



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**SECOND SESSION
TUESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2012**

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BILL (*Public*)

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Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
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GOSK*Deputy Speaker*

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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 29 of 2012

Sitting of 27 November 2012

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis

at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

(11.38 p.m.)

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2013) BILL

(No. XXVII of 2012)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation (2013) Bill (No. XXVII of 2012).

Question again proposed.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I must apologise if you find my voice a little bit croaky. I have got a frog in my throat, but that would not stop me from saying a few words.

I am sad and not disappointed to see the empty benches of the Opposition and I congratulate hon. François for his presence here.

(Interruptions)

Bravo!

(Interruptions)

And to me, he has always represented the true, real, constructive Opposition and I congratulate him for that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been in this House since 1995/1996 and I take this opportunity to thank the hon. Prime Minister. I have been on his side from 1995-2000, 2000-2005 in the Opposition and 2005-2012 again by his side in this House. I must pay tribute to his courage, of his convictions and to the way that he really provides leadership to the country, to the alliance and whoever wants to follow.

In this same House, I have seen Members, now in the Opposition – the MMM – applaud the Budget of the Labour Party. The MMM Government, into Opposition two years later, starts criticising the same measures that they were applauding. Again, in 2010, this time it is the MSM. They were part of the Government, applauding sometimes louder than us, the measures that were taken. Suddenly, things have changed. What has changed?

Yesterday, I listened to hon. Pravind Jugnauth, and I wish he was here, because I have no animosity against him and he decided what he did. But I would like to see him in front of me when I will tell him, what I call, a few truths, which are often unpalatable. He has called this Government, illegitimate. I would like him to explain what the illegitimacy of this Government is. This Government was elected by the country on a programme and the MSM joined us in this programme. They knew the programme. Now, suddenly, I find the language has changed.

To remind the House, the Members who elected to leave Government - I say elected to leave Government - they were not evicted, they were not thrown out, they were not asked to go, they chose on their own free will to go, and, they call this an illegitimate Government. They are an illegitimate Opposition. I congratulate the Members here who have had the courage to come on this side, and said this is where the country's interest lies. We have our good adopted daughter, hon. Mrs Prateebah Bholah; we have hon. Mrs Mireille Martin and we have hon. Jim Seetaram. They are the true patriots. They are the ones who rose to the occasion. I will quote a similarity, in my case also, I was called *transfuge* in 1997. But I was not a *transfuge*. I was listening to the voice of the electorate that we are in Government, to stay in Government until such time that we come back to the public and show what we have done, what we have achieved and the public can judge. The judgment has been in 2005, 2010 and I was re-elected. It is the electorate that decides and the electorate knows best.

Yesterday, I was going to thank the hon. Member. He introduced a term, which I will use *ad nauseam*: multidimensional flop. This describes the state of affairs of the other side. The remake is a flop, a multidimensional, Mr Speaker, Sir. The leadership is a flop. Everything is a flop, but they don't see it in themselves. They put it on our side. They are a multidimensional flop in all ways and means that we can think of.

Today, we don't even know who is leader of what, who is doing what on the other side. We wish we had a credible Opposition. At least, they could tell the public in simple terms what is going on. Instead of *bla, bla, bla*, instead of innuendo, instead of backbiting, instead of

spreading - and this is serious, Mr Speaker, Sir - communal divisions in the population. This is a serious pattern. I will mention one thing, Mr Speaker, Sir. I was told that somebody – I won't say where – in a religious place, said: '*Beebeejaun, DPM, nou pas koner si pas li hindou, si pas li musulman, si pas li catholique*'. This is the best tribute that can be given to my public life, that in public, I am all, I am Mauritian and in my private, I have my own beliefs, my faith and the practice of my faith, and this, I keep private. I say this, Mr Speaker, Sir ...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Deputy Prime Minister. This issue has not been canvassed by the Opposition. So, carry on with your speech, but just refrain from that little bit.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I apologise if I have gone beyond, but the idea is to denounce communalism at all levels that we are practising it. The same people here have tried to think otherwise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are two characteristics of this Budget. Here, I take the opportunity to congratulate my good friend, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, for this Budget. This Budget is expansionary and importantly fiscally responsible. It takes into account the need to enhance people's well-being in a challenging global environment. This is a key to it all, this challenging global environment. The Opposition must not take the public outside for ignorant fools. They know what is going on in the wider world, Mr Speaker, Sir, for many reasons apart from what we hear from the news, on television, but, actually, apart from knowing about Greece, Spain and Italy, they know from their relatives in England, in France, the difficulties that are being experienced there. We have many Mauritians leaving United Kingdom, Ireland and France to come back here and settle after years abroad. The situation there is bleak and Mauritius holds a hope for them. This is important that we all realise that we do not live in a *bulle*, we live in connection with the outside world and this is important.

This Budget is a balance. I like this word. It ensures fiscal discipline and this is important. Fiscal discipline enables sustainable growth for the future. It is a mixture of both fiscal discipline and growth for the future to a sustainable way. This Budget is guided by a five-fold strategy –

- (a) ensure sound macroeconomic management;
- (b) protect the vulnerable;

- (c) embrace technology and reinforce our African strategy;
- (d) support growth and create employment, and
- (e) strengthen public services.

I wish that the interventions on this part of this House would be more publicised. All these issues, one after the other, from 'a' to 'b' to 'c' to 'd' to 'e' have been fully explained in this House and I hope that *peu à peu* this will trickle down to the public to understand the philosophy of this Budget.

It contains measures and they said that it is empty and there is nothing there. It contains measures and it says it. Then, it comes to us to implement them. We have always said that the Budget is there and we will implement it. We have every motivation to see that these are implemented. There are many measures. What do I find to help the manufacturing sector? This is important, especially to help the manufacturing sector to cope with a difficult economic situation, with the SMEs being taken fully on board. The Small and Medium Enterprises are the backbone of our economy and they should be protected. They are fully taken on board. There are lots of other measures where SMEs are being taken on board, but I will not go into them.

Next is the transition. To accelerate the transition to technology and reduce the digital divide and those who have listened to the Minister, hon. Chedumbrum Pillay, will have no doubt about his determination based on its track record that this will be achieved and achieved sooner than we think.

The next is a four-year action plan to reduce youth unemployment and they are making a mockery of it. It is as if our youth – we have to start somewhere and build it up and I congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance for this effort to look at the young, to look at those who have degrees and who have no experience. Those who need work experience are being placed, those whom we need are being encouraged to come and join the services. Last, but, more importantly, support to the vulnerable through different innovative ways specially providing incentives to children from low income families to benefit from education. This is important, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have heard my friend, the hon. Minister of Finance, saying so often that poverty *ce n'est pas une fatalité*, we can get out of poverty and to get out of poverty we need education. The emphasis is on education allowing the families to send their children to school and then to look after them after hours, it is part of the strategy of Government and what I have said is in line

with Government's mission to further diversify and consolidate the economic base as proposed in the Government Programme 2012-2015 which aims at 'Moving the nation forward'.

Especially the MSM Opposition seems to have forgotten the Government Programme 2012-2015; they accepted this programme; they were part of it; they approved it. But now that we are implementing the 2012-2015 Programme, they find faults with it? This is wrong. You should not have one language when you are here and one language when you are over there, it's wrong. Hon. Minister Xavier-Luc Duval, the Minister of Finance has laid the foundation for the consolidation of the macroeconomic performance of our country against a backdrop of current uncertain economic conditions which I have explained and outlined a few minutes ago. In spite of the prevailing adverse global economic situation, we are still capable of managing fairly well. With inflation at 4.1%, growth at 3.4% is expected to reach 4% next year, budget deficit of 2.5% and will continue to trend downward to 2.2% in 2013. *N'en déplaie à l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth hier qui a essayé de faire son mieux pour convaincre - je ne sais pas qui - que ces chiffres sont discutables.* I don't know where he got all these from and, interestingly enough, I found hon. Pravind Jugnauth quoting the so-called authority and the same hon. Member, in 2011, was criticised by them, same press, for their comments on his budget. So, he is using them now as a reference. How wrong can we get? How much can we err from where we started? I take this opportunity to remind the House that hon. Pravind Jugnauth, in his Budget Speech 2011, enunciated his fiscal philosophy and I am sure that everyone will be hanging on my lips to say what his fiscal philosophy was. I quote hon. Jugnauth –

“Keeping the debt at a manageable proportion of GDP is one of the sensible strategies of fiscal responsibility.”

Which we all know, but he said it –

“Keeping the debt at a manageable proportion of GDP is one of the sensible strategies of fiscal responsibility”.

What was he aiming at, Mr Speaker, Sir? He was aiming at a budget deficit of 3.9% of GDP. That was his aim: 3.9%. Today, Mr Speaker, Sir, my colleague, hon. Xavier Luc Duval, Minister of Finance, has achieved much better with a deficit of 2.5% and 2.2% next year, and I cannot but help to say – *plus responsable que cela, il meurt.* But what can you do? Can you be more responsible than that?

Mr Speaker, Sir, public-sector debt falling to 54.2% of GDP and is expected to decline further to 53.7%, and this is important. I lay emphasis on this and Government will only borrow to invest in the future of this country. It is not money squandered; it is investment into the future. Capital investment programme for 2013 will amount to Rs28.6 billion and these heavy investments will be in the water sector, electricity, waste management, roads, port, airport, communication, amongst others. And I repeat investment for the well-being of generations to come.

Mr Speaker, Sir, having gone through this preliminary analysis, I now turn to public utilities and I start with the water sector. Mr Speaker, Sir, during the recent years, the CWA has undertaken major works to replace old and defective trunk distribution mains in different regions in the country; in the North, East, West, South and, more importantly, also in the central part. Works amounting to some Rs500 m. have been completed at Camp Fouquereaux-Alma, Quartier Militaire-Mont Ida-l'Unité, Plaine des Papayes-Triolet and Pierrefonds, and the outstanding works at Balisson-Bemanique and Riche en Eau/Ferney amounting to some Rs200 m. will be completed by August 2013. And I am sure this news will please my hon. friend, Dr. Arvin Boolell. Further to these works, a population of 150,000 will benefit from an improved water supply. So, there have been ongoing works in different regions of the country; none has been ignored – the centre, the East, the North/Plaine des Papayes and then the South at Balisson-Bemanique and Riche en Eau, and the works will soon be completed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 1999, we had an unprecedented drought affecting the whole country. In 2000 and again in 2010, the upper Mare aux Vacoas region was mostly affected by drought. Presently, various regions in the East are affected due to deficient rainfall in part of the country which usually has rainfall above the national average – at the East. Emergency measures have been taken to abstract river water at La Queen and Pont Lardier and I take this opportunity to say a big thank you to Dr. Diwakar Bundhun and family who have generously put at the disposal of the CWA a borehole on their private land to supplement water supply in the East. This, Mr Speaker, Sir, is patriotism indeed and it was given in a matter of seconds; there was no discussion, they were asked, they came and they said yes. I would like to say also that this borehole has lots of water and this will help to alleviate the difficult situation in the East. In the days to come the water situation should improve. Meanwhile CWA is providing water tanker service in the affected regions, namely Bramsthan, Ecroignard, Trou d'Eau Douce, Camp Ithier

and Laventure. Mr Speaker, Sir, these are the *ad hoc* works where we spent Rs500 m. plus Rs200 m. soon to be spent.

These *ad hoc* works have reduced the frequency of pipe bursts and improved hours and quality of supply in these regions, affecting some 150,000 population. However, the reduction of Non-Revenue Water requires a holistic and sustained approach through the mobilisation of substantial financial resources not only to replace the old network mains and communication pipes, but also for the introduction of state-of-the-art technology such as telemetry for the operation of the system. I would like to also reiterate that Non-Revenue Water is composed of several components. The major component, of course, is physical losses, leakages in the system, and if we have a 50% Non-Revenue Water, maybe 40% to 45% is due to physical losses in the system. But there are also apparent losses, which are not real losses in terms of theft. It is called unauthorised consumption, but it is theft of water and it is quite significant, coupled with metering inaccuracies and unbilled consumptions, which means that consumption is not even known and there is no bill sent, and people are using water. So, we have several components of Non-Revenue Water, and we mean to address all of them, including the leakages, the metres, and making sure that everyone has water, but pays for it.

Given the magnitude of the problem which has to be addressed through the replacement of more than 1500 km of pipelines over the next ten years - and I say that for the information of the House - it is a tremendous task. It is a tremendous task because replacing pipes is part of the solution, and you start by replacing the big pipes that are leaking. They are obviously there. They are sitting there, and time after time they leak, but they are not the only source of the problem. There is also what we call communication pipes; pipes further down, which are smaller in volume and size, which go undetected unless you have special methods of finding out where the leakages are. We have this problem now at Bramsthan. At Bramsthan, we took water from the river at 'La Queen', and we put it into a system. Suddenly, we realised that system is leaking very badly because before choosing that system, there was no information that this pipe was leaking. It was not seen, and we only realised it afterwards. This will be put right, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we are doing our best. So, I say to our population in the East that we are taking all measures fast and, in a couple of days, things should be back to a reasonable normal.

So, we are in face of this tremendous challenge of replacing all asbestos pipes; 1500 kms; and we do it km by km every year; 5 km, 10, 15, 75 km, 5%. It is time we take the bull by the

horns and start in a professional - and this is the word, Mr Speaker, Sir - way to deal with this problem of leakages and Non-Revenue Water. We have to start somewhere. So, we are starting in the Upper Mare aux Vacoas region and, at the same time, in parallel, we will be working in other areas as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the expertise of the Singaporean team to provide Project Management Services for the design of the works at Upper Mare aux Vacoas, preparation of bid documents, assist in the evaluation of bids and supervise the works, a project estimated at Rs1 billion will be implemented over the next three years, and provision has been made in this Budget. The sum of Rs1 billion may sound very important, but if it is not combined with technical knowhow, we are going again to spend money and see no results. So, the technical knowhow is important. This project will comprise detailed field investigations to establish the baseline data to be followed by the replacement of some 300 kms of pipe lines - it will be about a fifth of the 1500 kms - of different diameters. It will also be accompanied by replacement of water meters, which I have underlined, because a lot of the water meters are unreliable and reading lower values. More importantly, they are reading lower values than water going through. Also - very important – there is the introduction of telemetry and SCADA system for the operation and management of the water distribution. The telemetry system will include monitoring of pumping stations, service reservoir levels and downstream control valves, including installation of flow monitors and pressure transducers at critical locations in Mare aux Vacoas area for effective and intelligent management of water pressure in the distribution system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are going to go into modernity now. We cannot sort of ring reservoirs and ask: ‘what level are you at today?’ To ring valve operators to say: ‘are the valves working or not?’ To look at pressures! It will be there, automatic; the information will be relayed to the Central office, to a central point where action can be taken immediately instead of relying on information which is false. This is what I call going into the modern world with our water system. It will take time and effort, but, at the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir, we must ensure the long-term sustainability of projects and, for this, an important component of capacity building in the design and modelling of the system is important. It is essential that, for the project to be sustainable over the long-term, we have an important capacity building component.

For our youth, our students from the universities, there is plenty of potential for jobs here, and I will inform my colleague about what we are doing so that in three, four or five years we will need a lot of them. We will need a lot of these graduates in the water sector to manage the system, but they have to learn it first and there is only one way of learning. At university, yes, but from on the ground, and this is where attachment is important; that they spend time in the world of work and see how things are being done, and then add their own contribution. It is amazing when young graduates come and join us, how they see the weaknesses in our system; and they come and tell me about it. I am happy and pleased to see this reaction, this interaction between the young and those who are already established there.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the reforms in the water sector, Government will implement its reform programme, and details on the strategic initiatives were given in my reply to PQ B/603. It is a pity that it was not replied orally and had to be put in the Library. I would advise my friends to look at this reply of PQ B/603. Amongst others, it talks about institutional structure enhancements. We must enhance our institutional structure. It is important. The way it is now, fragmented between CWA, Wastewater Management Authority and the Irrigation Authority, it is time that we put them together so that we have a holistic approach to the water sector. The water resources will be outside this because they cannot be judge and party at the same time. So, we are keeping the water resources apart.

We also talked about financial sustainability. The financial sustainability of a system depends on how smart we work, what services we deliver and what revenue we get. All this is going to be addressed. I have talked at length on the effective management of Non-Revenue Water and, importantly, there is an initiative which I highly regard, namely community engagement and public education. If we do not have community engagement, if we do not have public education, there is not going to be any progress. I was heartened by the reaction I saw in one newspaper, where they were talking about the difficulties of the water supply. There were seven persons replying. Six out of the seven said: 'we waste too much water'. They didn't talk about mineral water, they said: 'at home, we waste too much water'; all of them. This was a revelation to me that, at least, the public now understands that water is not indefinite. Water is finite and we must look after it in the best way we can.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I turn now to the water resources. Mobilisation of adequate water resources is critical to achieve the objective of the 24/7 water supply to the population. And,

this, I again remind that the objective is not going to be reached in a matter of one, two or three years, but it will be reached if we all put our heads together and the idea is to have water in our system 24 hours out of 24. I am told by competent technicians that even though a system may be leaking, I don't know at 20%, 25%, it is the acceptable international norm. You have acceptable leak in the system at 20-25%, but even then releasing the water on a 24-hour basis makes sense because each time we close the valve and we reopen it, it destroys the system because it goes into an empty system and the pressure is built up and it destroys the system. This is important. And the next thing is to introduce – I have said it already – pressure monitors so as to get the right pressure, but this introduces one difficulty. Most of our population live in conglomeration, but we have a few who live far up on the heights. How to get water pressure to them and, at the same time, not damage the system? The other difficulty today is that some very well off people have three or four floors - I am talking about private buildings - and they argue about the pressure. They get pressure at one or two levels, but put a pump! They should also share the responsibility. We cannot put a pressure to go 7th floor up when they should be putting a pump because it will destroy the system. So, this is about water supply 24 hours, 7 days a week. It is achievable. I think it makes sense because apart from being convenient to the householders, it also makes technical sense.

When it comes to water resources, I would like to remind the House, once again, that it is this Government, under the leadership of Dr. the hon. Navin Ramgoolam who has initiated the construction of three dams to mobilise additional resources over the next 50 years - starting with Midlands dam in 1998 which we all attended at and which is proving to be very efficient and a boon to the North and to Port Louis as well; part of it comes to North Port Louis. So, we have the Midlands dam, then the Bagatelle dam which is actually under construction and Rivière des Anguilles dam scheduled to start in 2014.

Incidentally, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bagatelle dam will improve water supply in the regions of Lower Plaine Wilhems, part of Black River and Port Louis. So, it is not just a Port Louis project. It is a project which will improve up to - I gather - Beau Bassin, Coromandel and North of Rivière Noire. So, it is quite widespread.

Additional boreholes have been drilled in 2012 and we have a total of 115 boreholes supplying some 100 mm³ potable water annually.

I will give some figures which our hon. Members may be interested and it is very revealing. Mr Speaker, Sir, the water supply is divided into six zones and each zone has different characteristics one from the other. None of the two are alike and I'll quote some figures.

The upper Mare aux Vacoas system depends 80% on surface water. The lower Mare aux Vacoas system relies 80% on boreholes and this explains part of the difficulties now being experienced in Rose Hill because of the borehole situation. The East relies 65% on boreholes and the North 50% on surface water and 50% on boreholes.

Each region has its own characteristics with Mare aux Vacoas at 80% on surface water and lower Mare aux Vacoas 80% on boreholes. This explains the sporadic difficulties we have in the different zones. Today, we have forgotten about upper Mare aux Vacoas. We are talking more about Rose Hill, lower Mare aux Vacoas and certainly more about the East. In the face of that, for the long-term, my Ministry has already prepared a master plan for the development of water resources up to year 2050 which has identified the potential for mobilisation of an additional 175 mm³ of water per year and the existing availability is 800. So, now it is 800 million mm³, an additional 175 mm³ is going to be mobilised over years and the plan is -

- to enlarge the existing La Nicolière and La Ferme dams;
- identification of 11 sites for direct river abstractions;
- construction of four new dams in time and, I say it again, this is in time. At the moment, it is Bagatelle and Rivière des Anguilles. What will follow, there will be new dams at Deux Frères, Constance, Calebasses and Baie du Cap. These are identified as areas that will provide water and relief, but it will come over time.
- Maximising use of boreholes;
- Reuse of treated wastewater for irrigation purposes.

This is one aspect that is creating problems because some of the wastewater is being injected into boreholes; the other is being thrown out at sea or is used for irrigation. So, we have to educate the public and those who need water for irrigation that what we are providing is safe and can be used for irrigation.

Apart from the availability of water, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have also the problem of quality of water resources which is an important public health issue. The quality should be preserved at all costs. We also take it for granted. Nothing happens out of the blue. If we don't follow it up,

things happen. We may have algae and pollutants in the reservoirs. My Ministry is making sure by monitoring the water quality. A Surveillance Committee has been set up to monitor the quality in all reservoirs and feeder canals with technical assistance from JICA and AFD. In addition, My Ministry will shortly award a contract to study the characteristics of the Central Plateau and northern aquifers, both are major sources of our water supply. It is good to know - I see, Mr Prem Suddal; one of these days, go to one of his lectures where he will talk about the geography and geology of Mauritius, the caves with water in the centre and other places. They store our water, but we have to know how they get there. What is the dynamics of that flow? Where do they go? We did a study in 1998-1999. I remember a Frenchman came and gave us some very valuable data for here and Rodrigues which has been of great use. It is time that we re-actualise it and we are going to award a contract to study the characteristics of the Central Plateau and northern aquifers with a view to optimising their recharge and abstraction capacity as well as the protection and sustainable utilisation of the aquifers. What happens today, suddenly we hear the boreholes have gone down rapidly and we are taken unaware. We should introduce science into our water system to be able to measure and monitor and take the necessary precautions and do what has to be done. So, these two studies about the northern aquifer and the Central Plateau aquifer will give us a good idea of how to improve and how to better use and how to utilise our water resources.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now come to the water rights. It has been with us for a long time and its one component has yet to be resolved and we intend doing it if not by cooperation from others, but by using the law to do it. Unfortunately, there is a lot of resistance and reluctance on the part of the water rights holders to provide documentary evidence on their existing rights. We have asked them, we have written to them. We have invited them to come to my office to discuss, but they are totally resistant. In the light of the poor response, the State Law Office is finalising Regulations to make it an offence in case water rights holders do not disclose all information regarding their water entitlements and their particular use. This is important to give documentary evidence of the entitlements and their particular use because when they were given, they were given for agriculture and milling. Today, the use has changed and they don't even wish to give us the information. How are we going to manage?

Water rights holders have 50% of the available water and CWA 22% only. It gives you an idea of the magnitude of the problem and we have to get it right. I remember last year the hon.

Leader of the Opposition, Mr Paul Raymond Bérenger quite rightly said, if we need the Opposition, they will give us a hand to settle this problem in this House. I will take him up eventually on this and we will see how it goes.

Next, Mr Speaker, Sir, comes this thorny problem of sanitation. It is not easy; it is always difficult, whatever he said - and I am sorry hon. Lesjongard is not here and the others who talk and talk and they don't know what it is about. You see bla bla bla again. The implementation of the first phase of the National Sewerage Programme started in 1998 and the public sewerage system has been extended to the regions of Grand Baie, Baie du Tombeau and most of the Plaines Wilhems areas. Some 78,000 premises will be connected to bring the level of connection to the public sewerage system to around 22% of households by end of this year. So, here we are, 78,000 premises connected, 22% for household by the end of this year. Much has been said about additional costs in the Plaines Wilhems and Baie du Tombeau areas. Much has been said as if money has been wasted. I have done it before and I will do it again so that, at least, my good friends over there understand the problem and explain it to them. This is important.

I again, reassure the House that there has been no wastage of public funds and every cent spent has been accounted for in waste water works whether for the Plaines Wilhems or Baie du Tombeau projects. So, the question is: 'why the cost overruns? Why has it cost more than was budgeted?' The answer is simple, if we take time to think about it. The cost overruns resulted from the time lag from the concept designs and implementation of actual works. What happens? Every major waste water work, from beginning to start of works, takes between three and five years. Every work! No exception! We can check on that. During the three to five years what was projected has changed. It is no longer the same, there are new settlements, new houses, new people coming in, and what do we do? We say sorry to them, we are going to do it next time. Next time will be in five years' time, it won't be now.

What has happened? As I said, new developments have occurred in the area and we have had to add a significant additional number of houses to be connected. When these projects were started, Mr Speaker, Sir, there was no detailed topographical survey. The audit has underlined it on many occasions. There was no detailed topographical survey which means you didn't know exactly where you were; how much you had to dig; how deep you had to dig because, in some places, if the house is low-lying, you have to dig deeper to get the gravity flow into the network.

You cannot plan long-term; you have to go on the ground, see what it is and make sure that you are addressing all the issues. As I said, there has been greater depth of excavation to connect a maximum number of houses by gravity. Moreover – and I would like to say this again - the waste water works today include two major components that were not provided for. One is, as we dig, we also change the CWA pipes. That is important, and also we reinstate full width reinstatement of roads. And this is the system, but my good friend made us pay for it. So, we had to pay for it. It is good work. It had to be done and it's done. So, it explains the nature of the increase. Firstly, new connections which had to be done to avoid another project which will take four to five years; secondly, the unknown nature of the soil because at some places we had to dig deeper; thirdly, to get the CWA pipes, and fourthly roads reinstatement. So, there we are!

A year or two ago, audit, once again, drew the attention that before we start, we must have a full topographical survey. Now, you know what this entails? This entails again, one-year delay, because when you do a full survey, instead of starting today, it takes you about a year to do the full survey. So, there is delay and delay means cost, but we have to do it so that we know exactly the nature of the works to be undertaken.

It is a pity, hon. Ganoo and hon. Lesjongard especially, with very vociferous, I am not sure whether it is based on not knowing the facts or knowing the facts and being willfully - I won't use the word - malicious. I don't know.

I would like my good friends to listen to this. We hear so much about waste water works now. Listen to this! I would like to draw the attention of this House to the real wastage of public funds in wastewater projects between 2000 and 2005. Real wastage! There is no question there, in 2000/2005. What did they do? Grand Baie Treatment Plant saga! Have you heard about that word 'saga', very dear to the Opposition? What happened? The treatment plant was completed in April 2003 at a contract value of Rs250 m. One treatment plant! And what happened to the treatment plant, Mr Speaker, Sir? It had to be operated and maintained, but there was no waste coming in, because there were no house connections and the house connections started two years later. So, this sort of disjointed way of doing things, you have a treatment plant and it is not operational for two years, waiting for house connections! This is what I call Rs200 m. of public funds wasted, waiting for two years to be used. And also during that time, it had to be maintained because the contract starts. Maintain what? What did they do? They get water from CWA which we can hardly afford to wash it now and again so that *li pas rouiller* and we spent a

lot of money to make sure that there was no impairment due to idleness of the system because the system is electromechanical and the parts rust from disuse. So, it had to be used.

Now, do you think that is the only one? There are three or four, but I will mention the other one. The other one is the Montagne Jacquot Project. You have a rising main and you pump it into a treatment plant and what happens is that the construction of the rising mains worth Rs121 m., remain idle again for two years. Rs121 m. unused for two years, waiting for the construction of the treatment plant and sea outfall and there again waste of public funds due to uncoordinated planning in the years 2000-2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll go back to projects. We are also providing funds for minor projects. We have not forgotten the minor projects because questions are often asked about what is going to happen to minor projects. Works are being carried out on ex-CHA estates to improve sanitation conditions. We have 185 ex-CHA estates, 45 have been rehabilitated and six other sites have been identified as priority projects for implementation as from next year. So, we are not forgetting them.

As far as treatment plants are concerned, we have four existing large treatment plants at St Martin, Montagne Jacquot, Baie du Tombeau and Grand Baie. The St Martin treatment plant – I'll go one by one - is treating waste water up to tertiary level which is used for irrigation. Again, this water used for irrigation, can you imagine the users who are mainly the bigger owners refuse to pay? What do they do? They use the small planters so that they don't have to pay. They complain about the price and they complain about the cost and they don't want to pay. We will go with that.

The Montagne Jacquot and Baie du Tombeau treatment plants provide primary treatment with disposal through long sea outfalls, whereas the effluents at tertiary level at Grand Baie is injected into boreholes. So, we have four: one is used for irrigation; two, long sea outfalls and three, treated tertiary into borehole. The treatment plant at Baie du Tombeau will be upgraded to secondary treatment and the capacity of the Grand Baie treatment plant will be increased from 3500 m³ to 10000 m³ per day to accommodate waste water from the Grand Baie area and, at the same time, make available a higher volume of treated effluents for irrigation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as renewable energy is concerned, to address our long-term energy security, this Government has demonstrated its strong commitment to enhance the contribution of renewable energy sources - and I will lay emphasis on this - to the extent

possible in the global energy mix. There are still barriers to be overcome, namely in terms of relatively high costs, mastering the technologies involved, the intermittency and unreliability of supply coupled with prohibitive cost of energy storage as well as a large land area needed for PV and wind farms. It is important, Mr Speaker, Sir. There are two parts of that which maybe are not well-known: energy storage is there, but very costly. Secondly, the land area needed for photovoltaic and wind farms are large.

The first wind farm of capacity 30 MW at Plaine Sophie will be operational in 2014. The siting – this again, we learn lessons from looking at these issues - of the wind farm has been finalised after taking into consideration several criteria, namely the wind regime, the required land area and interference with other services. Based on these criteria, we had to move this site twice to a third point; firstly because of neighbours; secondly, because of interference in navigational matter, and thirdly, eventually we found a site. We did obey what the hon. Prime Minister said, you cut down one tree and you plant two trees. So, we are going to minimise the space that is needed, but the project is ongoing and I hope, by next year, it will be operational. The 18 MW wind farm at Plaines des Roches has taken much time because, at the moment, the quoted prices are too high and the CEB is trying to get a cheaper or as good or better project. There we are, we have the Plaine Sophie, but at Plaines des Roches, we are waiting.

When it comes to solar, there are already bids for a 10 MW photovoltaic project comprising units of 1 MW or 2 MW which are being evaluated. The question is: why one unit of 1 MW or 2 MW? Spread all over the island and the sunshine is different and it makes it easier to accommodate on the grid.

Regarding the Small Independent Power Producers, there are three categories of applicants supplying electricity -

- (i) High Feed-in Tariffs as incentive;
- (ii) Feeding at marginal cost, and
- (iii) No cost.

For the first category of a high feed-in tariff, the target is to connect 1 MW at the end of this year and 3 MW at the end of next year. The second category at marginal cost comprises public, educational, religious and charitable institutions supplying electricity to CEB. Here, I am grateful to hon. Dr. Vasant Bunwaree for the schools which make an effort to produce renewable energy at school level. Apart from being a useful project, it also educates and this is very important for

us. Then, we have the Municipality of Port Louis. I congratulate the Mayor of the Municipality for taking the initiative to have photovoltaic at the level of the Municipality and also the BEC schools. The third one is interesting, Mr Speaker, Sir, because there has been some correspondence on this. This one consists of applicants who connect to the CEB at no cost. Now, why should they connect to CEB at no cost? This is to stabilise their own system. They have a system of photovoltaic, about 400 KW, but they cannot run it unless it has got a stabilising factor. The stabilising factor is connection to the CEB grid. We have two such projects: MCB at St Jean and Winners at Coromandel. My Ministry is also working on a Grid Code and Feed-inTariffs for renewable technologies of capacity 50 KW to 400 KW and above 400 KW to be connected to the grid at medium voltage.

Also my Ministry is exploring other sources to meet our energy requirements. We are looking at geothermal potential with a core hole to be drilled at Bar Le Duc to study the temperature gradient. We are also looking at a Feasibility Study for the use of LNG for electricity generation. Sixteen applications have been received and are being evaluated.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have so many requests for photovoltaic projects that we need a Master Plan. We need to know where we are, what we are doing, where we are going and I thank the Government of India with the assistance of an expert from the Planning Commission of India to produce a Master Plan for the development of renewable energy, an Action Plan for implementation of most cost-effective projects. This is important for us, we know where we are going; how to go about it and, but more importantly, what projects are the most cost-effective ones.

I'll turn to the last but certainly not least which is energy efficiency. Energy efficiency, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the quickest and least costly way of addressing energy security, environmental and economic challenges. The implementation of energy efficiency will reduce our dependence on fossil fuels but also reduce a peak demand when expensive generating sources are used. I am glad to note that low energy lamps are being increasingly used at household level, street lighting and, most importantly, at traffic lights. I thank my colleague, the Minister of Land Transport for making sure that all traffic lights now are light-emitting diode (LED).

Government buildings are also being encouraged to reduce their energy bill. We are finalising regulations on product labelling. The product labelling, Mr Speaker, Sir, will provide

the public with information on energy efficiency equipment available on the market and, importantly also, that their performance will eventually save them quite a bit. It is economical; it makes sense.

I repeat that excise duties will be applied on inefficient electrical appliances. In the industrial sector, my Ministry is co-funding a public-private initiative to carry out energy audit in 10 industries with the technical assistance of AFD and the recommendations will be implemented as demonstration projects. It is no good doing energy audits if we do not implement changes for savings. We have another initiative, a consultant for a framework on energy efficiency in energy intensive industries.

My colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, has drawn my attention - and it is important and I had not realised it - that there are many beneficiaries of concessionary electricity tariffs. There are large beneficiaries of concessionary electricity tariffs and they are not using it efficiently. So, why should we pay for inefficiency? We are going to make them efficient, if they are not, we are going to remove their concessionary tariff.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Energy Efficiency Management Office is there. One difficulty is to get a director. We are getting one from India and it will be functional as soon as possible, because we could not get any local candidates and we hardly had any application. It is because it is something new and, once again, I would ask colleagues to let the universities know, to let the secondary school leavers know where the potential in that field is for work. They are much needed; we cannot find the energy auditors. I opened a workshop on energy auditors. For training, we had 25 to 30 interested. In the end, we contacted them and only one responded. They are all busy elsewhere. There we are!

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is the *Observatoire de l'énergie*. I would not go on and on, except to say, in the global sense, efforts by global policy-makers to promote energy efficiency have fallen short of the economic potential. I am talking of global as an epic failure. It is an epic failure, but we should not underestimate the difficulties associated with the challenges to change the habits of the population to shift to energy efficiency and energy saving, but we must resolutely pursue our efforts on *maîtrise de la demande de l'énergie*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have given some information on public utilities. I now revert back to general comments before I conclude. Mr Speaker, Sir, the future challenges are clear. World economic power is undergoing a constant change. Technology is changing people's lives and

countries' fortunes. Countries that will succeed will be those that have risen to the challenges of this world in transition. This is a theme of this Budget today: 'Rising to the Challenges of this World in Transition'. This 2013 Budget continues the tradition of this Government in improving the well-being of the people in the face of difficult global economic context.

As a responsible Government, we continue to speak the truth. We have never misled the people with tall tales and demagogic speeches. I have never heard one. I have never heard any Member here making demagogic speeches outside, not in my presence anyway, and we can be sure they don't...

(Interruptions)

I know they don't, because we say the truth. When there are difficulties, we tell them.

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: When there are difficulties, we tell them; we tell them the truth and we are not afraid of saying when things are difficult that they are difficult and we never mislead the people.

We have always offered solutions and provided strong leadership to every problem faced, with hon. Dr. Ramgoolam at the helm.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Mauritian economy is centred on its people. The economy is the contribution of the people throughout Mauritius, rural, urban professionals, blue-collar workers, farmers, labourers, smallholders, fishermen, teachers, businessmen, entrepreneurs and this Budget comprehensively addresses all of them.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with due respect - I hesitate because hon. Li Kwong Wing is not here – apparently, so I am told, he is the economic spokesman for the Opposition. I expected a serious analysis from him, but instead we heard a speech characterised by pure demagogy. His speech shows a clear lack of vision as he does not even recognise that the rationale of the 2013 Budget focuses on developing a learning nation and this is an investment for the future.

It is a response for a global concern for talent in the globalised knowledge economy where intellectual capital is a new competitive advantage and talent is the new strategic asset. If the spokesman of the Opposition does not understand this basic concept, he has no vision for the future. He talks about economic misery and triple shock. I tell you, Mr Speaker, Sir, while my colleague, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, was giving his speech, I was watching them and I saw first, gloom, then deep gloom, then utter

misery on their face, because they realised that there is not much they could have replied to. And triple shock, what triple shock? He mentioned it, I did not mention. The Budget - a triple shock! Do you know what the triple shock was? When he heard that –

- (i) the budget deficit was being reduced;
- (ii) the Inflation rate was being reduced, and
- (iii) the overall debt level was being reduced.

This was the triple shock and they got into a state of shock from which they have not recovered till now.

In conclusion, this Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, makes a pledge to fulfil our potential towards developing a country that we can truly be proud of -

- 1. A country where the weak are protected;
- 2. Those in need get help;
- 3. The young are cared for;

The young are cared for - I listened to hon. Obeegadoo talking about the difficulties of providing a hot meal to students. We know about the difficulties; they do not have to tell us. But where was the difficulty, Mr Speaker, Sir? When he was Minister, these children were provided with *pain fourré* - I am quoting - '*pain fourré* with insufficient decayed stuffing'. I repeat '*pain fourré* with insufficient decayed stuffing'. I know that we are going to have difficulty as to whether the meal is warm or cold or whatever. But where is the difficulty about making sure that the stuffing is adequate and it is not decayed?

Secondly, as he said himself, he ended up with children being taken to hospital with food poisoning. He is trying to explain it by saying they could not find a supplier, they only had one supplier. I would like to know more about that. There are so many suppliers at local/regional levels. Why have one central supplier from Curepipe? It does not make sense. When there is outcry, they changed the programme and you know it was changed to what? When you read the Audit Report, it was changed to green bananas or overripe bananas. *Ou soit banane-là pourri ou soit li vert, pas capave mangé*. This is what our children had got and they were talking about caring! I continue -

- (4) The elderly are valued;
- (5) Those in need assisted, and
- (6) Those with potential are given opportunities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before ending, I will just say a few words, that the Opposition mentioned the MID concept. But we stressed it and the hon. Prime Minister said it on several occasions. The MID concept should penetrate each and every action that we do, whether educational, energy, employment or anywhere. Our system now is permeated. It is understood that it is a component of our programme. I think, at the beginning, I said it myself, it was too centralised on energy. Now, we are happy it is on the five “Es” and we are going to achieve this through different Ministries, whether we say it as MID, whether we say it any other component, but it is there very much so.

In this Budget, this Government is looking ahead not only over the next few years, but also over the next generation. I will end by quoting Sir George Foster who, I am sure, you all know is a well-known thinker. What he said, Mr Speaker, Sir, we should keep it, put it on our work desk and remember it every day –

“There is a special need just now for long vision and the fine courage of statesmanship, and the warm fires of national imagination. Let us summon them all to aid. We should not be thinking over much of what we are now, but more of what we may be in years to come.”

Let us climb the heights and take the long forward look with Dr. the hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

Thank you.

At 12.56 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.39 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like, at the very outset, to thank you and your Deputy for the patience, tact and wisdom with which you have presided over the debates on the Appropriation Bill 2013.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, in April last we presented our Government Programme for 2012-2015. The aim of this Programme is to engineer a horizon shift and put the country on a sound footing to face the upcoming challenges in these turbulent times. Through this Programme, Government has proposed a whole range of inspirational and groundbreaking ideas to prepare Mauritius for the long-term.

The 2013 Budget, presented by the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, blends perfectly with the vision set out in the Government Programme 2012-2015 and it precisely aims at preparing the country to rise to the challenges of a world in transition.

The 2013 Budget has been carefully crafted to move the nation forward towards greater prosperity by raising the skills and the capacities of our people, especially our youth, harnessing the power of technology, improving our infrastructure, enhancing our competitiveness while at the same time reinforcing protection for the most vulnerable.

The journey of economic re-engineering, Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, started in 2005, when we decided to charter a new course for our country by responding with boldness and imagination to turn around an economy that was stumbling into a self-reinforcing decline. We had some tough decisions to make. But we did not duck the difficult choices - we took them head on. The measures we introduced have shown tangible results in the form of a strong and resilient growth of the economy over the last seven years despite the world global crisis, the worst one the world has known for the last 80 years. We have succeeded in reviving the waning spirit of our people through our unflinching determination to nurture a more inclusive society, promote social justice and economic democratisation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius today is work-in-progress, and through the 2013 Budget, we are giving the country a vigorous impetus to ride the tides of the global turmoil and build the Mauritius of tomorrow in an uncertain world. I say 'uncertain world', Mr Speaker, Sir, because we still do not have visibility on the World Economy. Economics, as we know, remains an inexact Science. Very few Economists predicted the 2008 financial and economic crisis.

Now, while some were predicting seeing the green shoots of recovery, the eurozone has slipped back into recession. And it seems, the UK economy will go the same way of a double-dip recession.

As we all know, Mr Speaker, Sir, Europe remains our major trading partner, so, inevitably - you don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand this – this will affect our economy and will impact negatively on it. That is why we must continue on our path of reform and innovate while putting even greater emphasis on education, skills and development, and creating new pillars of development. This is what this Budget is all about.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I listened from my Office to the interventions of the hon. Members on the other side and I must say honestly, it beggars belief. They are the same people who were speaking of *l'état d'urgence économique* when they were at the helm of the country, when there was no global recession, no global financial or economic crisis. Now, they have been predicting an economic tsunami.

In his address on the 2013 Budget, the shadow - I suppose - Minister of Finance, hon. Li Kwong Wing, spoke of 'sluggish growth rate, under-performance, under-achievements, broken promises,' and the supposedly 'weak macroeconomic fundamentals and economic wreckage'. These are his words that I am quoting, Mr Speaker, Sir.

As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, you have to wonder whether this Opposition actually understands anything about economics and managing an economy in the face of an unprecedented global economic crisis. They seem to me, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sorry to say, economically illiterate. They seem to have buried their heads in the sand and are ignorant of what is happening in the world economy. How do you make sense of any economy, Mr Speaker, Sir? How do you judge economic performance? You look at the macroeconomic data, the trend and the macroeconomic fundamentals. This is how you can judge the performance of any economy, Mr Speaker, Sir. What is worst is that some on the opposite side have even said that we have manipulated the figures. How irresponsible can one get? A former Minister of Finance saying here 'manipulated' the figures! You just have to shake your head!

Mr Speaker, Sir, the World Bank has just published its Country Brief on Mauritius last month. Let me quote from this report. It says –

“Mauritius has solid economic fundamentals: open to foreign investment (USD273 million in 2011, 2.9 per cent of GDP), export oriented (USD5,900 million in 2011, 53 per

cent of GDP), high standards of governance (46th in the 2011 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index) and business friendly (the top-ranked African country in business climate, ranked 23rd globally in the 2011 World Bank Doing Business report)."

It goes on to say that -

"The country is ranked high in terms of competitiveness, investment climate and governance. The World Economic Forum's global competitiveness index ranked Mauritius at 54 out of 133 countries in 2011-2012, behind only South Africa in the Africa Region. It topped the 2011 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, (...)"

In fact, for the third consecutive year.

"(...) and is ranked 36th in the AT Kearney Global Services Location Index 2011."

It goes on to say, Mr Speaker, Sir - I wished the hon. Members of the Opposition were here to listen, and I thank the two hon. Members who are here, from Hizbullah and Rodrigues -

"The remarkable performance of the economy is attributed to sound economic governance, accelerated reforms to sustain long-term growth and effective State-business relations. These factors together with timely and targeted responses helped Mauritius to weather the negative effects of the global crisis."

Of course, the World Bank has highlighted the development challenges facing us. This Budget, as I said earlier, is precisely addressing these challenges.

For the harbingers of doom in this House, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me also restate here what the British newspaper, "The Guardian", wrote on Mauritius only a few months back. Let me quote -

"With few natural resources other than its celebrated white sand beaches and exquisite clear turquoise waters, Mauritius has turned itself into an economic success story through innovation and ideas. By creatively exploiting its strategic location, the island has reinvented itself from a struggling monocrop economy to a vibrant jewel in the Indian Ocean, treasured by tourists and investors alike. (...) Behind this idyllic picture is an impressive economic success story fuelled by the innovative spirit of its people and government. (...) While Africa is the world's poorest continent, Mauritius is among its most prosperous nations: Gross Domestic Product per person in 2011 was more than £5,600. Poverty is low, and it is consistently ranked the best-governed nation in Africa."

Mr Speaker, Sir, contrary to what we have been hearing from the other side of the House, we have succeeded in maintaining macroeconomic stability and a reasonable rate of growth despite the dramatic turmoil in major economies. While many countries around the world are mired in recession and debt, we are reducing our debt, we have a Budget surplus, and we are continuing to grow.

We have not only been able to maintain our Welfare State, but we are consolidating it. We are maintaining free education, free transport for students and the elderly, free health services, and universal old age pension, which has been increased at a rate higher than inflation. Subsidies on different basic commodities are being increased, and this time it will exceed Rs1 billion. And we have accomplished all this without increasing VAT. Mr Speaker, Sir, we can be rightly proud of our achievements!

We also heard the Opposition criticising our objective of reducing deficit and public debt. There were, in fact, contradictions in what they were saying. Mr Speaker, Sir, public debt and budget deficit are the twin beasts that need to be tamed and kept under control. A few years back, we introduced a Public Debt Management Act, which sets statutory ceilings and targets on public sector debt levels, thus reinforcing fiscal discipline. Public sector debt has, in fact, been brought down from 64% in 2005, when we took over, to 53.7%. The statutory requirement is to bring it to 50% by 2018. The budget deficit has also been reduced from 5.1% in 2005 to 3.8% in 2012, and is expected to be further reduced to 2.2% in 2013. It is worth highlighting that this will be one of the lowest budget deficits ever achieved.

All these, Mr Speaker, Sir, reflect a sound fiscal stewardship and fiscal rectitude on our part. The experience of Greece, Spain, the United States of America and other countries hold valuable lessons. We have seen how a debt debacle can undermine economic stability, and we have to avoid this at all costs. Stability must come first.

Our deficit and debt reduction plan is on course. We will not waiver from it. Instead, we are reinforcing our commitment to fiscal responsibility, not just in this Budget, but also in the years ahead. We have to send a clear and strong signal to the international investment community that Mauritius is observing fiscal discipline and economic solvency.

The first lesson that we must learn from the global crisis is to get the finances of the nation right. They must be strong and sustainable. We must never overlook or underestimate the

damage that high deficits and debts can do to a nation's economy. All the woes of the eurozone today, Mr Speaker, Sir, is about finances in particular, the wobbly and unsound public finances.

Let me take a brief incursion back and look at what this Government has been doing since 2005 to get the kind of strong macroeconomic fundamentals that earned us an upgrading of our sovereign debt rating. We have systematically been cleaning up the fiscal mess that we inherited in 2005 - high debt, high deficit, and we had to struggle to turn around an '*économie en état d'urgence*'; their own words, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let us look at what we left in 2000 and what we inherited in 2005.

First, on GDP growth! We left a GDP growing at 10.2% in 2000. 10.2%, Mr Speaker, Sir! We got back in 2005, and the GDP was growing at a mere 2.7%! As I said, there was no major recession, no major challenges! The sea was calm! There was no storm! Yet, this is the result! There was no global recession, no recession in the eurozone. In contrast, we had to deal with the great recession and two recessions in the eurozone. The euro area was then growing at an annual average of 1.5%, twice the average annual growth since 2006, which is 0.75%.

In 2000, we left an unemployment rate of 6.5%. When we got back in 2005, the unemployment rate was 9.6%! We left a female unemployment rate at 9.2% in 2000, and when we got back in 2005 that rate of female unemployment had gone up to 16.4%! We left a savings to GDP ratio of 26.2% in 2000, but when we got back, that ratio was 17.7%. We left a private investment to GDP ratio at 16.2% and we inherited a private investment to GDP ratio of 15.3%.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Mr Speaker, Sir, was literally drying up from 2001 to 2005 and the average annual FDI inflow was Rs1.5 billion. While from 2006 to 2011 the average annual FDI was Rs10.3 billion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there can be no better vote of confidence in our economy and its management than that. Nobody will invest in a country if they are fearful of the economic situation. Investors never invest in a country where they feel that the economy is going down. That is the proof of the pudding. We left a Gross Official International reserves good for 4.3 months of import in 2000 and years later in 2005 that was reduced to 4.1 months.

We left a Balance of Payments surplus of Rs6.4 billion and we inherited a deficit of Rs4.9 billion in 2005. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, in five years, from 2001 to 2005, there were three years of Balance of Payments deficit. In the past six years, under my Government, the Balance of Payments has shown surpluses every single year.

We left a budget deficit of 2%. When we got back in 2005, the budget deficit was 5.1%. Again, this was without taking into consideration the skeletons that were left in the cupboard, and if we add all these, it goes up tremendously.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the average annual budget deficit for 2001 to 2005 was 5.4% and this, in spite of raising VAT twice and keeping taxes high. Compare that to the average annual deficit of 3.2% for the period 2006 to 2012 and going down with a cut in income tax of 50%, leaving VAT untouched and even reducing and eliminating duty on a number of imported goods.

At the sectoral level, we inherited a sugar industry in despair, a textile sector that had constructed beyond recognition, with an output going down by 35% in four years and shedding thousands and thousands of jobs.

Their economic model, Mr Speaker, Sir, was still centered on preferences. Everyone knew - even a Form VI or Form V economic student knew - that these preferences were being dismantled. *Gouverner, c'est prévoir, M. le président*. They could not even see what was right in front of their nose. They could not even see that. They want us to give them the ship of the State at a time when there is no visibility. What of their nose, they could not see.

They were stuck in their own mindset. Same type! Nothing changed and that is the result that we got when they were in charge of this country. Had these trends continued, Mr Speaker, Sir, the story would have been a totally different one today. Indeed, it would have been an austerity budget. Instead, this Budget has brought down the deficit to 2.2% and, as I have said, one of the lowest ever.

In short, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Dream Team of MedPoint 1, churned out to be a real nightmare for the nation. They want the nation to bring back MedPoint 2 so that they can destroy the economy and the country as well. Never, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Fortunately for this country, this Government, at the very beginning in July 2005, started to turn around the economy. The strength and soundness of economic management and macro-economic policies are obvious for all to see. We achieved a lot more, and as we have said before we have been able to turn an '*économie en état d'urgence*' into an '*économie en état de résilience*'.

All we need to do now is to compare the global economic events. From 2001 to 2005, as I have said before, there was no storm, the sea was calm, it was easy to steer the ship but there was no direction for the ship of State was rudderless.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this very much reminds me of the classical conversation between Alice and Cheshire, the cat in “Alice in Wonderland”, where we are taught that if you don’t know where you want to go, any road will take you there!

They were at a loss to chart out a pathway to progress and prosperity for our nation! We all recall how they collectively headed straight into the *karo canne* - if I may say so - and this is where they still are and where they will still remain for a long time to come.

Mr Speaker, Sir, from 2006 to now we have been weathering one storm after another. We started with an economy that was *en état d’urgence*, unsound public finances; we were already at the bottom of the pit. When I hear the former President - I don’t know where he learnt his economics, he never learnt anything anyway. He is talking about the country is in a pit. He took us in the pit. There was the dismantling of the Multi-Fibre Agreement. They did not know about it. They did not prepare about it and nothing was done. The 36% cut in the price of sugar was there and everybody knew. No preparation! Surging oil prices! A barrel of crude oil, Mr Speaker, Sir, was \$28.2 in 2000, \$53.4 in 2005 and today, it is nearly \$108. Surging food prices even threatened food security.

At that time, the worst financial turmoil that we had to face – what we call the black swans; the great recession that followed; the eurozone crisis and the shifting of the world economic power.

To face such situations, we needed to move the economy in forward gear, and we needed fiscal space, we needed to support the enterprises in difficulty, we needed to protect the most vulnerable, and, at the same time, continue our long-term objectives and vision. And most of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, we had to shake off the reliance on trade preferences and to take on a new approach to development; one centered on global competitiveness and make our economy even more resilient. This is exactly what we did.

Our actions in 2006 have created the resilience that the country needed to face the shocks. This is recognised by world experts, not just us saying it.

Today, the 2013 Budget continues to consolidate our approach to sound economic management. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is this discipline and hard work that have today allowed us to pay for the 2013 PRB Report, which will cost the Exchequer around Rs4.6 billion.

As I said in my reply to the PNQ from the hon. Leader of the Opposition on 19 November last, the Government has fulfilled its promise by ensuring the publication of the PRB

Report ahead of time despite a very tight and extremely difficult context. A salary review is normally due every five years. Mr Speaker, Sir, the previous report was published in July 2008, and, therefore, it should have been July 2013 that this new report should have been published. Nevertheless, the Government approved that the 2013 Report be made effective as from 01 January 2013 itself and that its recommendations be implemented *in toto*. Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, the payment of the new salaries will be effected in full.

We recall, Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2003, when the global economic situation was much better to what it was today, when they had taken more money out of VAT increases, all sorts of things, increased tax, payment of the PRB salaries had been phased over two financial years. However, in 2008, we paid the PRB salaries in one go and we are doing likewise for this report of 2013 in spite of the difficulties we all know, except the Members on the other side.

