

No. 19 of 2011



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 25 October 2011

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebejaun, GCSK, FRCP	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
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Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	Minister of Education and Human Resources
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Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology

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<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
<i>Deputy Chairperson of Committees</i>	Deerpalsing, Hon. Ms Kumaree Rajeshree
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 19 of 2011

Sitting of Tuesday 25 October 2011

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

At 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office –

The Annual Report 2010 of the Mauritius Ports Authority.

B. Ministry of Education and Human Resources –

The Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (Registration of Pre-Primary Schools) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 176 of 2011).

C. Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Consumer Protection –

The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 17) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 177 of 2011).

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

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

Second Reading

THE SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (2010) BILL

(No. XXI of 2011)

Order for Second Reading read.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Supplementary Appropriation (2010) Bill (No. XXI of 2011) be read a second time.

The Bill provides for the appropriation of a total sum not exceeding Rs3,719,556,346 to meet supplementary expenditure incurred under certain programmes under fiscal year 2010.

There has been additional expenditure over the voted provisions for certain programmes in the Programme-Based Budget (PBB) because of *virements* conducted from one programme to another programme during the year.

It is important to note that, if during the course of a financial year, expenditure in respect of a programme is going to exceed that provided in the PBB while at the same time savings are going to accrue under another programme, a transfer of provision or *virement* is allowed from one programme to another programme within a Ministry or from one programme in a Ministry to a programme in another Ministry. Reallocations are subject to limitations and conditions, as laid down in the financial rules on *virements*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Appropriation (2010) Act was passed by the National Assembly in December 2009, and a total sum of Rs65.9 billion was appropriated for financial year 2010 under 124 programmes. In the course of the fiscal year, two new programmes were added, bringing the total number of programmes in operation to 126. This follows the creation of new Ministries in the wake of the last general elections, namely -

- (i) Programme 731: Policy and Strategy for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, and

- (ii) Programme 741: Policy and Management of Tertiary Education, Science, Research & Technology.

The House may note that the Schedule to the Supplementary Appropriation (2010) Bill reflects the portfolio of Ministers as at 31 December 2010. All the changes that have occurred in 2010, namely the creation of new Ministries and Programmes and shifts in Programmes are fully reflected in the Schedule.

Total expenditure under all programmes for 2010 actually amounted to Rs60.7 billion, that is, Mr Speaker, Sir, Rs5.2 billion below the total sum appropriated. In fact, there has been underspending under 103 programmes. However, expenditure has exceeded the initial amount appropriated under 23 programmes. This additional expenditure needs to be covered by a Supplementary Appropriation Bill.

As the House is aware, section 105 of the Constitution stipulates that where any “head of expenditure” (now any “programme” under the Programme-Based Budget) requires funds in addition to what has already been appropriated, such additional funds would require further appropriation by the National Assembly through a Supplementary Appropriation Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Supplementary Appropriation (2010) Bill relates to excess expenditure of around Rs3.7 billion.

I will now briefly outline the main areas where additional expenditure was incurred -

- (i) an additional amount was required under Programme 952: “Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government”, to provide additional support to enterprises and industries to survive the eurozone crisis, including setting up of new Schemes under the Saving Jobs and Recovery Fund. The amount of Rs2.1 billion is actually a provision made in that year to cover future expenditure. This amount was not actually spent in year 2010. In fact, as can be seen on page 39, savings of Rs959 m. have been made under programme 952 for that year.
- (ii) an additional net amount of Rs1,069 m. was required for the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, consisting essentially of Rs1.1 billion payment to the Sugar Reform Trust in connection with the implementation of the Accompanying Measures for the sugar sector as well as amounts to meet commitments relating to irrigation schemes and support to small planters following the 36% reduction in the European Commission sugar price;

- (iii) an additional amount was required under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, consisting especially of a provision of Rs1 billion for future expenses on the Road Decongestion Programme, and Rs475 m. for upgrading of roads. It also includes a Rs117 m. bridging loan to Mauritius Shipping Corporation. It is worth pointing out that the “South Eastern Highway Project and Schoenfeld Bypass at Rivière du Rempart” was funded to the tune of Rs57 m. by underspending in other projects of the same Programme;
- (iv) an additional amount of Rs306 m. was required under the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities mostly for wastewater infrastructure projects;
- (v) an additional amount of Rs304 m. was required under the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life essentially for the purchase of medicines, drugs and vaccines. It needs to be pointed out that acquisition of a Geriatric Hospital to the tune of Rs144.7 m. was funded by underspending in other projects of the same Programme;
- (vi) an additional amount of Rs167 m. was required by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform institutions to meet commitments towards recipients of Basic Retirement Pensions and other non-contributory pensions and social aid, and
- (vii) an additional amount of Rs57.4 m. was required under the Ministry of Housing and lands in connection with LAVIMS Project and compulsory acquisition of land.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Estimate of Supplementary Expenditure for 2010 compares favourably with previous years, specially taking into account the fact that the amount being voted includes provisions being made for future expenditure of Rs2.1 billion for Savings Job and Recovery Fund and Rs1 billion for the Road Decongestion Programme as well as a loan to MSC.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, in accordance with your previous rulings, I have limited my speech strictly to the items on which we are being asked to vote today.

With these remarks, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend this Bill to the House.

Mr Bachoo rose and seconded.

(11.43 a.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger): Mr Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Minister of Finance has just said, there has been underspending by some 7% of the funds provided for financial year 2010, that is, underspending by Rs5 billion. On the other hand, we are being asked for supplementary funds of roughly 6% of the original sum voted, that is, Rs4 billion. I heard the hon. Minister of Finance talked of savings and, at times, he seemed quite proud of what he called savings, but before looking at what additional funds are being requested of us, I think it is worth looking where the main underspending took place, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker Sir, at page 3, under *Code 363 - Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities*, the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, for fighting poverty, was provided more than Rs1 billion – a massive programme - and we spent, Sir, Rs400 m. What empowerment! I can understand that the hon. Minister did not look at where those so-called savings took place. This is not savings. This is underspending in a crucial programme for Socio-Economic Empowerment. But, there is even worse. Social Housing Development! We voted again more than Rs1 billion and we spent less than Rs400 m., Mr Speaker, Sir. Savings again, savings so-called!

But, when we leave the social field and we look at the economy, scaling up ICT (Information Communication Technology), the Minister concerned nearly every day speaks of scaling up the ICT sector. We voted, Mr Speaker, Sir, Rs500 m. and we spent less than Rs300 m. and this is called savings on scaling up of the ICT sector.

Let me come to Fisheries Development. There is a new Minister who promises us everything in the Fisheries Sector and, there again, we voted Rs276 m. and we spent less than Rs100 m. for Fisheries Development.

The last item that I will take is very symbolic and is an example of underspending. How many times have we not debated *maltraitance des enfants*? We heard the previous hon. Minister and the present hon. Minister responsible for the welfare of children, complaining of lack of staff because of lack of funds. Even there, Mr Speaker, Sir, under the item “Child Protection Welfare

and Development”, we voted Rs62 m. and we managed to spend Rs54 m. and we are talking of savings. This is on the so-called savings that the hon. Minister referred to very rapidly - I understand why - in his speech, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Now, let me look at the extra expenditure that we are asked to approve. I hope the hon. Minister replies to the question which I am going to put to him now, because we are talking of huge sums of money. I would seek clarification for the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security. There is a huge item called “*Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation*”, Mr Speaker, Sir. We voted a huge sum of nearly Rs2 billion and we are asked now for an additional Rs1 billion. I think when we are talking of that kind of money, the House and the country are entitled to have full clarification on that item and on so many other items, Mr Speaker, Sir. For *Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation*: Rs2 billion asked for and Rs3 billion spent, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Land Drainage System, at page 3. We had approved for land drainage the sum of Rs5 billion. We are asked for an additional Rs600 m., Mr Speaker, Sir.

Apart from that ‘Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation’, there is another item on which I would like to seek enlightenment, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is under the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities – ‘Radiation Protection’. We approved a sum of Rs2,260,000,000 and apparently we spent only Rs6 m. And yet, we are asked for a Supplementary Appropriation of Rs300 m. And finally Mr Speaker, Sir, I think we are entitled to some clarification as to why the item ‘Contingencies and reserves’ where we voted as contingencies and reserves a sum of Rs5 billion and we are asked for an additional sum of Rs1,148,000,000. We are entitled to explanations and the hon. Minister is there to provide the explanations that the House deserves to receive.

Finally, there is one item of expenditure which we will not approve and we will come back to that at Committee Stage. That is the additional expenditure of Rs3 m. for the Independent Commission Against Corruption. We are not satisfied with the way ICAC is doing its work; we are not satisfied at all and we are not going to approve, therefore, that additional sum of Rs3 m. that is required from us. What results are we getting, Mr Speaker, Sir? We approved a sum of Rs135 m. Only yesterday it was Rs100 m., ‘*un chiffre rond*’, and it has gone up to the sum of Rs135 m., and yet that is not enough. The ICAC needs additional vehicles, and

it has the cheek of requesting Rs3 m. additional expenditure from us, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is definitely an item that we will not approve. And we will come back to ICAC and Medpoint at Committee Stage.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(11.53 a.m.)

The Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr A. Sayed-Hossen): Mr Speaker, Sir, for anybody who has listened to the speech of the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, when we look at the details of the Supplementary Appropriation that he has canvassed, we can notice very easily the different categories of spending for which the hon. Minister of Finance is asking the House for Supplementary Appropriation. These can be broken down into four categories which are all of them strategic, Mr Speaker, Sir.

First of all, we are talking about the Budget of 2010/2011 where we are still under the effect of the financial and economic crisis which hit the world and which hit our traditional markets from 2009 onwards with the effects continuing further. First of all, there was a need to restructure the economy. As the hon. Minister of Finance has mentioned, he is requesting for an appropriation of Rs1.1 billion to provide additional immediate support to enterprises and industries to roll out the eurozone crisis; secondly, to address the difficulties linked to our main markets, and thirdly, to build up, to reinforce, and to strengthen the competitiveness of the sugar cane sector. Rs1.069 billion are requested in his supplementary budget for that particular item.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we should bear in mind that we are talking of two sectors that are of strategic importance to the wealth of Mauritius and that requesting for supplementary appropriation for these two sectors is absolutely important, is absolutely necessary. And then this Government has vouched to modernise this country and we have embarked on a process of infrastructure modernisation, and for this purpose there is need, of course, to build roads, to mend roads and to acquire land for the building of new roads and new infrastructure.

The fourth point is that there is a need to address social needs. Social security and health constitute two very important pillars. These are the four categories for which the Minister of Finance is asking for supplementary appropriation.

I have listened with attention, of course, to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition had to say and I think we should know what we want. We are criticised for overspending and we are criticised for underspending also; underspending, for example, the hon. Leader of the Opposition said in Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. Of course, that Budget which was voted in 2010 to finance projects in socio-economic empowerment was meant to finance socio-economic empowerment. But then, this is a responsible Government, Mr Speaker, Sir. Not because there has been Rs1 billion or Rs2 billion or whatever sum that has been voted, that this sum should be spent irrespective, notwithstanding the projects that have been presented. It is very clear that the Ministry of Social Integration and Empowerment has its own guidelines, parameters and criteria for allocating funds to development and empowerment projects and if that sum of money, which was voted in 2010, has not been spent, it is with reason, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is because those projects which were found to be serving the purpose of Social Integration and Empowerment, these are the projects which have been financed.

Of course, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has spoken about underspending in other fields also, Social Housing Development – under-spending. I would wish, with your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, to bring to the attention of the House that this social housing development is linked to the utilisation of the 2000 *arpents* which were ceded by the MSPA to Government following negotiations led by the hon. Prime Minister with the sugar sector as premise to the reform of the sugar sector.

Out of these 2000 *arpents* which have been ceded, 1000 *arpents* are to be used for social housing. This was the decision that was taken and, of course, being given again that this is a responsible Government, it would not have been sensible at all for Government to take the 2,000 *arpents* immediately and then to wait for one year, two years, three years, five years or ten years to do something with that, whether it is agriculture or housing.

The process that has been adopted is that the 2,000 *arpents* would remain under cane cultivation until such time as projects would mature, until such time as projects would be finalised, until such time as finance would be found to implement these projects. This is why - and this is not irrelevant, Mr Speaker, Sir - a part of these 2,000 *arpents* has not yet been ceded by the sugar industry, MSPA members to Government and this is why part of the Housing Development Programme has not been implemented up to now.

I come now to extra expenditure, Mr Speaker, Sir. I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Leader of the Opposition on what seems to me to be a misreading of the figures on page 5 that he mentioned when he talked about *Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation*. Actually, the sum that was appropriated in 2010 for this particular item, was Rs37 m. and a sum of Rs31 m. was spent and not Rs2 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Rs1.888 billion is the sum total of a number of items.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member keep quiet! Let me listen to the debate!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Sayed-Hossen: May I continue, Mr Speaker, Sir?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Well, for the re-attention of the House, I said that the hon. Leader of the Opposition may have misread the figures that he mentioned on the *Programme Code 486: Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation*. For this particular Programme Code, the sum appropriated in 2010 was Rs37 m. and not Rs2 billion and the amount spent was Rs31 m. and not Rs2.7 billion. Actually there was an underspending of Rs5 m. on this particular programme. Of course, I am sure that there is no need for me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to stress on the importance of Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation. This is very intimately linked and is a very important dimension of the Prime Minister's *Maurice Ile Durable* project.

The extra expenditure which the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned again is on *Land Drainage*. All of us know, over years, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there has been a total lack of discipline - over many years - on construction in Mauritius, on the use of land in Mauritius where, very often, natural drains had been obstructed either by walls or by buildings, by houses, by industrial buildings, by commercial buildings, and we have a major problem of water overflow. So, land drainage is a very important issue; that is why, for example, over the past few years, whenever we had some heavy rains - even for a few hours - there were floods. Land drainage is a very important issue and I don't think that we should quarrel. I think this is beyond politics, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't think we should quarrel over issues like land drainage which has to do not only with the modernisation of our infrastructure, with the security of buildings and other assets, but, basically, which has to do with the safety of people.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what I had to say regarding the remarks made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Before ending my speech, I will just refer to one thing which the hon. Minister of Finance has mentioned in his speech: what we are doing in this exercise is a transfer of provision, *of virement*, which is allowed, according to financial instructions on *virement*, from one programme to another programme within a Ministry or even, from one programme in a Ministry to a programme in another Ministry, because there has been in 2010 and in 2011, reshuffles in responsibilities in Government.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(12.04 p.m.)

Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Speaker, Sir, we are called upon again, as in each year, to examine the Supplementary Appropriation Bill and the Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure, and in this case, to give approval to the additional public expenditure made in excess of the amount appropriated in the Budget 2010 adopted in December 2009 under the former Minister of Finance, Mr Rama Sithanen. This year, we are voting the Supplementary Budget, almost at the eve of the new Budget for 2012, over 10 months after the end of the Budget Year 2010.

Private companies, Mr Speaker, Sir, are required to approve their revised estimates and budgets well before that time so that they can file their accounts, according to law, within six months of the end of their Financial Year. So, what is the signal that Government is giving to the public when it submits its supplementary estimates for approval after such a long delay? Is this sound modern, up to date financial management when it is not even at par with the prescribed practice for the private sector? This is a case of: “you do what I preach, but I do contrary to what I preach”. How does the Government inspire good financial governance with this practice? This late and delayed submission of the supplementary public expenditure creates a problem for legislative oversight of public financial management. It leads to a situation of *fait accompli*, when it should ensure the timely submission of financial information and the proper reporting of extra budgetary provisions within the appropriate deadline. Otherwise, we are compelled into a situation where we act as figureheads or rubber stamps, having to vote excess expenditure already made without any practical controls or powers over the Executive as we would not want to grind the State financial machinery to a halt. With these preliminary remarks on the unduly late timing of this Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, which is of concern and contrary to good

public sector governance, may I be allowed to make some general comments on this Supplementary Appropriation (2010) Bill before analysing the Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure?

This Bill provides for a supplementary budget of Rs3.7 billion which is an excess of over 5.6% of the original budget 2010 or 1.2% of the GDP when the budget deficit is estimated at 4.3%; compared with previous supplementary budgets, this excess expenditure has taken an alarming proportion. It is much too high and it is unacceptable. I see the current hon. Minister of Finance smiling, but I am not blaming anybody. *Les torts sont partagés*, because this is an expenditure that has been incurred during the first half year by Mr Rama Sithanen and during the second half year by his predecessor, hon. Pravind Jugnauth. But the present hon. Minister of Finance loudly applauded both and thus, he is doubly accomplice *de cet excès* by throwing fiscal discipline out of the window. Previously, under incremental linear line by line budgeting, some cost overruns could be understood.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Soodhun, could you please, keep quiet!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: But today we have Programmed-Based Budgeting, that is, each programme and each item of expenditure is carefully worked out, assessed, costed and budgeted. How can there be such a big variance in the budget of Rs3.7 billion which is 1.2% of the GDP? The current Minister of Finance proudly inaugurated a Center of Excellence of the IMF for Public Financial Training to set the example for Africa. I think, clearly, charity should begin at home and we should rather put our house in order first. What is worrying and dangerous is that we never draw lessons from the past. We never seem to learn, but we always try to teach others.

Nous sommes des donneurs de leçons.

(Interruptions)

Now, we have this enormous variance in the Budget.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: We have this enormous variance in this Budget in spite of a new budgetary system. We have supposedly changed the previous budget system.

Mr Speaker: I think I will have to stop the hon. Member here. This is an Estimate of Supplementary Expenditure. I have given you more than what is enough for you to say that the ESE has been presented late. You have to come to the items which concern it, not a general debate.

(Interruptions)

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Order now!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With your permission, I was just mentioning that this variance is enormous and in spite of the new budgetary system, we have not changed our mindset and we have not made any improvement. This expenditure, which is to be voted today, continued to show excess over the appropriated sum and this variation is acceptable in the case of unforeseen expenditure and emergency situation, but, in this case, as I will try to point out, it is clearly unacceptable and it shows mismanagement, if not crisis management. Let us take the examples one by one. I come to the first example which is the upgrading of roads, on page 15, referring to Item No. 31113403. The sum appropriated was Rs320 m. and now there is an additional sum of Rs475 m. to be voted, which means that there is 148% increase in this item. So, this variation, if we have to go by the international guide - because we always hear the hon. Prime Minister talking of international best practice - for engineering works, the FIDIC clause, it recommends that any variation should not exceed 10% and in this case we have 148% variation. To stay in the same score, we go to ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: ... the new item that has been provided for in this Supplementary Budget. There is a capital grant of Rs1 billion as a new item towards the Road Development Authority for the road decongestion programme. Mr Speaker, Sir, this road decongestion programme has already a balance of Rs 2,750 billion on 01 January 2010 and if you look at the Director's report that has just been submitted - I just had a very quick glance - I saw that the balance as at the end of 31 December 2010 is

Rs2.9 billion. What does that mean, Mr Speaker, Sir? There was already a balance of Rs2.75 billion for road decongestion programme and at the end of the year we have a balance of Rs2.9 billion. So, what is this Rs1 billion new provision for because the balance is still...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance, you will have the right of reply. Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: This means that the sum of Rs1 billion has been provided for as an extra injection of funds into the road decongestion programme which has served no purpose because he has left the balance of the fund unchanged at the end of the year. What does that means clearly, Mr Speaker, Sir? The Rs1 billion has been injected in that fund and the fund has remained unchanged. So, it means clearly that Government has been borrowing money in the meantime at high costs, but has been injecting money in a dormant fund which has earned low interest. This is what it means, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is very bad stewardship of public finances.

