



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)
FIRST SESSION
WEDNESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2011**

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MAURITIUS**Fifth National Assembly**

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 27 of 2011

Sitting of Wednesday 16 November 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)

PAPER LAID

The Prime Minister: Sir, the Paper has been laid on the Table –

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

The Annual Report of the Mauritius Revenue Authority for the period July 2009 to December 2010.

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION
CWA – WATER PIPES – REPLACEMENT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water supply, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

- (a) the amount of money spent on the replacement of the water pipes, since 2005 to date, on a yearly basis;
- (b) if the Non Revenue Water Cell has been de-activated and, if so, indicate the date and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the date on which the project for the transfer of water from the Mare Longue reservoir to the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir was first mooted;
- (d) if the pattern of the filling of the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir has changed recently and, if so, how, and
- (e) if an Expression of Interest was recently launched for the selling of water by private operators to the Authority.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the water sector is not only about pipe replacement and non revenue water, it is about water supply, water treatment, water distribution and the use to which the water is made and the CWA looks only after 20% of the available water resources and I would like the House to bear this in mind and with the future this will change, of course. When it comes to the water supply as it is now, we have to think about what it was, what it is and what it will be.

Today, the Bagatelle Dam, construction would start. Unfortunately, the implementation of the Bagatelle Dam started four years late and this is from a simple decision which was taken.

Mr Speaker: No, I think the hon. Deputy Prime Minister must keep this for supplementary questions. The question he has is a direct question, keep this for supplementary.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am only saying this because this has an impact on the Mare aux Vacoas water supply system, Mr Speaker, Sir, that's why I went into it.

Following the official visit, Mr Speaker, Sir, of the hon. Prime Minister in Singapore last year, the services of the Singapore Corporation Entreprise were enlisted to undertake a Water

Sector Reform project with the main objective of developing a Water Strategic Plan to ensure sustainable water...

(Interruptions)

I will come to it - for all Mauritians to achieve a 24/7 potable water system, reduce Non-Revenue Water, improve Total Water Management system and have a plan in place to meet the increasing and changing needs and introduce resilience into the system. Also as part of this project, an institutional structure, operation and maintenance framework and capacity building plan will be developed to support the water sector reform.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has various water resources and should under normal circumstances be able to meet future demands, including supporting economic development and the growing affluence of the population. However, seasonal shortages of water and other institutional and operational issues continue to be a challenge in ensuring a sustainable water management network.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to part (a) of the question, the amount of money spent on major pipe replacement since 2005 is as follows -

| Financial Year | Length of pipes (km) | Amount (Rs) |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------|
| 2005/2006 | 56 | 225 m. |
| 2006/2007 | 41 | 200 m. |
| 2007/2008 | 32 | 160 m. |
| 2008/2009 | 33 | 150 m. |
| 2010 | 42 | 200 m. |
| 2011 to date | 60 km completed 20 km to be completed | 400 m. |
| TOTAL | 284 km | 1.335 billion |

A further Rs500 m. is earmarked in 2012 for pipe replacement. This compares with Rs920 m. invested by the previous Government between 2000 and 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the Non-Revenue Water cell, the Central Water Authority embarked on a major Non-Revenue Water Project funded by the tune of euros 20 m. Consultants

from Severn Trent Water International of UK submitted a baseline report on Non-Revenue Water situation in 2006.

A French expert carried out pilot projects for about one and a half years in 24 pilot zones across the island, representing about 10% of consumers. This project included replacement of meters, verification of individual household connections to check on thefts, measurement of production and analysing consumption and sales figures. However, there was no significant decrease in the Non-Revenue Water in these regions at the end of the pilot study.

This was followed, Mr Speaker, Sir, by in-house projects carried out by the Central Water Authority in the 24 zones mentioned. With improvement works in the pilot zones, the level of losses decreased from 55% to 40% but could not be sustained because of the poor state of the pipes which eventually broke down else than where repairs were carried out.

In the light of this situation, in August 2010, the Central Water Authority Board reviewed its strategy to address water losses in the network. In this context the Non-Revenue Water Cell was disbanded and the employees were redeployed in the Operations Division of the Authority. It does not mean that when it was disbanded, no works were carried out, they were just given different responsibilities.

Mr Speaker Sir, it was decided to give priority to the replacement of pipes, especially the old asbestos, cast iron, steel and galvanised iron pipes that have exceeded their life span and had started to burst in the distribution system. Based on the extent of old pipes to be replaced estimated at some 2,000 kms, an investment of about Rs10 billion would be necessary to reduce the high level of Non-Revenue Water to acceptable international level of 10-25%.

Given the extent of the investment and physical works required, the CWA has planned to carry out pipe laying works on a priority basis as already indicated in my reply to part (a) of the question. Being given that the water supply system of Mare aux Vacoas in Upper Plaines Wilhems is the worst affected area, the Central Water Authority has already started extensive pipe renewal in the affected areas and about 70 kms of water pipes have been replaced, and by the end of the projects, additional water pipes will be replaced as well.

A total of 33,206 leaks island-wide were attended to and 6,941 non-working metres were replaced during the first three quarters of 2011. Some 238 cases of illegal tapping of water have been detected and about Rs2 m. recovered as from 30 September 2011.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have also approached the Singaporean experts to advise on immediate actions to replace pipes in the Upper Plaines Wilhems region.

The current water distribution pipes in Central Plateau, as I said before, consist of asbestos pipes, cast iron, old steel and GI pipes which are susceptible to frequent damage and leaks, especially over time. It is estimated by CWA that out of the 700 km of pipelines in this area, about 270 km are very old pipes which need to be replaced.

To implement this immediate project, Mr Speaker, Sir, the fast-tracked route of project delivery will be followed. Two Experts from Singapore will work in close partnership with the CWA and the WRU and develop and design realistic and implementable plans.

As regards part (6) of the question, the Mare Longue has so far, after hydro power generation at Tamarind Falls and Magenta hydro plants, been used to supply water for irrigation in the western coast and milling at Médine sugar factory. The transfer of some 2 million m³ yearly of water during the dry season from Mare Longue reservoir for potable use was first considered in 2008.

However, during the same period, a study to harness additional water resources in the Mare aux Vacoas catchment area was also carried out. The study concluded that some 10 million m³ yearly as compared to 2 million m³ from Mare Longue could be harnessed through a diversion dam on the upper catchment of Rivière du Poste as a more cost effective option. A consultant has already carried out the detailed designs and tenders will be floated shortly. Due to deficient rainfall during the year 2010 summer season, the release of water from Mare Longue for irrigation was stopped in December 2010 and kept as a strategic storage for potable use.

With the chronic deficient rainfall, the option to use water from Mare Longue for potable use was decided in February last when the Mare aux Vacoas storage level was already below the average level. The contract was awarded to Sotravic Ltée on an emergency procurement in May 2011 for the sum of Rs82 m. and to be completed within six (6) months. As from 12 October 2011, some 25,000 m³ of water daily is supplied to La Marie Treatment Plant from Mare Longue reservoir to supplement supply in the Mare aux Vacoas system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the pattern of filling of Mare aux Vacoas reservoir, the storage in Mare aux Vacoas reservoir is dependent on the rainfall pattern. For example, in 1999 due to the deficient rainfall, the inflow was about only about 60% of the normal. The situation is similar this year and therefore the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir is only at 28% storage currently.

In other years, the inflows were satisfactory and thus adequate water supplied in the Mare aux Vacoas supply zone.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will table a table giving information on rainfall and inflow. And the remarkable thing is how closely it is linked for every 100 mm of rainfall we get 1 million cubic metre of water into the reservoir. And this is consistent throughout even in 1998/1999 during the dry season, even in 2011 now it is consistent. But the rainfall pattern and the filling of the reservoir matches.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House that the possibility that there might be diversions of feeder canals and inflows into Mare aux Vacoas reservoir have been fully examined as I get frequent request from this side of the House about the situation.

I wish to confirm that no diversion of rivers and canals flowing into Mare aux Vacoas were noted during several joint inspection visits by teams of officers from the Water Resources Unit, the Forestry Service, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agro Industry.

As regards the possibility of leakage at Mare aux Vacoas, Mr Loic Giorgi, hydro geological expert was in Mauritius in 2010 and was asked to study this issue. After examining all the data, he has concluded that there is no water leakage in the reservoir.

My Ministry also approached the IAEA for assistance and studies were undertaken using isotopes by an IAEA expert. In his report the expert has ruled out the assumption of possible leakage.

Mr Speaker Sir, in addition to the impact of decreasing rainfall in the Mare aux Vacoas catchment area, the overall demand for potable water has been increasing by an average of 2.5% yearly, over the last eight years. There has been a 16% growth for domestic consumers, 62% increase for commercial users, 44% for hotels and guest houses and 32% for public institutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the overall consumption per capita for domestic use is 167 litres. The overall national per capita consumption including industrial and other users increased from 212 litres in 2006 to 221 litres in 2010.

With increasing developments in the Mare aux Vacoas supply zone, production from La Marie Treatment Plant has increased from 90,000 m³ in 2005 to 110,000 m³ per day in 2010.

The filling of the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir, as I have already underlined, is dependent on rainfall. However, in the end of 2011 because of the deficient rainfall.

(Interruptions)

But I am giving the pattern of filling of the reservoir. The pattern of filling depends on rainfall. The Leader of the Opposition asked the question, we give the answer.

Mr Speaker Sir, with regard to part (e) of the question, the Central Water Authority invited an expression of interest on 15 September 2011 to invite private promoters to supply water for potable use. On the closing date of 17 October 2011, 23 applications were received with proposals which can be grouped in four categories –

- (i) desalination of water through reverse osmosis from sea water, submarine fresh water and brackish water;
- (ii) treatment of surface water sources – off take from rivers and existing reservoirs;
- (iii) development of ground water, and
- (iv) recycling of waste water.

The proposals are being examined by a Technical Committee.

My Ministry has also been advised by the State Law Office that the existing legislation provides that the Central Water Authority should be the sole undertaker for supply of water for domestic, commercial or industrial use and that the participation of private companies in the supply of water requires an amendment to the existing legislation. The necessary legislative changes are presently being looked into.

Mr Speaker Sir, water supply problems are not new. What is new is the seriousness of purpose of this Government ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I will request the Deputy Prime Minister - he has covered all the issues raised - to keep whatever additional information he has for supplementary questions.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is an opportunity for me ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister can make a statement to the House later on at that same matter.

(Interruptions)

Order!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will shorten and finalise and say that comments are being made, but I will insist that the water tariff in our country is still very low

even with a proposed increase with effect from 2012. The average price per meter cube is around Rs7 in Mauritius compared to Rs27 internationally. This relative cheapness, in no way, must be leading to a responsibility in wasting water. A public awareness campaign ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No! Alright!

Mr Bérenger: *Incroyable!* From the figures I have just heard, in fact, we spent more on replacement of pipes in 2005-2006, then, last year, Mr Speaker, Sir, from Rs125 m. to Rs150 m. a year. In 2002 the CWA signed a finance contract and agreement with European Investment Bank (EIB) for 20 million euros for replacement of pipes. Can I know what percentage of that loan has been used and whether, finally, EIB cancelled the whole loan because of very slow withdrawal?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is in my reply. The project was to attend the NRW issue. An expert came from France, he started work and at the end of almost 18 months, there was no improvement and, therefore ...

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I asked a specific question on the disbursement of the loan. You ruled three times.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

The Deputy Prime Minister: I said why it was cancelled.

Mr Bérenger: Well, my question is what percentage of that loan was disbursed. If the hon. Deputy Prime Minister don't have the answer, he should tell us.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will provide the answer. But I am explaining also, Mr Speaker, Sir, why it was stopped.

Mr Bérenger: On 08 November, the Minister told us that for replacement of pipes, Rs640 m. have been earmarked for the replacement of pipes, and these are being implemented this year or next year. Can I know what is provided for replacement of old pipes in the 2012 Budget?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, Rs500 m. but I am assured by my colleague that whatever is needed above that will be provided. The answer is 4 m. Euros were spent out this EIB.

Mr Bérenger: 4 m. Euros out of 20 m. Euros loan which has been cancelled...

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir,...

Mr Bérenger: I am on my feet!

The Deputy Prime Minister: You can be on your feet but let me answer this.

Mr Bérenger: If you could sit on your tongue...

Mr Speaker: Order, no provocative remark!

Mr Bérenger: Well he sits down and passes remarks at me!

Mr Speaker: I am saying no provocative remarks from both sides of the House!

Mr Bérenger: Thank you. Moreover, Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the de-activation of the Non Revenue Water Cell is concerned, will the hon. Minister agree that this was a serious *faux pas* and that the new Chairperson in an interview given last Sunday in l'Express Sunday, when asked about his priorities, said, first priority –

“premièrement je vais réactiver la Non Revenue Water Cell à partir de janvier 2012...”

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, I am not aware of what was said by the CWA Chairman but, I will make a point. The 20 m. Euros were spread over years, it was not for one year, it was not for two years. It was for a project which was going to take the time it took.

Mr Bérenger: We obtained a 20m. Euros loan, we used 4m. Euros and the result is that the European Investment Bank cancelled the loan, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is the truth.

As far as the transfer of water from Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas is concerned - I had asked when that project was first mooted - I think I heard the Deputy Prime Minister say that it was first considered in 2008. Is it not a fact that in 2007 the CWA had even prepared tender documents for that project, which were sent to the Ministry and the Ministry turned down the project supposedly for lack of funds?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have underlined it in my reply, in as much that there was a better alternative the Rivière du Poste project with a 10 million metre cube per year compared with 2 million metre cube from Mare Longue. This project is quite different from what it was before. Before it was just a diversion for 2 million, today we are getting 25,000 daily from it. Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to underline that the EIB was not a grant, it was a loan. A loan which has been misspent...

(Interruptions)

A loan which was not providing any result.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: As far as this transfer of water from Mare Longue, we have wasted a lot of time to Mare aux Vacoas, are there other such transfer projects being considered in relation to SAJ Dam, La Ferme and other sources of supply?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me for the information of the House, give a wider picture. The Bagatelle Dam will improve supply in the Port Louis area...

(Interruptions)

What is the question? It is about diversion.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Deputy Prime Minister answer!

(Interruptions)

Let the Minister answer, he is being put questions let him take his time to explain his policy and then the answer. I have told you that I will give you some more time.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the question be asked more precisely?

Mr Bérenger: My question is not about the Bagatelle dam, we have wasted years with this transfer project from Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas. My question is: are other such transfer projects being considered for SAJ dam, La Ferme and other sources of supply?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is what the confusion is, Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not know any SAJ dam. What SAJ dam?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: There is no SAJ dam.

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! I do not know why such a simple question is provoking so much noise in the House. Such a simple question! The answers must be straight forward, questions must be straight forward. This is a matter of national interest. Order! Carry on.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, which dam are we talking about? SAJ dam does not exist.

(Interruptions)

I will tell you one thing, the problem about water supply and about the reservoir was this lengthy discussion about what the dam was going to be called and this also delayed the project, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Unfortunately, we get no answers from the Deputy Prime Minister at all, Mr Speaker, Sir. Figures have been circulated but, again, when replying to a question on 08 November about feeder canals and water coming into Mare aux Vacoas, this is the main problem these days, we forget that Mare aux Vacoas supplies one third of the population with water and they are suffering. When a question was put by the hon. Mrs Labelle on feeder canals to Mare aux Vocoas, he said –

“...if you look at the figures two years ago, they were quite adequate. It is only this year that the volume has gone down. I will publish the figures of comparative inflow into Mare aux Vacoas for the past five years ...”

Is this the information that is being provided - the inflow through feeder canals, rivers and so on? And what is the trend?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are several questions, I will take this opportunity to answer. Inflow into feeder canals as such cannot be measured accurately. What we have, inflow into canals, inflow from Pradier, inflow from Takamaka and the rainfall as it is and it has dropped. We have had, as I said, several surveys at the request of different Ministries to go and have a look and there is no diversion. Mr Speaker, Sir, I seize this opportunity once again to say that the EIB loan has not been cancelled. The reason that it was stopped at the time was the question of having new tariff, with a new tariff they have agreed now to resume the loan.

Mr Bérenger: Has the new agreement been signed with the European Investment Bank, if yes, for what sum, and when was it signed?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it has not been signed yet. When it is signed, I will inform the House.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the proposals that have been put forward by the private sector, can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the decision to amend the law, as a policy decision, has already been taken by Government or whether we will put *la charrue devant les boeufs* that we have called for proposals and now consideration will be given to amending the law?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The State Law Office is working on it on a fast track basis.

Mr Bérenger: Will the proposals include new boreholes?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the problem is linked up to water rights and we have to look into this as well. We cannot have people taking our national water rights and selling it to us. We have to look into this as well.

Mr Bérenger: Do the proposals that the private sector has put forward for selling water to the Central Water Authority, do they include cost estimates? That is, have they worked out for how much they would sell that water to the Central Water Authority and how does it compare to the cost of producing the water which the Central Water Authority is providing to the population right now?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a very preliminary expression of interest. Yes, some of them have supplied, for example, the desalination issue has been addressed and it is more expensive, we know. It is also according to the availability of a *reseau* near the production, but it will be more expensive, of course.

Mr Jugnauth: Since we have been and we are still in a crisis situation, will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister say why a huge amount of treated water coming from St Martin treatment plant is being wasted at sea?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been treatment and the quality of treatment itself has been at issue. Last year there was a breakdown in the treatment. It has been repaired and the wastewater is being used for irrigation. Unfortunately, there has been recently *déversements* of paints and other substances in the water which may be noxious to the vegetables growers. So, we are looking into it. They have been interrupted on and off, but at the moment it is working.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to Non Revenue Water, facts have been stated today, Mr Speaker, Sir, and figures given. Facts are that since 2005 until today, we have lost a loan of 20m. Euros and there has been under spending.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, I am sorry. The hon. Minister has explained what has happened to the loan. The hon. Member cannot make comment, he has to put questions.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether non-revenue water has increased from 44.7% in 2005 to some 49.6% in 2009, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is, 50% of the water that we

collect is lost in our piping system? Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister agree that his Ministry has failed in overseeing and monitoring national projects with regard to water? Today, we are not able to alleviate the sufferings of the population when we have a drought.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, we must be cautious when we are interpreting figures. The figures depend also on the flow, the availability and the hours of supply of water. In good times there is more leakage and in difficult times there is less. But, I will ask a question, Mr Speaker, Sir. The pipes are 100 years old. Some of them are 60 years, but most are 100 years old. But, between 2000-2005 maybe one day the hon. Member will tell us what has been done between 2000-2005. The answer is nothing.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan. Let the hon. Minister answer!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Deputy Prime Minister has just stated that several Ministries have surveyed the area concerning the feeder canals. Our genuine information on site, confirms that this is not the case. Is Government ready to appoint an independent consultant, at least, to go and see what the private operators in the Tourism sector who have effected deviation and who have been affecting the filling of Mare aux Vacoas. This is a genuine information. Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister agreeable to commission an independent inquiry?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this has been off repeated, off checked and nothing came out of it. But, I have also said that I will be willing to go with anyone who has information and do it on *visu* and on site myself or accompanied by any other who is willing to come.

Mr Jhugroo: In this critical situation in which we are, how does the hon. the Deputy Prime Minister explain that he has not been able to nominate a Chairperson for the Board and a General Manager for almost a year?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, a Chairperson has been appointed.

Dr. Sorefan: May I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister when did the Project Planning Committee approve the Rivière Du Poste Dam and why is it taking such a long time to implement the construction of the dam?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not at the Project Planning Committee, but it is at the Central Procurement Board.

Mr Uteem: It has been reported everywhere that there are only 62 days left of water supply in Mare aux Vacoas. Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister tell us what will happen if we don't get heavy rainfall and Mare aux Vacoas is not filled within 62 days? Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister consider cutting water supply from other regions of Mauritius so that people from Plaine Wilhems will be getting water supply?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the situation is of concern to everybody and it is alarming. I take this opportunity to thank the public who has responded very positively, especially in the Mare aux Vacoas region where the CWA is doing its best to supply four hours of water and according to needs and as well as the water tanker service is working.

Now, we have had difficult times in the past. It was exactly the same in 1999-2000. It was worse about 20 years, 17 years ago when it was only 17%. We are expecting rainfall. We are expecting our underground water to replenish, but I expect that it will get replenished and then go down again. But, that is not the point. The point is that we are taking active measures to improve the Mare aux Vacoas system as a whole and as a priority. Not bit by bit. This is a message that I want to send, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Prime Minister has taken it on himself to look at the water issue and approach the Singaporean team. And, at their last visit in October, we impressed on them that we cannot wait for a holistic approach for the whole island. So, we are going to concentrate on Mare aux Vacoas for the time being.

Mr Jugnauth: I see that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is sharing the optimism expressed by the Chairperson of CWA, only yesterday, about the rainy season coming and so that probably we will get back to normal in a few months time. Would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister consider postponing the increase in water tariffs, so that there is a better supply of water and then imposing a new tariff?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the former hon. Minister of Finance, early this year, impressed on the importance of having a tariff increase as soon as possible.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Order! Order now!

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to take the same point. I would like to put the same point as a last question. The new Chairperson of the CWA has said that his priority is to re-establish, *réactiver*, le *Non Revenue Water Cell à partir de janvier* and we all agree that the water supply situation is very, very difficult these days and it could get worse. Therefore, can I ask Government to consider putting on hold - until that Non Revenue Water Cell has been reactivated and until the water supply shortage has eased - the 35% increase that is supposed to take effect as from January of next year?

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, whatever we call it - by a name or by a different name - the objective is the same. Whether, we have a Non Revenue Water Cell activated or de-activated is not the issue. The issue is to address the problem of water leakages in the major system and it is being done. Now, whether we activate it in January or now, but the nature of the work will be the same. Mr Speaker, Sir, the request of the hon. Leader of the Opposition to put the increase on hold, does not hold water.

(*Interruptions*)

You have said it! Thank you. The condition for getting ...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Deputy Prime Minister answer!

The Deputy Prime Minister: I think the most important part has been missed, Mr Speaker, Sir. The tariff is on water consumption and the first 10m³ involving 97,000 consumers are not involved in the increase. This is the bottom line, Mr Speaker, Sir, and it has not been recognised enough.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

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 BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2012) BILL
(No. XXVI of 2011)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation (2012) Bill (No. XXVI of 2011).

Question again proposed.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate my colleague, the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for his brilliant presentation of the Budget 2012 where he has achieved a remarkable feat of protecting the most vulnerable groups of our society whilst, at the same time, boosting investment and going further in improving the country's ease of doing business. This will, no doubt, encourage foreign direct investment, which has been an important vehicle for economic growth and development during the recent years.

We should not forget that this Budget is being presented at a particularly difficult juncture with a threat of a relapse in the world economy as a backdrop. Our traditional economic partners, the Euro Zone countries, are presently struggling to prevent "the explosion of Euro, which would mean the explosion of Europe", as the French President, Mr Nicolas Sarkozy puts it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition takes exception to our reference to the Greek debt crisis and denounced it as *enfantillage*. Of course, the Mauritian economy cannot be compared by any stretch of imagination to what is happening in Greece and other peripheries of euro zone.

Greece's economic meltdown is the result of a series of irresponsible policy decisions and actions that end up as a Modern Greek tragedy. Shakespeare would have been very happy if he was here to write up another story about it. Greece over the years has been rocked by massive tax evasions from its corporate sectors and oligarchs, falsification of its balance sheets with connivance from dishonest financial institutions; unsustainable sovereign borrowing that reduced its bond to junk status, that is, in other words, living beyond its means. Has it not been the massive bail outs from its euro zone partners, Greece would have been a failed economic State. Other countries on the periphery of the euro zone have had to take tough measures, resulting in change of Government in all cases.