We also agreed, Mr Speaker, Sir, to set up an Independent Errors, Omissions and Anomalies Committee to examine all the cases that would be submitted to the Committee.

In line with the Government Programme of 2012-2015, Government has recently taken the decision to set up a Civil Service College, which will play a key role in uplifting the skills of employees in the public sector in delivering high quality services with efficiency and dedication to the general public.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the past, when Mauritius became independent and when we became a success story - I think it was in the early 1970s - there was a report which said that Mauritius has managed, not only because of the sound economic policies, not only about the choices that the Government took, but also because we had a Civil Service that could work and deliver on time. We want this to continue, Mr Speaker, Sir.

In order to ensure the rapid implementation of projects in the public sector, a Project Management Manual is being drafted which will spell out the best international project management practices covering the planning process, the monitoring and evaluation procedures.

The Office of Public Sector Governance under my Office, Mr Speaker, Sir, has set up an online central data base for parastatal bodies where financial and non financial information are available on performances. This database will enable the OPSG to closely monitor the performances of these organisations and at this stage 30 parastatal bodies have been registered in the system.

In line with our strategy to improve control on public expenditure, a Public Sector Task Force is being set up. The Task Force will identify weaknesses in the management of public funds, define a strategy for preventing recurrence of shortcomings raised by the Director of Audit in his Report, recommend reform measures in the systems and procedures to be implemented by Ministries and Departments and, where necessary, propose changes in legislation.

Furthermore, an E-Government Steering Committee is being set up to accelerate and monitor the implementation of all e-projects in the Civil Service.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the global economic context in which Mauritius is having to operate is indeed fraught with uncertainties. As I said, there is no visibility.

Only a couple of weeks ago the 17-country eurozone economy slid back into a recession. France, another triple-A economy was downgraded one notch by Moody's.

Five eurozone countries are in recession - Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Cyprus. Those five are also at the centre of Europe's debt crisis and are imposing austerity measures, they are cutting wages, Mr Speaker, Sir, pensions are being cut, taxes are being increased in an attempt to stay afloat, while unemployment is rising; 23% of unemployment in Spain, Mr Speaker, Sir, a country which is at the heart of Europe, part of the European Union. 23% of unemployment! One young person in five is actually jobless and surveys are pointing to increasingly depressed conditions across the eurozone. All we hear are: austerity, high unemployment, deepening recession, debt crisis that is more difficult to deal with, downgrading the sovereign debt.

We are talking about a eurozone economy that is worth as much as the US economy, Mr Speaker, Sir, with a population of 332 million people, the biggest customer of the United States, China, India, and other exporting nations.

Europe's economies have been on a downward spiral and there is little sign of any improvement in the near-term. The European Union's executive arm forecast the eurozone's economy would shrink to 0.4% this year and then they are hoping a meagre 0.1% growth in 2013. Many people are disputing that figure. As a nation, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is so euro dependent, we need to be prudent, we need to stay on our guard, but what is happening in Europe is only part of the story, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The US economic recovery is not as consistent as it should be. There is the famous issue of the Fiscal Cliff which if not resolved can exacerbate the woes of the global economic environment.

India and China are growing but not as strongly as expected.

The IMF, for the third time this year, reviewed downward the projected global growth which it now estimates to be at 3.3%, global, for 2012.

The UNCTAD's World Investment Report of 2012 notes that prospects of global FDI flows continue to be fraught with risks and uncertainties.

The latest figures released here in Mauritius by the Bank of Mauritius show that the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows into Mauritius from January of this year to June reached more than Rs4 billion. At a time when they are saying that FDI is at risk, fraught with difficulties, here, it has increased. It has reached Rs4 billion.

From 2001 to 2005, total FDI inflows amounted to Rs8 billion, whereas for the period 2006 to 2012, it has been in excess of Rs66 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir. For the last five years, inflows have been Rs55 billion. This alone represents a 600% increase in FDI as compared with the previous five-year period. As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, there can be no better vote of confidence in the Government's management of the economy.

The Business Facilitation Act which we introduced in 2006 has significantly contributed in promoting Mauritius as a well-regulated and an efficient investment destination. It has acted as a catalyst for the massive surge in FDI inflows since 2005. With a view to making Mauritius an investment destination, my Government will revisit the Business Facilitation Act to address remaining hurdles hampering investment flows in Mauritius. Our objective is to make of Mauritius a top-class investment destination.

In terms of economic measures, this Budget provides direction for new markets, including Africa, China and Russia as well as for new sectors including a new economic pillar, the Ocean Economy, the blue economy as we call it, and a number of emerging sectors such as the petroleum hub, the medical hub, the education hub which all have the potential for strong growth in the future.

Major projects in the sectors of telecommunications and ICT, pharmaceuticals, gold refinery, diamond exchange and gems processing industry, involving investors from Europe, Asia and the Middle East are already in the pipeline.

Furthermore, in the Hospitality and Property Development sector alone, some 13 projects worth Rs34 billion are in the pipeline for the coming year.

In the public sector, the State Land Development Co. Ltd will soon launch the Phase I of the Highlands City Project, covering an area of 218 *arpents*. The whole area will cater for major development of an integrated project which will comprise a Knowledge and Innovation Hub and maybe a Medical Hub.

The Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd (BPML) will, on its part, construct a new High-Tech Complex at Rose Belle Business Park.

With the implementation of all these new projects, the years 2013 and 2014 will witness a tremendous boost in business activities in Mauritius – “*une véritable relance économique*”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the Ocean Economy, a Task Force has been set up under the chairmanship of the Director of the Mauritius Research Council (MRC) to prepare a framework for charting a road map for developing the concept of the Ocean Economy in a sustainable manner.

An Integrated Ocean Planning Strategy will be formulated after wide consultation with all the stakeholders. The strategy document will help to set up the appropriate institutional structure, legal and regulatory framework for the development of research, commercial and non commercial activities.

Our maritime space, Mr Speaker, Sir, has the potential to become our prime source of revenue as well as an almost unlimited source of food, energy, health products, minerals and leisure. We also want to ensure that this new pillar is really democratised from the very beginning. Not the same big fishes will come and eat at the same bowl of progress. It will have to be democratic. We want to make sure that people in this country not only will move forward as an economy, but the people can also get the share of the growth that we are creating.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Africa is unanimously considered as an emerging market and a potential global growth pole due to many factors –

- untapped natural resources;
- steady population growth with a rise in the middle class;
- An improved general macroeconomic environment, and
- institutional and business reforms well under way.

Now, we are strategically located in what we call the golden triangle with India, Asia, and Africa. Mauritius is increasingly seen as the business and investment gateway to the African continent. The combination of geographical location, bilateral and multilateral networks, our preferential market access and the business-friendly, modern and sustainable environment offered to investors at large, plus the political stability that we have in this country give us a competitive edge as the platform from which investors can do business and expand their activities in Africa.

In order to further enhance the international profile of Mauritius as the gateway to Africa, we have already set up the Africa Centre of Excellence for Business. This Centre acts as a repository of business intelligence for the continent, a networking platform for international investors interested in Africa and a one-stop shop to facilitate investment projects in Africa.

Our comparative advantage in positioning the Mauritian economy as the undisputed business platform to Africa rests on our number one rank in Africa in key benchmarks like the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Survey, the Wall Street Journal & Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom, The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, the Mo Ibrahim Index of Good Governance, the Environmental Performance Index, to cite but a few.

Besides, Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius, with its bilingual tool, talent pool, is internationally recognised as a safe, trusted and international financial centre of choice with an impressive network of Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs) and Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements (IPPAs). So far, Mauritius has signed 41 DTAAs, including 17 with African countries, and 37 IPPAs, including 19 with African countries. The strategy is to expand still further our network of DTAAs and IPPAs, especially with African countries.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the 2013 Budget lays the foundation for Mauritius to position itself as a focal point for investors going into Africa. These measures will facilitate the movement of African businessmen by giving them quick access to Mauritius. That is why we have extended the visa facilities to 29 additional African countries; either there will be full-exemption or they will get a visa upon arrival. You cannot want to be a hub and then you have difficulty to come in the country.

We are increasing the representation of Mauritius in Africa by appointing honorary consulates in every major city on the continent.

We are strengthening the position of Mauritius as a services platform to Africa by means of signing five additional Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements with Africa next year.

Furthermore, measures will be taken to encourage the setting up of Regional Treasury Centres and Regional Headquarters Administration in Mauritius.

Creating better structures to help companies take advantage of the rules of origin and preferential market access to SADC and COMESA by granting the Freeport status to export-oriented companies which carry out specific manufacturing activities solely for export to Africa.

Mauritius is also encouraging direct investment into Africa. FDI outflows peaked to Rs1.4 billion in 2010. Our local investors are more and more present on the African continent, namely in Mozambique, South Africa, Madagascar, Kenya and the Seychelles. Our strategy is to offer all the necessary support to our local private sector players to expand their business activities in the region so as to broaden our economic base.

The 2013 Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, shows that we remain prudent and flexible in our approach. We have seen how some countries are having to apply very stringent and painful measures of austerity, cutting wages, salaries, hours of work, cutting jobs, cutting social expenditures and are not being able to invest in the people, in infrastructure and so on, just to be able to service the debt and to put the finances in order. We see every day riots on the television in many countries.

Budget 2013 is sending a very clear signal that this Government will never drive the country into a situation of high debt and high deficit. It also shows our conviction that the best time to act is now and not tomorrow, not the day after or the next year. Now, Mr Speaker, Sir! We must remain ahead of the curve.

I again congratulate the Minister of Finance and Economic Development for setting both the deficit and the debt at the ratio of GDP on a declining path. No country should do what the Opposition wants us to do, that is, to spend and spend now, and leave the debt for our children and their children to pay. No, Mr Speaker, Sir! Such a course would be irresponsible and is similar to what happened in countries in the eurozone which are now mired in an unprecedented recession.

This Budget delivers a primary budget surplus - which means any borrowings will finance only productive investment and not consumption. And this is good for the future of the country and for our children and their children, because the investment we make today will

benefit them in the long-term. This Budget is about long-term sustainability of growth and the public finance, and this Budget connects with our vision as enunciated in our Government Programme of 2012-2015.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in line with our vision geared towards internationalising our economy and promoting Mauritius abroad as a quality destination for foreign direct investment, Government is continuing to invest massively in the expansion and modernisation of our infrastructure network.

We all know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the former MSM/MMM Government did not have the courage to take a final decision on the LRT project. The former Prime Minister who then became President, who is now in the *karo canne*, said so many times - I think hon. Bachoo said it in his speech yesterday - that he was prepared to do the LRT project, but for hon. Bérenger, he could not do it. He did not have the courage; all talk, no action. It is like the dog which barks, but cannot bite. I don't bark, but I do bite. They dilly-dallied on such a matter of vital importance to our country. Now, if they had done it at that time, it would have cost the country much, much less, billions and billions of rupees less.

On the other hand, this Government, the Labour/PMSD Government, will go on record in history for having the foresight and the vision to do the groundwork to provide our country with the most modern public transportation network that would be lasting for decades to come with a tremendous positive impact on the living standards.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another major infrastructure investment project has been the modernisation of the SSR International Airport with a view to transforming it into a modern state-of-the-art airport in the region. The construction of a new Terminal in an area of 56,000 m² will enable us to reach this objective. Also, the new Terminal will allow parking of new large aircrafts, for example, the A380. The new terminal will start operation by March next year and it should be fully operational by June of next year. A parallel taxiway is also being constructed. This will not only minimise the runway occupancy time, therefore, increase capacity, but it will also provide an alternative runway in cases of emergency. The existing Cargo and Freeport facilities at the SSR International Airport have space constraints which constitute a barrier to development in the airport.

In view of the fact that traffic forecasts predict an increase in air freight volume over the years, it has become essential to expand the existing facilities. In this respect, an area in the

southern-eastern part of the airport has been identified for the development of a new Cargo and Freeport zone.

Airports of Mauritius is now proceeding with the construction of the overall common infrastructure to enable subdivision of the land into smaller plots to lease to promoters for development of cargo terminals warehouses and build other facilities related to Cargo and Freeport activities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am speaking of the airport; let me also say about the Port which plays a vital role in the Mauritian economy. Presently, it handles around 99% of the total country's external trade. In view of the expected increase in cargo traffic and container transshipment, the MPA has earmarked an amount of some Rs7.3 billion for Port development over the next five years which include some Rs4.3 billion for the upgrading and extension of berths at the Mauritius Container Terminal to capture more containerised bulk and liquid cargo traffic.

One of the major objectives of Port Louis Harbour is to position itself as a bunkering hub for vessels plying from the Far East. To ensure that Port Louis effectively develops into a hub, especially a Petroleum hub, the MPA has, among others, earmarked some 5.5 hectares of land for the construction of tankage facility to cater for the increase in bunkering activities.

On the other hand, the State Trading Corporation has been allocated some 2 hectares of land at Mer Rouge for the construction of additional tankage facilities of some 25,000 tonnes.

Concerning the energy sector, we shall set up in 2013 the Utility Regulatory Authority which will set the scene and clearly define the tariffs and the parameters within which operators in the traditional energy and the renewable energy sectors will function as well as those in other utility sectors.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Budget is also about economic democratisation which is another goal and pillar of this Government and we are making progress every year. It has strong and powerful measures to give the SMEs and micro enterprises a boost and the support they need in those difficult times.

Access to finance at affordable costs has always been a hard nut to crack. This Government has done the job with a record amount of finance flowing to them and not from the Government, but from the commercial banks.

It is really distressing, Mr Speaker, Sir, that some people see the 9% of the empty glass and they fail to see the 91% full glass when they look at the implementation record. They do not

want to see the outstanding success that the financing scheme has proposed for SMEs last year. And they also do not want to admit that the extension to micro-enterprises will be an equally big success. They also do not want to see as if it is a case of successful cooperation between Government, the commercial banks and the Bank of Mauritius.

This Budget is also in line with this Government's conviction that the best route out of poverty is education, as we always say. This is something that we have learnt from the Father of the nation and that shows up in every programme of this Government and every Budget. This Budget makes historical moves as far as education is concerned.

For the first time in Mauritius, Government will distribute, next year, one tablet computer to each and every school boy and girl in Form IV. This entails the purchase of some 20,000 devices, that is, after free education, free travel to schools, now our students will have free access to new learning technologies. There will be no digital divide among students due to income and wealth differences. And let us not forget that Government is making this extra effort in times when things are uncertain. Yet, on education, Government is not going to count the pennies - most important of all, it has to ensure that all our students get a fair start in life after school.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, the other strong messages – there are so many, otherwise I will make a speech for five hours - that this Government is sending to families with modest income and the vulnerable are the hot meals in the ZEP schools and the payment of child benefits only to families who send their children regularly to school. This has to be a motivation, Mr Speaker, Sir. You cannot collect the money and not send the child to school. The objective is to have the child to be in school. We are talking about 5,000 children, here, Mr Speaker, Sir, who should be at school, but are not, and the measure of giving the hot meals in ZEP schools is going to cost Government Rs130 m.

The new Government-backed Student Loan Scheme, where banks will offer low cost student loans up to Rs100,000 per annum to students to finance university fees is another example of the kind of emphasis we are putting so that every student, regardless of the financial situation of their parents, can have access to tertiary education. It is both about access and affordability.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is also providing a scholarship for students from vulnerable families who cannot secure a student loan and would miss out on an otherwise rewarding career

provided they qualify through the Social Register of Mauritius. Thus, Mr Speaker, Sir, from the foundation years to the end of schooling, this Budget facilitates access to education, improves quality and ensures an inclusive education system.

I have always made the pledge, and I reiterate it here today, that poverty should never be a barrier to education in our country. Education is the most powerful and sustainable way out of poverty. We will ensure that every child in this country gets the education he or she deserves to get a fair start in life, as I said. It is in line with our vision of equal opportunity to every child in this country, to develop his or her full potential.

In this context, I am pleased that following the appointment of a Visitor at the University of Mauritius, he has submitted to me a Special Report on the University of Mauritius Trust and we have approved his recommendation to amend the University of Mauritius Act of 1971 to regularise the legal existence of the UOM Trust. The necessary legislative amendment will be effected in the forthcoming Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill.

The Budget also includes important reforms in the health care sector and makes provision for increases beyond the inflation rate in the payment of social benefits and old age pensions. This Government shows that it is a caring Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to law and order in the country. As I said earlier, Mr Speaker, Sir and many times in response to questions, law and order remain our priority. It has to be the priority of any Government. We want our citizens and those who visit our country to feel safe and secure.

We are well aware that there cannot be any development without security. Development and security are mutually interrelated. Over the recent years, we have evolved a combined strategy to deal simultaneously with the challenges of development and security within a democratic set-up; we have to respect the fundamental human rights and freedoms and to uphold the rule of law.

I wish, in no uncertain terms, to reaffirm the determination of my Government to resolutely deal with crime and law and order within the provisions of the law.

Those who commit crimes and break the law must expect to pay the full consequences of their actions, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are going to bring new legislations, but I will not go into those details now.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are, today, many challenges to internal security: organised crimes, money laundering, drug dealings, cybercrimes, maritime piracy and terrorism. To meet these emerging challenges, the criminal justice system has to be constantly adjusted to give the necessary powers to the institutions to fight crime, to prevent crime and to deal with the criminals appropriately.

Our Police Force should also be appropriately staffed, equipped and trained. This is precisely why I have started major reforms of the Police Force during my first term as Prime Minister. It seems, Mr Speaker, Sir, either people don't want to know or they just want to ignore it for political reasons. I don't know how many members of the press know that when I came in as Prime Minister in 1995, to my horror, a country which was supposed to be a developing country, emerging economy, they never had a computer to look at digital prints. They were looking against the light like this, Mr Speaker, Sir, comparing prints.

(Interruptions)

Economic miracle!

(Interruptions)

That was at the Forensic Laboratory. No SOCO! No, all these things I have done, Mr Speaker, Sir for the Scene of Crime Investigation. No training, nothing! This is how we are getting results, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is why I said, they need to be appropriately staffed, equipped and trained. I have continued those reforms when I came back in 2005. We are currently in the process of implementing the National Policy Strategic Framework which was launched in February 2010. With the ongoing reforms programmes of the Police Force, we have taken bold and decisive actions to help and ensure more robust and more effective policing. As a result, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are witnessing positive progress in combating crimes. Crime statistics, I do not invent the figures. The figures are there. The same people were doing the statistics before. Crime statistics indicate that the crime rate is constantly going down. 5.4% per thousand population in 2008 to 4.1% to 1000 population in 2010 and to 3.1% in 2011. Now, as I always say, one crime is one crime too many, but at least we are in a declining trend. In 2011, as compared to the previous year, there have been significant decreases in reported cases for property offences by 12.3%, theft by 17.3% and drug offences by 5.6%. It is expected, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the declining trend will be maintained over the coming years. Our

determination to fight perpetrators of crimes will be stepped up and there will be no complacency against crime and anti-social behaviour.

I must say that sometimes I see – when we were answering the PNQ the other day - some people do some things and they get a fine of Rs1,000 or Rs2,000 and that is not enough. We have to ensure that those who commit crimes know the consequences are going to be severe. That is what we need to ensure.

Over the recent years, Government has ensured that the Police has the necessary resources to deliver on its mandate. We have invested heavily as far as new buildings are concerned; introduction of new equipment and technologies, acquisition of new vehicles and the recruitment of adequate human resources for the Police.

An amount of Rs7.9 billion has been provided for this fiscal year as compared to Rs6.5 billion in the last fiscal year and Rs 4.8 billion in 2010 and this despite, as I say, the financial situation in the world. It is an increase of 21% over last year's Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir.

We are pursuing our policy to replace existing Police Stations currently housed in rented buildings of which we know the problems; they are old. I will not go into all these details, Mr Speaker, Sir, but we are also constructing a new National Coast Guard post at St Brandon, which will start by the end of this month; one at Poste La Fayette next year, and we are also upgrading the National Coast Guard post in Rodrigues. We are going to look at it closely.

It is important to invest in new technologies to reinforce the capacity of the law enforcement agencies. We have seen, Mr Speaker, Sir, what new technologies do. We have seen the results, drastic results with CCTV Street Surveillance System. We have introduced the Digital Radio Communication System, the Coastal Radar Surveillance System. Now, a ship can move from the port and go anywhere it wants, and we can monitor it for quite a distance. We are acquiring a new offshore patrol vessel, which will cost us USD58.5 m. This is under the Indian line of credit, and it will be well equipped. It is expected in September 2014.

The phase 1 of the Crime Occurrence Tracking System, which involves the monitoring of criminal offences over the island, has been completed. This will include 28 Police Stations. The second phase of the project will cover the remaining Police Stations and other units of the Police Force.

Mr Speaker, Sir, coming to budgetary measures for next year, we will be extending all these facilities; CCTV Surveillance System and the Digital Radio Communication. We are

acquiring 10 fast interceptor boats and two water jet fast attack boats to enhance the capabilities of the National Coast Guard.

I mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I am mentioning it again, we are investing in new technologies. You have seen what has happened in the *Gros Dereck* case. The same thing is happening in Seychelles. The Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues tells me that the same thing is happening in Rodrigues. We have a huge Exclusive Economic Zone. It is difficult for us to patrol it. We have the Dornier, the offshore patrol vessels, but it is not possible to control everything. We are now going to acquire new technologies that will cover a vast area. We are going to acquire this. It is not going to cost us the world, but we are going to acquire it so that we can cover all these things and people don't think they can just throw drugs in the sea and other small boats will come and get them.

We are acquiring these 1800 electronic bracelets as part of the implementation of the Bail (Amendment) Act.

(Interruptions)

The front bench of the MSM; the whole front bench!

We are upgrading the Passport Personalisation System, with a view to enhancing security at our borders. We are also upgrading the Passport Border Control System for an enhanced border control system, with appropriate security features based on the latest available state-of-the-art technologies, which will give us the ability to detect any *mala fide* visitor, and provide advanced information on passengers, and ultimately ensure that only genuine visitors get access to the country.

There will be the implementation of a Drug Entry Strategy Programme at an estimated cost of Rs121.5 m. by the Customs Department, for better drug detection at the borders. This will be in collaboration with the ADSU, which has been doing a formidable work, the National Coast Guard and the Passport and Immigration Office. We will be acquiring new equipment, x-ray equipment and all those things, Mr Speaker, Sir, but it will be too long if I go through all this.

We are also implementing an E-Business plan for the Traffic Branch. Mr Speaker, Sir, the Police is continuously renewing its fleet of vehicles to enhance its operational capability. During the course of this year, 138 vehicles, costing around Rs141 m. were acquired for the Police Force. Again, we have made provision this year for about 30 additional vehicles.

We know that there is need for more manpower. The demand is higher and, very often, you see people retire before their time. 2327 Trainee Police Constables have been recruited since 2007. A batch of 613 Trainee Police Constables will be recruited by the end of this year. Provision has been made for next year's Budget for another additional 600. Capacity building programme for the Police Officers is being stepped up. Continuous professional development of Police Officers is a must to ensure continuous improvement in the delivery of the service. Every effort is being made to provide local as well as overseas training to Police Officers. In September of last year, the Police Department entered into an agreement with the University of Mauritius for the training and development of Police Officers in different fields; leadership, management, and information technology.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I should say that, during my first term, I introduced this idea of Police Officers getting degrees from the University of Mauritius. I remember when the Leader of the Opposition was Prime Minister - I think it was during Committee of Supply - he praised this so much as if it was his idea. So, I stood up and said: "but you forget to say I started it", and his answer was: "I never said you never did anything right".

It was a great beginning. Since then, some 2480 Police Officers have been trained. Now, we are constructing a Police Academy, which will widen the possibility of giving a high level training locally, and to train more policemen.

And also, we said in the Budget - we have said it before, Mr Speaker, Sir – that they get their degrees from the University. It can't be just they get a degree and hang it on the wall! They must be able to have this accelerated promotion because we want to have the best and the brightest. We can pass all the laws we want. It will depend on the individual. In every field, it is the same, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The fight against drug trafficking again needs tough and bold measures. In this regard, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are continuously reviewing the operation and capabilities of the law enforcement agencies and those organisations involved in prevention, rehabilitation and treatment of drug users, in order to improve their effectiveness.

The measures taken by the law enforcement agencies are again yielding positive results. The figures in regard to the number of persons arrested in drug related cases and the amount of drugs seized during the course of this year clearly indicates that Police has been very vigilant. As at 13 November, 1405 persons were arrested this year and we are managing to break this drug

ring of the *gros barons*. Very often, they were behind the scenes. What has happened with *Gros Dereck* would not have happened if we did not invest, if we did not have good people, if we did not have the intelligence we've been working on. That is why we are getting results, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like here to, again, pay tribute to the courage, the dedication and the commitment of the law enforcement officers, especially ADSU, but all the rest, for the excellent results they have obtained in recent drug seizures. They deserve our gratitude and our admiration and, above all, the collaboration of each and every one of us.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to fight organised crimes, there is need to have the appropriate legislative framework. The legislative measures are under constant review to ensure that the law enforcement authorities have the necessary tools and powers to deal with the emerging security challenges. That is why in April, last year, we passed the Asset Recovery Act, which came into operation in February of this year.

This Act sets up the appropriate institution responsible for the forfeiture of assets of those involved in crimes, including drug trafficking. It also provides a comprehensive asset recovery framework and legal procedure for the recovery of assets in order to reinforce the fight against crime, including transnational crime, and to recover the proceeds and instrumentalities of crimes, that is, ill-gotten gains.

The Asset Recovery Act, Mr Speaker, Sir, was amended in October of this year in the light of experience gathered by the enforcement authority since the proclamation of the Act, in view of certain problems that they encountered. Under the amended legislation, the enforcement authority can make applications for the restraint and the confiscation of proceeds acquired in the course of unlawful activities carried out up to ten years prior to the commencement of the Act, thereby extending the casting net provided by the Asset Recovery Act. This is considered to be an important weapon in the fight against crime, especially drug trafficking.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are also constantly reviewing processes and procedures to make them less cumbersome. We will be introducing the Police and Criminal Evidence Act in this Assembly.

Provisions will be made in the forthcoming Judicial and Legal Provisions Bill to amend the law to provide for the Courts to give timely judgments. At the same time, 50 Judicial Assistants will be recruited to support the Judiciary, and expediting the delivery of judgments.

Mr Speaker, Sir, more and more use is now being made of scientific led investigation, namely DNA technology. In fact, in July 2009, we have passed the DNA Identification Act, and it came into operation in February 2010. The Forensic Science Laboratory has been appropriately resourced in terms of staff and equipment. Local and overseas training have also been provided to forensic scientists. A DNA Population Statistical Database has already been constituted. Other appropriate databases are being constituted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the FSL signed an agreement with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation for the installation of a Combined DNA Index System which allows crime laboratories to store, compare and match DNA records from offenders, crime scene evidence, unidentified human remains and relative of missing persons. The system is available in 58 countries. The software has been installed in the FSL by the FBI in August this year. This would be an important tool in the fight against crime across borders.

We are providing extra resources to the FSL. This year, an amount of Rs13.8 m. was spent in the acquisition of high tech equipment and for next year, we have an amount of Rs34.3 m. which has been provided.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me say a few words on the Prisons Service. The main focus of the Prisons Service is to improve the physical conditions in the existing prisons and maximise the opportunities for detainees to rehabilitate themselves so that they can effectively integrate the mainstream of society, thus reducing re-offending.

During the course of this year, an amount of Rs21 m. has been spent in the physical improvement of the infrastructure in the existing prisons. Budgetary provision for an extra amount of Rs17 m. has been made to pursue the programme for the renovation work in prisons.

A new High Security Prison is under construction at Melrose to cater for 750 detainees. As at date, the project is 68% completed and it is expected to be operational from July next year.

A new open prison for women will be constructed on a plot of land, adjacent to the Correctional Youth Centre at Beau Bassin. Tender procedures will be launched shortly and we expect it to be completed by 2014.

As the House knows, we are going to accommodate 60 pirates in the new prison which will be constructed at Beau Bassin, as part of the agreement signed between the EU and Mauritius for the transfer of pirates for trial. The project is financed by the EU.

To enhance security in the prisons, a new CCTV System comprising 119 cameras has been installed at the GRNW Remand Prison. Additional ones have been installed at Beau Bassin Central Prison. Tenders for the others have been launched.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have heard about the illicit use of mobile phones. The Government had bought a jamming equipment for the telephones. The problem with that, it was jamming also the telephones of all the neighbourhood and people were complaining. Now, we are going to introduce a new jamming equipment, especially in the new prison, starting with Melrose. A cellular phone decoder has already been received which will read SIM cards secured inside the prisons. There is no way prisoners will be able to use their mobile phones in prisons with this system. It costs us money, but we have to accept; we have to spend to be able to get the new technology.

As part of the ongoing reforms, we are also going through the e-Prison Project which is being implemented, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am not going to go into all these details, otherwise it will be too long. But I can say that much emphasis is being laid on rehabilitation of detainees and, at the same time, I want them to know: if you break the law, you are going to prison; it's not going to be a hotel. It is not going to be a 5-star hotel. You will have to know what the consequences are of being in prison. I better not say too much about this, Mr Speaker, Sir, otherwise I'll say what I should not be saying here, but preventive and rehabilitation programmes will be provided also to address the problem of illicit drug-dependent detainees in prisons. A separate unit has been put in place at the Beau-Bassin Central Prison with a view to dispensing Methadone to detainees. Since 2007, a Drug Secretariat has been set up at the Prison to plan and monitor all activities concerning the rehabilitation and prevention programmes for substance abusers.

The Prisons Service proposes to introduce a new rehabilitation programme, based on the model available in Singapore, namely Good Lives Model and Risk Need-Responsivity Model. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is meant to reduce the risk of reoffending and we will see how it works.

Effective management and leadership are essential to the functioning of the Prisons Service. The quality of the service depends on how the human resources are recruited, trained and managed. Therefore, the human resource capability of the Prisons Service is being reinforced in order to effectively manage our prisons. 127 Prison Officers (including 22 female officers) have joined the Service since August 2011. Provisions have been made in this Budget for the recruitment of some 147 Prison Officers. A scheme for Cadet Officers has also been

introduced with a view to catering for specialised fields such as IT and Civil & Mechanical Engineering. With a view to exposing staff to learning experiences overseas, opportunities are being provided to officers to participate in regional and international forums, and training abroad. 18 officers attended international seminars or workshops. Study tours were also organised for senior management staff to Singapore prisons and Western Australian correctional services.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in pursuing the reforms in the Prisons Service, with the assistance of an expert Prison Consultant, funded by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Prisons Service has developed a 10-Year Strategic Plan. The Plan, as I said, focuses on reducing the rate of reoffending and on the introduction of “world best practices” in prison administration and management systems in Mauritius. It is done with the consultation of the stakeholders.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me say a few words about HIV/AIDS. The National AIDS Secretariat, which operates under the aegis of my Office, has formulated, with the participation of the relevant stakeholders, the National Strategic Framework 2012-2016. The objectives of the new framework are to reduce new HIV infections, reduce death related to HIV and to diminish the stigma and discrimination towards people living with the infection.

A separate NSF has been formulated for Rodrigues for the first time to cater for the specificities of Rodrigues, where the mode of infection is primarily heterosexual. There are indications that the number of new cases detected annually is on the declining trend.

Prevention of new HIV infections remains the main objective of the programme. HIV epidemic in Mauritius is concentrated, as we know, with a high prevalence among certain key population groups. That is why the prevention measures and focused interventions must be among those specified groups. That must be the priority of the programme while, at the same time, increased resources will be directed towards prevention programmes within the general population.

Women-centered harm reduction service facilities will be designed to reach women who inject drugs equitably, with vocational training and child-care facilities provided to facilitate their access. Prison inmates on Methadone at the time of their incarceration, as I said, continue to receive treatment while they serve their sentence. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is well-known that female sex workers are particularly vulnerable to HIV, and do not access the health care system because

of the stigma. An expanded service will be made available to them through outreach programmes.

Government will reinforce its programme of Prevention with Positives: based on the Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention Approach (PHDP). Couple-testing for HIV will be promoted and health care professionals will be trained to encourage partner disclosure; so, couples can make informed decisions together about HIV prevention and reproductive health.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the quality of care and support extended to people living with HIV are being improved and will continue to be improved. We are monitoring the quality of Anti-Retroviral Treatment with a mechanism of Adverse Drug Reporting. Treatment adherence will be improved through increased drug literacy programmes among patients, and also all HIV-infected individuals will be treated as from the moment of detection. This is in line with the WHO Guidelines.

Biological studies, in fact, have shown, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there is a high incidence of Hepatitis B within the vulnerable population. Vaccination against Hepatitis B will be carried out among prison inmates and people who are vulnerable. The percentage of HIV positive women who received the complete mother-to-child prevention package has increased from 81% in 2010 to 96% in 2011. This programme is being strengthened and in order to achieve the objectives of the National Strategic Framework, an amount of Rs96.9 m. has been provided in this Budget. The resources to be obtained under the Global Fund during the period 2012-2014 will amount to Rs118 m. We will supplement the rest.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me just say a few words about the Competition Commission. It was established by this Government in 2009 to promote competition in the interest of consumers, businesses and the Mauritian economy. Protection of consumers remains a high priority for this Government. The CCM is applying international techniques and best practice, adapted to the specific circumstances of Mauritius in detecting infringements of the Competition Act. The Commission has now reached its 100th enquiry; 14 investigations have been completed and 8 have been conducted into suspected cases of restrictive business practices. Mr Speaker, Sir, perhaps people do not realise this. It is a new organisation; it is already doing very well. For example, for the Kraft cheese, they have managed to reduce the price, because they were trying to put the price together; there was a monopoly on the price. This has been done. I do not want to

go into that, but there were many restrictive business practices in Mauritius. This is being stopped. They get a warning, and if they continue they'll get a huge fine.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to corruption - we all know - we want a corruption-free society. Our fight against corruption is being strengthened.

Complaints for the 2011 totalled to 1,725 compared to 1,350 for 2010. There has been an increase in the campaign awareness, Mr Speaker, Sir. This year, ICAC has conducted face-to-face sessions with other events involving a total of 32,776 persons from different backgrounds and sectors. Students, professionals, public officials, new recruits and private sector officers have been targeted for the year.

In addition to these regular activities, the rationale is to render more visible the anti-corruption message and bring the public closer to the fight against corruption. The youth has been ICAC's main focal point in its education and sensitisation campaign. A more structured approach has been adopted with them.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is to be highlighted that ICAC has been awarded the 1st place of the United Nations Public Service Award (UNPSA) 2012, for the Africa region, under the category: "Preventing and combating corruption in the public service", for the initiative "Public Sector Anti-Corruption Framework".

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Commission has set priority objectives for the year 2013. I am not going to go through the set of priorities, but it is to reinforce a capacity for investigation through training; to empower public bodies; to identify anti-corruption education, and to enhance integrity of people in both the public and the private sectors.

ICAC will continue to ensure that through education, prevention and investigation, there will be a symbiosis of thought and action to bring a paradigm shift among the population and to ensure that the country is less prone and more resistant to corruption.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have provided the funds for the construction of new ICAC headquarters at Le Réduit which will start by early next year.

Just one word on the Mauritius National Identity Scheme, the current National Identity Card was first issued in 1986, that is, it is 26 years old. Not only the current card is very easily tampered with, but the legacy systems, database and the policies on which the entire system rests are obsolete, unreliable, difficult to update and ill-suited for our modern model to achieve

efficiency gains. The need to replace the current ID card dates back to the 1990s and it is long overdue.

Government is implementing this scheme which will replace the current paper laminated card with a modern and secure smart ID card which will enable strategic developments in the ICT sector and the e-Government system for decades to come. I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir - just a word - we have chosen Singapore. Why? Because Singapore - try to do corruption in Singapore and you will see the result - is known to be one of the countries where there is a harsh, very harsh penalty for corruption. That is why we chose Singapore.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regulations were made under the Immigration Act with a view to making effective as from 01 January of this year the scheme for the grant of Permanent Residence Permit for 10 years.

With a view to attracting more Foreign Direct Investment, it has been announced in the Budget Speech that this scheme will be extended to non-citizens who will bring investment of a minimum amount of 500,000 US dollars and invest in a qualifying business activity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are confronted with new challenges in our Board of Management with the relaxation of our visa regime and increased mobility of persons and temporary migration.

With the coming into operation of the new airport terminal which will have a capacity to handle four million passengers yearly, we need, obviously, to reinforce the operational efficiency of our Border Management System.

In this connection, the existing Border Management System of the Passport and Immigration Office will be modernised with appropriate state-of-the-art technology for the upgrading of the existing hardware infrastructure, provision of additional immigration counters, provision of new passport scanners and porting of the whole system on the New Airport Terminal. The project will cost around Rs100 m. and will be implemented in a phased manner. An amount of Rs50 m. is being budgeted to start the project.

In the same spirit, we are going to enhance the security features of the Republic of Mauritius Passports by adding electronic chips to store biometric features of the holders. This is expected by the year 2014.

A few words on road safety, Mr Speaker, Sir! It remains one of the priorities of Government as well. It is, in fact, in this context that a Special Road Safety Management Unit

has been set up since 2009 under the aegis of my Office to coordinate all road safety activities, by adopting an integrated approach to the matter. The main objective, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to have an effective road management team comprising officers of the Police Department, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, and the Special Road Safety Unit of my Office to work on measures for the promotion of road safety.

These measures will include public awareness, sensitisation campaigns, improvement in physical infrastructure, and also, Mr Speaker, Sir, everything that goes with it, but also, installation of additional speed cameras to discourage speeding.

The legal framework has been revisited and, this year, we introduced the Penalty Point System under which the road traffic offenders will be sanctioned not only by fines, but also by penalty points which may lead to disqualification of the licence of a driver. Government is currently putting into place the necessary infrastructure, including the setting up of an IT system at the Traffic Branch which will enable the Penalty Point System to become operational. The whole process is expected to be completed by April of next year and there will be no exception. Let me say it again, no exception, because some have been saying this is latent. No! There can be no exception on safety, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Emphasis is also being laid on the new need to review the way people drive in Mauritius. This is a real problem that we have, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is in this context that the Special Road Safety Unit of my Office is collaborating with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure on the elaboration of a project for the setting up of a Driver Education and Training Centre to provide for formal and systematic training and education programmes, not only to the drivers, but also to pedestrians, also to children; so, they'll adopt responsible attitudes and behaviours. The ultimate objective is to ensure that safe driving is a norm in Mauritius. To inculcate the respect of road safety among the youth, road safety will be introduced in the education curriculum next year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, forty-four years ago, our country was founded with the dream of always moving forward as one people, as one nation. Today, the Government - and I am pleased to announce it, if it is not known yet - is taking that dream one step further. We have launched an innovative project, the National Institute for Civic Education (NICE) to prepare our youth to carry out their roles as proud and responsible citizens.

From 11 to 20 December of this year, we will bring together 200 Form IV students to discuss and reflect on the virtues, knowledge and skills required to move Mauritius as one people and as one nation. The children will be taught to be proud to be Mauritians. The programme content will comprise such notions of civic education as leadership, discipline, creativity, healthy lifestyle, entrepreneurship, respect of societal norms, respect for elders, history, democracy and nation-building which will be imparted through the activity-based programmes. Afterwards, the students will proceed on experimental training and organisations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is not only respected for its resilience in the face of international and economic downturn, but it is also respected for being in the vanguard of Human Rights practices. We have finalised a National Action Plan on Human Rights which will be launched soon.

This is the landmark on the human rights landscape of Mauritius. It shows where we are, what we are, what we want to achieve in terms of legislative framework and policies and programmes of the Government and charts the way forward. Even then, Mr Speaker, Sir, we will continue benchmarking our best practices and improving further.

We are restructuring the National Human Rights Commission after the passing at the National Assembly of the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act and the Police Complaints Act. We have put all under one roof, Mr Speaker, Sir, except for the Equal Opportunities Commission. By setting up that Commission, we have fulfilled yet another electoral promise made to the nation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Commission started its operation this year and the work done only after six months of operation augurs well for the future. Out of the 414 complaints as at mid-November, 205 cases have already been examined. We will ensure, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the equality of opportunity in this country transcends all difficulties to become a reality. In this budget, the provision has been doubled for the Equal Opportunities Commission to Rs20 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as Rodrigues is concerned, Rodrigues is being provided with special measures to boost its economic development and as part of the Republic of Mauritius, as I said, it cannot be subject to different treatment. I said it clearly, Mr Speaker, Sir, during my recent visit in Rodrigues, there cannot be two categories of citizens within the same Republic. My Government wishes to reaffirm its commitment to enhance the economic and social

development of Rodrigues and bring it at par with Mauritius. Rodriguans are being given full support in order to create an environment which is conducive for such development.

The budget allocated to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has increased from Rs1.6 billion in 2012 to Rs1.7 billion this year due to major capital investments. An additional sum of Rs1 billion has been budgeted under the vote items of other Ministries and parastatal organisations for different sectors in Rodrigues. And as I have announced during my recent visit in Rodrigues, Government will subsidise the freight of rice and flour to enable the two commodities to be sold at the same price in Mauritius, this, at a cost of Rs21 m. annually.

Government has now gone further, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the Budget has provided another amount of Rs23 m. to cover the freight for powdered milk, edible oil, tea and cement. And we have said, there should be no digital divide between Mauritius and Rodrigues or Agalega. The development of ICT should be encouraged as it will link Rodrigues to the rest of the world. And it is a sector that will lead to the creation of employment on the island. I have a vision, Mr Speaker, Sir, that Rodriguans who come here to work, soon, they will want to go back to Rodrigues to work because Rodrigues is going to leap forward because of the money that we are giving, the sectors that we encourage them to develop. I inaugurated the ICT Centre for Excellence during my last visit, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I was surprised at that inauguration so many Rodriguans came and they wanted to buy the new technology, and they have money to buy. I must tell you that they have money to buy. The Centre will, therefore, attract potential investors in Rodrigues. Also, Mr Speaker, Sir, unemployed young Rodriguans who have successfully followed their training that we are providing would have the opportunity to participate in the ICT Skills Development Programme whereby they can be placed in an industry and obtain a stipend of Rs6,000 monthly or Rs12,000 for university degrees.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have also made provision for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to be assisted by officers who will be recruited under the Capacity Building Programme at the Ministry of Finance and also under the Service to Mauritius in various fields.

Free WIFI has already been provided in three different locations. The implementation of the Fibre Optic Cable Project will be initiated hopefully next year. Pending that installation of the Fibre Optic Cable, Rodrigues will be provided with additional 112 mega bits per second bandwidth on satellite for a period of two years at a nominal cost to attract potential investors in Rodrigues.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we know that the water sector is crucial for the development of the island. A sum of Rs70 m. has been allocated for the setting up of two desalination plants of a capacity of 500m³ each in Pointe Venus and Caverne Bouteille. They will start in 2013 and hopefully two more plants will be constructed in 2014. We are also looking at constructing those plants here, Mr Speaker, Sir, because we see what is happening, here, in Mauritius.

Private investment in the water sector through Public Private Partnership is encouraged to give a boost to agriculture and help in resolving the water issues of the island.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't think I need to talk about education in Rodrigues at length because two Ministers have talked about it. We have seen how the pass rate for the CPE level has increased. Under the Laureate Scheme, the number of scholarships has increased to 4. Actually, there are 17 Rodriguans studying at the University of Mauritius, University of Technology and other training institutions. And we are providing loans to University students under the Human Resource Knowledge Arts Development Fund which will encourage further education at tertiary level.

And to also alleviate the hardship of patients from Rodrigues who come to Mauritius, accommodation facilities are being provided to some of them who have long-term specialised treatment.

In the sports sector again, Rodrigues has produced many outstanding and world recognised athletes and we are proud of that, Mr Speaker, Sir. They will be given all the necessary support and their participation in national and international events will be encouraged. We also want to encourage the autonomy of Rodrigues, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it is important that they are able to take some decisions.

A new studio, for example, for the MBC was inaugurated during my trip there. It will allow Rodrigues to broadcast its own news in order to keep the specific cultural identity of Rodrigues. The new studio will also bridge the gap between the two islands and Rodriguan programmes will be broadcasted in Mauritius as well as in other places.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before I end, I want to say a few words on the *Maurice Ile Durable* (MID) Project. I recall that in his address, hon. Lesjongard described the project as being '*une coquille vide*'. Similar criticisms were made by hon. Li Kwong Wing. This statement, Mr Speaker, Sir, betrays their ignorance of the whole MID Project because the MID Project is a

'projet de société'. Have you ever heard of them speaking of MID? Never! They did not even know about MID. When I mentioned the 5 'Es'...

(Interruptions)

...they were about to destroy the environment with the Valley de Ferney. It would have been an irreparable destruction of the environment. They seem to have forgotten. They don't know what the 5 'Es' are. They just don't understand what the 5 'Es' are.

(Interruptions)

Yes, forget about that at Terre Rouge. They never thought of it. They never imagine that we have to move forward, we have to think ahead, have a vision. They never have any vision. Now, they want to see immediate results. And they talk of *'coquille vide'*. They say there was nothing in the budget on MID. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As a matter of fact, this Budget espouses the objectives of *Maurice Ile Durable* and that of Rio +20 Conference on Sustainable Development held in June this year; the measures announced. It is because they don't understand. They think *Maurice Ile Durable* is about saving energy on lamps and solar panels. I think that's what they think, Mr Speaker, Sir. Go and learn! Unfortunately, they are not here.

(Interruptions)

They don't know what it is. That is why they mistook and they said there is nothing on MID. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, it falls under different Ministries. They should go and learn what the 5 'Es' mean. It is a project that just does not concern one sector, it concerns most of the sectors of the economy and, put together, the measures bring about an adequate balance for socio-economic and environmental development which is human-centered and which is within the sphere of an equitable Mauritius.

Our citizens will also be provided with a better work life balance through a series of measures in the leisure and sports domain, but, more importantly, they will be provided with an ambitious and comprehensive Clean and Green Mauritius Programme that entails the embellishment and cleaning of the living environment, reforestation, urban and rural renovation projects and waste management. We want our citizens, Mr Speaker, Sir, to be nurtured in a conducive environment so that they become more efficient and competitive and aware of what MID means.

For MID to become a reality, I have always said, Mr Speaker, Sir, there needs to be a change of mindset. In this Budget, the Government is leading by examples; Ministries are taking bold measures in segregation, cutting down on consumption of paper and using recycled paper. If the private sector follows, Mauritius will make a quantum leap towards environmental protection and supporting the Green industry which, given time, will increase our current 6.3% of Green jobs to higher levels in line with our commitments that we have taken at Rio +20. That is one example that I am giving, Mr Speaker, Sir.

This Budget also provides a series of measures that will lead to energy reduction and energy efficiency both at household and industrial levels and this will ensure a low carbon footprint for the country. A sizeable share of the Budget has also been allocated to water, electricity, waste water management and infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is a blessed country. In fact, Professor Joël de Rosnay was talking to me and he was telling me the same thing. He was saying that in Mauritius, probably, we are unique in having twelve potential sources of green energy. He cannot think of any other country which has twelve potential sources.

We are probably unique in that way. We need to look into each one of them thoroughly and because the MID project falls under various Ministries, I think that we need to have an overall picture. I was talking to him and we need co-ordination. That is probably something that we need to put more emphasis on. This is why I intend to set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Energy as a Task Force, not as a Board, to ensure that this coordination happens. I have also mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we will have at the same time to reform the CEB so that it is not both the producer and the regulator. That is wrong and we have said this many times.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me conclude by saying that a hallmark of my Governments since 2005 has been interweaving economic success with social justice and inclusion. This Budget continues in that proud tradition. Although, Mr Speaker, Sir, the preparation of the Budget is a team work, I must congratulate the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for not only he kept our vision for the future in mind on the radar screen, in spite of all the economic difficulties and the unpredictable world economic outlook, he has innovated, he has embraced technology so that it is within the reach of every child and grown-up in this country. This is what opportunities are all about, Mr Speaker, Sir.

This Budget is not just about income and expenditure. It is about achieving resilience in the face of adverse conditions and improving the fiscal position so that Mauritius is not caught up in the headlights of global capital market concerned with high and rising debt.

This Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, is more about the kind of future that we want for our children and about the kind of country that we want to live in. That is what this Budget is about. They have misunderstood it completely. I think that they really think that if you had stood up and spoken for four hours it would have been a great Budget.

(Interruptions)

That is what they think!

(Interruptions)

Empty drums in other words!

We are still going through exceptional times, Mr Speaker, Sir. They require exceptional responsiveness. The Government is determined more than ever before to mobilise all our creative energies to move the nation forward together towards a brighter future for all our citizens. That is what the Budget is about.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me quote these truly inspirational teaching from Swami Vivekananda. It is so relevant to what is happening in this country. Look what he says –

“We reap what we sow.”

They are reaping what they are sowing and they will continue reaping, even if they do not sow.

(Interruptions)

“We reap what we sow. We are the makers of our own fate. The wind is blowing; those vessels whose sails are unfurled catch it, and go forward on their way, but those which have their sails furled do not catch the wind. Is that the fault of the wind? (...) We make our own destiny.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, if we do not control our destiny, somebody else will. It is often said that the best way to predict the future is to create the future. So, let us believe in our destiny and let us make our future!

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: I suspend the sitting for forty minutes.

At 4.20 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.08 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): M. le président, je voudrais, à mon tour, vous remercier, de même que le vice-président, pour la justesse et la façon dont vous avez mené ces débats sur le budget 2013. Je voudrais aussi remercier tous les membres de la Chambre pour leurs interventions.

Ce *Summing-Up* cet après-midi, me donnera l'occasion de répondre surtout aux oiseaux de mauvais augure, les prophètes de malheur et les faux experts assortis de l'opposition. Je dois dire aussi, M. le président, que pendant une année, ces messieurs ont fait peur à la population, ont fait peur aux investisseurs, et ils ont tout fait pour saper le moral du pays et cela a été très, très antipatriotique. C'est quelque chose que nous devons dénoncer avec véhémence. Je dois dire aussi que j'ai raté quelques interventions au Parlement, néanmoins j'ai tenu à lire toutes les interventions de tout un chacun d'après le relevé du Hansard. Je dois dire aussi que j'ai voulu éviter ce qui s'est passé en 2011, quand *the Economic and Financial Measures Bill* fut présenté à cette Chambre en juillet 2011 par mon prédécesseur, l'honorable Jugnauth, c'est-à-dire, neuf mois après la présentation de son budget. Cela était inacceptable. Cela a fait une moquerie de tout le budget qu'il a présenté en novembre 2010 et il a fallu absolument que ce genre de bêtise ne se répète pas encore une fois.

M. le président, je dénonce premièrement le boycott de l'opposition, les bancs vides, on doit dire qu'on a un peu l'habitude d'avoir les bancs vides. L'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, lui-même a été boycotté. Il s'asseyait près de moi et il était très embêté quand l'opposition avait boycotté son *summing-up* à l'époque. Et quelle raison l'opposition a-t-elle donné à l'époque? C'était la hausse des prix. Ils avaient vu que les prix avaient trop augmenté sous le ministère de mon prédécesseur. Donc, ils ont fait un boycott et aussi le fait que Rodrigues ne figurait pas supposément dans le discours budget. Voilà deux raisons de l'opposition MMM pour le boycott du *summing-up* de mon prédécesseur. Il était trop offusqué par cela et il avait dénoncé l'attitude honteuse de la part de l'opposition. Ces gens étaient payés des fonds publics! Et lui avait même été qualifié de *'bye looker'* – c'est dans le *Hansard*, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

L'honorable Pravind Jugnauth avait qualifié l'honorable Bérenger de *'bye looker'*; je ne sais pas s'il a des informations que nous n'avons pas. Il y a eu d'autres insultes, M. le président, et je dois dire que moi-même je ne souscris pas à ces insultes. Des insultes très personnelles qui ont été faites à l'encontre du chef de l'opposition que, moi-même, je ne voudrais pas répéter dans

cette Chambre, mais qui sont, malheureusement, dans le *Hansard*. Il avait même refusé de répondre au *Committee of Supply* quand les membres de l'opposition lui demandaient certains renseignements. Il disait: non, non, vous savez j'ai déjà répondu et je ne répondrai pas encore. Il avait refusé de répondre. Voilà le boycotté qui est aujourd'hui boycotteur et qui se retrouve donc dans la même situation! Je ne me sens pas insulté. Moi, cela ne me fait ni chaud ni froid qu'il ne soit pas là ou que les autres ne soient pas là. On en a l'habitude. Mais ce n'est pas la première fois et, bien sûr, ils avaient aussi boycotté le discours programme. Et quelle nouveauté ! Ils avaient trouvé que c'était un flop. Ils avaient dit que c'était un flop magistral et maintenant c'est monumental. Ils avaient trouvé que c'était du bla-bla. Donc, cette fois-ci, ils avaient complètement boycotté le débat. C'est le pauvre contribuable, M. le président, qui doit casquer chaque fois pour les gens qui ne font pas leur travail. L'avenir du pays se décide dans cette Chambre, mais pas sur des caisses de savon et pas sur un camion.