Let us come to that other new item under the *Programme Code 952: The Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government* where there is a Supplementary Appropriation of Rs2.1 billion under a Saving Job and Recovery Fund also known as Additional New Stimulus Package. Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, we know that funds have been used under that item to finance Infinity BPO and RS Denim being the two singularly notorious cases of misapplication of funds. In the case of Infinity BPO, the funds have not been used to save jobs. The funds have been used to...

Mr Speaker: We are not debating Infinity BPO. We are debating the Additional Appropriation of funds. In a couple of days, the Budget will be presented and the hon. Member will have the opportunity to talk about Infinity BPO.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am just trying to spell out the use of funds under this new vote and I am asking myself whether the funds have been applied for Infinity BPO to save jobs and to

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: No, it is a query because we have to have legislative approval for an expenditure that is to be appropriated. So it is quite in order to ask how that expenditure has been made.

Mr Speaker: Yes, for that the hon. Member is right.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: But if money has been spent to buy a building which has cost Government Rs340 m. will the hon. Minister confirm that proper valuation of that building has been carried out and whether that was the proper cost to be paid to save jobs?

Mr Duval: On a point of order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: There is a point of order!

Mr Duval: There are no sums being appropriated here for any excess paid to Infinity or RS Denim. Therefore, this is not in the debate. The sums they asked are not being appropriated here at all.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is just putting questions. When you will have the opportunity to reply, you will answer.

(Interruptions)

Carry on!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I know that the owner of Infinity BPO has certain relations close to power.

(Interruptions)

Mr Li Kwong Wing: But this is beside the point.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Can I ask the hon. Member not to make provocative remarks, please? Carry on! Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: There is another item, which requires clarification and it refers to *Acquisition of Land, Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, under the Ministry of Housing and Lands; it is *the Programme Code 64302*. Under this Programme, there was a sum appropriated of Rs120 m. already and now we have a supplementary appropriation of Rs52.8 m., which constitute 44% increase in expenditure. The House would remember that I asked a Parliamentary Question on this matter in the recent past and the reply was that there was land acquisition that has to be compulsorily made because of the Ring Road Project. But, may I ask the relevant responsible Minister to confirm whether the small land owners, who have had their lands acquired and displaced, have been paid the amount that has been negotiated or whether that amount has been paid only to one big land owner, in that case, namely Société Sando at Pailles which is along the Ring road belonging to Mr Roland Maurel? It shows that there is a kind of discriminatory spending on that item. So, I would urge that the Ministry expedites the payment of the sum for which there is a request for appropriation, to expedite the payment for the smaller land owners.

With regard to *Programme 482 - Competitiveness of the Sugarcane Sector*, I heard hon. Kader Sayed-Hossen mentioning that this is a new appropriation of Rs1.1 billion to help to reform the sugar sector. Well, the question that needs to be asked is that whether that Rs1 billion that we are now being asked to vote is an amount that has been paid and whether proper monitoring is being made for that amount paid because if it is for exchange of 2000 *arpents* of land, it leads to a cost dearly paid of Rs500,000 per *arpent* of land that has been exchanged for that deal. So, whether this additional appropriation of Rs1 billion is a good deal for the country?

The other item of expenditure that one has to look into is for the Ministry...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Bhagwan and hon. Aimée, order! Order, I said. Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, the other item of expenditure....

Mr Speaker: Hon. Choonee, do you want to go out?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: ...falls under the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities. Under *Programme 444: Sanitation*, there is an additional amount of Rs298 m. to be voted over and above a budget of Rs1.1 billion for wastewater infrastructure. Will the Minister confirm whether it is a payment for fees to contractors as it has been marked as book adjustments? So, how a book adjustment can amount to 26% of a budgeted amount because consultant fees of 26% of a budgeted amount is unduly high?

We come to another item which is a legacy of the Minister of Finance when he was the Minister of Tourism. I see under *Programme 342: Sustainable Tourism Industry*, there was an appropriation of Rs43.8 m. and now the House is called upon to vote a supplementary appropriation of Rs23.7m. that is more than 54% in excess. An excess of Rs15.8 m. is described to be provided for the installation of 1,050 panels for fixing of posters and for a computerisation project. Will the Minister confirm whether we have value for money if for putting up panels for fixing of posters we are spending more than Rs15 m.? Is it a sign of value for money?

Mr Speaker, Sir, these are the main items of expenditure that fall under the main programmes, but there are certain expenditures which fall under the broad category like maintenance and construction of roads and it is good to ask here under this broad category of *Programme 323: Construction and Maintenance of Roads* will the Minister confirm that this is for the construction of this modern access road to the Jin Fei Zone and how much money has this access road cost because from what we have seen, while we have a modern access road to the Jin Fei Zone, the Riche Terre Branch road which is the adjacent road is completely dilapidated and cracked and under disrepair because all the trucks carrying rocks out of the Jin Fei Zone pass along...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, you can only be limited to ask questions as to whether this amount which is being asked, includes payment for the construction of the road. For the other point that you are mentioning, you can come next time during the debates on the Budget Speech.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, no my question was if money has been spent for a new road and whether money has been provided under this Supplementary Appropriation is to repair the old road adjacent to it which is under disrepair? That is the question that I was trying to put. So, in summary, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the absence of proper legislative oversight and scrutiny, the Budget System is subject to....

Mr Speaker: No, the Estimate of Supplementary Expenditure System, not the Budget System.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Sorry, I mean there is excess expenditure which can fall outside the purview of scrutiny because it has been laid in the House with undue delay and we did not have time really to go into all the details, but however, this is an area that will be debated during the Budget Speech and what I would like to conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that there are various items of expenditure which do not fit the sound budgetary practice and, with these words, I would like to close my speech.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon Bhagwan! Please, I could hear your voice very high. Keep quiet!

(12.27 p.m.)

Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Explanatory Memorandum to the Supplementary Appropriation Bill...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! I have to listen to the hon. Member's speech, you are distracting me.

Mr Jugnauth:... which is in front of the House states that the object of the Bill is to provide for supplementary appropriation by programmes of the expenditure of Mauritius in respect of the financial year 2010, which is in excess of expenditure appropriated for certain programmes for the Appropriation Bill of 2010.

Now, I am emphasising on the object of the Bill because logically the Minister of Finance normally comes with the ESE to appropriate sums which are spent in excess of those approved by Parliament for the past financial year. This is what the ESE is all about. But let me refer to what the Minister of Finance said and I quote "This ESE compares favourably with the previous years." Yes, but in what way? Because I can still recall for the years 2008 and 2009 when the ESEs were presented to this very House, they were presented in parallel with the Budget itself and Parliament there and then was asked to approve for sums to be spent not during the previous financial year, but for the forthcoming financial year. In fact, this was for the first time in the

history of Parliament that such ESEs were being introduced and this is why I agree with the hon. Minister of Finance that in that way this ESE compares favourably with the previous ESEs.

Now, I don't want to go into the reasons why the previous ESE's were brought in that way because we all know that the then Government of the day, the then Minister of Finance wanted to make an accounting. I can't recall what words he used, but it was certainly creative accounting in order to increase the budget deficit. I can recall when I was in the Opposition at that time I had expressed concern on the way things were done. Therefore, when I took over as Minister of Finance, Mr Speaker, Sir, I resolved, in fact, to put good order in the way the finances of the country were being managed. In the budget that I presented in November 2010, I, in fact, paved the way for the special funds that were set up to be subsequently dismantled and their respective sums transferred to the Consolidated Fund. So I chose the path, in fact, of full transparency in managing the finances of the country and, obviously, we had to go through a transitional period. The Supplementary Appropriation (2010) Bill before the House today was, in fact, being prepared. It was not finalised but, I must say, it was being prepared when I was still Minister of Finance. I remember very well having questioned officers of my Ministry then as regards to certain significant excess spending particularly concerning public infrastructure projects. As we have seen, we are asked to approve a sum in excess of Rs497 m. under programme 323 nearly half a billion rupees.

I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not the first time that such ESEs are being presented for excess expenditure, but I make reference particularly to infrastructure projects because, in a number of cases, there is justification. But I must say that in a number of cases it is not merely good spending, because excess spending comes for a number of reasons which are not really in the interest of the country. We cannot just take money from public funds and just because there are projects that have cost over and above the estimates, that projects are in the pipeline that, of course, *irrémediablement, on ne peut pas faire autrement que d'approuver les dépenses*. But then, we must know why has there been excess expenditure; why are there cost overruns. That is the reason why I intended to set up a project monitoring unit at the Ministry of Finance. *Avec l'objectif* to see to it that Government is getting value for money and that there are no significant overlays between initial earmarked funds for the project and ultimately the final cost. I must say, with much regret, this initiative has met with - in fact probably some people were suspicious

about the motive behind it and I can still recall at the level of the Prime Minister's Office they decided to replicate the same unit with the result – no unit being set up at the level of the Ministry of Finance; no unit, in fact, has been set up, as far as I can recall, even at the level of the Ministry of Finance to monitor, to see to it that these projects are being done in the best interest of this country. I hope that Government will rectify the situation.

Let me comment on some items now with regard to the ESE, especially on item 31112801 which has been created under sub-programme 58201: Hospital Services and High Tech Medicine Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets. I will only say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the new item in this particular case which relates to the famous Rs144.7 m. that are required, in fact, to meet the cost of acquiring the new building and equipment for the setting up of the Geriatric Hospital. Now this disbursement of funds occurred in December 2010 and since then there has been wide controversy in the country in the wake of, in fact, an inquiry which has been started and is still being conducted by ICAC; an inquiry at the level of the CCID; new issues that have, in fact, cropped up in the course of the number of, I would say, allegations made here and there and, in fact, as Mr Speaker knows very well, because last time mention was made, there is a case before the Supreme Court with regard to this issue. In the light of what I have just stated, we, on this side of the House, do not agree with the creation of this particular item under sub-programme 58201 in the given circumstances.

Let me explain so that there is no confusion. We are not saying that we are against because there is a policy decision that has been taken; it was in the Government Programme at that time and...

Mr Speaker: No, policy can be debated in the ESE. Now, I am allowing you to make a few comments because this is a new item, and when a new item is created some policy debate can take place, but we cannot go into the Government Programme.

Mr Jugnauth: Yes. Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, I will go according to your ruling, because I am just mentioning that a policy decision has been taken. It was in the programme before, and there should be no misunderstanding about the stand that we are taking. We are not against the policy of setting up a Geriatric Hospital, but, in the light of the circumstances that have cropped up, which I have just stated, we are against the setting up of this new item.

Let me come to the Supplementary Appropriation of Rs3 m. under the programme 131 which relates, in fact, to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Now, I will straightaway say that we are, in fact, throwing public funds away in the dustbin, as we all know the way ICAC has utterly, in fact to me, failed to deliver independently and efficiently in combating corruption. In fact, this institution has become a political tool in the hands of some people...

Mr Speaker: I do understand the position of the hon. Member, but I must tell him that there are two things. One, this is an institution which, according to law, if it has to be criticised, must be done by way of a substantive motion. Secondly, there is a Parliamentary Committee which looks after all the finances of the ICAC. Now, I am not going to gag Parliament because of the law. I will allow the hon. Member some leeway, because he has to explain his stand on the item, but he will need to have control over what he has to say. He has to explain in a very brief manner why he is not voting for the item.

Mr Bérenger: Can I take a point of order? I would wish the Chair to enlighten me. The Standing Orders do say that the Judiciary so, so and so cannot be questioned except through a motion. Can I be enlightened which section of our Standing Orders says that ICAC is protected by same?

Mr Speaker: It is Order 40 (5) -

“(5) The conduct of the President and the Vice-President of the Republic or the person performing the functions of the President’s Office, Mr Speaker, Members of the Assembly, Judges, Members of Statutory Commissions or other persons engaged in the administration of Justice shall not be raised except upon a substantive motion (...).”

(Interruptions)

No, we are talking of Statutory Commissions. The ICAC is a Statutory Commission, and falls within Order 40 (5).

(Interruptions)

Being given that this is Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure and the hon. Member is saying that he is not prepared to vote, he has to write to explain it a little bit why.

Mr Jugnauth: I was just saying how ICAC has, in fact, utterly failed in its objective. To me, it is just independent in name, but the way that enquiries are being conducted shows clearly that they are not acting in an independent manner. With regard to the issues that have been...

Mr Speaker: I think you have been given enough opportunity.

Mr Jugnauth: Yes. I won't go into the details, but I am sure people know what I am referring to. Therefore, on this side of the House, we will take a stand that we will not approve this additional fund to an institution which is not doing its work according to the objectives that have been set out in the statute. I must say even diplomats...

Mr Speaker: No, I am sorry, hon. Member!

Mr Jugnauth: So, we do not agree with this additional provision of Rs3 m. In fact, at the appropriate time, we intend to challenge the budgetary provision of ICAC altogether.

Mr Speaker, Sir, just to conclude, I would say that it is high time that we assess the progress that has been approved under the Programme-Based Budgeting to see whether the objectives that are being set out have, in fact, been met and the degree of efficiency attained in managing public funds. I can remember that I started with the assessment when I was Minister of Finance and I am in a position to say that we have to steer ahead more resolutely and systematically

On this note, Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your attention.

(12.42 p.m.)

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me thank all the four Members of the House who have intervened on this Bill and, specially my colleague, hon. Cader Sayed-Hossen.

Concerning the three Members of the Opposition, I am a bit at a loss, because all three have actually taken completely different stances. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has, in fact, lambasted people who have underspent; hon. Li Kwong Wing has taken a different approach, lambasting people who overspent and criticising the delay in presenting this Bill, whereas hon. Jugnauth has, in fact, commended the early presentation of the Bill, as I understand. So, it is obviously not the same.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Minister should have listened carefully to what I have stated. These are not the words.

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Whatever! So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am a bit at a loss of what to say, but I would say this, Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Duval: I will say this....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Duval: So far as the underspending is concerned, obviously we need to understand that all the spending in effect, that this is an exercise that is made by Government 12 months before the end of any financial year. So, we are doing actually next week for the end of December 2012. God knows what will happen before December 2012! In any budgetary process

(Interruptions)

I don't know if it is the same in a shop. In any budgetary process, there are always different provisions that are made and it does not turn out. In a company, every month you may change your budget and re-actualise it, but this is not done in Government. It is done only at the end of the year through this Estimate. So, that is why we have some overspending and some underspending. It is good to understand that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Now, so far as underspending is concerned, nobody wants to underspend. The hon. Leader of the Opposition raised a question of the Ministry of Social Integration – for that period, I think I was Minister for about 6/7 months – I tried my best to get the capital projects going, really I tried my best. But the procedures were such - it is a new Ministry - the procedures were such, the people issues were such that probably a lot of the projects are being enumerated now and it is good, because it does take time to get this done. In fact, I think this has been recognised

by the Government with the production, Mr Speaker, Sir, of the famous White Paper on modernising the Public Procurement Framework and it is quite clear.

So, I'll just read a little bit of the paragraph just to remind the House. In the introduction, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is said –

“The country is now faced to a new challenge to increase the level of investment, accelerate the execution of infrastructural projects and improve the delivery of public services.”

In fact, this Public Procurement Framework has to be improved so as to improve the capacity of the public sector institutions to implement projects. So, it is clear that Government has taken note of the chronic underspending, under implementation of projects and is dealing with it and we hope that after consultations are done, we will come up with a new public expenditure legislation which will allow things to go quicker, because it is not of any use if projects are not done. You actually bear the criticisms of a bigger deficit when you introduce your Budget only to end up with a much smaller deficit than you originally planned. Perhaps, I should just mention that when you talk of wastage, etc, it is good to note that despite the Supplementary Appropriation, which is, in fact, emphasising that we spent less than previously *in toto*, the Budget deficit for 2010 was 3.2% and not the figure quoted by my hon. friends. So, 3.2% was a very respectable Budget deficit for any country especially in the difficult times that we are going through, Mr Speaker, Sir.

As far as the overspending is concerned, again, I am sure that hon. Member knows, but perhaps he has not wanted to say that a lot of the amounts being voted today are, in fact, provisions being made, because, in fact, everything in the Stimulus Package, there has been the need to create rainy day funds so that if things get worse, we are not caught our pants down as it were. So, in fact, we do need to create funds to prevent any downturn that may happen in the economy and this is what is happening in this year, Rs2 billion or so for the saving jobs and recovery fund and another Rs1 billion for the Road Decongestion Programme. These are funds which are created to allow Government if necessary to jumpstart the economy and we have seen that private disbursement has fallen. These are funds which were there to protect the country and to prevent us from going through any recession through the bumping up of public investment which is done in every country, obviously in times of low private investment, and we can address

that issue in the Budget time why there was low private investment. You do need to create funds; that's why I intervene just now, not a cent of this money has been spent, it is for the future. Hopefully, we will see whether it was spent in 2011, but not in 2010. So, it is not wastage. We have provisions, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is as if you are keeping food in your fridge for, in fact, if tomorrow you have problem, you won't go hungry and that's exactly what is being made.

As far as agriculture is concerned, I think there was some sort of confusion concerning 486 and for 482 and I would not go into that again. Mr Speaker, Sir, what we are doing today, whatever can be said, it is a wonderful sign of accountability. In fact, we have spent differently to what was voted for and, in all transparency, Government comes to Parliament and shows exactly where things have been spent more or new items have been created.

Many different points have been raised concerning different issues, different programmes and I will leave that as is usual, Mr Speaker, Sir, to the Committee Stage where Members will have ample occasion to get information that they actually require.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the creation of funds, I am informed that, in fact, the Business Growth Fund was created by my predecessor. In fact, there still exist funds in the budgetary process. Not all the funds. Granted that some of the funds were in the process of being closed down, but, by no means, all, Mr Speaker, Sir! I understand also that the primary need for creating these funds was to prevent any downturn in the economy and saving jobs and stopping closures. Obviously, we needed to borrow these funds; these are coming from borrowed amounts, but, obviously, nobody is stupid enough to put these funds in non-interest bearing accounts. I mean, that is the basic rule that you can do in a chemist shop or wherever. So, that is what we did, and these are in interest bearing accounts, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I mentioned the OPSG. As far as new items created are concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir, these were created according to the manuals - I do not want to go into it - but with the proper approval. If it was by the Ministry of Health, it was done with the proper approval of the Ministry of Finance under my predecessor. So, I will not go into that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Just to finish off, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would say that, on the question of the Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure, every year there have been large amounts which have been appropriated in this way, even though the large provisions that make up this amount, which is

meant to be spent this year, are much less than in previous years. Even when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Finance or Prime Minister - I have the figures here - very large amounts going to more than Rs1 billion or so for that time were being appropriated in this way.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, with these words, I thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

At 12.51 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.30 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ESTIMATES OF SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE (2010) OF 2011

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

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, with regard to item 21110: *Personal Emoluments - Additional provision required for payment of salaries to officers on contract*, can the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance give us a breakdown of the amount spent in excess of the amount appropriated, that is, Rs782,500, especially in view of the fact that the House might wish to know who are these officers on contract? Are they from the Electoral Boundaries Commission or the Electoral Supervisory Commission, especially in view of the fact that the Electoral Boundaries Commission, as we know, established under the Constitution, is required to review the boundaries of the constituencies to present a report to the Assembly? December 1999 was the last time when the House was given a chance to vote on a report presented. As we know, in 2009, the next report was due and was never presented to the Assembly. So, we would like to know why we are paying these officers when this report has not been presented to the House. What is the use, therefore, of this vote?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me just answer the question. First of all, the hon. Member wanted to know who the two officers are. One is Mr Avatar, who is the former Deputy Chief Electoral Commissioner, and the other one is Mr Murugesan Veerasamy who is the former Principal Electoral Officer. They were taken back on contract from 01 March 2010 up to 28 February 2012. Whatever happens, the work has to be done, and they also had to prepare the Code of Conduct. But to answer specifically the question of the hon. Member as to why the report has not been presented, it is because we are having a look at the electoral reforms; there might be changes in that. That is why I prefer to wait, and then I will bring it to the...