What the current crisis affecting the euro zone illustrates to the rest of us is that massive sovereign debt and large budget deficit financing are not sustainable in the long run. This budget takes on board this warning. We have to face difficult challenges from Europe and the US, the traditional markets of our manufacturing exports and tourism sector. All financial analysts and political commentators of respectable publications like the Financial Times, Economist and Wall Street Journal anticipate major difficulties for the euro zone. Some even predict the demise of the euro land. We are living in a paradigm shift with dangerous consequences to our democratic system. It is the market, not the popular vote that decides who run a government. The changes in the government of Greece and Italy are a case in point. I think this is the point which the hon. Prime Minister expressed forcefully last week. The Greek tragedy could escalate into a full blown economic and social crisis affecting initially the euro zone, Europe proper, the US and other parts of the world subsequently.

We have seen that failure of the G20 Summit, which recently met in Cannes to agree on new financial assistance for distressed euro countries, has finally forced Italy to accept that the IMF monitors its austerity programme. Moreover, the US President, Barrack Obama, has made it clear that the US would not increase its contribution to the IMF, unless the euro zone sorts out its problems. He has urged the Greek and Italian governments to take necessary actions to control their budget deficits.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been lucky in Mauritius, under the able leadership of our Prime Minister, to survive this great recession of 2008, due to the appropriate and judicious measures that the government has boldly taken at the right time. Though we can say that our economy has shown resilience to the economic shocks rocketing the world, we should certainly not lie on our laurels. This Government will again steer this country out of the economic marasm threatening us, and this budget has taken necessary steps to help create a new economic order and dynamism in this country. Mr Speaker, Sir, in our endeavour to push the country ahead, we have not forgotten *nos compatriotes les plus démunis de notre société*, in line with the philosophy of putting people first.

Indeed, as a responsible government, this budget has a strong social component, where important measures have been introduced in education, social security and the housing sector. As we have seen, social housing is high on the agenda of this government. Sensitive to the plight of our fellow citizens at the lower rungs of the social ladder, provision of Rs1.5 billion has been

made in the Social Housing Development Fund in this budget, with the aim of achieving social cohesion and harmony, and relieving the pain and burden of the poorer sections of our society.

Government has, since 2005, made a complete overhaul of the housing policy, with a view to increasing access to affordable housing, with particular attention given to the vulnerable groups. Housing, being one of the three basic needs of life, always remains a top priority of this government. As we say it in Hindustani '*roti kapda aur makaan*'. *Makaan* is very important. It is worth mentioning that, from this year's housing census, the rate of housing ownership in Mauritius has reached almost 90%. However, there are some pockets of poverty around the island where people still live in substandard conditions.

As can be seen, the achievement of this Government with regard to provision of housing to vulnerable groups of our society has been remarkable. We have already embarked on a National Housing Programme, which seeks to strengthen social and cultural integration through the provision of appropriate social and recreational facilities. I would like to correct the statement made by my hon. colleague, hon. Ameer Meea, to the effect that only 533 housing units have been constructed and allocated during the period of 2005-2010. Hon. Ameer Meea got it all wrong. He has, unfortunately, been looking through a narrow telescope, stating with great vehemence that the MMM has constructed 4,500 housing units during their mandate, whereas *l'Alliance Sociale* constructed only 533 units.

The fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that a significant number of housing projects started in 1999 under the Labour Government and completed in 2001 and 2002. This includes 994 units under the 1,000 shell housing project. Likewise, the construction of 1,474 Exim type housing units was initiated in 1999, but implementation of the project started only in 2002, with a delay of almost two years.

However, I concede that some 912 Firinga type housing units were planned and completed during the period 2000-2005, and the construction of further 634 Firinga type housing units started before July 2005 but were completed under our mandate, which is normal, as this confirms the concept of continuity of Government.

I would, therefore, gracefully ask the respectable hon. Mrs Labelle and hon. Ameer Meea that their attacks against my Ministry are not justified. I wish to point out that, following the 2005 General Election, the NHDC faced serious problems when some 470 housing units throughout the island were illegally occupied, and this resulted in considerable damage to

property. The NHDC had to incur cost to the tune of over Rs30 m. for reinstating those housing units, delaying construction projects.

Mr Speaker, Sir, between 2005 and 2010, we did indeed start constructing some 1,041 housing units, out of which 883 have already been allocated, and a further 208 units will be allocated by the end of this year. Mr Speaker, Sir, additionally, 295 fully serviced lots for the lower middle income households at Ville Noire, Glen Park, Souillac and Solitude have been completed. These sites are provided with electricity, water and sewerage. Allocation of the service lots is underway. As most of the suitable State lands for housing projects have already been developed for such projects, government, in line with its vision of providing decent housing units for every family, is now identifying and securing more lands under the Government/MSPA agreement for its social housing programme.

Hon. Ameer Meea in his intervention has mentioned that there are some 2,000 arpents of land available. In fact under the Government/MSPA agreement only 1,000 arpents of land will be made available for housing projects.

Under the National Housing Programme some 65 arpents of land have already been identified and secured for mixed housing development. The project consists of construction of 481 housing units as well as the provision of 270 serviced plots at Pointe aux Piments, Quatre Cocos, Camp Ithier, Sebastopol, Beau Bois and Chebel. The concept of mixed communities will cater for the needs of families from different income categories. The cost is estimated to be Rs496 m. and tenders for these projects have already been launched and funds for their implementation are provided in the Social Housing Development Fund. From funds allocated in the Budget of my Ministry for this current financial year, some Rs400 m. have already been disbursed. Moreover, another Rs500 m. will shortly be disbursed making a total of nearly Rs1 billion. It is, therefore, incorrect for hon. Pravind Jugnauth to say that not a single cent has been spent through the Rs1.5 billion allocation.

A further 100 *arpents* of land, Mr Speaker, Sir, will be made available for social housing development in the year 2012. For this project, the land will be sold to potential beneficiaries as per the provisions of the Finance Act.

Additionally, with a view to addressing the increasing demands for housing in Port Louis, housing projects are being envisaged at Penang Street, Priest Peak (Vallee des Pretres) and

Military Road sites. I wish to point out that the housing project at Military Road is being implemented under a new concept. The units have been pre-sold...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: There is too much noise in the House!

Dr. Kasenally: ...prior to the start of construction works. As regards the availability of green space, I fully share the concern of my colleagues. As such, the planning layout of this project includes green space for landscaping.

I wish to point out that delays have occurred in the implementation of the National Housing Programme because of difficulties in obtaining land which suit our requirements and satisfy certain criteria, including proximity to existing infrastructure. Additionally, soil tests have also to be carried out in some cases to assess the suitability of the land for construction. Moreover, new sites have to be identified in the event that these lands are found to be inappropriate.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to enable the NHDC to be more efficient and to maintain a stable cash flow, an upfront loan of Rs300 m. will be provided to the company, interest free through the Social Housing Development Fund.

As announced, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the Budget 2012, this Government is introducing a new and more flexible approach by bringing in a wider choice of housing providers in the social housing sector. We are encouraging the private sector participation in the social housing market through the setting up of a not-for-profit Housing Development Trusts which will mobilise resources from the CSR funds of companies to meet the cost of construction. This will provide a wider range of delivery units even reaching the middle income earners and will ensure that houses are affordable to low income families and are of value for money. The availability of both public and private investment in the delivery of affordable housing will, undoubtedly, boost up the production of affordable housing.

These Trusts will be responsible for the management of their respective estates and will be exempted from VAT, land conversion tax, registration duty and transfer tax for the purpose of social housing projects. These Trusts will operate in close collaboration with my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to facilitating the social integration of people from vulnerable groups, families earning less than Rs10,000 would be heavily subsidised for purchasing...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Aimée, could you keep quiet! Don't you understand? I have been calling you to order since the Budget Speech has started here.

Mr Aimée: I am not talking, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: You are talking! Don't challenge me! If you are not interested to hear your senior colleague talking, please, the door is open!

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to facilitating the social integration of people from the vulnerable groups, families earning less than Rs10,000 would be heavily subsidised for purchasing a housing unit subject to entering into a Social Contract covering civic responsibilities, employability, education of children and family values.

For this particular scheme, the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment would have a major role to play. Rodrigues will be catered for as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the construction of housing units and increasing access to land tenure is not the only means of creating affordable housing for needy families. Government sponsored loans and grants have proved to be effective ways of facilitating access to housing for the low-income groups who are owners of plots of land or who have been allocated a building site lease. Government is, therefore, ensuring that the lowest income groups benefit from greater subsidy. In addition, funds to the tune of Rs90 m. have been disbursed this year in favour of some 1,870 eligible beneficiaries under the Roof Slab Grant Scheme to help needy households to complete the construction of their houses. It is to be noted that, since the introduction of the Roof Slab Grant Scheme in 1997 under the Labour Government, some 47,314 households have benefitted from the grants totalling some Rs1.9 billion.

The aim of facilitating access, Mr Speaker, Sir, to land tenure helps families to feel secure without the threat of eviction and hence, can invest without fear of losing their assets. Once legal tenure is secure, households very often find the funds to make basic improvements in their living conditions. In other cases, Government through its agencies provides loan to finance housing improvement works.

The House will recall that in 2007, this Government brought a key change in the life of owners of ex-CHA houses, by making their dream become a reality. I refer to the sale of the land on which stand ex-CHA houses at a nominal price of Rs2,000. This scheme has provided the owners with secured tenure and since its implementation, some 8,700 owners of ex-CHA

houses are now owners of the land on which stand their houses. However, there are still some 2000 families who simply do not have the means to purchase the State land on which stand their houses. As a compassionate Government, we have provided for these lands to be granted free of charge to them.

With a view to providing a just and equitable treatment and equal opportunity to owners of ex-CHA housing units, Mr Speaker, Sir, found on private land in respect to which Government do not hold any title deed, a nominal rental of Rs10 per annum is being claimed to these owners. This measure has taken effect as from January 2011 and will continue until the finalisation of the deed of sale between Government and private owners.

Mr Speaker, Sir, conscious that the problems of space, privacy, security and sanitation lead to social, economic and environmental degeneration, Government has, over the last few years, spent some Rs150 m. for rehabilitation works which consisted of roof waterproofing, repairs to cracks and electrical meter cabins in several NHDC housing estates. Presently, rehabilitation works of sewerage disposal system and water reticulation works are underway. A provision of a further Rs100 m. has been made in this Budget to rehabilitate the wastewater disposal system on 47 housing estates, water reticulation works on 15 housing estates and waterproofing on two housing estates.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that most NHDC housing estates do not have a proper syndic and this has resulted over time towards a degradation of utility services and common areas.

I would like, Mr Speaker, Sir, to point out that I have never *rejeté avec véhémence l'idée de mise sur pied des syndics*' as stated by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. On the contrary, I have always encouraged residents to take full responsibility of their assets. In my reply to various Parliamentary Questions on syndic matters, you will recall that I informed the House that I was already looking into ways and means to encourage the residents to set up syndics. Concurrently, I was also seeking technical assistance from UN Habitat with a view to setting up the syndics. In September this year, Mr Antonio Yachan, a consultant from UN Habitat carried out a mission in Mauritius. He had effected site visits at some of the housing estates and had working sessions with all stakeholders. He has submitted his report and his recommendations would assist us in setting up of syndics in the NHDC housing estates.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned earlier, we are very much concerned about the living conditions of these people. With a view to providing them with a clean, safe and healthy

environment, we will provide all the necessary resources that the NHDC housing estates which do not yet have an operational syndic do set up a functional one. To this purpose, Government will contribute Rs2,400 yearly per housing unit to set up a syndic. This measure will considerably improve the life of some 6,150 families residing in the estates.

In his intervention, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has agreed that solving the problem of syndics in NHDC housing estates is the hardest nut to crack and that its implementation would be very tough. With a view to enlisting the commitment of the residents as to their responsibilities towards the maintenance of their common spaces and common premises which seem to be the very backbone of the problem, I am proposing the setting up of an Estate Management Unit at the NHDC to manage all activities related to the proper functioning of the syndics.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the problems have been identified over time and one of the main task of the Estate Management Unit will be to carry out information campaigns to sensitise residents on the need to maintain their housing estates with a view to safeguarding the value of their assets and to provide training to residents who intend to form part of the '*Conseils Syndicaux*'. The Estate Management Unit will also provide support to the syndics for the registration, budget preparation, training in fund management and holding of general assembly meetings of the syndics to finally assume their responsibilities fully. The syndics will be called upon to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the relevant stakeholders to ensure a clean, healthy and safe living environment. Moreover, Government's contribution to the syndics will be conditional to each housing estate setting up its own syndic.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am making a special appeal to the residents of the NHDC housing estates to set up the syndics wherever required, help the same to operate properly, thereby improving their living conditions. In this respect, Government has provided an amount of Rs17 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is also the authority responsible for land use, planning and management. With a view of setting up the pace for strong growth, we are conscious that procedures should be streamlined and all bottlenecks investment and infrastructural developments removed. In addition, simplification of the legislative framework and reduction in the processing time are the *sine qua non* conditions to achieve strong and rapid economic growth.

The basic requirement for development is land. Since land is a scarce resource, an efficient and judicious use has to be made so that the existing and new needs of citizens, investors and generations to come can be taken care of. One of the objectives of my Ministry is obviously to address access to and use of land in the best possible way.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the planning division of my Ministry is the central spatial planning service provider of Government and it plays fully its role in guiding development to foster economic prosperity. Let me briefly mention the steps and actions which my Ministry undertook during the current year to facilitate access to and efficient use of land.

First, a new outline scheme for Quatre Bornes was prepared and approved to allow developers to have an updated spatial framework for development. As we are all aware, Quatre Bornes, besides being centrally located and also next to major junctions, is also endowed with a pleasant climate and also pleasant people.

However, it is noted that the town still has reserves of undeveloped land. Opportunities for concentrated mode of development to optimise road and other service infrastructure can be tapped to provide high density development in line with the concept of Maurice Ile Durable by way of energy efficient reduced travel needs.

The four outline schemes for the District Council Areas approved in September 2006 were modified to include the latest available information on land to accommodate the new investment requirements. Policies were redrafted to make them clearer and mineral zoning of several sites were removed following a thorough study to eliminate uneconomic and unsuitable sites. This has paved the way for projects which were held up previously due to mineral zoning.

Another important task undertaken by my Ministry is the preparation of Planning Policy Guidance for siting and designing radio telecommunication equipment. I had in my speech last year, emphasised the need to facilitate the fifth pillar of the economy namely the ICT sector. Service providers were encountering numerous difficulties whilst applying for Building and Land use Permits due to lack of clear guidelines. Moreover, an over precautionary approach led to numerous applications being rejected and subject to appeals. I have the pleasure to announce that this new PPG is effective since June this year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in these days of economic turmoil, we have to ensure that our resources are judiciously used. Until recently, applications from development of State land had to be assessed twice against the same development criteria by both my Ministry and the local

authorities. To avoid duplication in the permitting process, we have streamlined procedures as regards certain categories of State land by delegating to the local authorities the power to assess and determine these applications. We shall continue to seek and explore other ways and means to further rationalise the permitting process through better and clearer procedural and technical guidelines. We shall also look into the possibility of streamlining the processing of applications for major development State land.

To boost up the tourism sector, my Ministry will provide support needed through land use planning in safeguarding our natural environment. In fact, apart from getting rid of litter around us, we should also have to see that our natural environment with high scenic landscape value is not encroached upon with too much concrete, thus spoiling the appeal of the island.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Development Strategy constitutes the most planning instrument which prevails over all other documents for the spatial development of the territory. It provides a comprehensive strategy for land use planning and the protection of natural environment and aims at creating and stimulating investments in the public and private sector so that smooth economic development can take place. It also aims at integrating the transport strategy with land use proposals. When translated into operational outline schemes, the National Land Development Strategy becomes a powerful tool for management and control of the permitting process. The current National Development Strategy became operational in December 2004 and sets the land use strategy up to 2023.

My Ministry will conduct a mid-term review of the National Land Development Strategy to align existing policies and proposals with new Government initiatives and programmes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the current urban outline schemes were prepared in the eighties and their review is long overdue. If we want to achieve sustained and enhanced growth, we have to unlock the hidden potential for development of our conurbation the more so that half of the population live in the five major towns. I am pleased to announce that a contract for the comprehensive review of the outline schemes for the five municipal areas has been awarded this year to the tune of Rs32.5m.

This exercise will be completed in May 2013, and it is expected that the new schemes will become operational by the end of 2013.

One major proposal in the review exercise includes the preparation of model prototype small and medium enterprise industrial layouts to accommodate small workshops, and start-up industries.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the main tasks to which I shall be attending next year is in enactment of the Land Use Planning and Development Bill. This is a very important piece of legislation which will streamline the various permitting processes, consolidate all planning laws under one legislation, and set and reduce time frames for the plan making procedures, create the Planning and Development Commission and modernise the planning function.

As we are all aware, land is a pre-requisite for all economic and social department of the country. The major purposes for which land are required are mainly Government projects, social housing and industrial development including hotel projects. Thus, it is imperative that a judicious utilisation and management of this scarce and valuable resource is maintained while, at the same time, ensuring a fair return on this prime asset. In this endeavour, Mr Speaker, Sir, the policies in respect of *campement* and industrial site leases have been reviewed and the revenue collected this year amounts to Rs720 m. Moreover, Mr Speaker, Sir, as already announced, the annual rental for industrial site leases over State lands will be again reviewed from 2012 to reflect the current market values subject to a maximum increase of 40%.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Ameer Meea referred to the word “opacity” in relation to the Neotown project. He also referred to the project as being contrary to democratisation of the economy. There is no such thing as opacity. Let me remind the hon. Member that there was complete transparency and I tabled all related documents in the National Assembly. Moreover, I have already given all the details relating to the project in my replies to the PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition and to various PQs on the project.

As far as democratisation is concerned, investors will have the opportunity to develop individual lots within the 58 *arpents* site once the promoter provides all the onsite infrastructure.

It is expected that this major waterfront development will bring in FDI to the tune of Rs16 billion. This will catalyse economic growth and development and create jobs that will ensure that prosperity percolates for all the strata of our society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the main functions of my Ministry is to acquire lands for all Government projects such as road network, schools, health institutions, community centres and other facilities. This has necessitated the acquisition of some 397 *arpents* of land out of which

225 *arpents* have been acquired for road construction purposes. This is reflected by the impressive new road network operational or currently being constructed around the island.

Moreover, some 949 *arpents* of land will also be acquired for other Government projects including Bagatelle and Rivière des Anguilles dams.

To prevent delays in the projects implementation and at the same time reduce the hardship to previous owners of land compulsorily acquired for development purposes, my Ministry is envisaging to bring necessary amendments to the legislation to allow payment of compensations as recommended by the Valuation Office once notice under Section 8 of the Land Acquisition Act is transcribed and Government becomes owner of the land. At the same time, the previous owners will benefit from compensation payable. Should there be any representation regarding the quantum of compensation, the latter would be referred directly to the Board of Assessment and eventually Revenue and Valuation Appeal Tribunal. On determination of the case, the balance if any, together with interest will be settled. The State Law Office is being consulted on the matter.

Mr Speaker, Sir, being a signatory of the Convention on Safety of Life at Sea, we have the obligation to ensure safety of navigation in our waters. In this respect, a Memorandum of Understanding on hydrography was signed in October 2005 with the Government of India for assistance in the field of hydrography. So far, 18 hydrographic surveys have been conducted around Mauritius including Agalega, Rodrigues and St Brandon. Navigational charts have been produced from the surveys and will be used by mariners at sea as well as for fishing and touristic activities.

The 7th Indo-Mauritian Joint Hydrographic Committee has been scheduled for mid December this year where decisions will be taken to undertake surveys of other major spots around our exclusive economic zone, thus providing up to date international recognised charts covering our waters. Mauritius being a member of the International Hydrographic Organisation, South African and Islands Hydrographic Commission and the North Indian Ocean Hydrographic Commission plays an international role in the field of hydrography.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Government of India for all the support and assistance being provided to us.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am very much concerned about the problems by illegal occupation of State lands which brings in each wake other social problems and health hazards. As Minister of

Housing and Lands, I have adopted a zero tolerance approach to these social problems. As such, my Ministry has taken bold steps to prevent illegal occupation by the eviction of squatters and demolition of unauthorised structures on State lands as soon as detected.

Mr Speaker, Sir, however, I wish to point out that so far some 2789 genuine cases of a squatting have been regularised including 203 in the regions of Karo Kalyptis, Batterie Cassée, la Ferme, Bambous, Cap Malheureux, Surinam and Belle Mare. I have taken note of the statement made by hon. Ameer Meea regarding the alleged situation of squatters around the island and I wish to put the records straight. Though there may be still some 983 cases of people illegally occupying State lands, not all these cases are deserving ones. Sensitive to the plight of people from vulnerable groups, my Ministry is examining those deserving cases on a case to case basis with a view to regularising their situation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the LAVIMS project is the first and major part of an ongoing reform programme that will deliver the essential building blocks for a modern Land Administration, Valuation and Information Management System for the Republic of Mauritius. The system will provide a comprehensive national integrated set of the spatial data for effective land use planner. With the implementation of LAVIMS, Government will be able to ensure a modern, secure, transparent, affordable and efficient land administration and management system.

To operationalise the cadastre, the Cadastral Survey Act of 2011 has been enacted and relevant sections of the legislation are being proclaimed to take effect from 01 January 2012.

Moreover, a Cadastre Implementation Unit has already been set up at the level of my Ministry to maintain the cadastre. The Unit is currently manned by 21 officers. In addition, 10 trainee surveyors and three trainee cartographers will be recruited next year to reinforce the Unit.

Substantial efficiency gains will be derived from implementation of the LAVIMS unit namely: reduction in cost, time, design and planning stage of projects, such as land acquisition for the road projects. Reduction in processing time for determining the ownership for land acquisition from weeks or months to 2 to 3 days, reduction of fraudulent practices in land dealings with the location of a unique Parcel Identification Number to every land parcel being subject to transaction.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the digital...

Mr Speaker: Is the Minister going to be long?

Dr. Kasenally: Three to four minutes.

Mr Speaker: Alright!

Dr. Kasenally: The Digital Cadastre is the cornerstone of the land management and administrative system that will sustain economic development and will become a shining example of modern tool embracing the art technology.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am fully convinced that all the measures announced in the Budget with regard to the housing sector will go a long way to achieve the objectives set out to protect the vulnerable groups of our society. I will personally ensure that all measures are in place at the level of my Ministry to meet these challenges. I am convinced, with a dedicated personnel who will deliver on all promises made.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we went into the campaign for the last general election, all the candidates of the Labour/PMSD were imbued with a deep sense of integrity, loyalty and honesty. We wanted to win all through and fought as a team *contre vents et marées*. We fought in certain circumstances against all odds in every nook and corner of the country, pushing forward our political agenda and the vision of our Prime Minister. We fought from Souillac to Cap Malheureux, from Flacq to Rivière Noire. We fought on the beaches, on the fields, in the towns and villages and remote hamlets. We did not surrender. We did not surrender to the onslaught of the so-called giant stalwart, streaming in his fleet of black limousines full of immaculately dressed corpulent bouncers, through the main streets of Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac. Yes, there was going to be no retreat no surrender.

We won a decisive victory, but when scanning the results in certain Constituencies especially, I would mention, seven, eight, twelve and sixteen, a real discomfort was felt within the Labour Party. A cold run down the spine of many of our colleagues. *Le ver était déjà dans le fruit*. Eventually this led up to the breakup of this Government as the Prime Minister stood firm on his principles and would not interfere with the institutions of the country. This Prime Minister is not for the turning. But come what may, time runs through the roughest hour. We shall overcome. Yes we can, Mr Speaker Sir.

At 1.03 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.19 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, creation of wealth and development must occur on the same parallel rail. They must be side-by-side and one cannot precede the other, otherwise it is putting the cart before the horse

and the outcome is catastrophic. That is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our surprise when the Minister of Finance, in an interview to *L'Express Dimanche*, declared, I quote -

'Il faut créer de la richesse avant de la partager'

our surprise with such a statement which came from no less than someone who has passed through the Ministry of Social Integration.

When you talk of creating wealth, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from where does the money to invest and create come? When you talk of creating wealth, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from where does the money to invest and create, come? The money is taxpayers' money, workers' money, workers' sweat, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When we talk of distribution of wealth, this does not simply mean giving money to people who do not work. Distribution of wealth does not mean dependency, rather it means providing jobs to everyone, providing the education needed to do good jobs. This means that families are well cared of. This means decent housing. This means the basic necessities of life, food, shelter and clothing.