Cette semaine nous allons voter un budget de R 105 milliards, c'est-à-dire, 105 mille millions de roupies que le gouvernement a contribuées et que nous allons dépenser de la part du contribuable dans toutes sortes de secteurs. Il y a non seulement les dépenses, il y a aussi les mesures du budget, tout est boycotté par l'opposition de par leur attitude. Je ne sais pas s'ils viendront tout à l'heure, mais j'espère au moins qu'ils auront la décence de venir.

M. le président, il y a eu pire. Pendant toute l'année, il y a eu cette tentative de saper le moral du pays, de saper le moral des mauriciens avec une certaine cohérence d'un groupe de presse bien défini et que nous n'avons, nous-mêmes, pas cessé de critiquer et de mettre en exergue. Donc, ils ont tout fait pour saper le moral. Mais ce qui a été pire, c'était la conférence de presse du MMM avec leur boule de cristal, ils avaient prévu un tsunami économique, qui devait s'écraser sur notre petite patrie, sur notre petite île. Voilà donc, la terminologie employée pour nous dire que nous allons vers un précipice.

On sait que lorsque le tsunami s'est écrasé sur notre petite île sœur, les Maldives, dans l'océan Indien, cela avait fait 200,000 morts, et plus même. On ne peut ne pas être choqué par cette terminologie, M. le président, qui visait vraiment à détruire tout le moral des investisseurs, tout le moral de notre pays, et il faut cesser cela. Donc, quelle déception pour eux, ces gens de l'opposition! Quelle déception! Parce qu'en fin de compte, le budget ne leur a pas donné ce bonus de fin d'année qu'ils attendaient ! Ils attendaient un budget d'austérité, ils attendaient un budget qui allait serrer les vis partout, et peut-être même couper les pensions, peut-être même

mettre des fonctionnaires à la porte, peut-être même réduire les prestations sociales. Mais, au contraire, M. le président, le gouvernement a bien géré la situation ; tellement bien géré la situation qu'il n'y en a pas eu, et il n'y en aura pas - cette année-ci en tout cas. Il n'y aura pas de budget d'austérité. Voilà la vraie déception des prophètes de malheur de l'opposition.

Donc, au lieu de récolter un bonus de fin d'année, ils ont récolté une claque importante, parce que ce budget démontre avant tout les bons fondamentaux économiques de la République de Maurice.

M. le président, un déficit budgétaire aujourd'hui de 2.5% est jaloué par presque le monde entier. L'Amérique est à 7%. Ils sont jaloux de ce déficit budgétaire, et c'est la même chose pour carrément tous les pays du monde. Nous l'avons fait, M. le président, et je viendrai tout à l'heure aux attaques de l'honorable Jugnauth concernant les chiffres que nous avons publiés. Donc, nul besoin de médecine *souval*, parce qu'il n'y a pas eu de budget de crise ; il n'y a pas de crise, pas d'austérité. Pas besoin de budget d'austérité, parce qu'avant tout, M. le président, ce que la bonne gestion économique a permis cette année-ci, c'est grâce aux efforts de nos entrepreneurs. Il faut le souligner que ce n'est pas le gouvernement qui fait tout. Nous créons le cadre. Ce sont les entrepreneurs, ce sont ces employés qui se lèvent à six heures du matin pour aller travailler dans les usines, dans les champs de canne, pour aller travailler dans les bureaux, qui se servent de leur esprit, de leurs mains, de leurs efforts et de leur sueur pour faire ce pays arriver. C'est eux qu'on doit remercier, c'est eux qui ont réussi ce succès économique cette année-ci.

Le chômage est sous contrôle à 8%, et pas à 8.2%, comme l'a dit hier l'honorable Jugnauth. 8% de chômage contre 7.8%-7.9% l'année dernière. La dette publique est en baisse - tout à l'heure je parlerai de la soi-disant marge fiscale que nous avons. L'inflation en tout cas pour cette année-ci est jugulée à 4.1%. Quand il était ministre des finances, l'inflation pour l'année 2011 était à 6.5%. Donc, la croissance cette année-ci est à 3.4% contre seulement 3.6% l'année dernière, parce que le CSO - que l'ancien ministre des Finances n'apprécie guère - a décelé une grosse erreur dans les chiffres de l'année dernière, sur le textile surtout, de près de 2 milliards de roupies, qui avaient été *double counted* pour une usine. Peut-être qu'il ne comprend pas ; peut-être qu'on ne l'a pas expliqué d'ailleurs, et je l'explique aujourd'hui.

Ils ont exagéré la croissance en 2011 – ce que nous n'aurions pas fait d'ailleurs. Elle était à 3.8%, mais, en fin de compte, la vérité c'est que c'était à 3.6%, parce qu'il y avait eu une

grosse erreur dans les chiffres. Comment l'a-t-on décelé ? Le ministre de l'Industrie et moi avons eu une grande réunion avec les opérateurs. Ils ont dit carrément : 'on ne comprend pas, Monsieur le ministre. Comment se fait-il que l'année dernière vous nous aviez dit que nous avions bien fait, mais, en fin de compte, on n'a pas fait aussi bien, et cette année-ci vous nous dites que nous ne faisons pas bien – mal – et, en fin de compte, nous faisons bien ?' Donc, le CSO a retracé tous les chiffres et a remarqué cette erreur qui baisse terriblement la croissance de l'honorable Jugnauth. Donc, pas de quoi se vanter.

Il faut dire que, pendant une bonne partie de l'année 2011, l'économie mondiale était florissante. Les ennuis sont arrivés avec le *Fiscal Cliff* américain, et cela n'a commencé à chuter qu'en mi-2011. Donc, voilà la situation en ce qu'il s'agit de la croissance. La croissance se mesure en pourcentage. C'est pour cette raison que le Singapour, qui est un pays extraordinaire, ne fera que 1.3% ; tellement le PIB singapourien est fort que, bien sûr, en pourcentage, toute augmentation est faible. Les Maldives, notre petite île sœur, ne fera, en fin de compte, que 1.5% de croissance cette année-ci, mais avec un déficit budgétaire de 30%, M. le président. Il faut le dire : 30%. Les Maldives sont à la recherche de prêts partout, alors que nous avons, dans ce fameux compte à la banque de Maurice, près de R 8 milliards, que nous avons des prêts que nous n'avons pas décaissés des bailleurs de fonds ; des dizaines de milliards de roupies. Nous avons pris ces emprunts en pensant que la situation pourrait se détériorer. La situation ne s'est pas détériorée, et ces sommes sont restées principalement là où elles sont, et nous n'avons pas décaissé. Comparez-nous donc aux Maldives, qui est dans une situation complètement différente de l'île Maurice, des Seychelles à 2.8% de croissance, et, M. le président, ne parlons pas de la Réunion qui est à côté ! La situation est ce qu'elle est.

On nous compare souvent à la croissance africaine. Nous sommes à 8500 dollars de revenus *per capita* - PIB *per capita* \$8500. En Afrique, la plupart des pays sont à 800 dollars. C'est clair que 80 dollars d'augmentation du PIB va vous donner 10%. Mais nous, pour avoir 10% de croissance, il nous faut 850 dollars d'augmentation. Donc, ce n'est pas comparable. On ne peut pas se comparer aux pays africains, parce que le PIB par habitant est tellement plus faible. Aujourd'hui, il y a un vrai effort, un réel effort des pays africains pour la bonne gouvernance, pour la bonne gestion économique, pour la bonne gestion de leurs ressources naturelles, et aussi, bien sûr, des nouvelles découvertes en Afrique. Tout cela fait qu'il est difficile pour n'importe quel pays au monde - pas que Maurice - d'arriver au pourcentage de

croissance africain. Mais nous sommes heureux que cela se fasse, parce que nous avons tout à gagner, en tant que pays africain, par une croissance soutenue en Afrique, et nous faisons tout pour soutenir justement cette croissance en Afrique.

M. le président, cette année-ci, les *export-oriented enterprises* auront une croissance de 6.1% dans une situation extrêmement difficile. C'est du bonheur, M. le président. Le secteur textile qui est compris dans les *export-oriented enterprises* se stabilise cette année-ci. Nous espérons une croissance l'année prochaine.

Le secteur offshore, tant décrié pendant l'année, par 'l'Express' aussi, qui avait écrit à un certain moment que le secteur offshore ne se résumait plus qu'à la moitié de ce qu'il était, va croître par 12.4% cette année-ci ; les TIC 9% ; le tourisme est stable, la canne à sucre - on ne peut pas encore faire la pluie tomber - baissera de 7%, et la construction aura une petite baisse. Voilà, donc, une photo de l'économie mauricienne ; la performance de l'économie mauricienne cette année-ci.

Je suis heureux qu'avec les changements à la BOI, le nouveau directeur qu'on a nommé, notamment Monsieur Poonoosamy et toute son équipe ont fait un travail exceptionnel. Le FDI a nettement repris, et on s'attend à un investissement direct étranger de R 9.5 milliards cette année-ci, qui est plus que l'année dernière, malgré les problèmes.

Je dois dire ici très sincèrement - j'occupe les fonctions du ministre des Finances, et à une autre occasion ce sera autre chose – qu'il faut avoir du respect pour les gens avec qui on a travaillé. L'honorable Jugnauth a travaillé à deux reprises avec les officiers du ministère des finances. Ce sont des gens qui travaillent dur, ils sont intègres, et ils font leur travail pour tous les ministres des finances qui viennent, et pour tous les gouvernements qui passent. C'est cela leur travail de fonctionnaire.

Quelle honte, M. le président ! Quelle honte pour l'honorable Jugnauth de venir mettre en doute les chiffres de l'économie nationale qui ne sont pas produits par Xavier-Luc Duval. Je ne me suis pas assis à minuit avec le *midnight oil* en train d'écrire des chiffres, de fausser des chiffres ici et là. Ce n'est pas comme ça que cela se fait. Le bureau des statistiques, *Statistics Mauritius* est un corps qui est reconnu internationalement. Nous sommes le second CSO Africain à avoir adopté le *special data dissemination standard* - tellement c'est difficile. Nous sommes à la hauteur, nous sommes respectés par tout le monde, nous sommes au summum dans la présentation des statistiques dans le monde africain et dans le monde entier. Nous sommes

respectés par tout le monde. Nos professionnels partent ailleurs pour démontrer ce qu'il faut faire. Comment oser mettre en doute l'intégrité de ces professionnels du *Statistics Mauritius* constamment ? Dieu seul sait dans quel tiroir il est allé trouver ces chiffres alors que nous, nous respectons les normes du *FMI*, les Nations Unies *Statistics Division*, the *International Labour Office*. Les statistiques ne sont pas préparées comme ça. Les statistiques sont préparées d'après les normes bien établies sur le chômage, sur la dette, sur la croissance, tout est établi comment on fait et ce sont des professionnels qui le font.

M. le président, ce n'est pas comme-ci demain je dis, *Okay* 3.4%, et puis 3.6%, 3.7%, ou 2.9%. Comment mettre 3.4% et après, quand on regarde les revenus de l'État, c'est vide. A ce moment-là, vraiment, ce n'est pas 3.4%. Je ne sais pas si cela s'est passé avant au ministère des finances, mais ce serait quelque chose peut-être pour l'ICAC, on ne sait pas. Mais les revenus au ministère des finances cette année-ci ont augmenté de 10%, M. le président. 10% d'augmentation dans les revenus de l'État ! Cela veut dire bien quelque part qu'il y a une croissance ! Nous avons réduit le poids fiscal l'année dernière. Nous avons enlevé les taxes sur les capitaux. Nous avons enlevé les taxes sur les dividendes. Nous avons enlevé plein d'autres choses, les taxes sur les motocyclettes, etc. Donc, les revenus augmentent. Ce n'est pas moi qui ai tiré de ma poche juste pour faire plaisir à l'honorable Jugnauth.

Donc, quelque part, l'économie a bien marché. La *MRA* a bien fait son travail et les autres départements aussi. Donc, l'argent est là. J'ai démontré pendant le discours du budget quelles sont les importations, les dépenses, etc.

Donc, il n'y a pas de doute qu'il y a eu une belle croissance cette année-ci, M. le président, et c'est honteux de venir dire autrement juste pour le plaisir, pour essayer de se faire une plateforme ou de faire à l'Express je ne sais pas quoi. Nous sommes fiers non seulement de la croissance, mais du fait que la *MRA* et les autres, le *Registrar General*, etc., ont fait leur travail comme il se doit et ont ramené beaucoup de milliards à l'État que les contribuables vont payer. Je parle juste d'un petit truc ici. M. le président, vous savez que souvent on peut se tromper. On se dit que plus le taux de taxation est fort, plus les recettes vont augmenter. C'est souvent le contraire. Plus on réduit les taxes, plus l'argent rentre.

Encore une fois, M. le président, l'année dernière, en 2012, beaucoup de pays ont adopté l'austérité, augmenté les taxes, etc., pour ramener de l'argent. A Maurice on a fait le contraire. On a délibérément fait le contraire. Nous avons réduit, pas de taxe sur les capitaux, pas de taxe

sur les dividendes, tout ce qu'on a retiré ailleurs, les *billboards*, l'*Entertainment Tax*, etc. En tout cas, on a fait plein de choses pour réduire les taxes et voilà qu'on reçoit une manne. Cela a stimulé l'économie et je viendrai là-dessus dans un instant.

Avant le budget, nous étions assez dans une morosité au ministère des finances. Ce n'était pas gai ; on sentait que les choses étaient en chute. On était dans une pente descendante et c'était clair que l'année 2012 devait être difficile et qu'il fallait redresser la pente. Au début de l'année 2011 quand la croissance trimestrielle était de 5%, tout le monde était très content, mais après on a oublié.

Je crois que mes collègues ont démontré cela clairement; cela a continué à baisser à 4%, second trimestre, 3.7% ; troisième trimestre, puis cela s'est affaissé à 1.8% à la fin. On avait continué comme ça. Effectivement, on n'aurait pas fait 2.9% cette année si on avait continué comme ça. Mais on ne l'a pas fait, parce qu'on était sur une pente descendante et le budget 2012 a redressé. Tout de suite après, nous avons eu 3%, 2.7% plus 3.7% et cette année-ci, au dernier trimestre, nous espérons faire 4% de croissance. Cette année-ci pendant le budget nous sommes sur une pente ascendante. L'année dernière nous étions sur une pente descendante. C'est pour cela que nous pouvons prévoir aussi que l'avenir sera meilleur l'année prochaine malgré les prophètes de malheur. Depuis quelque temps, ils se sont calmés un peu, les prophètes de malheur. Malgré cela, parce que nous sommes sur une pente ascendante nous pensons faire mieux encore l'année prochaine, et c'est pour cela que nous nous sommes permis d'augmenter notre croissance de 3.4% cette année-ci à 4% l'année prochaine. Et nous allons le faire !

Nous savons comment nous allons le faire. Le grand problème va être aux touristes. Aujourd'hui le tourisme a plafonné ; moi-même j'ai été ministre du tourisme, je connais bien l'effet sur la croissance. Donc, si le tourisme reprend l'année prochaine, M. le président, le textile aussi va reprendre. Ces deux là, M. le président, suffiront pour nous remmener à 4% l'année prochaine, parce que les autres ont le momentum déjà.

Donc, M. le président, *well done* à toute l'équipe gouvernementale qui a travaillé, à toute l'équipe économique et tous ceux qui ont travaillé au sein des différents ministères, au sein du *BOI*, au sein de *Entreprise Mauritius*, de *MTPA*, tous ceux qui ont fait de sorte que nous ayons cette résilience cette année-ci. Nous avons aussi facilité le *business facilitation*, comme a mentionné le Premier ministre. Tout cela ne se fait pas seul. Avec de l'effort nous sommes montés de cinq places dans le *ease of doing business*. Nous avons reculé sous mon prédécesseur.

Je m'excuse mais c'est la vérité, je n'essaie pas de tomber sur lui, c'est la vérité, je n'y peux rien, et aujourd'hui on reprend. On a repris cinq places dans le *ease of doing business* de la Banque Mondiale.

M. le président, pour l'année prochaine nous voyons un déficit budgétaire réduit à 2.2% et malgré un *PRB* de R 4.6 milliards - s'il n'y avait pas de *PRB* notre déficit serait de 1.1% seulement. Mais je dois admettre que nous avons aussi eu un transfert du *National Resilience Fund*. Mais malgré tout cela, notre déficit n'aurait pas dépassé les 2.5% l'année prochaine.

Il y a ici un petit truc à dire concernant le soi-disant 'marge de manœuvre'. Quelle est la vraie marge de manœuvre du ministre des finances, M. le président? Il y a deux paramètres à respecter. Premier paramètre : le déficit budgétaire, qui est les dépenses courantes des investissements directs du gouvernement moins les revenus. Mais il y a aussi la dette publique. La dette publique, M. le président, est le deuxième ratio auquel nous devons faire attention. Si le déficit budgétaire reste faible mais la dette publique augmente, par exemple, ça veut dire en fin de compte, premièrement, que nous n'avons pas respecté la loi - en 2018 nous devons tomber à 50%. Et en même temps, M. le président, si demain nous laissons monter notre dette publique, nous risquons de perdre cet *upgrading* de *Moody's* que nous avons eu.

Donc, nous n'avons pas vraiment de marge de manœuvre parce qu'il faut garder le déficit budgétaire suffisamment faible, c'est-à-dire à 2.2%, pour permettre *below the line* qu'on emprunte des milliards pour financer les investissements du gouvernement qui passent au-dessous du déficit. Je ne sais pas si je me suis bien expliqué, mais marge de manœuvre il n'y en a pas parce qu'on ne peut pas se permettre de laisser augmenter la dette à nouveau. Cette année-ci, c'est 54.2%. L'année prochaine ce sera 53.7%. On aurait aimé baisser encore plus, mais on n'aurait pas pu augmenter encore les dépenses de l'État cette année-ci.

Si on aurait fait cela, on aurait eu à investir moins et nous ne voulions pas investir moins parce qu'on a accepté et on a voulu investir. Cette année-ci, c'est un record, M. le président. R 28.6 milliards dans les infrastructures que mes collègues ne vont pas dépenser, mais investir. L'année prochaine, R 5.5 milliards dans le *Harbour Bridge* et le *Road Decongestion Programme*. R 1.4 milliards dans le projet de Terre Rouge/Verdun. R 1.2 milliards - comme a souligné l'honorable Premier ministre - dans le port parce que ce qui va se passer dans le port, c'est que le quai du *Mauritius Container Terminal* va être étendu par 240 mètres et la profondeur sera de 16.5 mètres. Cela va nous permettre, M. le président, d'accueillir dans notre petit port de

Port Louis, les plus grands conteneurs qui sont dans cette région du monde. 11,000 conteneurs sur un bateau, ils pourront accoster au petit port de Port Louis. C'est extraordinaire ! M. le président, les travaux commencent en mars de l'année prochaine. Voilà donc, un *statement of faith* dans le port mauricien. Non seulement ça, mais dans l'avenir de Maurice, la clé de l'Océan Indien, *the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean*, dans ce triangle d'or dont l'honorable Premier ministre a parlé qui relie l'Asie, le Moyen-Orient et l'Afrique, Maurice sera extrêmement bien placée pour profiter de ce gros investissement dans le port. Donc, dans le Sorèze, ça continue à être plus de R 1 milliard de dépenses ; *New Melrose Prison* qui sera complété l'année prochaine avec R 700 millions. Les problèmes de l'eau, mon collègue, l'honorable Vice-Premier ministre en a expliqué, avec Bagatelle Dam à R 700 millions. Je prends la peine de dire tout cela parce que si je ne dis pas, ce n'est pas bon et si je dis aussi, ce n'est pas bon !

Je vais prendre un par un. La *National Identity Card*, R 600 millions. Toutes ces dépenses que nous allons faire, nous allons les voter dans quelques jours. Un *fast attack craft* pour protéger nos eaux territoriales, R 540 millions. Un autre *offshore patrol vessel* de R 500 millions. On ne peut rien refuser à l'honorable Premier ministre. Et R 500 millions pour que la CWA investisse dans le renouvellement des tuyaux autour de Mare aux Vacoas. Là, je n'ai pris que les projets de plus de R 500 millions. Je peux prendre le reste mais je crois que je préférerai déposer cela tout à l'heure sur la Table de l'Assemblée Nationale. Voilà de gros investissements pour l'année prochaine qui vont soutenir l'économie nationale et c'est pour cette raison que nous avons besoin de prendre beaucoup d'emprunts *below the line*, que nous ne pouvons pas laisser augmenter trop le déficit budgétaire. C'est peut-être cela que je voulais expliquer, M. le président.

Il y a des risques, bien sûr, sur l'économie mondiale l'année prochaine. Je dois dire ici que le FMI a prévu une petite reprise l'année prochaine. Cette année-ci, ils ont prévu une croissance mondiale de 3.3%. Donc, nous avons fait un peu mieux, ici, à Maurice au niveau mondial. L'année prochaine, il prévoit une croissance de 3.6% pour le monde entier. Donc, il y a une petite reprise et nous espérons que cette reprise va s'affirmer et va se réaliser. Bien sûr, l'Europe – nous lisons tous ces journaux - il y a une bataille rangée entre l'Allemagne, l'Angleterre et les pays un peu latins parce que certains veulent dépenser plus que d'autres. Nous espérons que cela va se régler et c'est dans l'intérêt de tout le monde que cela se règle rapidement. Mais, l'Europe, il ne faut pas se tromper, aujourd'hui, est en *double-dip recession*.

L'Europe est notre marché principal; plus de 60% de nos exportations vont là-bas et plus de 60% de nos touristes viennent d'Europe. Cela a changé plus de 60% de nos investissements directs. Je suis heureux de voir que dans les premiers six mois de cette année-ci, 65% de nos investissements directs sont venus de la Chine et de l'Afrique du Sud. Donc, là aussi nous avons réussi notre transition vers d'autres pays parce qu'autrefois on ne comptait que sur l'Europe. Aujourd'hui comme autrefois n'aurait pas été possible. Nous avons cette dépendance terrible sur l'Europe. La petite île Maurice est le septième pays le plus exposé à L'Europe. Le premier pays c'est l'Angleterre et le septième pays, c'est l'île Maurice, tellement nous sommes exposés à l'Europe mais malgré tout cela, grâce aux efforts de tout un chacun, nous réalisons une croissance plus qu'honorable. M. le président. Le Premier ministre a parlé du *fiscal cliff*. Nous espérons, encore une fois, que les républicains et démocrates pourront s'entendre au sujet des dépenses et les revenus de l'État Américain.

M. le président, juste pour vous dire que le plus important en ce moment-ci, c'est de préparer à cet *overexposure* que nous avons en l'Europe. Peut-être que certaines personnes n'ont pas réalisé que nous sommes le septième pays le plus exposé à l'Europe. Il est donc urgent et primordial pour nous de pouvoir réorienter notre économie sinon si l'Europe s'en sort, c'est comme-ci on joue du poker, on dit : si l'Europe s'en sort, on est bien, mais si l'Europe ne s'en sort pas, qu'est-ce qu'on fait ? Maurice ne veut pas couler avec l'Europe. Donc, ce qui est plus important pour nous c'est cette transition dont j'ai mentionnée dans ce budget. C'est pouvoir bien faire comprendre à tous les opérateurs économiques mauriciens que cette transition est primordiale. On a parlé avant. Ce gouvernement, après les élections de 2010, a parlé de *re-balancing*. Mais qui nous a écouté dans le secteur privé ? Qui nous a écouté dans le tourisme ? Personne ! Ils ont snobé. L'Asie a été snobée par quelques personnes dans le secteur privé. C'est une vérité. Aujourd'hui, on vient blâmer le gouvernement sur l'accès aérien. J'en parlerai. Mais ils ont snobé. Ils ont dit que les touristes ne pourront pas manger dans la même salle de restaurant qu'un touriste européen. Tout cela a été dit. Mais ce n'est pas vrai parce qu'aux Maldives et à Venise, 20% des touristes aujourd'hui sont des chinois. A Maurice, on a fait un retard sur la transition. C'est pour cela que c'est important dans ce budget de bien faire l'emphase et de bien mettre les points sur les 'i' qu'il faut cette transition. Ce n'est plus une option, c'est un *must*, c'est obligatoire. Nous devons faire la transition vers le marché de l'Est à cause de notre sur-dépendance sur l'Europe principalement. La BOI a des instructions pour

recentrer ses efforts de *marketing* vers les pays tels que la Chine, l'Inde, l'Asie en général et l'Afrique du Sud. Nous allons recentrer encore plus que nous l'avons fait. Cette année-ci, nous allons recentrer avec beaucoup plus d'emphasis sur ces pays. Hier même, M. le président, j'ai inauguré à Vacoas un grand RES et le financement de ce RES était d'un monsieur chinois. Il parle ni l'anglais ni le français, mais il a mis R 1 milliard dans un RES à Vacoas. Donc, pour vous dire comment on a des investissements de la Chine.

M. le président, donc, je parlais de se recentrer sur d'autres pays. Maintenant, qu'en est-il, M. le président, du tourisme ? J'en ai parlé, tout à l'heure, un peu. Il y a un plafonnement, mais beaucoup de choses se cachent derrière ce plafonnement. Premièrement, il y a une baisse. Quelqu'un a dit que les statistiques sont préparées autrement maintenant. Mais il y a une baisse conséquente dans les arrivées de l'Europe. C'est vrai ! Mais puisqu'il y a un plafonnement, on aurait dû féliciter le ministère, la MTPA et les acteurs touristiques parce que cette baisse conséquente dans nos marchés principaux a été résorbée entièrement par une hausse dans d'autres marchés : la Russie, l'Asie, l'Afrique du Sud, tous les autres pays, même la Réunion à côté de nous, ont augmenté de telle sorte que nous avons un plafonnement dans le marché touristique aujourd'hui à l'île Maurice et l'année prochaine les opérateurs prévoient une augmentation de 6.5% pour l'année prochaine.

Nous ne sommes pas servis de 6.5% l'année prochaine. Nous sommes servis d'un chiffre de 5%. Nous avons été un peu conservateurs, mais tous les opérateurs sont quasiment certains de pouvoir arriver à une croissance de 6.5% l'année prochaine.

Maintenant comment arriver à cela ? Nous allons protéger l'Europe, bien sûr. Nous avons besoin d'ouvrir les nouveaux marchés en collaboration avec le secteur touristique, les tours opérateurs, Air Mauritius et le gouvernement, tous ensemble autour d'une table. Le ministère du tourisme est arrivé à créer presque l'impossible, c'est-à-dire de faire de sorte qu'à partir du 23 janvier ou 26 janvier, il y ait deux avions d'Air Mauritius par semaine qui vont atterrir à Shanghai.

Voilà, donc, une ouverture extraordinaire pour le tourisme mauricien. Cela a demandé un effort considérable pour pouvoir le faire, mais c'est quelque chose d'extraordinaire. Ça va donner un nouvel espoir. Air Mauritius parle même aujourd'hui de troisième vol sur Shanghai pour que les hôtes restent moins de temps là-bas et c'est plus économique pour eux - trois vols, quatre vols par semaine. Ils parlent même de trois vols par semaine. Si cela se fait, ce sera

révolutionner le tourisme mauricien. Nous voulons qu'en septembre le même type de collaboration - un marché peut-être encore plus porteur, moins en nombre, mais certainement en devises - avec la Russie et ça se fera aussi. L'année prochaine nous verrons deux vols d'Air Mauritius sur la Russie et deux vols sur la Chine.

Maintenant, j'ai trouvé intrigant tous ces débats sur l'*air access*. Des gens qui ne connaissent rien, je pense, du domaine, disent tous les jours dans les journaux que nous avons une politique trop restrictive concernant l'accès aérien. Or, M. le président, rien de plus faux et c'est bon que l'on met une fois pour toutes les points sur les 'i' parce que rien n'est plus faux. Comment ça marche l'accès aérien ? Il y a les accords bilatéraux que nous avons avec l'Angleterre, la France et tous les pays, et on détermine un nombre de vols qu'un transporteur mauricien peut faire et le nombre exact réciproque d'un transporteur étranger.

Or ce qui est vrai c'est que sur tous nos marchés - à part deux, j'en parlerai plus tard - il n'y a aucune restriction dans le nombre de vols que le transporteur étranger puisse faire. Il n'y a aucune restriction parce qu'il y a tellement de capacités. Nous avons signé pendant des années des capacités extraordinaires aux Anglais, par exemple. 79% de la capacité aérienne en Angleterre n'est pas utilisée par les compagnies nationales anglaises. On se rappelle que *Virgin* est venu et reparti et il n'est plus revenu et personne ne l'a remplacé. Donc, il y a près de 80% de la capacité en Angleterre. Pourquoi est-ce qu'un autre transporteur aérien anglais ne vient pas ? On se demande ! Même en France, il y a une petite capacité disponible.

J'ai toute une liste, M. le président. L'Allemagne : 33% de capacité inutilisée; l'Italie : 55% de capacité inutilisée ; La Suisse : 86% de capacité inutilisée ; l'Autriche : 100% ; la Belgique : 100% ; l'Espagne : 100% ; la Hollande : 100% ; La Russie : 33%. Donc, en tout, sur l'Europe, 65% de capacité inutilisée. Et on parle aussi d'autres pays. On peut parler de l'Australie, de la Chine, de Hong Kong, de la Malaisie, du Singapour et du Kenya même où il y a absolument aucun transporteur étranger qui peut, mais ne veut pas venir. Ils ne veulent pas venir à Maurice. Ce n'est pas rentable pour eux de venir à Maurice, donc, ils ne viennent pas. Voilà, donc, la vérité sur l'accès aérien. Il y a extrêmement beaucoup de capacités dans tous les pays, les marchés principaux, mais pour une raison ou une autre les transporteurs étrangers ne veulent pas déservir la ligne.

Donc, heureusement, nous avons Air Mauritius. Et là je comprends le problème parce que demain il y aura des demandeurs du *Middle East*, probablement, ils veulent venir. Il y a le

marché sur la Réunion qui est aussi protégé. Mais demain, M. le président, sans Air Mauritius - Dieu seul sait que c'est une petite compagnie qui se bat contre tout le monde - quel transporteur nous emmènerait des touristes ou emmènerait des Mauriciens en Australie. Qui ferait la route sur l'Inde, sur Hong Kong, sur la Malaisie ou sur Singapour ? Qu'est-ce qu'advierait de notre *Africa strategy* si demain Air Mauritius ne va plus au Kenya ?

Donc, il y a aussi, bien sûr, un équilibre à trouver et nous avons trouvé, je pense, le bon équilibre où nous devons absolument maintenir Air Mauritius parce que c'est un *lifeline* pour notre pays et, en même temps, nous devons avoir suffisamment de compétition pour s'assurer que les touristes et les voyageurs, et notre stratégie de *Hub Mauritius* puissent se faire. Voilà la vérité sur l'accès aérien, M. le président. J'espère que cette argumentation un peu bête va cesser. On se sert tout le temps de la même argumentation à l'effet qu'il n'y a pas d'accès aérien. En fin de compte, comme on voit, et c'est facilement prouvé, qu'il y a beaucoup de places sur nos marchés.

M. le président, je ne vais pas revenir sur les autres mesures du tourisme. Je vais peut-être parler un peu de TIC. Ce qui a retenu cette année-ci toutes nos attentions, M. le président, c'est la technologie, le TIC. Nous avons surtout réalisé qu'on a à Maurice - je parle sous la correction de mon collègue, le ministre de TIC - à peu près 30% de ménages qui sont connectés à l'internet contre 75% dans les pays développés. Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire ? Cela veut dire que nous avons une marge importante de notre population qui grandit - qui a déjà grandi - mais qui rate ce départ vers l'avenir. Cela veut dire que nous avons cette marge de 30% à 75%, c'est 40 points de marge, des gens qui ne sont jamais aussi performants que certaines personnes qui habitent dans les pays étrangers. Est-ce que cela est acceptable pour Maurice ? Est-ce qu'on accepte, aujourd'hui, en 2012, que nous nous faisons devancer jour après jour par des pays parce qu'ils sont mieux connectés que nous, parce que leurs élèves, leur enfants, leur population ont adopté la technologie, ils connaissent à fond la technologie informatique et que nous allons grandir dans un environnement où 70% de la population ne sait pas ce que c'est que l'internet ? Ce n'est pas acceptable.

C'est clair que c'est un défi à relever sinon nous allons hypothéquer l'avenir et ce n'est pas dans l'intention du Premier ministre, l'honorable Navin Ramgoolam et de son gouvernement de se laisser devancer par d'autres pays. Et c'est pour cette raison que nous avons pris la décision de faire de sorte que l'internet au débit - on parle de l'internet au débit, on ne parle pas de

n'importe quel internet ; pas ce type d'internet qu'on sonne et puis on se connecte. Non ! On parle du *broadband* ; on est connecté tout le temps avec le *broadband*. On parle de cela à un prix imbattable, comme on dit, dans les soldes, de R 200, M. le président.

Le *tender* est déjà lancé. Nous espérons jusqu'à la fin de l'année pouvoir allouer le ou les contrats aux prestataires de service qui vont offrir à chaque famille mauricienne la chance d'être connectée au monde extérieur, d'être connectée à la vie moderne, d'être connectée au monde de la connaissance pour seulement R 200 par mois et c'est quelque chose, donc, qui se fait maintenant, *as we are speaking*, M. le président.

Notre objectif est que dans les années à venir - l'année prochaine, l'année d'après - nous rattrapons cet écart inacceptable qui existe entre la connectivité à Maurice de 30% et de 75% dans les pays plus développés que nous.

Aujourd'hui, M. le président, même un mécanicien a besoin de connaître l'informatique. Je me rappelle quand on était encore à la NEF, au ministère de l'intégration sociale, on voulait envoyer des mécaniciens au Canada, les mécaniciens sont venus. Ils ont dit : 'non, non, les mécaniciens mauriciens ne savent pas comment faire pour lire, diagnostiquer un moteur en se servant de l'ordinateur. Nous ne pourrions pas prendre ces mécaniciens pour travailler au Canada.' Donc, c'est ça le *digital divide* qui existe et c'est à cela que nous devons donc parer, M. le président. Malgré tout ce qu'on dit ne pas se préparer aux défis de la technologie, c'est accepter un recul sans fin de l'île Maurice, de la croissance à l'île Maurice.

M. le président, il y a aussi notre projet éducatif, n'est-ce pas, un grand bang: vingt milles tablettes distribuées à travers l'île Maurice dans les formes IV. Ce projet vient non seulement en termes de tablette mais vient avec un schéma éducatif pour qu'il y ait des e-books, pour qu'il y ait des *tutorials online*, pour qu'il y ait des time-tables online, tout ce qui peut venir avec l'informatique dans les classes. M. le président, cela va révolutionner les formes IV. Chez nous, pourquoi les formes IV? C'est parce que nous voulons qu'ils gardent au moins trois ans ces *computers* jusqu'à la fin de leurs études. Cela va révolutionner tout cela mais il ne faut pas prendre cela comme un projet simplement on vous donne un ordinateur. C'est un projet qui vient avec tout ce qui vient derrière, incluant, M. le président, une forte allocation budgétaire pour connecter les écoles avec la fibre optique; pour que les écoles soient sur le *fast track* en ce qu'il s'agit d'internet. Cela coûte un peu d'argent mais nos écoles, avec ce projet, avec l'argent que nous avons mis de côté pour ce projet, toutes nos écoles secondaires seront connectées à la fibre

optique et donc, pourront être vraiment à la page la plus moderne pour ce qu'il s'agit de l'informatique dans le monde entier. Rapidement, je ne parlerai pas que du prix M. le président, concernant l'informatique mais aussi la vitesse. La vitesse est importante. Je vois que le Rwanda se prétend être le pays le plus fort du *desk* informatique; Maurice n'est pas bien placée paraît-il mais nous voulons, dans trois ans, M. le président, que toute l'île Maurice soit couverte par la fibre optique. Nous voulons donc devenir le pays avec l'internet le plus rapide dans l'Afrique. Comme l'a dit le Premier ministre, nous sommes généralement dans le *top* en Afrique, on ne veut pas rester à la traîne concernant la couverture fibre à Maurice et aussi pour se faire, il faudrait considérer le *one deep policy* où une fois qu'on fouille, toutes les compagnies puissent se servir du réseau.

Concernant le 4G, il faut bien comprendre ce que c'est. Bien sûr, le 4G n'est pas connecté. Cela ne se voit pas mais c'est l'avenir du pays. Il y a quelques problèmes concernant les *towers*. Ils ont des difficultés à les placer mais nous sommes engagés à aider pour que les *towers* puissent être placés là où ça se doit sans gêner la population mais aussi que ce soit partagé à travers les utilisateurs. Le 4G pourrait révolutionner non seulement l'informatique mais toute l'île Maurice. Demain, j'ai un chauffeur, je lui mets un GPS dans sa voiture, je saurais exactement où il va se traîner et ce sera comme cela pour tous. Ce sera comme cela pour la vitesse d'un camion; ce sera comme cela pour les *outworkers* qui existent dans nos départements. Tout le monde pourra être connecté tout le temps à travers le 4G. Cela va révolutionner notre pays et c'est important que nous allions au plus vite vers le 4G et le fait que la MBC va, jusqu'à la fin de l'année prochaine, cesser ses programmes analogues, cela nous permettra d'obtenir des fréquences additionnelles pour une utilisation plus efficace du 4G à l'île Maurice sans coût additionnel. Voilà donc l'agenda technologique, M. le président. Il y a aussi toute la question de la technologie au gouvernement. Nous ne sommes pas encore à la page concernant la technologie au gouvernement. Vous le savez je suis sûr. Nous sommes tous dans les ministères souvent choqués par le fait que beaucoup de nos collaborateurs ne savent pas suffisamment se servir de la technologie, comment la technologie pourrait améliorer le service; pourrait réduire les frais; réduire les coûts et donc c'est absolument nécessaire que cela change pour changer la culture mais aussi pour changer la culture de toute la population. Nous sommes reconnaissants envers le Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) parce que nous sommes un des quatre pays au monde – quatre pays c'est tout MIT Accenture a choisi Maurice et offrira gratuitement à qui le

veut à l'île Maurice, pas à l'île de la Réunion, un cours de vingt heures si je ne me trompe sur le *computer* à toute la population mauricienne. C'est gratuit. Si on veut un certificat du MIT, on paye R 600. Cela va coûter 20 dollars – moi-même je le ferai – un jour je pourrais dire que j'ai un certificat du MIT, cela m'aura coûté vingt dollars. Donc, c'est ce qui est offert par le MIT à l'île Maurice et nous en sommes reconnaissants. Tout cela va dans cette direction de faire un changement rapide à l'île Maurice parce que c'est essentiel pour notre croissance à l'avenir.

Pour finir sur ce chapitre, M. le président, je parlerai des centres d'appel et des autres entreprises du secteur TIC. Vous savez il y a une chose qui nous connecte au monde entier. Il y a Air Mauritius, il y a les bateaux et il y a l'internet. Le coût de l'internet est comme le coût d'un billet d'avion. Plus c'est cher, plus cela décourage les gens. Plus c'est cher, plus cela nous éloigne de nos marchés principaux. Donc, successivement, je dois dire Mauritius Telecom, comme tous les autres opérateurs, ont baissé le coût sur ces appels de l'IPLC (International Private Leased Circuit). Ils ont baissé successivement et cette année-ci cela nous a fait plaisir de pouvoir annoncer une baisse additionnelle de 15% qui interviendra avant le 01 janvier dans l'IPLC. Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire ? Peut-être il faut mettre en chiffres. Un centre d'appels moyens, M. le président, se sert d'une dizaine de IPLC, donc, vingt megabytes je ne sais pas trop, c'est environ trente milles dollars par mois. Cela va baisser par 15%. Donc, nous avons un *saving* conséquent pour les centres d'appels à l'île Maurice. Cela va nous permettre d'attirer encore plus de centres d'appel ; par centre d'appels peut-être un *saving* de deux millions de roupies par an. Simplement sur cet item qui va baisser immédiatement, on peut le dire. Donc, ce sera encore une fois un coup d'accélération que nous allons donner au TIC. C'est pour cela aussi que nous sommes confiants d'une grande croissance dans ce secteur-là l'année prochaine.

M. le président, le secteur manufacturier, je l'ai dit dans mon discours, mérite toutes nos félicitations. Depuis le début, nous soutenons leurs efforts avec principalement *Enterprise Mauritius* qui intervient avec un budget conséquent de R 135 millions et plus s'il le faut. Il n'y a pas de problème parce que c'est important qu'ils puissent recentrer leurs exportations. Déjà les exportations vers l'Afrique, cette année-ci, ont augmenté de 20% sur l'année dernière qui est extraordinaire, principalement l'Afrique du sud qui est devenu aujourd'hui un grand client pour le textile mauricien. Donc, cela se fait.

Il y a deux problèmes qui ont perduré dans le secteur manufacturier. Premièrement, c'est la productivité qui est insuffisante. Deuxièmement, c'est un peu lié, c'est le manque de main-

d'œuvre. La nouvelle équipe à la *National Productivity and Competitiveness Council* (NPCC) a démarré quelques semaines de cela une grande campagne de motivation. Vous avez peut-être vu les *billboards* et nous les encourageons parce que c'est l'avenir. Si seulement les travailleurs mauriciens regardaient un peu vers la Chine, ils comprendraient que ces chinois, qui viennent aujourd'hui en touristes, venaient autrefois en travailleurs et que ces chinois qui viennent aujourd'hui en touristes touchent plus.

Même dans nos textiles là-bas, en Chine, ils touchent beaucoup plus que leurs homologues, ici, à Maurice. Si seulement ce message pouvait être transmis clairement à nos compatriotes, qu'il faut investir, ce n'est pas que le problème des travailleurs, c'est aussi le problème du *management* ; il faut investir pour pouvoir être productif. Mais si on pouvait faire cela, M. le président, le secteur manufacturier connaîtrait encore plus de croissance et ce serait extraordinaire. Mais il faut le faire, il ne faut pas baisser les bras, il ne faut pas perdre patience, ni confiance.

M. le président, nous avons parlé des mesures économiques, il y a aussi des mesures urgentes. C'est pourquoi je suis un peu déçu de l'opposition. Il y a des mesures urgentes qui sont prises dans ce budget concernant des problèmes sociaux. En ce qui concerne le chômage à Maurice, 8% c'est raisonnable. Pour les hommes matures, le chômage est ce qu'on appelle *frictional*, c'est assez faible, il n'y a pas vraiment un grand problème. Pour les femmes, le problème est plus accru, mais c'est surtout pour les jeunes que le bât blesse. Les jeunes, M. le président, le chômage est aujourd'hui à 27%. Cela a toujours été assez fort, ce n'est pas quelque chose de nouveau. Mais gouvernement après gouvernement, on a tout essayé, mais on n'a pas vraiment pu résoudre le problème. Et là, aucun gouvernement responsable ne peut faire un budget sans penser à cela. Maintenant, nous avons fait deux choses très importantes. Premièrement, nous avons augmenté les dotations, la subvention, la moitié des salaires, non pas pour six mois maintenant, mais pour un an, douze mois complets pour subventionner un jeune, et plus de tracasserie administrative. Cela va être vraiment facile pour quelqu'un de recruter un jeune jusqu'à 25 ans, recruter ce jeune et demander la subvention, cela va être facile. On va subventionner R 4,000 pour un non-gradué et R 7,500 pour un gradué. Il faut faire quelque chose.

Je me rappelle beaucoup de ce grand intellectuel, M. Paul Romer, qui m'avait expliqué un jour. Il m'avait dit : 'Xavier, tu sais, en fin de compte, le travail c'est la continuation de

l'école. C'est au travail que les jeunes vont apprendre la discipline, qu'ils vont apprendre à avoir une relation avec leurs collègues, qu'ils vont apprendre d'ailleurs le travail lui-même.' Donc, il faut absolument que l'État investisse dans le travail pour les jeunes, sinon ce sont des avenir entiers qui sont brisés. Donc, M. le président, nous avons voulu faire un grand pas en avant en subventionnant sur un an. Cela n'a jamais été fait autant que cela à Maurice. Sur un an, la moitié des salaires pour tous les jeunes et tous les gradués de notre pays, on va essayer, on va voir si cela marche. On n'a pas fait que cela, parce que le problème c'est que ce n'est vraiment pas *one-size-fits-all*. On ne peut pas dire à quelqu'un : 'vous êtes informaticien, vous allez avoir les mêmes conditions que quelqu'un qui veut simplement une femme de chambre'. Pourquoi pas ! Ce sont des humains. Une femme de chambre, un charpentier, tous ces gens-là méritent notre attention. Mais ils ne peuvent pas avoir le même *scheme*. Il y a plusieurs départements du gouvernement qui s'en occupent, que nous avons tout reliés sous un comité d'où il sera possible d'offrir des cours *tailor made*.

M. le président, je vais prendre l'exemple d'un aide-maçon. Nous en avons tous dans nos circonscriptions – et ce sont généralement des gens qui sont pauvres. Ils travaillent trois/quatre jours par semaine généralement, parce que c'est le type de travail. Un aide-maçon - main-œuvre, comme on dit à Maurice – a déjà sa famille. Vous lui dites : 'allez travailler, je vais vous payer vos leçons'. Comment sa famille va vivre pendant ce temps-là ? Ce n'est pas possible ! Pareillement, demain quelqu'un qui va être un informaticien ou peut-être même quelqu'un qui a pris un cours, il a pris *Tourism Management*, il ne peut pas trouver du travail dans le *Tourism Management*. Qu'est-ce qu'il fait ? Il faut absolument le *reskill* dans quelque chose d'autre. Donc, il y a mille permutations pour pouvoir vraiment aider les jeunes et c'est pour cette raison qu'on a mis R 330 millions dans ce *scheme*. Qu'est-ce qui manque ? On en mettra encore et c'est absolument nécessaire de briser ce cercle vicieux de *youth unemployment*.

A Maurice, nous avons 8,400 gradués qui ne travaillent pas, dont la plupart, la grosse majorité trouve un travail dans dix mois, mais une bonne partie, le reste, 1,400 environ sont plus d'un an, et là aussi, nous devons faire la différence. Nous avons ce projet qui est extraordinaire, au gouvernement c'est le *service to Mauritius* qui est un projet valable, qui prend the *brightest* des jeunes. Ceux qui ont seulement *Upper Second* dans leur degré viennent travailler. Il y en a au ministère chez moi, il travaille dans mon bureau. Ce sont des jeunes formidables. Nous allons prendre l'année prochaine 300 jeunes additionnels. D'ailleurs, il y a en ce moment-ci même une

publicité dans les journaux, nous allons prendre 300 l'année prochaine et ce sont des gens qui vont apporter un *know-how* au gouvernement, mais aussi ils vont en profiter dans leur carrière et à l'avenir. Donc, nous avons pris des mesures. Ce genre de personnes seront disponibles aussi - pas le *service to Mauritius* - mais les jeunes, parce qu'on veut développer leur *high-tech manufacturing* avec mon collègue, le ministre Cader Sayed-Hossen et ce genre de soutien pour l'emploi sera aussi disponible pour les jeunes qui voudront aller travailler dans le *high-tech* à l'île Maurice. Nous avons aussi offert à l'industrie manufacturière des incitations fiscales importantes pour les aider à investir.

L'investissement, M. le président, dans le secteur *Export Enterprise* est faible, moins d'un milliard de roupies cette année-ci. Je suis le premier à le reconnaître dans le *manufacturing*. En 2009, c'était R 700 millions, c'était trop faible pour assurer l'avenir, pour assurer la prospérité de ce secteur ; il faut absolument faire quelque chose ; qu'on augmente l'investissement des secteurs manufacturiers. C'est pour cela que nous allons donner des *Accelerated Capital Allowances*, ce qui veut dire que si jamais demain j'investis R 500 millions dans les machines, ce n'est pas beaucoup, cela se fait tous les jours, R 250 millions je vais retirer de ma taxe cette année-ci et R 250 millions l'année prochaine de mes profits. Donc, vraiment c'est une grande incitation à l'investissement.

Nous avons aussi donné des facilités d'exemption pour le *Land Conversion Tax* pour les gens qui construisent des usines à l'île Maurice et puis encore plusieurs autres choses que nous avons faites concernant le *manufacturing*.

Quelque chose d'important que nous avons fait pour les *local manufacturers*, M. le président. Ils se plaignent tout le temps que c'est le jour du budget qu'ils savent si la taxe douanière va baisser ou pas et donc ils sont incapables d'investir. Peut-être qu'ils investissent aujourd'hui seulement pour savoir que dans deux/trois mois le budget vient et tout change. Nous sommes tombés d'accord avec eux qu'on va leur donner un préavis de six mois avant de changer le *customs duty* pour qu'ils puissent savoir, cela va les encourager à investir. On pourra leur dire : 'regardez, on ne va pas toucher à tout cela cette année-ci. Allez-y, faites vos investissements, par contre deux/trois autres, parce que nous avons des accords bilatéraux et multilatéraux, etc., qui nous obligent aussi de baisser les taxes quelquefois.' Donc, cela se fera de cette façon-là.

M. le président, je vais toucher à quelque chose d'important concernant tous les débats autour de la croissance. Pourquoi est-ce que la croissance est importante? J'ai quelquefois l'impression que ce n'est pas clair pour tout le monde pourquoi nous avons besoin de la croissance. La croissance, bien sûr, nous amène plus de richesse, plus de prospérité. La croissance nous permet la création d'emplois, sinon la croissance, c'est quoi ? De nouvelles entreprises, des entreprises qui grandissent, de nouveaux hôtels, de nouvelles usines, c'est cela la croissance. Cela nous amène, donc, de l'emploi, cela nous amène de l'investissement. Un terrain vague hier, demain est une usine. Donc, l'investissement crée lui aussi de la croissance. Mais il faut aussi savoir que la croissance amène une hausse du pouvoir d'achat. On se rappelle dans les années 80, nous étions tous là, il y avait une forte inflation, beaucoup plus que maintenant. Il y avait le parti travailliste, il y avait le PMSD, nous avons été des auteurs de cette croissance, on le sait tous, mais néanmoins, c'était des conditions de la croissance avec un peu d'inflation.

Aujourd'hui, M. le président, comment puis-je mieux illustrer la croissance que de dire qu'une croissance de 4% annuellement nous amènerait à doubler la richesse nationale dans 18 ans ? Donc, tous les ans, pendant 18 ans, au lieu de toucher R 100,000 comme député, on serait libre de dire en termes réels - pas en termes monétaires - qu'on toucherait le double. Nous serions deux fois plus riches dans 18 ans avec 4% de croissance. C'est la façon la plus simple que je puisse l'expliquer. Avec 5% de croissance, à ce moment-là, dans 15 ans, on va doubler. Ça c'est le mieux. Avec 6% de croissance - le Premier ministre sera toujours Premier ministre dans 12 ans - on aurait doublé notre richesse nationale. C'est ça l'importance de la croissance. Sans la croissance, zéro richesse ! Sans la croissance on est pareil comme avant. Sans croissance, on stagne. Au contraire, les Anglais, par exemple, ont perdu le pouvoir d'achat. Pourtant, l'inflation est très faible là-bas. Ils ont perdu 40% de pouvoir d'achat depuis la crise. Il n'y a pas de croissance. La population augmente, M. le président. Donc, la croissance est très importante.

C'est important qu'il y ait une roupie qui est bien alignée. Ce n'est pas moi qui l'ai dit. Nous avons demandé au Fonds Monétaire International de nous envoyer une équipe d'experts. Il y a aussi deux banques internationales qui, de leur propre gré, à leurs propres frais, ont fait des études sur l'alignement de la roupie, et ils ont tous trouvé un mauvais alignement conséquent de la roupie. 10% à monter ; c'est substantiel. Le FMI s'est servi de plusieurs types de mesures et, en moyenne, ils ont trouvé 12.4% de mauvais alignement. Mais, en se servant du ratio le plus

important pour Maurice, il a dit que nous étions à 15% de mauvais alignement. Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire, M. le président ? Cela veut dire que si j'exporte pour R 100, en fin de compte, je n'ai que R 85. Cela a un effet très *pervasive* sur l'économie mauricienne. Et si la roupie augmente c'est parce que nous sommes beaucoup plus compétitifs, parce que nos compétiteurs aussi – qui vendent ce qu'on vend - sont dans la même situation que nous. On peut tolérer cela sans problème. Mais si cela se fait pour des raisons artificielles, nous sommes dans de vrais problèmes.

C'est pour cela, M. le président, qu'il y a eu tous les débats concernant la roupie. Il y a eu ce problème qui se résout. Je crois que la banque de Maurice est d'accord - autant que je sache - que ça se résout. Ils ont à agir eux aussi. Je crois que l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a soulevé ce point, et c'est pour cette raison que je soulève ça aujourd'hui. Nous n'avons jamais eu l'intention de présumer du rôle de la banque de Maurice. Mais nous avons beaucoup d'argent, des milliards de roupies en dépôt qui ne ramènent aucun sous. C'est un manque à gagner pour les contribuables d'environ R 300 millions, équivalent à la dotation que nous avons allouée au programme des jeunes, par exemple. Donc, c'est énormément d'argent. C'est pour cette raison que nous avons cherché à placer l'argent en toute légalité. C'est notre argent ; on a essayé de le placer dans des conditions où le contribuable pourra avoir un *return* qui est raisonnable. Donc, c'est la raison principale pour laquelle le ministère des finances a acheté des devises ; parce qu'il y a eu un nombre limité de banques mauriciennes qui ont voulu prendre notre dépôt en roupies. C'est la raison principale pourquoi nous avons agi.