(Interruptions)

No, it hasn't got lost. It is better to wait and, then, in a few months' time, we will know what we have to do.

Mr Ganoo: Under the same vote, but item No. 22120: *Fees - Additional provision required for payment of legal fees in connection with cases against the Electoral Supervisory Commission at the Supreme Court*, can the hon. Prime Minister give us a breakdown of this figure of Rs1,882,500, to whom were these legal fees paid and in connection with which case before the Supreme Court?

The Prime Minister: There were in fact 12 cases. The hon. Member wants to know the names of the cases? There were two cases for Dr. Luc Mooniasamy, one for Mr Eliezer François, one case for Mr Lisette and others. Then, there was the case of Mr Vencatasamy and 31 others; Mr Marie and 64 others, and Mr George Ah Yan. Sir Hamid Moollan was the Barrister. Then, there were, of course, these same six cases, and Mr Rajah was paid for that sum.

Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission - Programme Code 071: Supervision of Electoral Activities and Review of Electoral Boundaries (Rs2,527,235) was, on question put, agreed to.

Independent Commission Against Corruption - Programme Code 131: Combating Corruption (Rs3,000,000) was called and agreed to.

Government Printing Department - Programme Code 271: Government Printing Services was called.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, in relation to item No. 22100001 *Paper and materials – Additional provision required due to increase in price of paper*, I would like to know whether the material is bought for all Ministries or only for the Government Printing Department, and what is the procurement method used to buy these papers.

The Prime Minister: There were the usual procurement procedures, Mr Speaker, Sir, but the additional sum was required to meet a significant increase of about 50% in the price of paper on the world market in 2010.

Government Printing Department - Programme Code 271: Government Printing Services (Rs4,766,567) was, on question put, agreed to.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 442: Energy Services was called.

Mr Jugnauth: Under item 22060 *Maintenance*, I just wanted to know from the hon. Minister how long did this existing grid last for.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, regarding item 22060, it is a question of replacing the inverter on the Grid Tie Photovoltaic System at the New Government Centre. It has not been working for years and now it is being repaired. It is one off expense.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, on the same item, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, since it is under item Maintenance and we are talking of the replacement of an existing re-connected inverter, for what purpose that inverter was used for and what capacity of generation that inverter was having?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the inverter is to convert a direct current into **AC**. The capacity is 60 KVA and the energy produced is 45 KVA.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether the totality of the New Government Centre is serviced by this inverter? Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister also tell us who the supplier of this connected inverter is?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This was supplied in 1999 and left into a state of disrepair for many years. The one who supplied the equipment had to look after the inverter. There was no question of having a tender. It was the question of getting the inverter in that system working.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister say - because he has just said that the existing grid has not been working for years - why is it then that the expense was not forecasted in the Budget itself and that an additional sum had to be spent?

The Chairperson: Why it was not forecasted before the Budget?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, we have tried for years to do it house, but it has not worked. So, we had to tender it.

Mr Bérenger: The notes say replacement of existing grid for a value of Rs2 m. already appropriated and now a supplementary appropriation of Rs1.4 m. It is quite an amount of money. Has there has been a tender?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have answered this question, Mr Chairperson. This is a specific equipment supplied in 1999/2000 and has not been working since. We have now replaced it and it is specific to that apparatus.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 442: Energy Services (Rs7,718,870) was, on question put, agreed to.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 444: Sanitation was called.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, in relation to item 31113, may I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, what control, if any, does the Authority exercise before Exim Bank of China makes a disbursement to the contractor? Is the consent of the Authority required before Exim Bank pays extra fees to the contractor?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, there are various strict control on what is claimed and what is paid. I have no difficulty with that.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, under the same item, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister if we could have some clarification on the book adjustments and whether he has taken cognizance of the report of the Director of Audit with regard to this item, and also if we could be enlightened on who are the legal advisers of the Wastewater Management Authority?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, there are three parts in the question. I would like to have a precision. Hon. Li Kwong Wing mentioned about expenditure on

consultancy services, there is none. It is not consultancy services, it is the actual works carried out. According to the loan conditions for the Plaines Wilhems Sewage Project Lot I A, payment is made directly by Exim Bank of China to the contractor and adjustments are made in the Treasury Accounting System. This accounts for the book adjustments.

Only a sum of Rs100 m. was provided for Plaines Wilhems Sewage Project plot 1A. The contract was awarded in November 2009. The earmarked amount for this project in 2009 was paid in 2010. Additional amounts were also spent for house service connections.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, my question is related to the Wastewater Authority. I would like to know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the Board of the Wastewater Authority has been reconstituted. The Board has to approve the amount for the construction of the wastewater infrastructure. May I know whether the Chairman of the Board is illegally acting as Chairman now?

The Chairperson: No, this is not ...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member can ask whether the Board has approved this. That is the point. I will ask the hon. Minister.

Mr Soodhun: Whether it is legally constituted?

The Chairperson: Whether the Board has approved this amount! Whether it should be approved or not!

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Board legally constituted has approved this.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Soodhun, you have put your question and the Deputy Prime Minister has answered. The Minister takes responsibility of what he said in the House.

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, under the same item 31113 wastewater infrastructure...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

(Interruptions)

I have said order from both sides of the House and there should be no provocative remarks.

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Construction of wastewater infrastructure ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Hon. Soodhun, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he is satisfied that the house to house connection works are being effected within delay as well as full reinstatement of the roads where major works had been carried out, be it in Quatre Bornes, Rose-Hill or Beau Bassin?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, there is always room for improvement. Yes, we are aware of the problems arising and we are looking into it, especially regarding road reinstatement.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, being given that we are approving a 30% increase in the budgeted amount, inform the House whether there were any delays in delivery of the wastewater infrastructure and whether any penalty had been offset against the increased amount that we are paying to the contractors?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, there are penalties to be imposed and they will be imposed. But a lot of the delays are from the other factors than what we are talking about.

Mr Lesjongard: Under same item, Mr Chairperson, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to confirm whether with regard to payment to contractors, some of the payments were effected without prior approval of the CPB or even the Waste Management Authority Board or the parent Ministry?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, this question has been asked and answered in a PQ last time. I can come back and provide the hon. Member with the answer. It was already replied.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister confirm whether one of the reasons for this additional provision is because there was a conflict in the terms of the contract and the loan agreements?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There were some delay in getting agreement on the loan from the EB and it is part of the reason why it has appeared this year.

Mr Jugnauth: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister confirm whether there have been extra expenses with regard to the construction of wastewater infrastructure at Bambous and, if so, would he say whether inquiry has been conducted and, if yes, to situate the responsibility and if he could inform the House who have been responsible for such thing?

The Deputy Prime Minister: As the hon. Member is aware there has been problem in Bambous, but it applies to 2011 and not 2010.

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities – Programme Code 444: Sanitation (Rs297,983,629) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment – Programme Code 731: Policy and Strategy for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment was called.

Mr Ameer Meea: Under item 21110, *Personal Emoluments* with an amount of Rs3.6 m. can I ask the hon. Minister if we can have a breakdown of the details, whether it includes only staffs or any newly appointed advisers?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, Personal Emoluments, that is the basic salary of the DPM, is Rs1,013,174; extra remuneration for VPM and adviser Rs18,748; Allowances, Duty and Entertainment Allowances for VPM and Personal Allowances for Advisers Rs499,072; Extra Assistance, Salary of Advisers, Rs1,717,676; End of Year Bonus for VPM and Advisers Rs390 totaling Rs3,639, 468.

Mr Ameer Meea: May I ask the hon. Minister if he can give us the name of the other advisers?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, I have no problem in giving the names. They are Mr Assi, Mr Charitar, Mr Chateau and Mr Mebadi.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Minister say what was the highest salary paid to anyone of the advisers?

Mr Dayal: Yes, Mr Rault.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can we know what the amount is?

Mr Dayal: Rs88,480.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, I did not quite get the amount for Entertainment Allowance?

The Chairperson: I can't hear what the hon. Member is saying, please do me a favour.

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I did not quite get the amount for Entertainment Allowance?

Mr Dayal: Rs499,072.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment – Programme Code 731 (Rs10,352,323): Policy and Strategy for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 323: Construction and Maintenance of Roads and Bridges was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, under this Rs1 billion for the Capital Grant – Contribution to Road Development Authority/Land Transport Authority for Road Decongestion

Programme, can the House be provided with information as far as the details of expenditure are concerned?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, this is a provision which has been of Rs1 billion and as and when the money is required we are going to utilise them.

Mr Bhagwan: Where and on which item?

Mr Bachoo: That is on the road decongestion programme!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this Rs1 billion will be used only in one particular constituency or island wide? Because we have the impression that the 19 other constituencies are being penalised except at No. 9. We have a real problem of maintenance of road and road resurfacing within urban areas. I know that you have forgotten my constituency, but can the hon. Minister add it on the list?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, if you would allow me, let me start from the North and I'll give details to the South, East and West and that will take about 15 to 20 minutes. I am here; I am going to answer the whole question. We have started with Goodlands.

The Chairperson: No, I think if the hon. Minister has the list, he can circulate it.

Mr Bachoo: I have answered this question on many occasions in the House! The hon. Member must come with a substantive question and I am going to give him the answer required.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister can circulate the list.

Mr Bachoo: I am going to circulate it. Mr Chairperson, as far as the road decongestion programme is concerned everybody is aware about Terre Rouge Verdun, Verdun Trianon, Ring Road Phase I and road separated junction at Caudan, widening M1 from St Jean to Grewals, East West Connector Flacq to Moka, I can go on and on.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister will surely remember that there is an acute problem of decongestion of road at Vandermeersch Street day and night. Hon. Sayed-Hossen knows about it too and we have spoken about it in the past. Can the hon. Minister assure the House whether

within this Rs1 billion funds have been earmarked for the decongestion of Rose Hill centre at Vandermeersch Street?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, I have consultation with my colleagues and I have also invited the Opposition to come forward with concrete suggestions in order to find a solution to do away with this congestion. There is one problem at Vandermeersch Street. I could have enlarged that road but, unfortunately, there have been too much opposition; people don't want to do away with that slot which is about 2 kilometres. In addition to this, hon. Sayed-Hossen knows about one of the propositions that we had made, that is, to build up a bridge. Unfortunately, it will be too costly and it won't serve any purpose. I have also requested Dr. Reesaul from TMRSU to have a proper look at all the built up areas and if it is possible for us to perform a miracle, we will do it. I don't have any problem and, on the same line, let me announce the House that we are not sitting cross legged on this issue; we are trying to find ways and means in order to solve this problem.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order now!

Dr. Sorefan: Regarding Item No. 31113403, *Upgrading of Roads*, may I know from the hon. Minister if he can give us a list of all these items listed here and especially concerning urgent roads resurfacing?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, I am definitely going to circulate a list of all the works which have been undertaken. These concern the upgrading of roads, maintenance of roads, tarring of roads and enlargement of roads.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to item No. 31113403, *Upgrading of Roads*, can the hon. Minister elaborate on the measures with regard to road safety, measures that his ministry has taken lately because we see that the number of accidents are not decreasing?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, concerning the number of accidents, the percentage is decreasing day by day but, having said that, that does not mean that we are safe and sound. We have taken a number of measures; the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of my Ministry is undertaking the work, enlargement of roads and extension of roads and upgrading of roads,

providing footpaths wherever necessary and all these actions are being undertaken. In addition to this, wherever, extremely necessary, humps have also been put and, in fact, we are introducing about 100 speed cameras which we are going to receive in the month of March. All these are measures that have already been taken and we are taking them in order to improve our road structures.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: With respect to item 3113403, *Upgrading of Roads*, can the hon. Minister say whether there are any consultants or contractors who have received more than two or three contracts for upgrading of roads in general?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, regarding the upgrading of roads, under this item, normally the whole country is divided into four zones and in each zones one contractor is appointed not by me but by the Central Procurement Board. They appoint and then we have got the rate system which has been established by the Central Procurement Board and we work according to that. If one contractor gets two zones, so far the better. It is up to the CPB to decide. I don't take any decision, as far as appointment of contractors is concerned. Secondly, the NDU also appoints contractors through the Central Procurement Board even at the NDU we have the zone system. I said that the country is divided into four zones.

The Chairperson: Is it a follow-up?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: It is a follow up on what I have just said. I understand that it is the Central Procurement Board, but even then, my question has not been answered. Even if the Central Procurement Board has approved, has it approved for upgrading of roads for one contractor who has received more than two or three contracts?

Mr Bachoo: But I am not responsible for that. The Central Procurement Board has to take its responsibility. Even if it is more than one zone, even if it is more than two zones, I don't think that they have got more than two zones; it is normally two zones. But we are not responsible in any way for whatever action undertaken by the Central Procurement Board.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regard to item 26323079, *Capital Grant - Contribution to Road Development Authority/Land Transport Authority for Road Decongestion Programme*, can I ask the hon. Minister what is the exact amount that has been

already spent on the *métro léger* project for road decongestion because in an answer to a PNQ from the Leader of the Opposition, he did say that he had got the full blessing of the Prime Minister to go very quickly with the project?

Mr Bachoo: Yes, but I did not go so fast as to break myself. Mr Chairperson, in fact, the House is aware that we are having consultancy services from Singaporean authorities and we are working on that. We are still at that particular stage and, as at now, we have not spent money on that project.

Mr Baloomoody: If I may come back to Item No. 31113403, *Upgrading of Roads*, the hon. Minister says that he has no problem to circulate the list of roads. Can the Minister, at the same time, circulate the names of the contractors who are doing these works?

Mr Bachoo: Definitely, I am going to circulate the names of the contractors.

Mr Ganoo: I come back on the same item regarding *road safety measures*, Mr Chairperson. Can the hon. vice-Prime Minister tell us whether he is satisfied with the measures regarding drivers who are driving under the influence of alcohol today, in spite of the fact that there are fewer...

The Chairperson: No!

Mr Ganoo: I rephrase my question.

The Chairperson: I agree with the hon. Member, but this does not arise! Rephrase your question.

Mr Ganoo: In spite of the fact that we have lesser accidents, but we have seen that we have more fatal accidents, the number has increased and alcohol is one of the reasons. Can the hon. Minister tell us whether the law will be revisited on that issue?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, on many occasions the hon. Prime Minister has already announced the penalty point which we are introducing in the House, probably in the weeks to come.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister, on the same item, regarding the construction of 16 lanes at Mahebourg - you know well about it - where matters stand?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, the work has already started and nearing completion and in addition to this, there are other major works which are being undertaken in the same Constituency and the hon. Member is fully aware of it.

The Chairperson: Any more questions? Hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: I just heard the hon. Minister saying that with regard to the *métro léger*, a report has been submitted to Government by the Singaporeans. Two questions: first of all, is the hon. Minister satisfied with the contents of the report? If yes, is Government going ahead on the basis of that report?

Mr Bachoo: The hon. Member was, himself, since a few days back a Member of this Government. He is fully aware how concerned we are regarding the light rail and, as I have just mentioned, there is a Committee at the Prime Minister's Office. They are looking into the details and definitely, we are interested in the project. We will go ahead with the project.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea and then, finally hon. Bodha!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same item, the hon. Minister just mentioned that there are four zones. Can I ask the hon. Minister what are the contractors of the four zones?

Mr Bachoo: I am speaking from memory, in the north for RDA, it is General Construction Co. Ltd.; one zone is General Construction Co. Ltd. In the east, it is Civic. In the south, if I am not mistaken, they have Civic and General Construction Co. Ltd.; they are responsible, probably, for the entire country - either both of them must be having two zones. It must be like that. I don't have the figures in mind, but it must be two contractors only for these years.

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. As regards the last item - *Upgrading of Roads - Additional provision required for works related to road safety measures, road alignments, road drainage and bridge improvement/reconstructions and for urgent roads resurfacing*, can I ask

the hon. vice-Prime Minister, when the point system is going to be introduced because this time...

The Chairperson: No, it does not arise from this question! Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: On the same item, can I ask the hon. Minister as regards the traffic lighting system, whether he is aware that there is much delay as far as maintenance is concerned. When a traffic light breaks down, it takes so much time to be repaired, what system can be put in place so as to avoid accidents in many places?

Secondly, how many traffic lights are in order and the footpaths; all footpaths along the major highways, main roads, Beau Bassin, Rose Hill, Quatre Bornes, are in a very bad shape, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether provision has been made, at least, to repair all these footpaths?

Mr Bachoo: Regarding the traffic lights, Mr Chairperson, unfortunately we have only one company that is undertaking the work of repairs. Despite all our efforts to encourage competition, we have not been able to get a second one. Then, most of the traffic lights are in order and we have also taken decision at the TRMSU whenever cases are reported to us by the Police, we act immediately. As far as the footpaths are concerned, hon. Reza Issack has just mentioned a few days back, that we have already started the upgrading of footpath in the main road from Rose Hill towards Beau Bassin and a Works Order to the tune of Rs8 m. has already been issued.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he can inform the House if his Ministry has launched tenders for the recruitment of a contractor to implement the road toll system and which are the roads concerned?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, it is only when we reach the bridge that we are going to cross it. It's too early.

The Chairperson: Final question! Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Under item 31113003 - *Construction of Roads* where savings have been mentioned, may I know from the hon. Minister whether programme and sub-programme were purposely inflated leading the way for reallocation, intentionally?

Mr Bachoo: This is not the case, Mr Chairperson.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping - Programme Code 323: Construction and Maintenance of Roads and Bridges (Rs497,055,643) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping - Programme Code 325: Maritime Services was called.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what these operational expenses are and whether alternate source of finance has been sought before asking for a loan from Government?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, how can we get alternate sources of finance? It is a parastatal body and we had no alternative than to come to Government for support. In fact, the Mauritius Shipping Corporation is only meant to provide services to Agalega and Rodrigues.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on the same item, an amount of Rs117 m. has been given as loan. Can I ask the hon. Minister when will this be refunded? Has it already been refunded and what is the instalment?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, Rs80 m. have already been converted into equity capital and this means that Government has increased its shares and today, it is almost 99%. The rest, the sum of Rs37 m. comprises of loan has to be reimbursed, but, in fact, the Mauritius Shipping Corporation is passing through difficult days.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Just from the question put by hon. Uteem, what about the immediate expenses? Because mention is made here about the immediate operational expenses for the loan we have given. Can we have some particulars of that urgency?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, that concerns dry docking. Both of our vessels are old now. The first one, Mauritius Pride, is already about 25 years old and dry docking costs a loss of money that can go above Rs40 m.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Minister just stated that Rs80 m. has been converted as equity. So, if we understand, it won't bear any interest. What is the expected rate of return on this investment?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, it is very difficult for me, at this particular moment, to pronounce on this issue. As I have just mentioned, we are going through bad days.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Maybe I did not hear properly, but is the hon. vice-Prime Minister talking about replacement of any ship that is being used by the Mauritius Shipping Corporation?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, we are not talking in terms, actually, of replacement. There is a consultant who is working. We have got two vessels. Now, we have to decide - we are not sure about it whether we have to get rid of the older one and then, we have to procure a new vessel. This, so far, we have not yet decided, but we have the consultants who are working and they were appointed by the Ministry of Finance. Let's hope that they come forward with the recommendations.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping - Programme Code 325: Maritime Services (Rs90,789,038) 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: Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: I have not given you the floor. I was consulting my document.

(Interruptions)

Yes, now carry on!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On item *31133 Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, an amount of Rs12 m. has been spent on furniture, fixtures and fittings. Can I ask the hon. Minister if any tender procedures have been launched before the expenses were incurred and which company or individual won the tender?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, a tender procedure has been launched. I don't know the name particularly, but I can look for it. It is for a company rather than an individual.