Quelques jours avant le budget, M. le président, un quotidien fait un micro-trottoir pour savoir ce qu'attendent les Mauriciens du budget. Voilà ce que l'un d'entre eux dit - et cela résume parfaitement le *mood* dans la population - on interroge une personne et voilà ce que la personne dit « il s'attend – il c'est une personne, c'est un monsieur, bien sûr – entre autres à ce que le ministre prenne des mesures pour combattre l'inflation qui ne cesse de ronger le pouvoir d'achat des consommateurs. Avec un salaire mensuel d'environ Rs18,000, il avoue qu'après avoir honoré toutes ses factures et fait les provisions du mois, il ne lui reste pas grand chose. Il appréhende des jours difficiles, surtout après l'annonce d'une augmentation de la facture d'eau. Pour lui, c'est le début d'une cascade d'augmentations qui va miner les petites bourses en 2012. ». Tel est, M. le président, le sentiment de la population et les députés qui sont sur le terrain conviendront que tel est le cas à travers le pays.

M. le président, ce budget est le plus décevant. Pour une personne, je l'ai dit, qui a dirigé pendant plus d'une année le ministère de l'intégration sociale, je m'attendais à mieux. Le ministre avait suggéré son intention, en plusieurs occasions, de rétablir le pouvoir d'achat à plusieurs reprises. La population ainsi que les ménagères, en particulier, se réjouissaient déjà à l'idée de pouvoir jongler avec les factures. Oh combien salées! Et, en même temps, à mieux nourrir leurs enfants. Mais le budget présenté n'a pas répondu à leurs attentes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the high cost of living is exasperating the population. Different types of taxes in particular indirect taxes in the form of VAT are becoming harder and harder to bear. La population est perpétuellement tondu. ‘Pé passe aspirateur dans nous poche’. C'est ce que la population dit. The VAT, Mr Speaker, Sir, est une manne pour le gouvernement. La population comprend mieux pourquoi le gouvernement ne se soucie nullement, ne réagit pas quand les prix augmentent, parce que, à travers la VAT, les caisses du gouvernement se renflouent. Et nul n'est épargné par la taxe, par la TVA, les personnes âgées, les bébés. Tous y passent et tout y passe! With the increase in prices of basic commodities and other foodstuffs, people are becoming poorer and poorer. Et là, ce matin, il y a quelqu'un qui m'a donné les prix de deux articles seulement, M. le président, le beurre et le fromage, deux prix différents sur deux mois. Octobre 2011, le beurre Flora qui coûtait R 92, coûte aujourd'hui R 99. Le mois dernier R 92, aujourd'hui R 99. Fromage Kraft R 64.90 le mois dernier et aujourd'hui, à ce jour, R 71.90, M. le président. My colleagues before me, precisely my hon. friend, Devanand Nagalingum was speaking last day and the Minister Aimée confirmed the fact that the rich are becoming richer as there are more Mercedes on the road, he forgot to mention that people in Dilo Pourri, in his constituency, are becoming poorer and poorer. My other colleagues, I think Mrs Ribot and hon. Nagalingum also, mentioned - some people do not know, Mr Speaker, Sir, but some people in this country have never eaten a yoghurt. You just walk in remote villages and *Cité* now pompously renamed *Résidence*. Mothers dare not consume a yoghurt for fear of depriving their children of bare necessities. I know that other MPs have talked lengthily about it. This is not demagogic, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but the bare truth and it is worth saying it over and over again.

Households, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are struggling to pay soaring utility bills. Electricity bills have risen dramatically these years and they are getting piled up from months to months. Every one of us is much aware of this, especially when we receive our constituents in our constituency. We are asked to give a helping hand to pay part of the electricity bills. In many cases, households have been purely and simply disconnected from supply. The population is getting fleeced day by day. Fleecing is the appropriate word, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Toutes sortes de ‘charges’, de frais sont imposés au petit consommateur. Do you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that with regard to electricity bills, if the consumer is not satisfied with the bill and wishes to make a complaint, do you know that he has to pay R 150 to lodge a complaint, R 150 which is not refundable...

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, this is the fact – or if you prefer Rs450, this one is refundable, to fix another ‘compteur’. As I said, this one is refundable if it avers that your ‘compteur’ is ‘défectueux’. This is most painful for old age people. I think that this policy has to be reviewed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. *C'est un fardeau additionnel pour les petites gens. Croyez-vous que c'est supportable, quand on sait que des familles ne peuvent se permettre des denrées de base ? R 150 pèse lourd dans le budget familial. Alors, où trouver des additional charges ? Où trouver les R 150 ? Donc, la solution est « mieux vaut subir et ne pas protester, car se plaindre a un prix ».*

In cases where households manage to pay electricity bills, CWA bills are left aside to be paid at a later date or months after. And Government has already announced this morning a further increase for early next year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition talked about the problem of unemployment. He said that 35% of the jobless are less than 25 years old. Joblessness is a denial of human rights. Without a decent job, people cannot defend their economic and political freedoms. Women are the most badly hit with this problem of unemployment and all its consequences, especially with regard to women who are heads of their families.

Last year, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government announced a scheme called ‘Housing with Good Living’, and the then Minister of Gender Equality, after having expressed her surprise for, I quote -

“For the whole nation, as nobody would have thought of such a budget at a time of world crisis.”

And she went on with -

“My congratulations go to the hon. Minister”

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden, please!

Mrs Navarre Marie: Later on, she went on praising that scheme saying -

« (...) quand on tient compte qu'il y a de plus en plus de filles-mères, de femmes vivant seules à la tête des familles et les provisions faites pour une politique alternative aux aides sociales à travers le processus d'empowerment. »

What is happening, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? I would like to just read an extract of an article, which appeared in a daily newspaper on 14 November this year, entitled ‘*Sa maison*

coule comme une passoire, elle réclame des tôles et du bois pour son logis.' What are the living conditions of families in this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? I will read another extract from another newspaper; this one is l'Express of Monday 07 November -

« Quand on s'enfonce dans les ruelles du village - on parle du village de Grand Sable - on trouve des familles dont le sort n'est en rien enviable. Elles ont à peu de choses près le même profil ; familles nombreuses, la mère qui ne travaille pas, et le père « traser », soit acceptant des petits boulots ça et là. »

This is one facet of the population, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. What is the solution? What do people do to have more money in order to make both ends meet, to be able, according to them, to have a decent living? What do they do? They throw their money in gambling in the hope of becoming rich. At the end of the day, there is not one penny left.

And how does Government deal with the social problems and the social issues? It is just reacting. Crisis management, firefighters! This is all what is being done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. *Il suffit qu'une question parlementaire soit déposée à l'Assemblée nationale et le travail est fait en un temps éclair, juste pour pouvoir répondre à la question. Ou alors, faut-il qu'un drame surgisse, que les voilà 'débouler' pour faire le travail.*

I will give two examples, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The first one concerns the road accident which happened in Curepipe, involving a minivan carrying workers from a call centre colliding with a bus. This time, Government announced that the concept of *permis à points* would be introduced while, in fact, it would seem that the traffic unit had been apprised of such a danger at this juncture of the road since years. Since this fatal accident, there have been other fatal accidents, but still no *permis à points*.

Secondly, a fire broke out in Pointe aux Sables, in our constituency, before the general elections. The family was promised a plot of State land in the region. Meanwhile, they rent a house nearby. On several occasions, they made the to and fro at the Ministry of Housing and Lands, with no avail. Then, *ce qui devait arriver arriva*. They were evicted from the rented house; the family had no choice than to live in the open. The newspapers wrote about it. I put a PQ - my colleagues also - which I sent, of course, to the Clerk's Office one week before the sitting of the Assembly. It was only after the Ministry had taken cognizance of the PQ that the necessary was done for the family. A plot of land was, therefore, offered to the family - *vite, vite, débouler*. This is good news. But why should Government need to wait for a PQ to attend

to problems? This is firefighting. *Après la mort, la tisane, M. le président. C'est le cas de le dire!* After two babies lost their lives during a fire, which devastated their homes in the south of the country, we were all shocked, stunned by that story. And we are still astounded by the reply of the Minister on the issue yesterday - *le ton, la nonchalance*. It was only after this tragedy that Government decided to take care of the family - a 'decent' dwelling, a job for the father, money to the family, and the CDU taking care of the surviving children. Again, *après la mort la tisane*. Again, firefighting began crisis management...

(*Interruptions*)

Non, avant pas ti ena !

(*Interruptions*)

...and in both cases, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the family at Pointe aux Sables and the family at Grand Sable in the south, social workers were well aware of the situation. Meanwhile, what is happening on the other hand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? On the other hand, each day brings its *lot de scandales*. Scandals over scandals: Med Point, Neotown, *protection des petits copains, ex-chauffeur de la Mauritius Telecom arrêté en Suisse avec des millions, braderie des terres de l'Etat, des passe-droits, les déclarations d'un député de la majorité sur le mode de recrutement de la PSC, le problème d'eau, le sentiment d'une justice à deux vitesses, M. le président*.

We, the MMM, have already launched a devastating attack on the scandal ridden political elite...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, no cross-talking!

Mrs Navarre-Marie:... as we have pledged to root out crimes and corruption...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: And the popularity of Government has already dipped over corruption concerns....

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, please!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: On the one hand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, people are becoming poorer and poorer and are struggling to make both ends meet; on the other hand, there is the enrichment of a happy few with the result that people become bitter and bitter. There is a

growing bitterness from the people. There is a sense of inequality and unfairness. The results of such bitterness are evidenced by the increased social disintegration and increasing crimes, thefts, burglaries, drugs, mental illness and family breakdowns. The Mauritian Society, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has badly derailed. I will just read a few titles from certain daily newspapers.

- Agressé à coup de sabre pour une dette de R 300!
- Pour une dette de R 300, agressé à coups de sabre et de rondin de bois.
- Rixe à Surinam – Après l'avoir agressée à coups de gourdin, il tente d'embrocher sa voisine (...)
- Un jeune de 18 ans tue son oncle au sabre.
- Un policier kidnappé et battu : « Tuez-le et jetez son cadavre à Mont-Blanc »
- Les receveurs en proie à une série d'agressions.
- La domestique de l'hôpital accuse un spécialiste d'agression.

(Interruptions)

All this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Hon. Hossen! I am still in the Chair. The hon. Member has the right to make a statement.

(Interruptions)

She can!

(Interruptions)

Please!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Mauritian society has badly derailed. I repeat: This situation...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: This situation arises out of unfair distribution of wealth and the feeling of impunity for white collar gangsters. Our youths, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are getting fed up and discouraged and are organising protests through social Internet networks. And this Budget has the guts to levy a tax on them by increasing the rate of SMS and MMS! All these

factors, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are detrimental and contrary to the aspirations of the population. It is urgent for Government to take necessary actions - the right ones, I mean. Unless the right action is taken, unless decisive action is taken, our nation will continue to fall prey easily to violence, to abuses. The first victims are no less than children. The last report submitted by the Ombudsperson for Children, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has once again expressed concerns regarding our protection mechanisms for our children. When in 2002, I think or 2004, I decided to set up that office, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some people were thinking that I was losing my head. They just could not understand why, as a Minister, caring for the protection of children, I was setting up an office that would be like a benchmark to the services that the Ministry was offering. Some were thinking that I wanted to shoot myself in the foot and that I was giving myself rope to hang myself politically. But, my concerns were not to keep my ministerial post at all cost, but to provide further protection to our children, to the children of the Republic, as I felt and still feel that the Ministry, that the CDU, cannot be judge and party of its own actions. That is why when I first learnt about the fact that the Ombudsperson for Children from Norway was on a private visit in Mauritius, I expressed the wish to meet him, he came, we discussed, he gave me a copy of the legislation of this country which I adapted in the Mauritian context and that is the Genesis of the project.

To come back to the report, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what the Ombudsperson is saying is the glaring lack of coordination between the different protection and support mechanisms. When we were in Government, we have always adopted a holistic approach on the issue. But now, it is about who will get the credit, who will get more credit.

Again, on the issue of child protection, *après la mort la tisane!* After the murder of Jeannick Martin at Richelieu there was a popular uproar, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. A popular uproar, then nothing! Thereafter, the heart of a baby girl, *perforé*, after physical torture by one near relative! Then again, an uproar; then everything cools down. We cannot go on like this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. A Government cannot go on like this. What is wrong, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Are services regarding the protection of our children sufficient? Do we have enough resources to protect our children? The issue is not whether the CDU should be a completely autonomous body. What is the situation now? On the one hand, the Ministry designs policies. The Child Development Unit, which should, in fact, be called the Child Protection Unit; the executive arm of the Ministry with regard to child protection.

We have the National Children's Council, which organises activities and awareness campaigns to sensitise on the Convention on the rights of the child. The Ombudsperson for Children Office is a watchdog, who sees to it that the Convention is applied by all stakeholders. The Ombudsperson makes recommendations on how legislations or mechanisms can be amended and improved in the best interests of the child.

On the other hand, there are community-based organisations, such as Child Watch Network and other NGOs. What is lacking? Firstly, a close coordination between the different stakeholders! We should adopt a holistic approach, as mentioned in 2004 document, a world fit for children, making of the protection of children a national issue. *Une cause nationale*. Secondly, more staff is needed at the CDU. In his Budget speech, the hon. Minister proposes the recruitment of 20 additional Support Officers for the CDU and the NCC, that is, the National Children's Council. The question is: how many of these 20 Support Officers will be attached to the CDU and how many will be posted at the National Children's Council. Are those to be posted at the CDU to be Child Welfare Officers or only Support Officers; like Family Support Officers that we have at women's associations? Thirdly, Mr Speaker, Sir, more vehicles are needed to be put at the disposal of the CDU. Fourthly, as I mentioned, to make of the protection of our children a national issue.

Keeping small kids, babies in crèches maybe one measure to protect them from child abuses, but this is not always true. The grant of Rs1,500 is a laudable initiative indeed, but only 2,000 kids will be concerned. Who will be eligible? What are the eligibility criteria? At one time, the figure of around 7,000 poor families was mentioned in one Budget Speech. This Rs1,500 for 2,000 kids, when this is applied, this must be closely monitored. Why? In the past, when Government has decided to pay a certain amount to kindergartens for children aged 3 years, some unscrupulous kindergarten owners intentionally raised their fees so that the parents had to pay the amount in real terms. For example, a parent used to pay Rs1,000 instead of paying Rs800, they are made to pay Rs1,000 and we go back to square one. Our saying is that keeping kids in crèches may be one means to protect our children, but the thing is that even children who are under the custody of Government tend to be forgotten very often in hospitals after their discharge. Unbelievable, Mr Speaker, Sir! *Carrément oublier!* The law must be applied to sternly punish all those who ill-treat our children; be it public officers or anyone who ill-treat our child. Whoever ill-treats a child must be severely punished by the law. This will be a strong signal

because Government exists to provide security for and promote the well-being of its people. The most vulnerable, Mr Speaker, Sir, must be cared for.

This is why to end I would say that there needs to be much greater focus on equitable wealth distribution. This is important for the sake of social stability. The increase in equality is the most serious challenge for this country. I do not think that this Government is paying enough attention to it. This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, largely demonstrates this. Government has cut itself off from reality and people's needs. There is now a call to purify the air of scandals and to review our economic policies of distribution of wealth. The population will not wait any longer. Their hopes in this Government have already faded and public support has declined. There is an urgent need to clean the air and to reset our economic policies.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(2.58 p.m.)

Mr C. Leopold (First Member for Rodrigues): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me from the very beginning to ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Bhagwan, please! Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Leopold: ... congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance for the Budget presented on 04 November last parce que, M. le président, c'est un budget qui redonne le sourire et l'espoir à la population, surtout à Rodrigues. C'est un budget innovateur avec un calendrier d'implémentation. Du jamais vu, M. le président ! C'est un budget touchant tout le monde dans leur vie quotidienne, qu'on soit handicapé, femme au foyer, étudiant, SDF, businessman, chômeur, tout le monde y trouve son compte dans ce budget.

C'est un budget qui va permettre aux plus faibles et aux plus vulnérables de notre société de se mettre debout avec tant d'opportunités offertes. C'est sans doute un budget qui va nous aider d'avantage à l'éradication de la pauvreté et l'exclusion dans toutes les sphères de notre société.

M. le président, à Rodrigues ce budget a été très bien accueilli par la population à tel point qu'à ce jour les blocs de l'opposition crédible ne se sont pas opposés ouvertement. Et pour cause, M. le président, c'est la première fois que le budget total doté à Rodrigues dépasse la barre de deux milliards de roupies et le budget capital pour l'île, M. le président, pour la première fois, dépasse un milliard de roupies. Pourquoi, M. le président, la population à

Rodrigues a bien accueilli le budget dans son ensemble? C'est grâce à la solidarité et l'engagement sans précédent du gouvernement pour moderniser Rodrigues. Je vois dedans, M. le président, la création d'emploi direct, durable qui soit solide et vrai. L'histoire retiendra que c'est pour la première fois qu'un gouvernement s'est engagé à prendre un *loan* de R 600 millions pour l'île Rodrigues.

Donc, M. le président, ce budget dans le fond, comme dans la forme, prend en considération les aspirations du peuple de Rodrigues. C'est pourquoi, M. le président, certains, qui sont décontenancés par le budget qui a été présenté, essaient de faire des diversions en parlant de conflits ici et là qui sont pour moi, des non-sens. C'est pur démagogie. Le budget a démontré, M. le président, que c'est dans l'entente et le dialogue cordial entre le gouvernement régional MR de Rodrigues et le gouvernement central que Rodrigues va sortir gagnant et surtout, qu'aujourd'hui, dans ce présent gouvernement, nous avons un fils du sol, après plus de dix ans, au sein du Cabinet. C'est grâce à ce gouvernement, M. le président.

M. le président, la relation entre Port Louis et Port Mathurin s'est rétabli à tel point que je peux dire qu'il y a de l'automatisme entre le gouvernement régional et national parce que, quand on regarde le budget qui a été présenté en septembre dernier à l'Assemblée Régionale et le budget présenté tout récemment à l'Assemblée Nationale, il y a beaucoup de points de convergence. C'est vrai, M. le président, nous pratiquons une politique basée sur le dialogue et la compréhension. Moi, je prévois des jours meilleurs pour l'île Rodrigues parce que ce budget va jeter les jalons pour un développement durable et soutenu de l'île. C'est pourquoi, M. le président, j'ai été choqué la dernière fois quand, dans cette Chambre, à la suite de certains événements d'une marche pacifique qui se tenait à Rodrigues, on vient ici pour parler de tension et d'insatisfaction.

M. le président, nous avons suivi l'événement avec intérêt. Savez-vous combien de participants il y avait à cette manifestation? Le rapport de la police parle de 250 alors que nous avons fait compter un à un. Il y avait 54, M. le président. Même s'ils ont gonflé par cinq le chiffre, M. le président, nous avons une population aujourd'hui de 40,000 personnes et 250 sur 40,000, cela ne fait même pas un pour cent de la population. C'est pourquoi, ils ont été défroqués depuis mars dernier à l'Assemblée Régionale. Ils ont fui devant leurs responsabilités. Ils ont quitté la plateforme idéale pour défendre l'intérêt du pays pour aller dans la rue, pour soulever la rue contre le gouvernement mais, heureusement, que le peuple de Rodrigues n'est pas dupe. Il

n'a pas suivi. Moins d'un pour cent de la population a suivi la manifestation et ils viennent prétendre que les élections sont dans la poche alors que nous avons aujourd'hui presque 28,000 votants à Rodrigues.

Pire encore, un autre, quelques semaines après le budget, a tenu un *meeting* public, qu'on a évoqué dans cette Chambre, pour dire qu'il y a tensions, insatisfactions à Rodrigues. Savez vous ce qu'il y avait comme assistance, M. le président? Treize personnes sous l'eucalyptus et on vient nous dire qu'il y a insatisfaction ! On vient nous dire qu'il y a tension à Rodrigues.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order !

Mr Léopold: M. le président, quand la presse ici s'en mêle et reprend sans vérification n'importe quoi, cela fait beaucoup de mal à Rodrigues. Il ne faut pas regarder que les pancartes, il faut aller au-delà de ces pancartes. *We have to go behind, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir*, parce que moi, je parle du langage, du slogan qu'on a utilisé dans les rues et même pendant un certain 35^{eme} anniversaire, le langage rétrograde. Au moment où nous, nous parlons de l'intégration, de la réunification de la république, certains osent venir semer la zizanie et la division au sein de notre république, avec des langages antipatriotiques qu'il faut condamner. Quand certains ne connaissent rien, ils cautionnent ce langage dans cette Assemblée, c'est grave et c'est mauvais pour la démocratie, M. le président.

Je trouve heureusement que le peuple...

The Deputy Speaker : Hon. François, you will have the opportunity to reply, please !

Order !

(Interruptions)

Mr Léopold: Heureusement, M. le président, que le peuple n'est pas dupe et que le peuple est serein. Le peuple sait où il y a la vérité, le peuple sait qui travaille dans son intérêt et le peuple sait qui est là pour faire de la démagogie parce que, M. le président, tout excès est mauvais et une *overdose* de démagogie est toxique.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, do not interrupt !

Mr Léopold : M. le président, c'est vrai que nous avons beaucoup de défis, de *challenges* à faire face comme dans tous les pays. Même en Amérique, aujourd'hui, ils construisent encore des routes, mais laissez-moi vous dire qu'alors que certains voient du noir partout, il y a des gens

à Rodrigues qui font des efforts avec leur cœur, qui sont des patriotes et travaillent pour leur pays. Laissez-moi vous dire que Rodrigues est debout.

C'est vrai, M. le président, rien n'est plus sourd que celui qui ne veut rien entendre et rien n'est plus aveugle que celui qui ne veut rien voir et ça on ne peut rien faire. Que cela déplaise, on va travailler dans l'intérêt du pays. *We are going to put Rodrigues first.*

C'est pourquoi, M. le président, je vous invite à aller voir ce qui se passe chez nous. J'invite aussi les journalistes. Au lieu de se baser des fois sur des correspondants *biased*, ils doivent aller voir de visu, toucher du doigt la réalité de Rodrigues. Ils doivent aller voir ce qu'on fait dans le domaine agricole en ce moment, ce qu'on fait dans le tourisme. Rien que pour le mois de septembre, il y a eu plus de trente pour cent d'augmentation. Ils doivent aller voir ce qu'on fait dans l'éducation. Bientôt il y aura une université à Montagne Malgache. Ils doivent aller voir ce qu'on fait avec les routes, ce qu'on fait dans le pays. C'est ça la réalité rodriguaise. Certains vont venir dans quelques minutes et oser dire qu'il y a un gaspillage du fonds public. Ce n'est pas du gaspillage M. le président. Depuis que le MR a tenu les rênes du pouvoir à Rodrigues en 2006, ce n'est pas la transformation qu'il y a eu dans le pays, cela a été la métamorphose, M. le président. C'est vrai qu'il y a des choses qui ne sont pas sous notre contrôle, M. le président, comme dans tout pays. Par exemple, quand on parle de la sécheresse, de la pluie, il y a un Commissaire pour l'eau, mais il n'y a pas un Commissaire de la pluie. Il ne peut pas fabriquer la pluie. Nous faisons des efforts. Pourquoi on a commencé avec le *rain harvesting programme*, M. le président ? C'est pour donner aux Rodriguais les moyens pour lutter contre la sécheresse parce que ce n'est pas la première fois qu'il y a la sécheresse à Rodrigues, mais avec les moyens de bord, on fait ce qu'on peut, M. le président. C'est pourquoi nous, ici, parlons de l'avenir et nous parlons de l'avancement du pays.

Mais je vais laisser les coups bas et les bassesses aux habitués parce que nous avons un pays à diriger.