M. le président, il faut dire aussi qu'il n'y a rien de nouveau à ce que le ministère des finances achète des devises. Cela se fait tous les jours, par tous les gouvernements, tous les ans. Il n'y a rien de nouveau, et c'est faux de dire, premièrement, que nous n'avons pas fait des *tenders*. Nous avons fait des *tenders* avec les 14 banques locales. Non seulement nous avons fait ces *tenders*, M. le président, nous les avons faits en toute transparence, et nous sommes satisfaits du résultat. Donc, c'est ça concernant la roupie.

Je dois dire aussi que - ce n'est pas une blague - nos économétriciens au ministère des finances et aussi une équipe indépendante allemande ont calculé qu'un mauvais alignement de la roupie de 15% réduirait la croissance d'un point. C'est-à-dire qu'au lieu de 4.4, ce serait 3.4, et les allemands qui sont venus ont même trouvé que la différence est plus grande, allant jusqu'à 2%. Pour vous dire, donc, l'effet qu'un mauvais alignement peut faire sur l'avenir du pays. C'est

pour cela que j'ai pris la peine d'expliquer comment la croissance sur 15 ans doublerait la richesse de notre pays. Voilà, donc, ce que je voulais expliquer concernant cela, M. le président.

Touchant rapidement aux services financiers, je vous dirai que les services financiers ont connu une croissance soutenue cette année-ci, mais avec l'*Africa strategy* qui a soutenu les services financiers cette année-ci, nous avons une grosse augmentation de 12% dans l'*offshore*. Mais nous voulons créer à Maurice des *regional headquarters*. Cela va dans le sens du développement de l'aéroport et – je suis toujours sincère, M. le président, et je voudrais féliciter le Premier ministre pour ce qu'il a fait. Cela n'a rien à faire avec le budget ; c'est venu avant le budget - concernant les visas, que lui-même a mentionné, d'entrée.

Aujourd'hui, M. le président, nous avons 53 pays africains, et plus Maurice, ça fait 54. Dans ces 53 pays africains, aujourd'hui nous n'avons que 5 pays qui ont besoin d'un visa avant de venir à Maurice. Donc, 48 ressortissants des pays africains sur 53 n'auront pas besoin de visa au départ. Ils prennent leur avion, ils viennent à Maurice, et on s'occupe d'eux à l'île Maurice. N'est-ce pas extraordinaire ? N'est-ce pas la volonté de ce pays d'être vraiment le *star and key* de la région, d'être vraiment le *gateway* de la région ? Il y a un risque dans tout. Ouvrir nos portes comme ça, c'est un geste d'amitié extraordinaire aux pays africains et, donc, je voudrais remercier le Premier ministre qui a pris cette décision d'ouvrir d'une façon très conséquente à 75 pays en tout, mais 29 pays additionnels pour l'Afrique. Cela va nous aider grandement dans notre stratégie africaine. Ils auraient dû être reconnaissants. Cela va aider l'*offshore*, cela va aider les services financiers, cela va aider le tourisme, cela va aider l'investissement, cela va aider le commerce. C'est extraordinaire!

Mais, en ce qu'il s'agit des services financiers, nous voulons être un centre pour les *headquarters* régionaux et les *treasury centres* aussi. Dans notre *Finance Bill*, ces deux items sont définis, les activités sont définies, et nous allons encourager cela. Nous voulons vraiment faire compétition avec l'Afrique du Sud, Nairobi et l'Ethiopie en vraiment étant le *hub* financier pour l'Afrique, et nous espérons un jour être aussi le *hub* aérien pour nos amis Africains. Autre chose que les gens des services financiers avaient demandé sont les *exempt funds*, c'est-à-dire les fonds d'investissements qui ne sont pas résidents fiscalement à l'île Maurice.

Ce n'est pas tous les fonds qui veulent payer les 3% de taxe que les GBC 1 paient. Ils ont demandé, et on va leur offrir la chance de créer des fonds qui ne sont pas fiscalement résidents à

Maurice et, donc, ils vont être taxés à 0%. Cela aussi va aider au développement du secteur financier.

Maintenant, je parlerai de quelque chose d'important. Dans le secteur financier comme dans la politique et dans toute chose, M. le président, la réputation est importante. La réputation de notre pays est la clef de notre succès; j'ai mis beaucoup d'efforts tout comme ceux au gouvernement pour protéger la réputation de l'île Maurice. La FSC, depuis mon arrivée, a recruté un étranger comme *Head of Supervision* car c'est toujours mieux dans ces rôles d'avoir quelqu'un de déconnecté avec le reste du pays. Mais ce qui est quand même choquant, M. le président, c'est qu'avant mon arrivée au ministère il n'y avait aucune inspection des *management companies*. Zéro inspection, M. le président ! J'ai les chiffres. En 2011, avant mon arrivée - même en 2010 avec mon prédécesseur, bien que nous ayons environ 160 *global business management companies*, il n'y avait que quatre inspections en 2010. Et zéro inspection *on site inspections* avant mon arrivée en 2011. Aujourd'hui, M. le président, je suis heureux de vous dire que cette année-ci nous allons faire 162 inspections *on site* des *global business management companies*. C'est bien, cela leur permet d'apprendre ; il y a une connaissance qui se transfère entre nos employés de la FSC et les *management companies*, et vice versa.

Pour terminer, M. le président, quand le chef de l'opposition prétend que ce budget n'a aucune importance, c'est vraiment insulter la misère et c'est ce qui me rend plus triste. C'est vraiment insulter la misère que de dire en fin de compte qu'il n'y a rien d'important dans ce budget. Il y a ces 9,200 enfants, M. le président, qui allaient - pas tous et pas tout le temps - quand même souvent à l'école le ventre vide. Comme ici, si Madame Dallais ne nous nourrissait pas pendant le *lunch time* et les soirs, comment est-ce qu'on aurait pu se concentrer sur les discours? Comment est-ce qu'on peut demander aux enfants...

(Interruptions)

Comment demander à ces enfants de se concentrer en classe s'ils ont le ventre vide ? Quand il y a eu le *summer school*...

(Interruptions)

Mon collègue, le ministre de l'Éducation m'avait invité ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker : Silence !

Mr Duval : C'est clair pour nous qu'une des attractions du *summer school* était justement la chance de pouvoir avoir quelque chose de décent à manger. Cela nous a ouvert les yeux, mon collègue et moi, et nous avons décidé d'offrir aux enfants un repas chaud. On aurait voulu en offrir à tous les enfants pauvres mais logistiquement c'est difficile. On va commencer avec les écoles ZEP, offrir à chaque enfant un repas. A R 75 le repas par enfant pendant les mois de classe, cela va coûter R 1,500 aux contribuables par enfant par mois. C'est beaucoup d'argent. C'est déjà R 1,500 que la mère/le père de l'enfant va économiser. Déjà ils économisent sur l'éducation gratuite, sur le transport et aujourd'hui l'enfant va être nourri et c'est une économie additionnelle. C'est extraordinaire, M. le président. Ils recevaient autrefois R 11 par jour. Je ne sais pas trop ce qu'on donnait pour R 11. Mais aujourd'hui ils vont recevoir R 75. C'est une somme additionnelle de R 64 que chaque enfant pauvre des écoles ZEP va recevoir. A l'opposition MSM/MMM de snober cette mesure !

(Interruptions)

Ce n'est pas important pour eux ! Ils ont le ventre rempli, je présume. Le ventre bien rempli, la peau du ventre bien tendue et cela ne les intéresse pas de parler des 9,200 enfants

(Interruptions)

... qui, à partir de l'année prochaine, vont recevoir cet argent. En tout cas, cela me fera grand plaisir de visiter ces écoles et de voir ces enfants à l'heure du repas. Comment cela va se faire ? On va décentraliser ; on a déjà décentralisé avec le projet de cette année-ci. Nous avons donné R 700,000 à chaque école mauricienne, secondaire et primaire pour faire des rénovations. Cela va vraiment *empower* les PTAs. En collaboration avec la direction de l'école, nous allons faire la même chose et je suis sûr, M. le président, que les parents et les professeurs ensemble - qui je crois sont de bonne volonté - trouveront la formule idéale, c'est-à-dire, sous contracter et offrir le meilleur repas possible à nos enfants pauvres.

On a aussi pensé à ces 20,000 enfants qui ont une allocation jusqu'à R 2,250 par famille. Savez-vous, M. le président, qu'à la *National Empowerment Foundation (NEF)*, il y a 5,000 enfants sur l'*extreme poverty list*, mais parce que le système de la sécurité sociale étant ce qu'il est, ils ne reçoivent aucune allocation. Donc, 5,000 enfants sur l'*extreme poverty list* qui ne reçoivent pas d'allocation ! D'autres en reçoivent parce qu'ils ont des *single mothers* ou parce que les parents sont handicapés, etc. Mais le système de la sécurité sociale *is such* que ces enfants ne reçoivent rien ! N'est-ce pas une aberration, alors que ces parents sont très pauvres et

ils touchent moins de R 6,200 par mois ? C'est un fait aujourd'hui que ces enfants recevront une allocation allant jusqu'à R 2,250 par famille. Le gouvernement et le contribuable feront le sacrifice et en tout ce sera 20,000 enfants, incluant ces 5,000 qui vont recevoir soit une allocation pour la première fois ou une augmentation de leur allocation. Cela aussi est la grande innovation de ce budget, M. le président.

Concernant le social, comme l'a dit le Premier ministre, les parents ne recevront pas d'allocation s'ils ne sont pas des parents responsables. Pas question de prendre cet argent et de faire autre chose que de s'occuper de l'enfant. Pas question de briser l'avenir de cet enfant en ne l'envoyant pas à l'école. Pas question donc de faire autre chose que de s'occuper de l'enfant. Donc, s'ils ne viennent pas à l'école deux mois de suite, l'allocation sera coupée. L'allocation sera rétablie après, mais ce sera un avertissement pour les parents. J'espère que ce sera un début de ce qu'on appelle les *conditional transfers* où l'État encourage un mode de vie à travers des allocations que les parents puissent bénéficier.

M. le président, on a parlé de 20,000 enfants, on a parlé de 9,000 enfants qui auront des repas. On a parlé de 20,000 petits planteurs qui avaient demandé une aide pour le compost. Ils vont recevoir jusqu'à R 1,500 de subvention sur chaque tonne de compost. Nous avons mis R 40 millions pour cela. C'est bien pour la santé de tout le monde parce que beaucoup d'entre nous mangent des légumes, mais souvent il y a trop de produits agricoles servis qu'en fin de compte ce n'est pas aussi bon pour la santé. Donc, cela va aider les petits planteurs. Dieu seul sait combien la vie des petits planteurs n'est pas aussi facile. J'habite à Melville, M. le président, et je suis entouré de petits planteurs. J'ai un terrain que j'ai prêté à l'un d'eux. Ce travail est bien difficile. Soit il ne pleut pas ou il pleut trop, soit il y a des bêtes, ou il y a un cyclone ; ce n'est jamais terminé. Ce sont des gens qui doivent beaucoup lutter et vraiment c'est dur. Moi personnellement, et le gouvernement sommes heureux de pouvoir les aider parce que le compost va non seulement fertiliser mais c'est aussi bon pour la terre. Je ne suis pas planteur mais on me dit que c'est bon pour la terre. Donc, c'est un *win-win situation* pour les consommateurs, les petits planteurs et le MID.

On a parlé des 20,000 *tablet computers* pour les jeunes, M. le président. Ces milliers de jeunes du *Youth Employment Programme* vont en profiter. Il y a les 8,000 locataires de la CHA qui se dérangeaient pour venir payer R 200, R 300 ou R 400 au *Ministry of Housing* et qui, aujourd'hui, n'auront plus à payer.

Il y a ces victimes du *hit and run*. Encore une fois, cela n'intéresse pas l'opposition qu'il y ait environ 100 personnes par an – plus que je ne le pensais – qui sont victimes du *hit and run*. Quand on est victime du *hit and run*, il n'y a pas d'assurance. Personne ne paye. On est laissé au bord de la route. Quelqu'un nous emmène à l'hôpital, on peut être paralysé pour la vie, on peut même perdre un membre de la famille et c'est peut-être même un chef de famille. *Who cares* pour le reste de la famille ? *The Government cares*, M. le président. Nous allons créer un fonds spécial qui sera financé par le secteur privé et le gouvernement et cela viendra en aide aux *hit and run victims*.

Des centaines de gens auront un espoir parce que leur avenir est brisé. C'est facile à penser. Demain si je suis un chauffeur et je fais un accident, je n'ai pas d'assurance ou je suis seulement un piéton, je ne peux plus aller travailler, qui va me nourrir ? Ces R 3,000 ? C'est tout ce que j'ai. C'est mon seul avenir. Ce sera les R 3,100 du *Handicap Allowance*, que le ministère de la sécurité sociale va m'offrir. C'est tout pour le reste de ma vie. Comment nourrir mes enfants ? Comment faire avec tout cela ? Il n'est pas trop tard. Nous allons faire de sorte que l'année prochaine, nous aurions un *Hit and Run Compensation Fund*. Je sais que le président de la FSC, M. Marc Hein, est très à cheval et qu'il fera de cela une réalité pour tous ces gens qui souffrent.

M. le président, je vais parler rapidement sur les frais bancaires, qui sont très chers au Premier ministre. C'est vrai qu'ils sont souvent excessifs. C'est vrai qu'on est souvent à la merci – je ne dis pas méchamment – des banques. Quand on a pris un emprunt de R 5 millions, R 10 millions, R 3 millions ou R 1 million, on est *captive*. Comment va-t-on partir ? On nous fait payer n'importe quel frais bancaire et c'est difficile de bouger, parce que nous sommes déjà débiteurs vis-à-vis de la loi. Il y a ici une relation qui n'est pas très égale entre la banque et ses clients. Dans d'autres pays aujourd'hui, ils ont adopté un système que la Banque de Maurice va appliquer et qui s'appelle '*Treating Your Customer Fairly*'. C'est-à-dire, faire de sorte que malgré le fait que le client doit à la banque, néanmoins il ne faut pas exagérer sur les frais, il faut être juste. La Banque de Maurice aura les pouvoirs nécessaires pour qu'elle puisse mettre en maximum sur les frais bancaires dans les cas où c'est exagéré. Il y a aussi l'*Ombudsman for Financial Services* qui est prévu dans la prochaine session parlementaire. Il y a aussi, M. le président, d'autres lois concernant le *Deposit Insurance Scheme*. Nous voulons, bien sûr, protéger encore une fois les gens qui cette fois-ci, eux ils donnent de l'argent et mettent dans une

banque de bonne foi et voilà que la banque est mal gérée, la banque a un problème. Mais cela n'est pas encore arrivé à l'île Maurice. C'est possible demain qu'une banque se trouve dans les mauvais draps et nous voulons préserver l'intérêt des dépositeurs à travers un *Deposit Insurance Scheme* qui est d'ailleurs préconisé par la Banque de Maurice.

M. le président, parlons rapidement de ces centaines de milliers de patients dans nos hôpitaux. L'honorable ministre de la santé a un programme qui va, d'après moi, créer une révolution dans le service médical à l'île Maurice. Premièrement, demander à chaque aspirant docteur, n'importe où qu'il ait fait ses études, de venir et de passer un examen pour vérifier le niveau de chaque médecin. C'est très important pour les mauriciens, M. le président. C'est important pour le service public comme pour le service privé. Pareillement, M. le président, c'est une aberration que dans les services de *casualty*, certains médecins travaillent pendant 20 heures ou plus et ce sera limité aujourd'hui avec le recrutement de 75 médecins. Le *shift system* sera introduit et personne ne fera plus de 8 heures temps.

Les jeunes sportifs, M. le président, nous avons fait encore une fois pour eux. 400 personnes aujourd'hui sont sous le Programme Sport- Étude. Quand j'avais pris le ministère des finances, le ministère finançait pour 70 personnes et aujourd'hui c'est 400 jeunes qui sont dans le Programme Sport-Étude. Ce Programme les aide à étudier et à être sportif en même temps. Je suis très heureux que nos sportifs de haut niveau aient un *allowance* décent, jusqu'à un maximum de R 30,000 pour chaque sportif de haut niveau. Je suis très heureux que cela pourra se faire parce que ce sont des gens qui donnent beaucoup d'efforts pour notre pays.

M. le président, je terminerai en parlant de deux secteurs que nous avons lancés l'année dernière. C'était le *Film Framework* que nous avons lancé pour faire des acteurs des mauriciens. Nous avons décidé à l'époque avec le *Pilot Scheme* de rembourser à 25%. Nous avons eu des études et cela s'est avéré pas suffisant. Aujourd'hui, nous allons rembourser à 30% et le *Pilot Scheme* est aujourd'hui finalisé. Nous avons eu six demandes. Pour le premier trimestre, on avait eu le démarrage d'un premier long métrage qui va se faire à Maurice. Nous avons eu des millions de roupies d'investissement dans ce film. Je vais taire le nom. Toute chose prend un peu de temps, mais nous n'avons pas annoncé quelque chose dans le vide puisqu'aujourd'hui c'est fait. Nous espérons donc qu'avec le nouveau pourcentage, nous aurons beaucoup plus de films. Les objectifs pour l'année prochaine, sont deux grandes productions cinématographiques; une série télé, deux documentaires et quatre projets publicitaires pour l'année prochaine.

J'espère qu'il y aura beaucoup d'acteurs et d'actrices mauriciens qui vont pouvoir profiter de cela. Bien sûr, M. le président, chaque roupie dépensée localement contribue deux fois à l'économie mauricienne.

Concernant les marinas, M. le président, notre consultant a été nommé et il a identifié sept sites pour les marinas et une trentaine de *Mooring Stations* à travers l'île. Le BOI est en contact avec les promoteurs potentiels pour ces investissements. Le BOI prévoit un investissement d'un milliard de roupies sur les trois ans à venir. Cela va générer en R 3 milliards et R 7 milliards sur 20 ans. Ce n'est pas facile d'amener un investissement de cette envergure, mais le BOI s'attèle à cela. Pour aider à développer ce secteur, il est prévu en 2013, un *Boat and Marina Show*, qui va donc aider à promouvoir les acteurs à travers le monde.

M. le président, notre port franc a reçu une nouvelle vie l'année dernière avec l'abolition du *Tax Holiday* qu'on a accordé à l'*infinitem*. C'était en déclin. Cela a stabilisé. Je pense que le port franc a vraiment un bel avenir dans l'*Africa Strategy*. Bien sûr, nous avons toujours un point de connectivité qui n'est pas au *top*. Cela viendra avec le volume. Nous avons des normes à tout, coût d'opération, l'état de droit, l'accès préférentiel à la COMESA et à la SADC. Ce sont des atouts non négligibles, et je pense que nous pouvons facilement faire compétition à des ports comme Dubai, par exemple, qui ont d'autres atouts, mais nous avons nos atouts nous aussi. L'année prochaine, M. le président, nous allons nous atteler à vraiment donner un nouvel essor aux ports francs mauriciens.

M. le président, on découvre le pétrole et les ressources en gaz, etc. autour de nous à la Mozambique et partout. J'espère qu'avec les efforts du Premier ministre on va en trouver. A ce moment, cela changera le travail du ministre des finances définitivement. On trouvera de l'argent, de l'or noir et du gaz chez nous. J'espère qu'on en trouvera chez nous. Mais entretemps, il y a ce développement d'un *petroleum hub* qui a été mentionné déjà à Maurice, probablement à Albion, je ne sais pas si ailleurs. Nous avons l'intention de profiter - si cela est le mot - de ce développement autour de nous en créant des facilités de stockage. Déjà Maurice est un port de choix pour les bateaux, pour le *bunkering*.

Nous voulons accélérer ce mouvement vers l'île Maurice, non seulement en termes physiques dont des cuves, etc. pour stocker ces produits, mais aussi, c'est très important, M. le président, qu'autour de nous, les pays auront besoin d'expertise pour leur industrie pétrochimique. L'expertise, l'industrie pétrochimique devraient se trouver à Maurice ; il faudra à

l'île Maurice avoir non seulement un *physical petroleum hub*, mais un *hub* d'expertise pour offrir des *soft services* aux pays de la région parce que partout autour de nous on découvre des ressources pétrolières et gazières. C'est absolument important qu'on puisse, nous aussi, participer à cette industrie.

M. le président, quelqu'un a raconté l'autre jour qu'on n'a pas mentionné les pêcheurs ; ce n'est pas vrai. Premièrement, concernant les pêcheurs, on a étendu, comme les petits planteurs, leur accès au remboursement de la TVA, mais il y a quelque chose de fantastique que mon collègue, le ministre de la Pêche fait, et qu'il faut saluer, c'est la propagation de l'aquaculture pour le *small scale* à Maurice.

Bien sûr, ce n'est pas facile. On a essayé, je crois, des gueules pavés ; cela n'a pas marché. Pour les cordonniers, cela marche. C'est un peu '*touch and go*', mais cela vient. J'habite à Melville, Grand Gaube, il y a aussi non seulement les petits planteurs, mais les pêcheurs là-bas et ils sont très enthousiastes pour l'*aquaculture small scale*. Bien sûr, ils vont faire quatre *pilot schemes* : Trou D'eau Douce, Grand Gaube, Mahebourg et le Morne. C'est un avenir prometteur que nous offrons aux coopératives de pêche, M. le président. Bien sûr, il faudra faire attention surtout à l'environnement et nous avons fait venir un expert de la Banque Mondiale - encore un expert - il y a un mois environ et avec la Banque Mondiale et le ministère de la Pêche, nous ferons de sorte que ces petites entreprises d'aquaculture, ces petites fermes, puissent non seulement prospérer, mais prospérer dans un environnement sain, dans un contexte du MID. Donc, c'est très important. Depuis longtemps nous n'avons pas eu un tel débouché dans le secteur de la pêche à l'île Maurice. C'est bon pour les pêcheurs, pour les consommateurs, en fin de compte, c'est bon pour tout le monde. C'est ce qu'il y a de meilleur avec ce projet-là.

Donc, M. le président, le Premier ministre a parlé de petites et moyennes entreprises. Je n'ai peut-être pas l'intention de retourner là-dessus sauf pour dire deux choses, que nous avons éliminé les *performance bonds* pour les contrats jusqu'à R 5 millions pour les petites et moyennes entreprises, ce qui veut dire que souvent quand ils faisaient un contrat avec le gouvernement, on leur demandait R 100,000 de dépôt. Où ils vont trouver R 100,000 de dépôt ? Ils n'ont pas R 100,000, R 200,000 ou R 300,000 de dépôt. Donc, ils laissent tomber le contrat, même ayant été alloué le contrat, et, aujourd'hui, donc, jusqu'à R 5 millions, ce ne sera plus nécessaire.

Autre chose aussi, pour la transparence, M. le président, pour chaque contrat de plus de R 5 millions – autrefois c'était R 15 millions - automatiquement maintenant le gouvernement va mettre sur son site *web* à qui a été alloué le contrat. Ce n'est pas encourageant d'aller préparer des *tender documents*, d'envoyer au ministère concerné, et on n'entend jamais plus rien. On ne sait pas qui a eu et qui n'a pas eu. C'est décourageant ! Probablement, la prochaine fois, la personne ne fera pas l'exercice.

Bien sûr, on ne va pas faire cela pour tous les petits *stationeries* que nous achetons, etc. Maintenant à plus de R 5 millions, nous allons mettre sur notre site *web*, et la personne sera encouragée à participer ; en plus, il n'y aura pas, comme j'ai mentionné, les *performance bonds*. Donc, vraiment, nous voulons encourager les petits à profiter de cela.

Il y a aussi cette baisse dans le taux de LEMS. LEMS c'est le *leasing facility* que nous offrons aux petites entreprises et qui baisse de 8.5% à 7.25%.

M. le président, je vais terminer en disant deux ou trois choses.

L'inflation, l'année prochaine, sera – nous avons pris peut-être le *lowest case* - 6%. Ce n'est pas anormal dans une période où nous devons payer R 4.6 milliards de PRB, qu'il y ait un effet sur l'inflation. Ce n'est pas anormal. Maintenant, pour l'opposition, de venir demander au Premier ministre comment cela se fait concernant l'écart, je pense la relativité secteur privé et secteur public. Essayer de créer un petit désordre avec le PRB, ce qui n'est pas correct. On se rappelle dans les bancs du gouvernement que juste avant le budget de l'honorable Jugnauth, le seul budget qu'il avait présenté, il avait voulu dissocier la compensation salariale et cela avait créé beaucoup de remous. Nous étions contre; je me rappelle moi-même que j'étais contre. Comment dissocier la compensation salariale pour le public et la compensation salariale pour le privé ? C'est comme ci arrivé à la fin de l'année, donner tant pourcent au secteur public parce que le gouvernement peut payer et peut-être moins au secteur privé.

Nous n'étions pas d'accord de dissocier et c'était venu dans le public ; l'opposition même était choquée de cette suggestion-là et cela n'a pas passé parce que ce n'est pas correct. L'inflation n'est pas plus pour une personne ou pour une autre et, donc, le PRB l'année prochaine est quelque chose qui est nécessaire. Il y a un rapport scientifique qui a été préparé ; il y aura un *Anomalies Commission* que le Premier ministre a nommé, mais quand même c'est R 4.6 milliards, qui est presque 5% du budget. C'est énormément d'argent et, bien sûr, en retour,

comme c'est d'ailleurs correct de le demander, il faut une productivité accrue, une attention accrue pour pouvoir permettre au gouvernement de payer cette somme qui est considérable.

Nous n'avons pas fait comme le gouvernement de 2003-2004. Nous n'avons pas fait ces simagrées d'essayer de payer une partie cette année et la moitié l'année prochaine. Les gens disent que nous avons subi un tsunami. Si on avait subi un tsunami, comment on aurait fait pour payer R 4.6 milliards l'année prochaine, alors qu'eux, sans aucun problème, paraît-il, ils n'ont pas pu payer et c'est cela, donc, que chaque fonctionnaire se demande bien quelle est l'attitude de l'opposition MSM/MMM quand ils étaient au gouvernement. Quelle était leur vraie attitude vis-à-vis les fonctionnaires ? Je crois que nous avons prouvé notre bonne foi sans aucun doute vis-à-vis des fonctionnaires de ce pays, M. le président.

Dans quelques semaines, nous allons présenter la loi pour la compensation salariale de cette année-ci. Cette année quelqu'un qui touche R 3,000 va toucher une augmentation de 10% - R 300. La même personne qui touchait R 3,000 l'année dernière aura R 330. Donc, si je touchais R 3,000 l'année dernière, avec la compensation que nous allons accorder sur les deux ans, c'est R 630. C'est très bien! C'est 21% alors que l'inflation est à la moitié.

Donc, c'est deux fois plus que l'inflation. L'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, quand il était ministre des finances – ne vous moquez pas, M. le président - il avait offert R 90 à ces mêmes personnes. Nous avons offert R 330 suivi d'encore R 300. Au contraire, c'est à eux de rougir, M. le président, pas le gouvernement Parti Travailleiste/PMSD.

M. le président, l'honorable Jugnauth a oublié – lui-aussi peut-être un peu amnésique - qu'il a lui-même créé des *special funds* quand il était là. Je crois chaque année il oublie qu'il a créé un *special fund* de R 2.1 milliards. L'année d'avant, il appelait cela le *Business Growth Fund (BGF)*, et comment venir dire maintenant qu'il est contre, je ne comprends pas, mais il l'a créé - un peu amnésique. Il a demandé, M. le président, qu'on paie un PRB intérimaire. Je n'ai pas compris cela : qu'on paie un PRB intérimaire ! Mais c'est stupide, M. le président, parce qu'on paie le PRB *in full*. Ce sont les *anomalies* qu'on va corriger. Le PRB sera payé à partir de janvier 2013 complètement. Il n'y a pas de PRB intérimaire à payer. Donc, je crois qu'il s'est trompé un peu là-dessus, et il a parlé longuement sur le taux de taxation. Comme j'ai dit au début de mon discours, M. le président, ce n'est pas le taux de taxation qui est important, c'est la recette fiscale et ce gouvernement a démontré clairement, avec l'augmentation des recettes, que

nous avons pris de bonnes décisions l'année dernière en réduisant les taxes et en encourageant les activités économiques.

L'honorable Li Kwong Wing, pour sa part, ne connaît pas les régions pauvres. Ma collègue, l'honorable Ms Deerpalsing, l'avait bien démontré l'autre jour que le bâtiment pour les petites et moyennes entreprises - j'ai la photo, je peux circuler à nouveau, mais ça a déjà été circulé - le bâtiment à Roche Bois, un peu loin peut-être de Monsieur Li Kwong Wing mais il est complété. Non seulement il est complété, mais cela était sur les journaux et nous avons six personnes qui aménagent dans ce bâtiment. Il y a environ une quinzaine; nous avons six qui aménagent tout de suite, ce mois-ci même, dans ce bâtiment-là. C'est un très joli bâtiment et non seulement petites et moyennes entreprises à deux étages, mais ce sera fantastique, un abri pour les sans-abris au troisième étage, M. le président, à la route Abattoir de Roche Bois.

M. le président, pour terminer, l'opposition, remplie de démagogie dans un contexte d'élection municipale, a décidé d'abandonner son poste. Ils viendront, je présume tout à l'heure - je ne sais pas - pour aller sur une caisse de savon. Il y avait tant de choses à dire, à commenter, dans ce budget-là, je n'ai pas voulu prendre quatre heures du temps de la Chambre. Il y a eu un *memorandum* qui a été circulé avec ça. Nous allons présenter dans deux semaines, j'espère, les deux lois qui accompagnent le budget. Il y a 60 lois qui vont être amendées à travers le *Finance Bill* et l'*Economic and Financial Measures*. Mais c'est un record, M. le président, le nombre de lois qui vont être amendées et présentées à la Chambre dans deux semaines. Il y a dans ce budget, 224 mesures séparément; quelques unes sont dans les discours, d'autres sont dans les mémoires. Je vais prendre un exemple: quand on a décidé d'offrir des allègements fiscaux aux hôtels - il y a une centaine d'hôtels - nul besoin de venir dire à un million de personnes ce qui va être fait pour les dix hôtels qui n'ont pas les moyens de payer le bail du *Ministry of Housing and Lands*. Donc, c'est dans le *memorandum* et c'est comme ça que nous avons opéré cette année-ci.

M. le président, l'opposition, donc, nage en démagogie, détourne les propos, essaye de faire un lavage de cerveau. Le fait est, M. le président, que la gestion macroéconomique est exemplaire et justifie pleinement le *upgrading* de *Moody's* que nous avons eu l'honneur de recevoir cette année-ci. Le budget est considérablement le secteur moteur de notre économie. D'ailleurs, nous avons l'AHRIM, la MEPZA, la BASECA et l'OTAN. L'AHRIM c'est le tourisme ; la MEPZA c'est sous l'exportation ; la BASECA c'est la construction, et nous avons l'OTAN. Ils ont tous accueilli favorablement les mesures budgétaires. Ce budget prend aussi en

considération des mesures urgentes sociales. Nous avons eu besoin de prendre pour les enfants, pour les jeunes, pour tous les gens qui sont dans le besoin dans notre pays, des mesures sociales urgentes. Nous avons eu besoin aussi de préparer notre avenir. J'ai expliqué longuement comment la connectivité et tout ce qui tourne autour de la technologie va influencer sur notre croissance l'année prochaine.

M. le président, ce budget, donc, en conclusion est un *blueprint* qui va protéger notre pays des effets néfastes de la crise et, en même temps, assurer un avenir brillant et plein de prospérité pour nos compatriotes.

Merci, M. le président.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

THE APPROPRIATION (2013) BILL

(NO. XXVII OF 2012)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

Programme-Based Budget Estimates 2013 & Indicative Estimates 2014 & 2015

The Chairperson: I have to inform the House that in conformity with Standing Order 73, paragraph (4), and after consultations with the Chief Government Whip and the Opposition Whip, I have decided to allot a maximum of 20 minutes per Programme Code for each Ministry for the consideration of the PBB Estimates 2013.

Thank you.

(Interruptions)

Silence!

(Interruptions)

I say silence! Could you listen? We are going to proceed page by page!

The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to -

001: Office of the President - Presidency Affairs (Rs56,162,000)

011: Office of the Vice-President - Vice-Presidency Affairs (Rs11,915,000)

The Judiciary - Programme Code 021: Administration and Delivery of Justice was called.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, can we have some details on the item...

The Chairperson: On which page?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On page 13, the item *Service to Mauritius Programme*.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: At page 13, under the same item. *Programme Code 021: Administration and Delivery of Justice*, whose total expenditure is Rs523,600,000. It is the same item.

The Chairperson: It is the Judiciary, yes. The hon. Member is right. Which item is it? The hon. Member said Programme Code 021, which item?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: *Programme Code 021: Administration and Delivery of Justice*, item No. 21110 - *Personal Emoluments* and sub item No. 21110010 - *Service to Mauritius Programme*: Rs6,900,000. Can we have some details on what this programme consists of and how this expenditure is meant to be made?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, this was well explained by me and by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development during the debate.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Next question! Silence!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

Mr Baloomoody: I prefer to ask a question, if I am allowed to ask the question.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I say silence! Put the question!

Mr Baloomoody: On the same Programme Code - *Compensation of Employees*, I find that the...

The Chairperson: Could you specify the page and the item No.?

Mr Baloomoody: At page 13, item No. 21 – *Compensation of Employees*. I find, on page 9, under *Strategic Note 2 - Major Constraints and Challenges*, how they are addressed. It is stated that ‘Holding of morning and evening sessions are envisaged.’ May I ask the hon. Prime Minister when this programme of morning and evening sessions will start, as this has been mentioned for many years now?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, this depends on the Administration of Justice. It is not me who decides this.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, are we going page by page or programme by programme?

The Chairperson: Page by page.

Mr Obeegadoo: So, if it is the same programme...

The Chairperson: We are still on page 13.

Mr Obeegadoo: We are on page 13, not 14?

The Chairperson: Now, page 14. If the hon. Member has a question, he can proceed.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two questions, Mr Chairperson, under item 27- *Legal Assistance in “in forma pauperis”*. I would like to know whether the Estimates, which are the same for 2013, take account of the increase in the number of applicants for legal aid in view of Government’s decision to review the conditions of eligibility for legal aid. My second question is: are we making provision next year for employment on a permanent basis of full-time Solicitors to be able to attend to urgent matters in terms of application for legal aid? I have a third question...

The Chairperson: No, one by one!

(Interruptions)

One by one, please!

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, in fact, the number of cases for legal aid has increased, and we have taken that into consideration. Again, if we see that there is need for more, we will have to see. For example, in 2011, there were 2,963 cases and, this year, there have been 4,216 cases. With regard to the other question, I understand that this is being taken into consideration.

Mr Uteem: In relation to item No. 2821100 - *Council of Legal Education*, I understand that the Council of Legal Education will not be dispensing courses. So, why are we maintaining the budget of Rs2 m.?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that they are not going to dispense courses at all. I think that there is a restructuring. This is what I understand.

Mr Roopun: On page 14, under item No. 26313 – *Extra-Budgetary Units*, could the hon. Prime Minister give us some details about the extra-budgetary units mentioned here?

The Prime Minister: I didn't understand at all, Mr Chairperson. Can the hon. Member repeat, please?

(Interruptions)

Mr Roopun: With regard to item No. 26313 - *Extra Budgetary Units*, can the hon. Prime Minister give us some details, please?

The Prime Minister: In fact, this is explained. Extra-budgetary units include the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies. I don't think the hon. Member wants me to go through all this, but it also includes the collection of fees and all those things. It is basically for the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies.

Mr Baloomoody: Under item No. 31112415, I find that there is provision for the *Upgrading of District Courts and Other Courts*. May I know whether the District Court of Souillac is one of the priorities of the Courts to be upgraded and, if so, when work will start?

The Prime Minister: I think this was mentioned in my speech. It is on the priority list, but I think there is a problem of land. We have to acquire the land.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk on item No. 31112 – *Non-Residential Buildings* and item No. 31112415 – *Upgrading of District Courts*. Last year, at this time, I raised the issue of the unbelievable state in which the District Court of Souillac presently...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, silence!

Mr Obeegadoo: Why is there such intimidation? We are doing our job!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, let me listen at least to the question! Then, I will decide whether I will allow it or not!

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can confirm that this year the amounts budgeted do provide for the District Court of Souillac...

The Chairperson: This question has already been put and answered by the hon. Prime Minister.

Mr Obeegadoo: Then, I will ask about the Courts of Mapou and Pamplémousses, which require urgent attention.

The Prime Minister: We know that they need urgent attention, Mr Chairperson, but it is the procedure. For example, we are getting a new district contractor. We need to have a contractor. We can't just give it to somebody to do the work. There is no Project Manager available on the private market. There is none. So, we have to go to the MPI to try to get a Project Manager, but, unfortunately, they are taken up with other jobs. So, we are going to move as fast as we can. But we had hoped that there could be Project Managers in the private sector available. One of the problems is that they are paid much higher fees in the private sector than in the Government sector. This is one thing that the PRB wanted to correct.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, still on page 14, under item 22180 – *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)*, a sum of Rs2.4 m. has been earmarked. May we know how much is for mission and how much is for capacity building?

The Prime Minister: Again, it is for the Administration of Justice. I don't decide this.

Mr Uteem: Under item No. 31112 – *Non-Residential Buildings*, has any provision been made for accommodation of the new Court of Appeal that is being provided for in this Budget? Where are they going to sit?

The Prime Minister: Yes, the procedures have started, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: Does the hon. Prime Minister know where it is intended to have this new Court of Appeal?

The Prime Minister: All I know is that the procedures have started. They must have found the place where it is going to start. In fact, the law also is ready, but the problem is a question of time; whether we will have time in this session or not.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under the item *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, which is the last item on the page, for many years now, we have had microphones in our District and Intermediate Courts that have been standing idle, whereas they were supposed to register computerised

registration of proceedings. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Budget for next year does provide for the activation of this project? It is a project, I suppose!

The Prime Minister: In fact, there have been some minor shortcomings in the programme, Mr Chairperson. My understanding is that they will start in the Commercial Court early January next year, and then they will move on to the Supreme Court and the District Courts. But there have been some shortcomings.

Mr Baloomoody: With due respect, the hon. Prime Minister probably did not understand the question of my learned friend, hon. Obeegadoo. It is true that, today, in the Commercial Court, it is already digitally recorded. At the Supreme Court, it is already digitally recorded, but, unfortunately, the equipment has already been placed for years now in our Intermediate and District Courts, but they are not being recorded. Some of the apparatuses have already been out of date. Are we going to have recordings in District and Intermediate Courts as well?

The Prime Minister: I explained, Mr Chairperson. I quite understood the question. My understanding is that we have started with the Commercial Court. It is exactly what I am saying. The Phase 1 of the project covers civil and commercial cases only and the contract for the application is at a testing stage. That can only be operational in early 2013; that is my understanding.

Mr Roopun: With your permission, Mr Chairperson, I would like to return to the question of overseas travel and ask the hon. Prime Minister who, in fact, decides about the overseas travel. Is it a lump sum which is given to the Judiciary and which is being administered by the Judiciary, or is it a case-to-case approval which is given by the Executive?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I am not happy with the system as it is. It is a lump sum, but the approval has to come to the Executive, but I don't decide it.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under the same item *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, I would like to ask about the Creole language which has made a lot of progress over the last 10 years. Right now, witnesses depone in Creole. This is translated into English by Magistrates. I would like to know whether we provide for development of appropriate software to take into account Creole language in our Courts.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, they are provided with facilities for translation, if need be, but I understand that in District and Intermediate Courts, the technological means are not available to do this immediately. Magistrates are taking down the proceedings in writing.

When any person who is required to give evidence, satisfies the Court that he does not possess competent knowledge of English or French, he may then give his evidence in the language with which he is best appointed. But they have technical problems and they can't do it overnight.

Mr Uteem: I am referring to the same item *Upgrading of ICT infrastructure*. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister the initial cost of the IJCE project and whether the revised price was asked by the contractor?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, in 2010, I think, for the Mauritius Network Services the amount was for USD3 m.

Mr Seeruttun: Again, under the same item, may we know who the contractor of that project is?

The Prime Minister: I hardly know who the contractor is, but it is with the Mauritius Network Services Ltd.

Mr Roopun: On the issue of language problem in Courts, Mr Chairperson, I have gone through the various items and I don't find any item on interpreters attached to Courts. I would like to be enlightened about this issue, because in the past we had interpreters, but today I understand that no interpreter is being appointed and people from outside are being called upon in cases of Bhojpuri, Hindi and so on.

The Prime Minister: I would have thought this must be provided, Mr Chairperson, because there have always been interpreters in Courts. Whether that falls under that issue or not, I will have to check.

The Judiciary - Programme Code 021: Administration and Delivery of Justice (Rs523,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

National Assembly - Programme Code 031: Parliamentary Affairs was called.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 19, under item 22180, there is a new item *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)* of Rs6,100,000. I welcome this vote because we all know the difficulties Parliament has had over the years with the Ministry of Finance. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether, as from now, all requests for fund for mission or capacity-building will be monitored by Parliament itself, by the Speaker's office or the Clerk's office instead of the Ministry of Finance, taking into account the difficulties Parliament has had over the years to approve missions of the staff and even parliamentarians?

The Prime Minister: From what I understand, Mr Chairperson, one of the difficulties was when the sessions of Parliament are ongoing, we cannot afford to have parliamentarians not here. But that is something that perhaps could be monitored by you, Mr Chairperson. You could perhaps monitor the situation because it concerns parliamentarians, but the money has to come from the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Bhagwan: On *Parliamentary Affairs*, Sir, at page 20, *Upgrading and Refurbishment of old Government House*, we are being asked to vote Rs37 m. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether we still have the services of a Project Manager, whether since the commissioning of this building, an assessment has been made by the Project Manager of MPI concerning all the loopholes since so many things are not working correctly here? We spend most of our time here when we have Parliament sessions and there are lots of defects in the way the construction has been done. So, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether there has been an assessment post-commissioning of the building? And also can I ask the hon. Prime Minister now that we are being asked to vote Rs37 m. whether an appropriate office has been earmarked for the Leader of the Opposition? We have witnessed that all the offices are being filled. Has the request been made to Mr Speaker?

The Prime Minister: First of all, on the Project Manager, Mr Chairperson, it was advertised in February 2010. The recommendation was sent to the PSC. The PSC selected the Project Manager and there has been an increase in this scope for the project and, accordingly, my understanding is that the project had been extended up to 31 March and also because of the delay in the contract, an amount of Rs6.65 m. has been charged to the contractor because of the delay. We are waiting for the substantiation of the claim.

Mr Chairperson, with regard to the Leader of the Opposition, the office has always been for it. I think you also have been for it. But when I was Leader of the Opposition I told you....

(Interruptions)

Yes, but the same thing happened to me when I was Leader of the Opposition. You said you will give, but you never gave. In fact, ...

(Interruptions)

No, I will not need the office; it is you who will need the office. I will never need the office.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence!

The Prime Minister: Not only that, I don't know whether you were here last time. When I went to the offered office, first of all, I must say that hon. Bérenger wanted me to have the office here. But I went to see Mr Speaker, who was Mr Ramnah; he said yes first, then he said there is no space here. Then, he said we can have an office for you outside Parliament. I said fine. Then, after a long delay, an office was found apparently. The now Secretary to the Cabinet was asked to - he was not in that position - make an appointment with me to go and see the office. I went to see the office. It was generally okay, except it had some modifications to be made. I took somebody who knows architecture to come with me and so, we decided that the office is fine, but the modifications will have to be made. Then, the former Prime Minister - not the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I must say...

(Interruptions)

I must tell you the story, because this is how it is.

(Interruptions)

No, but you must listen.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I say, order! Order!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: If you don't let me answer, I will stop answering questions; either you let me answer or you don't.

(Interruptions)

You must listen! Then, the former Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, said that it is too expensive. It was going to cost something about Rs900,000. When they said it was too expensive - there was no recession, but Government had no money - I said okay, I will pay for it myself and give it to whoever becomes the Leader of the Opposition after me. Nothing! We will look into it obviously because I think there are new spaces coming available soon. We will look into this.

Mr Bhagwan: The Prime Minister has probably not understood what I said about the way - we are here: *la porte cassée, lott pa bon, aircon pa travay*. I'll say it in patois. There are lots of practical problems. This is why I am asking Government whether the MPI will make an independent assessment of all the shortcomings of the way this building has been constructed.

The Prime Minister: I think all this is in the contract from what I see, Mr Chairperson; that is why there is a claim. We are claiming against the contractor which has to be substantiated. It is a huge amount – Rs6.65 m.

Mr Jhugroo: On the same item, Mr Chairperson, can we know why no consideration was made for the installation of IT equipment when the upgrading and the refurbishment of the Government House were done to enable the hon. Members to use their laptops and tablets?

The Prime Minister: I am not sure whether no provision was made or perhaps because of the cost, Mr Chairperson. I cannot see it here, but I suppose that this is not something that is going to cost too much. I can't say why it was not made, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

It was a question of looking at the structure which was in a terrible state. That was a priority.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, with regard to item 31132 - *Intangible Fixed Assets*, with reference to the e-Parliament projects, there is an amount of Rs7 m. which has been earmarked. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the project is already being installed and by which contractor given the fact that, in spite of an e-Parliament project, there is no provision to recruit a Parliamentary ICT Manager or an Office Management Executive to operate the e-Parliament project?

The Prime Minister: It is, in fact, for 2013, so, the procedures are ongoing.

The Chairperson: There is already a person in charge. Last question!

Mr Uteem: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister, at page 19, under item 22900, what are the other Goods and Services?

The Chairperson: Which page, please?

Mr Uteem: I am at page 19.

The Chairperson: We are at page 20.

Mr Uteem: Yes, but it is the same programme.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence! We have to follow. We are at page 20, which item do you have in mind?

Mr Uteem: This is at page 19 on the same programme.

The Chairperson: We are at page 20, it is over. I said at the beginning, we are proceeding page by page. Just watch it!

Mr Obeegadoo: On a point of clarity, Mr Chairperson, we are not going by programme, we are going by page.

The Chairperson: We are going page by page. This is what I said at the beginning.

Mr Obeegadoo: Okay, because, on the Judiciary, we skipped pages because we thought it was the Programme. Fine! So, I'll stick to page 20.

The Chairperson: Wait a minute, hon. Member! I made it very clear at the beginning that we are going to proceed page by page.

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: So, I think I was clear enough for everybody to understand.

Mr Obeegadoo: Anyway, there has been some confusion. We'll go page by page. Page 20, under item 31132401 - *e-Parliament projects*, I would like to know whether, for the next financial year, we are making provision for wireless Internet system to be provided for in the House?

The Prime Minister: If it is e-Parliament, it will have to be. It would be impossible. You wouldn't call it e-Parliament then.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please! I gave you a ruling last time and I explained why. We need to have the system....

(Interruptions)

May I proceed! We need to have the system set properly. That is why I said, for the time being, no tablets will be allowed in the House.

National Assembly - Programme Code 031: Parliamentary Affairs (Rs199,160,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

National Audit Office - Programme Code 041: External Audit and Assurance Services (Rs120,312,000) was called and agreed to.

Public and Disciplined Forces Service Commissions - Programme Code 051: Public and Disciplined Forces Service Affairs was called.

The Chairperson: It starts from page 30.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, I want to be enlightened as regards *Achievements/Constraints and Challenges* at page 29. I just wanted to be guided whether we can ask details about the various strategic notes because I have the impression that we are skipping.

The Chairperson: No. The debate is over; now we are dealing item by item. If you have any question on any item, you tell us the page and the item number.

Mr Obeegadoo: I shall try to abide by your rules, Mr Chairperson. At page 29...

(Interruptions)

Who is chairing the debate? Do I understand there is a Chairperson there?

The Chairperson: Proceed, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 29, on Strategic Direction, there is the third bullet which refers to maintaining ethical standards and then on page 32, we have Personal Emoluments. One of the issues that has been raised is as to whether generally there can be relatives of persons holding ministerial positions being appointed to membership of the Commissions. I would like to know whether provision is being made for this practice to be discontinued in the future.

The Chairperson: Well, I am sorry this question is not allowed. This is a policy matter. Any question on this item?

Mr Baloomoody: At page 32, on item 22120 - *Fees*, may we know to whom these fees are paid and if we can have a breakdown?

The Prime Minister: The fees are based for training; the provision made is to enable officers to benefit from training opportunities relevant to the needs of the Commission. There are also fees in connection with examinations and interviews. The provision here is for payment of fees to officers who assist the Interviewing Board and expenses such as designing the questionnaires, the papers; marking and invigilation fees in connection with the examinations and also there are fees to the Mauritius Qualification Authority.

Mr Baloomoody: Very often, Senior Magistrates are called upon to chair Disciplinary Committees...

The Chairperson: Is this still on the same item?

Mr Baloomoody: Yes on fees, but I have not seen any fees for Chairperson of Disciplinary Committees. May I know on which item they are paid because, very often, the Senior Magistrates chair the Disciplinary Committees?

The Prime Minister: This would not be here. I suppose you're talking about the Judiciary.

Mr Baloomoody: No, at the Public and Disciplined Forces Service Commission, whenever there is a public servant who has to be present, who has to attend a Disciplinary Committee, very often, it is chaired by a member of the Judiciary, a Senior Magistrate. It depends on grade. May I know whether these fees come from here or from the Judiciary?

The Prime Minister: I would think, if it falls under the Judiciary, it will be over there and if he feels it does not, then, it would be here. If I get a new clarification, I would tell you. If I get something else, I will tell you, but I think that's what it is.

Public and Disciplined Forces Service Commissions - Programme Code 051: Public and Disciplined Forces Service Affairs (Rs90,639,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ombudsman's Office - Programme Code 061: Ombudsman's Services (Rs9,639,500) was called and agreed to.

Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission - Programme Code 071: Supervision of Electoral Activities and Review of Electoral Boundaries was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, on page 43, under Programme Code 071 *Review of Electoral Boundaries*, we have been asked to vote Rs1,099 m. Sir, we all know the fate of what has happened to the previous review. Can we have an idea from the hon. Prime Minister where are we concerning the boundaries? Actually, what is the latest position?

The Chairperson: Which page is it?

Mr Bhagwan: Page 43.

The Chairperson: Ok, Programme Code 071.

Mr Bhagwan: *Review of Electoral Boundaries*. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand concerning the report and also where matters stand concerning the future? Can we have some news from the hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: You can have some news certainly. There is no need for expert. We have already had the experts that we need. But I did explain in Parliament, there were questions asked, I think by yourself and hon. Obeegadoo. This review of the Electoral Boundaries, I explained, is intricately linked with the Electoral Reform that we are going to propose. It has to work together. I cannot come and ask to vote for Electoral Boundaries and change the Electoral Boundaries. So, we will come together to that.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under Programme Code 071: *Supervision of Electoral Activities and Review of Electoral Boundaries*, on page 43, there has been a lot of discussion, as the hon. Prime Minister is aware, about giving legal effect to the codes of practice which are issued by the Commission. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister taking, for instance, the issue of emoluments whether for next year, we are providing for the additional costs that will be entailed by giving legal force, legal effect to electoral codes of practice.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member, Mr Chairperson, is, I think, assuming that we will give legal force to the code of practice. Yes, I also thought that, but my understanding is that they are now reviewing the situation, because in other countries, there have been lots - including India - of difficulties in enforcing the code. It might lead to all sorts of complications. My understanding is that their view now is that perhaps it needs not be any statutory force. I am all for it, but that is their opinion and we will have to discuss it, maybe.

Mr Obeegadoo: If my colleague will allow me! Even disregarding the code of practice to enshrine the independence of the Commission, in terms of who work for it, the employees in very sensitive position, the crucial moments, does this Budget provide for the additional staff to be recruited so that the Commissions can function independently without depending on staff selected by Ministries in relation to the electoral process?

The Prime Minister: It would be impossible, Mr Chairperson, for the Electoral Supervisory Commission to have the staff to supervise election. It would be impossible; they will have to get staff from outside.

(Interruptions)

Then, we will have to pay somebody and then 11 months out of 12, he won't be working. So, that is the situation, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same item, Mr Chairperson. To have that independent institution, we find that there are office equipment and furniture, office expenses. Where is the office? I do not see any fees, any rent for that office. May we know where the Commission is situated?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that it does have an independent office and that is why they have to take the office furniture. They already have an office.

Mr Bhagwan: We are not blaming the institution itself, because we have been there these days. Is it not proper - the hon. Prime Minister will agree - that, at least, the Commission

itself should not be housed in the Electoral Commissioner's premises? They should have a building of their own, the secretariat and all the equipment. It should be a normal case. Actually, they are being, I won't say dumped in the premises of the Electoral Commissioner's Office, but they are squatting, at least.

The Chairperson: The office to be independently housed?

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this Budget will cater for them to have a new and an independent office?

The Prime Minister: In fact, it was always like this. My understanding is that they have an office in the city building on the 9th Floor. I am not sure whether it is the same building or a different building.