Mr Jugnauth: Can the hon. Minister say whether the Ministry has vacated all the offices in Port Louis to move to Ebène?

Dr. Kasenally: No. Only one office is left at Moorgate, which will be vacated by the end of this year.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: With regard to item *31133 – Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings*, can the hon. Minister say how much furniture, fittings and fixtures have cost for his personal office?

Dr. Kasenally: We don't do for personal or for every single office. If the hon. Member wants, I can go and check every single item in my office, and lay it on the Table. But, it is never done like that.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, Rs12 m. has been spent on partitioning works for the newly rented building. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he has benefitted from a reduction of rent since an amount of Rs12 m. has been invested in the building?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, we have brought all the various departments which were lying all over Port Louis, and this has led to a more efficient and better output and, of course, there is a price to be paid. It is slightly higher than the original rent. But, the output has been better, and my Ministry is performing better.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 641: Policy and Management for Housing and Lands (Rs13,117,741) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 643: Land Management and Physical Planning.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, under item *31132101- Land Administration, Valuation and Information Management Systems (LAVIMS) Project*, we are being asked to vote a substantial

amount in excess of the amount appropriated; nearly Rs28 m. The additional provision is required to meet variations in the scope of the contract to include some 100,000 additional residential properties. Can the hon. Minister tell us how is it that such a substantial number of additional residential properties were not provided for in the initial contract?

Dr. Kasenally: The initial contract figures were based on the 2000 Census. Since then, there has been a greater movement of people towards towns, and there has been an increase of, at least, 100,000. We had to include this to have a very accurate situation as far as housing is concerned, so that we can incorporate all in the system.

Mr Bhagwan: Under item *31410801 - Acquisition of Land*, it is said that additional provision is required for payment of compensation related to compulsory acquisition of land in connection with various major government projects. Can we know from the hon. Minister who is responsible for the valuation prior to government purchasing these lands? Is it the Valuation Office? Is the Chief Government Valuer working these days? Who is the one effecting these valuations for government prior to purchasing these lands?

Dr. Kasenally: It is the Department of Valuation, not the Chief Valuer. But there are many valuation officers who do that. The procedure is that, first of all, they value the land, and they tend to agree with the person whose land has been acquired. If they agree, they are paid immediately. If not, they go to the Board of Assessment. Unfortunately, this takes a fair bit of time. It is a legal procedure; it is a Board, which is chaired by a Magistrate, and it takes the time it takes.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, as regards to *Goods and Services, item 22030 - Rent*, we see that there is an increase of more than 50% for rent. Can the hon. Minister enlighten us as to this increase?

Dr. Kasenally: As I have said, it is because we have moved to a totally new building where we have, at least, six floors. We have got all the services there, and it has increased. The rent has been assessed by the Central Procurement Board.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, under item *31410801- Acquisition of Land*, can we have from the hon. Minister a list of the areas where government intends to have compulsory acquisition of land? For example, if it is in Port Louis, which street.

Dr. Kasenally: All over, from east to west, north to south, from Cap Malheureux down to the south. Recently, there has been a fair amount of acquisition done for the Terre Rouge-Verdun link road, and also for the Phoenix bypass which was inaugurated only this week.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the Government Chief Valuer is medically fit? Because we heard recently that he has got a *trou de mémoire*.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, the Government Chief Valuer is attached to the Ministry of Finance. I have certainly not examined him, and so I am unable to say.

(*Interruptions*)

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, with respect to road projects where compulsory acquisition of land has been done, can the hon. Minister say whether this Ministry ensures that the land owners are not penalised in the sense that their land does not become landlocked?

Dr. Kasenally: My Ministry will never allow any of the persons whose land has been acquired to be landlocked or to be to their disadvantage. We always look after the interests of all the people. We have to be fair on that.

Mr François: Mr Chairperson, with regard to item 31132101- *LAVIMS*, will the hon. Minister inform us whether the LAVIMS systems will be centralised or in a three standalone, as there are three Oracle licenses required for the project? May we know the purpose of these Oracle licenses?

Dr. Kasenally: It is a system which is centralised. As for the other question, I have not understood. Could the hon. Member perhaps elaborate?

Mr François: We required three Oracle licenses. Will the system be centralised or will it be in three different parts? Because we required three licences.

Dr. Kasenally: No, it will be centralised. There are certain security measures which have to be taken. As its name stands, LAVIMS means Land Administration, Valuation and Information Management Systems. It is an integrated system. So, everything is integrated centrally.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, year in, year out, the Director of Audit severely reprimands Government and the Ministry of Housing for acquiring land and not developing it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo, you must bear with me, that is policy.

Mr Ganoo: This is the introduction to my question. Whether therefore Government is disbursing so much money to acquire land and whether the projects are already identified. It is the Director of Audit who says that these lands remain idle and not developed and Government is investing so much money. So, can the hon. Minister circulate a list of all these projects?

Dr. Kasenally: I entirely agree, Mr Chairperson with the hon. Member of the Opposition, but this business has stopped since this Government came to power for the simple reason that my Ministry now does not acquire any land unless the demanding authority or the Ministry provides proof that they have a project and they have money because year in, year out - when the hon. Member was also Minister - there were lots of problems about that. So, we have put an end to that.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the acquisition of land, can the hon. Minister say whether it is for cases where there has been valuation, but ultimately Government has had to pay more than what was valued and if that was the case, could the hon. Minister circulate a list of the cases?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, as I said, if there is any increase of what is to be paid, it is decided by the Board of Assessment, but as far as drawing a list is concerned, of course, I'll take time. In fact, recently, I circulated a list which is about 100 pages. I will try to satisfy the requirements of the hon. Member.

Mr Bhagwan: On compulsory acquisition of land, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there are cases where Government has compulsorily acquired land for a specific project and then there has been a change in the purpose and land has been given to persons for other projects than the initial project? I know there are cases. Can the hon. Minister circulate the list?

Dr. Kasenally: In the past, there have been such cases but there are far and fewer now because of the strict policy of this Government as far as acquisition is concerned, as I mentioned, recently.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, I have three questions.

The Chairperson: No, carry on one by one. I will see whether I will allow the hon. Member three questions.

Mr Ameer Meea: The LAVIMS project has been announced since long. Can I ask the hon. Minister when this project will be fully operational?

The Chairperson: Which project?

Mr Ameer Meea: LAVIMS!

The Chairperson: LAVIMS?

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, there has been a lot of impediments because there has been reevaluation and increase in the scope of work, but it is going to be soon and the projected time will be probably in the early months of next year. We are, at the moment, doing the fine-tuning.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, last question!

Dr. Sorefan: As far as acquisition of land is concerned, I would like to know from the hon. Minister how many persons whose land has already been acquired, works have already been completed and have not been paid up to now?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, I have said, I don't have the number, but I said there might have been a long delay because they go to the Board of Assessment which is a legal procedure where, unfortunately, my Ministry cannot be responsible for that, but, however, when there is agreement they are paid almost immediately.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 643: Land Management and Physical Planning (Rs44,295,493) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Tourism and Leisure - Programme Code 342: Sustainable Tourism Industry was called.

Mr Bhagwan: With regard to item 31113431 *Placement of Buoys*, there is a provision of Rs12.7 m. Regarding fixing of navigational aids and zoning of lagoons at Belle Mare, can the hon. Minister inform the House which authority has done the survey and how the list for the placement of the buoys has been arrived at? Can he also inform us who is responsible for the placing of these buoys?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, I don't have the details, but I don't mind to table the details.

Mr Bérenger: On the same subject, Mr Chairperson, who calculated ...

(*Interruptions*)

Therefore, Government came to the conclusion that there is a need for fixing of navigational aids and zoning of lagoons at Belle Mare. I am sure some kind of survey must have been carried out and provision was made in the Budget for less than Rs2 m. And now we are asked for more than Rs12 m. How can that be? There was supposed to be programme budgeting and so on, how can that be explained?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Order!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I have the name of the contractor, it is Network Ltd.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on item 26...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Yes, put the question!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, under item 'Grants'.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: *Johnny Walker.*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order now! Order! Order! Order now! There is no need.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bérenger: This is the second time. The other day, somebody mentioned rum, now he throws another alcoholic drink at our side. This is how trouble starts.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: The Minister can answer questions for which he has got the information, for which he has not got the information, I expect him to say that he has no information and he will circulate or whatever he will do, but I don't want any provocative remarks to be made. Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, now!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, now! I have told you order now.

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, carry on!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, now!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on Grants item No. 26313089 *Current Grant – Tourism Authority*, an amount of Rs22 m. has been appropriated and an excess amount of Rs15.8 m. has been spent. Can I ask the hon. Minister how much the 1050 panels have cost, what is the total cost and what is the cost per unit?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Yes, I have the details for the 1050 poster panels. It cost Rs2,568,000.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, is the hon. Minister going to look into it to see that we can actually use these panels because, as the law stands, we can only put posters on authorised

boards and the authorised boards are authorised under the Local Government Act and these poster panels are not in compliance with the law.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we are working closely with the Ministry of Local Government.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, I would like to ask the hon. Minister regarding the *Placement of Buoys* under item 31113431 if he can justify the amount spent in excess from Rs1,750,000 to Rs12 m. and whether there have been any tenders.

The Chairperson: Does the hon. Minister have the reply? If he doesn't have, he doesn't have.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I will circulate the details on the buoys.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The Minister does not have the reply; we cannot force him to answer.

(Interruptions)

Yes. Please, sit down! I have given the floor to hon. Mrs Labelle. It is me who is important, not the microphone.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, must we take it that the hon. Minister has not got a single information regarding the increase from Rs1.7 m. to Rs12 m. on the placement of buoys?

The Chairperson: He has answered the question; he takes his responsibility. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Minister what is the cost for the computerisation of Business Process Project?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The computerisation of Business Process Project cost Rs5,900,000.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Baloomoody: Now we are called upon to give nearly Rs16 m. to the Tourism Authority. We know that the Rs2 m. go to the Board and Rs5 m. go to the computerisation of the business. Can we have in detail what are the other sums; how they are allocated and for what purpose?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: For the final item, it is the recurrent expenses of the Tourism Authority. We have salaries, gratuity, printing, postage and stationery, travelling expenses, pension, contribution, professional charges, insurance, repairs and maintenance, electricity, telephone, staff welfare and also fixed assets.

Mr Baloomoody: The Minister has given a list; we want them in detail, how much goes to each item - entertainment allowance, travelling, etc.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I have the list. I will table it.

Ministry of Tourism and Leisure - Programme Code 342 – Sustainable Tourism Industry (Rs23,678,331) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Agro-Industry & Food Security - Programme Code 482: Competitiveness of the Sugar Cane Sector (Rs1,069,057,412) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology - Programme Code 741: Policy and Management for Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Rs8,196,487) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Youth & Sports - Programme Code 682: Promotion and Development of Sports was called.

Mr Uteem: At page 25, under item 2111 – *Other Staff Costs*: Rs8.5 m. Can know why there is an increase of almost 50% on the budget for those staff? What do they do and why don't we adopt a flexitime or increase the number of staff instead of paying overtime?

Mr Ritoo: The increase is mainly due to the fact that we have a lot of overtime to pay for drivers, attendants, caretakers and general workers. It is in connection with the training of athletes and access to public for practice of sports activities after office hours and also during the weekends.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: At page 26, under item 31122 – *Other Machinery & Equipment*. We see that there is an additional provision was for the purchase of sailing equipment. Can we know what amount went for sailing equipment specifically; who benefited and which criterion was used to select the beneficiaries?

Mr Ritoo: Sailing equipment amounting to Rs2,850,000 were purchased for the Sailing Federation. This was in connection with the IOIG.

Mr Quirin: A la page 26, sous l'item 22060 – *Maintenance*. Le ministre des Sports peut-il nous dire quels sont les complexes sportifs qui ont été rénovés et la somme dépensée pour chaque complexe?

Mr Ritoo: It was mainly for the repair and upgrading of the metal gates at the Anjalay Stadium, for the electrical panel at the Serge Alfred Swimming pool and also for the maintenance of certain stadiums.

Ministry of Youth & Sports - Programme Code 682: Promotion and Development of Sports (Rs6,943,008) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions - Programme Code 501: Policy and Management for Social Affairs (Rs138,349) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions - Programme Code 502: Social Protection (Rs41,418,897) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions - Programme Code 503: National Pension Management was called.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 30, under item 27210 - *Social Assistance Benefits in cash*, may I know from the hon. Minister what category of beneficiaries are we talking about here when we talk about an additional Rs122 m.?

Mrs Bappoo: The additional provision required is due to the increase in the number of specialised schools from 136 to 168 in 2010. The amount paid is also for travelling expenses concerning three university students. 1,660 students are attending specialised schools such as CEDEM, APEIM, School for the Deaf and also the Loïs Lagesse Trust Fund.

Mr Obeegadoo: I heard the Minister - under the same item - refer to an increase in specialised schools. May we have some indication what schools are being referred to; what nature of schools and why the increase?

Mrs Bappoo: I just said, Mr Chairperson, schools like CEDEM, APEIM, School for the Deaf and even the Loïs Lagesse Trust Fund School. These are the schools benefiting from these benefits and also students from the university. We have three university students.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have not caught this very clearly. Did the number of specialised schools increase from 138 to 168? Did I hear rightly?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes. The additional provision required is due to the increase in the number of specialised schools. I don't have the whole list at hand from 136 to 168 in 2010.

Mr Obeegadoo: Would the Minister agree to table a list of these schools?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, of course, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Ameer Meea: At page 30, under item 22120 – *Fees*. Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the nature of the fees that have been paid and to whom?

Mrs Bappoo: It is due to the sensitisation programme which was carried out at a time for a higher number of beneficiaries to have their pension credited directly into banks. The original provision for fees to Mauritius Post was therefore reduced. However, as there was no significant change on that policy, additional funds were required from the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 30, under item 27210 – *Social Assistance Benefits in cash*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been a net increase or decrease in the beneficiaries of invalid pension?

Mrs Bappoo: There is an increase in the various pensions and the number of beneficiaries for social aid, exam fees and various other allowances. Of course, there is an increase in the number beneficiaries to the various pensions.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions - Programme Code 503: National Pension Management (Rs125,776,351) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Programme Code 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities was called.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 31, under item 22110 – *Overseas Travel*, there is an increase of Rs15,000. Can the hon. Minister inform the House about the air tickets purchased, the increase paid is for whom and by whose authority?

Again at page 31, under item 26312 - *Current Grant to Local Authorities*, can the Minister, at least, give us a breakdown Local Authority-wise of this vote?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning the provision required for air tickets, I do not have the information. I will table it. The cost of air tickets referred to is for my PS to attend a workshop in Birmingham. The additional provision required is for the payment of compensation. There was no provision for the increase in salary and for pensioners and employees of the Local Authorities.

Mr Bhagwan: What is the breakdown?

Mr Aimée: I don't have the breakdown.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Programme Code 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities (Rs15,237,859) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 582: Curative Services was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, under item 21111 *Other Staff Costs*. There is a sizable additional supplementary appropriation of Rs95.3 m. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what grades are being referred to here where there would appear to be such a shortage as to justify this additional expenditure.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the overtime paid is for ambulance attendant, drivers/ambulance drivers, general workers, nurses, Health Record staff, Senior Hospital Care and Hospital Care Attendant. I am giving a few of them. This is the major component but, Mr Chairperson, Sir, a list can be circulated.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether we could get a breakdown of the minor maintenance works that have amounted to an excess of Rs29 m.?

Mr Bundhoo: I thought we were still on the first one.

Mrs Ribot: I refer to item 22060 - *Maintenance*.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Let the hon. Minister answer!

Mr Bundhoo: The information will be circulated.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same item, the supplementary expenditure is for presumably on unforeseen expenditure. In this case, the amount is nearly half of the actual amount appropriated. May we at least know why? What happened? Why it was not received?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, I thank the hon. Member for this question. In fact, for the year 2007/2008, it was Rs233 m.; for 2009: Rs189 m., and for this year, it is Rs160 m. Thank goodness, it is on the decreasing!

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Chairperson, in the light of what I have stated in my speech during the ESE, I shall move that the new item *31112801- Acquisition of Geriatric Hospital* under Sub-Programme 58201 be excluded until we are aware of the outcome of the inquiries and the legal proceedings under way.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Later on! When I will put the question, then the Member will move for his motion.

Mr Jugnauth: Can I move for a division of votes also?

The Chairperson: No, for the time being, let us finish with the questions.

(*Interruptions*)

Who has got to speak? Hon. Ganoo!

(*Interruptions*)

Order! Hon. Soodhun, could you please keep quiet? Don't forget we are in Parliament!

(*Interruptions*)

No, please! I did not see him. I heard the Member first. Keep quiet!

Mr Ganoo: I come on page 33 item *22140 Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*. Mr Chairperson, the initial provision for this item was Rs673 m. approximately. Now the additional provision that we are being called to vote is an increase of more than 50%. Can the hon. Minister explain why is this sum so substantial? Why no provision had been made so that we are now faced with an increase of more than 50% for the acquisition of medical supplies, drugs and equipment?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning the question raised by hon. Pravind Jugnauth, I must say – and this has already been replied by the Prime Minister earlier on to a question addressed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition - that I cannot, as the hon. Member is saying, withhold this payment for a very simple reason: it is for ICAC to do that. It is not for the Ministry, because it is ...

(*Interruptions*)

Can I finish?

Mr Bérenger: Mr Chairperson, I think you ruled that we will get to that later on.

(*Interruptions*)

He put the question, I was not listening!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bundhoo: I am replying.

The Chairperson: We will come to that later on.

Mr Bundhoo: Alright! Thank you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: Under item 22140 *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, I would like to ask...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Let us proceed in order. I will give the Minister the opportunity again.

Dr. S. Boolell: ... the difference between medicines and drugs and the sum allocated to buy each. What are medicines and what are drugs?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the allocated sum is with regard to medicines, drugs and vaccines, CT Scan, MRI fees and material, dental material and equipment. The whole list is here. I can either read it or have it handed to the hon. Member.

(*Interruptions*)

Dr. S. Boolell: Is the list separating the medicines and the drugs?

The Chairperson: The Minister has said that he will circulate the list. The hon. Member will take cognizance of the list and if he has any queries to ask, he will have the opportunity to do so. Hon. Ganoo, repeat your question!

Mr Ganoo: Why was there need for such an important and sizable additional provision required? This was the question.

Mr Bundhoo: I explained earlier, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that for medicines, drugs and vaccines, it was Rs235 m.; for medical, disposables and minor surgical equipment: Rs129 m.; for orthopaedics material and equipment: Rs11 m.; for CT Scan and MRI fees and material ...

(Interruptions)

Why? Because whoever was there earlier made the wrong proposal!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Hon Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: I want to go back to item *21111 Other Staff costs*. I have two questions. The Minister earlier listed some of the categories where there appeared to be a shortage of staff. I would like to know why there is such a shortage and what is being done to address the issue or what has been done since to address the issue of shortage so that next time round, we do not face again a huge overtime payment bill and, more specifically, is the hon. Minister aware of a problem at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital where Health Care Assistants, for many months now, have not claimed not to have been paid overtime? Is it being addressed in the context of this payment?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, concerning the first question, the simple reason is that we have already published advertisement to recruit 200 nurses. Secondly, we have vacancies with regard to Health Care Assistants and other grades which, I would imagine, would be filled shortly. Thirdly, with regard to RMOs, doctors also, interview is being carried out now and, hopefully, all these vacancies will be filled. Hopefully, the item on overtime would be reduced next time.

Mr Obeegadoo: The second part of my question has not been answered, Sir.