M. le président, cela fait le onzième budget que j'assiste dans cette Chambre et j'ai toujours dit, dans mes discours, que c'est bien d'avoir de bonnes intentions pour Rodrigues, mais que c'est mieux de passer à l'action. C'est pourquoi il faut se départir de ce qu'on appelle à Rodrigues, le concept « écouter, jeter par le hublot. ». Je m'explique. Quelqu'un - un ministre, ou quelqu'un d'autre - qui vient à Rodrigues et qui écoute la population, qui vous donne des tapes dans le dos, qui note, sur des pages entières, des rapports sur rapports et, ensuite, on ne voit

plus rien à l'horizon, pour le Rodriguais c'est un signe. Une fois qu'on a pris l'avion, on a tout balancé par le hublot.

Mais ce présent gouvernement, M. le président, a entendu l'appel du peuple de Rodrigues. Il a démontré que ce gouvernement a un cœur. On n'a pas que la parole, on passe à l'action, *and, as a scientist, I base myself on facts* et c'est ce qui parle le plus, M. le président. C'est pourquoi, même avec le contexte difficile aujourd'hui dans le monde, il y a la crise économique, la crise financière, la crise alimentaire, aucun pays n'est épargné. On voit même l'effondrement des géants économiques. Croyez-vous qu'il n'y a pas d'impact sur les petits États insulaires comme nous à Maurice et à Rodrigues? Mais pourtant, on a fait des efforts, M. le président, des efforts sont là, même avec les effets sur la balance commerciale, le ralentissement des croissances. M. le président, nous savons que nos ressources sont limitées, mais il faut utiliser ce qu'on a à bon escient, c'est-à-dire, notre ressource humaine, nos terres et nos mers. Nous devons utiliser judicieusement tout ce qu'on a dans le territoire de la République de Maurice, les îles Maurices, au pluriel. C'est pourquoi nous, à Rodrigues, nous avons été quand même assez avant-gardiste parce que, vous savez, comme on le dit en créole, '*dans la fin qui zaco menz piment*'. C'est-à-dire, quand vous êtes dans des conditions difficiles, *either you adapt or you perish*, et c'est ce qu'on fait à Rodrigues. On a adopté les pratiques du développement durable qui a été cité, adopté, depuis décembre 2009, dans les SIDPR à Rodrigues. Parce que nous ce que nous voulons, c'est mettre tout le monde à contribution pour le développement futur et durable de l'île Rodrigues.

C'est pourquoi, M. le président, aujourd'hui, pour que la République puisse aller de l'avant, il faut que la République soit forte et je fais un appel aux décideurs qui sont dans cette Chambre, peu importe le bord. Je viens d'inventer, il y a quelque temps, un concept, que j'ai partagé la dernière fois avec un ministre qui était en visite chez nous, et que j'appelle le concept OBF – Oser, Bouger, Foncer. C'est ce qu'il nous faut si on veut aller de l'avant. Si chaque citoyen adopte ce principe avec nos moyens, nos qualités, avec nos différences - Oser, Bouger, Foncer - c'est la République qui va sortir gagnant, M. le président. C'est pourquoi...

(Interruptions)

Oui. OPR '*ena copyright l'intelligence li!*'

C'est pourquoi il y a pas mal de réalisations à Maurice aussi bien qu'à Rodrigues à ce jour, M. le président, mais il nous faut encore aller plus loin. Il y a encore beaucoup de chemins

à faire, M. le président. C'est pourquoi je dis qu'il faut faire de la place pour tous les composants de la République, parce que Rodrigues a toujours aspiré à jouer un rôle prépondérant dans le développement économique du pays. Mais, quelque fois, faute de moyens, et faute de volonté politique aussi, il faut le dire, on n'a pas pu arriver à ce qu'on voulait, à la manière et au temps où on le voulait.

C'est pourquoi, M. le président, je dis qu'il y a beaucoup de similitudes entre le budget régional et le budget national ; cela démontre qu'il y a cette bonne entente entre Port Louis et Port Mathurin qui va sans doute nous faire décoller. Et là, tout récemment, j'ai parlé avec certains collègues de cette Chambre et j'étais étonné que certains ne soient pas au courant qu'on vote un budget à l'Assemblée Régionale avant qu'on ne vienne à l'Assemblée Nationale. Laissez-moi vous dire, messieurs, mesdames les honorables, qu'à l'Assemblée Régionale nous avons même un *website*. Cela nous permet de savoir ce qui se passe dans la République. Il faut aussi être au courant de ce qui se passe à Rodrigues. Il faut être au courant des agendas et tout ça, comme ça on ne va pas gober n'importe quoi parce que nous sommes dans la même République. Nous, nous n'avons rien à cacher, nous travaillons dans la transparence parce que nous travaillons avec le cœur pour le pays.

Donc, il y a eu pour ce présent budget, un échange de correspondances entre la Commission responsable des finances et le ministre des finances et, M. le président, après la présentation du budget à l'Assemblée Régionale, on arrive à l'Assemblée Nationale, et cette année, comme nouveauté, tout un chapitre a été consacré à Rodrigues. Mais comment ne pas apprécier, M. le président? C'est pourquoi je dis, ce changement va métamorphoser le destin de l'île parce que j'ai toujours dit qu'on ne doit pas doter Rodrigues d'un budget sectoriel, basé sur le nombre d'habitants ni sur la superficie de l'île. Ce ne serait pas correct, M. le président, parce qu'on ne peut pas donner un budget sectoriel à Rodrigues pour l'Assemblée régionale et, heureusement, que le ministre des finances l'a compris parce qu'à Rodrigues on a quand même 46 *areas of responsibility*. Ici, quand on donne un budget à un ministère, c'est uniquement dans un domaine spécifique alors qu'à Rodrigues, tous les domaines qu'on a à Maurice, ils se retrouvent à Rodrigues. Donc, on ne peut pas baser le budget de Rodrigues par tête d'habitants ou par rapport à la superficie de l'île. Il faut baser par rapport à la demande qu'il y a à Rodrigues et ce présent ministre des finances l'a très bien compris, M. le président.

Donc, M. le président, nous aussi à Rodrigues nous avons pas mal de défis à relever -

- le sous développement/le social;
- le chômage et la précarité de l'emploi;
- l'eau;
- l'éducation;
- l'épanouissement de notre jeunesse - nous avons les mêmes combats,
- le *capacity building*,
- le décollage économique,
- la protection des groupes vulnérables,
- un service de santé de qualité, M. le président.

C'est tous les défis que nous avons aussi à Rodrigues et nous savons aussi qu'à Rodrigues, M. le président, nous avons 40,000 habitants et des estimations nous donne 50,000 Rodriguais à Maurice qui sont parfois mal-aimés, incompris, mal-logés. Il y a tout cela, M. le président. Il y a trois lettres qui maintenant font crier, pleurer et grincer des dents ; ce sont ces trois lettres - PPS. J'ai été visité, depuis ma nomination, des amis Rodriguais qui habitent à Tranquebar. J'ai été à La Galette, j'ai été à Baie du Tombeau, j'ai été à Triolet, pour voir dans quelle condition qu'ils vivent. Croyez-moi, M. le président, les Rodriguais qui sont à Maurice vivent dans des conditions terribles et difficiles et, c'est pourquoi j'ai toujours dit, je me suis engagé dans la politique parce que quand je regarde Rodrigues, les Rodriguais - c'est mon peuple, mon pays, mon combat.

Donc, dès qu'il y a la possibilité de soulager la souffrance de mes compatriotes, cela fait partie de mon combat, M. le président. Parce que si vous regardez aujourd'hui, M. le président, les revenus qu'on récolte à Rodrigues, c'est insignifiant, d'autant plus, quand eux ils étaient au pouvoir, c'était de lors de R 16 millions par an. Nous on a fait des efforts avec la production. Maintenant c'est venu jusqu'à R 20 millions mais, quand même, M. le président, on contribue à peu près 1% seulement de notre budget. Croyez-vous que ça fait la fierté des Rodriguais? Croyez-vous que les Rodriguais sont fiers de ça? Mais à qui la faute, M. le président? Parce que nous, nous faisons des efforts à Rodrigues. La faute est partagée. C'est pourquoi j'ai dit que j'apprécie le budget et que je trouve que l'outil que le présent gouvernement est en train de donner à Rodrigues va nous permettre de casser ce cercle vicieux. C'est dans l'intérêt du pays.

Et je vais plus loin encore, M. le président, quand on regarde, par rapport à la précarité de l'emploi, le *social aid* à Rodrigues pour l'année 2011 sur une population de 40,000 habitants,

est-ce que vous savez à combien s'élève le *social aid* à Rodrigues? R 49,5 millions et pour l'année 2012 ça a été estimé à R 56 millions, M. le président. C'est immense. Est-ce qu'on peut blâmer ces gens qui viennent demander du *social aid*, M. le président ? Il n'y a pas d'emploi. C'est pourquoi le gouvernement a compris qu'il faut commencer avec les mesures tout de suite pour qu'au moins le secteur privé décolle, M. le président. De même pour le UHR, M. le président, *Unemployment Hardship Relief*, en 2010, on a dépensé R 5.6 million et en 2011 cela a été estimé à R 7 million. C'est grave. Mais à qui la faute ? C'est pourquoi nous avons eu une prise de conscience pour aller vers le développement durable avec le moyen de bord. Nous avons inventé un autre concept ; *c'est-à-dire 'produire ceki ou manger, mange ceki ou produire!'* Cela a marché, M. le président. Les gens sont retournés vers la terre et allez voir aujourd'hui les efforts à Montagne Goyave, comme à Baladirou!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Hossen, please!

Mr Léopold : Ce n'est pas l'époque où on disait aux Rodriguais d'aller planter des *ti piments* sans leur donner les moyens, maintenant on donne les moyens aux Rodriguais. On est en train de les encourager de retourner vers la terre. On leur donne les moyens techniques et modernes. On fait des villages de piments, villages de limons. Aujourd'hui le miel est en train d'être valorisé et un label aux produits Rodriguais. C'est grâce à qui, M. le président ? C'est grâce à ce gouvernement MR que certains trouvent qu'ils n'ont pas de vision. Ils ont des visions mais ce sont plutôt des illusions. Admettons qu'ils ont des visions, mais nous, nous passons à l'action. Et le peuple sait faire la différence.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, order !

Mr Leopold : M. le président, il y a eu un retour vers la terre même la mer, l'aquaculture, on vient de commencer, juste avant qu'on vienne à Maurice, lundi. On a commencé avec l'aquaculture, plus précisément la culture d'algues à Rodrigues. Ça je vais laisser le soin au ministre d'en parler. On a commencé lentement mais sûrement, M. le président. Pourquoi a-t-on fait des parcs marins, M. le président ? Pour éviter les erreurs des autres, M. le président. C'est autant de mesures qui sont prises à Rodrigues et certains ont le culot de venir dire qu'on ne fait rien à Rodrigues. Je le redis, M. le président, l'excès de démagogie, c'est toxique, c'est mauvais pour la santé. C'est pourquoi nous invitons les Rodriguais à se surpasser, à bouger parce que le pays a besoin de tout le monde. Mais nous

avons des limitations de ressources, M. le président, qui sont, bien évidemment, notre *limiting factor*.

M. le président, je ne vais pas être long. Au paragraphe 337 de ce présent budget, je cite

— « *A submarine cable will be laid to link Rodrigues to Mauritius* »

au coût de R 600 million, M. le président. Comment ne pas être satisfait ? Savez-vous depuis combien de temps on s'attend à ce que Rodrigues soit raccordé à l'autoroute de l'informatique ? Savez-vous, M. le président, que depuis le 08 avril 2002 le câble SAFE est opérationnel à Maurice ? Depuis le 08 avril 2002, combien de questions ont été posées dans cette Chambre par l'honorable ministre Von-Mally, par moi, même par les autres membres qui étaient là ? Mais qu'est-ce qu'on a fait, M. le président ? Au moment où on déposait le câble, cela passait beaucoup plus près de Rodrigues que le *mainland Mauritius*. On a fait des représentations. On était fatigué avec cela. En vain, M. le président ! Et vous voulez me faire croire, qu'aujourd'hui en 2011, ça coûte moins cher qu'en 2002. On va me faire gober ça, M. le président ! C'est inconcevable ! Moi, je vous dis *actions speak louder than words*. Savez-vous combien de SC et HSC *holders* restent *idle* à la maison à Rodrigues et qui maîtrisent très bien l'anglais et le français ? Combien sont venus ici à Maurice pour travailler dans des conditions qu'on connaît avec tous les aléas que cela représente, M. le président ? Combien ont été au MITD par leur propre initiative, à l'université et qui ont fait leur IC3 parce qu'à Rodrigues on veut bouger, M. le président. On a toujours dit, on ne veut pas de poisson, on veut la ligne pour aller à la pêche. C'est ça la mentalité Rodriguaise. C'est ça la spécificité Rodriguaise et c'est ça l'authenticité Rodriguaise, M. le président. Et, aujourd'hui, même quand il y avait la bande passante qui était là avec un coût très élevé, il y a eu des efforts, il y eu des aventures. Certaines personnes se sont lancées dedans, mais malheureusement cela s'est soldé par des échecs. Il a eu beaucoup de tentatives. Même en 2007, l'Assemblée Régionale avait envoyé ici 50 stagiaires pour suivre des cours en IT. Pourquoi, M. le président ? Nous n'attendons-on pas le câble arriver à Rodrigues pour envoyer des gens se former. Au contraire nous plaçons la formation en avant. Nous croyons dans la formation. Ce sont autant d'efforts que nous faisons. Tout récemment, qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ? L'Assemblée Régionale a même identifié un terrain à Papayes avec la collaboration d'ICTA pour notre futur IT Village. Parce que Rodrigues étant petit on a identifié ce qu'on appelle notre IT Village à Papayes comme vous le savez. Il y a des développements

dans les autres endroits, il faut que les développements viennent aussi vers l'ouest de Rodrigues. Le terrain était déjà *surveyed, done...* c'est déjà identifié. Maintenant qu'est-ce qu'on attend ? Là, on a donné le câble, on attend aussi à ce qu'on ait un *intelligent building* à Rodrigues. C'est comme-ci on donne une belle voiture à quelqu'un mais sans la clé de contact. Cela devient *useless*. Je fais un appel au gouvernement. On a fait le premier pas, pour moi le pas le plus difficile. Maintenant il nous faut aller vers la construction d'un IT building à Rodrigues. Donc, M. le président, la différence entre les intentions, les rêves et l'action, c'est très visible.

M. le président, une autre mesure dans le budget qui m'interpelle beaucoup, c'est le développement du port et de l'aéroport au paragraphe 343 et je cite –

«.... RRA will be able to clear land for airport development and dredge access to the port »

Et là, M. le président, tout récemment à Rodrigues, des officiers de la MRA qui sont en communication constante avec l'île sont venus pour dissiper certains pseudos malentendus où encore une fois certains avaient peur et voulaient faire ce qu'on appelle des *cheap démagogies*. Mais pourtant dans tous les programmes électoraux de l'île, quel que soit le parti, on peut lire « développement de port et de l'aéroport ». Pour une fois, M. le président on a un gouvernement qui a dit « ok, on a compris, on développe le port à Rodrigues, on modernise le port ». Ils ne veulent pas. Ils font de la démagogie. *Pas touche nous Grand Pâté, pas touche nous patrimoine.* Mais, c'est comme- ci quelqu'un a faim, l'œuf est là, il veut faire une omelette mais il dit *–pas faire dizef là dimal*. Mais c'est impossible, M. le président !

(Interruptions)

Pas casse dizef là, pas faire li di mal ! Mais, c'est impossible M. le président ! Ils sont des champions à parler de l'exode massif sur Maurice et cela est devenu un slogan creux. C'est comme un disque rayé! Ils vont et viennent avec cela. Aujourd'hui on a la possibilité de mettre un frein à l'exode massif vers Maurice. Qu'est-ce qu'ils disent ? *Nous pas d'accord.* Comme-ci ils sont jaloux parce que ce ne sont pas eux qui vont le faire. Mais croyez-moi, M. le président, ils ne sont pas les seuls à être champions dans le respect de l'environnement. Moi aussi, en temps que biologiste, je sais c'est quoi l'écologie et le respect de l'environnement. Je sais c'est quoi le développement durable parce que tout ce qui va être fait, va se faire dans le respect de l'environnement. Qui ne se souvient pas dans des années 70/80 quand vous allez à Rodrigues dans le vieux Mauritius et qu'il fallait descendre en pleine mer ? C'était agréable, M.

le président ? Est-ce que c'était agréable ? Et comment a-t-on fait pour que le vieux Mauritius arrive à accoster avec le quai de Port Mathurin ? On a fait ce qu'il fallait faire. Mais c'est la même chose qu'il faut faire, aujourd'hui, M. le président. *At a time* quand le ministre des finances parle au paragraphe 181 qu'on va avoir des *training courses in hospitality on cruise ships*, M. le président. Combien de fois j'ai été témoin des bateaux de croisière qui arrivent dans les eaux rodriguaises. Les ségatiers étaient là, les tours opérateurs et les hôteliers aussi, ils attendaient des passagers mais personne ne voulait descendre parce que c'est en pleine mer. Vous savez combien on perd dans le pays? D'après le chiffre avec la MTPA, rien qu'à Maurice vous savez combien cela contribue dans le budget à Maurice, plus de R 600 million par an et tout le monde veut venir à Rodrigues et qu'est-ce qui se passe maintenant ? Ils font de la démagogie pour empêcher le développement. Je vois dedans l'avenir, l'emploi direct et indirect, M. le président. Déjà, nous sommes en train de travailler pour la visibilité de Rodrigues dans ce domaine. Il y a déjà des gens qui ont des contacts et qui veulent venir à Rodrigues. Mais nous, on a dit qu'on va respecter l'environnement, parce que déjà, d'après le dernier *survey*, les morceaux de coraux c'est simplement un *outcrop*. Cela représente déjà un danger pour le Mauritius Pride et le Trochetia. Est-ce qu'il faut attendre qu'on ait le remake à Poudre d'Or avec Angel One, avec le Mauritius Trochetia et que des centaines de familles Rodriguezes meurent pour qu'on passe à l'action ? A ce moment-là, que vont-ils dire ? Le gouvernement *pane faire narien*. Mais nous, nous savons que gouverner c'est prévoir.

C'est pourquoi je dis qu'il y a démagogie et démagogie. Il faut faire attention. On ne va pas laisser des démagogues empêcher le développement du pays. On ne va pas laisser des démagogues empêcher nos frères et sœurs de Rodrigues d'avoir un emploi décent. Ce n'est pas parce qu'ils sont bien lotis qu'il faut oublier les autres, M. le président. Et c'est ça le rôle d'un gouvernement responsable. C'est un deuxième *goal* ça.

M. le président, il y a au paragraphe 345, *residential accomodation to patients coming to Mauritius*. M. le président, laissez-moi raconter la petite histoire. Après ma nomination, le 16 septembre dernier, j'ai présenté des projets au Premier ministre et au ministre des finances, bien sûr dans l'intérêt de Rodrigues, que j'ai d'ailleurs dit dans certains journaux. Il y avait ce projet pour les patients venant à Maurice ; il y avait aussi la réhabilitation du centre de Baladirou en un centre de jeunesse ; la construction d'un *recreational centre* pour les *elderly* à l'exemple de ce qu'on à Pointe aux Sables ; le problème d'eau ; le *reengineering* des maisonnettes du *Trust*

Fund ; le projet de tout-à-l'égout au moins dans le nord du pays, et bien évidemment le port et l'aéroport.

Tout récemment, dans le collège où je travaille, nous avons organisé une grande activité pour les gens souffrant du cancer qui viennent se faire soigner à Maurice. J'ai été touché quand les gens m'ont dit que, lorsqu'ils viennent ici pour la chimio ou la radiothérapie, alors qu'ils ne sont pas en phase terminale, parce qu'ils n'ont pas de famille, pendant une, deux, trois semaines, ils sont dans la même salle que ceux en phase terminale. Voyez-vous le traumatisme, M. le président. Vous êtes dans une salle, et tous les jours il y a trois, quatre personnes qui meurent à côté de vous. Croyez-moi, cela ne va pas vous aider pour le *recovery*. Donc, je me suis appuyé dessus. Je connais aussi des Rodriguais qui accompagnent des malades et qui sont obligés des fois de dormir à même le sol à l'hôpital. Laissez-moi vous dire M. le président. Le Premier ministre m'a écouté attentivement ainsi que le ministre des finances. Je suis heureux aujourd'hui que ce projet figure dans le budget. D'ailleurs, la décision a été prise pour que le bâtiment soit dans la région de Floréal ou Curepipe ; donc, à mi-distance entre Rose Belle et Candos. Ensuite, j'entends sur les radios un honorable membre dire que c'est le PQ qui a donné suite à cette décision. Si c'est le cas, étant donné que c'est Rodrigues qui sort gagnant, tant mieux ! Mais moi, franchement, avec l'expérience parlementaire que j'ai, je ne sais pas si c'est l'opposition ou le gouvernement qui prépare le budget. Alors là, il faut m'éclairer aujourd'hui. Donc, là, je suis vraiment dans une impasse.

M. le président, là ils vont parler de conflits ministres/PPS/RRA. Quel conflit, M. le président ? Vous nous voyez déjà...

(Interruptions)

Mr Leopold: M. le président, s'il y a trois lettres qui dérangent en ce moment, c'est PPS. Mais heureusement qu'à Rodrigues ça arrange. Vous savez ce qu'on dit à Rodrigues ? On a présenté un budget à l'Assemblée régionale pour Rodrigues, et on a présenté un autre budget à l'Assemblée nationale pour l'île. Rodrigues a eu deux budgets. C'est ça la perception à Rodrigues. Donc, pour moi, c'est de l'enfantillage, c'est du *cheap politics* ; pour moi, c'est comme si on faisait *a case of no case*.

M. le président, comment ne pas mentionner brièvement certains autres secteurs comme l'éducation ? On aura l'ouverture prochaine d'une université à Montagne Malgache, parce que nous croyons dans la formation. Nous croyons que c'est en formant des gens que la démagogie

n'aura aucune raison d'être, M. le président. Déjà, avec le MRC, on vient d'ouvrir une antenne pour la recherche à Rodrigues et, croyez-moi, ça va marcher. On donne déjà des cours pour arriver à un BSc en IT à Rodrigues avec l'Université des Technologies.

M. le président, l'autre mesure qui m'a interpellé dans ce budget concerne les subsides des *airfares* au paragraphe 344. Pourquoi on continue avec cela ? On voit que ça porte ses fruits à Rodrigues et, donc, il faut continuer dans ce sens.

M. le président, il y a aussi le côté social. On parle aujourd'hui de *concrete CIS houses* - 400 unités pour Rodrigues. Mais dans le projet que j'avais présenté au ministre des finances, j'ai dit qu'il faut *reengineer* ces maisonnettes du *Trust Fund*, parce que ce n'est pas correct d'avoir des maisons, comme s'il était écrit 'je suis pauvre' sur la maison. Il faut au moins donner des toilettes, une salle de bains, et même un moyen de collecter l'eau de pluie à ces maisonnettes, M. le président.

M. le président, au paragraphe 266, on parle aussi de *low cost housing* que j'accueille très favorablement, Pour ce qui est de la santé, j'accueille également les dispositions pour les *overseas treatment*. Il n'y a pas autant de firmes du secteur privé à Rodrigues pour aller demander de l'aide quand vous avez un traitement à faire à l'étranger. Je suis heureux que la contribution soit passée de R 200,000 à R 500,000. Je trouve que c'est un bon geste pour les malades, M. le président.

Pour ce qui est du *food security*, M. le président, la semaine prochaine nous allons inaugurer notre marché moderne à Port Mathurin. Et là, franchement, j'ai un petit pincement au cœur quand je pense à feu James Burty David. Je sais que ça était un petit peu son dada, mais on va l'inaugurer la semaine prochaine. On a aussi, M. le président, un abattoir moderne qui verra le jour dans très peu de temps, parce que nous allons être là pour son inauguration et travailler dans l'intérêt du pays.