(Interruptions)

That is a good point that we can look into.

Mr Uteem: On item 21111 *Other Staff Costs*, a sum of Rs145,000 is budgeted, but there is no staffing position other than for the Chairman and the members of the Commission. So, may I know what are the other staff costs; to whom it is paid and what it relates to?

The Prime Minister: That is, for example, for the travelling and transport. There is travel grant for two advisers; there has to be mileage allowance during the election time and also there is staff welfare there; they have to make provision for it.

Mr Uteem: Under item 22120 *Fees*, may I know to whom the fees are paid?

The Prime Minister: These are the fees which are paid for Court cases which may be entered in the Supreme Court related to eventual electoral petitions, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Roopun: On the same item, I see a sum of Rs185 m. earmarked for next year.

The Chairperson: On the same item?

Mr Roopun: Yes, on the same item. A bit down *Fees icw Election*, a sum of Rs185 m. is being earmarked for next year. Could I have some details? It is at page 48.

The Chairperson: No, we are on page 43.

Mr Roopun: Sorry!

Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission - Programme Code 071: Supervision of Electoral Activities and Review of Electoral Boundaries (Rs4,244,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Electoral Commissioner's Office - Programme Code 081: Electoral Services was called.

Mr Uteem: On page 48, item 22120016 *Fees icw Election*, I see that there is an amount of Rs185 m. for next year. Is that an indication that the general election would be held next year?

The Prime Minister: As you know, we always have to make a provision, because it is the Prime Minister who decides and nobody else. There will be no election next year, I can guarantee that.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 48, I just want some factual information. Programme 081 Electoral Services, publications and stationery for the Commissioner's Office, the Budget is being slashed by half from this year to next year. Similarly, travelling within the Republic is being slashed from Rs1 m. to Rs600,000, but overseas travel mission and capacity building increases from nil this year - strange enough - to Rs700,000. Maybe there are some readjustments in items; the hon. Prime Minister might care to enlighten us?

The Prime Minister: There is no readjustment, Mr Chairperson, because the Village Elections and the Municipal Elections are being held this year. In this context, provision for such payments has to be made for 2013. But there is no need to make other provisions because the elections would have been held. As for Rodrigues, again, in relation to house-to-house enquiry and registration of electors for 2013, provisions made in 2012 were, from my understanding, for passage and accommodation costs of officials in Rodrigues in connection with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Now, most of the expenses, of course, are non recurrent, except for the registration of electors.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 48, under item 22 *Goods and Services*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether we have had in the past, studies concerning the electronic voting? There had been visits to India by both Government and the Opposition. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether process for Mauritius to go for electronic voting ...

The Chairperson: Which item is it?

Mr Bhagwan: At page 48, Programme 081: *Electoral Services*, item 22 *Goods and Services*.

The Chairperson: Alright.

Mr Bhagwan: I will repeat myself. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether Government is proceeding ahead with this project of electronic voting?

The Chairperson: Well, this is a question which is best for a PQ.

The Prime Minister: I am all for it. If we have a consensus - I know the Electoral Commission was looking at it. There were some complaints from some quarters. There were some articles. You will always find an article which says the other way round, but, I think, generally, there is consensus on it. It works generally, except in Florida, it does not work.

Electoral Commissioner's Office – Programme Code 081: Electoral Services (Rs250,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Employment Relations Tribunal – Programme Code 091: Industrial Dispute Resolutions was called.

Mr Uteem: At page 53, last item *Employment Relations Tribunal, SS1: Percentage of cases disposed of within the time limit as provided by law*, it is around 50%, but I don't see any increase in staffing. Is there any amount budgeted to increase the efficiency of the Tribunal?

The Prime Minister: There were some cases with backlog, Mr Chairperson, but my understanding is that the backlog is getting better.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 51, paragraph 2, *Major Constraints and Challenges*, it is said that the number of employment disputes is on the rise. Clearly, there is a problem of staffing there. They could have achieved only around 50% of what is the legal time limit. In fact, there is no increase in manpower. What is budgeted to make sure that we, at least, stay within the legal time limit?

The Prime Minister: I think they take into consideration the time limits that now have to be taken into consideration, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Roopun: May I go to page 54? Under item 22120002 *Fees to Chairman and Members of Boards and Committees*, I see the fees are being decreased. It appears to be a bit in contradiction with the number of hearings which the Tribunal is envisaging, according to the strategic plan. Why is there a decrease in the fees payable to the Chairman?

Mr Obeegadoo: I have one question before going on to page 54. I thought you are going page by page, Sir; that is, why I was struggling to follow.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member can put his question.

Mr Obeegadoo: Because if we are going page by page, then we should finish page 53.

The Chairperson: Let us now go to page 53!

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 53, the same item raised by my colleagues, that is, the last item on page 53 ...

The Chairperson: Employment Relations Tribunal.

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, the percentage of cases disposed of within the time limits as provided by law. Here, we have the medium-term planning we are targeting at. I want to understand from the Prime Minister, since we are budgeting public money and we want to be effective, how is it that with regard to time limits provided by law, as far off as 2022, our target will only be 56% in 2022 to comply with time limits provided by law. I don't understand.

The Prime Minister: Well, this is a target, Mr Chairperson. Again, administrative is not part of my duty. As I have just been told, the percentage does not depend on us; it depends on the Tribunal. They are putting targets, but, hopefully, they will reach beyond those targets.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, under item 22120002 *Fees to Chairman and Members of Boards and Committees*, I note that the amount budgeted will drop from this year to the next. Does this mean that we are taking into account the fact that the personnel in charge of the Tribunal is now having recourse to private arbitration to supplementary incomes?

The Prime Minister: No. For private arbitration, that is, we will have to have the permission of the President, as you know. I can't say how they can rely on this, because it does not depend on them. It is not a regular income. So, I can't see how that will be taken into consideration.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, at page 54, under item 22030 *Rent*, I can see that there is a substantial increase in the rent amount for the year 2013 and it goes up again in 2014. May we know what justifies that increase?

The Prime Minister: That is because there has been additional space created and there is provision in the contract for that.

Mr Baloomoody: Under the same item 22120002 *Fees to Chairman and Members of Boards and Committees*, is the hon. Prime Minister telling us that the Chairman of the Employment Relations Tribunal needs the permission of the President to take private arbitration or only the Judges of the Supreme Court?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that it must be after working hours and it must have the authorisation of the hon. Chief Justice and the Master and Registrar.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I then seek confirmation from the Prime Minister that in budgeting these funds, we are being given the assurance that there will be no private work, i.e. such as in Disciplinary Committee hearings, as you are well aware, Mr Chairperson, will be

performed during office hours on weekdays? Do we have the assurance of the Prime Minister there?

The Chairperson: I do not think that the Prime Minister can answer this question!

The Prime Minister: I cannot give the hon. Member that answer.

The Chairperson: Any more questions?

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Under the item of *Rent*, I suppose this is a tribunal which is very well accommodated building-wise and there is a significant increase in *Rent*, my arithmetic is not great, but is it 10%?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: This question has been answered!

Mr Obeegadoo: On *Rent*? But then can I ask about *Publications and Stationery*? Again, in this case, there is a drop in the budget - on the very same page. May we know what accounts for this drop in the amounts budgeted?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It is because, as I said, the office equipment and furniture have already been purchased; so, they do not need to be purchased every year.

(Interruptions)

Employment Relations Tribunal - Programme Code 091: Industrial Dispute Resolutions (Rs21,560,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Local Government Service Commission - Programme Code 101: Local Government Human Resource Affairs (Rs22,337,000) was called and agreed to.

Independent Broadcasting Authority – Programme Code 121: Supervision of Broadcasting was called.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Bhagwan! It is on page 64.

Mr Bhagwan: The Independent Broadcasting Authority which is not independent!

(Interruptions)

On page 64, *Programme Code 121*, we are being asked to vote Rs9,100,000 for an institution which is not independent according to us...

The Chairperson: No, put the question!

Mr Bhagwan: I am asking the question.

The Chairperson: Put the question!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know whether the Prime Minister has been aware of the way this institution has been working...

(Interruptions)

You are not the Prime Minister! Go at *Coin Ideal*!

The Chairperson: Please, no interruption!

Mr Bhagwan: *To penkor vine Premier ministre ale assiz cot Coin Ideal labas to cozer!*

The Chairperson: No interruption!

(Interruptions)

Proceed!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Ale assiz cot Coin Ideal!*

(Interruptions)

Ale assiz cot Coin Idéal labas to cozer.

(Interruptions)

Ale assiz cot Coin Idéal...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, order!

Mr Bhagwan: *Vine cot mwa, coup de pied to gagner, coup de pied. Vine cot mwa to gagne coup de pied couillon !*

The Chairperson: Please, order!

Mr Bhagwan: *Coup de pied mo fou twa!*

The Chairperson: Proceed with your question, hon. Member!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Twa coup de pied to gagner ar mwa, vini!*

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson : Hon. Aimée !

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Vini coup de pied !*

(Interruptions)

Li dir li vine dans mo lacaze sa bachara là !

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, proceed with your question!

(Interruptions)

Silence, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Laryaze! Sale mo la main are twa...*

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I want some order!

(Interruptions)

Proceed with your question, hon. Member!

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, what I am asking the Prime Minister is, we have all heard the public uproar concerning the decision taken by the IBA which, according to us, is not independent. Can the Prime Minister circulate the names of the members and the Chairperson of the IBA and, at least, Sir, on behalf of the Opposition, I am moving formally a motion that the Rs9,100,000 be left with only one rupee.

(Interruptions)

We will remove all the sum...

(Interruptions)

I am making a motion, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

I am making a motion that the whole sum be reduced because this institution is not independent.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: There has been a motion made...

The Chairperson: No, he has put a question!

Mr Obeegadoo: No, this

(Interruptions)

There is a motion.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Wait a minute!

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the question be answered first? I was rising having regard to the motion. Is your guidance that we should hear the answer to the question first?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: Fine, then I shall rise on the motion.

The Prime Minister: The answer is very simple. These are the people who say they believe in real democracy! These are the very people! Okay, let me answer the question! My understanding is that they have not banned or suspended phone-in programmes in general. The public is still free to call to the radio stations to air their views or feelings on all issues other than political during the election campaign...

(Interruptions)

Otherwise what! You get free air! We do not know how they work? I know how they work!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Well, order!

(Interruptions)

I say order!

(Interruptions)

I say order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody, Order! Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

The problem is that you have put a question, when you get the answer, you are not happy!

(Interruptions)

You listen to the answer of the Prime Minister....

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, proceed with your question!

Mr Bhagwan: I have made a motion and I am asking my friend to second the motion and then we will see what Government will tell us, but for us this institution is not independent and the Prime Minister knows. He knows...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, wait a minute! Wait! I have to give a ruling as to whether you cannot make a motion at the Committee of Supply stage.

(Interruptions)

Please, listen to me!

(Interruptions)

You better come with a proper motion!

(Interruptions)

Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a question further to the answer just given by the hon. Prime Minister.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am asking the...

The Chairperson: But before you put your question, guide us to which item.

Mr Obeegadoo: The item is the general vote on page 64 of Rs9,100,000.

The Chairperson: Alright, proceed!

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is: I have listened to the answer given by the hon. Prime Minister, is the Prime Minister aware that contrary to the prevailing practice ever since private radios came into existence, contrary to prevailing practice for the two general elections of 2005 and 2010, contrary to the prevailing practice for the Municipal elections of 2005, this time the IBA has issued directives banning, and I quote –

“Broadcasting of any live or recorded phone-in or call-in programmes on political matters or politically related matters.”

In other words, denying the right to free expression, gagging Mauritians two weeks before elections! Never seen in any democracy...

The Chairperson: I will have to stop you, hon. Member...

Mr Obeegadoo: I ask the Prime Minister...

The Chairperson: I have to stop you, hon. Member!

(Interruptions)

This is Committee of Supply stage, no need to make a speech! You have the right to put a question; you are welcome to put a question!

(Interruptions)

Wait a minute!

(Interruptions)

What is your question?

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is: since we have this amount that is being budgeted, is he aware of the undemocratic practice observed by this Commission?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, this is a policy matter, but still I will answer a piece of it because there are inaccuracies in what he said.

(Interruptions)

According ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence, hon. Bhagwan!

The Prime Minister: According to the law, this can be done, but, first of all, let me say that I understand that the Director-General of the IBA has pointed out to the radio stations and they have admitted that they are unable to provide a balance when the programme is in. They cannot provide a balance. It has to be balanced!

(Interruptions)

It has to be balanced and now...

(Interruptions)

And now for your information...

(Interruptions)

Do you want to listen or not?

(Interruptions)

If you want to listen I am answering the question! If you do not want to listen, I will sit down!

(Interruptions)

But let me tell you

(Interruptions)

Let me tell you...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence!

The Prime Minister: Unlike of what you think, in France the CSA has decided that *la programmation des émissions d'expressions directes est suspendue jusqu'à la date du scrutin*. It is the same in France, so, what are you saying?

The Chairperson: Next question!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: But I have the evidence here!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I have officially made a motion that the amount be removed.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, please I am speaking to you! What is your motion, please?

Mr Bhagwan: That this budget be reduced to R1.

(Interruptions)

Trop bokou mem donn zott ça!

(Interruptions)

We are being asked to vote public money, taxpayers' money amounting to Rs9,100,000.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, listen to the question!

(Interruptions)

Yes, proceed!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, through you, I am making a motion that this item ...

(Interruptions)

Out of this item...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Well, silence I say. Let the hon. Member proceed with his question!

Mr Bhagwan: Instead of Rs9,100,000, the sum be reduced to R1.

(Interruptions)

The reason is that they are not performing; they are not performing independently.

The Chairperson: Okay.

(Interruptions)

There is no need to second.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I have already answered.

(Interruptions)

There is a bias. The same people are ringing. There is no balance. They themselves accept there is no balance. They ...

(Interruptions)

They canvass people to ring. Do you think that we do not know?

(Interruptions)

And the IBA has decided there has to be a balance like they do in other countries and that is the reason.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on the same item, at page 64 ...

Mr Baloomoody: Can we debate on the motion?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member wants to say something on it?

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, I want to say why I support the motion of my learned friend.

The Chairperson: There is no need to second.

Mr Baloomoody: No, I am not seconding. I am just saying why we are supporting the motion because we want to believe that if this institution is not independent ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence!

Mr Baloomoody: ... this institution is biased, and this institution is taking ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I say some silence! The hon. Member may speak on the motion.

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. In fact, we are asking the taxpayers – it is not my money, it is not the Government's money – to give to the Independent Broadcasting Authority a sum of Rs9.1 m. My friend, hon. Bhagwan, has moved that we reduce it to R1. I support that proposition because the IBA is not an independent authority. The IBA is a biased authority, which takes instruction elsewhere, and has people on the Board who are ...

The Chairperson: Yes, but the hon. Member is repeating exactly what hon. Bhagwan has said. You should not repeat!

Mr Baloomoody: The IBA is supposed to supervise all the radios and the TV. I am adding that they are biased inasmuch as it does not control any of the MBC radios and not even the MBC/TV. The MBC/TV has been campaigning all throughout up to today for the Government in view of the forthcoming municipal elections, and no action has been taken by the IBA, be it on all the radios and the MBC/TV.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I say silence! According to the Standing Orders, the hon. Members have the right to.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Chief Whip!

Mr Obeegadoo: There is an ongoing dialogue between the Whips. I was waiting for that to subside.

The Chairperson: I am not going to allow repetition.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, if I may be allowed to speak. You said there was no need to second the motion, but you have allowed us to speak on the motion.

The Chairperson: Yes, the hon. Member can speak on the motion.

Mr Obeegadoo: What we are saying is that we, on this side of the House, and I hope that any reasonable Member on the other side of the House, will ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence!

Mr Obeegadoo: ...agree that, to the extent that this Broadcasting Authority is not operating in an independent manner ...

The Chairperson: The hon. Member is repeating. I have said clearly that I will not allow repetition. Enough time has been given to the hon. Member. We have 20 minutes for this item.

On question put, motion defeated.

(Interruptions)

Please, sit down!

(Interruptions)

Silence, please! I say silence!

(Interruptions)

Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Today is a very sad day for democracy. On the same item ...

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Ameer Meea: Page 64, *Supervision of Broadcasting*, where an amount of Rs9.1 m.

...

(Interruptions)

No, it is not yet voted.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: If there is no order, I am going to suspend. Please, put your question!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 64, there is a sum of Rs9.1 m. earmarked. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if we can have the breakdown of this figure?

Mr Obeegadoo: This amount presumably includes fees to members of the IBA - the Chairperson and members. A question was put, which has not yet been answered. Who are the members? I would like to go further to say who are the members, and what are their qualifications other than their affiliation to the Labour Party.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I don't know whether they know that there is a Complaints Committee, plus there are different members for the IBA.

(Interruptions)

But if the hon. Member does not like, what is the point for him to say...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, please! Let the hon. Prime Minister answer!

The Prime Minister: I will circulate the names. These are for their wages plus the number of complaints that have been received. It also includes the interview that they have made, the directives that they have issued and all this. That is what the sum is for.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister - he surely must have the list - whether Mr Dulthumun is a member of that Independent Broadcasting Authority? Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the country, to the nation at large whether Mr Dulthumun is a member of the IBA?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, there are eight members.

The Chairperson: The hon. Prime Minister is answering the question. I want some silence.

(Interruptions)

I want some silence, I say!

The Prime Minister: There are eight members, of which he is one.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bundhoo!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, I asked the hon. Prime Minister the breakdown of the fees of Rs9.1 m. Can I have the breakdown?

The Prime Minister: I have just given the hon. Member a brief summary. I will circulate it at some point. There are 41 complaints on one issue; there are 64 complaints on another radio; there is one complaint and another one; two on the satellite system; 97 on another one, and there are directives. So, it will take some time to compute.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, on the same item, which refers to page 65, I see under *Services to be provided - S2: Monitoring of programme content, and number of programme hours monitored (Radio) - 20,888 hrs.* Would the hon. Prime Minister give us details about the monitoring done per radio station? How much for each station? Also, I don't find any monitoring about television. I wanted to know if the IBA carries out monitoring of television programmes.

The Chairperson: No, the hon. Member should come with a PQ.

Mr Roopun: I wanted to ...

The Chairperson: I have ruled. Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister how many complaints have been received by the IBA with regard to the MBC and the outcome thereof? My second question ...

The Chairperson: Before the hon. Member proceeds, to which item is he referring to?

Mr Jhugroo: It's the same item.

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Jhugroo: It's item 121.

The Chairperson: Yes, item 121 is about *Supervision of Broadcasting*.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether IBA is giving equal treatment to all broadcasting agencies?

The Prime Minister: The answer is yes, and for your information even the MBC is being monitored. They have been identified as two potential breaches committed by the MBC and they are going ahead with it.

The Chairperson: I allow a last question to hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On the same item, I suppose there is an item - *Fees Paid to Board Members*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what is the total amount of fees paid to members of this Board?

The Prime Minister: I explained, Mr Chairperson, there is not just the IBA Board; there is also a Complaints Committee. Everybody has to be paid. I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Time is over!

Independent Broadcasting Authority - Programme Code 121: Supervision of Broadcasting (Rs9,100,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: I suspend for one and a half hours.

At 8.16 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.46 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Independent Commission Against Corruption – Programme Code 131: Combating Corruption was called.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, the ICAC has been in operation for more than seven years

...

The Chairperson: Which item, please?

Mr Jhugroo: Item 131. Mr Chairperson, ...

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Jhugroo: Page 67, at the top, Overview of Department ...

The Chairperson: Page 69?

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, the ICAC has been in operation for more than seven years

...

The Chairperson: Question!

Mr Jhugroo: ... and the performance has been nil ...

The Chairperson: Question, please!

Mr Jhugroo: Given that so many cases have been dragging on for so many years despite millions are being spent every year...

The Chairperson: Question, please! No statement!

(Interruptions)

Silence! Question, please! No statement!

Mr Jhugroo: My question would be on *Combating Corruption*.

The Chairperson: Put your question!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

Mr Jhugroo: It is clear that ICAC is no more an independent body....

The Chairperson: No, no! Put your question!

Mr Jhugroo: I move for a motion, Mr Chairperson, that the amount we have been asked to vote today be reduced to R1 because it is no more independent. ICAC was supposed *pou pas guette figire*, but today it is doing the contrary! So, I move for the motion, for the amount that we are asked to vote ...

The Chairperson: Your question is not in order!

Mr Jhugroo: May I know why my question is not in order?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence! I have said your question is not in order!

Mr Jhugroo: I am asking whether this could be reduced to the amount of R1. I move for a motion.

The Chairperson: I repeat, your question is not in order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, I want to be guided. There was a similar motion made by an hon. Member earlier on and the Chair allowed the motion; I wanted just to be guided on the procedure.

The Chairperson: The motion put by the hon. Member was comprehensive. The question put by hon. Jhugroo is not a proper question.

(Interruptions)

I am not going to allow any statement. If the hon. Member has any question, I will listen, otherwise I won't listen.

Mr Jhugroo: My question is whether the amount to be voted today can be reduced to R1 being given that ICAC is not an independent institution as it was supposed to be.

The Chairperson: Now, are you making a motion or putting a question?

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: A motion.

The Chairperson: Your motion is in the form of a question. It is not allowed.

Mr Jhugroo: So, I move for the amount of the budget to be reduced to R1.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I still maintain that the hon. Member's question is out of order.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, I have a question and I move for a motion. Being given that ICAC is not an independent institution, I would like to know whether the hon. Prime Minister will consider reducing this amount to R1 and I move for a motion.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, silence! The hon. Member is trying to do his job, but the job has to be done according to the Standing Orders. Is he putting a question or making a motion? This is the first hurdle. The second one is ...

(Interruptions)

Wait a minute, please! The second one is...

(Interruptions)

Sit down! I will guide you. When you put a question, you say an amount, nobody knows that amount. You have to be specific about the amount. So, which amount do you want to reduce?

(Interruptions)

Silence! We give him his chance to do so.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, I move that the amount of Rs203,500,000 be reduced to Rs10.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: That is correct! Now, it is correct! Now, it is a motion.

(Interruptions)

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, will we be allowed to, at least, give our opinion on this motion?

The Chairperson: This is what I don't understand, there is a motion and everybody keeps quiet, so, I put the question.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, the issue is that the ICAC has so far not satisfied this side of the House that the statutory duty ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I say, silence!

Mr Roopun: ... imposed upon it is being done according to fairness and in undue independence and we move that the amount which is supposed to be appropriated under this item be reduced due to the unsatisfactory nature of the work done by this Commission. And, in fact, there are various instances where those near to power are being treated in a manner where investigations are dragging on at the level of the ICAC.

The Chairperson: Therefore, the question is that the sum of Rs203,500,000...

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, there is a motion. We rule on the motion, then, we come to the vote, because we have questions to ask with regard to the vote.

The Chairperson: I said that the motion is proper now. That is why I am putting the question. *La motion est recevable. C'est okay.*

Mr Baloomoody: *C'est recevable...*

The Chairperson: So, therefore, the question is that the sum of Rs203,500,000 appropriated to ICAC be reduced to Rs10.

(Interruptions)

Silence! Therefore, the motion is that the said sum be reduced to Rs10.

On question put, motion defeated.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I would wish to have some explanations from the hon. Prime Minister; I refer to page 71. There are increases provided for in the number of positions of Chief Investigator, Senior Investigator and Investigator. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister what the rationale is for such an increase. Whether it is the volume of work that is increasing or not and, if I may put a two-in-one to make things shorter, on page 70, there is also the *Capital Grant* to ICAC which is increasing from Rs45 m. to Rs60 m. Could we also have some explanations as to that?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, as for the procedure which is adopted by ICAC and staff and all this, I am sure the hon. Member knows that under the Prevention of Corruption Act of 2002, it is meant to operate as an independent Body and its operation is monitored only by the Parliamentary Committee. That has always been the case and will remain the case.

As for the *Capital Grant*, that I can tell you, they are actually renting a building and the workload has increased and, therefore, they are trying to get a new building at Ébène. This is the provision for it.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I have a further question? The hon. Prime Minister is surely aware that there have been questions raised as to the necessity to independently evaluate the effectiveness and the efficiency of ICAC having regard to the budget voted year after year and even...

(Interruptions)

I am addressing the hon. Prime Minister through the Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence!

Mr Obeegadoo: If my question is not properly put, Mr Chairperson, I seek guidance from you and not from Minister Jeetah. I address the hon. Prime Minister, and there is only one Prime Minister as far as I am aware.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Just a minute! Silence! Hon. Member, could you tell us under which item you are speaking?

Mr Obeegadoo: To the overall estimates on page 69.

The Chairperson: Correct! Carry on!

Mr Obeegadoo: That is logical. I thought you would have caught that. So, my question to the hon. Prime Minister is: he is aware that there have been calls...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, I would appeal not to interrupt. Time is running out.

Mr Obeegadoo: Precisely. That there needs to be independent evaluation. Even from within Government in the past, there have been calls for benchmarking of the work of ICAC as is the case for similar Bodies overseas. So, I would like to know if, in the interest of the proper utilisation of public resources, that the Budget for next year does provide, at long last, for some mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness and the cost-efficiency of ICAC's operations.

The Prime Minister: As I said, Mr Chairperson, this is to be monitored by the Parliamentary Committee, not by me.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the *Current Grant* in the recurrent budget, the amount earmarked is Rs143,500,000. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister how much of it is devoted to compensation of employees, salaries and wages, given the fact that there is an increase of 15 employees in ICAC and there is an increase in the amount budgeted by

Rs3.5 m. which should in effect cater also for PRB? So, can we know how much is devoted to payment of salaries and wages out of this current Budget?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, let me perhaps say what previous Prime Ministers have said in the past about ICAC. Let me just quote what the former Prime Minister, now Leader of the Opposition, has said. He has said that –

“The Government has refrained under the former Prime Minister and, myself, as Minister of Finance, including last year from giving any details on the basis that there are different Supervisory and Advisory Committees, but especially a Parliamentary Committee that supervises the functioning of ICAC. Therefore, the former Prime Minister and myself felt that out of due respect to ICAC, in the spirit of the independence of the Commission, we should leave it to the Commission to look into all these issues or the Supervisory and Advisory Committees. The Prime Minister should not look into that.”

Mr Baloomoody: I do understand what the hon. Prime Minister has said with regard to the then Prime Minister, but, at that time, the appointment of the Directors of ICAC - there was a Committee presided by the President, including the hon. Prime Minister, who was then Leader of the Opposition, and the then Prime Minister who is now Leader of the Opposition. Now that things have changed, this statement does not stand; things are different. So, we should now be able to ask questions, because now there is a political innuendo to the appointments of the Directors of ICAC. So, we will ask questions. This is why we withdrew at that time, because there was a specific Committee. Now, it is different. It is only on the advice of the hon. Prime Minister. It must be clear that Parliament today is being asked to vote a lump sum to ICAC with no details whatsoever about the expenditure. So, we are entitled - because it is taxpayers' money - to ask questions of how this money will be used. We found one important issue regarding ICAC on page 67; *Delays in obtaining itemised bills from different agencies* - agencies including Ministerial agencies - *and disclosures by banks*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, from this Budget, whether we have made provision to ensure that, at least, these disclosures are made available to ICAC within reasonable delay?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, let me first address the point that was made that there is a difference in the appointment. The way it was done before, it was just hoodwinking the population. I will tell you why. I have been in that Committee; you have the President from MSM and the Prime Minister from the MSM and then, you put the Leader of the Opposition who

is outvoted every time: two to one. So, where is the difference? So, I will stick to the same answer that I gave you.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether we may have some clarifications of the global ICAC budget which is on page 69; whether, we may know what proportion thereof is going to investigation as opposed to the two other functions of prevention and education.

The Prime Minister: This is precisely what I said, Mr Chairperson. I am not going to go into the administration of ICAC. We have a Parliamentary Committee, let them ask the question. Same question, same answer.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, Programme 131 ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Put your question!

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, under Programme 131, a sum of Rs140 m. had been spent for combating corruption. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this includes the famous case of the Councillor of Quatre Bornes where a lady was caught ...

The Chairperson: No, question not allowed!

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson ...

The Chairperson: I said question not allowed! Hon. Ameer Meea, do you have a question?

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same item, on page 67 – *Major Constraints and Challenges* and how they are being addressed. It says: discrepancies in certain aspect of the law which need to be addressed; necessary amendments to the law still awaited. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister which section of the law needs to be changed and whether the ICAC has requested that certain sections of the law be changed?

The Prime Minister: Again, it is a matter of policy, but it is the Parliamentary Committee which has to look into this, not me.

Independent Commission Against Corruption – Programme Code 131: Combating Corruption (Rs203,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

National Human Rights Commission – Programme Code 141: Protection and Promotion of Human Rights was called.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to item 26 *Grants*. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister why there is not any list of staffing positions attached to that Commission and could the hon. Prime Minister enlighten us on the number of support staff and the names of the members attached to the Commission?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, as the hon. Member probably knows, we have just amended the law. A new law has been passed at the National Assembly and it is going to be proclaimed. Once it is proclaimed, the different measures will be taken; staff and everything. People will be named.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same item, the issue of proper appointment of a Chairperson and members of the Commission has been raised time and time again. Why are we being asked to vote a new budget for a new financial year? Why has this still not been addressed?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member should know we have just passed the law. We have changed the whole structure two months ago. The law has to be proclaimed and then they are going to be named.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister why all the time we have been waiting for the new law to be passed; that Commission has not been submitting any report for the past two or three years?

The Prime Minister: No, it is not true. They have submitted a report.

The Chairperson: No, the question is not proper. The hon. Member must come with a PQ.

Mr Uteem: Still on item 26 *Grants*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister why is there a reduction in the current grants for 2013 and then it goes up again?

The Prime Minister: I have just answered the question. As you know, we have separated the Equal Opportunities Commission from them and there has been provision which was made, for example, separately for the Sex Discrimination Division which is no longer required. I am giving it as an example.

Mr Obeegadoo: We are being asked to vote, nonetheless, Rs10.3 m. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of this situation right now whereby the Police Complaints Bureau is no longer operational and, on the other hand, the Commission is not yet functional with its new responsibilities as a result of which identification parades cannot be held independently and this is creating a major problem? We are going to vote this amount. Can we have a clear

commitment from the hon. Prime Minister as to when the new legislative provisions enacted are going to be proclaimed so that justice is done?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that there is a problem with the parades and whether they are not functional at all. I have not been made aware of that, but in any case, the law is being proclaimed. As soon as the law is proclaimed, the Division will be staffed with different people. As you know, there will be a Chairperson overlooking everything and there will be three Divisions with three Deputy Chairpersons.

Mr Baloomoody: I would refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 72. One of the major constraints of the Human Rights Commission is that 'Recommendations made by the Commission to the relevant Institutions are not binding'. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether provision has been made in that budget to ensure that, at least, their recommendations are binding on other institutions?

The Prime Minister: I don't know whether we should make that provision, Mr Chairperson. We can look into it. There might be a reason why it is not binding.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on the same item, Programme 151 on page 79, there has been a substantial increase...

The Chairperson: I am sorry, which page?

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 79.

The Chairperson: Page 79. The hon. Member is wrong. It's Ombudsperson.

Mr Obeegadoo: Still on the same point, the hon. Prime Minister did not seem to understand the question. So, if I may be allowed to explain. My question is as follows. In the past, we had a Police Complaints Bureau whereby if there was an allegation of in propriety on the part of the Police, the Police Complaints Bureau handled the enquiry, organised the identification parade, of course, it did not do anything afterwards which is why the hon. Prime Minister came with a new law which we supported. We had misgivings, but we supported the general thrust of the law which said that the Commission will deal with this. My question is: whereas we are being asked to vote this budget, right now, the Police Complaints Bureau is no longer functioning properly so that the same Police station where a person has allegedly been victimised or assaulted, has to conduct the identification parade and the Commission says that it cannot do otherwise because it has to refer to the Commissioner of Police.

The Prime Minister: I heard the hon. Member saying: in any case, they were not functioning. It was not a satisfactory situation. The hon. Member wants me to go back to the unsatisfactory situation. What we are saying is this is why we changed the law. As soon as it is proclaimed, it will be done.

National Human Rights Commission – Programme Code 141: Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (Rs10,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ombudsperson for Children’s Office – Programme Code 151: Protection and Promotion of Children’s Rights and Interests was called.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 79, under item 21110 *Personal Emoluments*, there has been a substantial increase of Rs1.4 m. whereas in the number of posts, there has been only an increase of one employee. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why there is such a substantial increase?

The Prime Minister: This provision is for the basic salary of 13 funded positions, and then there are allowances, cash in lieu of leave and end of the year bonus and service to Mauritius Programme which we mentioned earlier. Because there are 13 funded positions, that is the case.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, may I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 76 about the overview of department? “High percentage of child abuse/child neglect cases and difficulties to convince stakeholders to invest in prevention and engaged in rehabilitation. Sensitisation and training of stakeholders will be undertaken and ongoing advocacy with different departments.” We have just heard last week allegations of child abuse at the MITD. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether provision has been made in this budget to ensure that all responsible parties are sensitised with regard to the issue of child abuse?

When I look at the number of staff which we had last year, it will be increased by one only. What provision has been made to increase the number of staff professionals in order to sensitise responsible parties of authorities, be it teachers, head teachers, head of departments with regard to child abuse?

The Prime Minister: This is policy matter. Lots of activities have been done and the number has been increased by one. As far as I know, there has been no demand for further increase; they are satisfied and in spite of that, the number has been increased by one.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 79, item 22030 *rent*, the amount for 2013 has gone up to Rs1.2 m. May we know why that increase and whether it is new premises and, if so, where is it located and whether tender exercise has been carried out to move the new premises?

The Prime Minister: There has been a need for additional space and also additional parking space.

Mr Ameer Meea: I will go back to the *Personal Emoluments*. My question to the hon. Prime Minister is: there has been only one increase in the number of employees and the increase has been substantial for *Personal Emoluments* by Rs1.4 m. for one staff. Why such an increase?

The Prime Minister: Yes, it is not for one staff. I should make it clearer. It is also being provided in the PRB Report that it is going to be implemented.

Mrs Ribot: I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister, on page 77, among the *Major Services* - there is the *Training of educational staff, frontline officers and staff of NGOs on the Rights of the Child*. And I don't see the item *Training* in the Budget. I would like to know which sum has been earmarked for it.

The Prime Minister: We can't go back to page 77. We have reached 79.

The Chairperson: It is about training.

(Interruptions)

Silence!

(Interruptions)

It is about training.

The Prime Minister: They are already being trained and that is ongoing. There is provision.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: In relation to the staff of the Ombudsperson, may I know from the list, because I can't see from the list of human resource whether there is any psychiatrist attached to the office of the Ombudsperson?

The Prime Minister: I would have thought, but I can't say for sure, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, allow me to go back to my question on rent. I did ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the increase was with relation to an increase in space. He did say it is due for increase in space. I also asked whether a tender exercise was carried out.

The Chairperson: I am sorry, this question has been answered. Hon. Obeegadoo, put your question. It has been answered; we are wasting time.

(Interruptions)

Silence!

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is of a general nature and refers to the global Estimates, the global budget on page 77. Overall, we are being asked to vote a 20% increase at page 77 and I wanted to ask the Prime Minister what accounts for that increase and what we can expect in terms of enhanced services as a consequence of that increase.

The Prime Minister: I have just explained, Mr Chairperson that this takes into account the payment for the PRB. The PRB is going to be for next year; that has to take into account for that.

The Chairperson: It is a huge increase.

Mr Baloomoody: One question to the hon. Prime Minister at page 79, item 22120 *Fees*. We find that there has been a drastic reduction in the amount paid with regard to fees. It was Rs35,000; now it is Rs10,000. May we know for what purpose these fees were paid and why is it that for next year, we are budgeting only Rs10,000?

The Prime Minister: I think there was an item for legal fees with the provision of Rs25,000 which has been deleted because they felt there is no need for that. The fees for training are already there.

Ombudsperson for Children's Office – Programme Code 151: Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights and Interests (Rs10,324,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions – Programme Code 161: Criminal Advisory and Litigation was called.

Mr Uteem: In relation to Programme 161, as from page 82, it is in relation to *Retainer Fees to Counsel*.

The Chairperson: You are referring to which item and which page?

Mr Uteem: At page 85, under item 22120012 - *Retainer Fees to Counsel*, we find that a sum of Rs2 m. has been earmarked for each year. May I know who these Counsels are, to whom retainer fees are paid?

The Prime Minister: You are talking about item 22120012 - *Retainer Fees to Counsel*. These are the different Counsels that we have to pay when we take cases to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. But you know the names; you were a pupil at that Chamber.

(Interruptions)

What do you mean by retainer? No, we pay the fees to the legal officers who work for that firm and also for the Barrister which, I must say, is less than what used to be charged.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 84, there is an amount for *Personal Emoluments* plus there is another amount for *Other Staff Costs*, item 21111 of Rs6.3 m. So, my question is: what is the nature of these *Other Staff Costs*?

The Prime Minister: First of all, there is a basic salary for 16 funded positions; then, they have the allowances and the cash in your service plus the end of the year bonus. This is what makes up the *Personal Emoluments*, from what I understand, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 83, Sub-Programme 16103 *Assistance to Victims and Witnesses of Crime*, we find that there is nothing under 2011. I am looking at the performance targets and the target for 2013 is 100%, whereas in terms of the estimates indicated on page 82, there is not much of an increase. So, may I have some clarifications from the hon. Prime Minister as to what precisely is covered by this programme for support and assistance to victims and witnesses? What do we mean by a 100% achievement target for 2013, and how are we going to achieve this with hardly an increase in the Budget?

The Prime Minister: Well, they seem to have achieved the necessary assistance that is needed for victims because for the issue of framework for victims' and witnesses' support, I am told the purpose for which the victims are there and they have been helped. Unfortunately, since last year, no staff had been assigned although budgetary provisions had been made. No staff had been assigned therefore; the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms has not been able to designate an officer on a full-time basis. Response from the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms is now in the pipeline.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what type of assistance do we give to victims, and victims of what? Is it road accidents, leasing of criminal offences? What type of assistance are we giving to victims and victims of what act? Is it criminal act, civil act?

The Chairperson: No, the question of the hon. Member is about policy.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, may I refer you to item 22160 - *Overseas Training* and also item 22180 - *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)*? Can I know how this sum of Rs1.8 m. has been arrived at? I also see that overseas training is no more. It was only Rs200,000 for this year and now it would seem that this amount has been grouped to Rs1.8 m. Could we have some details about it?

The Prime Minister: This is the provision. They need to have training, but there is also need for accommodation costs and also if they are travelling overseas, provision is made for costs and for the staff. That is what it covers.

Mr Roopun: How is that sum of Rs1.8 m. arrived at?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, how would I go and get the list of hotels; where they went; how many cars. This is not something that I will answer.

(Interruptions)

Mr Roopun: Sorry, Mr Chairperson, I have been told to *ferme la bouche*.

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, of course, we are approving the Budget for next year. The hon. Prime Minister cannot know the hotel and so on. It is a mere projection. Could we know what amount is being earmarked for mission; what amount is being earmarked for accommodation and so on, so that we can have an idea of how this sum of Rs1.8 m. has been estimated at least?

The Chairperson: It would be difficult for the Prime Minister to answer this question. It is for 2013; it depends upon the circumstances. Next question!

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 22090 - *Security*

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I don't want any disturbance. Put your question!

Mr Ameer Meea: Under item 22090 - *Security*, there has been a substantial increase from Rs200,000 to Rs900,000. May we know why such an increase and to whom this amount is paid?

The Prime Minister: Basically, Mr Chairperson, this concerns the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions which is independent. I cannot tell the DPP what to do.

The Chairperson: This is an administrative matter. Any more questions!

(Interruptions)

Mr Li Kwong Wing: May I put a question on item 22900933 - *Expenses related to Anti-Piracy*, may we have details of the expenses?

The Prime Minister: I think this is in relation to the involvement of the DPP's Office in the formulation of the policy and about the prosecution and all this. That is what it is.

Mr Uteem: At the same page, item 31133 - *Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings*, there is a huge amount of Rs45 m. spent on furniture, fittings and fixtures. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister why such a very substantial amount?

The Prime Minister: This is what has been spent, but also I must say again, Mr Chairperson, we are talking about the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; hardly can the Prime Minister go and ask what curtain was bought; what chair there is?

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions - Programme Code 161: Criminal Advisory and Litigation (Rs124,805,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal - Programme Code 171: Determination of Appeals by Public Officers was called.

Mr Baloomoody: I have one question on page 91 under item 22120 – *Fees*: Rs1 m. and Rs200,000. May we know to whom these fees are attributed and for what purpose?

The Prime Minister: This is a provision for the payment of fees for Counsels and Attorneys on a case-to-case basis that will be retained to represent the Tribunal before the Supreme Court.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I refer to the item 22030 – *Rent*? I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether he is aware how inappropriate the present premises of the PBAT are. And, therefore, does the budget we are being asked to vote make provision for new premises to house the PBAT?

The Prime Minister: Obviously not because it is the same amount. It's not a question. We are not the United States of America; we have a limited budget. At least, we have started; there was none before. We have done something. We are not America. We can't just build huge buildings all over the place. We have to do with what we can do. I brought the law for this Appeal Tribunal. At least, you have been there. I know. I understand that they would like to have a better building, but we do what we can.

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the Prime Minister aware that right now....

The Chairperson: No, no, no. Question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, the question. Is the Prime Minister aware that right now appellants cannot fit into the Tribunal; where the Tribunal sits, I mean the room...

(Interruptions)

The question is...

The Chairperson: Please, don't disturb!

Mr Obeegadoo: Will he agree – this is a plea being made – urgently...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I am sorry, hon. Member, no statement, no speech, question; your question?

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes. My question is: will the hon. Prime Minister agree to look into this matter urgently?

The Prime Minister: Yes. I understand what the hon. Member is saying, but, as I've explained, Mr Chairperson, this is a new Body. We have passed the law. We have made it available; now people need to have some patience.

Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal - Programme Code 171: Determination of Appeals by Public Officers (Rs12,926,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 201: Prime Minister's Office was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I'll refer to page 94. Amongst the items listed as major achievements for year 2012, is there a framework for combating piracy? May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to indicate to us what the implications are for next year's Budget? Does this achievement translate into any specific budgetary provision for next year, and, if so, what does it entail?

The Prime Minister: There is a programme for this, Mr Chairperson and it is funded, as I explained, I think, in a Parliamentary Question. It is mostly funded by the European Union. I think the United Nations also is doing some funding in this.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, on page 100, item 22180 - *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)*, can we have a breakdown of the trips and costs incurred per trip for overseas missions?

The Chairperson: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member. This is an estimate for 2013. How would the hon. Prime Minister be able to give the hon. Member the details?

(Interruptions)

No. Question not allowed! Any more questions!

(Interruptions)

But they have still to travel!

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 100, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence!

(Interruptions)

Come with a PQ!

(Interruptions)

Silence! Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 100, Sir, item 22180 - *Overseas Travel*.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence! Yes, the hon. Member may put his question.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am sorry. The hon. Minister of Finance is getting excited. I will take instructions from you and only you, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence! No interruption, please! Carry on!

Mr Obeegadoo: I will only take instructions from you; not from anybody on the other side.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I say, order!

Mr Obeegadoo: He was not here, and when he comes in he gives instructions to people.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I say, order! The hon. Member may put his question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Certainly, and I am addressing the hon. Prime Minister who is a very polite person and does reply. Thank you.

(Interruptions)

Not as others. I would like to seek some clarification. This item overseas travel...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Wait a minute! Hon. Aimée, I do not want you to disturb and to interrupt.

Mr Obeegadoo: Show some respect for the hon. Prime Minister! Thank you! Item 22180 - *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)* seems to be a new item because we do not have anything under 2012 Estimates. There seems to have been a restyling and it is not just in the case of the Prime Minister's Office. This is a general feature. So, can we have some explanation? What item from last year this corresponds to, why there has been this restyling and what implications are there in terms of capacity building? Because everywhere there is now this item capacity building; what does it mean in the case of the Cabinet Office?

The Prime Minister: In fact, Mr Chairperson, I have been saying this for many years. I think that every Ministry should have his/her sum for whatever overseas mission. Instead of going to the Minister of Finance and then going to the Prime Minister, they should decide which is the priority and on which mission they can go. Very often, you will see that towards the end of the day, there is an important mission. So, it is something additional. That is why it is separated. Each Ministry now will do its own priorities on what is essential to go to, what is not essential to go to. The capacity building is for staff training.

Mr Baloomoody: If I may take the reply of the hon. Prime Minister compared to what he has said earlier and with which he is not satisfied himself with regard to the Judiciary, he said that he does not want the Judiciary to come to the Prime Minister's Office whenever it comes to travel and capacity building. Put it that way. Now, we are learning that Ministries have their own budget, and that they will decide for themselves without authorisation of the Prime Minister's Office or the Ministry of Finance. Is it what we have heard, or do they still have to come to your Office?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 100, under item 22120 – *Fees*, it was Rs600,000 this year, and now it has increased to Rs1,100 m. for the year 2013. May I know who the beneficiaries of these fees are and for what purpose?

The Prime Minister: We do not know who are the beneficiaries of the fees, but this is a provision that we expect. There are big cases coming. Probably, we will go to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council because we do not think they are entitled to what they are asking. So, we are expecting these cases eventually to go. They are trying to negotiate. If they do not come to an agreement, then, we expect there would be huge cases. But there are also fees for training of staff.

Mr Uteem: Under *item 22900 - Other Goods and Services*, there is a huge increase from Rs1 m. to Rs13 m. in 2013. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what does this increase relate to?

The Prime Minister: The second is a provision. We expect there will be more expenses for different services, including uniforms for people and all these things. But it is a provision.

Mr Uteem: To follow up on this, the item is *Culture et Avenir* Activities to the tune of Rs13 m. This is why I want to know what is this *culture* and activities. It just goes on to the next page.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, this is a unit which is under the PMO to look for specific projects on culture and arts.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 101, the provision for the Mauritius Oceanography Institute, which is item 26323040, the Estimates go from Rs17.5 m. to Rs53 m., and that includes construction of a complex at Albion. But yet, I was given to understand that the Albion Fisheries Centre was being closed down, which means that we do have a building available there, from what I can recall from the time I was Minister of Fisheries a long time ago. So, may we have some clarification? Was there a need to have an entirely new building and why cannot the whole facilities at the Albion Fisheries Centre be used, therefore?

The Prime Minister: My understanding, Mr Chairperson, is that it will be at the Albion Centre, but more extensive works will have to be done. It will be not just for administration; there will be research, there will be laboratories and other things. It is going to be bigger than it is meant to be, and that is why it is being at Albion, as I said.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am intrigued by the vote under sub-programme 20102 *National Day Celebration*, which increases from Rs20 m. this year to Rs30 m. next year. May we have an indication who is the special guest the Prime Minister has in mind that would justify this 50% increase?

The Prime Minister: It is because we are going to celebrate 45 years. It is quite an event. 45 years is not 42 or anything else. It is 45 years, and that is why we have made provisions for more.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the sub-programme *Cabinet Office*, can we know from the hon. Prime Minister what is that rent being paid for?

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Page 100 item 22030 – *Rent*, Rs1.8 m. for Cabinet Office. What is that rent being paid for? Which building is that?

The Prime Minister: This is provision for payment of the Drug Asset Forfeiture Office and also for the Commission for Democratisation of the Economy.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, on page 102, item 22900931 *Commission on Maurice Ile Durable*, we are being asked to vote a sum of Rs3 m. this year. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of the harsh criticism there has been outside as to the lack of results on this whole project of *Commission of Maurice Ile Durable*? Will the hon. Prime Minister tell us for what purpose the sum of Rs3 m. will be applied next year? Is it going to be fees for members of this Commission? Is it going to fund any specific project? How will it translate into tangible results?

The Prime Minister: With all due respect, if the hon. Member had been here during my speech, he will have listened. I gave all the details about this in my speech.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, at page 102 under item 22900927 *National Institute of Civic Education*, could we have some indications about the increase by more than Rs15 m. of the budget on National Institute of Civic Education and why is there such a large increase?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, again, we explained during the speech that this is a new item, why we are doing it and what it is going to do. I explained all this during the speech.

Mr Baloomoody: May I refer the hon. Prime Minister to item 22900915 *Multi sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS Project*? We found that there has not been any increase with regard to this budget when we know that there has been an increase in HIV/AIDS which affected people in Mauritius. It is a fact that there has been an increase. Can I, on the same page, refer the hon. Prime Minister to item 22900932 *Human Rights Awareness*? We have a specific item where we are providing Rs2 m. next year, but can we know who runs that project when we know that there is supposed to be a Human Rights Commission which should run this Human Rights Awareness Project and how does it collaborate with the work of the Human Rights Commission?

The Prime Minister: First of all, the hon. Member is wrong. I explained that, again, in my speech that I think we are meeting with some success because the rate has decreased. It has not increased, it has decreased officially. I have to go by official. They were showing an increase before, now they are showing a decrease. So, I will have to accept that. This is what I say. The other question, I think, was on the Human Rights Awareness. I think the hon. Member is talking about part of the Human Rights, if I am not mistaken.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, under item 22900932 *Human Rights Awareness* where we are budgeting nearly Rs2 m., can we know from the hon. Prime Minister who runs that project?

The Prime Minister: This is going to be under the Human Rights Monitoring Committee.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, at page 102, under item 22900910 *Running Costs of Security Unit*, an amount of Rs8 m. is being earmarked for that item. May we have some details about what that training cost comprises of?

The Prime Minister: The increase is due for the rent and computerisation of the provision to meet the Data Protection Office.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 102, under item 22130 *Studies and Surveys*, I see that a sum of Rs3.5 m. has been spent for the year 2012 and no amount has been earmarked for 2013. Can we know which studies and surveys have been carried out?

The Prime Minister: There are reports, in fact, on the surveys, but the provision was made for a consultant at that time for the setting up of the Driver Education and Testing Centre. Now, that project has been transferred to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping. That is why there is no provision for this, because it has been moved there.

Mr Uteem: The last item on page 102 *Contribution for Operation of Mauritius International Arbitration Centre Limited*, where this year there is an amount of Rs15 m. budgeted; last year, there were Rs22 m. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister the number of international arbitration that is being held in Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: This has just started. We have, in fact, a big conference. I hope the hon. Member will be there. This is a new sector that we are starting, Mr Chairperson. That will start running up.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, under item 22900927 *National Institute of Civic Education ...*

(Interruptions)

This has been answered. In that case, can I take the item 22900921 - just before *Special Road Safety Unit* which is located at the Prime Minister's Office? I would like to understand what the actual purport of this unit is right now. I understand there is one special Adviser to the Prime

Minister on road safety matters. Is this what the unit is about or does it have any specific mission apart from what falls under the MPI?

The Prime Minister: Again, I don't want to sound impolite, but I explained all this in my speech. Let me just clarify! It includes the unit which is under my Office. We have to buy office furniture and equipment and all this. But it is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and the Police Transport Unit.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, at page 102, again under item 22900916 *Running Cost of Data Protection Office*, I can see that the amount earmarked for 2013 has gone up by more than 100%. May we know why there is that increase?

The Prime Minister: That same question was asked. I have already explained about the computerisation and the Data Protection Unit. We have to do it because there are new items. We are computerising everything. I have just answered that question.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 103, there are two votes for the NSS, Rs7 m. and Rs6 m. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether these NSS are given additional responsibilities apart from National Security, because these days we are being harassed? Even here somebody was following me ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Bhagwan: Even in front of my house! I have to feed them. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether these NSS officers are given special assignments to harass Members of the Opposition? He will tell me in his time also. But these days they are everywhere. Even if you have a political meeting in my office, near my house...

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, this is not a question. Time is over! I give the hon. Member some more time to put his question.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I understand because I was...

The Chairperson: So, the question is that the sum of...

The Prime Minister: Can you allow me to answer?

The Chairperson: Yes.

The Prime Minister: I understand because I was also...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

The Prime Minister: ...Leader of the Opposition and I had...

(Interruptions)

...somebody who had...

(Interruptions)

In fact, Mr Chairperson, now that I am on the other side, I understand. We tend to be a bit of paranoid attitude because if I believe all this – but how many people are working there? Just go and see! They do not have...

(Interruptions)

Maybe they are just fooling. Be careful! Maybe they do not even work; they are telling you that they work, then you are giving them coffee and tea.

(Interruptions)

Maybe, maybe, I am saying maybe.

The Chairperson: Okay.

Programme Code 201: Prime Minister's Office (Rs813,428,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Prime Minister's Office - Programme Code 311: Rodrigues Development was called.

Mr François: Mr Chairperson, I have just one question on page 105 under item 22060001 *Buildings*. May I have some details on that item, please?

The Prime Minister: On which page?

Mr François: On page 105, item 22060001 *Buildings*, there is a substantial increase from Rs100,000 to Rs2.4 m.

The Chairperson: Item number two from top on page 105.

The Prime Minister: It is on the maintenance of buildings.

Mr François: The building itself?