The Chairperson: The Minister has given the answer.

Mr Obeegadoo: No, the second part of my question referred specifically to Health Care Assistance at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital.

Mr Bundhoo: In fact, hon. Barbier, I understand, had put a substantive question on that. I have already given instructions...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Bundhoo: I have already given instructions subsequent to my visit at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital to conduct an inquiry as to why, for the last fifteen months, overtime has not been paid, to apportion the blame and to state remedial action for payment within the next six weeks.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan! Order, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Baloomoody, please, let the hon. Member put his question!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: Under Item 22140: *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment, sub item (iii) orthopedic materials*, can the Minister inform us whether action is being taken at least to review some equipment at the Orthopaedic Centre at Victoria Hospital where lots of patients are suffering and have to wait for these equipment, including myself as I have been there every day as a patient? Thirdly, will the Minister inform the House whether he is aware that for many of the patients attending hospitals, even at the Dr. Jeetoo and Victoria hospitals, there is a problem of lack of medicines for diabetics and they are being prescribed to purchase from outside? Is the Minister aware and whether he is taking urgent action for poor people who are being prescribed drugs for diabetes so that same is stocked at these hospitals?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the equipment breakdown, this is being addressed and, this is precisely why there is a tremendous amount with regard to medicines, drugs and vaccines, especially with the growing number of patients diagnosed with diabetes, the urgency for purchase has also been felt and that is why it has increased.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, going back to Item 22140: *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, an amount of Rs672 m. has been appropriated and an amount of Rs387 m. has been spent, that is, almost 58% in excess of what had been budgeted has been spent. Can I therefore ask the hon. Minister if this amount has been spent prior to tender procedures or was it spent on an *ad hoc* or arbitrary basis?

Mr Bundhoo: I have every reason to believe that my predecessor followed all the necessary procedures.

Mr Baloomoody: On *item 22900: Other Goods and Services*, we are asked to vote an additional of nearly Rs50 m. a breakdown of the figures regarding uniform allowance, foodstuffs, vegetables and especially store materials; can we have a detail of the items which have been purchased?

Mr Bundhoo: In fact, Mr Chairperson, this figure increased substantially because it was a payment done over two years with regard to the new framework of the Budget 8 months, 6 months and 12 months for two years and that is why it explains for the substantive increase of the specific period.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the payment of overtime I heard the Minister saying that he has requested for an inquiry to be done. Can I ask the Minister whether he has been made aware that an enquiry was already on and by now we should have received the outcome of that enquiry?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: Can I inform the House ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Some silence, please!

Mr Bundhoo: Can I inform the House that on the day I visited Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, after my appointment as Minister, I had this query, the same query was asked to me by attendants, servants at the Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, Victoria Hospitals and other hospitals. I conducted a meeting in my office and we have initiated actions. Mr Chairperson, I have also met the trade unions of different ranks from nurses to hospital servants and I am fully aware of the inconvenience this is causing to all these categories of workers and the hon. Member can rest assured, the needful is being done for payment.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, order!

(Interruptions)

I said final question! Let me put the question for clarity purposes: *the question is that Programme Code 582: Curative Services (Rs304,376,204) stands part of the Schedule.*

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to my motion, Mr Chairperson, can we have a division of vote, please?

The Chairperson: No, you move for what to delete the item?

Mr Jugnauth: I am moving that the new item *31112801 under sub-programme 58201* be excluded until we are aware of the outcome of the enquiry and the legal proceedings that are under way.

Mr Bérenger rose and seconded.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Chairperson, can I add something on the same item? I have just checked in the Estimates for 2010, we had not less than non-residential buildings, 27 cases starting with construction, extension of hospitals, new Jeetoo Hospital and so on, 27 listed. Of course, that item Geriatric hospital is not in that list. We are informed that we are not asked to vote money because savings have been made elsewhere. I second the motion that we delete that new item and I would like to know and I think that the country is entitled to know

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order, I have taken her to task, order!

(*Interruptions*)

Order! Carry on.

(*Interruptions*)

Order, order, I said! Order! I have taken her to task then no need for any further comment. Order!

Mr Bérenger: I would wish to know and I am sure that the country would like to know where savings were made that were used for the purchase of Med Point Clinic. On what items savings were made?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order, order!

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, if I may say something. I can understand that the Leader of the Opposition comes up with a motion of the sort, but I fail to understand why hon. Jugnauth would do so. The creation of a new item...

Mr Bérenger: I am asking about which savings....

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Chairperson: What is happening, why are you intervening? It is my duty not yours. The first question has been from hon. Pravind Jugnauth, let the Minister answer.

Mr Duval: I am answering both in fact, Mr Chairperson, because the easiest way would be for the hon. Leader of the Opposition to ask his neighbour because on 23 December a Minute was approved by hon. Pravind Jugnauth, then Minister of Finance..

(*Interruptions*)

where the minute was asking for permission to reallocate funds from identified savings! I can find the savings. But, the hon. Leader of the Opposition will understand that I was not there at the time and I do not have it at the tip of my fingers, I will get the information if you like. I am not bothered to go and look for it as it is not my style. I can look for it. In fact, it was from identified savings and it is clear that a new item was being created because it did not exist. So, in signing this Minute, the hon. Member must have understood that he was creating a new item and now we are being asked to remove it, because the amount was approved for reallocation on 23, *illoco presto* the payment was made a few days later. The next day the payment was cashed. I read yesterday from “*Le Mauricien*” that it was moved....

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Can I listen to the explanation which is being given by the Minister?

Mr Duval: I did not want to go into all this but I am being asked. I read from *Le Mauricien* yesterday that it was moved from the State Bank...

The Chairperson: No, the Minister cannot quote from the press.

Mr Duval: I understand that it was moved to another bank.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Keep cool, I am giving all the information you asked for.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

(Interruptions)

Okay, he has said it. So many people quote from the newspapers!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Duval: He should keep cool, Mr Chairperson, let us be relaxed about it. So, this money is gone, paid for and is cashed by I do not remember.

The Chairperson: The seller.

Mr Duval: Med Point, it was cashed, it is gone. All we are doing now is for transparency telling the House that the amount has been paid; it is already gone. What is point of excluding what from where? If Mr Chairperson the shareholders would bring back the money, we would be very happy to exclude it.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, order, order! Order now!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order now!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

There is a motion. Is the hon. Member insisting about the motion?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, Mr Chairperson. More so, when a new item is being created and it is before the Parliament today for us to vote, and we are perfectly entitled to ask for this item to be excluded. More so, Mr Chairperson, if I can have a few minutes, the hon. Minister is saying that it was me then, the Minister of Finance who created the new item, but ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Jugnauth: ... in the meantime there have been a lot of allegations and controversies. Let me explain. The hon. Minister has said a few about it. There has been an inquiry, which has started and which is not already completed. There have been people who have been saying, that although this deal is legal, it is immoral and I hope that they vote against the item today.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, I am moving for a division of vote.

(Interruptions)

It is immoral and unethical, Mr Chairperson, I am also ...

(Interruptions)

... moving for a division of vote.

Mr Duval: With the permission of the hon. Prime Minister, we are willing to exclude this matter. We can adjourn provided that the cheque is returned to Government, then legally we can exclude it.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order now! Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: On what the hon. Minister of Finance has just said, only last week, the hon. Prime Minister replying to the PNQ from me, said that he does not know what has happened to that cheque. Whether it has been cashed or not and added that he couldn't do anything because it was ICAC and ICAC only could do or say anything. Can I ask the hon. Minister of Finance, how come one week later, he tells us he knows, and whereas a week ago the hon. Prime Minister said that he is not entitled under the law to do anything. Has the hon. Minister checked with ICAC? How do you know that this cheque has been cashed?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Duval: I do not why the hon. Leader of the Opposition is wasting his time asking me, Mr Chairperson, he should ask hon. Jugnauth.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: The question is: that the new item *Acquisition of Geriatric Hospital* be deleted.

Mr Jugnauth: I move for a division of vote.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Let us work in silence, please!

On question put, the House divided.

Ayes

Hon. Uteem

Hon. Dr. Sorefan

Noes

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I want to know what exactly we are voting. Are they returning the money? Or what are we doing?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: The motion is that item Acquisition ...

The Prime Minister: Can I ask, Mr Chairperson, a motion to exclude this, but the money has already been cashed. So, what are we excluding?

(Interruptions)

I can answer the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I wanted to answer.

(Interruptions)

Let me answer the hon. Leader of the Opposition! When the PNQ was asked, I was advised that this matter is with ICAC, it is better for us not to get into this, let ICAC deal with it. But, since the question was asked, SIC did try - there was never a meeting - and recently, we found out that the money was cashed the next day. Money was transferred from one bank and put in another bank and money was transferred.

(Interruptions)

You should ask the hon. Member. He is next to you; ask him where the money has gone.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Can I know, Mr Chairperson...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Bérenger: ... only a week ago, the hon. Prime Minister informed the House that he has been advised that he could not either find out or say anything. What has he or hon. Duval done, to find out? Has SIC been taken to task for not stopping that cheque?

The Prime Minister: No, no. In fact, since you asked the question, I did not go and ask ICAC, but with regard to SIC, I can say why it has not been done because the hon. Leader of Opposition was referring to it. They said that they tried, but the money is gone, already cashed and transferred to London.

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, it is obvious that any Accountant General will be able to know when a cheque that he has drawn has been cashed or not. That is obvious that the cheque was cashed before 31 December and it was a cheque made by the Accountant General under the

order of the Ministry of Health. That was done and cashed. Where the cheque has gone from there, we can only assume.

(Interruptions)

It cannot be stopped by us because it was already cashed the very same day or the next day.

Mr Bérenger: I have one additional question because now we learn supposedly that SIC tried to stop. Last week, SIC supposedly has not done anything. Can I know whether the Bank of Mauritius has stepped in to stop the cashing of this cheque here or overseas?

The Prime Minister: Let me explain because maybe your version is not clear. When the cheque was signed, it was sent. SIC is a shareholder, they do not know what is happening. The money was already cashed and sent. It seems that part of the cheque has been sent abroad. So, even before ICAC has started its inquiry, the very next day, all of this was done, so what can they do?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Bérenger: My question is: has the Bank of Mauritius taken any action on that issue?

The Prime Minister: The Bank of Mauritius has no legal right to do anything about this at that time.

The Chairperson: It is the end of the matter. Let me put the question now. The question is that the Item *31112801 Acquisition of Geriatric Hospital* be deleted from the Estimate of Supplementary Expenditure. Is the hon. Member insisting on a division of vote?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes.

On Question put, the House divided.

Ayes

Noes

Hon. Uteem.

Mr Mohamed: One issue, since the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance ...

The Chairperson: Is this a point of order?

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order, on *la recevabilité de la motion*. My point is that since the hon. vice-Prime Minister already explained to this House and I don't see that it is contested that this money has already been spent on this item and that this vote here, is only *post facto* to take cognizance of it having been spent, cashed and transferred abroad.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Can I inform the hon. Member that there is a precedent in 1981 or 1982, when the whole Estimate of Supplementary Expenditure was deleted. It can be done now. The question has been put. Then the hon. Prime Minister has to come back with the estimates.

On Question put, the House divided.

AYES

1. Hon. M. R. C. Uteem
2. Dr. the Hon M. R. Sorefan
3. Hon. S. Soodhun
4. Hon. M. K. Seeruttun
5. Hon Ms L. N. Ribot
6. Hon. K. Ramano
7. Hon. Mrs M. J. Radegonde
8. Hon. J. P. F. Quirin
9. Hon. L. S. Obeegadoo
10. Hon. Mrs A. Navarre-Marie
11. Hon. D. Nagalingum
12. Hon. K. C. Li Kwong Wing
13. Hon. G. P. Lesjongard
14. Hon. Mrs F. Labelle
15. Hon. P. K. Jugnauth

16. Hon. P. Jhugroo
17. Hon. Mrs S. Hanoomanjee
18. Hon. A. K. Gungah
19. Hon. E. J. R. Guimbeau
20. Hon. A. Ganoo
21. Hon. Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun
22. Dr. the Hon. S. Boolell
23. Hon. N. Bodha
24. Hon. Mrs P. K. Bholah
25. Hon. V. Baloomoody
26. Hon. M. Ameer Meea
27. Hon. R. A. Bhagwan
28. Hon. P. Roopun
29. Hon. P. R. Bérenger

NOES

1. Hon. J. C. Leopold
2. Hon. Ms M. J. Perraud
3. Hon. D. S. Khamajeet
4. Hon. A. R. G. M. Issack
5. Hon. A. H. Hossen
6. Hon. J. H. T. Henry
7. Hon. P. G. Assirvaden
8. Hon M. Peetumber
9. Hon. Mrs K. B. Juggoo

10. Dr. the Hon B. Hookoom
11. Hon. Ms M. G. S. Anquetil
12. Hon. Ms K. R. Deepalsing
13. Dr. the Hon R. R. Hawoldar
14. Hon. S. Moutia
15. Hon. Mrs M. F. Martin
16. Hon. J. Seetaram
17. Hon. S. Dayal
18. Hon. S. C. Sayed Hossen
19. Hon. L. Bundhoo
20. Hon. J. Sik Yuen
21. Hon. S. Mohamed
22. Hon. M. Choonee
23. Hon. L. H. Aimée
24. Hon. S. Ritoo
25. Hon. L. J. Von-Mally
26. Hon. T. Pillay Chedumbrum
27. Dr. the Hon. R. Jeetah
28. Hon. D. Virahsawmy
29. Hon. S. Faugoo
30. Dr. the Hon. V. Bunwaree
31. Hon Mrs S. Bappoo
32. Dr. the Hon. A. T. Kasenally
33. Hon. A. Bachoo

- 34. Hon. X. L. Duval
- 35. Dr. the Hon. A. R. Beebejaun
- 36. Dr. the Hon. Prime Minister

ABSTENTION

- 1. Hon. J. F. François

The Chairperson: Order! Order! I want you to keep quiet.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Soodhun, I don't understand. Every time you are in this House, whether you are on this side or on the other side, you create problems. Can I ask you to keep quiet!

Ayes: 29 Noes: 36 Abstention: 1 Absent: 3

Motion defeated.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, Programme Code 582: Curative Services (Rs304,376,204) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Arts and Culture - Programme Code 621: Policy and Management for Culture was called.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Chairperson, under item 22040 - *Office Equipment and Furniture*, can the hon. Minister inform us what office equipment and furniture have been purchased for such a significant additional amount of Rs422,489?

Mr Choonee: Mr Chairperson, the new Ministry was set up, and office equipment means purchase of photocopiers, office equipment, fax machine, furniture, secretariat and reception lounge.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Chairperson, could the hon. Minister inform us what the fees entail to?

Mr Choonee: Mr Chairperson, the fees is an additional provision required to meet the payment of allowance to the resource person who is drafting the White Paper on Arts and Culture.

Ministry of Arts and Culture - Programme Code 621: Policy and Management for Culture (Rs1,916,867) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment - Programme Code 541: Policy and Management for Labour and Employment was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, there are two items which I would like some information about. The first one is item 22040 – *Office Equipment and Furniture*, where the additional amount is far more significant than the initial amount appropriated and, secondly, under item 22060 – *Maintenance*, could we have some clarification as to why the sum is being requested?

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, with regard to item 22040, an additional amount has been spent for the purchase of items of furniture for the offices of the Minister and the Permanent Secretary. With regard to those particular items, I would like to inform the hon. Member that it is about office desk, sofa set, visitors' chairs, cupboard for books, conference table and chairs, and also for the Permanent Secretary. As far as maintenance is concerned, that is for the refurbishment of the office, including the blinds and the flooring; specifically for the blinds, which has not been carried out ever since 2001, more than ten years ago. It was a health hazard finally.

Mr Ameer Meea: Under item 21111 - *Other Staff Costs*, an excess amount of Rs282,828 has been spent. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether we can have a breakdown of this figure?

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, with regard to that particular sum, the difference is of Rs282,828 and represents the amount spent due to increase in bus fares and an increase in the number of officers eligible to travel grant and commuted travelling allowances. If the hon. Member insists on a breakdown of that, I will gladly give the details.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment - Programme Code 541: Policy and Management for Labour and Employment (Rs81,348) was, on question put agreed to.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection - Programme Code 604: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like some enlightenment under Item No. 28211, *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*, this issue of transfers to non-profit institutions and payment of lump sums and arrears, the amount is very significant. It is twice the initial amount appropriated, more than twice; I simply want to know why this is so and why it was not anticipated?

Mr Seetaram: In fact, in 1977, at the request of the MCU, the SICOM Ltd, set up and managed a pension fund for employees of the MCU Ltd in accordance with the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds Act. The MCU contributes an amount of 25% of the salaries of its employees to the Pension Fund. At the start, there were 33 officers. However, by 1999 only ten officers remained and as at date contributions have been made to the Fund on behalf of only four officers. Being given that the contributions made on the behalf of the employees decreased substantially, as the number of employees went down while retiring benefits payable were on the increase, a deficit in the Pension Fund was created.

In 2010, after an actual valuation report on the MCU Pension Fund, the SICOM informed the Ministry that the Pension Fund was in a state of deficit and an additional amount of Rs8.3 m. was requested from the Ministry of Finance to be injected in the Fund to enable payment of retirement benefits to employees retiring from the service.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, there has been a saving under Programme 604 of about Rs6 m. Can we have some details regarding this saving - on which items?

Mr Seetaram: In relation to saving - what exactly?

Mr Jhugroo: Can we have the details of the savings and under which items?

Mr Seetaram: I will circulate the information.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, under Item No. 28211030, *Other Current Transfers – Mauritius Co-operative Union*, the hon. Minister just said that SICOM informed the Ministry. Can we know when SICOM informed the Ministry and why that expenditure was not forecasted?

(Interruptions)

Mr Seetaram: I did not catch what was said.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I would like to know when SICOM informed the Ministry that this payment has to be made. Was it before the budget was presented or after and, why, therefore, that expense could not be forecasted?

Mr Seetaram: I will let the hon. Member know. I don't have the information.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: There is nothing wrong for the hon. Minister not to have the answer.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection - Programme Code 604: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives (Rs2,159,880) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection - Centralised Operations of Government - Programme Code 952: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.

Mr Bérenger: Are we moving afterwards to the last page? Are we taking the sub-programmes at the same time or later on, or now?

The Chairperson: We are on page 38. No question? Then we move on to page 39!

Mr Bérenger: Under item 26323205 - *Saving Jobs and Recovery Fund*, I would like to know from the Minister of Finance, whether that Fund is still there, and if yes, how much money is there in that Fund?

Mr Duval: Its actually now called the Business Growth Fund. The name was changed, but it is basically the same thing. Yes, there is a balance there. I don't have the exact figure but there is some money still there.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the hon. Minister tell us how much money has actually been spent under that Fund for SMEs and how many SMEs have benefitted from this Fund?

Mr Duval: To which Fund is the hon. Member talking about, please?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Chairperson, this is spent in 2011; it is in this budget that you will get this fund. It is a provision. Many times before I have explained that is it a provision, a type of stimulus package, and it is not spent. It is just a provision and money is spent in 2011. I hope it is clear now.

Mr Bérenger: It is not as simple as that. This is for 2011...

Mr Duval: 2010.

Mr Bérenger: This vote is for 2010 - additional provision. So, we want to know, under that Fund, the *Saving Jobs and Recovery Fund*, how much was spent on SMEs and what part of this additional sum will go to SMEs.

Mr Duval: As you can see, if you look at the schedule there is nothing appropriated. So, it is a new thing. Nothing there, so nothing was spent before. This is a new Fund and part of a stimulus package for expenses: support to industry in 2011. It is a new Fund.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: You are not satisfied?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, does it mean to say that this new Fund has been provided and, in the course of this year, no money has been drawn out of this Fund?