M. le président, il y aussi le *pre-job training scheme*, et cela rejoint ce que nous avons mis à l'Assemblée régionale, mais avec des moyens moindres, avec des moyens moins significatifs. Il y a les moyens qu'on donne aux SMEs, M. le président. L'avenir et l'emploi se trouvent dans les SMEs. Il y a surtout le *freight rebate scheme to provide subsidy on sea freight, on imported raw materials and exported finished goods*. Ça c'est vraiment un problème qui affecte l'exportation de Rodrigues, M. le président. Je crois qu'avec ceci *more business models will become financially viable and yield a reasonable financial return*. On s'attend à ce que le

private sector investisse davantage dans le tourisme, l'agriculture, l'artisanat etc. sans oublier le domaine sportif, où le ministre des finances a fait mention de beaucoup d'innovations, et je suis sûr que les Rodriguais vont en tirer des avantages.

M. le président, un dernier point. Il y a notre Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues, le *RRA*, dont j'ai voté le projet de loi en novembre 2001 dans cette Chambre. Aujourd'hui, après neuf ans de son fonctionnement, ne faudrait-il pas repenser sur son fonctionnement ? Je pose la question. Après neuf ans, pourquoi ne l'a-t-on pas adopté à Maurice ? Peut-être que cela donne des sueurs froides à certains, ici ! Peut-être aussi que cela démontre que le modèle qu'on a adopté à Rodrigues n'est pas nécessairement le modèle qui convient le mieux, parce que cela conduit à beaucoup d'instabilité. Nous avons été témoins de sept élections en neuf ans. C'est pourquoi, M. le président, alors qu'il n'y a pas de respect pour l'autonomie de Rodrigues, je dis que c'est un gouvernement qui respecte l'autonomie de Rodrigues, autrement on n'aurait pas donné tous ces *incentives* que je viens de mentionner. C'est pourquoi je vais plus loin. Je vais faire un appel au gouvernement pour montrer qu'on respecte l'autonomie de Rodrigues, que le 12 octobre, le jour de l'autonomie soit décrété un jour férié par respect de la fête qu'on fait à Rodrigues. Comme le Président de la République fait le déplacement à Rodrigues pour la fête de l'autonomie, pour justement avoir cette intégration de Rodrigues dans la République, je trouve qu'il faudrait que le 12 octobre devienne un jour férié, ainsi il y aurait plus de concertation, plus de prise de conscience sur l'importance de ce jour de l'autonomie.

En conclusion, M. le président - je vais définitivement terminer. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, politics is about changing the future of a country, shaping our destiny and transforming the life of our fellow citizens, not for the worst, but for the best. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, do you think we can fool people? No way, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! People are so informed and well aware of so many issues, even better than some of us here! This is why we have to be cautious in everything that we undertake, and every step we take, because we are dealing with public money and things should be done in the interest of one and all.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, besides being cautious, we must also have the guts to move forward. This is what precisely the people voted us for. Once we are convinced that in what we are dwelling with is just unfair and that it puts the people first we had to adopt the '*OBF*' principle, *oser, bouger, foncer - stratégie vers un avenir meilleur*.

M. le président, je termine en disant ‘félicitations’ au ministre des finances pour son premier budget, qui a été un coup d’essai, un coup de maître, comme cela a été le cas avec notre Chef Commissaire à Rodrigues. Je dis aussi merci au Premier ministre, qui a écouté, enfin, l’appel de Rodrigues, qui a compris qu’il faut commencer avec le développement, parce que très souvent, M. le président, les intentions sont là mais les actions ne suivent pas. Donc, je vais dire encore : I support this Budget.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(3.44 p.m.)

Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am honoured to participate in the debates of the 2012 Budget as an Independent Member of this Parliament, representing a ‘True Rodriguan Voice’ and defending the interests of all the good people of Rodrigues. I humbly thank them for their faith in me.

I wish to thank, from the first outset, my Leader, Mr Louis Serge Clair, GCSK, for his devotion and his unconditional, truthful commitment to the people of Rodrigues. I shall remind the House of his historical ‘*Lutte pour l’Autonomie de Rodrigues*’, *sous son leadership au sein de l’OPR*.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I congratulate all those who intervened before me, from both sides of the House, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the hon. Leader of Opposition, and my thanks goes also to all those who cherish sincerely Rodrigues in their heart.

I am not going to refute the Member who just preceded me, but during the course of my intervention, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will understand why.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance presented his 2012 Budget, what I qualified as a ‘*Budget d’apaisement*’, based on challenging promises, with uncertainties around.

The Government Budget will build on “Growth for Greater Good”, despite the tough road of challenges in an international economic and debt crisis taking place in Europe, Greece, Portugal, which is menacing the economic balance of the entire world.

In Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, shall we say that we must be proud of the resilience, as announced? I tend to disagree, despite the good intention of the Minister of Finance with changes in tax policies to attract investments and to create wealth, as the challenges ahead remain uncertain.

The internationalisation of our economy as well as a thorough promotion to make Mauritius an FDI country is positive, but the risk associated with it is not clearly spelt out.

M. le président, la section 23 du budget fait mention de la dignité humaine au cœur du problème de la pauvreté. Mais, quelle est la priorité du peuple dans sa vie quotidienne aujourd’hui, M. le président? Qu'est-ce qui est fait dans ce budget pour promouvoir la dignité humaine, surtout en ce qui concerne Rodrigues plus précisément? C'est clair que Maurice veut accentuer son rôle de modèle sur plusieurs fronts. C'est là que la cohérence, dans les intentions et les actions, est importante.

Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius can lead the way as a country by setting the standard to be at our best in the world and among the African nations.

Mr Serge Clair, my leader will certainly say: “*Nou Kapav, Nou pas kapav*” and surely, hon. Dr. Kasenally and hon. Aimée will say: “*Yes, we can!*”.

However, I understand full well that it will mean nothing if there are still thousands of unemployed people and thousands of people living in poverty, and many living in overcrowded house, wondering if there is not a better world and a better place.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a responsible Government should take the welfare of our citizens at heart in longer terms without being trapped in engrossing in populist policies.

Let me consider now the macroeconomic performance indicators as announced traditionally by the Minister of Finance. GDP: 4.2%, inflation rate: 6.5% and a surplus balance payment of Rs3 billion. Does this truly imply that Mauritius is showing resilience through a world of turmoil and appropriate policy formulation and implementation? Time will tell, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Is the GDP growth, in itself, reliable indicator in the present circumstances?

My concern is about real growth, because without development, growth is not sustainable, and it is the real development indicators that truly determine the sustainability of economic growth, not the manipulation of statistics purely to bring ephemeral comfort to listeners.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we ask, for example, given the GDP of around 4.2%, that the hon. vice-Prime Minister claims about -

- i. Do our people have secure jobs?
- ii. Can all our people pay their electricity bill today?
- (iii) Can our people afford to buy food?

- (iv) Can our people afford housing?
- (v) Can they access reliable public services?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has the Minister of Finance answered fully all these things people cared about?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a responsible Government that has a sense of servitude would be interested in providing the good governance, as internationally accepted, through effective Government policies and administration, listening and respecting *la voix du peuple* and maintaining accountability to its people, upholding the rule of law, maintaining the regulatory quality, controlling corruption and maintaining political stability through democracy. This is where Government's decision must always make reference to put people first, but not politicians and friends first.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the proposed Public Procurement (Amendment) Bill is imperative, especially with the actual saga of public monies in Rodrigues as substantiated by the Director of Audit. I will come to that later.

The question of opening public offices on Saturdays has to be clearly worked out. In Rodrigues, many public servants are now facing the politically motivated discriminatory treatment of overtime. For example, some drivers are receiving a monthly allowance between Rs15,000 to Rs25,000, while others, in the same department, are not receiving any single cent for overtime, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the consolidation of agriculture towards a firm policy for production is positive and this is high on Government agenda. Rodrigues, unfortunately, from the failure of the Commission for Agriculture, is missing the opportunity to become again the '*grenier*' of Mauritius. The budget has reduced to only Rs22 m. earmarked for 2012. Why, Mr Speaker, Sir? There was provision of Rs100 m. for a couple of projects, but only two or three are completed for the past 12 or 24 months.

In 1976, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my leader, Serge Clair, prophesised a vision for food security and nutrition as major goals for Rodrigues. I quote –

“Rodriguais pas compte lors manzé ki sorti dehors. Compte lors manzé ki sorti dans ou la terre. »

This is prophesy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. One of the Rodriguan politicians, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now serving as Minister, once said –

“Au lieu li donne ou enn travail dans gouvernement, li dire zotte alle plante ti-piment.”

And the same *ti-piment*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that they are trying to seduce the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security to earn big money under the Food Security Fund to promote *ti-piment*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, cette année-ci, ils n'ont pas vanté les chiffres de production gonflés comme ils ont fait l'année dernière, 192 tonnes d'haricots, gonflements des chiffres pour influencer le ministre, M. le président. Mais dans la réalité, qu'est-ce qui se passe sur le terrain, M. le président ? Qu'ont-ils fait avec l'argent reçu du *Food Security Fund*, *Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir*. Le gaspillage pour la clôture des terres non-cultivées, partagées avec des agents politiques, excluant les vrais planteurs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the water sector reform shall remain a priority for both Mauritius and Rodrigues. Will the Singapore expertise extend to Rodrigues? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in Rodrigues, Government is guilty of spending millions to construct small projects without putting in place the right mechanisms and machinery to sustain them. We have a situation where wastage is higher than the delivered product, as typified by the Rodrigues Water Company. Since 2006 to date, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rs1.8 billion have been disbursed for capital projects in Rodrigues over and above the stimulus package and food security funds. Water problem which is not a priority for the Movement Rodriguais party, remains unsolved despite their promises –

“Ou pou gagne delo 24 lors 24.”

How do you conciliate the problem of water when the Chief Commissioner himself, in his budget, has reduced the budget for water by 50% for the year 2012, that is, from Rs39.5 m. to Rs18.3 m., Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. *L'eau reste un problème majeur et est distribuée sur une base politique à Rodrigues.*

Le *Leader* de l'opposition a mentionné l'exemple de manque d'eau dans la lingerie à l'hôpital de Crève Cœur. Ce n'est pas tout. Même les patients sont contraints d'acheter de l'eau en bouteille pour prendre leur bain, M. le président. C'est inacceptable alors que la Commission de Ressource en Eau vient de recevoir R 50 millions du gouvernement central, l'argent qu'il utilise aujourd'hui, M. le président, pour faire la maintenance des routes, opérations '*bousse trou*', M. le président, sur nos routes au lieu d'acheter des camions citernes, encourager le *rain water harvesting programme* ou faire fonctionner...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please ! Order!

Mr François: ... le projet des unités de dessalement mis en place par l'OPR depuis 2006 et abandonné par le mouvement Rodriguais aujourd'hui, M. le président. M. le président, il y a une mafia à l'œuvre à Rodrigues, avec l'argent public au niveau de la transaction d'eau et des petits contrats, M. le président. Une citerne d'eau coûte R 4,000. Ceux qui peuvent payer ont l'eau, ceux qui ne peuvent pas meurent de soif, M. le président.

C'est de l'amateurisme, c'est de l'incompétence et manque de sérieux alors que dans plusieurs villages l'eau du robinet est approvisionnée tous les deux ou trois mois, voire même nos éleveurs, M. le président, sont contraints de vendre leurs animaux à des prix dérisoires pour sauver leur économie.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, the fishermen community, unfortunately, have voiced out their dissatisfaction with the fisheries sector lately on many fronts. Despite the *Assises de la Pêche*, fishers are losing confidence seeing no brighter future. You would have heard it on the radios, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Go around in Rodrigues and even here, in Mauritius, go and talk to the fishermen, listen to them. Where is the Fisheries Master Plan, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? What is happening to it? Is the Fishermen Investment Trust meeting its objectives today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Pourquoi les épouses des pêcheurs noyés ou disparus en mer attendent encore leur compensation depuis plus de cinq ans, M. le président ? Qu'est-ce qui se passe ?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in section 134 ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Von-Mally, please! Use your pen and write it down.

(*Interruptions*)

Please!

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in section 134, the hon. vice-Prime Minister states that -

“An Exchange Programme will be put in place with Rodrigues Fisheries Protection Service to share knowledge and skills.”

From information gathered, among officers in Rodrigues, many fear that this is used as an instrument for punitive move. That's what I have been told. The hon. vice-Prime Minister is looking here for local community's support for lagoon supervision to be enhanced to a reasonable level. This is what he says in the Budget Speech, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. What our officers from Rodrigues will come here to learn if the situation is already chaotic, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

In Rodrigues, if I go further, the Fisheries Protection Service itself is without leadership and direction and has become a non-serious and unreliable service, especially, after the dismantlement of the Fisheries Flying Squad which was remarkably doing a good job to combat fraud in our lagoons, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Is it not ridiculous now to release sea cucumbers in the lagoon after authorised over-exploitation

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr François: *Zotte in fini la mer là, M. le président !. Zotte ine fini la mer là*, with their regulation to authorise the exploitation of *bambarris*.

The Deputy Speaker: Don't interrupt the hon. Member, please!

Mr François: Today, they are trying to replenish the marine environment back to its original by importing sea cucumbers from Madagascar! *Guet l'argent, pas guet l'environnement marin! L'argent ! L'argent!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr François: Life saving equipment is a must for fishers, and it has been long since same was delivered to them. I have been made aware of hundreds of radios, bought since long, and are still awaiting delivery for our poor fishermen who need good communication for their safety at sea, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When will these radios be delivered? Will it be on the eve of the next coming regional elections?

M. le président, passons ! Au niveau de l'éducation, ce sont l'introduction de la langue Créole au niveau des écoles, le *Programme Enhancement* et la situation des pré-voc qui font débat.

The 3 years pre-vocational education programme needs a complete review in Rodrigues. CPE failures remain a concern for both Mauritius and Rodrigues as our children are being forced

to be result oriented simply, that should be reviewed. Teachers guide and recommended textbooks were received at one month before exams. There are two community schools, namely at Araucaria and Mont Charlot under construction since 2006 in Rodrigues, have not yet been completed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is shameful ! *Pénalise ène banne pauvre zenfants misère zotte l'éducation.' Le Premier ministre lui-même a dit et je cite –*

« c'est seulement l'éducation qui pu aide nous combatte la misère... »

Look at what we are seeing today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am skeptical about the Summer School Programme.

M. le président, avec l'échec de la Commission de l'Education, Rodrigues a besoin d'une grande réflexion sur l'éducation - surtout avec le système appliqué à Rodrigues en ce moment – avec tous les partenaires.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Hon. Léopold, please!

Mr François: Par contre, M. le président - les picotements, je comprends, M. le président !

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr François: M. le président, je félicite le gouvernement qui, à travers le fond CSR, suite à mon intervention l'année dernière, apporte sa contribution pour aider les enfants des parents pauvres dans le déplacement pour l'*Educational Tours* en préparation pour l'examen de la CPE. J'en suis reconnaissant.

However, what will happen to the announced University campus at Montagne Malgache? There is no budget provision. I have seen nothing. *L'effet d'annonce !* Why not upgrade and consolidate the existing Human Resource Centre at Malabar which has been used to conduct university courses, for example, Certificate in Management in 2004? Mr Dharam Gokool was a leading lecturer from the University of Mauritius during these courses.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the provision of Rs500,000 for Maintenance Grant is a good move, but I hope that it will be enough for those schools.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our environment is a plus to our tourism industry. Mauritius and Rodrigues need tougher laws for a clean environment. The vice-Prime Minister says it rightly. I quote: "There is far too much litter around". C'est vrai M. le président, il y a un manque

d'éducation ciblé sur l'aspect environnemental, le changement climatique, le concept Maurice Ile Durable et de plus, M. le président, il faut le dire, Maurice est sale et même Rodrigues. La population a perdu cette responsabilité commune pour la protection et la préservation de notre environnement. Government must regulate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, especially when we talk about the placement of billboards. We must regulate to ban billboards, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Let's have the courage to ban it. *Zot pé défigure l'environnement!*

M. le président, Maurice Ile Durable is still timidly moving ahead. Mauritius is lagging behind at the international level. Here, I echoed Rodrigues, the vision of OPR which says –

“Rodrigues need to be an ecological sustainable island...”

That is why in the first Regional Government, under the leadership of Mr Serge Clair, we initiated the Sustainable Integrated Development Plan (SIDPR) for Rodrigues. It is the OPR which initiated, what we call, the bible of sustainable development for Rodrigues, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, il y a aussi le compost. The encouragment of composting of solid waste at domestic level must become a drive for all the population. I here proposed that Government looks into the possibility of delivering domestic compost bins to promote this initiative among the population in general.

Je vais simplement dire une phrase sur la pauvreté, M. le président. There is no dignity in poverty. Poverty results, we have seen it here, in prostitution, destitution, vagrancy, destruction of relations, family relations and the mess of all the social ills like alcoholism and drugs abuses around.

M. le président, maintenant la partie sur housing. *On parle de la construction de 600* concrete cum CIS houses, I certainly welcome this initiative. But, what worries me, is that there is no mention of improving the architectural design of these housing units, but it is only aiming at quantity instead of quality. We need quality. Will the criteria for eligibility be clearly set out, not the party adhesion or card that succeed and will the NEF/Trust Fund eligibility criteria be revisited?

M. le président, on parlait des Sans Domicile Fixe. Port Louis qui est la vitrine touristique et économique de Maurice, l'image des Sans Domicile Fixe dans nos rues, démontre la fragilité de notre société. C'est inhumain de voir des citoyens qui dorment encore dans les rues. Et là la

création d'un *shelter* pour les Sans Domicile Fixe, est une très bonne action qui complète le regard sur la dignité humaine.

Pour ce qui est de la santé, M. le président, OPR Party reckons the health sector for Rodrigues as a top priority. The Government 100% increase of grant for Overseas Treatment Scheme from Rs200,000 to Rs500,000 is most welcome, but what worries me is how this scheme will apply for Rodrigues. We need to clear that out.

M. le président, le service de la santé à Rodrigues est lui-même malade. Savez-vous ce que la population dit, M. le président ? Le service de la santé gagne Chikungunya, et la situation s'aggrave !

The health sector in Rodrigues, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is a ticking time bomb waiting to explode, contrary to what is said by the Regional Government of Movement Rodriguais 'towards a model health sector for Rodrigues'.

L'hôpital n'est plus un lieu d'assurance pour nos malades aujourd'hui, M. le Président.

Shall we not call for a profound enquiry and reform about the health service in Rodrigues with all the existing chaos, mismanagement, frustration, frequent apparent cases of neglect, overworked ambulance services, burden of transfer of patient for intensive care in Mauritius, the recurrent shortage of water in the health sector and, on many occasions, forced surgeon to postpone surgery due to lack of water, lack of Specialists, Clinical Psychologists and Psychiatry where patients have to wait for six months ?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I need to put on record the good work started by hon. Hanoomanjee, ex-minister of Health, in posting our first dentist in Rodrigues, who is doing an excellent job there. In the same line, I will request the present hon. Minister for Health, Mr Bundhoo, to see to it to facilitate the posting of our first young doctors in Rodrigues. They are at present without any job, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I also propose that Government look into the possibility of financing the health sector with a CT scan. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it costs a lot, but we badly need a CT scan to save the lives of our brothers and sisters who, for a simple scan, have to travel from Rodrigues to Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to health sector, there is an urgency that the Ministry of Health, the Commission for Health, the Health Directors, the Social Workers sit down to discuss in good faith for a speedy settlement of all grievances. Rodrigues deserves better, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Concerning the SME'S, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I fully agree to inculcate an Entrepreneurial Culture in our Republic. This is very good. I'm happy to see that the hon. Minister will give full support to the measure, which will transcend to combat the ills created in Rodrigues by the *Mouvement Rodriguais*. They used to say to the young people -

'atane nou pou emploie twa dan gouvernement", au lieu faire zotte debrouiller'

Oui, M. le président. Au lieu de pousser nos jeunes vers une mentalité nouvelle, une mentalité de débrouillardise, on dit aux jeunes: *'attane nu pu donne twa travail.' Qui faire? Pour gagne election!'*

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Development Bank of Mauritius with regard to SMEs needs a full reform.

Concernant le sport, M. le président, Rodrigues est une pépinière sportive qui fait la fierté de la république, avec des athlètes comme le Rodriguais Daniel André, premier Mauricien, à courir au niveau olympique et Antonio Félicité, champion de Judo au niveau l'Océan Indien et d'Afrique. Nous avons, aujourd'hui, des champions du monde comme Jackson Perrine et James Agathe en kick-Boxing qui, d'ailleurs, je félicite chaleureusement pour leur rôle d'ambassadeur pour Rodrigues et Maurice sur le plan international et leur rôle de modèle pour la jeunesse de la république, M. le président.

Les infrastructures sportives à Rodrigues souffrent, malgré tout, M. le président; la dégradation du Stade de Camp du Roi, la piste synthétique en nette dégradation, plus de compétition pour la discipline *Handball*, la piscine olympique de Marechal au cout de R 80 m., qui ne fonctionne pas depuis 2006 avec l'arrivée du Mouvement Rodriguais au pouvoir, M. le président.

Je voudrais que les honorables Ritoo et Choonee écoutent le cri d'un slammeur/sportif qui dit, et je cite -

'Je me réveil dans une corbeille, mon ile Rodrigues, croyais comme Alice au pays des merveilles, 'piscine ti ouvert, zordi fermer lere MR ine pran, zordi piscine fermer, ki fer ?'.

Alors, le politicien responsable du sport à Rodrigues passe son temps à voyager, à faire des propagandes politiques sur la MBC/radio locale, tous les jours, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me also to congratulate the Trust Fund for Excellence in sport under the great leadership of Mr Michael Glover and a heartfelt congratulation to Mr Michael Glover. I appeal also for at least a quota of two scholarships for Rodrigues under the excellence for sports.

En ce qui concerne les Jeux des Iles, M. le président, l'honorable ministre Ritoo, et tout le monde, est d'accord avec moi que les Jeux des Iles de Seychelles a été une référence incontournable pour nous tous. Je félicite les athlètes pour leurs performances et la fierté apportée à la nation mauricienne. Aujourd'hui, au niveau de Rodrigues, il y a un vœu monumental pour que Rodrigues puisse participer en tant qu'île autonome dans les prochains Jeux des Iles de l'océan Indien. Oui, je dis bien, M. le président, en tant qu'île dans les prochains Jeux des Iles à l'exemple de Mayotte et de la Réunion qui sont des départements Français.

Dans ce même esprit, je propose des amendements au *Sports Act 2001*. Dans cette loi, Rodrigues est considérée comme '*the région of Rodrigues*', ce qui ne devait pas être le cas par rapport au statut d'autonomie de Rodrigues. Parmi les amendements, c'est de changer l'appellation du '*Rodrigues Regional Sports Coordinating Committee*' à tout simplement le '*Rodrigues Sports Committee*'. De ce fait, il faut établir un comité olympique pour Rodrigues avec les mêmes fonctions comme celles de la Réunion et le comité national olympique de la France.

Concerning Justice System and Prisons, Mr Speaker Sir, in a Parliamentary Question No. B/293 of 2011, I have raised the issue for a review of the weaknesses for access to legal aid and the administration of justice in Rodrigues. What is required today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, est une justice '*a une seule vitesse mais pas à deux vitesse*'. '*Passe quatrième un seul coup si bizin mais pas roule lors première*',

Justice delivery is taking too long in Rodrigues, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Some cases took 5, 6 or 7 years before judgment. This is why, I requested for the posting of a second magistrate and for the operation of a second court in Rodrigues, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I certainly welcome the amendment to the Bail Act, which I will have the opportunity to intervene, especially with regards section 14 - Prohibition Order for defendant or detainees of Rodrigues prevented from leaving Rodrigues to come here to work because of unfounded reasons of risk of absconding in Mauritius.

I have witnessed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the saying of a magistrate, ‘*Ou pas gagne droit quitte territoire Rodrigues*’, which according to me is anti-constitutional and need to be addressed in the Bail Act Amendment Bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Pte La Gueule prison is designed for only 30 persons or so ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please order! Order hon. Baloomoody!

Mr François: ... and today there are more than 70 persons in custody that is twice its capacity living in inhumane conditions.