The Prime Minister: This is, in fact, for the maintenance of buildings. There are eight quarters. The rest is not for the building, but for the eight quarters, there is the repair of a leaky roof at a quarter and then this is used as a guesthouse and then there are seven remaining quarters to be subject to normal maintenance works.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, could we have details about the fees increased from Rs10,000 to more than Rs4.4 m.?

The Prime Minister: Which one?

Mr Roopun: On page 105, item number *22120 Fees*.

The Prime Minister: There is an increase in the provision made for the recruitment of service providers to be employed under the Capacity Building Programme for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and this is why you see the increase.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: May I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 105, the last item - *Upgrading of accommodation facilities for patients from Rodrigues*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether accommodation for students from Rodrigues is included in this item or is it on the *Building* item because there are many complaints from the students who get scholarship from Rodrigues who, unfortunately, do not have proper accommodation when they come to study in Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: I will have to check on this, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

Every day, even if there is no rain.

(Interruptions)

The question was whether the upgrading was...

(Interruptions)

Yes, this is a separate item.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a question, Sir, on item *25 Subsidies* on page 105, the *Freight Rebate Scheme*. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the modalities of this scheme have been worked out and who is going to be implementing this?

The Prime Minister: I gave all the details, if you would remember, Mr Chairperson. In the speech, I gave the details about this.

(Interruptions)

It was two hours and forty minutes.

Prime Minister's Office - Programme Code 311: Rodrigues Development (Rs 1,747,226,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Government Information Service – Programme Code 211: Government Information Service and Provision of International News was called.

Mr Bhagwan: I would like to talk on the Government Information Service at page 115 regarding the Media Trust Fund. Year in, year out, we are being asked to vote this amount. Has there been any progress? We were waiting for the Robertson report and so on. Now that there is a new trade union for the newspaper personnel, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether he has been made aware of the registration of this new trade union? Whether he has received request for funding and where are we exactly with the Robertson report?

The Prime Minister: The Robertson report has been delayed because of the scandal from the journalists; they were hacking all the phones of every other citizen. He was waiting for the Leveson Report which now, I believe, will be produced on Thursday, that is, in two days' time. Once he gets this report, he will see what the recommendations are because this is relevant to us also. Then, he will make his report. That is why there is a delay. But as soon as this is done, we will be doing all this. It will be in the law.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the fees payable to Mr Robertson is included in the Budget here?

The Prime Minister: Fees that are payable to?

Mr Uteem: Robertson Report on the media because I see an item on Fees. I do not know if that relates to his fees or it is budgeted somewhere else.

The Prime Minister: No, this is just for the Media Trust, not including it.

Mr Uteem: Under item 22100 *Publications and Stationery*, I see there is a reduction of Rs2 m. In his Budget Speech, the hon. Minister of Finance announced a substantial reduction in paper; that we are going to have e-filing. Is that the only impact, only Rs2 m. reduction in the Budget?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the hon. Member probably does not know because what the hon. Minister is expecting to say in the Budget, nobody knows, they prepare all the stuff, but we are moving in that direction, that is, a paperless Government.

Government Information Service - Programme Code 211: Government Information Service and Provision of International News (Rs52,780,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Forensic Science Laboratory – Programme Code 221: Provision for Forensic Services was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 118 where it is all about the overview of the Forensic Science Laboratory. One of the major constraints is shortage of trained and experienced staff. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why is it that provision has not been made in this Budget because when we look at the number of staff, it is 57 all throughout? Why is it that for such an important institution, dealing with criminal investigation, provision has not been made to remedy the shortage of trained and experienced staff?

The Prime Minister: I believe that they are looking at new people who will be in charge of the Department and then we will see. I must say, Mr Chairperson, that the previous person who was there was a very qualified lady; she did not believe we needed extra staff because she said that the deployment of the staff is being done not in an effective way. She stressed - not just she, but other people also stressed - that in the UK, for example, the staff are there to work in the Laboratory. They cannot just spend their time in the Courts and this has to be restructured.

Mr Obeegadoo: So, precisely, if I may follow up on the answer just given by the hon. Prime Minister, how then, without additional staff will the FSL be represented in Court to produce results of its investigations and analysis?

The Prime Minister: That is the advice that I got from the experts, Mr Chairperson. The feeling is that in England too they have to go to Court. They accept the evidence that the FSL gives. Here, they challenge everything. So, we have to have a system where we cannot have all the staff going to Courts and not doing the work here. We will work out something.

Mr Obeegadoo: In that case, Mr Chairperson, I note that the overall budget at page 119 is being increased by some Rs22 m., which is very commendable in the light of recent criticism there has been against the FSL. However, essentially looking at page 122, this increase is accounted for by upgrading of laboratory equipment. Would the hon. Prime Minister kindly give some indication as to what we are envisaging here, what new equipment and what sort of upgrading to allow the FSL to rise to the challenge it faces?

The Prime Minister: There are many sections that are being upgraded, Mr Chairperson. Again, in my speech, I gave some indications of the things that are being upgraded. But let me

just give you briefly that we have to have a Laboratory Integrated Management System, that is, the software. This, itself, is estimated at Rs7 m. There are many things like this. There is the Liquid Chromatography, Mass Spectrometry that has to be brought. There is the PCR, specific fridges that have to be bought, upgrading of satellite laboratory in Rodrigues also because we are also looking at Rodrigues.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, allow me to refer back to page 118, where we talked about major constraints and challenges. Emphasis is made on training to upgrade existing staff. When I look at the amount earmarked for the year 2013, there is no mention made about training of staff or capacity building to existing staff. Why is that so? How are we going to address that problem if no money is being catered for that training?

The Prime Minister: That is all included in the budget. It is an ongoing process. You have to keep training in that department because it is new. But that is ongoing.

Mr Roopun: I refer to the major services provided by this department. Could I be enlightened as to whether the laboratory still does paternity tests in Court cases because I do not see any mention here? I know in the past private individuals could go there for DNA tests in case of paternity and so on.

The Prime Minister: They have not specified everything that they do, otherwise we would have a big volume, but I am sure it is included in that.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the hon. Prime Minister give us some explanation as to why on page 121, under item 22060 *Maintenance*, it has more than doubled from Rs2.3 m. to Rs5 m. when the rent of a building has actually decreased from Rs1.5 m. to Rs500,000? There is a reduction in the size of the building, but maintenance has doubled.

The Prime Minister: This is due to the fact that new equipment had been bought in 2012, but they need to be maintained. We have a Gas Chromatography and all that. These were purchased, I believe, this year and they have to be maintained.

Forensic Science Laboratory – Programme Code 221: Provision for Forensic Services (Rs88,609,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Pay Research Bureau - Programme Code 231: Public Sector Compensation and HRM Policy and Strategy was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether Government is contemplating replacing this organisation and whether the Director is still in his office?

The Chairperson: This is a matter of policy, hon. Member.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can I put the question in a different way? It is a very valid point raised by my colleague. Being given the huge controversy created by the last PRB report - this cannot just be a question of one individual - in terms of the next budgetary provisions, how are we planning to address weaknesses in the wage setting mechanism as represented by the PRB?

The Prime Minister: First of all, Mr Chairperson, this is policy. I do not know whether you want me to carry on. It is not fair to say that this PRB report is a big mess. We had these problems over the years. Every time the PRB report has been published, whatever happens, you will see people shouting over the roof. In fact, I quoted in my speech, what Donald Chesworth had said –

“This is art in Mauritius for everybody to shout on the roof up. Nobody is happy.”

He said that and I quoted him. It is the same here. I think he tried to do a justifiable work and I have explained. We had a question today about Project Managers. If in the private sector, you are going to pay a Project Manager 10 times what is being paid in the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, where do you think he would go to work? That is the problem that we have. We must attract the best in the practising. This is one of the issues he tried to address. But, obviously, there must be some anomalies, there always are, and that is what happened.

(Interruptions)

No, because there are some anomalies, I think the trade unions were fair. They were not demagogic. They were speaking of the two slight perhaps increase at the bottom, but the overall aspect is that we must make sure that we attract the best and the brightest in the civil service.

Mr Baloomoody: One of the main frustrations today in the Police Force is with regard to the PRB report. Unfortunately, they cannot – especially those in the grade of Sergeant and Inspector - go and protest or make a submission to the Errors and Omissions Commission. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether we have made provisions in that Errors and Omissions Commission to allow, at least, a representative of this sector, of the Police, to go and represent themselves before Errors and Omissions Commission?

The Prime Minister: Again, this is a policy matter. But I must say something, Mr Chairperson. We are talking about a Disciplined Force. We cannot have this in the Disciplined Force.

Pay Research Bureau - Programme Code 231: Public Sector Compensation and HRM Policy and Strategy (Rs33,145,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Civil Status Division - Programme Code 241: Civil Status Affairs was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 134, Programme Code 241, there is a very significant increase in the sum budgeted for item 22 *Goods and Services*. Would the hon. Prime Minister care to provide us with some explanation as to what this refers to? Are there new Civil Status Offices being opened around the island and, if so, where?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member is talking about goods and services, which is explained by the different costs of utilities. It covers everything. If the hon. Member wants to go in the details, I can do so. But my understanding is that it includes all these that he sees under Programme 241.

Mr Obeegadoo: It relates very obviously to office equipment and furniture. This is where the increase is. I wanted to know whether this means that there are new Civil Status Offices to be opened in certain parts of the island or are we just re-equipping, refurbishing existing Civil Status Offices?

The Prime Minister: No, it is quite more extensive than this, Mr Chairperson. For example, there is the provision for a new server and software; this itself is a sum of Rs5 m. This is to host the CSD application to reduce delays. Computers are being bought, as well as printers and all these, and there is an exercise for the remaining sub offices for the computerisation of the whole system.

Civil Status Division – Programme Code 241: Civil Status Affairs (Rs79,852,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Religious Subsidies – Programme Code 251: Financial Support to Religious Organisations (Rs74,600,000) was called and agreed to.

External Communications – Programme Code 345: Civil Aviation and Port Development (Rs318,230,000) was called and agreed to.

Police Force – Programme Code 261: Security Policy and Management was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 151 – *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*, which is as follows – “*High number of Police Officers leaving the service before attaining retirement age*”. Can I ask the hon. Prime

Minister whether he is prepared to give us a list of vacancies that exist in the Police Force now with regard to higher category over and above ASP, which have not been filled?

The Prime Minister: In fact, this has been subject of a Parliamentary Question, Mr Chairperson, and this is an ongoing process, the number of Police Officers – it has been a trend, not just recently, Police Officers leaving the service before retirement age. That is why we are trying to increase the recruitment of Police Officers to compensate for that and the promotion is ongoing, except that, I think, at the moment they are not doing anything because of the election. They don't want to do any promotion exercise at this point; they will do it later from what I understand.

Mr Baloomoody: A Sergeant was graduated to Inspector and an Inspector was graduated to ASP and ASP to SP. When was the last time we had that exercise, because now we have the election we can't do that exercise? When was the last time especially to the senior?

The Prime Minister: If we do it now, you will say that we are promoting people in time of election – that is what you would be saying.

Mr Baloomoody: When was the last time?

The Prime Minister: Well, you go and check.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk on page 157- *Rent*, item No. 22030007, *Rental of Lines for CCTV and other Security Network Systems*. The sum of Rs80 m. has been earmarked same as last year. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister how many CCTV systems are involved because there is complaint that the Mauritius Telecom is overcharging for the rental of these lines?

The Prime Minister: I explained that in my speech in detail, in fact. I would suggest you go back to the speech, but they are overcharging and they are doing what they can do.

Mr Bhagwan: I will take one item, Mr Chairperson, at page 159 – *Vehicles and Motorcycles*. *Je me fais le porte-parole de tous ces motards* who are suffering from backpain ...

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member says the same thing every year!

Mr Bhagwan: The Prime Minister can go and check. His motorcycle and that of the DPM are top, but the others, *M. le président, je me fais le porte-parole de tous ces motards qui vont régulièrement chez des médecins, qui ont des problèmes de backpain*. Can the hon. Prime Minister, at least, see whether he has received genuine representations on the type, the specification of these motorcycles and whether the Head of the Police, the Commissioner of

Police has seen with his eyes, *la selle en bas et le guidon en haut*? This state of situation is very sad indeed. I raised the question last time. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will have a careful look at these motorcycles so that these specifications be done in a proper manner so as to protect the health of these poor traffic officers?

The Prime Minister: I have not personally heard of this, Mr Chairperson, but I will ask the Commissioner of Police to change – not to buy from the stuff, but to buy from elsewhere...

(Interruptions)

Yes, but, again, they also have not been receiving any complaint. They should, at least, complain to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Bhagwan: We are all on the road!

The Prime Minister: Yes, but the hon. Member does not ride motorcycles - I have ridden motorcycles in the past and I must say that some of them have to be in that position.

(Interruptions)

I will check.

The Chairperson: No interruptions. Hon. Bhagwan, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I want to raise the issue of Telephone Facilities at Police Stations. So, I will raise it at page 158 on the *Machinery and Equipment*, or I am not sure whether this is the right item. But the point is, Mr Chairperson, that several important Police Headquarters - and I take the example of Curepipe Police Headquarters - do not have proper telephone switchboards to such an extent that in the case of emergencies, it is very difficult to get immediate, urgent access to the Police Station or to the Police Headquarters. So, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister - since he must have got reports of what I am saying - whether budgetary provisions for next year do allow for an overall survey of telephone access to Police, especially Headquarters around the island? And I would make a special plea in the case of Curepipe.

The Prime Minister: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I am not aware of what the hon. Member is saying. I mean, I am not aware if recently this has been a problem, but, firstly, I can say that a survey is being done, and, secondly, they are also changing their equipment to digital instead of the analogue one and this is being extended everywhere.

Mr Uteem: Under item No. 22900001 – *Uniform*, on page 158, there is a substantial increase from Rs18 m. to Rs27 m. and this is not reflected in a change in the number of personnel *pro rata*. May I know why there is such a big increase in the budget for uniforms?

The Prime Minister: This is because it is an ongoing process; we are changing and also, as I have said, because of what you asked earlier on, we are recruiting more and more policemen, but we have to make provisions.

Mr Bhagwan: Regarding the same item, I see on many pages *Vehicles and Motorcycles*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the Police Department, the Commissioner of Police have had a close look at the Bike Patrol Unit? Everywhere we see motorcycles and vehicles and if you ask me and people around where we reside about this Bike Patrol Unit, it is a very effective unit visually during the day for traffic. So, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, in this Budget, provision has been made to increase the fleet of the Bike Patrol Unit, and to spread it in urban areas and even in the big suburbs?

The Prime Minister: I am speaking from what I know. It has not actually been cancelled. It has been transferred so that there is more coordination. From what I understand, it has not actually been cancelled. So, I will say that to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Roopun: May I come again on the issue of *Maintenance - Vehicles and Motorcycles* under item No. 22060 at page 159? Why is there an increase of more than Rs17 m. for maintenance of vehicles and motorcycles - more than doubling?

The Prime Minister: This is because although we are purchasing new vehicles, we have to maintain the older ones as well. Not everything is getting rid of, and that is what explains the increase in the rise of maintenance cost. Once they start aging, the cost is more.

Mr François: Just one question with regard to Police Officers in Rodrigues. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether provision has been made to provide Police Officers with equipment like torches, especially for night operations? They have been through a few operations, and they do have a big problem with regard to night equipment.

The Prime Minister: I know this is being done. It is being treated the same. I just got a note stating that, in fact, they are purchasing 200 bikes.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 159, under item No. 31132401- *Upgrading of Passport Personalisation System*, there is an amount of Rs50 m. budgeted for next year, and then Rs58 m. for the following year. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether tenders have

already been launched for the provision of these services and whether the Government intends to open it to Mauritians as well, or will it be a government-to-government project for security reasons?

The Prime Minister: I spoke lengthily on that. I wished you were here. You would have listened to all this and you would not have put all these questions. I can say, Mr Chairperson, that we have decided to introduce biometric identification passports. We have sought a quotation from a different firm, a US based company, which is the present supplier of passports in Mauritius. We note, from the contract that was made before, that the company has exclusive copyrights on the present system. So, we have to go to them first. But quotations are being looked at, and we will see. But, obviously, I don't think anybody would be able to do it here.

Dr. S. Boolell: Under item No. 31132401 - *Upgrading of Border Control System*, a sum of Rs50 m. is being voted. Could we have some details on that?

The Prime Minister: This is a system that is being now used in different countries. I explained that also in my speech, but I will just give you a brief detail. We need to make sure that our borders are safe. We are having a bigger airport and four million people are being catered for. This is the new system that is being adopted in many countries. We are adopting the same system.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 160, top of the page, *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, I must be mistaken and I am sure the hon. Prime Minister will correct me, but the impression I get is that all the Police Stations mentioned here are in the rural areas, whereas we do have serious problems in the urban areas. Am I right? I will take the example of Eau Coulée and Phoenix, where the Police Stations urgently need to be rebuilt or expanded. Will the hon. Prime Minister indicate whether, in the Estimates for 2013, there is any provision at all for these two cases I have just mentioned, that is, Police Stations at Eau Coulée and Phoenix?

The Prime Minister: It is wrong to say that you get the impression it is only the countryside. For example, there is Bambous, Trou d'Eau Douce and Cité La Cure. All these are on the list. But they are going according to priorities, and some of them have already been started.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand with regard to the *Construction of Regional Detention Centres* at (a) Piton and (b) Rose Belle?

The Chairperson: Which page is it?

Mr Baloomoody: Page 160, item No. 31112014.

The Chairperson: We have not reached *Programme Code 262*.

Mr Baloomoody: So, where are we now?

The Chairperson: We are on *Programme Code 261*.

Police Force – Programme Code 261: Security Policy and Management (Rs1,823,019,900) was, on question put, agreed to.

Police Force – Programme Code 262: Community Safety and Security was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to Sub-Programme 26202 *Road and Public Safety*, and I have also looked at the staffing positions corresponding to that Sub-Programme. Now, I would like to draw the hon. Prime Minister's attention to the problems on the motorway. There is an issue that he has, himself, very often raised here the fact that motorists do not respect lanes, especially now that we have three lanes. Looking at the provisions for next year, both in terms of programmes, patrols and staffing, I would like to know, since this is an issue which the hon. Prime Minister is concerned with, what specific provision is being made for appropriate measures, be it patrolling, be it education, sensitisation of motorists, as I cannot find anything here, and the problem is still the same as it was last year.

The Prime Minister: It will fall under the Road Safety Unit of my department and the MPI Department. But we are sensitising people. We will have specific patrols. There will be cameras, and there will be an education, first of all, to sensitise people about it.

Mr Roopun: On page 160, item No. 31121 - *Transport Equipment, Acquisition of Vehicles*, could we have details about the vehicles as regards the increase from Rs30 m. to Rs85 m.? I heard the hon. Prime Minister earlier on mentioning motorcycles which were being bought.

The Prime Minister: I will give you the details. It is a long list. There is a double cab van, a 4 x 2 van, a 4 x 4 van, and three high roof station wagons. It is quite a long list. It includes a mortuary van as well.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 159, under item No. 26160 – *Overseas Training*, I can see that in the year 2012, there was Rs2.1 m. earmarked, but no more money is being earmarked for training overseas in 2013 and beyond. Do we take it that these officers are now fully trained and they don't need more training?

The Prime Minister: There are two things. It is a continuous training, but some of them fall under different items now.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 160, item No. 31112014 – *Construction of Regional Detention Centres*, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the Piton and Rose Belle detention centres where matters stand and when they will become operational?

The Prime Minister: For Piton, the project will be implemented in 2013. As for Rose Belle, the project will be implemented in 2014.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under the same item, Mr Chairperson, we are making provisions for these two detention centres, but is the hon. Prime Minister aware that at Vacoas Detention Centre, there is one whole floor that is unutilised? It was meant to be for women prisoners, but because of an inadequate provision for water supply, this is empty and yet, we are spending so much on new detention centres. Would the hon. Prime Minister kindly look into this matter urgently?

The Prime Minister: I mentioned that in my speech again, Mr Chairperson. We are having a special one for women detention centre - that is what, I think, is going to be used for.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk on page 162, item *Combating Drugs*. At a time when the hon. Prime Minister was replying to a PNQ, he was congratulating the ADSU - “well done, we are proud of the ADSU officers.” Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, following this great success in the Gros Dereck affair, on item *Allowances*, whether a special allowance will be given to these officers who have done such a wonderful job - not only to these people of Plaine Verte, whenever there is such a high profile case where we have the culprits – and whether they will be given gold medals whenever they are able to catch bigger sharks? Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to see with the Commissioner of Police that a special prize or allowance be given to these people in the Gros Dereck affair?

The Prime Minister: I can assure the hon. Member that is what I said in my speech and the PNQ also, that they need to be congratulated and motivated.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I want to raise an issue which hopefully was not mentioned in the Prime Minister’s speech. I refer to Personal Emoluments. I am raising it on Programme No. 262, but I could have raised it on Programme No. 261. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister how much we have paid or how much will be paid for Police Officers who are actually suspended and awaiting disciplinary proceedings.

The Chairperson: Under which item is that?

Mr Obeegadoo: Personal Emoluments.

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Obeegadoo: Well, any of the sub programmes will do, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Yes, but the hon. Member has to be specific.

Mr Obeegadoo: Let's raise it under the Sub-Programme 26204 – *Combating Drugs* – item No. 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*. It could apply generally.

The Chairperson: Okay.

The Prime Minister: Not in my speech, but I did say before that we think this has to be relooked at. In the past, they used to get half the amount. In the 80s, this was changed. This is being looked at by the SLO.

Mr Obeegadoo: Maybe the hon. Prime Minister could give us some indication of how much will actually be spent of the amount of the estimates that we are asked to approve? How much will go to officers who are not working and are presently under suspension? If the information is not available, would the hon. Prime Minister undertake to provide same?

The Prime Minister: I will; there are not so many of them who are under suspension, but I can circulate it.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister about the issue of Combating of Drugs on page 162, item No. 21110004 – *Allowances*. If I may join my friend, hon. Bhagwan, do they give allowance for the payment of compensation to the ADSU officers combating drugs because we know that at the MRA, the Customs Officer do get sometimes very juicy compensation? Can we know whether this allowance is paid as well to ADSU officers?

The Prime Minister: As I said, Mr Chairperson, I believe in it. There is a system of rewarding whether it goes through the allowances or what, but I know there is a system of rewarding ADSU officers.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under Sub-Programme 26204 – *Combating Drugs*, I am a little bit confused. We had referred earlier to this new item of capacity building...

The Prime Minister: Which page?

Mr Obeegadoo: Combating drugs on page 162, this is an area where training and re-training and capacity building is very important and I am sure the hon. Prime Minister will concur. I see that under item No. 22160 – *Overseas Training*, there is nothing planned in terms

of budgetary provision for next year. I would like to know where and how we are addressing the issue of re-training or capacity building to combat drugs.

The Prime Minister: I can't see what item the hon. Member is referring to?

Mr Obeegadoo: I am referring to item No. 22160 – *Overseas Training*, where there was Rs485,000 in this year's estimates. There is nothing for next year and I am asking more generally since there is nothing else under this sub-programme relating to capacity building. How are we addressing the very important issue of training, re-training and capacity building of our Police Officers generally?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I am told, Mr Chairperson, that this is provided for in a different field. There is a provision of Rs700,000 for that.

Mr Uteem: Under item No. 311122 – *Other Machinery and Equipment for Combating Drugs*, in an answer to a PNQ, a few days ago, the hon. Prime Minister mentioned that there will be new equipment at the harbour port area for detecting drugs. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether these new equipment are included in this Rs2 m. or is it in another item?

The Prime Minister: Yes, it will fall under the Budget of the Ministry of Finance.

Police Force - Programme Code 262: Community Safety and Security (Rs3,234,608,100) was, on question put, agreed to.

Police Force - Programme Code 263: Defence, Emergency, Disaster Management and Surveillance was called.

The Chairperson: We are starting on page 153.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under the Sub-Programme 26301, again, I am looking for the appropriate vote concerning training. There is something on overseas at item No. 22160, but I want to refer to training here in Mauritius. We all know about the unfortunate incident recently when there was loss of life amongst SMF trainees. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister for next year, whether we are providing for training facilities and training equipment so as to be able as far as possible to guard against such unfortunate occurrences.

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member will look at the different pages, I think that is what is creating some confusion. The training, very often, falls under item *Fees* which is different and I think that is what is creating the difficulty. Here, again, it is the same thing; item *Fees*, that is where the training is going to.

Mr Obeegadoo: Just for clarification so that we can understand for the rest of the estimates; how can training fall under *Fees*?

The Prime Minister: That's what has been decided, as long as they get the money.

Police Force - Programme Code 263: Defence, Emergency, Disaster Management and Surveillance (Rs2,867,874,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Government Printing Department – Programme Code 271: Government Printing Services was called.

The Chairperson: Page 174!

Mr Obeegadoo: Under item *Government Printing Services, Programme Code 271*, I would like to refer the hon. Prime Minister to *Other Machinery and Equipment* item 31122 at page 177. I would like to raise the issue of the quality of some of the work - unfortunately that comes out of the Government Printing Department - and ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the acquisition of new equipment is meant to address such issues and what quality assurance mechanism there is within the department externally to ensure that we do get value for money.

The Prime Minister: I just need some clarification. I could not quite understand whether you are saying that there is a big problem there, that we need new equipments. What problem is the hon. Member referring to? That's what I would like to know.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am talking of the quality of some of the work that has been undertaken by the Government Printing Services, including for the National Assembly. I would like to raise the issue as to whether for next year we are providing for some sort of quality assurance mechanism so that we do get value for money, the money we are being asked to approve today.

The Prime Minister: I am not sure that I am aware that there has been a big problem with quality. Maybe we have a small problem, but we are providing for IT and other equipment. I can give you a list of the equipment that is being acquired at the moment.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 178, I note that in terms of staffing, there is no change. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this reflects more significant contracting out by Government of printing business. There was, in a recent past, a lot of talk of privatisation of the printing services or whether this has to do with the new e-culture which is being envisaged so that we have less and less printed material within the public service.

The Prime Minister: I think it is mostly to do with the e-culture, that we are a paperless society that we want.

Government Printing Department – Programme Code 271: Government Printing Services (Rs120,041,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 281: Meteorological Services was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 180 - *overview of the department*? One of the major constraints is *lack of trained personnel in specific areas*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what provision the Budget has made to address this specific issue which is of great importance for the meteo?

The Prime Minister: I don't know why they have put it under the item "*Fees for training*". It was a good question, but I don't know why it is being put under that item. But this is where all the training is.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will again refer to *Other Machinery and Equipment at page 184* under item 31122. There is the *Acquisition of the Doppler Weather Radar*. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister how is it that there were Rs50 m. this year; Rs130 m. next year and Rs260 m. planned for 2014? I would like to have some clarification. Is this one radar being acquired in different steps? This is not clear. Could the hon. Prime Minister kindly offer some clarification again? I hope this was not addressed in his speech.

The Prime Minister: This was not, otherwise my speech would have been over three hours. In fact, I know the answer. The radar has been donated by the Government of Japan under a Grant Aid Scheme. This is the law. We have to pay the VAT even though they are donating it under the Grant Scheme. So, we have to refund the VAT to them. So, the provision is for the refund of the VAT on equipment, the demolition of the existing radar tower building and then there will be other facilities that need to be looked into at the site.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question was: why the disbursement is being spread over three financial years? Are we really talking of refund of VAT to the amount of some - I don't know if we compute all these figures, certainly more than half a billion.

The Prime Minister: It is quite a complicated radar; it is not an ordinary radar. As I said, we have to demolish the tower site, where the actual existing radar is. We then have to prepare the site for the acquisition of this new radar.

Mr Obeegadoo: May we know where this radar is going to be sited. Maybe the hon. Prime Minister said so, I missed that.

The Prime Minister: I think the radar is going to be sited at the same place, but we have to destroy the old one, there is a tower that has to be pulled down and everything got rid of. Demolition work has to be done there. Mr Chairperson, the radar is not here yet. So, the Chinese experts have indicated that they want to go through the whole system first and then they will decide. In the meantime, we also have to break down. I would think this is on the same site. I would think.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue of equipment, Mr Chairperson, last year and the year before, the MET services were taken to task, in public opinion, because of the imprecise projections for cyclones. I would like to know whether the Budget for next year is addressing the problem. Whether it is this radar - I am no expert about radars - which is going to address the problem, to allow us to have some more precise tracking of cyclones, so we can project their path and their impact on the conditions in Mauritius when cyclonic conditions do prevail.

The Prime Minister: After all the criticisms have been made, Mr Chairperson, we have seen in the UK, in France and recently in the United States, they were not able to predict on time. You see the flood that happened in the UK, nobody predicted it. It is a very difficult science. They tried their best, but it is very difficult to be precise. So, we cannot give you this guarantee. If in UK and France, they can't do it, I can't give you a guarantee for Mauritius.

Mr Obeegadoo: One last question. I want to understand about this huge expenditure on the so-called Doppler Weather Radar. And I will update my knowledge afterwards to try to understand what this is. I want to understand this impact on the MET services. This is a huge part of the whole budget for the MET services. What will be the role of this radar? Why are we investing so much; what will it change?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I don't want to go into a long debate, but when this incident happened, when one of the cyclones and the flooding took place, a lot of people in the Opposition - I'm not saying the hon. Member specifically - became experts on meteorological equipment. Do you know how many people were saying: why don't we have a Doppler Radar here? At that time, whoever was the Director felt there was no need to have a Doppler Radar, but everybody was asking for this and saying: we are lagging behind, why don't we have this Doppler Radar? So, we got the Doppler Radar from Japan. Now, you're saying: why are we getting the Doppler Radar? The Opposition, themselves, were saying that my friend.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on the same item, I heard the hon. Prime Minister mentioning that the amount is for VAT refund, but, as far as I know, with regard to export items, there is no VAT imposed on any item that is exported from any country.

The Chairperson: Silence! The hon. Member has to put a question.

Mr Seeruttun: Whenever you import a good from overseas, VAT is not imposed on that item which is equipment for export.

The Chairperson: No, no. You must put a question. You are making a statement.

Programme Code 281: Meteorological Services (Rs215,181,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Mauritius Prisons Service - Programme Code 291: Management of Prisons was called.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 187 – *Major Constraints and Challenges*. One of the major constraints of the prisoners is the underuse of the Parole Board. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what provisions have been made in the Budget for the optimum use of the Parole Board?

The Prime Minister: I cannot say specifically what provision, but from what I understand they are reviewing the concept as it says here and they are doing a reconstitution of the Board. Perhaps I might get you more information, but that is all the information that I have got.

Mr Baloomoody: Do we have a proper Parole Board now sitting or a proper composition and, if so, can we know who the members of the Parole Board are?

The Prime Minister: From what I see, there is a Parole Board with Mr Bissessur as Chairperson and then we have a representative of the Prisons Department; a representative of the Police Department; a representative of the Probation and After Care Service, and then we have a representative from the Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare and Consumer Protection; then, there are three members and a Principal Probation Officer.

Mr Uteem: On page 992, item 22180 - *Overseas Travel*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister, whereas for other Ministries there are millions of rupees budgeted for overseas travel and capacity building, why is there only Rs240,000 for our prison services?

The Prime Minister: Probably, that's what they have asked for. Remember a lot of them will get country to country which we don't have to pay.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to go back to page 187 *the major achievements for 2012*. You are provided very intriguingly with success rates for detainees having sat the CPE or the MITD without being told what the actual figures, that is, what percentage of actual detainees take these examinations. So, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will indicate what percentage of detainees is actually following an educational or skills development programme?

The Prime Minister: Unfortunately, I did refer to that in my speech, so, I will refer you to my speech.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can I then try my luck at something else which might not have been mentioned in the speech?

(Interruptions)

The underuse of Parole which is mentioned as a major constraint, I would like to know how this issue and the intended points of reviewing the concept of Parole and the reconstitution of the Parole Board are reflected in the programme we are now considering 'Management of prison services'. Where have we budgeted corresponding expenditure to allow us to address this constraint?

The Prime Minister: I'll give you some details if you want. Unfortunately, the actual Parole system is constrained by legislation of only 2 to 3 detainees who are released on parole each year. This inability to earn remission for good work and behaviour for those convicted reduces the detainees. That is why the concept is being reviewed and this is in light of the recommendation that was contained in the Strategic Plan of 2012-2022 by the University of Technology Report on this issue.

Mr Baloomoody: In the Budget Speech, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance stated that 35% of the prison population comprises of people who could not pay their fine?

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Baloomoody: It is under item 31112 - *Non-Residential Buildings* and item 31112011 - *Construction of Prisons*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this Budget makes allowance for specific regime for those people who are in prisons because they could not pay their fine?

The Prime Minister: It was a misinterpretation of what the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance said. It is 35% of those who were found guilty in Court because they didn't

actually pay whatever they were due to pay. That is why we are relooking at the community service and all these things instead of overcrowding the prisons like they do everywhere else.

Mr Baloomoody: I am referring the hon. Prime Minister to page 193 – item *31112011-Construction of Prisons (a) New Prison at Melrose*. Which part of that building will be occupied by the convicted pirates? How many Mauritian inmates will be there or will it be reserved only for the pirates?

The Prime Minister: No, we never said that. I don't know where you got this idea. We said the Beau Bassin prison in the meantime, but we are building a new prison specifically for the pirates with the money of the European Union. It has nothing to do with Melrose.

Mr Baloomoody: We are to understand that the new prison for the pirates is not in the Budget.

The Prime Minister: It is because this is being paid by the European Union.

Mr Baloomoody: May we know where?

The Prime Minister: We are looking at different sites at the moment. I think they have already found a site, I can't remember, but Melrose has got nothing to do with pirates.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Still at page 193, under item 22900029 - *Enhanced Earnings for Detainees*, a sum of Rs4 m. is provided. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why it is only for this year 2013 that Rs4 m. are being provided? Why is it that in all other years, it is the sum of Rs7.7 m.? Why has there been a sudden decrease for the year 2013?

The Prime Minister: I think it has to do something again with the *Fees* item, Mr Chairperson, but I must check before I tell for sure.

Dr. S. Boolell: Under item 22900 on page 193 *Prisons Facilities for Pirates...*

The Chairperson: No, we are still under Programme Code 291.

Mauritius Prisons Service - Programme Code 291: Management of Prisons (Rs52,235,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Mauritius Prisons Service - Programme Code 292: Custody and Rehabilitation of Detainees was called.

Dr. S. Boolell: Under item *31112011 Prisons Facilities for Pirates*, a sum of Rs46 m. is being earmarked for the year 2013. Could we have some clarification from the hon. Prime Minister? What are these facilities that will be provided, where and how?

The Prime Minister: This is what I was mentioning earlier. I did mention in my speech also that they would be at Beau Bassin Central Prison and I think tenders have been launched already.

Mr Uteem: On the same item, but relating to *New Prison at Melrose*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister the variation in the cost of the construction of Melrose Prison from the initial budget and the actual cost incurred to date?

The Prime Minister: I remember a PQ was asked about this and how the previous Government delayed the construction of the prison. They found a site; then, they found that the site was not good. They changed the site and then, again, they found that there was water underneath.

(Interruptions)

Fortunately, the hon. Member asked the question, he does not know. That is why the price has increased because of the incompetence of the previous Government.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am on Programme Code 292 item 22140 *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*. I heard the hon. Prime Minister, only a few days ago, mentioning the fact that he did not believe detainees who were in a state of ill-health should be automatically transferred to hospitals, but that they should be treated on site within the prison. I would like to know if and how the budgetary estimates for next year reflect this belief of the Prime Minister. What new facilities in terms of a medical unit, within the prisons, are being provided for in next year's budget?

The Prime Minister: What I said was that, very often, you see criminals who are supposed to be hard criminals, and people who say: 'the big boys, as soon as the Police arrest them, they have got a heart problem'. What the hell is this? So, I say they should act as men and do not claim that they have heart disease, this disease or that disease when suddenly they are arrested.

(Interruptions)

Yes, as men! If they are real men, they should act as men, not as something else! They make big noises; they go on radios and everything. As soon as they are arrested, they say: 'oh, they broke my arm', or this or that. That is why I am saying I think they should realise, when they break the law, they have to suffer the consequences of breaking the law. That is what I said.

Mr Obeegadoo: Fair enough! My question was: how, therefore, the estimates for next year reflect that proposition? Are we providing for medical units within each of our prisons so that first degree treatment and examination by medical practitioners can take place within a proper environment at the prisons?

The Prime Minister: There are these facilities already, Mr Chairperson. There are doctors who are attached to the various departments, the Police Department, the Prisons Department, they can go and have a look.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 192, I refer to item *22130 Study and Survey*. I can see that a sum of Rs2 m. was earmarked for 2012. May we have some details about the studies carried out and the outcome of those studies?

The Prime Minister: It is a survey, in fact, for the accommodation of the pirates and in view of the project being on a fast track, they feel they need to have a survey for the project of the construction, because it is meant to start, I think, in early next year and they need to do a survey to see whether it is fit to have it there.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 195 where under item *175667 Principal Hospital Officer (Female)*, no provision has been made. Under item *175171 Psychologist*, there is no provision for any Psychologist. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister in what capacity are we rehabilitating these detainees where such important personnel are not available at the prisons?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I think they will use other services, if I am not mistaken, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Roopun: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether the Melrose prison will be operational this year? I do not see any recruitment of new Prison Officers scheduled during this financial year. Is there any recruitment being done?

The Prime Minister: In fact, if the hon. Member were there, again, he will have known. I spoke lengthily on prisons and I was right to tell this answer, that they are recruiting from outside on contract.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am at page 193 on item *31112411 Upgrading of Prisons*. I would like to raise this vexed issue of drug addicts in our prisons. Many times the suggestion has been mooted that drug addicts who are in prison, because of their addiction, should not be treated as other criminals, should be treated more as persons who are ill and receive appropriate treatment.

I wanted to ask whether upgrading of prisons is addressing the issue of separating drug addicts from other prisoners, that might need having separate prisons or having separate sections within prisons. Is this a matter that is being addressed within our provisions for next year?

The Prime Minister: This is a matter of policy again, Mr Chairperson, but this is being looked into.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to *Acquisition of CCTV Surveillance Systems*, item 31122811...

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On page 193, under item 31122811 *Acquisition of CCTV Surveillance System*, there is an additional provision of Rs16 m. on top of the Rs46 m. spent in the current year. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform us how is this system being operated when in the number of positions and posts funded in the budget, there is not even the post of somebody who is conversant with IT or monitoring of custody of prisoners?

The Prime Minister: These people have been trained; already we have trained people who know about IT. We do not need to carry on, giving that kind of training and also we subcontract sometimes, I am not just talking of the prisons. The extra amount that the hon. Member wanted to know, that is, about the Rs16 m., I think, it has got to do with the Barkly Special Prison for Women which will be implemented in 2013. That is a separate item.

Mr Obeegadoo: Let's take the cue from the Prime Minister's answer, since we are going to have a separate prison for women in 2013 and maybe the opening of Melrose prison in 2013, how are we going to reconcile this with the fact that in terms of staff in positions as pointed out by hon. Roopun, I think, there is not a single additional post being created?

The Prime Minister: I explained all this in my speech, my friend. I said this is coming in a different item.

The Chairperson: Time is over!

Mauritius Prisons Service - Programme Code 292: Custody and Rehabilitation of Detainees (Rs1,355,710,000) was, on question put, agreed to.
(00.10 a.m.)

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities – Programme Code 441: Utility Policy, Planning and Management was called.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, at page 203, under item 26313098 *Utility Regulatory Authority*, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether now the Board is fully constituted and whether we have recruited a Chairperson? And, if yes, the name of that Chairperson and what are the achievements?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the Utility Regulatory Authority has yet to be constituted.

(Interruptions)

Let me answer to the question! The hon. Member asked if it is constituted.

Mr Lesjongard: But I have not finished my question, Mr Chairperson, it is in relation to that Utility Regulatory Authority. May I know from the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Board is fully constituted now and whether a Chairperson has been recruited and what are the achievements of that Regulatory Authority?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, there is no need to repeat the question twice. I have already replied. It is yet to be constituted, we are looking at it, we are reforming the water sector and then when we will start the reform, we will start all over again.

Mr Lesjongard: Since we voted a legislation in 2008 and we still do not have a Board, I will put forward a motion that the grant to be allocated to that Utility Regulatory Authority be reduced to the sum of R1, Mr Chairperson.

The Deputy Prime Minister: If the hon. Member were here, he would have listened to the hon. Prime Minister who advocated that we have to change the CEB rules and get a Regulatory Body.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I raised this issue because last year the Deputy Prime Minister said the same thing. We are given the grant of the order of Rs1.5 m. to a Utility Regulatory Body which is not even constituted as per the legislation we have voted in this Parliament, and this is not correct. We are using taxpayers' money for a Board which does not exist at all.

The Deputy Prime Minister: We have not used any taxpayer's money.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I come on that motion?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member is going ahead with the motion, please? The Deputy Prime Minister has already replied.

The Deputy Prime Minister: There is no amount spent. So, what motion is the hon. Member going to make?

Mr Baloomoody: If there is no amount spent and there is no Board, so we move that this amount be deleted from the Budget.

The Deputy Prime Minister: We are voting for 2013.

Mr Baloomoody: We delete it from the Budget because there is no Board. We move that this item be deleted from the Budget. When they come with their Board, whenever they decide, we will put it.

The Chairperson: The question is that the sum of Rs1,000,000 to be appropriated to the Utility Regulatory Authority be reduced to R1.

On question put, motion defeated.

Mr Uteem: On page 203, in respect to item 28222014 *Water Tank Grant Scheme*, may I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister the number of water tanks that have been distributed and the criteria used for distribution of same?

The Deputy Prime Minister: A water tank, Mr Chairperson, is around Rs5,500 and Rs21,070,000 have been disbursed.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 197, *Major Constraints and Challenges*, reference is made to inadequate capacity for project and contract management. I would try to figure out what provision has been made to address that challenge. At page 202, under Programme Code 441, the estimates for publications and stationery are, in fact, slashed by half. The budget for studies and surveys is slashed by some 40% and in terms of staffing positions at page 208, there is hardly any increase. How does the Ministry propose, next year, to address this major constraint and challenge?

The Deputy Prime Minister: At which page?

Mr Obeegadoo: Well, the item about major constraints and challenges is on page 197 and I was referring to corresponding budgetary items at page 202 and to the staffing position, again, on the same programme at page 208.

The Deputy Prime Minister: When we need to build capacity, I am assured by the hon. Minister of Finance that we will use the Service to Mauritius Programme for the funding.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, under the same programme, item no. 22130 *Studies and Surveys*, last year, the estimates were of the order of Rs53 m., this year it is going to be Rs36

m. Can we have an indication from the Deputy Prime Minister as to what were the studies carried out and published, and what were the surveys carried out and published?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Singapore Cooperation Enterprise has submitted its report, and we have also had the Wastewater Master Plan which has just been produced.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to go back to a question I asked. I did not understand the answer.

(Interruptions)

I did not understand the answer and I am entitled to seek clarification. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister's budget mentions one and only one major constraint and challenge. This is: *Inadequate capacity for project and contract management*. So, I asked about the response to that single challenge which exists as at now, since it is there in the document for our guidance. How does the Ministry propose to meet that challenge since both in terms of staffing, programmes and projects, there is nothing? Did I understand correctly? And the Minister said we have nothing, but, as and when it is required, we will turn to finance.

(Interruptions)

So, please explain!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, we are well aware of the problems of project implementation. We have looked, we have searched and it is difficult to find. So, what I am proposing is when we get the service to Mauritius we try and find talents from there. It is almost impossible to get a full-time project implementation employee there.

(Interruptions)

But we will get them.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I will get back to *Studies and Surveys*. From what the Deputy Prime Minister has replied, he said that the studies and surveys involve a study carried out by the Singaporeans. I will refer the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to page 200, where we have an indication on the progress of the restructuring and merger of CWA/WMA and the Irrigation Authority. For year 2011, the progress was zero, and we are expecting progress in 2013 of the order of 25%. Can we, first of all, have an indication of what is the exact progress, and how much money has been paid to that Singaporean company?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is a pity that the hon. Member was not here when I spoke this afternoon!

(Interruptions)

I addressed this problem at length.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Still at page 202...

(Interruptions)

I was not here when you gave your speech. Under item 22100 - *Publications and Stationery*, I would like to know why it has been slashed by half and also *Studies and Surveys*, again, there is a drastic decrease.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is in response to the Budget Speech about a decrease of 25% in paperwork.

(Interruptions)

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities – Programme Code 441: Utility Policy, Planning and Management (Rs109,773,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities – Programme Code 442: Power Services was called.

Mr Lesjongard: Under programme 442, item No. 25110008 - *Subsidy to the Central Electricity Board, (a) Electricity Supply and Displacement of Electric Lines/Poles for Hardship Cases*, can we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister how many prepaid electricity meters have been installed as at to date?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is not the subject of...

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, under the same item. Last year...

(Interruptions)

I have it here in Hansard. Under the same item, last year, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister replied to a question on prepaid meters. I can table that. It is under the same item and I have it with me here.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I think it is under the same item raised by hon. Lesjongard at page 203, item 25 *Subsidies, (a) Electricity supply and Displacement of Electric Lines/Poles for Hardship cases*. All of us, Members of Parliament, regularly get representations for help in terms of displacement of poles. Why is it that, for next year, the subsidy is, in fact, being reduced, when the representations we receive are still as many?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is an indication of the progress that has been made for the supply.

(Interruptions)

The demand is getting...

(Interruptions)

The demand is getting less and less.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: I am coming back to that same item, that is, item No. 25110008, which was the same last year, where a question was put with regard to prepaid electricity meters, and under that same item the Deputy Prime Minister provided the answer. I am asking again my question: can we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister the number of prepaid electricity meters which were installed under that item?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Under that item, there is no prepaid meter. Prepaid meter is coming afterwards.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Under the same item of *Subsidies...*

(Interruptions)

...subparagraph (c) *Feed in Tariff to Small IPPs (MID Fund)*, I find that there is a sum of Rs40 m. this year, but only Rs10,000 for the next year, and in subsequent years. Could we have some clarification?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, for the information of the House, only Rs1.4 m. have been paid till now because of the slow introduction. Those who have applied have taken their time. More will be installed next year; so far, as at to date, it is Rs1.4 m. only.

Mr Uteem: Under item 22120 - *Fees*, may I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what does the Rs16 m. for fees relate to?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Rs16 m. are for the grant to global environmental facility, removal of barriers to energy efficiency and energy conservation in buildings, and the removal of barriers to renewable energy/solar energy.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I come back to the issue of prepaid electricity meters? Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister under which item provision has been made for such meters, and how many meters? Because last year, the Deputy Prime Minister informed the House that work was in progress and that he hoped to reach 2000 meters by this year. May we know under which item the issue of electric meters is being budgeted for and how many there are as at to date?

The Deputy Prime Minister: We are budgeting for 400 for the year 2013. It will be accommodated in the Budget.

(Interruptions)

Mr Seeruttun: On page 203, under item 22100 - *Publications and Stationery*, we can see a significant increase in the amount earmarked for 2013. How come the hon. Deputy Prime Minister reconciles that increase when we are talking about paperless office?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The increase is due to communication campaign on energy efficiency, which cost Rs1.85 m.

Mr Lesjongard: Under Programme Code 442, item ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Lesjongard, just go ahead with the question, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: *Mwa, pa amerde mwa hein!*

The Chairperson: Please, go ahead with the question!

Mr Lesjongard: *Laisse mwa fer mo travay trankil!*

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I want some silence, please!

Mr Lesjongard: Under item 25110008 - *Subsidy to Central Electricity Board - Part (c) Feed in Tariff to Small IPPs* – can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister how many applications have been received and how many such producers have been connected throughout Rodrigues?

The Deputy Prime Minister: 289 permits have been granted. 68 have been connected to the grid with the capacity of 631.6 kilowatts.

Mr Lesjongard: Under the same item, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the legislation has been amended too, because we know that with the existing legislation we have to seek the authority of the President? Last year, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister stated here that the legislation will be amended.

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Electricity Act will have to be amended eventually to include other measures as well.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under item 22130, *Studies and Surveys* – reference is made to the energy efficiency and solar PV projects. Since we have estimated Rs30 m. this year and we are projecting another Rs28 m. for next year, would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister kindly give us some feedback as to the disbursement for 2012, that would justify ...

(Interruptions)

Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister with me? I am talking at page 203, Programme Code 442, under item 22130, *Studies and Surveys*. There is mention of the energy efficiency and solar PV projects for which significant amounts were budgeted for this present year. May we know whether the disbursements do correspond to the amounts budgeted and to what effect, so much so that another provision for Rs28 m. for next year is justified?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is an ongoing project. The disbursements are justified. For the coming years, if the hon. Member wants the details, I will give it to him. Shall I give it to him? They are earmarked as follows –

- Energy Efficiency Regulation and Coach – Rs1.5 m.,
- Stimulating Energy Efficiency Services – Rs10 m.;
- Awareness Capacity Building – Rs10 m.;
- Energy Savings in Industries – Rs3 m.;
- Monitoring and Evaluation – Rs2 m., and
- Project Management – Rs3.5 m.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 204, under item 31, *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, I refer to item 31122 – *Other Machinery and Equipment* and the sub-item is *Solar Water Heater for Hospitals*. Again, this is the MID Fund; a sum of Rs20 m. was budgeted for 2012 and nothing for 2013. Should we conclude that all the money budgeted last year, have been disbursed

and that all our hospitals are now equipped of solar water heaters, and, if so, are we anticipating energy savings for the coming year in respect of our public hospital?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, this project has been transferred to the Ministry of Health.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 204, under item 32145502 *Loan to the Central Electricity Board, (a) Fort Victoria Power Station Phase II*, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister indicate to the House what has been the total cost of that Phase II project?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The total cost of the contract value has been Rs2,648,959,000.57.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities – Programme Code 442: Power Services (Rs189,098,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities – Programme Code 443: Water Resources was called.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 205, under item 28223010 *Capital Grant to CWA for the Replacement of old and inefficient pipelines*, we understand again that this year, hardly 70 ...

The Chairperson: Could the hon. Member kindly repeat the item, please?

Mr Lesjongard: On page 205, under item 28223010, we understand that again this year, hardly 75 kilometres of pipeline have been replaced out of 1,575 kilometres of old and defective water pipes. That is hardly 5%. At this pace, it is going to take us 26 years to replace those pipes.

The Chairperson: Put the question, please!

Mr Lesjongard: Can we have an indication from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister as to how much time it is going to take to replace that 1,575 kilometres of old and defective water pipes?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, if only the hon. Member was here this afternoon! I have taken great pains to explain the difficulties and the time it will take. We are starting in February in the upper region of Mare aux Vacoas.

Mr Obeegadoo: I was wondering about the Singaporean study and I note that on page 204 - I am sure you mentioned this in your speech, but you will bear with me since I was not

here – under *Studies and Surveys*, I see for studies on water resources and development, the estimates for 2012 are Rs7.5 m. and for the next year it is Rs9.8 m. Am I right that this item ...

The Chairperson: Can we have the item number, please?

Mr Obeegadoo: I will start again, Mr Chairperson. We are agreed that we are on Programme Code 443. We are at page 204, under item 22, *Goods and Services*, sub-item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys* – paragraph (a) *studies on water resources and development*. Are you with me, Mr Chairperson?

The Chairperson: Please, go ahead!

Mr Obeegadoo: Thank you. So, I now, kindly request from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister some explanation as to whether this is the item that takes us to the Singaporean study, which is supposed to be underway to assess our water resources, management of our water resources and the way forward and, if so, I would like to understand whether there have been disbursements in 2012, whether these disbursements next year will yield a report finally and when can we expect that report?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the studies include the Master Plan but other projects as well like consultancy services for Rivière du Poste, at Arnaud and consultancy services for modelling of the Curepipe aquifer. Yes, disbursements were made and it comes under another item. I will find it and let you know.

Mr Obeegadoo: May we know how much has been disbursed so far in favour of the Singaporean Company - I understand this is a private company doing this task - how much has been disbursed in 2012, how much will be disbursed next year and when are we going at last to get this Master Plan?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Master Plan is here and I replied to a PQ about three weeks ago, it is all there about the details and I have even included how much has been paid. From memory, it is between Rs20 m. and Rs22 m., but it is in reply to a PQ about three weeks ago. It is Rs30 m.

Mr Obeegadoo: When do we get the Master Plan, when do we get to see it?

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: On page 205, under item No. 32145503 *Loan to CWA for Riche Terre Jin Fei Development Zone*, can we have an indication from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister

whether works under that item have been completed there and what has been the scope of those works because the site is still lying idle?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, seven kilometres of pipes were laid from Calebasse to Riche Terre and I reiterate that it was not only for the Jin Fei Industrial Complex but it was also for the whole region of Riche Terre and Baie du Tombeau. So, it was not only Jin Fei. It was completed in June 2012, the amount spent was Rs28.5 m. last time and the whole project was Rs109 m.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 205, under the same item – *Loan to CWA*, item No. 32145503, may we have the details about the terms and conditions of loan awarded to the CWA, please?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will find out and circulate.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, following up from where my learned friend stopped on studies and surveys, a huge amount of money has been paid to the...