Mr Duval: Of course, money has been drawn out of this Fund, Mr Chairperson. But, we are still in October. So, money will be spent and will be accounted for at the end of the year, in the normal way.

Mr Bodha: Can we come back to the philosophy? Was it a Fund to be used after, that is, it has not yet been used for 2011?

Mr Duval: Yes. I hope, Mr Chairperson, that...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bodha: Fund for what has already been spent?

Mr Duval: No! Mr Chairperson, I am sorry, I hope that his neighbour is explaining to him what is happening here.

(*Interruptions*)

Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection - Programme Code 952: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs1,148,968,814) was, on question put, agreed to.

E.S.E. (2010) of 2011 was agreed to.

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

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

The Supplementary Appropriation (2010) Bill (No. XXI of 2011) was considered and agreed to.

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

Mr Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 4.27 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.19 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Second Reading

THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

(NO. XXV OF 2011)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. XXV of 2011) be read a second time.

This Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, is being presented in the context of implementation of innovative educational reforms and transformation which lay emphasis on holistic learner development, enhancement of educational outputs and empowerment of students to become global citizens. It addresses directly the issue of additional tuition which is undermining our education system.

Here, I wish to point out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we have considered appropriate to use the words “additional tuition” in lieu of private tuition which is a term connoting privacy of tutoring and which can be misleading, from a legal perspective.

Additional tuition, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a phenomenon which is deep-rooted in our education system which has been lasting for decades, and is widespread both in the primary and secondary sub-sectors. It has over the years given rise to a situation where it has almost become an extension of the mainstream schooling.

It breeds social inequality which it perpetrates and places a significant financial burden on parents when education is ostensibly fee-free. It not only represents a financial burden on parents but also causes undue stress and exerts much pressure both on parents and children alike. Even teachers providing such tuition suffer by having to work long hours and this has a definite bearing upon their health. We must accept that competition promoted by the system is a major factor fuelling additional tuition.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we know that, over the years, efforts have been made to fight against the negative aspects of the competition especially at the CPE level. In fact, the issue, I believe, should be addressed not only from the bottom but more so from the top.

It is common knowledge today that, for example, at the HSC level, the Laureate Scheme is strongly prized.

This has given rise to the fallacious belief...

Mr Speaker: I will have to remind the hon. Minister that he is opening the floodgate. We will have to talk about CPE, competition. This is a Bill which is going to limit additional tuition from Standard I to Standard IV, allowing additional tuition to stand from Standard V to Standard VI. Therefore, there is nothing wrong as such with additional tuition, but I think the hon. Minister can limit himself as to why he is not allowing additional tuition for Standard IV.

Dr. Bunwaree: I understand your position, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: This is an amendment to a Bill; it's not general policy debate.

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, but it is a topic of national importance. So, I believe certain information has to be given.

Mr Speaker: Therefore, the hon. Minister is going against my ruling!

Dr. Bunwaree: No, I will try to limit myself within the ruling you gave.

Mr Speaker: Thank you.

Dr. Bunwaree: I was saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, however, the real picture is that because of the competition at the highest level, all the children are taken from the very early stages because parents believe that they have to go in that direction which is not necessarily true.

Mr Speaker, Sir, children spend an average of 9 hours a day in regular and additional tutoring while adults have a 7-hour standard working day, *en général*. Children hence devote more time daily in their studies than parents at work.

In 1989, Mr Speaker, Sir, a study was carried out by the University of Mauritius and confirmed that additional tuition does not leave much time for children's emotional, social and physical development.

It must be pointed out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that additional tuition is a phenomenon which is rampant internationally and not limited to Mauritius only. As a matter of fact, the former Director of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of UNESCO, Mark Bray, has extensively researched on this phenomenon which he refers to as the "shadow education system". In a report, published in 1999 by Mr Bray, it has been established that supplementary tutoring leads to fatigue and adversely affects children's lives and negatively impacts on their mental development.

Referring to one particular developed nation (Japan), mention has been made in that report that despite its economic prosperity and apparent educational successes as reflected in international rankings of educational assessments, the society in that country became increasingly concerned about problems of suicide, bullying and acquisition of discrete knowledge relevant to examination rather than to real life.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the report highlights as well that extended hours of study for the very young can adversely impact upon development tasks as the building of sound and socially acceptable attitudes.

According to the same report, there is a likelihood that teachers might slow down their pace of delivery in order to ensure that they have a market for the after-school supplementary classes and this to the detriment of students.

The report also highlights that one of the strategies to reduce demand for additional tuition resides in making classes more interesting, innovative and learner-centred through the adoption of an activity approach supported by ICT-based aids.

I must add that outright ban at all levels is neither a viable and practical option nor an implementable one. This is why we are going, I'll call, into a phased manner and we are talking only of Standard IV in the Bill.

The 2009 report, Mr Speaker, Sir, by the same author regarding Government policies for private tutoring reinforces the argument that the most abusive and socially inequitable aspects of private tutoring need to be addressed by means of regulations.

The policy orientation and response in regard to the issue of additional tuition has been the subject of discussions over the past twenty years; there have been White Papers, Education Plans, Policy Analyses, but very little in terms of concrete actions to address this scourge. We agree that it is a complex matter and cannot be overhauled overnight. But a responsible Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, cannot just sit, analyse and not take any action to deal with it.

In fact, we started stressing the need to review our current policy on additional tuition already since 2008 when we were discussing with the stakeholders about the reforms in education and we produced the Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan (2008-2020). The plan mentions the need of eliminating it at Standard IV which falls now under the second stage of the primary cycle. The primary cycle which was initially divided in 2 stages of 3 years has now been extended to 3 stages of two years.

Stage I - (Standards I & II) covers programmes such as -

- Bridging the Gap,
- Baseline Profiling.

Stage II which covers Standard III and IV includes -

- Diagnostic Assessment;
- Remedial Education;
- Continuous Assessment, and
- Enhancement Programme.

Stage III which covers Standards V & VI, in fact, takes into consideration the -

- the Enhancement Programme techniques will be used during normal classes in Standards V and VI, and
- the Special CPE repeaters Programme has been introduced at Standard VI level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we primarily aim at rendering the learning experiences of children more enriching, enjoyable and rewarding. We also aim at gradually developing in children the drive towards empowerment through self-learning and ultimately, in the long term, opening up new vistas for them to function as citizens of the world.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the objectives underlying the policy reforms in the education sector with regard to the issue of additional tuition are -

- (1) To phase out gradually a system which places an over-reliance on academic performance and create an educational environment which promotes holistic learner development;
- (2) To improve performance and quality standards;
- (3) To cater for the needs of different ability groups, including academically less proficient ones, by providing for innovative pedagogical programmes within mainstream education for remediation purposes;
- (4) To bring more equity in learning opportunities to all pupils by alleviating the financial burden of a majority of parents, and
- (5) To promote ethics, equity and inclusiveness.

We are also determined, Mr Speaker, Sir, to change the focus of assessment that is currently summative to review and adapt the curriculum and stress on essential learning competencies.

Since I assumed office as Minister of Education and Human Resources, I have been reflecting on ways and means to come forward with a strategy to address this issue of additional tuition. I had engaged in consultations with a number of stakeholders and institutions with a view to charting the way forward.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is on the basis of the outcome of such consultations and general recommendations of the Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan that the Bill has been drafted and the objectives of which are clearly set as follows -

- (i) to extend the current ban on additional tuition to standard IV;
- (ii) to regulate the provision of additional tuition to students in Standards V and VI and for secondary classes; and
- (iii) to provide for the conduct of the Enhancement Programme and any other programmes in schools to enhance innovative teaching and learning experiences and to promote the integral development of pupils.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill incorporates one of the most important amendments to the Education Act in regard to additional tuition since May 1991, when a first amendment was made to Section 37 of the Act to, *inter-alia*, prohibit such tuition up to Standard III. At that material time the amendment was brought to ban tuition up to Standard III. Then, there were no meaningful and sustainable accompanying pedagogical measures which had been introduced.

Mr Speaker, Sir, however, this Bill comes at an opportune time when there has been much groundwork done in terms of sensitisation, consultations and introduction of accompanying pedagogical programmes and other administrative measures in support of these new policy initiatives. I had, in this august Assembly, Mr Speaker, Sir, on various occasions, in replies to Parliamentary Questions and during my intervention on the previous Budget Speech made announcements on new policy orientations and objectives on additional tuition.

It is to be noted that in early 2010, my Ministry has successfully implemented the administrative decision for not authorising the use of school premises for additional tuition to pupils of Standard IV. This was done in the context of the introduction of the Enhancement Programme which has been dispensed to pupils with parental consent as well as support of teachers, Head Masters and Inspectors.

Parents were sensitised through the Media and each parent concerned was so informed by way of a ‘*Lettre aux Parents*’ issued in February 2010. I had also recourse to a webcasting session with teachers last year to explain the rationale behind the introduction of the Enhancement Programme and the new policy direction and reforms.

Press Communiqués were also issued and in December 2010 last, during a Press Conference, I had announced new policy orientations which covered as well the issue of

additional tuition. I would wish to stress that Mark Bray himself in his second report makes reference to my policy announcement in 2009 to the effect that private tutoring would be prohibited for pupils up to and including Std IV.

Moreover, a number of innovative and groundbreaking measures have also been introduced for the benefit of the pupils and to ensure the sustainability of educational reforms. I will just mention a few which are -

- Diagnostic Assessment
- Continuous Assessment
- Remedial Education
- *Enhancement Programme*
- Zone of Inclusive and Integrated Strategy (ZIIS) under ZEP Programme
- CPE Repeaters Programme
- The Sankoré Project, etc.

I wish to point out that the introduction of the *Enhancement Programme* for core subjects and Asian Languages/Arabic has been instrumental, especially in the context of the strategy to curb the practice of additional tuition. This Programme has been successfully implemented at Standards III and IV and it has gained widespread parental support and acceptance, promoting as it does, personality development of the child, helping in character building and developing leadership qualities.

All these measures, Mr Speaker, Sir, which I have highlighted, constitute a strong foundation upon which my Ministry can build upon to reduce overreliance on additional tuition.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now highlight the specific amendments under this Bill -

- (i) Currently, under Section 2 of the Act, there is no definition of the words “private tuition”. The Act refers to private tuition without definition. “Additional tuition” is now being defined in the legislation as “tuition provided to a pupil who is attending a school, in a subject which is being taught at the school”.
- (ii) Under Section 3 thereof, the Powers and Duties of the Minister are being extended to include a new subsection (fa), for the conduct of the Enhancement Programme or any other programme in schools to enhance innovative teaching and learning experiences, and to promote the integral development of pupils. This will give due recognition to this initiative and ensure its continuity. The Enhancement Programme has been introduced at

the second stage (Std III/IV) of the Primary cycle and will remain so. The Enhancement Programme Techniques will also be used in Std V and Std VI during normal classes. Other programmes may be introduced for the secondary sector.

- (iii) Section 37A subsection 1(a) as it now stands already provides that private tuition should not be allowed for pupils of Standards I, II and III. This Bill makes provision for the replacement of subsection 1(a) of Section 37A by a new provision to extend the existing ban to pupils in Standard IV. Hence, additional tuition will not be allowed in the school premises - this has already stopped, in fact - and outside premises for school pupils of Stds I to IV.
- (iv) Under Section 37A, a new subsection 1(b) is being added for the control of provision of additional tuition to pupils when this tuition is legally permissible in Standards V and VI or students attending a secondary school, by providing for the registration of the teachers wishing to provide such additional tuition. This is meant to regulate the control of additional tuition by defining the parameters, terms and conditions of the provision of such tuition under appropriate regulations.

Section 38 of the Education Act, Mr Speaker, Sir, which relates to Regulations is also being amended consequently by incorporating a new paragraph dealing specifically with registration of teachers and conditions governing same. Teachers wishing to provide additional tuition at Std V and VI in primary schools and other classes at secondary level and who qualify for same will have to register themselves.

- (v) We are also seizing the opportunity to adjust the nominal fine of Rs2,000 to be imposed for breach of section 37A to Rs 10,000 and an amendment is being accordingly made to subsection 3 of section 37A of the Act. This will undoubtedly serve as a deterrent.
- (vi) Section 39 is also being amended to replace the words “private” by “additional”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that I had received a memorandum from stakeholders already in 2010, proposing a number of parameters which need to be taken into consideration in the context of the formulation of the regulations namely, pupil/teacher ratio, registration of teachers, setting up of an enforcement mechanism and physical and other conditions of premises. I wish here to thank them for their constructive proposals which will help in moving the agenda forward. These will be taken on board under the Regulations to be made.

After this Bill is enacted and proclaimed, appropriate regulations will be made with regard to registration of educators wishing to provide additional tuition and the regulations will also cover the following -

- (a) qualifications/profile of teachers applying for registration and subjects to be taught;
- (b) the number of students per group – (Pupil/Teacher ratio);
- (c) the timing and frequency of the tuition;
- (d) the specific periods and time during which additional tuition will not be allowed;
- (e) the requirements for physical, health and safety conditions to be in force;
- (f) the inspections that may be carried out by an authorised officer and enforcement aspects, and
- (g) any other criteria as may be determined by the Minister.

I propose, Mr Speaker, Sir, to engage into further discussions with stakeholders before finalising the regulations.

The implementation of the new provisions of the legislation will require, Mr Speaker, Sir, the setting up of an appropriate mechanism for driving this change in policy and will involve -

- (i) the conduct of further sensitisation programmes on details of the regulations which will be above all child friendly.
- (ii) registration of teachers wishing to provide additional tuition, and
- (iii) monitoring, control and enforcement of the new provisions of the Act and regulations to be made.

A Registration and Enforcement Unit would be set up at the Zonal Directorates level and the PSSA for the purpose.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the review of the policy on additional tuition should not be viewed in isolation but in conjunction with other reforms which are underway or in the pipeline. As the House may be aware, a number of innovative and far-reaching reform measures are being initiated to transform the education sector. Inextricably...

Mr Speaker: No, no.

Dr. Bunwaree: I am finishing....

Mr Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo will speak after you; he will open the debate.

Dr. Bunwaree: Half open...

Mr Speaker: This is an amendment; we cannot speak of reform generally.

Dr. Bunwaree: I am saying that...

Mr Speaker: I have to apply the rules of the House.

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes. I am saying that it should not be viewed in isolation, but in the context of all the other reforms.

We are also proposing, Mr Speaker, Sir, to regulate subsequently under the Education Regulations on a minimum level of attendance – we are coming with that in the near future - for a student to sit for examinations.

Mr Speaker: That is not part of the Bill.

Dr. Bunwaree: Let us not forget, Mr Speaker, Sir, that Quality Assurance and Inspectorate body will be consolidated so as to effectively quality assure the types of curriculum delivery in schools, especially after this Bill is passed and hence lead to performance improvement.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in conclusion, it is high time that parents, educators, students and all stakeholders share a common vision to transform our set-up into an education-friendly and enabling system which will promote development of wholesome individuals having not only academic achievement at heart but also other interests such as the need to live their young life fully and becoming well cultured, disciplined and responsible citizens imbued with innovative skills and abilities; in short, a model of national pride.

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

Mr Bachoo rose and seconded.

(5.43 p.m.)

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands): M. le président ...

Mr Speaker: I will ask for your indulgence. Limit your speech to the Bill, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: Out of politeness, I cannot but respond graciously to all the issues raised by the Minister.

M. le président, une ineptie, ni plus ni moins, mais rien d'autre qu'une ineptie. Voilà ce que représente à nos yeux ce projet de loi. Voilà ce qui à notre sens cette tentative de s'attaquer aux symptômes alors que le mal est ailleurs faisant des ravages dans nos salles de classe, dans les cours de récréation et jusque dans le cœur des petits enfants, détruisant leur enfance, les blessant jusqu'au plus profond de leur chair et laissant des cicatrices psychologiques à tout jamais.

M. le président, ce mal il est connu de tous. Grace à vous, M. le président, nous venons de prendre connaissance du rapport annuel de l'*Ombudsperson for Children* qui se réfère à ce mal en disant en l'absence de réforme du CPE : '*our young children will continue to be abused by this unjust system*', et qui réitère ses recommandations *made in earlier reports for a complete removal of any form of competition in the primary education sector*. Grâce à vous, M. le président!

Ce mal, il est connu de tous. Nous l'avions jadis décrit comme le *rat race* à l'image des multitudes de rats ensorcelés dans le célèbre conte pour enfants suivant aveuglement le joueur de flûte de Hamelin dans une course effrénée les menant inéluctablement à leur perte – *the rat race*. Ce mal profond, pernicieux a perverti l'éducation mauricienne à tel point que, comme l'écrivait Suren Bissoondoyal, nous n'avons plus dans les faits un système d'éducation. Il ne nous reste qu'un système d'examen uniquement.

Faire accroire, M. le président, que l'on puisse guérir la maladie en traitant uniquement les symptômes, cela équivaut à tromper le malade en lui promettant une guérison qui ne sera pas et qui ne sera jamais. M. le président, pour nous, au mieux c'est de la naïveté ou de l'incompétence sinon cela équivaudrait à de la supercherie.

Disons le de prime abord, les cours particuliers ou leçons particulières n'existent généralement chez nous que par et pour le CPE. Les cours particuliers n'existent que par et pour le primaire; n'existent que par et pour l'hyper compétition au CPE. Les examens de fin de cycle primaire, M. le président, sont devenus un concours d'entrée pour le QEC ou le collège Royal de Curepipe. Nous le savons tous. Concours d'entrée avec son *ranking* honni, dissimulé sous ses

obscurs A+, fait de nous une exception mondiale. De même, Maurice s'est fait connaitre au plan international ; au plan mondial de l'éducation avec son système d'éducation parallèle. Le ministre de l'éducation parlait tout à l'heure de Mark Bray, l'expert international en matière de cours particuliers, qui a été mon collègue alors que j'étais Directeur à l'UNESCO il y a quelques années. Nous avions eu l'occasion, l'ancien ministre Parsuramen et moi, lui aussi était alors Directeur à l'UNESCO, de participer à un symposium organisé par Mark Bray à l'Institut international de planification de l'éducation (IIPÉ) à Paris où j'ai découvert à mon grand étonnement combien était connu Maurice à travers le monde parmi des spécialistes en éducation parce que nous détenons probablement le record en terme de généralisation des cours particuliers au cycle primaire comme au cycle secondaire. Nous sommes désormais une référence mondiale pour les chercheurs en la matière.

M. le président, ce projet de loi que nous avons devant nous a trois objectifs, selon le ministre même –

- i. l'interdiction des cours particuliers en classe de quatrième dans le cycle primaire ;
- ii. l'inscription dans la loi de l'*Enhancement Programme*, et
- iii. l'octroi au ministre de l'éducation du pouvoir de réglementer les cours particuliers en établissant un registre des enseignants dispensant de tels cours.

Nous, au sein du MMM - et je crois pouvoir parler au nom de mes amis de l'opposition - nous objectons à ce projet de loi dans la forme et sur le fond. Dans la forme d'abord, parce que, selon nous - le ministre, par rapport à un projet de loi aussi important qui concerne tous les mauriciens, parents, élèves, collégiens, lycéens et pourquoi pas, étudiants à l'université - le gouvernement a eu recours à un procédé anti-démocratique. Vous savez, l'autre jour le Premier ministre nous disait que le Parti travailliste et le MMM partagent certaines valeurs, nous sommes des partis ayant des valeurs. Je suis désolé de le dire. Nous n'avons certainement pas des valeurs démocratiques en commun. Les valeurs démocratiques c'est quoi ? C'est une culture du débat, une culture du débat contradictoire, une volonté de se soumettre aux questions, de se soumettre aux critiques, l'ouverture face aux idées, aux arguments des autres. C'est cela la démocratie ! La démocratie ce n'est pas se faire élire. Souhaiteriez-vous intervenir, M. le président ?