The security of offices and detainees remains a concern. The provision of Rs500, 000 is insufficient to cater for the extension of Pte La Gueule prison, which was budgeted since long in 2006 when OPR was in power. Unfortunately, we lost in 2006, and this has been abandoned since then by the *Movement Rodriguais*. Go and see what is happening in Pte La Gueule prison.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Police in Rodrigues deserves and needs great support. This Budget again does not make any provisions for the construction of the Grand Montagne and Petit Gabriel Police Stations. Road safety remains a critical subject for Rodrigues. Rodrigues is expecting the setting up of the Rodrigues Police Band, as requested to the hon. Prime Minister. Rodrigues is also expecting a satisfactory recruitment share for the new recruitment service for Police.

Autonomie de Rodrigues, M. le Président, c'est le plus grand changement que Rodrigues ait connu au cours de son histoire à ce jour. C'est son accession à ce statut d'autonomie accordé par le gouvernement central et voté à l'unanimité dans cette auguste assemblée le 20 novembre 2001. Rodrigues est reconnaissant et le restera pour toujours malgré le manque de considération, aujourd'hui, par le parti au pouvoir à Rodrigues et là M. le président je propose quelque chose de très sérieux : qu'on travaille sur l'adhésion de Rodrigues, en tant qu'île autonome dans la Commission de l'Océan Indien, et d'autres institutions régionales, surtout au niveau de l'Afrique. Rodrigues est autonome, on a un gouvernement autonome dans la République de Maurice.

M. le président, que voyons-nous ces derniers temps ? On assiste à des manœuvres pour répondre à l'honorable membre de Rodrigues pour fragiliser, pour ne pas dire cette tentative de faire disparaître cette autonomie de Rodrigues. Les Rodriguais se demandent si vraiment la voix

de Rodrigues existe au sein du conseil des Ministres, alors qu'il parlait d'une Rodrigues forte à Rodrigues. 'Grand tapaz' à Rodrigues mais ici au conseil, qu'est-ce qu'il fait M. le président ?

M. le président, la section 40 du *Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act* stipule clairement la responsabilité du Premier ministre en relation avec le Chef Commissaire de Rodrigues, responsable de l'exécutif de l'assemblée régionale. Qu'a-t-on vu avec la nomination d'un ministre responsable de Rodrigues qui n'a plus de pouvoir sur Rodrigues ? Et tout récemment la nomination d'un PPS. Le Premier ministre a dit l'autre jour un PPS sans responsabilité pour Rodrigues et nous constatons que l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues perd ses responsabilités avec leurs ingérences. C'est le chaos total, la confusion ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please !

Mr François: ...et des désordres dans le fonctionnement de l'autonomie de Rodrigues et ils prétendent comprendre ce que c'est que l'autonomie de Rodrigues. Ils sont en train de commettre l'irréparable. L'autonomie, je vais vous le dire, M. le président, c'est un acquis, une fierté, qu'on la respecte. L'OPR résistera à toute tentative de destruction de l'autonomie qui, sous le *leadership* de Serge Clair, mon leader; les militants et nos ancêtres ont mené une lutte dans la dignité, la sincérité et l'intégrité pour la libération et la reconnaissance de l'identité du peuple de Rodrigues. Il faut le dire, le redire et nous allons le redire tout le temps, M. le président, 'pou qui zot tander et zot compren'.

M. le président, l'allocation budgétaire pour Rodrigues, ce ne sont pas les chiffres qui m'intéressent mais plutôt l'approche intégrée pour changer la vie de la population prenant en ligne de compte le progrès social, économique, la dignité humaine dans un élan de solidarité.

Le budget 2012 fait provision simplement de trois projets importants pour Rodrigues, comme je l'ai souligné il y a le problème d'eau qui s'empire, le coût de la vie augmente, le fret est à 39%.

Je continue, M. le président, le ministre des finances, à la section 336 de son discours dit, je cite '*today we are creating the turning point for Rodrigues by connecting its people, its businesses, and its professionals to the rest of the world*'. Non, M. le président, permettez-moi de rectifier cela, car Rodrigues était déjà connecté avec le monde depuis bien longtemps mais, ce qui nous manque, c'est un système plus rapide et efficace.

M. le président, le projet câble optique qui sera financé par un emprunt de R600 m., remboursable sur 20 ans, cela fait débat à Rodrigues, en espérant que le vice Premier ministre et ministre des finances va nous expliquer la modalité de cet emprunt au *Committee Stage* parce que la section 46 de la régionale parle de la possibilité de Rodrigues de faire des emprunts and, as you said, being guaranteed or being supported or approved by the Government of Mauritius. Il y a une provision dans la loi du *Rodrigues Regional Assembly* à la section 46. Malheureusement, je n'ai pas la loi du RRA avec moi.

M. le président, avec la situation de crise dans le secteur d'eau, pourquoi pas une même considération financière pour investir massivement au niveau des projets pour résoudre d'une manière durable le problème d'eau. Je retourne sur ce problème d'eau, M. le président. N'est-ce pas là encore un échec, un manque de discussion et de concertation entre le gouvernement central et l'assemblée régionale en terme de priorité pour les projets pour Rodrigues et les membres viennent taper la table ici comme si on est content ! Non, nous avons une vision pour Rodrigues et quand on parle M. le président on sait de quoi on parle parce qu'on sait d'où Rodrigues était et d'où Rodrigues est arrivé et où allons-nous mener Rodrigues mais malheureusement, M. le président...

Mr Speaker Sir, the subsidising of airfares to Rodrigues under the item Holiday Package and Passenger Service charge suspension Rs50 m., extended until end of December 2012 under the National Resilience Fund. This is subject to criticisms, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as this should have been extended to subsidisation of airfares, both to and from Rodrigues. Why not?

There is no provision from Government to work out the opening of the air access between Reunion and Rodrigues or simply by investing in more ATR flights. There is the problem to obtain a seat on Air Mauritius from Rodrigues to Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. From the provision made for airport development in Rodrigues, my question is: will there be any further geological study...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo please!

Mr François: Will there be any further geological study around these sites at Plaine Corail for their suitability before finalising this project? Moi je parle parce que j'ai rencontré des experts et on a parlé des problèmes de l'environnement liés. Je ne suis pas contre le projet mais là on demande les experts : est-ce qu'il y a une étude géologique approfondie qui a été faite et

qui va être faite concernant la prolongation où l'extension de l'aéroport de Plaine Corail. M. le président, en 2006, le parti au pouvoir, flattait le slogan '*faire Rodrigues rattrappe so retard*', cinq ans plus tard, c'est l'échec sur tous les fronts, surtout avec leur mouvance de l'indépendance économique. L'Assemblée Régionale comme, si bien dit, par l'honorable membre présentait ses propositions budgétaires; comme c'est prévu dans la loi de l'autonomie, la loi régionale et avec comme thème 'take off towards sustainable modernisation of Rodrigues '*Ensam à nou fer Rodrigues décollé*'. Mais que voit-on M. le président ? Un avion coincé dans un filet et à l'intérieur on voit une photo du Chef Commissaire avec un petit bateau de sauvetage de la garde côte. Voilà l'image : l'avion déjà coincé dans un filet *no take off* and the Chief Commissioner is ready avec son petit bateau de sauvetage. Voilà l'image de la gouvernance à Rodrigues M. le président, et peut-être je vais continuer pour dire quel est vraiment l'état actuel de Rodrigues. Rodrigues a été agressé, blessé depuis 2006. Rodrigues est malade et va très mal. Rodrigues souffre et pleure M. le président.

Let me put it in the right place with the right words Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is what the Rodriguans said "*Rodrigues, pé fini, Rodrigues ine reculé, kot Rodrigues pé allé, Rodrigues à genou*" and even themselves in their weekly newspaper they said: this is the weekly newspaper of the Government of MR in power, '*Rodrigues ine fini hypothéquer*', it is not me who said so, it is them. *Rodrigues ine fini hypothéquer*' ce n'est pas moi qui le dis...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr François: Et j'avance, et il ajoute dans l'express daté le 16 février 2011, un commissaire – 'le patrimoine foncier est en danger', ce n'est pas moi qui le dis M. le président. Un commissaire responsable du patrimoine foncier de notre terre à Rodrigues, c'est lui qui le dit dans l'express.

Of course!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Address the Chair!

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the government in power may have received a lot of money from budgets, but sadly they have burdened our country with a lot of problems such as - I won't go into the details of the increase in poverty by exploiting the...

(*Interruptions*)

Oui, oui, pas pleurer, mais faire chagrin, M. le président, parce que je suis un rodriguais de cœur ! J'aime Rodrigues, M. le président ! Quand je parle, M. le président, je parle avec mon cœur et non qu'avec ma bouche, parce que j'aime Rodrigues. C'est mon cœur qui parle et mon esprit. Et c'est pour cela que je suis ici aujourd'hui, M. le président; pour faire entendre la voix de Rodrigues, une vraie voix de Rodrigues ! What have they done?

- i. increase in poverty by exploiting the ignorance of people;
- ii. deterioration of quality of life, no creation of jobs - and the hon. Member himself said it: *pas d'emplois à Rodrigues*;
- iii. collapsing of public health care;
- iv. our environment is being seriously threatened, and
- v. our institutions, under autonomy, being compromised and violated.

Le Mouvement Rodriguais has outrageously become numb to the real needs of the people of Rodrigues. They have become deaf to the cries of our people. They have become blind to the many crises facing Rodrigues, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. They have become mute to the abuse of the positions they hold; to keep those people in a waiting situation. *Et l'honorable membre parlait de sourire sur les lèvres des Rodriguais, parlait de l'espoir à Rodrigues ! Allez dans la rue, allez à Port Mathurin, M. le président, allez à Plaine Corail et à Port Sud Est, et demandez aux gens. Vous connaissez bien Rodrigues, M. le président. Allez demander !*

M. le président, comment oublier les souffrances du peuple de Rodrigues: l'actuelle pénurie du riz ration, du gaz ménagé, l'épisode du riz ration pourri, l'*actual dissallowance* des pensions des invalides ou veuves ou aides sociales, l'épisode du fameux bateau usine Alizée...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr François: Qu'est-il advenu, M. le président, de ce fameux bateau poubelle tant vanté par le ministre de la pêche?

M. le président, il y a trop de scandales sur Rodrigues depuis 2006 ; l'audit l'a rapporté, et c'est sans précédent. Et là, je fais un appel au *Public Accounts Committee* pour présenter son rapport afin d'éclairer le peuple, et s'il faut amender la loi pour prendre des actions contre les fraudeurs, il faut le faire, parce que c'est l'argent public, c'est l'argent du peuple, M. le président.

Les sagas rapportés par l'Audit, M. le président, sur l'irresponsabilité, l'indiscipline fiscale, les gaspillages de l'argent public - and the hon. Member *ine bien dire talère la qui nous*

pou vine cause lor gaspillage. Regardez ce que dit l'Audit, M. le président : la réparation d'un tracteur au coût de R 1.9 millions, alors qu'un tracteur neuf coûte R 1.5 millions.

(*Interruptions*)

Les coûts des autres projets sont doublés, triplés, quadruplés, à l'exemple du bazar qu'il a annoncé - qu'ils vont inaugurer bientôt - qui devait coûter R 30 millions initialement et qui est passé à R 90 millions. C'est l'audit qui le dit ; trois fois plus cher !

(*Interruptions*)

On a annoncé R 10 millions pour le fameux abattoir l'année dernière, et on n'a rien dépensé. Où est l'abattoir? L'abattoir annoncé à R 9 millions va coûter R 39 millions, M. le président ; quatre fois plus cher. Et on se demande pourquoi. La non transparence dans des compagnies d'État privées - comme je l'ai dit auparavant, il y a une mafia, plus particulièrement au niveau de la *Rodrigues Water Company* qui bouffe sans transparence l'argent public, et actuellement il y a de nombreux cas intéressants pour l'ICAC ; les cas suspects de fraude et de corruption pour le paiement des *fees* d'examen par des personnes qui ne sont plus éligibles et possèdent des richesses.

On assiste encore aujourd'hui, M. le président, - à deux mois de la dissolution de l'Assemblée régionale - à des nominations des conseillers proches des politiciens au pouvoir.

The Deputy Speaker: May I inform the hon. Member that 45 minutes had been allotted to him, and I understand that he has exhausted his time. If the hon. Member could please just conclude!

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the situation is that I have so much to say on Rodrigues.

The Deputy Speaker: Alright!

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is difficult, as there is so much to talk about Rodrigues, and this is the only voice for Rodrigues.

The Deputy Speaker: I am giving you the latitude to talk, but you are aware that you have exhausted your time.

Mr François: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I don't have too long to go, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Le Mouvement Rodriguais, under the conflicting leadership of the Chief Commissioner, its leader, and the vice-leader, has lost its way. Rodrigues doit prospérer, M. le président, au

bénéfice de chaque citoyen et pour le pays en général, avec une mentalité productrice et communautaire, mais pas une mentalité d'assistés et d'individualisme. C'est ça la leçon rodriguaise, M. le président. Rodrigues n'a pas besoin de cette mentalité rétrograde de "*mo pou travail juste pou mo dimounes, ou dimounes kine vote mwa*", prônée par le Mouvement Rodriguais.

Je me souviens, M. le président, des promesses hors de l'ordinaire du parti au pouvoir, comme la plantation de un million de plants de coco, dynamiter le Grand Pâté qui fait un kilomètre de large, quatre kilomètres de long, avec une profondeur de deux à 30 mètres. Un ministre de cette Assemblée est venu dire aux Rodriguais qu'on allait dynamiter le Grand Pâté, M. le président. Et, hier ou avant-hier soir, je regardais la télé, et un expert au niveau de la MPA a dit qu'on n'allait pas dynamiter le Grand Pâté, parce que cela protège Port Mathurin et que c'est naturel. Je félicite cet expert de la MPA qui a compris et, nous, au niveau de Rodrigues, au niveau de l'OPR, on a dit qu'on ne pouvait pas toucher à ce Grand Pâté. Pourtant, le ministre est venu dire à la population qu'on va dynamiter le Grand Pâté.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross-talking, please!

Mr François: L'élevage de conoconos, bambaras et autres ; enlever la boue de la mer avec des pelleteuses, des excavateurs ! Quelques semaines de cela, lors d'une inauguration, il dit, et je cite

'Nous allons encourager les Rodriguais pour aller faire l'élevage des perdrix pour attirer les touristes.'

Je ne sais pas si vous savez ce qu'est le perdrix. Le perdrix est un oiseau dévastateur. Voilà le terme. Et c'est un responsable politique !

M. le président, il y a aussi le problème d'*unemployment in Rodrigues, which has reached an unprecedented low level, job loss, exodus with all the consequences of loss of life of our fellows in Mauritius.*

On assiste encore en ce moment même à des cas de licenciements discriminatoires dans l'industrie touristique, les abus par certains employeurs, basés sur les lacunes du *Industrial Relations Act*.

As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rodrigues is being misled rather than lead, misguided rather than guided, insulted rather than consulted.

J'ai demandé au Premier ministre, on many occasions, to set up a Commission of Inquiry for Rodrigues, to which he did not agree upon, and he is relying on the Office of Good Governance. Mais la situation s'aggrave, M. le président. Il faut le faire.

The Vox Populi, Vox Dei, la voix du people, la voix de Dieu ; et le peuple ne restera pas tranquille, M. le président. Je ne sais pas combien de minutes vous allez m'accorder, M. le président. Encore cinq minutes ?

The Deputy Speaker: No! One minute!

Mr François: One minute is not enough, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have scrutinised the (PSIP) Public Sector Investment Programme 2012-2016.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has been allowed 45 minutes. He is up to 56 minutes now; if the Opposition Chief Whip is agreeable, I will give him two more minutes. The Member is so passionate !

Mr François: M. le président, permettez-moi de rappeler à la Chambre la mauvaise mathématique, du parti au pouvoir, qui, dans le budget, M. le *président*, a présenté 15 kms de route pour R 70 million.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Conclude your speech!

Mr François : Je dois dire que je suis satisfait de la décision de l'honorable Premier ministre qui a confirmé sa position pour enlever Rodrigues dans le *new Local Government Bill 2011*, et la décision de ne pas aller de l'avant avec le 'Kréol Moricien' dans les écoles Rodriguaises. Là, je note aussi l'intervention du *Leader* de l'Opposition,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker : Order !

Mr François : ... des interventions d'autres honorables membres de l'Assemblée, tels que l'honorable Aimée, l'honorable Nagalingum, et toute la société civile de Rodrigues, l'OPR ; le peuple à parlé, la rue à parlé, malgré les chiffres - erronés – avancés par la police. Aujourd'hui, M. le président, c'est cela la démocratie au sein de la République en respectant notre culture, notre spécificité et notre identité.

M. le président, je vais dire quelques mots sur Agaléga. C'est une petite île. Je propose quelque chose d'importante pour les îles de l'océan indien, les îles de la République. Il faut

qu'on organise un 'Un Colloque des Iles' avec toutes les îles, Chagos, Agaléga, Rodrigues, pour voir quelle avancée au niveau de la République. Parce que, M. le président, une nation - Agaléga est un peuple et aujourd'hui la participation de toutes ces îles va créer ce que j'appelle cette fraternité à l'Etat Archipel de Maurice.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I find myself - through this budget debate - at the junction where paths are either leading towards the sustainability of our nationhood, while there is a strong will in Rodrigues for the horrid of the *Mouvement Rodriguais* rule will soon come to an end, I cannot ignore the irreparable harm this administration is causing to Rodrigues.

So, today, I do not just address those who are morbidly visionless and absolutely apathetic towards the hardship of the people of Rodrigues, I am addressing the people of this nation.

I am talking to the people of this country because they represent the fundamental reason for our existence and as their representatives. The struggle of the people of Rodrigues has reached a decisive moment, where the mandate of the present Rodrigues Government is nearly over.

M. le président, Rodrigues a besoin de sortir de son état d'urgence économique - comme mentionné par Mgr Harel – et sortir de l'état de négligence pour retrouver le vrai chemin de responsabilité et de solidarité vers l'émergence d'une Rodrigues autonome nouvelle.

Heureusement, que l'espoir du peuple de Rodrigues repose dans leur croyance en un vrai changement pour consolider et réussir l'autonomie de Rodrigues, avec l'OPR au commande, sous le *leadership* de Serge Clair.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: We break for half an hour.

At 4.44 p.m. the sitting was suspended

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

(5.18 p.m.)

The Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues (Mr L. J. Von-Mally) : M. le président, permettez-moi, tout d'abord, de féliciter le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval, pour l'excellent budget qu'il a présenté à cette Chambre.

Je peux d'emblée dire qu'il a frappé un grand coup. Ce budget a été très apprécié à Maurice comme à Rodrigues et je peux aussi dire, M. le président, que son style a ébloui pas

mal de gens. Il a agréablement surpris car il a choisi d'être positif malgré une situation économique mondiale qui tend vers le négatif. Avec la façon dont il a préparé le budget, je ne doute pas que ce budget va donner du tonus à l'investissement.

M. le président, après avoir écouté l'honorable membre de l'Opposition qui vient de Rodrigues, it is *as if everything is doom and gloom in Rodrigues*.

M. le président, doit-on comprendre qu'après 24 ans passés au pouvoir - serait-ce l'héritage qu'ils nous ont laissé ? Eux qui ont été au pouvoir pendant 24 ans ! Je ne vais pas prendre beaucoup de temps pour lui répondre mais tout à l'heure, en parlant de Rodrigues, je vais avoir l'occasion de parler sur certains points qu'il a faits ici. D'emblée, je dois dire ceci. Alors que le parti de l'honorable membre parle souvent du respect de l'autonomie, mais je me demande s'ils respectent l'autonomie eux-mêmes. Parce que si on veut respecter l'autonomie, ce qui doit être discuté à Rodrigues, doit être fait là-bas, pas ici. Est-ce que le député de l'opposition est en train de respecter l'autonomie quand il ne laisse pas discuter les problèmes de Rodrigues à Rodrigues et venir le faire ici. Je ne vais pas le suivre dans cette voie, je vais laisser débattre la plupart des questions relatives à Rodrigues par les membres de l'assemblée régionale et je vais m'en tenir au secteur qui touche à la république de Maurice en général.

M. le président, je vais commencer par parler du secteur de la pêche avant de parler sur Rodrigues. Je sais qu'il y a une limite, on m'a dit que je dois être court. Je vais essayer de le faire, M. le president.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is relevant to stress that at a time when the global economic meltdown is having serious ramifications on vulnerable economies like ours, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development has managed to craft a strategy with a profound sense of responsibility not only to face the economic crisis but also to ensure that the core interests of the nation are safeguarded. Indeed, it is worth pointing out that the vulnerable groups of our society have been given a careful and special consideration. Out of the 181 measures announced in the Budget Speech, 75 are dedicated to social welfare. Maybe some people have not noted that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the fisheries sector like the other economic sectors, is fully committed to contribute its share to the overall development of the economy. The strategy of my Ministry is geared towards combining the best of our human and natural resources to create opportunities for sustainable development and growth in the fisheries sector. Focusing on growth and innovation

in fisheries implies that we are mindful and cautious of the current state of our fisheries stocks and we are committed to explore new available opportunities in the EEZ, our exclusive economic zone, for the benefit of our stakeholders.

Fisheries and related activities in the national economy of Mauritius comprise all the supply chain impacts upstream and downstream of fishing and currently contribute approximately 1.3% of GDP, mainly reflected either in the processing or in the service sector. Direct labour force stands around 12,500 with an indirect labour force of around 20,000. Over the last four years, export of fish and fish products has increased to around 26% in terms of value and 12% in terms of quantity and representing 14.7% of the national export valued at 10.1 billion rupees. Total turnover in the fisheries sector amounts to some Rs19.8 billion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there have been many changes and challenges over the years in the fisheries sector. We have no choice than to navigate through the tides of change and we have to ensure that the changes we make are for the better. As spelt out in the 2011 Budget Speech, the Fisheries Master Plan for Mauritius, Rodrigues and the outer islands has been formulated following wide consultations with the fishermen community, operators of the industry and other stakeholders through '*les Assises de la Pêche*', organised by my Ministry both in Mauritius and Rodrigues. Given that the plan has socio-economic implications, Government has recommended the setting up of a multi-sectoral committee to have an in-depth study of the plan prior to its implementation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are all aware that capture fisheries worldwide has reached its summum of exploitation. Aquaculture both inland and marine, accounts for nearly 46% of total world fish supply and the surging demand for fish continues to grow and has mainly been met by aquaculture, which is the way forward to increase fish production. So, Mauritius has no other option than to follow this trend.

I am informed that the Ministry of fisheries engaged in marine ranching in the early 1990s with the production of marine shrimps and seabream under the outgoing Japan Technical Assistance Programme. I am pleased to note that the Ministry of Finance is conscious of the need to move towards marine ranching and the replenishment of the lagoons for the benefit of our fishers at large and have earmarked to this effect a sum of Rs10 m. for this endeavour. I would like to reassure the House that in no point in time, we shall have recourse to exotic species for

marine ranching. Focus will be on the local indigenous species namely, seabream, commonly known as *gueule pavé*, *mullet* and *cordonniers*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has expressed concerns about the marine ranching programme. Allow me now to shed light on the methodology to be adopted by my Ministry in the implementation of this programme. Restocking of the lagoon will be done through the release of juveniles of only local fish species in certain specific areas, such as marine parks and fishing reserves, which are marine protected areas. This ranching programme will create protected breeding populations that will eventually rebuild the depleted stocks in the lagoon. The successes of the marine ranching programme will undoubtedly depend on effective enforcement and management of the fisheries. The fishermen community will be taken on board in this programme and I can add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we will also proceed with post larval capture whereby we will capture post larvae just outside the lagoon and this can be used either to rear ornamental fish, we can choose among them ornamental fish which can be sold at high prices. We can also raise fish for food and also fish as bait and most of these fish captured will be used to replenish the lagoon, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Albion Fisheries Research Centre is currently implementing a pilot project for the culture of crabs. Should the project be successful, selected barachois around the island will then be stocked with crablets. Thereafter, crablets will also be made available to fishermen for culture within an appropriate framework.