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem, please specify the page and the item No.!

Mr Uteem: Yes, it is on page 204, item No. 22130 *Studies and Surveys* and the hon. Deputy Prime Minister just explained to us the breakdown, the amount of money paid for the Master Plan, etc. So, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister how is it that despite all the money that we are paying to the Singaporeans and others, on page 201, under Delivery Unit, Non Revenue Water, it is still 51% and 49%. Why are we not getting any result despite spending so much money?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Obviously, the Member does not understand the problem. I explained at length this afternoon. I took one and a half hours; he does not understand.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Lesjongard!

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will go further and say we had spent almost Rs800 m. in different parts of the country, but it will not affect the non revenue water until we do more.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I will get back to page 205, item No. 32145503, *Loan to the CWA*. I'll get back to the item Jin Fei Development Zone. As indicated here, it is meant for Jin Fei.

The Chairperson: Does the hon. Member have a different question?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I have a question.

The Chairperson: Is it different from the one the hon. Member set earlier?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, completely different. As it is indicated here, it is for the Riche Terre Jin Fei Development Zone. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister stated that it was not meant for only Jin Fei, but for the region, and now as regards the scope of the works, can we know the scope of the works for the region? What has been done for the region? He has not stated that.

The Deputy Prime Minister: It brings water to the region. How the water is distributed is another matter. It can be used as well.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I refer the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to page 205 item No. 32145 sub item No. 32145503 *Loan to CWA*?

(Interruptions)

You will be here only to call for praise, but you will never answer questions my friend.

(Interruptions)

He asked me for praise, it does not concern me. You are here...

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, please go ahead with the question!

Mr Baloomoody: He doesn't have any role here now!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member must not respond to them. Please, go ahead with the question!

Mr Baloomoody: Concerning item 32145503 *(a) Rehabilitation of Pailles Water Treatment Plant and (c) Replacement of other old and defective pipelines*, a sum of Rs62 m. was earmarked for last year and for the next year it will be Rs39 m. May I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister if he can inform the House the exact places where the project will be implemented for the change of old pipelines?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Are we talking about item 32145503?

(Interruptions)

Sorry, I have to repeat it. I addressed this problem extensively, but I will just tell you. Replacement of old pipes, Camp Fouquereaux-Alma pipeline, Plaine des Papayes-Triolet-Pierrefonds, Bemanique-Balisson, Quartier Militaire-Mont Ida-l'unité. I spoke about it this afternoon.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: I am here to do my work and I will do my work.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is part of your work to be here at all times!

Mr Baloomoody: It is not my...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please! Hon. Uteem, please go ahead with the question!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: You were not here. What were you doing if you were not here?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem, please!

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether any provision has been made in the Budget by way of grant or loan to CWA for surveys to find out new boreholes and to explore new boreholes in Mauritius? I am asking whether there is any provision made under the capital ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: On the same issue, Mr Chairperson, on page 205, item No. 311301 *Drilling of Boreholes*, an amount of Rs16 m. is earmarked for 2013. Can the Deputy Prime Minister give us an indication where he is contemplating drilling those boreholes?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The three boreholes to be done are at Pont Fer, Fond du Sac and Valentina.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 204, item 22090 *Security*. Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform us which are the firms that have been awarded contracts for security services and whether the same contractors would be awarded the contracts for security services in 2013?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The RSL Security Services Ltd for security services at dam sites and Hydrology Sub Office; contract awarded after a bidding exercise. The contract started in August 2012 for a period of two years.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I am interested in dams.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Specify the page and the item, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 205, item *31 Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*. There are three sub-items that refer to dams. I would like to have some explanation. Concerning the Bagatelle Dam, provisions were made in 2012, 2013, extending right up to 2015. I would like to know when the Bagatelle Dam will finally be completed and operational. Just below, we have the Rivière des Anguilles Dam; it is the same story; very important amounts were budgeted last year. There is a sudden drop this year. It goes up again next year and even a larger amount in 2015. Then, further down, there is *Upgrading of Dams* with a small amount next year, but huge amounts in 2014 and 2015. Can we have some explanation of what is happening for Bagatelle Dam, Rivière des Anguilles Dam and what uplifting of other dams are envisaged? It is a very confusing picture.

(Interruptions)

I am on page 205, item *31 Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*. The second item is *Construction of Dams - (a) Bagatelle Dam*.

The Deputy Prime Minister: What would the hon. Member like to know?

Mr Obeegadoo: What would I like to know? I would like to know what is happening, because Bagatelle Dam, as the hon. Deputy Prime Minister will see, there are significant amounts every year; 2012 right up to 2015. I would like to know when Bagatelle Dam will finally be completed or is it because there is not enough space on the page, otherwise we would have had 2016, 2017, 2018, and so on. So, I would like to know what is happening in the case of Bagatelle Dam.

Secondly, we have Rivière des Anguilles Dam just below. Would you rather take one by one?

(Interruptions)

I would very much like the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to keep cool!

The Chairperson: Is the question not over yet?

Mr Obeegadoo: So, the Rivière des Anguilles Dam; here, it is even more intriguing, because there is a sudden drop...

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo, you must hurry up because time is almost up.

Mr Obeegadoo: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister could not follow which page.

The Chairperson: I am telling the hon. Member that time is almost up.

Mr Obeegadoo: But the hon. Deputy Prime Minister wants to know the questions asked. So, what is happening in the case of Rivière des Anguilles Dam, because there are fluctuations in terms of amounts budgeted? This year, it is very low and then, you have *Upgrading of Dams* with again huge amounts. So, please tell us what is happening on this dam front!

The Deputy Prime Minister: For the Bagatelle Dam, the work started in December 2011 and is expected to end towards December 2014, but we are making effort, because sometimes there is delay in payments, and, therefore, it will be up to 2015. This is for the Bagatelle Dam.

For the Rivière des Anguilles Dam, we are at the stage now of land acquisition which has been completed, but with the quarry for the stones, we have yet to sort out. So, the land is there and we have appointed Consultants Coyne and Bellier. They have to do the land investigation.

The Chairperson: I am sorry, time is up.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 443: Water Resources (Rs1,884,204,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 444: Sanitation was called.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, on page 205, under item 31113008 *Construction of Wastewater Infrastructure - (a) Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project*, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House what has been the total cost overrun on that project?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Which project?

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: I repeat myself, on page 205, under item 31113008 *Construction of Wastewater Infrastructure - (a) Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project*, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister - *faudré éna patience selman* - what has been the total cost overrun on the project?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I replied to a PQ on this issue recently, and I also addressed this problem when I made my speech this afternoon. So, I would refer the hon. Member to both the reply to the PQ and to my speech.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am at page 206. I am concerned with Camp Caval which is in my Constituency. Now, under item 31113008 *Construction of Wastewater Infrastructure*, there was a sum of Rs5 m. budgeted for Camp Caval and further down below, under *Loans to Non-*

Financial Public Corporation - (e) Minor Infrastructure Works, there is, for this year, an amount of Rs9 m. budgeted. May I have some clarification as to the nature of the construction of wastewater infrastructure and how it might relate to the minor infrastructure works for next year? Is the work completed? What actually is happening?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Camp Caval Sewerage Project is at the stage of consultancy services for feasibility study and the evaluation of bids for consultancy services is ongoing. The duration of the contract is 24 months. The expected number of house connections is 1,600. The expected date of start of work is 2014. The estimated cost of project is Rs450 m.; funding: Government of Mauritius.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same item, may I know where matters stand for the region of *Bain des Dames* and *Pailles-Guibies Sewerage Project*?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Bain des Dames consultancy services feasibility study, again, the status is a final feasibility study report which is being awaited. The duration of contract work is 18 months. The expected number of house connections is 250. The expected date for start of work is 2013 and the estimated cost of project is Rs175 m.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, on page 206, under the last item, that is, item No. 32145517 – *Upgrading of Wastewater Infrastructure*, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether in that list where we are going to upgrade the wastewater infrastructure, we have the region of Cité La Cure because the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is well aware of the problems being faced by the inhabitants of that region, and whether he will table a list of regions where those infrastructure will be upgraded?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The item of *Upgrading of Wastewater Infrastructure* applies to upgrading and rehabilitation of wastewater infrastructure at existing wastewater treatment plants. Pailles-Guibies sewerage consultancy services for review of design. The design was made, but it has to be reviewed because there have been lots of changes and this has caused some delays. Provision is made for consultancy services. Regions covered are Morcellement Raffray, Bonnefin, les Guibies, Pailles East, Pailles West, Camp Chapelon and Anse Courtois. The design of the sewerage network is completed. The bidding document for consultancy is being finalised. Actions are being initiated for acquisition of wayleaves, and this is where we would like cooperation from everybody.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, this *programme 444 - Sanitation* involves a sum of Rs1,438,375,000, as you said earlier, and we know there are many projects and many of them take a lot of time to materialise. Yet, at page 211, we learn that there are only three persons employed in that unit in charge of sanitation and of the three, there appears not to be a single technical expert, but just one planner and two from support staff. Now, with all due respect, how on earth can we reconcile this level of planning with a huge scope of works?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This comes from consultants; it does not from this.

Mr Uteem: In relation to item No. 31113008 – *Construction of Wastewater Infrastructure* on page 206, *Tranquebar/Vallée des Prêtres*, may I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister which amount relates to Tranquebar and what is the status on that project?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Tranquebar/Vallée des Prêtres is combined consultancy services for feasibility study. The status: evaluation of bids for consultancy services is ongoing. The duration of contract is 24 months. The expected number of house connections will only be defined after the consultancy service. The expected date of start of work is 2014. The estimated cost of project is Rs150 m.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, on page 206, under item No. 32145517 - *Infrastructure Rehabilitation in ex-CHA Estates and Low Cost Housing*, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the housing estates are selected as a matter of priority and whether he would table a list of all those ex-CHA housing estates and low cost housing estates concerned?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I certainly will, but if the hon. Member wishes, I can say what are the housing estates concerned at the moment. Shall I read it? It is Cité Atlee, Cité Malherbes, Cité Palmerstone, Cité Plaine Verte, Cité La Cure and Cité Vallée des Prêtres.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, under the same item No. 32145517 – *House Service Connections*, there is an amount of Rs63 m. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what regions are concerned with this amount and what is the number of houses that will be connected?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, there are two contracts here. One is for Port Louis and one is for Plaines Wilhems. The contract value is Rs20 m., including VAT for each contract. The expected number of house connections under each contract is 200. The contract will be awarded by 2012 and it is a two-year duration contract.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 444: Sanitation (Rs1,438,375,000) was, on question put, agreed to.-

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 445: Radiation Protection was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I am looking at the programme targets which are at page 201 in respect of radiation protection. We are talking here of the harmful effects of the ionising radiation and we are told that as at 2011, there was only 18% compliance with international standards. Of course, we have nothing about 2012, neither what the target was, nor the actual attainment figure. Next year, it is 60%. I would like some clarifications from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister. What are we looking at here when we talk of ionising radiation? What are the sectors of the economy or sectors of social life concerned and what is the risk incumbent for the population?

The Deputy Prime Minister: We are, at present, talking only of workers in X-Ray departments, but we have to go further and look at patients' exposure as well. This is a long-term and other sources of radiation as well, but at the moment it is fairly limited. It is not an easy thing to do. We get the impression that there are too many investigations and too many scans, MRIs that expose patients.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 445: Radiation Protection (Rs10,648,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 361: Policy and Strategy for Economic Growth and Social Progress was called.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, under Programme Code 361- *Compensation of Employees*, the amount budgeted has decreased from Rs151 m. to Rs130 m., almost Rs20 m. less, while on page 236, under Programme Code 361, the number of employees will be increased from 231 to 238, that is, 7 more staff. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister how does he explain that the compensation to employees - the whole salary package – has decreased, when the number of employees has increased, and there is PRB that is going to be paid for next year?

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, we have recruited about 60 Analysts and they are at a lower salary scale. This is what I am told.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister why is it that under item *21110010 Service to Mauritius Programme*, Rs15.4 m. earmarked for this year has been slashed to Rs7 m. in 2013? Is it that the programme is not effective and there are weaknesses in the programme that have caused it to be slashed?

Mr Duval: Not at all, Mr Chairperson. In fact, a sum of about Rs20,000 is paid per person. So, you can easily calculate how many people will be in the Ministry or in the department. It is actually being ventilated all through diverse Ministries. That is why I think it is less this year. But, in fact, in the Budget Speech, you will find that we are recruiting 300 next year.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 229, under item No. 22030 – *rent*, there is a huge increase by Rs35 m. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what this relates to?

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, the Ministry intends to move out from the present offices at Government House to new rented premises. We actually have about 1300 staff at the Ministry. We don't know how many will move, but quite a few will move, and that explains the high cost.

Mr Uteem: Have the new premises already been identified or tenders launched?

Mr Duval: It is not yet finalised.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, please allow me to come back to the *Compensation of Employees* on page 228. There has been a decrease of Rs20 m., and still the number of employees has increased. At the same time, PRB is supposed to be paid next year. So, how can you explain that the number of employees has increased, plus PRB, and still there has been a decrease of Rs20 m.?

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, I will circulate the breakdown for the hon. Member.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to refer the Minister to page 222 - *Performance Targets* and the last item *Formulation of an ESTP Plan*. I must apologise. I am not too sure what ESTP refers to, but there is a description here. The objective for 2013 is 50% of Ministries. Could the Minister give us some indication as to what are the Ministries that are to be covered here?

Mr Duval: I don't have a list of the Ministries. But ESTP stands for Economic and Social Transformation Plan. That is a plan of Government for the next 10 years.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 229, under item No. 22120 – *Fees*, I can see that some Rs24 m. have been earmarked for 2013, of which Rs14.7 m. are for capacity building. Could we have some details about what the remaining amount is meant for?

Mr Duval: The breakdown is as follows –

- fees to Chairman and Members of Boards, PPP Committee: Rs535,000;
- fees for training: Rs8 m. – that’s a provision;
- fees to consultants: Rs1.2 m. - again that’s a provision;
- refund of subscription fees to professional bodies: Rs159,000;
- capacity building programme: Rs4.7 m. Again, it is a provision for procurement of technical expertise, both locally and abroad, to reinforce capacity constraints in the context of the PBB.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 229, under item No. 28 – *Other Expense - transfers to households*, we find a sum of Rs101 m. Would the Vice-Prime Minister give us some indication what this is about, what are the modalities of this disbursement, and who benefits from this funding?

Mr Duval: It actually describes transfers to households. In fact, it is the Decentralised Cooperation Programme, which is funded by the European Union. This programme actually caters for poverty reduction in Mauritius and Rodrigues, empowerment and solidarity support to vulnerable groups, people facing special challenges and those with special needs. This is to help NGOs.

Mr Obeegadoo: What are the modalities of disbursement? The hon. Minister mentioned NGOs. Does this money go to NGOs? It is Rs101 m. I would be grateful if we could be given some idea.

Mr Duval: If it is Rs101 m., it must be quite lengthy to provide the information. If the hon. Member asks the information by way of a PQ, I will give it to him. But it is, in fact, for the Decentralised Cooperation Programme.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 228, under item No. 21210 - *Social Contributions*, there has been a substantial decrease from Rs4.4 m. to Rs700,000. Can I ask the Vice-Prime Minister why such a decrease in contributions?

Mr Duval: In fact, these are social contributions to Government. It was **lumped** in this item, and now it is actually ventilated across the other departments.

Mr Seeruttun: At page 229, under item No. 311332105 - *e-projects of which (a) e-Budget*, I can see that Rs30 m. have been earmarked for 2013. Can we have some idea about how you go about with that project?

Mr Duval: In fact, I understand it is computerisation of the whole budgeting procedure for my Ministry, how it is done, how it is worked out, how the details are done and how it is monitored. It's that sort of project.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 229, under item No. 22120 – *Fees*, we are budgeting Rs24,595,000, out of which Rs14,700,000 will go to capacity building. May we know for what purpose the difference is?

Mr Duval: I have given the whole list, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has just answered the question. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: In relation to the *e-budget* under item No. 3112105, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what firm has been awarded the contract for this e-budget?

Mr Duval: State Informatics Ltd.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 229, item No. 22060 – *Maintenance*, there is an amount of Rs6.5 m. earmarked. Can I ask the Vice-Prime Minister what is being maintained and to whom it is being paid?

Mr Duval: The major item actually is maintenance of the e-budget, again to SIL, for Rs3.1 m. Then, there are vehicles and motorcycles, etc. – that's a provision – for Rs1.8 m. Plant and equipment and other provisions: Rs700,000. MOFED - offices of Government House: Rs400,000. Then, there is IT equipment: Rs500,000. So, the major item is e-budget for SIL.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 230, item No. 26313064 - *National Productivity and Competitiveness Council...*

Mr Duval: Give me the page number again, please.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will talk on item 26313064 - *National Productivity and Competitiveness Council*. We don't hear much these days from the NPCC as compared to the old days when it was very active. I understand there have been problems; the Chairperson having had some skirmishes with the Police or whatever. I would like to know what is happening. Is the NPCC still operational? What is it actually achieving these days so that we need to budget another Rs19 m.?

Mr Duval: Very much so, Mr Chairperson. The NPCC, in fact, has got a new lease of life. The hon. Member has not been reading the papers. Only yesterday or the day before, Mr

John Heap had been invited for a conference. He is the Managing Director of the Institute of Productivity and President of the World Confederation of Productivity Science.

All this week they have activities actually. Also the hon. Member should look at the billboards. There are lots of billboards. There is a whole productivity campaign going on and it's not fair to say that the Chairperson has had problems. He had a Court case which had been cleared. It's actually completely finished and I do hope that NPCC will be, like it used to be in the old days, much more active.

Mr Baloomoody: On item 26323 - *Capital Grant to Extra Budgetary Units*, for next year we are providing Rs1.2 m. for the *Financial Intelligence Unit*, item 26323015. May I know for which specific project?

Mr Duval: It is to buy one vehicle. It's a capital item.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 230, item 26313004 - *Board of Investment*, there is an amount of Rs154 m. May we know the breakdown of this figure?

Mr Duval: Board of Investment –

- staff costs: Rs69 m.;
- fees to Chairman and Board: Rs2.2 m.;
- rent: Rs11 m.;
- cost of utilities: Rs7 m.;
- other goods and services: Rs2 m.;
- consultancy fees: Rs5 m.;
- other operating expenses: Rs7 m.;
- investment promotion: Rs48 m., and
- fees for training: Rs1.5 m.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please go ahead with your question!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, but you should talk to him.

The Chairperson: Don't respond to them!

(Interruptions)

Some silence, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 229, item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, there is an amount of Rs21 m. It starts from page 229 and continues to page 230, it is the same programme. There has been a substantial increase from Rs13 m. to Rs21 m. with almost the same number of employees. Can I have a plausible explanation as to why such a huge increase in personal emoluments?

Mr Duval: There is a big increase in basic salary, reshuffle of staff from other sub programmes; an increase in allowances and end of year bonus. I can circulate it for the Member if he is interested.

The Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 361: Policy and Strategy for Economic Growth and Social Progress (Rs624,091,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 362: Public Financial Management was called.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the Gambling Regulatory Authority, there is a capital grant of Rs1.1 m. May I ask the Vice-Prime Minister what is it meant for? There was a project of centralising the server at the GRA for all the gaming houses and gambling spots. Is this covered by this sum of Rs1.1 m. and, if it is not covered, why is it so?

Mr Duval: I think the hon. Member may have missed the Budget Speech. In fact, the server is being transferred to the MRA. The MRA has a large number of IT personnel and will look after the IT requirements for the industry. The grant for the GRA is Rs23,635,000. I have the breakdown.

Mr Uteem: On page 230, item 26323043 - *Mauritius Revenue Authority*, Rs93 m. is in relation to what project?

Mr Duval: There is a long list; does the hon. Member want me to read it for him?

- Provision made for integrated tax in administration system: Rs3.5 m.;
- renewal of five vehicles: Rs5 m.;
- purchase of equipment, fixtures and fittings: Rs3 m.;
- maintenance and acquisition of ICT equipment (main ones): Rs12 m.;
- enhancement of finance and HRMS: Rs2 m.;
- installation of a weighbridge in a port area - very important: Rs3 m.;
- enhancement of security infrastructure at new Customs House: R1 m.;

- Drug Interdiction Programme: Rs42 m., and
- network and security enhancement at Hiram Court, wherever that is: Rs7 m.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 231, item 22120 – *Fees*, there is a new provision of fees for Rs2 m. as from next year. May we know for what purpose are those fees?

Mr Duval: It is a provision made for the payment of local fees to the University of Technology for officers of the finance cadre following diploma and certificate courses.

The Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 362: Public Financial Management (Rs1,372,987,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 364: Procurement Advisory and Contract Award Services was called.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Under item 22120 *Fees*...

The Chairperson: Can you specify the page, please?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On page 232, under Programme Code 364 - item 22120 - *Fees*, can we have some details from the Minister on the amount of Rs3,950 m. that has been provided for 2013?

Mr Duval: It is provision made for payment of fees to Chairperson, Members of Board and Committees, I think it is the Independent Review Panel (IRP) principally; fees for training for officers following certificate in diploma courses and consultancy fees. These are the three.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 232, still on Programme Code 364, under item 31132103 *e-Procurement*, there is an amount of Rs40 m. Can we have some details on this project?

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, e-Procurement is something we have been trying to do for a number of years. We want, actually, to computerise and have it more efficient and transparent for the whole procurement process. We have been looking, in fact, to purchase a system. If I am not wrong, I think they have floated a tender. The project would be implemented in the following phases: 2013 implementation of components of the e-Procurement system, online bidding, online evaluation, capacity building, that's Rs40 m. for next year and a further Rs10 m. for 2014, that is, Contract Management, Management Information System and Framework Agreement.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister if it is done in-house or it is being outsourced?

Mr Duval: It has, at tender stage, been outsourced.

Mr Uteem: Under item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*, on page 232, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister who is the current Director of the Procurement Office?

Mr Duval: There is an Ag. Director, Mr Germain, there is no full-fledged Director at the moment.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 232, under item 22120 – *Fees*, there is an amount of Rs9.1 m. May we know to whom these fees are being paid and the breakdown of it?

Mr Duval: Fees, Mr Chairperson, are, in fact, paid to evaluators and people who provide consultancy services and Rs9 m. are being provided for that, and for training of staff it is Rs150,000. In fact, it is much less than last year.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on the same page, same sub-programme, item 22030 – *Rent*, there is an amount of Rs4.7 m. May we know what is being rented, where and to whom this rent is being paid?

Mr Duval: It is at the NPF building and it is being paid to NPF, I presume, and the size is 1,406 square metres.

Mr Ameer Meea: Under the same item *rent*, but under a different sub-programme on page 233 - item 22030 – *Rent*, there is an amount of Rs8.1 m. Can I ask the same question as the last one?

The Chairperson: We are still on Programme Code 364. This is item 365. The hon. Member will have to wait for some time, please!

The Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 364: Procurement Advisory and Contract Award Services (Rs141,753,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 365: Government Accounting and Payments Systems was called.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 233, under Programme Code 365, item 22030 - *Rent*, Rs8.1 billion, may we know the detailed breakdown and what is being rent?

Mr Duval: Yes, Mr Chairperson, there is rental space at Rabadia Building, with a monthly rent of Rs595,000; there is rent at the Voucher Room in Farquhar Street, with a rent of Rs53,000 per month There is Flacq Cash Office with rent of Rs7,500 per month; Pamplémousses

Cash Office is for Rs7,500 per month. Voucher Room, Queen's Street with a rent of Rs12,000 per month.

Mr Ameer Meea: Under the same sub-programme - *Maintenance*, there is an amount of Rs16.8 m. Can we know the breakdown of this figure?

Mr Duval: Maintenance, plant and equipment: Rs400,000. Vehicles and motorcycles: Rs100,000. IT hardware and software: Rs16.3 m. The large part of that is payment to Oracle Technical Support which is paid to State Informatics Ltd. in respect of all Ministries and Departments at Rs10.75 m.

Mr Ameer Meea: Is it Rs16.3 m. of the maintenance of IT?

Mr Duval: Yes.

Mr Ameer Meea: It is paid to whom?

Mr Duval: As I mentioned, the Rs10.75 m. are paid to State Informatics Ltd for Oracle Technical Support. There is maintenance of line printers of Rs2 m. and New TAS Reports is Rs0.7 m. Maintenance of hardware is Rs4.65 m.

(Interruptions)

What I have here is the Oracle Technical Support which is paid to SIL; for the others, I do not have the information. I can provide it later on if the hon. Member wants.

Mr Ameer Meea: E-payment project, I suppose this is, again, a provision of Rs5 m. May we know the details of this e-payment project?

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, as we mentioned in the Budget Speech, we do want to move up the technology and also improve services to the public. Here, we are talking about Government accounting. So, the Accountant General will be accepting, hopefully, before March next year, payments by internet and by mobile. This is what it is all about.

The Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 365: Government Accounting and Payments Systems (Rs106,233,000), was, on question put, agreed to.

The Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 366: Provisions of Statistics was called.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, under item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys* where an amount of Rs42 m. has been budgeted, may we know the breakdown of this figure?

Mr Duval: It is basically for – as it says - surveys. There is a census of economic activities next year which is for Rs6.7 m. There is a census of agriculture and that's Rs8.7 m.; the continuous Multi-purpose Household Survey: Rs13.6 m.; Household Budget Survey: Rs7.7 m.; Census 2011, there is a sum of Rs3 m. for next year, and Survey of Outgoing Tourists: Rs2.4 m.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, just one line above is *Fees* - Rs14.5 m. May we know the breakdown and to whom these fees are being paid?

Mr Duval: Fees to Chairperson and members of the Statistics Board: Rs1.2 m.; fees for training: Rs1 m.; fees to consultants for training of staff for statistical capacity building under an African Development Bank Grant: Rs11 m., and capacity building programme: Rs1.3 m.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, at page 233, last item No. 31132103 *e-Business Plan*, may we have some details about what the hon. Minister intends to do with the Business Plan at the Statistics level?

Mr Duval: It says it is provision, including modernisation, of IT equipment, development and maintenance of new items of architecture, customisation of new web portal for Statistics Mauritius.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, under the same Sub Programme, that is, item No. 22030 - *rent*, there is a rent of Rs9.3 m.; may we know to whom this rent is being paid, what is its breakdown and where the premises are being rented?

Mr Duval: The LIC building.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 366: Provision of Statistics (Rs162,975,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 367: Valuation of Immovable Properties was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, under item 22120 - *Fees*, I find that only for next year, we are increasing the fees by more than 100%, Rs1.7 m. and then we come back to Rs800,000. May we know for what specific purpose for this year we have an increase?

Mr Duval: The fees have been increased because there is a capacity building programme of Rs900,000; the rest is the same as last year, that is, fees to Chairperson and members of the Board of the Objection Unit: Rs500,000; fees for training: Rs150,000 and refund of subscription fees to professional bodies: Rs150,000.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on personal emoluments, can I ask the Vice-Prime Minister who is heading the Valuation Department since the actual Head is being interdicted because he was being arrested by ICAC for losing his memory?

Mr Duval: There is a disciplinary proceeding against the actual Head and the Ag. Head is Mrs Bissessur.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on the same item of valuation of immovable properties, rent is being paid. May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister where this building is being rented, to whom it is being paid and the surface area rented?

Mr Duval: It is a building at Ebène, Nextracom.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, under the same item *rent*, since the hon. Prime Minister is here, I would like to make a point. Rent money is dead money.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I am sorry, the hon. Member has to ask the question.

Mr Ameer Meea: My question concerning rent is: is it not more proper for this office to have its own space instead of paying such huge amounts every year? Government does have all the lands in Ebène itself. Is it not proper for the Evaluation Department and other departments to have their own building? As I said, rent money is dead money.

Mr Duval: I would agree with that.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 367: Valuation of Immovable Properties (Rs95,711,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 368: Regulatory Framework of Companies was called.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, under item 22160 *Overseas Training*, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister why there is no amount budgeted for overseas training?

Mr Duval: Because there will be none next year.

Mr Ameer Meea: Again, on my favorite item, that is, *rent*, there is an amount of Rs9.5 m. You see how many millions are being spent on rent items. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister where this building is being rented and to whom it is being paid?

Mr Duval: In fact, this building is at 1, Cathedral Square which is just next door. The rent there is Rs9.3 m. plus the parking, etc.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on the same page, under the last item, *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister who won this contract and whether there has been any cost overrun?

Mr Duval: Implementation of Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) to cater for electronic filing, searching and retrieval of documents: Rs15 m. Whether the contract has already been allocated, I am not sure. I will provide the hon. Member with the information.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 368: Regulatory Framework of Companies (Rs79,367,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 369: Registration of Deeds and Conservation of Mortgages was called.

Mr Ameer Meea: On the last item, that is, *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, we find that there is a sum of Rs100 m. May we have some details on this project?

Mr Duval: Provision required for the modernisation of property registration project, this project consists of computerising all the activities pertaining to taxation, payment, registration and delivery of documents.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, under the item of *Publication and Stationery*, there is quite a substantial decrease in the amount spent. It is a good sign but could the hon. Minister share with us the reason how he managed to decrease by so much the amount on publication and stationery. Perhaps other Ministries could follow the example.

Mr Duval: I presume it goes with the ICT project which, as you know, there is computerisation of all the activities, documentation and registration, but, here, I have got just one line, provision reduced in line with Government decision to use less paper.

Mr Ameer Meea: Coming back to the upgrading of ICT, Rs100 m., may we know the name of the company that was awarded the contract?

Mr Duval: It was allocated to SIL.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, let me go back to that item on publication and stationery where some Rs10.4 m. were spent.

Mr Duval: If I may just interrupt the hon. Member, the SIL was an EDMS project. I will get the information for this one in a moment.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Seeruttun, please proceed!

Mr Seeruttun: If I could go back to that item *Publication and Stationery* where a sum of Rs10.4 m. was this year, that is, 2012. Could we be given some details about how that money was spent?

Mr Duval: I do not think that I have the information here. It is just the purchase of stationery.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development – Programme Code 369: Registration of Deeds and Conservation of Mortgages (Rs163,331,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, in fact, the Registrar of Companies is here, perhaps he can provide me with the information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, are you going back to the item?

Mr Duval: Yes, they would like to provide the information.

The Chairperson: No, I am sorry! I have already got it voted.

Mr Duval: All right.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 321: Policy and Strategy Development for Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Maritime Services was called.

Dr. Sorefan: Regarding the Programme Code 321 sub-item on *Fees* ...

The Chairperson: Specify the page, please!

Dr. Sorefan: On page 254 item 22120 *Fees*, I see that a sum of Rs21,350,000 is earmarked of which an amount of Rs15 m. goes to the *Consultants (including Transport Masterplan)* and provision for *Capacity Building Programme* is Rs1.6 m. There is a difference of Rs4 m. between the Rs21 m. and the rest. May we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister where the sum of Rs4 m. goes to?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, the other sum of Rs4 m. goes to fees to the Chairman and Members of Boards and Committees, provision for payment of fees to Motor Vehicle Arbitration Committee, Road Safety Council, Road Transport Advisory Board, fees to assessors, provision

for payment of fees to Chairperson, Members and Secretary of the Departmental Tender and Bid Evaluation Committee, fees for training and provision for short training courses.

Dr. Sorefan: On page 254 item 22030 *Rent*, a sum of Rs18,840,000 is earmarked, of which *Rental of Building* is Rs10.5 m. There is a difference of Rs8.3 m. May we know where this sum of Rs8.3 m. goes to?

Mr Bachoo: This is payment of rent for Jade House, Moorgate House, PPC's office and rental of new office for Mass Transit Unit, rental of parking slots and rental of facilities for events.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on the same sub-programme *Fees to Consultants (including Transport Masterplan)*, there is an amount of Rs15 m. May we know to whom this amount is to be paid and whether it is related to the *Métro Léger* project?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, it is consultancy fees for the setting up of a Mass Transit Unit. It is the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE).

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform us when will that Master Plan be submitted? Is there a time schedule for that?

Mr Bachoo: Well, they are working on that.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on the same item, has there been any tender exercise before this contract being allocated to the Singaporean Company or was it directly allocated just as for the Smart Card?

Mr Bachoo: This is a Government to Government agreement which was arrived at.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 321: Policy and Strategy Development for Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Maritime Services (Rs149,205,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 322: Construction and Maintenance of Government Buildings and Other Assets was called.

Dr. Sorefan: The sub-item 22120007...

The Chairperson: Kindly specify the page, please!

Dr. Sorefan: On page 255, item 22120007 *Fees for Training*, may we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister in what field this training is for?

Mr Bachoo: It is fees to assessors, provisions for payment of fees to Chairperson, Members and Secretaries of Bid Evaluation Committee and Departmental Tender Committee, fees for training to meet cost of training of staff, seminars and workshop.

Mr Roopun: Sir, coming back to page 254, could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give details on the item 21111 *Other Staff Costs*. It is Rs17 m. Could we have details about what this represents?

Mr Bachoo: This is travelling and transport, refund of travelling expenses by bus and mileage allowance, travel grant, commuter travelling, overtime, provision for payment of overtime to office care attendants for opening, closing, cleaning of offices and to officers and drivers working after office hours.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 322: Construction and Maintenance of Government Buildings and Other Assets (Rs376,534,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 323: Construction and Maintenance of Roads and Bridges was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 250, Programme Code 323 on Targets, I am interested in this *World Bank International Roughness Index Threshold Matrix*. The target is 50% for next year of our road network to be classified somewhere between 'average' to 'very good'. May I know what the present status is?

Mr Bachoo: We are going very fast in that direction, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Maybe I speak too fast. Let me repeat it again! The hon. Vice-Prime Minister is aiming for 50% in 2013. My question, in very simple English, is: in 2012, what is the present status? What percentage of the road network qualifies as average...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, in fact, we are nearing 50% even this year.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, they interrupt and they say policy. This is not policy. I am not asking about...

Mr Bachoo: I am not...

Mr Obeegadoo: Not the hon. Minister, but some of his colleagues would have to understand....

Mr Bachoo: I can't hear anybody, I am telling the hon. Member.

Mr Obeegadoo: Thank you, very much.

Mr Bachoo: We are nearing that 50% even towards the end of this year. So, we are much ahead of our time.

The Chairperson: Next question! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 256 - *Transaction Advisory Services for Ring Road and Harbour Bridge*, I refer to item 31113003 *Construction of Roads*. There is, as I said, *Transaction Advisory Services for Ring Road and Harbour Bridge* for a sum of Rs8.5 m. which is being provided. May we know where the project of Ring Road and Harbour Bridge has reached and also this Advisory Services to whom it will be paid?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, in fact, the Transaction Advisors are providing the services. Being given that the matter is at the Central Procurement Office, I am not in a position to comment on that because I am not aware of what is going on. I am just waiting for the outcome of it.

Dr. Sorefan: On the same item, regarding the Transaction Advisory Services to the tune of Rs8.5 m., may we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether it is the same group which was about to give the tender to a group plan consortium? Yesterday, they were supposed to give it.

The Chairperson: Can the hon. Member ask his question, please?

Dr. Sorefan: May we know if the hon. Minister is happy with this company ...

The Chairperson: What is the question of the hon. Member?

Dr. Sorefan: Whether the hon. Minister is happy with the company, who nearly bypassed the PPP Committee, the MPI department and even the Cabinet to go for the tender.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, in fact, I am very sad because the hon. Member was not here yesterday when I was addressing the House. I can surely say that all you have read in the paper is nothing but nonsensical rubbish because attempt is made to tarnish the image of this Government. The way they did years ago when Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, was putting up the highway. This is exactly what they are doing. This is all nonsensical. Neither my Ministry,

nor the CPB or anybody is held responsible and there was no leakage. I don't know where all the rubbish came out.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on the same item, *Transaction and Advisory Services for Ring Road and Harbour Bridge* – I was here yesterday, but I did not hear the hon. Vice-Prime Minister say this – whether the Phase II Ring Road, *le tracé* - has been finalised.

Mr Bachoo: In fact, there is a committee, which is being chaired by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and we are working on that. Section 6 has already been published. In fact, this is a human issue and we have to talk to all the people who are around. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister, the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands and I are looking into the issue.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am at page 256, under item 31 - *Construction of Roads*, at paragraph (c) - *Construction Bidirectional Lanes from St Jean to Pont Fer on Motorway M1*. I want to understand from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what has happened. It would appear that we have budgeted Rs33 m. for 2012, and yet, this is where the main bottleneck lies, the Phoenix roundabout. So, I want to know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister how he proposes to get out of this mess, where we are in, since the third lane at Phoenix is practically of no use anymore, and what he envisages to do, since only Rs3 m. have been requested in the Budget for next year?

Mr Bachoo: I am sorry to say that this third lane is not useless. In fact, on peak hours, we are opening it. At the same time, there are two adjoining villages, which are having some difficulties and we have to accept that they had certain problems. On peak hours, early in the morning and afternoon, I know all the people who are using that road to go towards the South, they know the relief that they get. In fact, this is not a problem, Mr Chairperson.

Secondly, the hon. Member has to bear with us, the great separated junction, which is part of the PPP, will be implemented next year.

Mr Roopun: May I join in with the issue of congestion in Quatre-Bornes and refer the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to item (m), *upgrading of Avenue des Tulipes*. Could we be enlightened about the status of the work? I am talking on page 256, the last item. Could we be updated about the upgrading of Avenue des Tulipes, whether works are being done there?

Mr Bachoo: Works in Avenue des Tulipes have already started and that will lead to the roundabout. The roundabout will cross that Avenue Hilcrest; both will get an outlet in the Motorway. This will be a great relief for those people who are on this side of Sodnac.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 256, regarding the project of Harbour Bridge, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether the project of Harbour Bridge or Dream Bridge is still on and what are the companies that have been shortlisted for this project?

Mr Bachoo: It is no longer a Dream Bridge; it is becoming a real Harbour Bridge. That forms part of the PPP. In fact, that's why I have just stated that we are awaiting the outcome of the works, which are being conducted by the CPB, that is, the tender exercise.

Mr Uteem: In relation to the PPP project; can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister indicate whether he has an idea about when he will start launching tenders for these PPPs?

Mr Bachoo: The tenders have already been launched and evaluation is being conducted. That's why in a section in the press, they are making mischief and writing all types of rubbish. So, the tenders are on. The evaluation has started. I am not in a position to say anything about it because that is under the PPP, which is very, very strict and confidential. Once our offer is made to any company, then the RDA, that is, the official wing of the Government will have to seek the approval of the PPP's office and, at the same time, the Cabinet. It is only then that we are going to make public, to say which company has got the contract. This is the law of the PPP.

Dr. Sorefan: On page 257, under item (x) – *Widening M1 from Ruisseau Créoles ...*

The Chairperson: Which item number?

Dr. Sorefan: Under item 31113003, (x) – may we know the contract value and when the work will start?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, it is about Rs65 m. and the work has already started.

Mr Ameer Meea: About the Harbour Bridge again, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether this bridge will be a toll road, and, also, what is the estimate of the cost of this project?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, in fact, to be honest, this forms part of the toll road, but we don't know exactly what will be the quantum because we are waiting to know who is going to get the tender and it is only then that we will be in a position to know. In fact, this toll issue, *péage*, the concept was first introduced in 2003, when the hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger was the Prime Minister of this country.

Mr Roopun: May I come back to the question of Avenue des Tulipes, on page 256? May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister by when will the work be completed?

Mr Bachoo: That is going to take some time because we had to wait a long time; there were problems and challenges regarding the land acquisition issues. Now, everything has been cleared. The work has started. I am not an expert in that, but, if I am not mistaken, it may take seven or eight months maximum.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to go back to the Phoenix Roundabout issue, which I have raised earlier – the St Jean/Pont Fer connection. I did not hear clearly. I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister mentioning a PPP. Do we understand that there is going to be alternative route or is it an overhead connection through PPP? What is the nature of the PPP project for Phoenix Roundabout?

Mr Bachoo: Under PPP, we have got many projects. Firstly, there are three roundabouts there: at Jumbo, at IVTB and then the Dowlut roundabout. All these three will have to be connected, either by grade separated junction or by flyovers. Secondly, we have got A1 and M1, that is, the connection between Coromandel and Sorèze. Thirdly, there is the Harbour Bridge. And fourthly, there is the tunnel, that is, Ring Road Phase II – the third lane that will start from Quay D and will end up at Terre Rouge. We will have the third lane as well as the grade separated junctions on three spots.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On the same page 257, item 32 – *Acquisition of Financial Assets; loan to Special Purpose Vehicle - Road Decongestion Programme*, this is a huge loan of Rs4.3 billion. Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give us details about this special purpose vehicle? How will that amount be spent? Is this amount meant to be spent in partnership with a private company in a consortium?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, I answered that question about six or seven months ago, but for the sake of the hon. Member, I am going to repeat the same thing. Government will provide a long-term rupee based loan to private party at market rate of interest. This would be used to finance Harbour Bridge, Ring Road (Lot 2), A1-M1 Bridge and upgrading of roundabouts on motorways. Private party will start reimbursing the loan after operation starts. Possibility of private banks and other financial institutions refinancing the loan early has been explored. This will reduce the burden on our debt stock and also faster development of the Mauritius capital market. In fact, this is being looked into by the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Ameer Meea: On the same Decongestion Programme, I think the Ring Road Project also forms part of this project. May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister where the Ring Road

Project starts and where it is supposed to terminate? Will it be as the original *tracé*, that is, Route Militaire in Port Louis or will it stop half way on the *tracé*?

Mr Bachoo: It will start where the Ring Road Phase I ends. There will be the tunnel, and it will go out of it in the vicinity of Tranquebar. This is the second phase. The third phase will be the one that will lead you towards Military Road. So, it has three phases. I am waiting the outcome of the CPB's evaluation.

Mr Obeegadoo: To go back to the Phoenix roundabout, what is the time frame? The Minister mentioned many PPPs. But, for this specific issue, what is the time frame for decongestion of the Phoenix roundabout?

Mr Bachoo: Once the contract will be awarded - if I am not mistaken - within six months they are going to start the construction works. If I am not mistaken, it may be around six months. I am not in a position to say how long it will take, as it will depend on the complexity of the work.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 257, item No. 31113003 - (x) *Widening M1 from Ruisseau Créoles to Place d'Armes (Northbound)*, a sum of Rs63 m. has been earmarked. Can the hon. Minister explain how this is going to take place?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, there was a tender exercise - intense competition between contractors. In the vicinity of Royal College, near the roundabout, there will be enlargement of the existing lane, and that lane will go up to the statue of Mahé de Labourdonnais.

Mr Roopun: On page 256, item No. 31113003 - (h) *Performance Based Maintenance Contract*, I see that Rs35 m. have been earmarked for last year and Rs15 m. for this year. Could we have some details about this project?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, this is a new concept which we are trying to introduce. Expressions of interest for short listing of consultants have been completed, and the terms of reference forwarded to short listed firms. The study will establish a strategy for future implementation of performance based contracting on the main road network. In the first instance, the project will be implemented as a pilot project on a section of the road network. The project has been delayed since consultancy is now being undertaken under a grant from the World Bank. In fact, this is one of the propositions made by the World Bank - Performance Based Maintenance Contract. We are going to try. If it works, so far the better!

Mr Roopun: What are the objectives of this project?

Mr Bachoo: The objective means that, if responsibility has been given to a contractor, let's say for the forthcoming five years, he will be held responsible for whatever works he has done, and he will be held responsible for any wear and tear. By doing so, we can reduce the cost.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am referring to sub-paragraph (u) *East West Connector (Feasibility Study)*, and I want to link that to sub-paragraph (s) *St. Pierre Bypass*. May we have some idea what is to happen along this eastbound route?

Mr Bachoo: First, the St. Pierre Bypass was a necessity. It was a compulsion. There was no way out because our children get stuck for 40 to 45 minutes every day in the morning and in the afternoon. That was the reason why the hon. Prime Minister insisted that there must be a bypass. The work will be completed before the end of the year, and the problem will be over.

Second, the East West Connector is going to bypass all the main villages and towns of that region. It is the connection between the East and the West, that is, Flic en Flac. This is only a study, and now we are going to look for funds. If funds are made available, we are going to start the construction.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, on the same page, sub-paragraph (t) *Upgrading of A9 from Nouvelle France to Souillac (Study)*, we were told - at least, that was what I read in the press, and I hope that was not rubbish - that there was going to be a new road altogether from Nouvelle France, bypassing the old road, connecting to Souillac. Is that still the intention?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, this is the study which we have conducted because the hon. Prime Minister once told me that, in different parts of the country, we are having motorways but there is no motorway in the South. The consultant is doing his work. In addition to this, we are enlarging the Nouvelle France Road to Bois Chéri. That work has already started, and in three and a half to four months it will be completed. So, not only the North, East and West, but even the South is going to benefit from whatever work we are doing.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 256, sub-paragraph (e) *Upgrading of Q/Militaire Road B6 (Phase II)*, I understand this is an ongoing project costing more than Rs1 billion because there is an amount of Rs550 m. for last year, Rs268 m. this year and even the year after. May I know who was awarded the contract?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, the contract was awarded to a company called Sinohydro. This is a long road starting at Belle Rive ending at Providence, and that is the reason why you

find that money has been earmarked in three budgets and that it will be above Rs925 m., if I am not mistaken.

The Chairperson: Time is over!

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 323: Construction and Maintenance of Roads and Bridges (Rs5,432,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 324: Land Transport Management was called.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Chairperson, on page 258, item No. 25210003 - *Free Travel Scheme for Students, Old Aged Pensioners and Disabled Persons*, I see that the same amount is earmarked for some years. I recall that Government proposed to come with a new scheme of payment to the buses, but, up to now, it is still the same. Some buses are in the garage, but they are paid on a daily basis. Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House where matters stand with regard to the new scheme?

Mr Bachoo: There is no such thing as new scheme but, in fact, we have put order in the system. In the past, many passengers, old people were complaining that they were left by the side of the road. This has been reduced completely, and all the drivers and conductors who have been disrespectful towards these people have been punished. There are hundreds of cases where they have been suspended and, at the same time, we have reduced the money which we are paying them. I don't have any doubt that the system is doing well.

Mr Uteem: On the very same item, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell us whether an agreement has been reached for next year with all the bus operators and whether it will be the same amount given to them or there will be a change?

Mr Bachoo: No, in fact, there has been a request on the part of the private bus operators that we have to increase the compensation that we are paying to them and at the same time the bus companies are complaining. We have a Steering Committee which is headed by the Head of the NTA. Normally, we look into the issues and then we take a decision, if need be.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I refer the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to item No. 22120004 - *Fees to Mauritius Posts Ltd?* May we know for what purpose we pay that fee to the Mauritius Posts Ltd.?

Mr Bachoo: We pay fees to Mauritius Posts Ltd. for the issue of Motor Vehicle Licences (MVL) and payment of penalty parking fines. That's what we pay, because we use Mauritius Post Office now.

Mr Ameer Meea: At page 258, *LRT - Preparatory Works*, Rs180 m. May we know what is this preparatory work, to whom this will be paid and whether contracts have already been awarded and, if yes, whether any tender exercise has been launched?

Mr Bachoo: This is exactly the Singapore Authority; this item has been put here under NTA, because this is the sum which had been paid to the Singaporean authorities. As I have mentioned earlier on one item, it was a Government-to-Government agreement. Following the agreement, they made offers and once they made the offers, we solicited the support of the Government of India. The Government of India sent us one expert from RITES, that is, the Indian railways. That expert went through whatever offers were made by the Singaporean authorities and we came to the conclusion that we can pay them Rs180 m. for the work which needs to be done. That is, the feasibility, the alignment, preparation of tender documents. All these works are being undertaken by them.

Dr. Sorefan: I will go back on the item *Free Travel Scheme*. The hon. Minister has mentioned that most of the problems are solved. May I inform the hon. Minister that old aged pensioners cannot use the buses because they are not adapted...

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, please put your question!

Dr. Sorefan: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister consider the issue of old aged pensioners who cannot use buses, because these buses are not adapted for them?

The Chairperson: This is a policy matter.

Mr Bachoo: The hon. Member is referring to low-floor buses.

The Chairperson: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, I don't think that you should respond to this. This is a policy matter. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Coming back to the *LRT - Preparatory Works*, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister just informed us that alignment works would be conducted. May I ask him if the land where the *tracé* is, has already been secured for the whole *tracé*?

Mr Bachoo: No. We are no longer utilising the same *tracé*. That was old, archaic and decrepit system. Now, this is a modern system. They are working on the alignment. I am not in a position, as at now, to specifically state what will be the alignment.

(Interruptions)

In fact, they are working on the alignment. They are going to make an offer to the Government. It will depend on the Government whether we will accept or we are going to ask for certain adjustments, but, in fact, they are going very fast. Yesterday, when I was addressing the House,

they had stated that in 2014, the real construction work will start and the options of adjustment will be based on financial and economic feasibility.

Mr Ameer Meea: On the same item, nothing is budgeted in 2014. So, how will works start when no sum is budgeted in 2014?

Mr Bachoo: I am talking about 2014. Do not forget that next year we will be having a budget. So, that is not a problem for us.

Mr Roopun: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, may I have some details about the amount spent on bus passes? At page 258, item No. 22900013 where there is a sum of Rs5.2 m. spent on *Supply of Bus Passes (Free Travel)*. May we know for how many bus passes this amount of Rs5.2 m. is earmarked for this year and next year? What does it cost per pass?

Mr Bachoo: We are issuing bus passes to 160,000 students and that is costing us Rs5.2 m.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 251, under the performance targets, there is mention of bus system improvement to enhance public transport with the target date of October 2013. I have not found any sum corresponding to this on page 258. Could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister please explain to us what this is about and what is foreseen?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, we had the idea of not purchasing low-floor buses which is very costly, but halfway we wanted to go. That's why we have got a Committee which is being chaired by the NTA to look into the possibility, through the support of Government also, of supporting the bus companies in order to procure such buses. This is what we speak when we are talking about modernisation of bus fleet.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question was: what is the target of October about? Firstly, what is meant to happen in October? Secondly, what funds are budgeted for this project?

Mr Bachoo: Well, in fact, a few years back, the Ministry of Finance offered a sum, I don't remember the amount which was offered to us, but we had put up a target by next year till October and we will be in a position to procure new type of buses. This is what we have mentioned here.

Mr Ameer Meea: Concerning Free Travel Scheme, there have been severe criticisms in the Director of Audit's Report concerning this scheme. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister if he is considering to review the system based on the number of pupils present in school?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, there was a British Consultant who came to Mauritius when the Deputy Prime Minister was responsible for this Ministry. The Consultant's recommendation was that the system which we are using is the best of all other options but, in fact, we have to make certain improvements on that. I can submit a copy of the report in the House.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 259, under item *Other Machinery and Equipment - Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment*, there is a sum of Rs124 m. budgeted for next year. The hon. Minister will remember that earlier this year we had problems when all the traffic lights - I won't say of the country, but certainly of the part of the country where I travel through every day - stopped working and there was a major crisis as to who was going to repair the traffic lights. So, I want to know whether provision has been made within this sum for some sort of safety mechanism to repair traffic lights.

Mr Bachoo: The unfortunate problem that occurred was because of non availability of contractors who could do the work. That was the problem which occurred a few months back, but this money is meant for supply, installation and commissioning of traffic signal equipment; contract for supply, installation and commissioning, and operation of speed cameras for all of us, 50 fixed plus 6 mobiles awarded to one Proguard Ltd for a total sum of Rs172,161,111.10. The money is meant for that. So, I would request everybody to be a bit patient, because all speed cameras will be installed, and I know on both sides of the House, hon. Members have already paid for over speeding on our roads.

Mr Obeegadoo: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister may not have understood my question. This budget for next year does provide for traffic lights.

Mr Bachoo: Yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: Now, this year we had problems, because there were no contractors to repair traffic lights and the hon. Vice-Prime Minister stated in the House that he would have wished his Ministry to have a Unit to be independent from the grips of these contractors, so, he could repair in situations of emergency; he could intervene. Has he provided for that in the present budget?

Mr Bachoo: With the staff that we have, the experienced technicians that we have, we are trying to put up a small unit in my own Ministry. In fact, in Mauritius we have got only one contractor who has been doing the job for the past 20 years and once or twice other contractors got it; but, unfortunately, they have failed to do it. That is the reason why we think that this time

we are going to have an international tendering so that we can give opportunities to others also to come up and try to modernise our system.

Dr. S. Boolell: Under item No. 22100007 – *Publicity*, I note that a sum of Rs10 m. is being paid. May I ask who is the beneficiary of this Rs10 m.?

Mr Bachoo: Normally, we make use of the MBC/TV. We have to pay them for the work that they do for us.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 259, under item No. 22030 – *Rent*, the amount for 2013 has increased by Rs1 m. Could we have the details about that?

Mr Bachoo: The increase is due to TMRSU to move to a new building this year and, at the same time, with the speed cameras that we are having, we need a special place to monitor from one centralised place. This is the reason why it has gone up and we have moved to a different building.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, reacting on what the hon. Vice-Prime Minister just said on the traffic signs and the possibility of going for an international tender, would that tender include replacing all the existing traffic lights, being given that the existing traffic lights already have a special software and, if so, how much money is budgeted to do that?