Mr Speaker: Le *Bill* ne parle pas de démocratie. Le *Bill* parle de leçons particulières et de l'*Enhancement Programme*.

Mr Obeegadoo: Justement, je me réfère au procédé par lequel ce projet de loi se retrouve devant nous. N'est-ce pas, M. le président !

Mr Speaker: Allez-y sur le procédé.

Mr Obeegadoo: Absolument! Je parle du procédé. Je dis que normalement en démocratie quand on est élu pour cinq ans, on n'est pas élu pour faire ce que l'on veut, pour être redevable uniquement après cinq ans. Je dis qu'en démocratie, dès l'élaboration d'un projet de loi, il faut qu'il y ait ouverture, il faut qu'il y ait débat, il faut qu'il y ait transparence et par la suite informer le public, expliquer ce projet de loi et non pas que les députés attendent le discours du ministre, lorsque le projet de loi est présenté en deuxième lecture pour tenter de comprendre les objectifs du gouvernement, pour comprendre les objectifs de ce projet de loi.

Mr Speaker: C'est un système qui a existé depuis belle lurette.

Mr Obeegadoo: Qu'aurions-nous fait an bon vieux temps de l'alliance MMM/MSM ?

(Interruptions)

Qu'aurions-nous fait ? Nous aurions d'abord, M. le président, tenu une conférence de presse pour expliquer pourquoi ce projet, où mener ce projet de loi, engager le débat – je vous ai écouté dans le plus grand silence, M. le ministre. N'est-ce pas ? Ça aussi c'est la culture démocratique, absolument. Je disais, donc, M. le président, que nous aurions tenu une conférence de presse, nous nous serions soumis à des interviews de presse, nous aurions rencontré ceux concernés - les *stakeholders* – nous aurions expliqué en long et en large avant de venir, ici, au Parlement, en débattre. A la place, il n'y a eu ni conférence de presse dans les semaines précédant la présentation du projet de loi, ni interview, ni explication. Mais, il semblerait que le gouvernement ait choisi en catimini de prendre tout le monde par surprise, de faire voter ce projet de loi à la va-vite pour ensuite le présenter comme un fait accompli aux parents, comme aux enseignants et cela nous le déplorons fortement, M. le président.

Mais, venons-en au fond de l'affaire. Je commencerai par l'interdiction des cours particuliers en quatrième année. Je pense que la première question que nous devrions nous poser c'est : pourquoi les leçons particulières ont-elles pris une telle ampleur à Maurice ? J'aurais

souhaité que le ministère ait commandité une étude sur cette question, puisque le ministre s'est présenté il y a deux ans déjà comme le ministre anti-leçon particulière. Savez-vous que l'un de mes prédecesseurs, le ministre Armoogum Parsooramen, lui, avant d'introduire un projet de loi au Parlement dans les années 90, avait commandité la seule étude réalisée à Maurice se rapportant à ce fléau, le rapport Joynathsing, à laquelle avait participé Vidula Nababsing dans les années 90. C'est un rapport très riche en leçon, mais qui date de plus de 20 ans. Nous aurions vivement souhaité qu'à la requête du ministre, l'Université de Maurice se lance dans la recherche appliquée, ce qui est rarement le cas et nous produise un rapport sur le phénomène des leçons particulières à Maurice. Ce n'était pas le cas.

Donc, laissez-moi suggérer à mes collègues de la Chambre les raisons. Il y a deux facteurs expliquant les leçons particulières à Maurice. D'abord, la demande des parents. Il y a une très forte demande, nous le savons tous, de la part des parents. Aucun d'entre nous ici – et je vous mets au défi un collègue de l'Assemblée de me dire le contraire – ne prendrait le risque que son enfant aille concourir là, en 2010, en 2011, aux examens du CPE sans lui trouver un prof de leçon particulière. Aucun !

(Interruptions)

Je parle du cycle primaire, je parle des cours particuliers au primaire. Aujourd'hui, M. le président, je prétends qu'il est impossible pour un enfant d'obtenir les 4 A+ au CPE, - non seulement les 4 A+, mais les 4 A+ se classant parmi les 140 premières ou premiers - pour accéder au QEC ou au collège Royal de Curepipe sans leçons particulières. Impossible ! Donc, le premier facteur c'est le facteur de demande et la demande c'est avant tout la demande des parents par rapport au classement au CPE. Déjà, en 2001, nous avions produit ce fameux document du 'rat race', dix ans de cela et, nous parlions des raisons pourquoi il fallait s'attaquer d'abord et avant tout au mal premier, l'hyper-compétition au niveau du primaire et nous disions ceci et, cela vaut toujours encore aujourd'hui, dix ans plus tard.

In actual fact, for the 18,000 children who passed the CPE examinations every year and more especially for the 4,500 who obtained 4 A's – à l'époque il n'y avait pas d'A+, il y avait le ranking qui existait toujours - there is intense competition to secure a place in the small number of perceived Star Secondary Schools where some 1,000 places are, in fact, available. Aujourd'hui, c'est pareil, c'est pour les collèges dit 'nationaux', mais pour les parents les plus

aisés, disons-le, la classe moyenne, c'est vraiment les 140 places au collège Royal de Curepipe ou au QEC.

Le rapport disait –

“It has long been observed that such competition results in a ‘rat race’ beginning right from the lower primary years, - *M. le ministre* - exerting immense psychological pressure on both students and their parents...”

Vous vous souvenez de l'image qu'on a vue il y a quelques jours de cette mère éclatant en sanglots quand elle allait déposer son enfant aux examens du CPE !

“... and perverting the very function of the school within society. The whole educational process is thereby vitiated, CPE ranking emerging as the natural corollary of the star school system which imperatively requires an instrument of selection as precise as it is arbitrary and ruthless to distinguish the few hundred to be admitted to the star schools from the rest.”

Voilà la cause première des leçons particulières!

C'est pour cela qu'à l'époque nous avions proposé tout un ensemble de réformes: régionalisation des admissions, conversion desdits *star schools* en lycées, *Form VI colleges*, construction de nouveaux collèges, ainsi de suite.

Mr Speaker: Mais le ministre a dit qu'il est en train de *phase out*. Il est d'accord avec vous.

Mr Obeegadoo: D'ici le prochain siècle, sans doute oui, M. le président!

Mr Speaker: Mais il a dit ‘*to phase out*’!

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Absolument. Premier facteur de la demande c'est la compétition intense...

Mr Speaker: Vous êtes en train de répéter les mêmes arguments ...

Mr Obeegadoo: Deuxième facteur, M. le président...

Mr Speaker: D'après les *Standing Orders*, vous n'avez pas le droit de répéter vos propres arguments!

Mr Obeegadoo: Ce n'était qu'un effet de rhétorique. Mais passons au deuxième argument, les programmes surchargés, M. le président - les leçons particulières. D'année en année, l'examen du CPE devient plus difficile. Cette année, au programme d'histoire-géographie, il y avait des chapitres traitant du *seafood hub*. Nous parlons d'enfants de dix-onze ans ! *Seafood hub, ICT sector*; des notions de base de géologie ! *Tourism*! En science, les enfants étaient appelés à différencier entre *solvent* et *solute*! Des choses que moi j'aurais appris en Forme III. Pourquoi, M. le président ? Parce qu'il faut pouvoir, comme on dit dans notre Kreol Mauricien, 'trier' pour obtenir les 140, d'où le besoin de leçons particulières.

Mr Speaker: I will have to stop the hon. Member here. According to our Standing Orders, he cannot go on repeating his own arguments. He has for the last 20 minutes repeated the same arguments time and again. If he continues like this, I will ask him to sit down.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am not repeating myself, Sir. I am making my point.

Mr Speaker: Yes, you are! You cannot challenge my ruling. The records are there. I am telling you that you have the right to make your point, but you cannot repeat your own arguments time and again!

Mr Obeegadoo: I shall not repeat, Mr Speaker, Sir. I shall not repeat, and I hope to be given the liberty to speak my mind.

Mr Speaker: Nobody is challenging your liberty in this House.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would hope so, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Do not argue with me!

Mr Obeegadoo: I am not arguing with you, Sir. I would not argue with you.

Mr Speaker: You have to accept my ruling, and this is the Standing Orders! That's all.

Mr Obeegadoo: Your ruling is accepted, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: We cannot be threatened as well.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Obeegadoo: Let it be!

Mr Bhagwan: We will not accept this.

Mr Obeegadoo: J'ai parlé du facteur de la demande. J'ai été interrompu et, donc, je dois répéter. J'ai parlé de la compétition intense, des programmes surchargés.

Le troisième élément est cette véritable psychose affectant parents, enseignants, enfants, qui fait que nous avons maintenant un cercle vicieux. Tout le monde se sent obligé, du moment qu'il puisse se le permettre financièrement, d'offrir des leçons particulières à ses enfants.

Le quatrième facteur de la demande est l'insatisfaction des parents par rapport à l'école. Ou bien les parents estiment que le programme est trop chargé et que l'année scolaire ne suffit pas pour couvrir ce programme - demandez aux parents - ou ils estiment que l'enseignant attribué à leur enfant n'est pas à même de garantir à cet enfant les beaux résultats qui sont l'objectif de tout parent.

Donc, il y a le facteur de la demande auquel ne s'est nullement référé le ministre. Je dis moi que les leçons particulières ne tombent pas du ciel, mais ont des raisons profondes. Il y a d'abord les facteurs eu égard à la demande, et ensuite l'offre. Face à cette demande, les enseignants offrent des leçons particulières. Pourquoi ? Il y a la pression des parents, mais aussi pour arrondir leurs fins de mois. Qui pourrait les blâmer, M. le président ? Savez-vous qu'aujourd'hui encore un enseignant du primaire commence avec un salaire de R 10,000, R 11,000, pour terminer autour de R 25,000, R 26,000 ou R 27,000 ? Donc, la moyenne des enseignants au primaire gagnent peut-être entre R 15,000 et R 20,000. Pensez-vous aujourd'hui, qu'à Maurice, avec l'inflation que l'on connaît, avec la vie chère, l'on puisse faire vivre une famille avec R 15,000 à R 20,000 ? Au secondaire, l'offre de cours particuliers ...

Mr Speaker: On parle du primaire et non du secondaire.

Mr Obeegadoo: M. le président, avec tout le respect que je vous dois, ce projet de loi traite aussi du secondaire.

Mr Speaker: Peut-être que je fais une erreur. J'ai lu le projet de loi, et je ne vois pas où se trouve le secondaire. Attirez mon attention.

Mr Obeegadoo: Oui, permettez-moi de vous éclairer, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Eclairez-moi !

Mr Obeegadoo: Ce projet de loi dit que le ministre peut établir un registre, afin de réglementer les leçons particulières à tous les niveaux.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Section (c) of the object of the Bill says -

“To control the provision of additional tuition to pupils in Standards V and VI or attending a secondary school, by providing for the registration of teachers wishing to provide such additional tuition.”

I was reading the body. This is the problem with those drafting the Bill. This is a Bill which concerns Standard VI.

(*Interruptions*)

Why have secondary schools been inserted? Does the Bill speak of secondary schools? I have been reading the provisions of the law.

(*Interruptions*)

Dr. Bunwaree: We are leaving the possibility, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the regulations to regulate for children following classes in secondary schools as well. This is the Bill.

Mr Speaker: Yes, but can your regulations go against the mother Act? It has to go together with it. When you are amending section 37A of the Act, you are talking of Standards V and VI and registration of teachers.

(*Interruptions*)

Carry on!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Obeegadoo: Donc, M. le président, à présent que nous avons clarifié ce malentendu, je disais qu'il y avait aussi le facteur de l'offre, et ce sont les enseignants qui, face à la pression des parents, tout à fait légitimement, peuvent aspirer à arrondir leurs fins de mois. Je disais que, même dans le cycle secondaire, un enseignant doté d'un *teacher's diploma* commence avec environ R 14,000 ; un enseignant licencié, *a graduate*, commence sa carrière en touchant R

19,000. Comment voulez-vous qu'une famille puisse vivre avec un tel salaire ? C'est la conjonction de ces deux facteurs, que sont l'offre et la demande, qui explique le phénomène des leçons particulières.

Aujourd'hui, quand j'écoutes attentivement le ministre venir nous présenter son projet de loi, à aucun moment ai-je étendu une analyse du pourquoi des leçons particulières, qu'il s'agisse du primaire ou du secondaire. Et, à défaut d'une telle analyse, l'on se demande comment parvenir au but recherché. Pourtant, M. le président, il y a des études qui ont été réalisées. Le rapport Joynathsing en 1988 nous disait que, déjà à l'époque, en dernière année de primaire, 70% des enfants prenaient des leçons particulières ; un rapport du SACMEC en 1995 nous disait que ce chiffre avait augmenté pour passer à 78% ; un autre rapport de l'ADEA en 2001 nous disait que le chiffre était passé à 87%. Donc, le problème continue à croître. Nous connaissons tous la réalité des cours particuliers à Maurice. Mais, quel en est l'impact ?

Les cours particuliers ont-ils un impact positif? Cela est pertinent, il faut se poser la question puisqu'on va interdire les cours particuliers en quatrième. Il est difficile de l'établir, il n'y a pas de données empiriques. A priori, les études internationales suggèrent que, dans la mesure où il y a des heures d'instruction – additionnelles - cela devrait, théoriquement, bénéficier d'une manière ou d'une autre aux enfants. Mais l'impact est négatif, M. le président.

Je me réfère à un article que j'avais écrit il y a quelques années de cela. D'abord, l'aspect santé ; le ministre lui-même se référait au début - quand il venait d'assumer son poste de ministre - au CPE, pas seulement aux cours particuliers. Il disait, en tant que médecin, connaître par expérience le tort que la compétition au CPE faisait à la fois aux parents et aux enfants.

Et, donc j'écrivais -

“Private supplementary tuition places an unhealthy burden on children, to the extent of being described by some as a new form of child labour. In Mauritius, it is not uncommon for young children aged nine, ten or eleven, to be subjected to supplementary tuition every day of the week and for several hours. To which must be added the double homework effect: homework from school, homework from tuition. The psychological toil, if not, the physical toil is all too obvious.”

Deuxième effet -

“Private tuition is socially regressive; both primary and secondary education are theoretically free in Mauritius.”

M. le président, je me souviens très bien de ce rapport de la Banque Mondiale, qui nous disait:

“Free education does not exist in Mauritius. At best, we have a State subsidised educational system”.

Car les parents, les riches et ceux qui peuvent se le permettre, doivent dépendre des leçons particulières.

“Although the schooling may remain free, the educational system becomes semi-privatised and only partly State subsidised and children from low-income groups are placed at an even greater disadvantage than would have otherwise been the case”.

Troisième élément -

“At times private supplementary tuition is forced upon unwilling parents, in particular poor parents, who cannot confront the class teacher when it becomes obvious that the latter gives more attention during normal school hours to his tuition clients than to others.”

This is a frequent complain.

Je suis sûr que le ministre - quand il aura terminé sa conversation avec son collègue - conviendra avec moi qu'il a sûrement dû recevoir de nombreuses plaintes des parents, disant qu'ils étaient forcés à recourir aux leçons particulières par l'enseignant de la classe.

L'autre élément d'importance capitale, dont le ministre n'a pas parlé, c'est l'effet des leçons particulières sur le système éducatif.

“Private supplementary tutoring is increasingly having a damaging effect upon the publicly funded secondary schools in Mauritius, as it evolves from a form of supplementary coaching to perceive more effective substitute to formal schooling.

On the one hand, the increasingly large numbers of students, particularly in the final years of secondary, are absent from school during the third term, ostensibly to revise

from home, but in reality to attend private supplementary tuition - with the blessing of parents and teachers alike.

In parallel, teachers do very little effective teaching in class during that same period, concentrating their time and energy on their private supplementary tuition students.”

“Private supplementary tuition is very disruptive for teacher management, inasmuch as there is an intense competition among teachers and considerable pressure exerted by teachers on the administration to obtain postings to schools attracting brighter students and generally located in middle class areas where the demand for tuition is stronger, to the extent that private tuition becomes a substitute for normal schooling; it reduces education to exam preparation, makes a mockery of school attendance and discipline, and questions the cost-effectiveness of keeping upper secondary classes or schools operating during the last academic term.”

Les leçons particulières ont un effet désastreux. A la fois elle reflète la mauvaise qualité de l'éducation dans nos écoles, telle que perçue par les parents et elle renforce cette mauvaise qualité et cela devient un cercle vicieux. Et quel a été, M. le président, la réponse des différents gouvernements? Avant 1988, l'Etat, dans les faits, ne se préoccupait pas grandement des leçons particulières. Peu avait été fait - pratiquement rien par l'Etat avant 1988.

A partir de 1988, il y a cette fameuse étude, intitulée «*The Private Cost of Education in Mauritius* », qui nous avait appris beaucoup de choses et je ne vais pas aujourd'hui entrer dans les détails, mais il y avait beaucoup de leçons, et suite à cela, le ministre d'alors, Mons. Parsuramen, avait organisé un débat public.

Pour la première fois, l'Etat pointait du doigt les conditions dans lesquelles étaient dispensées les leçons particulières et il y eut un débat, ici, à l'Assemblée nationale. Peut-être que vous-même, M. le président, aurait alors participé à ce débat. Et c'est là qu'il y a eu les premières tentatives de réguler, n'est-ce pas, le phénomène, avec l'amendement à l'*Education Act* et l'interdiction des cours particuliers dans les trois premières années du primaire.

En 1997 et 2000, le ministre d'alors avait bien essayé de remettre en question la logique compétitive du système, dont se nourrissaient les leçons particulières. Mais de graves divergences d'opinions, dirais-je au sein du gouvernement d'alors, entre 1997 et 2000, ne

permirent pas au ministre d'aller de l'avant. On connaît cet épisode : Le ministre, un jour, interdit les cours particuliers dans l'enceinte de l'école ; il s'en va en mission, son remplaçant renverse la décision et depuis les cours sont offerts dans les écoles, et personne n'a pu contester cela.

Entre 2001 et 2005, la période des grandes réformes - et soyons très clair, pourquoi dis-je que la pression pour les leçons particulières avaient diminué entre 2000 et 2005, même si je n'ai pas de données empiriques ? C'est parce qu'il n'y avait pas de 'A+', il n'y avait plus de possibilité d'admission en Forme I au Collège Royal de Curepipe ou au *QEC*.

Le meilleur résultat que pouvait obtenir un élève, c'était quatre 'A', et avec quatre 'A' l'on pouvait opter pour un collège régional. Donc, logiquement la pression était moindre et combien de parents me l'ont dit.

M. le président, nous savons donc quelles sont les causes des leçons particulières. Quel est ce mal profond qui ronge notre système? Mais, que va-t-il se passer maintenant? Si, comme nous le dit le ministre, à partir de l'année prochaine, les leçons particulières ne seront plus permises en quatrième, d'abord il va y avoir, dès demain, une grande incompréhension parmi les parents, parce qu'à ces mêmes parents on demande que leurs enfants obtiennent les meilleurs résultats possibles pour accéder aux 140 places du *RCC* ou du *QEC*, mais on leur dit, attention, pas de cours particuliers en quatrième.

Premier effet : l'incompréhension des parents et opposition des syndicats, qui ont déjà annoncé une manifestation samedi.

Deuxième effet : des cours particuliers en cachette pour la troisième année - comme cela se fait actuellement et le ministre le sait.