M. le président, il faut dire qu'en ce qui concerne l'aquaculture à Maurice on est en retard et on doit rattraper ce retard. Dans des pays comme la Malaisie, les crabes on les élève individuellement dans des boîtes. A Maurice on veut essayer ce système là. Pourquoi individuellement ? Parce que les crabes sont des cannibales, ils se mangent entre eux. Donc, on doit suivre l'exemple de la Malaisie et on commence déjà à rattraper ce retard. Donc, à Albion on a commencé à produire des petits crabes, the crablets.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Sea cucumber farming has its raison-d'être being given that these creatures help to purify the lagoon. In addition, it has not only a high market demand but also fetches high value particularly in the Far East countries. This explains the rationale of my Ministry to embark in the production of sea cucumber in our lagoons, destined as an alternative economic opportunity for our fishers who will benefit from the culture through the export market.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are all aware of the importance of coral reefs in our ecosystem. They protect shorelines. They protect against erosion and, most importantly, they serve as habitats for fish and other marine species, including commercial ones. Research has shown the medicinal properties of corals. In addition, coral reefs are also a major tourist attraction. Loss of coral reefs means loss of biodiversity, therefore, protecting the coral reef ecosystem is a must.

Mr Speaker Sir, in this perspective, my Ministry is already implementing a project on the rehabilitation of coral reefs at three sites in Mauritius and two in Rodrigues further to a successful pilot project conducted in 2008. The creation of coral farms and reef sanctuaries will help to replace the bleached corals in the reef and enhance the marine ecosystem, habitats and biodiversity. In addition, it could also contribute to the development of a new export industry and our small and medium enterprises can benefit from same. Of course, corals can be used as ornamentals also, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, during the course of this week, my Ministry embarked on a pilot seaweed culture project in the lagoon area of Albion. In fact, it was Thursday last, 10 November. I must here acknowledge the contribution of the Mauritius Research Council and the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science Research and Technology for their joint collaboration with officers of my Ministry to move into the pilot seaweed farming project. My hon. friend, hon. Rajesh Jeetah, was there for the launching and I thank him for the help that he is giving in this field.

Should this project proved to be feasible, it will give another boost to the fisheries sector given that culture of seaweed over one hectare surface of the lagoon may generate revenue to the tune of Rs75,000 and our fishermen can group themselves to take advantage of seaweed culture. The invaluable expertise of Tanzania obtained in this venture is highly commended and this pilot project is being replicated in Rodrigues and not later than Monday last, Mr Speaker, Sir, on 14 November, we launched this project in Rodrigues also. We can say that worldwide about 17.3 million metric tonnes of seaweed is produced mostly in the south-eastern countries and in China.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has always been sensible to the needs of the fishermen community at large and no stone is being left unturned to continually improve and facilitate their activities. Let me just make a *survol* on the plethora of accompanying measures already being granted to fishermen. If you would allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will enumerate them -.

Bad weather allowance: Rs224 per bad weather day, that is, some Rs120 m. is being spent for both Mauritius and Rodrigues annually, and if I am not mistaken, this is the only country where fishermen get bad weather allowance, Mr Speaker, Sir. When I was in Mozambique and talked of bad weather allowance to the authorities, they told me if we are mad in Mauritius to give bad weather allowance to our fishermen. I told them here, we are doing it.

A close season allowance to nets fishermen: Rs224 per day over a period of five months - some Rs5 m. yearly for both Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Rs10,000 is granted to the family of fishermen lost at sea in a case to case basis.

100% rate of bad weather allowance to fishermen admitted to a clinic or hospital on a case to case basis.

A compensation package for the voluntary surrender of a large net or gill net licence.

A grant for death to a fisherman at sea Rs200,000.

Scholarships to children of fishermen for studies up to tertiary level - some Rs1.5 m. is earmarked annually.

Free training courses at FiTEC with a stipend of Rs300 per training day.

Rs5000 is granted to a fisherman whose fishing boat or outboard engine is accidentally damaged at sea during a fishing trip.

Registered fishermen are eligible to a financial assistance of 14 days as sickness allowance when they are hospitalised for 14 consecutive days or more.

Fish aggregating devices – *dispositifs de concentration de poissons* - are deployed in the outer lagoon to encourage fishermen to shift to the FAD fishery.

In addition to this, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Budget now comes in with a series of new measures to consolidate the existing ones for further helping the fishermen community.

The abolition of import permit with respect to fish and fish products is a laudable initiative and it, in fact, meets the expectations of stakeholders in the fisheries sector. This is in line with Government's policy for the promotion of trade facilitation through the elimination of non-tariff barriers. Moreover, I wish to underline that my Ministry will continue to exert strict control on imports of fish and fish products at the point of entry in the country.

The removal of the 10% customs duty on refrigerated vehicles is another positive step in encouraging fishmongers and fish traders to transport their fish and fish products from various points of sale throughout the islands to the consumer under hygienic conditions. This measure

will further maintain fish quality from capture stage to the plate of the consumer being given that our artisanal fishers are progressively using ice flakes during their fishing trips. This goes in line with FAOs recommendations regarding good practices for fish handling and marketing.

To better harness the economic potential of our marine resources, Government will invest in cutting edge technologies. This measure will definitely give a boost to value addition in the seafood sector driven by the use of high technologies which are capital intensive in nature.

All registered fishermen will henceforth benefit from VAT refund on fishing gear, outboard and inboard motors of up to 25 horsepower, lifejackets as well as VHF radios. This measure is a concrete proof of our commitment to assist our fishermen in adopting the necessary equipment to move from the heavily exploited lagoon to offshore resources. All these equipment account for nearly 75% of the capital cost and thus removal of VAT on these items will relieve the fishermen financially.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are all aware of the fact that our fishers are daily exposed to the vagaries of the sea and indeed fishing is a risky activity. We are conscious of the dangers associated with fishing and my Ministry is leaving no stone unturned to equip fishers with the appropriate safety and security equipment. In this regard, the removal of VAT on VHF radios and lifejackets will further reinforce security and safety of fishers at sea. Use of VHF radios will serve as a communication tool for fishermen particularly in times of distress at sea.

I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has over the years distributed freely life jackets to fishers of Mauritius and Rodrigues. Since 2004, all new fishers joining the fishing activity have to follow an intensive course at the Fisheries Training and Extension Centre and upon completion of which they are offered free of charge a lifejacket. Hon. Barbier asked whether we are getting lifejackets, I hope now that he will rest assured.

I also wish to inform the House that my Ministry is coming up shortly with regulations for security and safety of fishermen at sea. Mr Speaker, Sir, as the stocks in the lagoon are under pressure from excess of fishing efforts, my Ministry is encouraging fishermen to operate on offshore fishing grounds. Fishing in those areas will require larger vessels with higher fish hold capacity and with more fishermen on board. To this effect, there is need for the regrouping of fishermen into cooperatives to maximise benefits from offshore fishing. I wish to underline that semi-industrial fishing in the offshore area of Mauritius involves an investment of nearly Rs8 m.

The removal of VAT on semi-industrial vessel will therefore encourage fishermen to group themselves to take advantage of this measure for embarking in the offshore demersal fishery.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the measure related to the identification of a strategic partner in the operations of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre, I must welcome this bold initiative which will strengthen the ongoing research activities for the benefit of our stakeholders. I am pleased to inform the House that my Ministry has recently carried out a thorough review of the ongoing research activities with the assistance of the Indian Ocean Commission. I am awaiting the report following which the recommendations thereof will be aligned with the budgetary measure enunciated.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the FAD issue, I wish to inform the House that the Fisheries Training and Extension Centre of my Ministry will pursue with the deployment of FADs jointly with fishermen in the outer lagoon areas. FADs will be deployed beyond the 20 nautical miles from the mainland for other users thereby avoiding conflicts with fishermen. Besides the ongoing training programmes, fishermen will be trained in the use of the newly designed and adapted collapsible traps for the banks fishery. Such traps will be an alternative mode of fishing on the banks compared to the one presently been practised.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regional cooperation is a key part of my Ministry's policy given that it is a major contributor to social economy and cultural growth. It provides the necessary platform to engage in practical and pragmatic cooperation to address many challenges in the fisheries sector along with safeguarding our economic interests.

In addition, my Ministry has been active in most of the regional fisheries management bodies to which we are party to and is strongly defending the core interests of our fisheries sector. Regional and bilateral cooperation have contributed substantially in terms of financial and technical assistance along with capacity building for the sustainable development and management of the fisheries sector including the fight against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing which we normally call IUU fishing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of national pride to note that, for the first time, Mauritius is chairing the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation which we call RFMO. This is not only a testimony of the credibility of Mauritius in that Commission, but also demonstrates the commitment of Mauritius in fisheries management. Mr Speaker Sir, Fisheries Protection Officers of my Ministry along with the technical staff of the

Fisheries Management Division of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre participate in the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Programme of the Indian Ocean Commission. I am pleased to inform the House that, during the joint surveillance patrols under the Indian Ocean Commission, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Programme in our Exclusive Economic Zone, four foreign fishing vessels have been booked for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and been fined for the offence in accordance with the provisions of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act. As a date, the total fine amounts to Rs10.8 m. Moreover, during another surveillance mission executed jointly on board of the Indian navy vessel 'Shardal', the National Coast Guard and the Fisheries Protection Service arrested a foreign fishing vessel in our EEZ for illegal fishing. The case lodged in court is ongoing, Mr Speaker, Sir.

As part of the fisheries management strategy, my Ministry is embarking on the preparation of a fisheries management plan for the banks fishery with the support of the FAO and the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Project, that is, SWIOFP, based on the principle of ecosystem approach to fisheries. This plan will address social, economic and environmental issues in the banks fishery. A participatory approach will be used in the formulation of the plan for the management of the resource. Co-management is the appropriate mechanism where the industry and Government work together and share joint responsibility for managing and developing fisheries resources.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is also worth highlighting that three fishermen including one from Rodrigues proceeded to Mozambique in July 2011 where they learnt co-management and microfinance from their fellow counterparts. I am informed that the three fishermen will shortly come up with a similar microfinance projects for the fishermen community under the aegis of the Fishermen Investment Trust.

Mr Speaker, Sir, export of fish and fish products has to adhere to stringent market requirements in terms of standards, norms and quality. Traceability and eco-labelling are equally vital for the export of fish and fish products. I must here underline that the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission have grouped themselves with a view to pooling resources to safeguard their interests on the international market and such a grouping is commendable. I am also informed that the Indian Ocean Tuna Operators would develop a common South West Indian Ocean label to reflect traceability, eco-labelling and sustainability of their products.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also wish to inform the House that following a mission that I made in Brisbane, Australia, last year the Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association is relocating its activities from Cape Town to Mauritius in December this year. In fact, I had a meeting with the Chairman of the Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association on 04 November last and he confirmed that three vessels would start landing their catch in Port Louis as from this December and some 25 vessels will come to Mauritius next year. They will be posted in Mauritius. Arrangements have been made with the local seafood operators for the conduct of a pilot auction of fish on board of these vessels where Mauritian operators would be invited to bid pending the operationalisation of the Fish Auction Market. Here, I wish to point out that an expression of interest is in the process of being launched for the operationalisation of the Fish Auction Market. In the same line, Japan has agreed to train our local auctioneers in the seafood hub for the sustainability of operations of the Fish Auction Market. I would like to add, Mr Speaker, Sir. With so many fishing vessels coming to Port Louis, this will provide plenty of jobs to Mauritians be it the dry-dock for the repair of vessels, be it for refuelling and also for processing of fish. All these activities will provide plenty of jobs to our fishermen and to other people.

In March 2012, a joint Mauritian-Japanese venture will start, for the first time ever in Mauritius, the production of sashimi for subsequent export to Japan. This is part of the diversification strategy of product development in the seafood hub and opening up of new markets for our seafood sector. Concerning the FPA, the fisheries partnership agreement, Mr Speaker, Sir, discussions are presently under way for the negotiation of a fisheries partnership agreement with the European Union.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I seize this opportunity to clarify certain comments lately made regarding the fisheries agreement with the EU and the seemingly non availability of tuna around the fish aggregating devices.

First, no agreement with the EU has been concluded yet.

Second, all foreign fishing licences granted to non EU vessels have for condition that they should operate beyond 50 nautical miles for Japanese vessels and seventy five nautical miles for Taiwanese, South Koreans, Malaysians, Indonesian vessels from the base line of Mauritius. Exception to this rule applies to licences issued to Seychelles under the bilateral fishing agreement whereby the fishing zone is 14 nautical miles from the baseline of the mainland and 15 nautical miles from the outer islands. In contrast, FADs are deployed at a

distance of 3 to 12 nautical miles from the baseline of the mainland. This clearly demonstrates that foreign fishing vessels are not licensed to fish around the FADs set for our fishermen only, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there have been repeated criticisms against the Fisheries Protection Service of my Ministry. Let me seize this opportunity to inform the House that my Ministry has already embarked on an overall reorganization of the Fisheries Protection Service. As at date, this service is manned by a pool of 203 Fisheries Protection Officers, posted in the 15 fisheries posts around the island, the Port State Control Unit, the marine park stations, the Fisheries Training and Extension Centre, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre, the Prosecution Unit and at the Ministry. The Fisheries Protection Service operates on seven days round the clock shift system. The Fisheries Protection Service Unit carried out some 4,331 patrols from the start of this year up to September, both in the lagoon and along the coast and recorded 167 picked up cases. 58 cases of illegal activities are being prosecuted. You will all concur with me that this limited pool of Fisheries Protection Service staff has a direct bearing on the effective monitoring of the fishing activities in the lagoon around the island. Nevertheless, to address this issue, my Ministry has taken the following measures to better equip the Fisheries Protection Service in the performance of their duties –

- (a) 4 patrol boats and 2 vehicles for the flying squad have been procured in the past two years;
- (b) Capacity building of our FPS officers on an ongoing basis;
- (c) A hotline for complaints from the public has been made operational at the Mahebourg Fisheries Post, the number is 8001011. Here, I would like to make a pressing appeal to one and all to make optimum use of this service and to be courageous enough to report cases of illegal fishing, and
- (d) Vacant posts are being filled in.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to further address complaints from the public, I have given instructions for an overall reshuffling of all Fisheries Protection Service officers. As a reinforcement measure, this budget provides for an exchange programme between the Fisheries Protection Service in Rodrigues and the mainland Mauritius.

Such an initiative will not only promote the sharing of knowledge and skills, but will also expose the officers to a new working environment for the effective delivery of the service.

During the course of next week, my Ministry will be having consultations with the National Coast Guard, the Commissioner of Police along with the Fisheries Protection Service officers to identify ways and means to synergise efforts in tracking illegal fishing in the lagoons and bring contraveners to justice.

In addition, Mr Speaker, Sir, our Vessel Monitoring System based at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre continuously tracks the fishing activities and movements of these vessels on a two-hour basis. As at date, not a single case of irregularity has been recorded. Such information can be counterchecked with the VMS of the National Coast Guard.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the reported non-availability of tuna around FADs at this period of time may be due to fluctuations in the migratory pattern and abundance associated with prevailing oceanic, climatic and environmental conditions as has occurred in the past and such situations are beyond our control.

M. le président, j'ai cinq minutes de plus, je vais essayer de faire vite. Malheureusement, concernant Rodrigues, le membre qui nous a attaqués n'est pas là. M. le président, le budget a été très bien accueilli à Rodrigues comme l'a si bien dit mon ami, l'honorable Christian Leopold. C'est la première fois dans l'histoire de Rodrigues que le budget a dépassé la barre de R 2.2 milliards, M. le président. Bien sûr, on a organisé une conférence de presse à Rodrigues et jusqu'à présent l'opposition n'a rien eu à dire. Ils essaient de critiquer sur des peccadilles. Certains savent faire de l'opposition, mais d'autres, ils opposent même quand il n'y a rien à opposer.

M. le président, quand le ministre des finances m'a parlé du projet de câble optique, quand il m'a dit qu'on va investir R 600 millions pour connecter Rodrigues à Maurice via le câble optique, il était très excité. Il m'a dit : le Premier ministre lui m'a dit qu'il faut qu'on connecte Rodrigues avec ce câble optique. Je voudrais, dès le départ, remercier le Premier ministre et le ministre des finances pour ce grand geste envers Rodrigues.

Mon collègue, l'honorable Christian Leopold, a parlé à propos des questions que j'ai posées il y a quelques années de cela, en 2002. Il y avait un autre gouvernement à cette époque. Le câble SAFE allait passer presque quasiment sur Rodrigues. J'ai posé une question parlementaire à l'époque mais pourquoi on ne connecte pas Rodrigues ? A cette époque - on n'était pas au gouvernement. La réponse qu'on avait eue était: cela coûte cher. Mais si, à l'époque cela coutait cher, je ne crois pas que cela pouvait coûter plus que R 600 millions. A

l'époque cela pouvait couter R 25 millions ou R 40 millions et ils n'ont pas voulu le faire, M. le président. Aujourd'hui, on traverse une période de crise économique mondiale. Le gouvernement a fait l'effort d'investir R 600 millions. A l'époque, en 2002, il n'y avait pas de crise et on a trouvé que c'est cher. Aujourd'hui il y a la crise et on débourse R 600 m. Qu'est-ce que cela démontre, M. le président ? Cela démontre que *action speaks louder than words*. Et cela, le peuple de Rodrigues l'a bien compris. Ils savent qui sont ceux qui sont dans leur intérêt et qui sont ceux qui ne font que parler. Ceux qui n'ont que des visions et qui ne font que rêver.

L'honorable membre qui m'a précédé, a parlé de vision qu'ils avaient. M. le président, la façon dont il a décrit Rodrigues c'est comme-ci tout va mal, que Rodrigues ne produit rien, que le problème d'eau ne remonte que depuis que le MR est arrivé au pouvoir. M. le président, ils oublient qu'ils étaient au pouvoir depuis 24 ans. Quel héritage nous ont-ils légué ? Ils ont été au pouvoir pendant 24 ans et aujourd'hui ils viennent dire qu'il y a des problèmes partout. Il est vrai que pendant quatre ans au pouvoir avec certaines personnes au sein du gouvernement régional ne voulaient pas faire les choses comme on voulait. Ce n'est qu'après cela, c'est-à-dire, il y a, à peine une année qu'on a eu un nouveau gouvernement régional à Rodrigues, un nouveau souffle. Le budget qu'on a eu démontre que la confiance a été rétablie entre l'assemblée régionale et l'assemblée nationale, M. le président.

L'honorable membre a parlé de l'agriculture. Il a dit que son *leader* - qui est assis quelque part. Je crois que s'il ne parle pas de son *leader* à tout bout de champ, il va être mis à la porte de son parti dès qu'il arrive à Rodrigues. Il a dit que son leader avait parlé de : '*manze seki ou planté, pas compte lors manzé sorti dehors, compte lors manzé ki ou produire*'. Fair enough !

Mais la différence avec nous, M. le président, nous n'avons pas fait que parler ; il y a l'action. A Rodrigues, avec l'aide de mon ami, l'honorable Rajesh Jeetah, qui nous a aidés à travers un gros tracteur - je crois que cela a coûté à peu près R 10 millions - on a fait des merveilles. Alors, qu'à l'époque de l'ancien gouvernement à Rodrigues, ils produisaient à peu près 300 tonnes de maïs. En une année, on a produit plus de mille tonnes de maïs, M. le président. Et la production augmente année après année, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Cette année on va produire davantage. Il y a le *derocking* qui est en cours. Les planteurs rodriguais sont en passe de devenir plus professionnels. On leur donne les moyens de produire plus. Entre l'Assemblée régionale et l'Assemblée nationale, avec cette atmosphère qui règne, on

est en train actuellement - et ce n'est pas par hasard - de donner à Rodrigues les facilités nécessaires pour que Rodrigues apporte sa pierre à l'édifice économique de la République, M. le président. Les Rodriguais apprécient, et les Rodriguais disent merci. Ce budget, comme je vous l'ai dit, non seulement porte l'empreinte du ministre des finances, mais aussi l'empreinte du Premier ministre qui surveille de près tout ce qui se fait à Rodrigues, et pour cela aussi on le remercie. On peut dire que le gouvernement est en train de miser sur la solvabilité de Rodrigues à moyen et long termes. On est en train de nous donner les moyens nécessaires pour faire progresser Rodrigues.

Laissez-moi retourner au câble optique, M. le président. Cela va réduire l'indépendance satellitaire de Rodrigues, cela va créer de nombreux emplois. Très bientôt, je suis sûr qu'il y aura des centres d'appels à Rodrigues, des *disaster recovery centres*. Déjà, il y a pas mal de Rodriguais qui sont formés et qui travaillent ici. Donc, ils pourraient ainsi retourner à Rodrigues. Par cette décision, Rodrigues s'est rapprochée de Maurice, et Rodrigues se trouve rapprochée du reste du monde, M. le président.

Mon collègue a parlé des *SMEs*. A Rodrigues il y a beaucoup de *SMEs* et nous comptons beaucoup sur eux. Cette idée de réduire le taux d'intérêt à 8.5% sur les prêts va grandement aider les Rodriguais. Les Rodriguais vont aussi bénéficier des R 500,000 qu'on va donner aux patients qui vont se faire soigner à l'étranger. On a parlé des facilités de logement pour les patients venant se faire soigner à Maurice. Rodrigues va aussi bénéficier des R 10 millions du budget pour repeupler le lagon ainsi que les R 22 millions pour le *food security* et pour l'agriculture. Par ailleurs, les pêcheurs de Rodrigues vont aussi bénéficier de toutes les facilités que les pêcheurs de Maurice vont avoir. Le budget fait aussi mention de 400 unités de maisons. Et le membre de l'Opposition ose parler des 400 unités de maisons et qu'il faut le faire comme ceci ou comme cela, alors qu'à leur époque, quand ils étaient au pouvoir, on avait droit à des petites boîtes d'allumettes, M. le président ! Sans toilettes, sans réservoirs et sans captage d'eau.

(Interruptions)

Concernant le port, mon collègue en a parlé, mais je voudrais apporter une petite rectification. Quand on a parlé de l'ouverture du port, il y a le Grand Pâté qui ferme l'entrée de Port Mathurin avec une passe pour les navires. Mais le Grand Pâté continue à grossir, M. le président. Il y a un *outcrop*, un pâté devant le Grand Pâté mais qui forme partie du Grand Pâté ! Mais c'est aussi un grand pâté, et il fait 200 mètres de long.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, si on veut ouvrir le port aux navires de croisière, il faut faire ce qu'il faut ! A Maurice, pour ouvrir le port de Port Louis, combien de grands pâtes on a dû éliminer ? Aux Comores ou aux Seychelles, pour ouvrir le port, combien de grands pâtes on a cassé ?

(Interruptions)

Ce n'est pas moi qui va casser cela ; ce sont des experts, M. le président, avec le *Mauritius Ports Authority*. Il y a un *outcrop* juste devant le Grand Pâté, et on va l'éliminer parce qu'à l'époque - c'est bon de le dire - quand on a fait l'étude géologique et hydrologique, il y a de cela 50 ans, le Grand Pâté qui se trouve à l'entrée de Port Mathurin était situé à neuf mètres de fond. Aujourd'hui, cela a poussé et c'est arrivé à 6.9 mètres, M. le président. Et quand on sait que le *Mauritius Pride* a besoin d'à peu près sept mètres d'eau, on peut dire que c'est déjà dangereux pour le *Mauritius Pride* et le *Mauritius Trochetia*. Donc, il faut faire vite ; cela urge. Il faut qu'on cesse de faire de la démagogie là-dessus.

Pour l'aéroport, c'est la même chose, l'honorable membre de l'opposition a dit qu'il faut faire des études. Bien sûr, comme on l'a fait pour le présent *airstrip*, on va faire des études, on ne va pas aller avec une pioche et des bulldozers pour tout casser. Il y aura des études. Ce sont des gens sérieux qui vont faire cela. Mais, pendant 25 ans, il y en a qui ont dit 'on ne veut pas agrandir l'aéroport'. Pourquoi ? On a dit que Rodrigues n'est pas à vendre. Ils ne voulaient pas que les touristes viennent à Rodrigues, M. le président. Ils ne le voulaient pas. Je me rappelle que, lors d'une conférence, il y avait plein d'étrangers, de touristes français, réunionnais, allemands, son *leader* s'est levé pour dire 'Rodrigues n'est pas à vendre' ! Il faut savoir ce qu'on veut. Veut-on vendre Rodrigues comme une destination touristique ? Oui ou non ! Il faut cesser avec cette démagogie, M. le président.