Mr Bachoo: No, we don't have any intention of changing all that exists, but if you have to put additional ones with better qualities, we are going to do it because that is going to cost us a huge sum of money. Instead of spending on that, it is better for me to buy a few dozens of speed cameras.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Chairperson, regarding item No. 3112299 - *speed cameras*, the speed cameras that we are using presently are getting obsolete. They are just taking speed. Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister considering to procure cameras for average speeding?

Mr Bachoo: Well, I am not a professional, but we are getting the best type of cameras and that is coming, I think, from Germany. The Germans are using the ones which we are going to use.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 259, item No. 31 - *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets...*

Mr Bachoo: Which page?

Mr Seeruttun: At page 259, item No. 31 – *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets – Construction of Bus Shelters and Stands*, there were some Rs5 m. earmarked in 2012 for that project and no more money is being catered for as from the year 2013 onwards. Does that mean that there won't be any shelters constructed anymore?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, last year we had Rs5 m. and we have constructed bus shelters. For the forthcoming year, we are going to take money from the NDU's Fund. So, NDU will be responsible for bus shelters.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 259, *Awareness Campaign*, last year, there was an amount of Rs1.5 m.; now, there is an amount of Rs500,000. In view of the constant increase in road accidents, does the hon. Vice-Prime Minister find this amount sufficient - Rs500,000 - for awareness campaign?

Mr Bachoo: Because there was too much of overlapping, the special unit which has been created under the Prime Minister's Office is doing the same work. We are doing the same work. There can't be too much of overlapping. That is the reason why we have reduced slightly here because they are getting support from the Prime Minister's Office as well.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under the item *Construction of Road Safety Devices*, if I may raise the issue of implementation capacity. I will take the example of the footbridge that we were to build at Wooton where people have to cross the road and the hon. Vice-Prime Minister stated in the House that he has launched invitation for tenders and there was no response. So, we are budgetting all this money, but do you have the implementation capacity?

Mr Bachoo: This is a policy decision, but I would like to inform the hon. Member that the hon. Prime Minister gave instructions that we have to put up two flyovers there. The work has already started. In six months' time, you will be having two flyovers in Wooton.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, I am a bit puzzled with one item on page 259, item No. 27 - *Social benefits*, though it is a small amount, I can't understand the social benefit of Rs3,000. What is that exactly? On page 259, item No. 27 – *Social benefits*. I am a bit puzzled.

Mr Bachoo: Yes, this is for funeral grants on demise of the staff.

Mr Ameer Meea: I think we should merge your Ministry with the Prime Minister's Office.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea, express your question in a straightforward manner!

Mr Ameer Meea: Under the item No. 31113018 - *Construction of Road Safety Devices*, there is an amount of Rs40 m. Does the hon. Vice-Prime Minister have a breakdown of it?

Mr Bachoo: Construction of Road Safety Devices, well, that concerns additional footpaths, handrails, guardrails, footbridges, pedestrian crossings, speed reducing devices, road studs and lay-bys for buses. That concerns the Rs40 m.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under the same item, mention was made in the House some time back of the need to revisit road markings along the motorway. This has not been done yet. I would like to know whether it has been budgeted for next year.

Mr Bachoo: In fact, we have started that work because the paint which was available earlier was not of very good quality. So, now, we have started over again.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping - Programme Code 324: Land Transport Management (Rs1,535,947,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping - Programme Code 325: Maritime Safety and Development was called.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Chairperson, on page 260, item No. 22090003 – *Global Maritime Distress and Safety System Services*, may we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether this is an ongoing project or will that be a new and, if so, whether tender will be launched for this?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, it is the Mauritius Telecom which provides the services. We have mentioned that many times in the House. Mauritius Telecom forms part of our Government, there is no tender as such.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 259, under item No. 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, there is a decrease in the amount compared to 2012. The amount for 2013 is less than the amount for 2012 despite the fact that we are going to have an increase due to the PRB report and the number of employees has remained the same. How does the hon. Vice-Prime Minister explain that decrease in the amount catered for?

Mr Bachoo: This is the actual trend, in fact. We have made provision for basic salary, salary compensation, extra remuneration, allowances, extra assistance and cash in lieu of leaves. So, I don't find any wrong in that.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, going back to the *Global Maritime Distress and Safety System Services*, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what is this Maritime distress and also to whom it is paid? What is the service?

Mr Bachoo: Regarding the *Global Maritime Distress and Safety System Services*, it is the Mauritius Telecom which has the necessary infrastructure and expertise. It is providing the GMDSS Services on behalf of the Government on a contractual basis, 3-year contract ending 31 December 2013. The monthly payment is Rs1,181,747.57. Replacement of GMDSS equipment by a new one costing around Rs18 m. including VAT, freight, insurance and other related costs. The contract has been awarded by Mauritius Telecom and repayment of capital cost in five instalments during a period of four years. That's it!

Mr Obeegadoo: Can the hon. Minister tell us what the GMDSS system is?

Mr Bachoo: The GMDSS means the *Global Maritime Distress and Safety System Services* which is used by our vessels which are in our seas. Whenever they are in distress, then they make appeal to us. This is a very old concept. Since 1990 we have it, but now we have modernised it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: Can I refer the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to item No. 22120 – *Fees*. May we know who are the beneficiaries?

Mr Bachoo: The fees are for assessors of Mauritius Standards Bureau, fees for training, fees for training abroad for technical staff, fees to consultant, computerisation of the shipping sector, fees in connection with the examination and interviews, fees payable to examiners in-house technical staff.

Mr Obeegadoo: We have had, in the recent past, two oil spills in two instances. I would like to know for next year where we have budgeted funds to address this issue and minimise risks?

Mr Bachoo: That is known to everyone; that falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment.

Mr Ameer Meea: On the same item 22090 - *Security*, there is an amount of Rs29 m. budgeted and out of this global maritime distress it is Rs20 m. May we know the detail of the difference, that is, Rs9 m.?

Mr Bachoo: Yes, I will give it to the hon. Member. We have got a Long-Range Tracking Services, that is, the Long-Range Identification and Tracking system is mandatory under the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention. The LRIT Services are ongoing and the contract is awarded to Fulcrum Maritime Systems Ltd of UK. Then, we have got the Radio Communication Services. Full-time staff costs, communication costs and operating costs as per contract ending 31 December; that is costing Rs7,100,000.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping - Programme Code 325: Maritime Safety and Development (Rs65,839,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping - Programme Code 404: Community-Based Infrastructure and Public Empowerment was called.

Dr. Sorefan: On Page 621, under item 31112022 - *Construction of Market Fairs*, may we know how many market fairs and where they will be constructed?

Mr Bachoo: The construction of market fairs is meant for Roche Bois and it is estimated at Rs10 m.

Mr Baloomoody: May I take the hon. Vice-Prime Minister again to item 22120 - *Fees*. For this year, we budgeted Rs275,000, but for next year we are budgeting Rs6,275,000. May we know for what specific purpose?

Mr Bachoo: It is fees for consultancy services concerning the survey inland, drainage and water management throughout the country, which has been under the request of the World Bank. They are going to finance it later on. We are going to locate the most important places in our country where we have got big problems of drains, that is, flooding problems and we have identified about six sites. The consultants are going to work on that. I think they are going to take three in a year.

Mr Baloomoody: May we know who are the consultants?

Mr Bachoo: We have not yet gone for tender, but we are getting the support of the World Bank to do that project.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, I would like to know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister how is it that there is an increase of more than Rs22 m. as *Personal Emoluments* for only 12 additional employees.

Mr Bachoo: It is because the three components of my Ministry are being merged into one - Community-based Infrastructure, Public Empowerment and Land Drainage. The three different branches had been incorporated into one and that explains why it has gone up.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, under this programme, I presume that the whole NDU budget is covered. Would the hon. Vice-Prime Minister kindly provide us with the constituency breakdown of the sums projected for next year?

Mr Bachoo: I am going to circulate a list which is based on zones because normally when the CPB gives contract to contractors, it is according to the zones. We have four zones; I am going to submit it. It is already ready. Any time, I can give it.

Mr Obeegadoo: PPSs operate on a constituency basis and they draw up the projects. So, may I kindly request the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to provide us with a constituency breakdown?

Mr Bachoo: Basically, they operate on zone, because one PPS is responsible at times for two constituencies. So, it is not one constituency, two constituencies, it is under zone. I give the hon. Member under zones. The names will be there, he can find out which are the villages and the towns which have benefited. Whenever the need was felt, we have done the work, with the exception of a few towns where the sewerage works were on.

Mr Ameer Meea: Under the same item, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister said that he will circulate the list for the zones. Can I ask him if he could also circulate the names of the contractors attached per zone?

Mr Bachoo: Yes, there are the contractors which have been appointed by the Central Procurement Board. I don't have any problem. I can even tell the hon. Member now that we have got four contractors. We have got Gamma Civic, Jangam, Safety Construction and Best Construct for the NDU.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 261, under the item relating to *construction of cremation grounds and cemeteries*, this is a thriving business, considering the increase in the amount from this year to next. Can we be provided with some details of where exactly the proposed cemeteries or cremation grounds are to be located? If there is a list maybe to spare the time of the House, can it be circulated?

The Chairperson: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, you can circulate it later.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, this is not a flourishing business. I have to be very, very serious about it. For the last 10 or 20 years, there were efforts to put cremation grounds with incinerators. In the past, it was all failures, and then the Prime Minister came in and he insisted that we must have about 12.

(Interruptions)

Yes, I know what I am telling! I maintain what I am telling! He came forward and he told us - the reason is simple. There are many poor people who can't pay Rs10,000, Rs5,000 to buy logs in order to burn the dead ones and the hon. Prime Minister came forward with the idea that we must have about 12. We have already given the contract and the buildings are nearly in completion. Unfortunately, we met the same problem as we had in the past. There had been challenges at IRP and we are waiting for it.

Secondly, we are constructing a cremation ground at Hollyrood, Vacoas. Phoenix is overcrowded now. We have procured 20 acres of land at Vacoas and, at the same time, at another place in St Pierre. The work was left unfinished. We are completing it. It is not a flourishing business. This is something very serious for everybody. So, don't make any joke over this!

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

(Interruptions)

Allow the hon. Member to ask his question!

Mr Seeruttun: On page 261, under item 22030 - *Rent*, there is a substantial increase in the amount for the year 2013. Could we have an explanation to that increase?

Mr Bachoo: It is payment of rental building to Mascareignes Sterling at levels seven, twelve and thirteen and part of levels three and five of the Sterling House.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 261, under item 31113014 - *Construction of Sports Facilities*, an amount of Rs10 m. has been budgeted. May we have a list where these sports facilities will be constructed?

Mr Bachoo: It all depends. Wherever there is a demand, we are going to look into it.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping: Programme Code 404: Community-Based Infrastructure and Public Empowerment (Rs597,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, I suspend the sitting for 15 minutes.

At 2.44 a.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 3.10 a.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade - Programme Code 381: Policy and Management for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will start with page 274. Among the major achievements for 2012, at page 274, fourth bullet, it is mentioned: Secured market access in the EU for canned tuna. I would like to have some clarification. Since when was our market insecure? I know there has always been an issue of quality control of our local tuna canning industry. Could we have some clarification from the hon. Minister as to what makes this a major achievement?

Dr. A. Boolell: Our market became very secured. In fact, when we ratified the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement which means that when we obtain a derogation, we don't have to wait for a long time before there is implementation. As from January 2013, things will flow very naturally and it will make it easy for our exporters because there will be the element of predictability. So, this is a very significant improvement. There is the element of predictability and reliability in respect of export of tuna, especially when we are going to obtain the derogation from a third country.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am still on the first part, Strategic Direction 2013-2015, bullet three: Effective exercise of sovereignty over Chagos Archipelago. I would like to know whether for the next financial year, it is the intention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to consider a new initiative after the rebirth we received earlier this year – the famous meeting in London. I would like to know what provision has been made...

(Interruptions)

If the hon. Minister might allow me to finish – what initiative is being envisaged and do we have funds budgeted for a specific fresh new initiative?

Dr. A. Boolell: The rebirth is only a figment of the imagination of my very good friend. I am sure he has paid heed to the extensive reply given by the hon. Prime Minister. I don't have to highlight that we leverage our lobbying on three-pronged: first, the diplomatic; second, the political, and third, we are even considering the juridical approach. The hon. Prime Minister has stated more than once the number of visits he had in London; interaction with lawyers and we grasp every opportunity whenever we attend regional or continental conference of multi-lateral organisations to highlight the sacrosanctity of our sovereignty.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can I ask my very good friend since effective exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos is a strategic direction, what concretely is envisaged for 2013 to ensure the effective exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago quite apart from the frequent visits to London?

Dr. A. Boolell: The frequent visits to London have a specific purpose. We don't have to speak with the tongue in the cheek. As I have said, the lobbying is effective because the policies were strategised. We have set up a special unit at the Prime Minister's Office. There is proper coordination with all relevant bodies.

Our permanent representative in New York and our High Commissioner in London are supplying us with all the relevant information. There is information gathering, we have taken up the issue with State Department, with President Obama and with the Prime Minister of UK. So, everybody is on board. But my friend should know that when we talk of negotiations, they can be long and arduous. But, as I have stated, we know what the meaning of sacrosanctity of our sovereignty is; we know that our sovereignty is enshrined on our Constitution. This is an issue which transcends all political barriers, and I am sure the Opposition would join hands with Government to put up a common front on an issue which is of national interest.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I take the hon. Minister to page 275, where it says 'Political instability in the region is a serious impediment to trade and investment'? May I know what provision has been made in the Budget for Mauritius to play an important role in finding a long-term solution to regional stability?

Dr. A. Boolell: Mauritius, of course, is an island unto oneself and, as a small island developing State, we are part of like-minded countries as member of the regional organisation, and we interact very forcefully with the international community to ensure that there is stability in the region. But, again, we all know the political difficulties being encountered by our friends in Madagascar, notwithstanding the climate of uncertainty in Zimbabwe. However, we leverage our case and the case of the region through regional organisation, continental organisation, and we make it a point to highlight the relevance and importance of security and peace in the region when we take up issues in multilateral organisations.

Mr Obeegadoo: Could I refer my very good friend to the Africa strategy mentioned on page 275? I have been looking for a reference to the African Union, which I have not found. So, I raise it under the Africa strategy. I would like to ask the hon. Minister, since the Pan-African Parliament has been lobbying for certain legislative powers to be granted to it in the spirit of its creation back in 2006, may I know whether the State, the Government of Mauritius, the Executive will support this demand of parliamentarians of the Continent that the Pan-African Parliament be granted some legislative powers, as to be decided at the next summit of Heads of State.

Dr. A. Boolell: Of course, this is a matter that cannot be taken up lightly. This is an issue that has to be discussed extensively, and when we gather all the relevant information, we will certainly take the decision which would be not only in the interest of Mauritius, but in the interest of the continent as a whole.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 283, item No. 22030 - *Rent*, there is a sum of Rs11 m. May we know which premises are being rented and to whom it is being paid?

Dr. A. Boolell: This is rent for payment of the building where the Ministry is. We rent several floors. The increase for year 2012 has not been utilised as the contract has been renewed on the same terms and conditions. Of course, we rent the place from Belem.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade - Programme Code 381: Policy and Management for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Rs71,295,800) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade - Programme Code 382: Foreign Relations was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 281, under item *Performance Targets*, I would like some clarification as regards the number of cases of piracy to be handled in Mauritius. We are told that, in 2011, there was one case of piracy actually handled in Mauritius. I must confess I am not aware of it. That is what is said at page 281, under *SS1: Number of cases of Piracy handled (including trial, transfer and conclusion of Agreements) in consultation with Prime Minister's Office*. So, which is, this one case handled in 2011? What do we mean by more than one case in 2013, more than two cases in 2014? Could we have some clarification? Are we banking on an increase in piracy in our part of the world?

Dr. A. Boolell: Of course, piracy is a scourge, and I do not have to highlight the impact of piracy upon our economy since we are a net food importing country, we import our basic commodities, we are a net exporting country also. We have to be part of the international community to wage war on this scourge. As you know, we introduced, by way of legislation, an Anti-piracy and Maritime Bill. We have also entered into agreement with UK and EU in respect of alleged pirates we are going to take on board for trial. We have also signed an agreement with Puntland and Somaliland for post-trial transfer of alleged pirate. I see here that there is a performance target and it is cumulative. It is true that we have had also a mock trial in respect of pirates to be put on trial in Mauritius. We have obtained financing from EU through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. So, we have put in place the system and, as a member of the international community, which is keen to wage war on this scourge, I think we are living up to our responsibility. I do not have to highlight also that the incidence of piracy in Africa has gone down with the support of the international community.

Mr Baloomoody: Was there a mock trial or a trial?

Dr. A. Boolell: No. There has been a mock trial with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The system has been put in place now. If ever there is the need to put a pirate on trial, I am sure we are ready to do so.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I would like some clarity there. I take it when it is said Performance 2011 Actual 1, that is a mock performance. If so, for 2013, can we understand very clearly whether it is the target to be attained? Does this become a policy objective of the Ministry to ensure that more than one pirate case is handled in Mauritius and it will increase then in 2014? Those are actually policy targets?

Dr. A. Boolell: I have stated that the Performance target is cumulative. There is no hard and fast rule. It all depends whether there is transfer of pirates under specific conditions, according to the provisions of the law, and whether we would agree to put them on trial or not.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the mock trial, can I ask the hon. Minister whether our Judiciary was involved, and whether it was a Judge of our Supreme Court who presided over that mock trial?

Dr. A. Boolell: There has been a mock trial. I don't have the detail of it, but I can supply the detail without any problem.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same page, we are told about the other performance indicators, the opening of honorary consulates in Africa with five targeted in 2013. Could we have the list of the countries or cities where we intend to have the appointment of honorary consuls?

Dr. A. Boolell: Of course, the list will be established. We are going to identify megacities, especially cities which ...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I have said that we are going to identify megacities and we are going to appoint honorary consuls in those places. It is noted that four honorary consuls have already been appointed in Southern Africa, two in Eastern Africa, one in North and one in Western Africa. But let me make it clear again that the object is to appoint honorary consuls in cities which are becoming megacities on the African continent with a population of more than five million.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 284, Mr Chairperson, under item 26210044 *Contribution to United Nations Organisations (Regular Budget)*, I would like to raise the issue here of the initiative by the Palestinian authority for the recognition of Palestine as an observer State. I would like to know whether at the next session of the General Assembly where, I believe, the question will be raised and debated, Mauritius will support recognition of Palestine.

The Chairperson: This is a policy matter.

Dr. A. Boolell: Again, I don't have to remind my hon. friend of the statement made by the hon. Prime Minister on this issue. We are fully supportive of the Palestine initiative.

Mr Obeegadoo: Further down on the same page, there is the issue of a contribution of Rs6.5 m. to the Commonwealth Secretariat. I am sure the hon. Minister is aware that some time this year, either this month or next month, there is a meeting taking place in London to decide on the future responsibilities of the Commonwealth Secretariat and there has been a move by certain

countries of which Australia and Canada are the main movers to restrict the ambit of responsibility of the Commonwealth Secretariat so that, for instance, education is no longer part of its mandate. Within the spirit of this contribution for next year, can we take it that his colleague, the Minister of Education and Human Resources has convinced the hon. Minister that we should stand firm for the preservation of the present mandate of the Commonwealth Secretariat?

Dr. A. Boolell: In fact, when we had the Commonwealth Education Ministers in Mauritius, my colleague was the Chairman of the Commonwealth Ministers meeting. Now, this issue was raised in the margin of the UN General Assembly meeting and I attended the Commonwealth meeting and we did put a lot of emphasis on the relevance of education and the reason as to why the Commonwealth should not shy away from their responsibility and the commitment taken. This matter was reinforced very forcefully when I attended the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting in the margins of the UN General Assembly.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will take it on the personal emoluments at the top of the page. May we know whether for next year Government will address the vexed issue of the diplomatic representations in Saudi Arabia and whether provision is being made at long last for a clear initiative in that respect?

Dr. A. Boolell: I have given a lengthy reply to a Parliamentary question put to me by hon. Ameer Meea and I am sure that my reply gives satisfaction to one and all.

Mr Roopun: I wanted to ask the hon. Minister, on personal emoluments, as regards our two roving ambassadors in Africa whether they are now in office and whether they have so far effected any visit in Africa and, if so, which countries?

Dr. A. Boolell: They are not only in office; they have the power to rove because Rs2 m. are being earmarked for them to assume their responsibility fully.

Mr Uteem: At page 285, under item 31112408 - *Upgrading of Chanceries of which: (b) Chancery Building London*, a sum of Rs80 m. has been earmarked for upgrading Chancery Building in London. Has the contract already been awarded for the innovation?

Dr. A. Boolell: Yes. The building in London is a very old one. In fact, we have a big problem because it is a building which is lagged with asbestos. The contract has been awarded for rehabilitation work to the chancery building to the cost of Rs80 m., except now that the contract has been referred to the Ministry which has submitted it to the Ministry of Public

Infrastructure for tight scrutiny because there have been some questions asked in respect of the documents which have not been well-prepared according to officers of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

Mr Uteem: Under item *31121801 - Acquisition of Vehicles*, an amount of Rs18 m. is earmarked. Can I know from the hon. Minister which chancery are we talking about here for the Rs18 m.?

Dr. A. Boolell: I know there are London, New York, Berlin, Paris, Canberra, Moscow, Antananarivo and Maputo because there is provision for renewal. When a car is five years old, we need to renew the fleet.

Mr Obeegadoo: I could note of what the hon. Minister said regarding our Embassy in London. I would like to ask him about our Paris Embassy which is not mentioned here. The last I heard was still accommodated in a very cramped quarters in Paris.

Dr. A. Boolell: It is a good question. In fact, with the crisis in euro, we set up a committee to see if we can make acquisition of new buildings since there has been a drop in the price of property. Now, there is a technical committee set up to look into the matter under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Finance. It is an issue that has been raised and discussed, but a decision is yet to be taken.

Mr Uteem: At page 285, under item *31 - Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, is there any amount budgeted for the opening of any chancery anywhere other than the existing chancery that we have?

Dr. A. Boolell: Under item *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, I see that a sum of Rs121 m. has been earmarked for 2013, but, as at now, I cannot say for certain that there is provision for the opening up of a new chancery.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 285, *Compensation of Employees*, under item *21110 Personal Emoluments*, there has been concern expressed in this House about postings in our overseas missions, that is, some persons staying beyond the normal tour of service and this was hotly debated here some time back. I would like to know whether for next year, in order to steer clear of controversy and any perception of partiality, the hon. Minister will ensure that we strictly abide by prescribed tours of service.

Dr. A. Boolell: There is no hard and fast rule. Our main interest is to see to it that our diplomacy lives up to our expectations and delivers on those expectations. So, as I say, we take the decision accordingly, but there is a basic principle to which we stick to.

Mr Uteem: Coming on that answer from the hon. Minister, is there any policy in the Ministry to call back any ambassador involved in any criminal case?

(Interruptions)

Dr. A. Boolell: Well, the question asked is so broad that unless my friend comes with a specific question I can give a specific reply. But if somebody has committed a misdemeanour, of course, we will certainly take whatever decision is considered to be appropriate.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I am sorry, hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

That is okay!

(Interruptions)

But then when I look on your side there is no manifestation on your side as to whether you are going to ask supplementary questions. I asked you whether you are going to ask supplementary questions. There was no response whatsoever.

(Interruptions)

Okay, I will allow the hon. Member the last question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Within time...

The Chairperson: That is okay, I said....

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: The vote has not been called.

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 286...

(Interruptions)

Item....

(Interruptions)

Mo pa bizin last chance ar twa do ta, mo faire mo travail ici...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo, please! Go ahead with the question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: *Nou ena jusqu'à 4 heures gramatin pou faire nou travail, nou pas bizin permission ar ou!*

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Ask your question, hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, under item 26210056 - *Contribution to IOR-ARC – Membership Contribution*, of course, we are fully committed to the IOR-ARC, but the perception is that there has not been much progress made on the original mandate of this organisation. May we seek some reassurance from the hon. Minister that as we vote yet another significant sum of Rs4.5 m. for the forthcoming financial year, there will be a close collaboration with the Secretariat based in Mauritius to see to it that we do move forward on this agenda?

Dr. A. Boolell: With all due respect, I think my hon. friend is totally dissociated from the harsh realities.

(Interruptions)

I mean, he should be updated and he should live up with the harsh realities. Information today is not a privilege of the few. It is properly disseminated and access to information is a right. So, what I will do since access to information is a right, I will convey to him a list of issues that have been the subject of discussion at the Indian Ocean Rim Association Regional Conference. There was a meeting which was held in India recently and a host of issues were raised. So, just to spare our friends from both sides of the House and to make sure that we use our time judiciously, I will lay this on the Table of the Assembly. If the hon. Member wants additional information, he is most welcome.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade - Programme Code 382: Foreign Relations (Rs860,305,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade - Programme Code 383: International Trade was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I seek clarification from the hon. Minister on this vote as to the staffing of our mission in Geneva?

Dr. A. Boolell: In Geneva?

Mr Obeegadoo: The WTO.

Dr. A. Boolell: Yes, but it is properly staffed and they are delivering on the work which has been assigned to them. I do not have to highlight the merits of the excellent work being carried out by the members of the staff and especially by our Ambassador who has become a force to be reckoned with not only at the World Trade Organisation but in regional and multilateral organisations.

Mr Obeegadoo: My point was to ask how many Trade Policy Analysts we have based there.

Dr. A. Boolell: Trade Policy Analysts? I do not have the exact number, but let me say again that Mauritius has become a reference for not only Small Island Developing States, but for all the members of the World Trade Organisation.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade - Programme Code 383: International Trade (Rs44,632,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 298, under item *Rent*, there is an amount of Rs10.3 m. which represents an increase of Rs1.5 m. approximately. May we know the premises rented and also to whom it is being paid?

Dr. Kasenally: The rent is being paid to Ebène Towers for my main headquarters where all the sections of the Ministry are housed and there is also a rent of office space at Moorgate House to the tune of Rs149,000 monthly. This is now shared equally between my Ministry and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to house the Transport Unit for light rail.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 292, under *Major Achievements* '508 housing units allocated at 10 sites, namely at Glen Park, Roche Bois (...)', may I ask the hon. Minister how many housing units have been allocated at Roche Bois?

Dr. Kasenally: I do not have the exact number, but it must be about 21 because there was a limited space there. In fact, we had to build on two different sites.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 298, item No. 21210 - *Social Contributions*, some Rs1.4 m. were earmarked for 2012 and for 2013 onwards it is only Rs400,000. May we know for what purpose that Rs1.4 m. were spent in 2012?

Dr. Kasenally: On which page, please?

The Chairperson: 298.

Dr. Kasenally: And which item?

The Chairperson: It is item No. 21210.

Dr. Kasenally: That was the contribution to the National Savings Fund.

The Chairperson: Any supplementary question?

Dr. Kasenally: Can I add something about Roche Bois? The exact number is 16 units.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 641: Policy and Management for Housing and Lands (Rs64,116,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to raise the issue of the NHDC Housing Estates. At page 292, we are told that 41 Syndics have been set up in 2012. Could the list of those Syndics be circulated? At page 300, under item 28212023 - *Setting up of Syndic for maintenance of housing estates*, a sum of Rs17 m. was budgeted for 2012. I would like to know how much of that sum has, in actual fact, been disbursed. There is another Rs17 m. budgeted for 2013; I would like to know how the Ministry has arrived at the sum of Rs17 m.

Dr. Kasenally: So far, we have managed to set up 36 out of possible 41 Syndics. The Government's contribution is Rs2,400 yearly per housing unit for the residents of the estates. This measure targets about 6,247 families. An amount of Rs10.3 m. has been disbursed during the period January up to date.

Mr Obeegadoo: Due to the alarm going off, I did not get part (b) of the answer.

Dr. Kasenally: A sum of Rs10.3 m. has been disbursed from January up to now.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the very same point, there is quite a number of Syndics that have been set up and we, of course, are very supportive of Government there. But the sums have not yet been disbursed. In the case of the NHDC Complex at Atlee, Forest Side, could we have some indication when the disbursement will actually occur?

Dr. Kasenally: I have to check with the NHDC that maintains the payment. There are only five remaining ones and I do not see Atlee in it. So, it must have just been set up, or something like that, but they will get their money. I am told that the process is ongoing. It has to be approved by my Ministry. It is a question of time.

Mr Roopun: On the question of setting up of Syndics, we know that the Government made some contributions. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether contributions are being received from the co-owners when setting up of the Syndic or whether it is only Government that is contributing.

Dr. Kasenally: Actually, they are supposed to contribute as well. In fact, Government is giving part of it. Of course, nobody prevents them from doing it. This is the minimum. This is not permanent and it is not going on *ad nauseam*. Initially, we are there to help them to take over. I must remind the hon. Member that the owners of the NHDC are full-fledged owners of their flats. As a citizen of this country, like any other one, they have to look after it. There have been difficulties and we are giving them a helping hand. Once they take off, we will let them fly through their own energy and finance.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether there is a system of audit set up at the Ministry to make sure that the sum being given to those Syndics is being properly used.

Dr. Kasenally: We have the motivators. It is the NHDC, which is the executive arm of the Ministry, and they are supposed to do that. Eventually, I think, I must go and check myself.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 300, under the project *Infrastructure at Military Road*, can I ask the hon. Minister ...

The Chairperson: Can the hon. Member specify the item number, please?

Mr Ameer Meea: It is on page 300, under item 28222 - *Infrastructure at Military Road*. The amount that is being budgeted is Rs15 m. In fact, I have several questions on it. I will go one by one. Is it the construction costs? How many units are being built? Can I have the selling price of each housing unit at Military Road? Have the buyers already been selected and how was the selection done?

Dr. Kasenally: The sum of Rs20 m. is for the infrastructure, which means water, electricity, roads and connection to the sewers. The project itself costs Rs75 m. The selling price of the units – there are 36 – varies between Rs1.6 m. to Rs1.8 m. I understand that most of it has been paid off by the beneficiaries. The selection was carried out by the NHDC. The people were asked to apply, and they applied and there was a selection process which was carried out.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 300, under item 28222013 - *Rehabilitation of Infrastructure of NHDC Estates*. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether all the NHDC estates have already been rehabilitated, otherwise can we have a list of the NHDC estates that have already undergone rehabilitation?

Dr. Kasenally: It is not possible to rehabilitate all the infrastructure. It is only those where there are problems. It is an ongoing programme with the rehabilitation of water reticulation network on 50 NHDC housing estates. It is a project which is estimated at Rs70 m. The consultants have been appointed for design and supervision works. The survey and feasibility reports are completed. Tenders for works have already been launched on a priority basis for Camp Levieux, La Tour Koenig, Cité Atlee and Palma. The works are expected to start early 2013. There is also rehabilitation of sewage infrastructure on some 48 housing estates to a cost of Rs250 m.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I take the hon. Minister to item 28222012 - *Casting of Roof Slabs Grant Scheme*. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether provision has been made to assist the owners of ex-CHA houses who want to change the slabs because of the danger some of these slabs represent?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, knowing the structure of the ex-CHA housing units, some of them, of course, have been rehabilitated by the owners themselves. We have to set up a concrete beam before we can put it. But the structure, as it has been constructed, is not possible for them. Those who have made the effort are actually having no difficulty in getting a slab. But their income should be less than Rs8,500. The minimum grant is Rs65,000.

The beam area must be 100 metre square. The plan allows for an area of up to 150 metre square. There is a flexibility of plus or minus five metre square and the owner should not be a proprietor of another Housing Unit and should not have benefitted from any Government Grant. As from 2013, all applications for roof slab will have to be validated by the Social Register of Mauritius in respect of income eligibility and for the budget of 2013, as you can see, Rs80 m. have been earmarked.

Mr Ameer Meea: Going back to the Military Road Project, this project is being built on State land. Can I ask the hon. Minister, the eventual buyers, apart from the Rs1.6 m. to Rs1.8 m. that they would pay to buy the house, what would be their annual rental of lease of the land every year?

Dr. Kasenally: I have not worked on that yet, but so far the project is ongoing and only when it is completed that each proprietor will be given a list *en bonne et due forme*. This would be according to the regulations of the Ministry, but normally it should not be very expensive as this is part of social housing and we take a nominal rent.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 296, under projections S3: *Grant under the casting of roof slab Scheme*, we find that there is a decreasing number of beneficiaries who would be benefitting from this grant. May I know why is it projected that there would be a decreasing number?

Dr. Kasenally: Well, it is difficult to predict how much but how many are going to apply for it. Although the sum which has been voted is Rs80 m., but as they come around I understand. In fact, I approached my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance and additional funds will be provided and no one should be left without any assistance if they qualify for it and they are on the social register.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 300, item No. 28222 - *Capital Transfers to Households*, I would like some clarification as to new housing units, or rather infrastructure for social housing for 2013. Are we to understand that the only expenses that are here will relate to Military Road? Would the hon. Minister confirm that the housing project to be undertaken in 2013 is that of Military Road?

Dr. Kasenally: No, it is not. Military Road is part of the programme which has started earlier this year, but we had a problem because one of the contractors just did not turn up and so we had to re-tender and this will be late. In fact, Military Road should have been over by now, but there is more social housing. I've got a whole list here. There are about 508 new houses which are going to be built; we are projecting it. There are about six sites following the exchange between Government and the MSPA and this is the first batch which is Chebel, Pointe aux Piments, Camp Ithier, Quatre Cocos, Sebastopol and Beau Bois and there will be 588 units. I think the tender documents are being prepared. In fact, the tender documents were already launched, but, unfortunately, when we went to the CPB, we found that the tenders were non responsive and we had to redo the tender, and it is ongoing now. Probably the project will start early 2013. Now, there are other projects which we want to have them ongoing and there are 11 sites in the second batch which are at Camp Ithier, Melrose, Mon Gout, Petit Bel Air, Souillac, Surinam, Khoyratty, Beaux Songes, Piton, Mme Azor, Goodlands and Henrietta as well. So, that

makes about 11. But there will be also land available at Camp de Masque, La Gaulette, Pointe aux Sables and Mare d'Albert. There will also be State land vested in the Ministry of Social Integration at Gros Cailloux. There is one site marked there as well and this will be the National Empowerment Fund. There is also State land available at Port Louis and Penang Street and Priest Peak also. Penang Street is also underway and for Priest Peak, we have already done the preliminary survey and soil test, and this will be ready this coming year as well. There are also sites for relocation of squatters. Provision of onsite and offsite infrastructure facilities has been provided at Camp Le Vieux, Bambous and Coteau Raffin, and there are certain undeveloped plots of State land on existing NHDC housing estates all over the country and we could build about 347 units on that.

Mr Obeegadoo: If I may just ask for some enlightenment. Looking at the estimates before us, there seems to be a budgetary provision only of Rs15 m. which is in respect of Military Road. Under this item of infrastructure for social housing - maybe I am mistaken - would the hon. Minister kindly indicate under which other item provision is being made for actual construction and for next year?

Dr. Kasenally: Well, currently we have a standing fund of about Rs1.5 billion which has been vested with the Ministry, but is currently now in an account at the Bank of Mauritius and we can draw through that as we proceed so that we can build as many houses as possible.

Mr Ameer Meea: On the same item, out of this Rs1.5 billion, can I ask the hon. Minister how much has already been spent?

Dr. Kasenally: Whatever we had we have spent, this is what I am saying, now there is Rs1.5 m. and as we proceed we are going to spend it as and when required.

Mr Ameer Meea: Concerning the project of Penang Street, may I ask the hon. Minister what surface area are we talking about and how many housing units are supposed to be built over there?

Dr. Kasenally: For Penang Street, the land extent is 34 perches; it is in the middle of your constituency in a residential area. There will be 21 units and the project cost is Rs30 m. for the building, Rs1.5 m. for infrastructure and Consultancy is Rs3 m. The Consultant is already working on it. This project will also start early 2013.

The Chairperson: I am sorry, time is up!

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 642: Social Housing Development (Rs246,030,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Baloomoody: Under item No. 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, can I take the hon. Minister to page 293, where it is stated -

“Rental Market in the housing sector is partly inactive.

- Review of the Landlord and Tenant Act to facilitate access to privately rented houses to middle income group.”

Can I ask the hon. Minister whether provision is made in the Budget to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act to remove the protection that tenants have today?

Dr. Kasenally: Yes. In fact, this is one of the measures which we are going to take this year, Mr Chairperson. In fact, there are 28,000 privately owned houses which are vacant. Experience shows that some landlords prefer to leave their houses unoccupied rather than lose more unpaid rent, and have to resort to tedious legal processes to assume possession of their property. As the hon. Member has pointed out, the Landlord and Tenant Act is a bit rigid. In fact, this does not encourage landlords to rent their property. Therefore, in order to create a more conducive environment for landlords to bring their housing units in the rental market, my Ministry will review the Landlord and Tenant Act.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 293, considering the constraints and challenges, the Budget refers to delays in allocating contracts, delays in processing of land acquisition, delays in processing of application for leases, delays in payment of compensation for land acquisition. There are many delays. I would like to place on record my appreciation for the dedication of the staff of the Ministry. As an MP, I have experienced their willingness and eagerness to help each time I have turned to them for poorer members of the community. Whether there is a problem of delay can only relate to either staffing or to the internal system. When considering the staffing profile at page 304, having regard to Programme Code 643, there is hardly any increase in staff. So, does the hon. Minister not share my concern that with the staffing that he is being offered for the next year, he will not be able to address those constraints and challenges identified?

Dr. Kasenally: I don't think there is a constraint with the staff itself in my Ministry. The important thing is to make them work efficiently. In fact, my staff is cooperating, but the

problems sometimes come. For example, as far as leases are concerned, there are legal challenges and they have to go to Court. I also depend on the Ministry of Finance, namely the Valuation Department. There have been some problems there over the last year, but, fortunately, it is being solved by the hon. Minister now. But, over and above that, this time we have asked for additional staff to be recruited both for the planning and survey. We have a management meeting every month to ensure that leases are prepared and delivered promptly. Also, I have to admit that there are some problems with the National Housing Development Company, which is a private company. They have their own Board of Management, and although they may be the Executive arm of my Ministry, sometimes one arm is tied. I wish they would perform better. I have said it quite unequivocally and I repeat it here; they have to pull up their socks and get things done.

Mr François: Just one simple question, Mr Chairperson. Under Programme Code 643: item No. 22130003 - (c) *Review of National Land Development Strategy*, it is earmarked Rs15 m. for this year, next year Rs5 m., Rs14 m. in 2014 and then back to Rs6 m. Do I understand that the review for the National Land Development Strategy is every two years?

Dr. Kasenally: I say no. I agree with you. It takes a long time because the current National Land Development Strategy was prepared in 2002 and became effective in June 2005. This present strategy will be set for development up to the year 2023. It, therefore, needs to be aligned to the existing policy and proposals with new Government initiatives and programmes. I can give you a status of the project to see how comprehensive it is. First of all, we have to collect the data which started in 2011 and, I think, we will be getting it by the end of this year. A draft land use strategy was prepared. In order to integrate the land use with the transport strategy, the NLDS will now be prepared in conjunction with the road master plan. Revised terms of reference for the new NLDS are presently being finalised with the assistance of the World Bank. We expect to launch tenders next year, and a sum of Rs5 m. has been earmarked for the initial payment of services of the study for next year.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk on page 302, *LAVIMS Project*. Recently, in the House, this question has been canvassed and the hon. Minister explained that there have been some problems in relation to this project. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he can give us a status and some information on the project?

Dr. Kasenally: There was a minor problem, but we have resolved it. LAVIMS project is made up of three components. There has been a delay, but we have had to have an extension of the contract. The delays occurred in the implementation because this was due to additional security measures required for the deeds module. When we were making a survey of all properties, we found a greater number of properties than we had expected and a greater number of documents for conversion and database.

But I must tell you that the LAVIMS project consists of three major components: the Digital Cadastre, a Parcel Based Deed Registration System and a Property Valuation. We had problem with the valuation because, at one stage, the Valuation Department was in turmoil - the Head, himself, became a headless chicken at one stage. The Cadastral module has been completed and is in operation since July 2009.

(Interruptions)

With an electric shock, they can get it back! The deeds module - the Parcel based Registration System has been completed and is operational since November. The Valuation Department of the IT infrastructure and network component has been completed and is operational since December last year. As I said, the Valuation Role Component has still not been completed. We also have to undertake what we call a user's acceptance testing on a sample data; certain discrepancies were found. When you put your PIN, you find that it was not responding to the proper property, but this also has been sorted out and the Ministry of Finance has prepared an implementation plan in consultation with the contractor for the completion of the Valuation Component. I am glad to say that at the end of next month it will be fully operational. Once operational, it will be of great help, especially with the Personal Identification Number (PIN), each parcel subjected can precisely define the outlines and boundaries of the land. It will also be an efficient system to combat prescription of land. As you probably know, Government has passed a law banning prescriptions and with the system, if the survey is not satisfied, it will not register the portion of land. Even with the PIN, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to prescribe a land. I think this is one of the great advantages and bonus of the LAVIMS project.

Mr Ameer Meea: Regarding the LAVIMS system, there was question of integrating State lands. Can I ask the hon. Minister the status about this issue?

Dr. Kasenally: This is also being done. At one point, every piece of land, every square centimetre will be perceived by LAVIMS. This is being taken care of.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 643: Land Management and Physical Planning (Rs446,521,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Dr. S. Boolell: On page 314, under item No. 22120 – *Fees*, may I ask the hon. Minister what all these are about and who gets paid?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, this fund is provided for the following –

- For our training needs and the provision made for payment of fees to the University of Mauritius in respect of three officers of Social Security Cadre following a Diploma course in Social Work, which is sponsored by the Ministry itself.
- For resource persons conducting induction course.
- For any in-house training expenses.

Dr. S. Boolell: Under item No. 22180 - *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)*, no sum was allocated last year and for the next year, you will find the sum of Rs1,200,000. Could we have some details from the hon. Minister?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, this is a new item in all Ministries. The funds provided before was under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, but now it is being transferred to our Ministry. The Permanent Secretary of each Ministry will be responsible for the various missions, etc.

Mrs Ribot: I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether she could table a list of the charitable institutions and the religious bodies benefitting from subsidies.

Mrs Bappoo: I will certainly table the list of charitable institutions and the religious bodies, but this subsidy, Mr Chairperson, is only for the water payment of CWA. Not subsidies as such!

Mr Roopun: On page 313, under item No. 21210 - *Social Contributions*, I see that the amount which was Rs4.1 m. is now dropped to only Rs700,000. Could we have the details about the Rs4.1 m. for this year, and also why is there this drastic change?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, this provision for payment of contributions to the NSF, that is, the National Savings Fund on behalf of the staff made under Programme 501 only in 2012. Provision of staff for the whole Ministry and all programmes and sub-programmes were

under the Programme 501. Now, everything will be done separately and provision is being made under different sub-.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 307, I would like to refer to the *Strategic Note - Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*. Is the hon. Minister with me? I am very happy that this year the Ministry has acknowledged its weakness in terms of policy making and the lack of capacity to formulate policy and has envisaged the setting up of a Research and Policy Unit.

However, when I turn to the details under Programme 501, whether at page 313 or in terms of the staffing, there is no indication that the Ministry of Finance has allocated funds that would allow the Ministry to set up this Research and Policy Unit. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether she has any ideas of how she can still proceed next year in the setting up of such a unit?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, we have already worked out on this proposal of having a Research and Policy Unit. This will be put into place by our own staff; pool of in-house researchers will be set up and with the collaboration of the University of Mauritius and the Mauritius Research Council to carry out research extra as per the needs of the Ministry. It is in-house, so, there is no need for additional staff.

Mr Baloomoody: May I refer the hon. Minister to page 307, *Strategic Note – Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed - lack of an effective mechanism to deal with complaints from members of the public; Setting up of a Complaints Bureau at Rose Hill and three decentralised offices in the North, South and East?* Can I ask the hon. Minister whether provision has been made in the Budget for the setting up of the four offices? When I look at the manpower, as just mentioned by my friend, hon. Obeegadoo, there is no mention of any increase of staff to man these three complaint offices.

Mrs Bappoo: It will be a Complaints Bureau, Mr Chairperson, yes, but mostly decentralised and initially a main bureau will be set up on the ground floor in the Social Security Office housed in Rose-Hill, followed by three decentralised offices in the North which doesn't need any additional staff. It will be done with our existing staff in our local office.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions - Programme Code 501: Policy and Management for Social Affairs (Rs94,706,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Dr. S. Boolell: Under item 27 – *Programme 502*, page 314, we note an increase in the sum allocated, from Rs922,000 to Rs1 billion. I would be much grateful if we could be informed about which one of the sub-items listed is actually the one which has caused that major increase, because we do not have the actual details.

The Chairperson: Page 314, item 27210!

Mrs Bappoo: It's all the expenses done at the level of social aid, for example, it involves the purchase of different assisting devices like hearing aid, wheelchairs, dentures, spectacles, earmoulds and all these come to a sum totaled over Rs15.61 m. It has also gone up because there have been more requests for these devices and also for the purchase of wheelchairs, like the standard wheelchairs plus the junior one which makes a total of 2,300 wheelchairs; dentures to 450 beneficiaries, spectacles to 3,400 beneficiaries and it goes up.

Dr. S. Boolell: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she could inform the House from these figures, how long is the waiting time for a prestigious wheelchair or hearing aid to be made available to somebody in urgent need of one?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, I always make it a point to see that we have sufficient number of these different items in stock. So, whenever we are to make the purchase for the needs for the requirements of the people, the different items are always in stock and we don't bring so much of delay in supplying the request made. But, at times, for example, I might say maybe for hearing aid, because one needs the assistance of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life which gives us the expertise for the mould, etc., it might take time, but for the others it is done as quickly as possible.

Dr. S. Boolell: May I inform the hon. Minister that the waiting time for a hearing aid is approximately six months.

Mrs Bappoo: This is what I just said. Hearing aid, we always have a delay on it. We cannot compare it with wheelchair. With wheelchair, we go on very quickly; hearing aid, we need the expertise of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for the moulds, etc.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 314, I would like to raise, first of all, the issue of *Funeral Grants*. If the hon. Minister can see where it lies on the *social benefits*, I take that the asterix here means that all these items have been grouped under one single heading, because I was not very

clear what the asterix here means. If that is the case, is the hon. Minister aware that considerable hardship is caused to the disabled people who are not old age pensioners and who pass away and do not benefit from the *funeral grant*. I have approached the Ministry to raise this point, following a very unfortunate case in my constituency. May I know whether the hon. Minister will consider including disabled people from poor backgrounds who pass away within those eligible for the *funeral grant*?

Mrs Bappoo: There are defined criteria for the *funeral grant*, Mr Chairperson and it is normally payable upon the death of a beneficiary of any of his dependants who is in receipt of social aid or the unemployment benefits or a basic pension, who would have qualified to receive social aid or if that person was not in receipt of a basic pension. These are the criteria. It will be a policy decision, if we need to change anything.

Mr Obeegadoo: My point there was that somebody who is not above 60 would not benefit from the *funeral grant* and maybe an exception might be made for disabled persons.

My second point, Mr Chairperson, concerns something I raised yesterday about young people who are not in employment, but who are healthy, and, therefore, do not benefit either from social aid or from the transitional unemployment benefit, because they have not contributed to the NPS. Again, may I appeal to the hon. Minister that in the course of next year this be considered as a possibility?

Mrs Bappoo: I take note of the proposal and we will study it.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions - Programme Code 502: Social Protection (Rs1,511,448,000), was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Uteem: At page 318, under item 27210103 - *Basic Invalidity Pension*, may I know from the hon. Minister what is the percentage of people who applied for this pension and who are successful?

Mrs Bappoo: Maybe I will table it, Mr Chairperson, because we have the various percentages for the various types of invalidity pension. I will just table the information.

Mr Baloomoody: I would like to talk on the same item, Mr Chairperson. One of the basic problems with this Basic Invalidity Pension is that you have to be 60% invalid to get that pension. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether provision is made in that Budget to look into that

issue of 60% physical invalidity, because there are cases where although physically they are not invalid, they have other problems which do not allow them to work? Is there provision in this Budget to review that issue of 60%?

Mrs Bappoo: We are on the same criteria, Mr Chairperson. It is a policy decision.

Dr. S. Boolell: Under the same item of Basic Invalidity Pension, may I ask the hon. Minister whether an invalid, who gets employed according to the latest modification of the compulsory invalid employment, will lose the Invalidity Pension?

Mrs Bappoo: Not at all, because the person with disability is allowed to work.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 311 - *Disability Unit* where we find that there are only 125 persons with disabilities who are being employed these days and up to 2022, we are planning to have only 175 people with disabilities. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether she intends to review the policy so that more and more disabled people can be employed?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, this is what we have done. It was just in July when we brought so many amendments, very important ones, to the TED Bill (the Training and Employment for People with Disabilities Bill). With the setting up of the Hearing Committee and the various provisions of that new law, it will definitely give more opportunities for people with disabilities to be recruited or to be trained; to be put on placement and for recruitment.

Dr. S. Boolell: In relation to the fees being paid for medical boards and domiciliary visits, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the conditions for the domiciliary visits?

Mrs Bappoo: For DVs, everyone, as from 90 years, has one DV monthly, but anyone as from 75 years also, if that person is bedridden, normally that person can apply for a DV. So, the 90 years for everyone, the 75 years condition being bedridden and we have also taken on board children with disability. They are allowed to have DVs also.

Dr. S. Boolell: Surely the age should not be the only criteria...

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, I would like you to specify the page and the item number.

Dr. S. Boolell: It's the same item, I continue with the same idea. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether she would not be amenable for a change in policy decision concerning those patients under the age of 75 who are actually bedridden.

The Chairperson: This is a policy decision. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On the very same item 22120001 - *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of doctors who sit on these medical boards and the criteria of selection for these.

Mrs Bappoo: Normally, for these doctors, there is press advertisement for applications if we need to recruit more and this is under the responsibility of the Director of the Medical Unit. Once they are interviewed and approved by the PSC, they are employed on contract and actually we have 44 of them.

Mr Obeegadoo: On item 22120001 - *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, the regular complaint is that it takes a lot of time for the processing of applications that go to medical boards. May we know, in the context of the amount that we are budgeting for next year, if there is provision being made? I ask the question because, in terms of staffing, there is no change. Can there be provision made? Is there a provision made for expediting of the treatment of the handling of applications of benefits that go to the Medical Board, especially invalidity benefits, invalidity pension?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, we have already improved the system and all the details are online. We are making a must that the processing completes within four weeks and the award is being made to the beneficiaries.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, on page 318, the very last item 28212022 - *Contribution to NPF on behalf of Domestic Workers*, I see a drastic decrease in the amount contributed on behalf of domestic workers from Rs12 m. to Rs5 m. Can I be enlightened about the reason for this drastic decrease?

Mrs Bappoo: The reason is quite simple, Mr Chairperson, because with the implementation of the project, which was a new measure, for the year 2012, we have to wait for the returns coming from the MRA because they go for payment at the MRA. The Ministry will be processing the returns. For those who pay at the level of the Ministry of Social Security, there is no problem, but the fact that we have to wait for the returns from the MRA, this takes time and the returns will be done early by April or May. When the returns are available, the payment to the National Pension will be done. That's why the figures show that we haven't been able to make use of the whole sum that was allocated. We haven't yet had the returns from the MRA.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions - Programme Code 503: National Pension Management (Rs11,110,697,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 319, item 22130002 - *Survey on causes of suicide among Teenagers*, this is a subject of growing concern. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is intended in terms of the survey. How will the Rs1 m. budgeted be spent and what are the objectives?

Mrs Bappoo: The fact, Mr Chairperson, that we have witnessed so many cases, I mean, several cases of suicide among the youth and students, etc., so, with the collaboration of my colleague, the Minister of Education and Human Resources and together with the Minister for Gender Equality involved in child security and protection, it has been decided to commission a survey through the Mauritius Research Council. The item is for that survey. This will be carried out. It will be a study to see what are the problems, etc. From the findings, this will help us to define our strategies and policies as far as suicide among our youth is concerned.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, can I know from the hon. Minister when the conclusions of that survey will be known?

Mrs Bappoo: It has to be started first, Mr Chairperson.

Mrs Ribot: I am on item 28211 - *Current Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions* on page 319. Can we get a list of those institutions benefiting from transfers from the Ministry?

Mrs Bappoo: It is mainly the Probation Homes for girls and the Probation Hostels for boys.

Mrs Ribot: Must we understand that the NGOs taking care of suicide benefit from no help from the Ministry?

Mrs Bappoo: This is not from that item, but if they make any request through the NGO Trust Fund Board, the request is being considered.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions - Programme Code 504: Probation, Social Rehabilitation and Suicide Prevention (Rs75,336,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Sir, I beg to move that we do report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and agreed to.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 28 November 2012 at 11.30 a.m.

Dr. A. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 4.45 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 28 November 2012 at 11.30 a.m.