L'on me rapporte que dans certaines écoles primaires, celles sur lesquelles le ministère a moins de contrôle paraît-il, il y a des cours qui sont offerts en cachette aux élèves de troisième année et c'est ce qui va se passer sans aucun doute pour la quatrième.

Troisième, l'impact sur les résultats. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails ; je pense que ma collègue, l'honorable Madame Ribot, va en parler tout à l'heure. Mais s'il est vrai que les programmes sont surchargés, si les enseignants du primaire se plaignent de ne pas pouvoir dans

le temps alloué compléter le programme - je parle des élèves moyens - quel est le risque de l'impact sur les résultats de quatrième déjà ?

Et, quatrièmement, l'effet escompté, c'est aussi une contestation devant les Cours de justice, comme l'ont déjà annoncé les syndicats. Le ministre s'est référé tout à l'heure aux études de l'UNESCO, aux études de Monsieur Bray – mon bon ami, Mark Bray. Il est sans doute conscient que dans le seul autre pays où l'État a eu recours à une interdiction pure et simple est en Corée du Sud. Il y a eu une contestation devant les Cours de justice, et la Cour suprême de ce pays a trouvé que cette interdiction allait à l'encontre de la Constitution et cela a été la fin de l'histoire.

Donc, je le dis simplement parce qu'il est de mon devoir de dire que le risque est là. Quelle est donc notre position par rapport à cette interdiction? L'on ne peut ignorer les effets néfastes des cours particuliers en quatrième. L'on ne peut ignorer le fait que le phénomène soit en hausse. Mais nous disons et nous maintenons que l'on ne peut s'attaquer aux symptômes en feignant d'ignorer les causes de la généralisation des cours particuliers à Maurice et de la résurgence des leçons particulières à partir de 2006. Et je pose la question aujourd'hui : qui en est le responsable?

Aujourd'hui, le gouvernement Travailliste vient nous dire: interdisons les cours particuliers en quatrième. Mais qui est responsable de la résurgence du phénomène des leçons particulières à partir de 2006, sinon ce même gouvernement Travailliste? L'honorable Dr. Bunwaree, à ses débuts comme ministre, disait - je parlais tout à l'heure de son expérience de médecin - que lui n'allait pas permettre la perpétuation du système du CPE. Si j'ai bien compté, trois ans plus tard, rien. L'on nous annonce toujours des réformes à venir plus tard, un jour, mais, en attendant, comme le disait Madame CZiffra dans son rapport, les enfants continuent à subir le CPE au quotidien.

Le deuxième objet c'est d'officialiser l'*Enhancement Programme*. Mais, M. le président, que savons nous de cet *Enhancement Programme*? Nous allons inscrire dans la loi l'*Enhancement Programme*, mais il n'y a pas un seul document officiel nous décrivant ce que c'est l'*Enhancement Programme*. Quand j'ai fait les ZEPs, il y a eu un document qui a été soumis au débat public. Quand nous, le gouvernement MSM/MMM de l'époque avait étendu les

heures de scolarité pour introduire le concept de *literacy hour, numeracy hour*, nous avions un document pour l'expliquer. J'ai consulté, avant de venir, le plan stratégique préparé sous le ministre Gokhool ; je suppose révisé et puis rendu public par l'honorable ministre Bunwaree. Ce rapport ne pipe mot de l'*Enhancement Programme*. Il n'y a aucun document officiel. J'ai essayé de me renseigner. Il y a eu quelques interpellations parlementaires et, donc, on a les réponses à ces interpellations parlementaires, et je me suis renseigné auprès des enseignants et des maîtres d'école.

Le ministre nous parle de l'*Enhancement Programme* comme un programme alternatif, *differentiated pedagogy, holistic development, innovative pedagogy*, et ainsi de suite. De belles paroles! Mais que signifie cela concrètement ? Quelqu'un a-t-il vu un programme, *one syllabus* de l'*Enhancement Programme* ? *Niet!* Qu'est-ce que c'est que l'*Enhancement Programme* ? On ne sait pas exactement, et pourtant on va l'inscrire dans la loi, M. le président. Nous savons que trois fois par semaine de 15.40 à 16.30 pour les classes de troisième et quatrième, à partir de cette année, il y a l'*Enhancement Programme*. Théoriquement dans toutes les écoles, mais on me dit que les écoles RCA, les écoles du BEC ont leur approche, et les écoles publiques ont une autre approche.

Les membres du personnel qui se portent volontaires sont concernés, mais tout le monde est impliqué: les enseignants, *Deputy Head Teachers, Head Teachers, Oriental Language Teachers, Inspectors*. A faire quoi? Personne ne sait exactement. J'ai parlé aux enseignants et aux maîtres d'école.

Le ministre, en réponse à une interpellation parlementaire, disait que 80% des enfants y sont; selon mes renseignements, ce n'est pas vrai. Dans les écoles très cotées, les *5-Star primary schools*, très peu d'enfants y vont. Même dans les écoles moyennes ...

(Interruptions)

Donc, le ministre semble convenir que ce n'est pas 80%. Tant mieux! Au moins, c'est le parler-vrai, et je vous en remercie, Monsieur le ministre. Moi, je dis qu'il y a à peine 60% des enfants qui vont dans ces classes d'*Enhancement Programme*. Les parents des classes moyennes, les parents ayant l'objectif QEC ou RCC n'envoient pas leurs enfants dans les classes de l'*Enhancement Programme*.

Comment enseigne-t-on l'*Enhancement Programme*? Il n'y a pas de manuel; il n'y a pas de *teachers' guide*, nous sommes en deuxième année; il y a de temps à autre des *briefing sessions*. On appelle tous les enseignants d'une zone, on leur fait un *briefing*. Il y a parait-il des instructions en ligne qui sont données, mais il n'y a pas de manuel. Formation, il n'y en a pas; il y a un *briefing* de temps à autre. Comment se fait ce programme ? Et à quel coût, M. le président ?

Le ministre des finances vient d'arriver et j'espère que pour protéger l'intérêt national, il va se pencher sur la question avant son prochain budget et se demander combien coûte aux contribuables l'*Enhancement Programme*. Je me suis laissé dire par le ministre, lors d'une interpellation parlementaire, que ceux qui y sont gagnent plus que l'allocation aux enseignants des ZEPs. Quelle en est la logique? Combien coûte au pays l'*Enhancement Programme* et quels sont les effets de l'*Enhancement Programme* ?

Quelque temps de cela, l'honorable Madame Ribot avait interpellé le ministre en lui disant: mais y a-t-il eu une évaluation de cet *Enhancement Programme*? Et le ministre disait : mais vous savez le théâtre, comment évaluer? Mais je suis d'accord avec vous, Madame, il faudrait une manière plus scientifique pour mesurer les résultats. Où en est-on? Pourtant, nous parlons de *Programme-Based Budgeting*, où il y a des indicateurs de réussite. L'on mesure l'efficacité de l'investissement public. Où en est-on pour l'*Enhancement Programme*? L'on nous demande de légiférer, d'inscrire dans la loi l'*Enhancement Programme*, alors que nous ne savons pas exactement de quoi il s'agit, comment il est enseigné, quels sont les élèves concernés, à quel coût ? - finalement rien ! - comment il a été conceptualisé, comment il a été mis en œuvre et comment il sera suivi et évalué.

Donc, je suis désolé, M. le président, l'*Enhancement Programme* soulève plus de questions qu'il n'en fournit de réponses. Pour nous, au sein du MMM et au sein de l'opposition, il faudrait d'abord que ce programme fasse ses preuves ; ensuite nous serions d'accord pour l'inclure dans la loi. En attendant, nous sommes résolument contre.

Troisième élément : ce devoir de se faire enregistrer. Donc, dans cette clause dont vous nous avez si gentiment donné lecture, M. le président, il y a peu, il est dit qu'il sera fait obligation à tous les enseignants de cinquième, sixième du primaire et tous les enseignants du

secondaire de se faire enregistrer. Mais qu'est-ce que c'est que cette histoire? Pourquoi, d'abord, se faire enregistrer? Est-ce pour qu'ils soient imposables pour les impôts?

(Interruptions)

Leçons ! Mais ce serait un moyen de s'assurer que le MRA puisse faire le suivi. Quel est l'objectif ? Est-ce pour imposer des conditions par voie de règlement et, ensuite, d'aller inspecter? Qu'on nous le dise clairement! J'ai écouté attentivement le ministre et ce n'est toujours pas très clair pour moi. Qui c'est qui va aller assurer la mise en œuvre ? Qui c'est qui va aller inspecter les classes de cours particuliers après les heures de classe ? Le ministre nous a parlé de la création d'une nouvelle unité au sein de son ministère. Il pourra y attacher une dizaine de personnes. Je ne sais pas ce que le ministre des finances va lui réservé comme dotation budgétaire. Mais vous imaginez-vous combien d'inspecteurs il nous faudrait pour aller inspecter après les heures de classes toutes les classes de cours particuliers ? Au primaire, c'est simple. C'est à l'école. Mais au secondaire, M. le président, on va aller chez chacun des enseignants du secondaire, inspecter? Et ceux qui ne sont pas enseignants - tout à l'heure mes collègues vont, sans doute, en parler - savez-vous combien de personnes qui ne sont pas des enseignants, mais qui offrent des cours particuliers dans leur temps libre ? C'est bien pour cela que nos enfants passent leur dimanche dans des cours particuliers ! Voilà une idée que le ministre aurait dû peut-être considérée : l'interdiction des leçons particulières le dimanche afin que ces enfants aient au moins un jour de liberté.

Et le supérieur, M. le président ! J'apprends que, désormais, les élèves, les étudiants de l'Université de Maurice, très bien formés à la mauricienne avec l'habitude des leçons particulières, vont demander à leur maître de conférence à l'Université de leur donner des leçons particulières. Mais, eux, n'auront pas besoin de figurer sur ce registre. Pourquoi? Donc, encore une fois, ce n'est pas clair, et je me dis, M. le président, que comme moi, avocat, sans doute, ces enseignants une fois enregistrés, seront imposables en terme de la TVA, n'est-ce pas? Les enseignants vont devoir réclamer la TVA comme les avoués, les avocats, et qui en fera les frais ?

(Interruptions)

Donc, les enseignants n'auront pas à payer la TVA ? Le ministre des finances n'est plus là. Nous prenons note de l'engagement du ministre de l'éducation en ce jour à l'effet que les enseignants ...

(Interruptions)

Ce n'est pas l'éducation dont nous discutons. Nous discutons des cours particuliers. Voilà le ministre qui se rétracte ! Donc, je reviens à ma question première. Si l'enseignant aura à payer la TVA, il va naturellement déplacer la TVA sur les parents. Les parents riches, les parents fortunés, n'auront pas de problème. Mais les plus pauvres, *Ki faire coustique, risse diable par la queue*, comme on dit, pour pouvoir payer ces cours particuliers et faire l'avenir de leurs enfants vont faire comment ? Donc, il y a, M. le président, énormément de questions qui se posent.

En résumé, M. le président, pour nous ce projet de loi, c'est un coup d'épée dans l'eau. Il s'avèrera, je le crains et je le regrette, inutile et inefficace, parce qu'aussi longtemps que l'éducation primaire dans ce pays restera enfermé dans la logique sélective du vingtième siècle, aussi longtemps que l'éducation primaire se résumera à la préparation, à un concours d'entrée dans les collèges nationaux et, en particulier, le Collège Royal de Curepipe et le QEC, nous aurons obligatoirement des programmes surchargés pour des besoins de sélection. Nous aurons obligatoirement un cercle vicieux lié à la compétition, l'excès de compétition, l'hyper compétition et qui emporte enseignants et parents et enfants dans un tourbillon sans fin.

Les cours particuliers, aujourd'hui, M. le président, je le répète, sont demandés par les parents - ne tombent pas du ciel. Les cours particuliers sont offerts par les enseignants en réponse à la demande des parents et les cours particuliers sont non seulement tolérés, mais facilités par l'État qui offre les bâtiments de l'État pour que les enseignants dispensent les cours particuliers.

Donc, ce qui est proposé n'a pas réussi ailleurs. Toutes les expériences - et j'ai longtemps étudié ce phénomène à l'UNESCO - internationales démontrent que la prohibition seule ne peut venir à bout des leçons particulières. Je le répète, si aujourd'hui les enfants mauriciens en subissent les effets, si, comme le disait Gilbert Cesbron : « A chaque examens du CPE, c'est des milliers de Mozarts qu'on assassine », qui en est le responsable ? Viendra-t-on me dire que ce sont les parents, les coupables ? Viendra-t-on me dire que ce sont les parents les coupables, parce qu'ils soumettent leurs enfants à des leçons particulières pour les besoins du CPE, du *ranking*, des 4 A+ pour l'admission au QEC ou au RCC ? Me dira-t-on que ce sont les enseignants, les coupables ? Vous le savez, M. le président, que si dans une école primaire, un enseignant refuse de donner des leçons particulières, il y a tout de suite manifestation - *sitting* des parents - exigeant son transfert. Est-ce les enseignants sont coupables avec les R 10,000 ou

les R 14,000 avec lesquelles ils débutent leur carrière? Qui est le responsable s'il y a toujours cette logique systémique d'hypercompétition ? Nous l'avions brisée, cette logique. Qui a rétabli cette logique contrairement à toute logique pédagogique, à contre-courant des tendances internationales, pour arraîsonnement politique partisane de bas étage? Qui en est le responsable ? Aujourd'hui, M. le président, si l'on garde tout ce système et l'on essaie par la loi d'interdire les leçons particulières, cela ne peut être que futile.

M. le président, face à ce projet de loi, nous demandons à ce que le gouvernement, le ministère de l'éducation, relève les vrais défis auxquels nous sommes confrontés : le défi de remettre en question le système, sa culture de classement, sa culture de l'élimination précoce, le fait qu'elle soit, en effet, trop et trop tôt sélective et son obsession à distinguer une toute petite élite à l'âge de dix ou onze ans sans se soucier d'élever significativement le niveau des autres. Le vrai défi, aujourd'hui, M. le président, au moment où l'on nous présente ce projet de loi, c'est de prendre acte que la justice et l'efficacité exigent que nous offrons à tous nos enfants de cinq à seize ans, comme le proposait le master plan du ministre Parsuramen, comme le proposait l'Action Plan du ministre Chedumbrum Pillay, comme nous l'avions proposé en 2001 et comme le propose, le *Strategic Plan* du gouvernement - mais sans doute pour le siècle prochain - un tronc commun à tous les enfants de cinq à seize ans. Le vrai défi aujourd'hui, M. le président, c'est de mettre fin à ce gâchis humain qui fait que 20% de nos enfants cette année n'obtiendront jamais le CPE, que 60% d'une classe d'âge, n'obtiendront jamais le *School Certificate*.

(6.42 p.m.)

Mrs P. Bholah (First Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart): Mr Speaker, Sir, the practice of private tutoring in Mauritius is long established and difficult to eradicate. Government intervention in Mauritius has, therefore, to take a different approach in trying to put a ban on private tuition in Standard IV.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me first put with some light on the educational, social and economic impact of private tuition also called the shadow education system. Our children are unable to live their young lives fully. They are largely abused by the parents over-concerned for grades and certificates, thus putting enormous pressure on young brains and probably setting them into undesirable attitude patterns as a result of a super competitive education system and a work

environment that has no place for initiatives, adaptability and creativity. Hence, parents have to seek assistance for private tutoring.

Immediately after school the child is rushed to tuition classes without proper food or rest and after the classes they returned home so late that they are denied the free time needed to explore their own personal interests. At tuition his skills and ability are relentlessly pitted against those of his age mates for competition in the name of the game and that prowess of the tutor rests on the results he produces. The age appropriate developmental task such as building wholesome attitude towards oneself, learning to get along with peers, developing conscience, morality and a scale of values tend a very poor chance in this climate of cruel competition and, as we are all aware, we are facing the results of this rat race in our society although it is not too late to react.

A report on Mauritius from UNICEF 1994 observed that the pressure to pass the CPE examination was so great that in several cases each year it burned out the learning momentum of the children. The report added: ‘Principals have talked about children coming to the secondary schools in a state of physical and psychological depletion.’ Failure can stigmatise a child. The report said “And success is obtained at too great a cost”. Mr Speaker, Sir, yes it may be a good thing that private tuition in Standard IV will be banned, but Government’s decision to ban private tuition run by school teachers cannot be recommended straightforward. The mad race for a place in a star school must be the prime concern of the Government. As far as the competition for a star school virtually exists, it is almost difficult to ban private tuition.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the decision to ban tuition in Standard IV cannot be taken so easily. The school needs to help weak students. I wonder if a law could bring an end to private tuition. Even brilliant students take private tuitions to ensure higher marks and if parents want their children to have extra coaching through private tuition, it is their fundamental rights.

In some instances, private tuition organised by class teachers can become a kind of blackmail if teachers only teach the more important topics in the private sessions. Do we have the yardstick to control such unfair methods of teaching? How do we control the subjects taught by the teachers during class periods and which are kept for tuition hours? What policy options are available? Ideally more resources should be allocated to education in general. If teachers’ salaries could be increased, it would reduce their search for a complementary income and if

money invested in these private courses could be input into mainstream education system, it would be for the benefit of all. However, it is not sure that such improvements would stop the development of such courses as long as examinations remain as selective as they are. Also, if Government cannot significantly increase the resources allocated to education, the race for private tuition cannot be stopped. In today's increasingly knowledge based and globalised societies where countries and firms compete on basis of quality, higher levels of education are necessary. It will be the best investment a family can make to prepare his children for future. These developments contribute to fuelling demands for private tuition as a complement to courses in formal education.

Mr Speaker, Sir, first providing supplementary tuition only exists because the mainstream education exists. Second, as the size and shape of mainstream system change so do the size and shape of supplementary tuition. Third, in almost all societies much more public attention focuses on mainstream than on its shadow and fourth, the features of shadow system are much less distinct than those of the mainstream system. Shadows can, of course, be useful, just as the shadow cast by sundial can tell the observer about the passage of time, so the shadow of an education can tell the observer about the change in the society. However, in some countries, parents, educators and politicians are highly critical of the way in which private tuition has come to dominate the life of family and pupils. Hence, the debate is still on to establish the abolition totally for Standard IV or not.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the Enhancement Programme in schools is concerned the establishment of proper innovative teaching method is long due. Special training should be set up at the level of primary teachers under specialised pedagogical experts focusing on various stages of students starting from Standard I to VI. Activities, mostly educational, also including non-educational activities such as sports...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mrs Bholah: ...should form part of the innovative programmes despite the fact of having brought electronic devices in the classrooms, the basic and fundamental teaching of moral values and patriotism tend to have been forgotten.

The large investment in primary education should also be distributed towards the formation of teachers to master new innovative methods and new approaches in attending to slow learners; more illustrating methods for teaching tendency towards more creative learning such as painting, drawing, gardening and care of plants not only as extracurricular activities, but part of the curriculum so that the learning child gets adapted to the mode of life in the outside world without forgetting the time for religious observance. This would replace the time reserved for private tuition.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, reform system of assessment should ensure that curriculum is not overloaded. The topic is complex because the nature of supplementary tuition varies and different policies are needed in different societies at different point in time. Some planners may prefer to leave the system to regulate itself, but others may wish to intervene in various ways such as encourage teachers to be more supportive to slow learners.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the control of tuition in Standards V, VI and secondary schools: the registration of teachers may look to be a good method, but a proper control system should be established in consultation with trade unions similar to other professionals practising in private.

The Ministry of Education should - while going through this exercise - take into consideration that parents are concerned with their children's future and that it is very important to consult all stakeholders, parents and teachers before imposing any legislation on them. This is the basis of all democracy.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Peetumber: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Assirvaden rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 04 November 2011 at 5.00 p.m.

Dr. Kasenally rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 6.52 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 04 November at 5.00 p.m.