On a parlé des cinq bateaux de pêche - ce sera une petite révolution. En fait, Rodrigues est en train de vivre une réelle révolution en termes de production. Le MR, depuis qu'il est arrivé au pouvoir, pousse vers la production. On veut que Rodrigues produise plus pour justement apporter sa pierre au développement économique de la République. On veut aider les pêcheurs. On ne fait pas que parler. A travers le programme IFAD-MARS, il y a cinq bateaux de pêche de 15 mètres qui vont partir pour Rodrigues à la fin de ce mois, M. le président, pour cinq coopératives de pêche. Donc, du côté de la pêche aussi, il y aura des changements.

Concernant le RRA, il y en a qui ont parlé disant qu'il faut faire des élections avant d'apporter des amendements. M. le président, avec le *RRA Act* qu'on a actuellement, on a eu droit à sept élections en neuf ans. Je me demande quel pays pourra soutenir cela ! Sept élections ! Je comprends pourquoi, à Maurice, on pense à deux fois avant d'adopter ce système qui donne une petite majorité. Et l'OPR, quand il était au pouvoir, avait dit qu'il faut amender car ce n'est pas bon. L'OPR...

(Interruptions)

Oui, il y avait des transfuges à votre époque, et vous n'avez rien pu faire. Vous avez quitté le gouvernement après trois ans et demi. Il y a eu des transfuges de notre côté aussi, mais on a pu s'arranger pour rester au pouvoir. C'est ça la différence. Mais, on ne doit pas laisser cela continuer. On doit avoir les amendements nécessaires. L'OPR est d'accord, nous sommes d'accord, alors allons-y gaiement. Qu'on fasse les amendements, et qu'on fasse les élections après...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Von-Mally: Celui qui gagne pourra diriger dans la sérénité. Je pense que c'est cela qu'il nous faut, M. le président. Je ne vais pas aller plus loin. Je vais conclure.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is indeed unfortunate that many of our people spend lots of their time criticising instead of putting heads together to find solutions. As Albert Einstein rightly said, and I quote -

'Nothing happens unless something moves'.

This government is incessantly moving and making things happen, Mr Speaker, Sir. Results are tangible and visible, be it on the national and international front. There are many opportunities unfolded in this Budget and we have to make the most of them for the attainment of a resilient and diversified Mauritian economy, with the capacity for sustained and rapid growth.

M. le président, le ministre des finances, l'honorable M. Xavier-Luc Duval, le Premier ministre et tous ceux qui ont aidé à préparer ce budget - car il faut le dire, ce budget a été préparé avec l'apport de tous ceux qui sont de ce côté de la Chambre. L'honorable ministre des finances a essayé de brasser large, d'avoir des consultations à gauche et à droite. C'est son style. Et je crois qu'il faut le féliciter pour cela. Donc, tous ceux qui ont aidé à préparer ce budget,

comment ne pas dire qu'ils sont des vrais patriotes, M. le président. Je suis sûr que c'est ce que l'honorable ministre des finances a voulu démontrer dans ce budget.

Le budget a été très bien accepté à Maurice - j'ai écouté les gens à gauche et à droite. Et à Rodrigues, M. le président, c'est une révolution positive qui est en marche et cela a mis l'Opposition K.O. Je remercie le gouvernement pour cela.

Merci, M. le président.

ANNOUNCEMENT

BUDGET SPEECH - DEBATE - TIME ALLOCATION

Mr Speaker: I have a small announcement to make. At the beginning of the discussion on the Budget, time was allocated to all sides of the House, the Government side and the Opposition side.

We are half way through and we have a number of orators who have not spoken on both sides of the House.

This morning, I spoke to the Government Chief Whip and to the Whip of the Opposition, informing them of the time which is left for both the Government and the Opposition, and the number of orators.

I am afraid, if time is not respected, those who are going to speak at the end will not have enough time to speak. I am going to maintain the time as allocated.

(6.12 p.m.)

Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened to several interventions from hon. Members on the other side of the House. I have witnessed how most of them have pointed *un doigt accusateur* at me and at hon. Pravind Jugnauth.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is indeed sad to see how people of this level can be totally blinded by power, to the point of losing their objectivity *et tomber dans le ridicule*. Either, Mr Speaker, Sir, they have lost their objectivity or deep inside, they acknowledge the truth, but *essayent de se voiler la face*.

Let's take *la Communicatrice du Parti Travailiste*. Has anybody here, in this august Assembly, heard her talking of the Khamajeet affair? Has anybody heard her talking of the hedging saga at the STC? Has anybody heard her talking of tailor made specifications for Med

Point? Has anybody heard her talking of Betamax? No, Mr Speaker, Sir! We should ask ourselves the question: why?

Après la déclaration compromettante de l'honorable Khamajeet, on s'attendait à des commentaires de l'honorable Ms Nita Deepalsing. Elle avait disparu de la circulation. ‘*Chup Chap*’! Silence radio! A tel point que certaines presses se demandent ‘*Kot Nita ?*’. M. le président, c'est l'hypocrisie à son comble.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, you cannot treat an hon. Member hypocrite.

(*Interruptions*)

Nobody will interfere. This is my ruling. The hon. Member should withdraw the word.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I bow to your ruling. I withdraw. *Défendre l'indéfendable, enfoncer la tête dans le sable quand il n'y a plus d'arguments et qu'ils sont coincés ! Mais, attention au retour de la manivelle !*

Mr Speaker, Sir, I joined my colleagues on this side of the House to say *haut et fort*, that the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has disappointed the people of this country. The more so, as some have said that he spent 14 months at the Ministry for Social Integration and that he was supposed to know better *la souffrance des gens pauvres*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what have we seen? A Budget geared for the satisfaction of the ‘fat cats’ of the private sector. The proof lies in the fact that the first two measures announced in the Budget Speech concern the abolition, with immediate effect, of the capital gains tax and the solidarity income tax regarding dividends. So, instead of ‘Putting People First’, it is putting the private sector first. That was his priority and it is a shame for hon. Members, of the other side of the House, who have applauded. That was the agenda of the hon. Minister of Finance! He confirmed his agenda when he came on a private radio to say that there is, I quote -

‘*Retour vers la politique économique des années 2005 à 2010 de l'Alliance Sociale.*’

An economic policy, Mr Speaker, Sir, that lead to an impoverishment of the population as indicated by the Central Statistics Office at that time.

Un retour vers la politique économique ultra libérale avec des jackpots par milliards aux ‘*fat cats*’ du secteur privé est la confirmation que le gouvernement Parti Travalliste/PMSD a tourné le dos au petit peuple comme avec l’Alliance Sociale. This brings me to ask a question, Mr Speaker, Sir: Do the hon. Members on the other side know what they want? They applauded

the introduction of the capital gains tax and the solidarity income tax. This time, they still applauded when these taxes were removed to satisfy the shopping lists of the ‘fat cats’. Out there, the people of this country are asking questions on the real agenda of the Labour Party. The hon. Prime Minister, himself, very often, criticises the ‘fat cats’ of the private sector. Yet, each time we have seen that the hon. Prime Minister has been over-generous to those same ‘fat cats’.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since some hon. Members of this House have deemed it fit to go back down memory lane, let me also remind them, how the *l'Alliance Sociale* Government had been over-generous to the ‘fat cats’.

Sans détour, M. le président, permettez-moi de venir directement à ces cadeaux, par milliards, que le gouvernement de *l'Alliance Sociale* avait consenti aux tout-puissants du secteur privé.

Premier cadeau : la dépréciation volontaire et massive de la Roupie, en 2006, a permis aux gros opérateurs économiques, surtout les secteurs de l’exportation et le tourisme, d’encaisser plus de R 10 milliards.

Deuxième cadeau : plus de R 2 milliards d’économie pour les patrons, quand le *National Pay Council*, mis sur pied par le ministre d’alors, a recommandé une compensation salariale bien au-dessus du taux d’inflation pour deux années consécutives en 2006/2007.

Troisième cadeau : R 3 milliards consenties aux grosses compagnies avec la baisse accélérée de la *corporate tax* de 25% à 15%.

Quatrième cadeau : R 5 milliards à l’industrie sucrière pour financer le *VRS II* et la centralisation.

Cinquième cadeau : R 5 milliards sur dix ans aux secteurs sucriers avec la hausse du prix du sucre sur le marché local.

Sixième cadeau : R 6 milliards de concession fiscale sur les terres que les établissements sucriers vont continuer à morceler suivant le *VRS II*.

Et, septième cadeau : encore R 10 milliards d’argent public avec le *stimulus package*, pour financer le sauvetage des entreprises privées et relancer les activités des opérateurs économiques, notamment à travers des projets infrastructurels.

Soit, M. le président, un total de R 50 milliards sur la période 2006 à 2009. At that time, Mr Speaker, Sir, do you know what was the comment which was made by hon. Ms Deerpalsing? She had lambasted the *l'Alliance Sociale* Government, by publicly stating that I quote –

“Since this Government took office, it has been a one-way street towards the economic elite in terms of handouts”. That was their agenda and now it is confirmed that this agenda has not changed since this budget pursues with the tradition of handouts to the fat cats.

It was, in fact, that agenda, that the former Minister of Finance, hon. Pravind Jugnauth demolished in the 2011 Budget when he came up with measures in favour of the population, while, at the same time, asking the fat cats to pay taxes and share their wealth with the poor. I am asking the question whether the *trahison* of the Labour party against the MSM is not associated with the long-standing tradition of the MSM to favour the working class as opposed to the policy of the Labour party to favour the rich few. Est-ce que le MSM a été sacrifié sur l'autel de la politique ultra libérale du parti Travailliste et du PMSD ?

Mr Speaker, Sir, some Members on the other side, including the Minister of Agro Industry, have said that the MSM is a small *parti*, the MSM is a very small party. Can I just remind the House of the score of the MSM candidates in the last general elections? All of the MSM parliamentarians scored the highest number of votes as compared to the Labour and PMSD candidates. From the results, it was clear that the *petit peuple* had seen in the MSM son défenseur.

Mr Speaker: I do understand that there are several Members of the Government who are going to speak and they will have ample opportunity to rebut one by one what the hon. Member is saying.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: And rightly so, Mr Speaker, Sir, the very first budget presented by hon. Pravind Jugnauth, relieved *le petit peuple du fardeau que lui avait été imposé par le gouvernement de l'Alliance Sociale*. In fact, all the promises as regards taxation, subsidies and direct support were fulfilled, namely the reintroduction of subsidies for SC and HSC examinations for a larger number of students. The income support for our most needy citizens was doubled. Reinstatement of the tripartite negotiations whereby representatives of workers could again sit at the same table with employers and the Government to discuss on salary compensation, income tax reliefs on Housing loans, university fees, the first 60 tons of sugar produced by small planters and subsequently relieving consumers from the burden of the STC hedging saga imposed on them by the *l'Alliance Sociale* Government.

En fait, M. le président l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, en tant que ministre des finances avait mis l'économie au service du pays tout en rectifiant le tir sur les mesures qui avaient rendu

impopulaire le gouvernement de l'Alliance Sociale. Les *ti dimounes* et la classe moyenne avait poussé un grand ouf de soulagement. Peut-être que les travaillistes n'avaient pas apprécié le geste de l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth au profit du petit peuple et quand le ministre des finances, l'honorable Xavier Duval vient dire que pendant 14 mois il n'y avait pas de ministre des finances,

(Interruptions)

Nous comprenons très bien ce qu'il voulait dire, c'est-à-dire que les *fat cats* n'arrivaient pas à s'engraisser. Il est venu à leur rescousse et a pris des mesures pour qu'ils s'engraissent à nouveau aux dépens de la population. Il y a aujourd'hui un gouvernement, M. le président qui a tourné le dos au peuple, qui s'agrippe au pouvoir grâce à deux transfuges. Encore une fois, le parti Travailliste confirme sa tradition de miser sur le transfugisme pour se maintenir au pouvoir coûte que coûte. C'est une culture qui se perpétue, ce n'est pas le peuple qui intéresse le parti Travailliste mais le pouvoir coûte que coûte.

If we look back, we will see that in 1967 the Labour party was in alliance with the IFB and the CAM and when the IFB was revoked, some *transfuges* stayed behind to allow the Labour party to stick to power. The PMSD then joined in 1969 and later was revoked in 1974, some *transfuges* again stayed behind. Tout le temps, M. le président, c'est la même rangaine. Les transfuges nous dirons que c'est dans l'intérêt du pays qu'ils ont cross the floor. Dans l'intérêt du pays, M. le président! If they had not been lured with the post of Minister would the two *transfuges* have crossed the floor? M. le président, quelle contradiction ! Pendant que le ministre des Administrations Régionales souhaite introduire une clause contre le transfugisme dans le *Local Government Bill*, son Premier ministre encourage et accueille au sein de son gouvernement deux transfuges. Deux transfuges au détriment de pur sang rouge comme l'honorable Madame Kalyanee Juggoo. Et ce même Premier ministre qui maintenant qualifie les transfuges de Juda et de traître. Et je vais souligner ici, M. le président, au traitement qui a été infligé à ces deux transfuges même par la MBC/TV, 10 secondes pour chacun, 10 secondes à la MBC et 10 minutes pour la caisse de résonance du général. 10 secondes, c'est ce qu'ils valent aux yeux du parti Travailliste pour ne pas dire les numéros qu'ils représentent dans l'arithmétique de la majorité. And when I look at the other side of the House ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, now!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: ... and I listened to the intervention of hon. Patrick Assirvaden...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Some order, please !

Mrs Hanoomanjee: ...himself a former Member of the defunct PSM party, qu'est-ce qu'il n'avait pas dit sur Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam ? Today this person is the President of the Labour party. Same, Mr Speaker, Sir, for some other Members who crossed the floor! Il y a certains qui ont passé treize ans à chanter les louanges de Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and today they have completely blot out from their memory what they said. Aujourd'hui, il ne jure que par Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and this is what we call we sit where we stand, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now address a very sensitive issue. I have given some thought to it, I have hesitated, but finally I think I have to mention it. Mr Speaker, Sir, on page 12 of the Budget Speech, the Minister of Finance gives the performance of Mauritius in a number of international rankings, but purposely or not, I cannot say, he has forgotten one, one in which Mauritius has received a gold cup. Gold cup pour Maurice sur la drogue, première place pour Maurice. Or, dans ce budget il n'y a rien pour adresser ce fléau. Le problème de la drogue, M. le président, qui fait souffrir tant de familles; des parents meurtris, des parents qui perdent leurs enfants; des jeunes qui volent, qui vendent tout ce qui se trouvent dans la maison de leurs parents. Pourtant, not a single line in this Budget and some people have the guts to come to this House to try to blot out completely the contribution of the ex-Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, in the fight against this scourge. *Que certains le veuillent ou pas, que certains viennent débiter leur haine contre Sir Anerood Jugnauth*, it is an undeniable fact that Sir Anerood Jugnauth, *au prix de sa vie*, had taken the bull by the horns in 1986.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker, Sir, look at this report!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: This is the copy of the findings of the Commission of Enquiry on Drugs which had been set up by Sir Anerood Jugnauth. This Commission of Enquiry was presided by Sir Maurice Rault. Hon. Shakeel Mohamed had quoted extensively from Hansard on the drug issue with special reference to Sir Anerood Jugnauth in his capacity as former Prime Minister of this country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since he had quoted from Hansard, I would wish today, to quote from this report which was laid on the Table of this Assembly and for which there is a copy placed in the Library of the National Assembly since 1986. I don't know whether hon. Shakeel Mohamed had read this report and if he has, right on page 8 there are certain comments which have been made. *L'honorable Shakeel Mohamed sera surpris, M. le president, car, il y a des vérités sur la connexion de la mafia de la drogue avec un certain légiste qui se plaît à s'attaquer contre Sir Anerood Jugnauth.* Let me see what page 8 says, I quote -

"The Commission had a laborious start because self-serving demagogues, without any regard for the interests of the country, campaigned to boycott it, even if by so doing they became the allies of the drug traffickers."

I am not saying it, the report says it, and it pains my heart...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: If Members don't allow me to follow, I won't be able to intervene if something is irregular. Yes, carry on!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: It pains me, just as it pains hon. Shakeel Mohamed, when I look at this report for the number of persons who have lost their lives through drugs. The report goes on to say -

"On 17 October 1986..."

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to mention names!

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member should be careful because she cannot impute motives to hon. Members of this House.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: No. I am not imputing motives. It is only the report...

Mr Speaker: Even if the report says it, if that person whom the hon. Member is going to name, is an hon. Member of this House, she cannot impute motives.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: He is not. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not saying it, the report says it. It says -

"On 17th October, 1986 Ally Gaffoor, Cader Gaffoor and Ismael Bacsoo, represented by Mr Mohamed, marched in procession into the witnessbox, and acting as if they were all playing the same gramophone record, declared that they refused to be solemnly affirmed."

The report goes on to say -

“It is clear that they so acted on advice given and in execution of a pre-arranged plan.”

“But the conduct of Mr Mohamed amounts to a confession.”

“We may add that although Mr Mohamed did not ostensibly represent Satar Bacsoo, his passion for Bacsoo’s defence (which did not stop at perjury) was not that of an adviser but...”

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I said, order! Otherwise, I will have to get some people out of this House! The Commission of Enquiry Report was quoted about a lawyer representing his clients, advised his clients and a remark was passed. I won’t stop her, but the hon. Member has to bear in mind and assume the responsibility of what she is saying and be careful as to the role that a legal adviser has to play when he is advising his client.

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: It is only the conclusions of the report and it says -

“We may add that although Mr Mohamed did not ostensibly represent Satar Bacsoo, his passion for Bacsoo’s defence was not that of an adviser but of an accomplice.”

This is the report, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is not what I am saying. This is what the report had said.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do apologise but what...

Mr Speaker: Is the hon. Attorney General raising a point of order?

Mr Varma: Yes, I am raising a point of order. The person to whom the hon. Member is referring is not a Member of this House and she is imputing motives on that person.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I must inform the hon. Attorney General that previous Members of the House or any member of the public are not protected by the Standing Orders and that this is where that when any hon. Member is quoting the name of people who are not represented in the House and who are defenceless must assume his responsibility.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said at the beginning that I have hesitated, but when I listened to hon. Shakeel Mohamed, the *virulence* with which he imputed motives to a former Prime Minister of this country, that is why I am...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: This is a point of order! Let me listen to the hon. Minister!

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order, Sir, the hon. Member has just stated that I had imputed motives the last time that I had addressed this august Assembly upon the former Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. I would like to state here that this whole Assembly was presided by the Deputy Speaker and I did not. Ths is wrong.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon Soodhun, what is happening? Do you want to do my work?

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Soodhun, let me tell you one thing! He raised on a point of order and I am now telling him that this is not a point of order, but it is a matter of personal explanation. So, you keep quiet! Don't do my work! If the hon. Member has anything to say at the end of the speech as a matter of personal explanation, he will seek my permission. Keep quiet!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The then hon. Prime Minister had to recall Parliament and give additional powers to the Commission while, at the same time, raising the final recusants from Rs1,000 to Rs 5m. If this is not a resolute fight against drug barons and drug trafficking, then what is it, Mr Speaker, Sir? The truth is that the population will not cease to thank Sir Anerood Jugnauth for his relentless fight against drug trafficking in his capacity as a Prime Minister. The attempts - I am sorry – of hon. Mohamed to point his finger to Sir Anerood Jugnauth will remain vain.

Mr Speaker, Sir, furthermore, I do not know how old hon. Shakeel Mohamed was in 1986, but if he had taken the pain of going back into history, he would have found that, at a certain point in time in 1985, four MLAs of the Labour Party was arrested in Amsterdam. Drugs were carried in suitcases and in a suitcase traced to one of them about 20kg of heroin was found.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: I am not going to tolerate any interruption! Can you please accept?

Mrs Hanoomajee: There was one Member who was even tried and sentenced to six months imprisonment. Now, the same report spoke of another lawyer, again Member of the Labour Party who was arrested..

Mr Speaker: Can I now intervene and tell the hon. Member that we are not debating the report of somebody who is not here. We are debating a budget speech. I have asked her to respond to criticisms to a level by the hon. Minister of Labour. Now, that she has made it, she cannot continue debating the report.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: *M. le président, venir aujourd’hui dans cette auguste Assemblée pour tenter de décrédibiliser un ancien Premier ministre* is shameful. I will take the time of the House to say only one sentence and that is what is quoted in that report and I quote –

“In fact, one thing which the enquiry has highlighted is that the then Prime Minister was a person of uncommon integrity”

History will retain that SAJ had been described as a Prime Minister of uncommon integrity!

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now say that in his speech, hon. Reza Issack stated, the other day, that – “*en terme de démocratie, la République de Maurice fait honneur et prend la première place*”. But, does democracy mean only free and fair election every five years? *Et là aussi, j’ouvre une parenthèse avec les élections municipales qui sont dues – auront lieu, n’auront pas lieu, seront renvoyés, nous ne le savons pas encore.*

But, to come back to democracy as a principle, the quality of democracy is evaluated with a perspective of ordinary citizens who experience its practices on a daily basis. *Et là, M. le président, je tiens à dire qu’on nous traite, nous, quand nous sommes dans l’opposition ..*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You don’t need to talk in a loud voice. I can’t hear the debate! You can speak in a low tone! Don’t disturb the debate!

Mrs Hanoomajee: *Quand nous sommes dans l’opposition, M. le président, on nous traite comme des ennemis, non pas comme des adversaires.* We have become victims of political harassment. Those who are responsible for enforcement of law and order harass Members of the Opposition. *Je m’explique, M. le président. Depuis que je suis dans l’opposition, il y a la NSS qui vient jusqu’à devant ma porte pour prendre des photos de ceux qui me rendent visite.* This is disgusting, Mr Speaker, Sir, with politically motivated selective prosecution, the very concept of political equality in a democracy remains an unfulfilled

promise. And this is exactly what is happening right now, Mr Speaker, Sir. Politically motivated selective prosecutions!

I will now talk on procurement, Mr Speaker, Sir. When we talk of public funds, we see that a large part of Government funds go towards procurement. Procurement is done by billions and for that matter there is a Public Procurement Act which provides the necessary framework, including a Public Procurement Board. The role of the Board is clearly defined in the Act and if we look at section 11 on functions of the Board, it is clearly spelt out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that -

“One of the functions of the Board is to review the recommendations of a Bid Evaluation Committee and approve the award of the contract or require the Evaluation Committee to make a fresh or further evaluation on specified grounds.”

It goes on to say that –

“The Board shall strive to achieve the highest standard of transparency and equity in the execution of its duties. And, it has to take into account the evaluation criteria and methodology disclose in the bidding documents, the qualification criteria and methodology disclose in the bidding documents, equality of opportunity to all bidders, fairness of treatment to all parties, the need to obtain the best value for money in terms of price quality and deliver, having regard to such specifications and transparency of processed and decisions.”

Furthermore, the powers of the Board on section 12 of the Acts says –

“In the discharge of its function, the Board may call for such information and documents as it may require from any public body and examine such records or other documents.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am mentioning *this pour mettre les points sur les i*. Especially that now, some hon. Members of this House pretend not to understand, for their convenience or I don't know whether just to misguide public opinion that the Procurement Board is a rubber stamp. In all circumstances, the Procurement Board has to assume its responsibilities and the Procurement Board does assume its responsibility. But, what is striking is that, in certain cases, to suit the convenience of some politicians, facts are distorted and allow me to set the records right, Mr Speaker, Sir. *Dans tous les cas de figures, les pouvoirs du Procurement Board sont bien définis et les membres assument et doivent assumer leur responsabilité.* But, Mr Speaker, Sir, at the same time, I would suggest that members of the Procurement Board be asked to declare their assets as well. For such an institution on which ultimate decision for procurement

by billions is made, it is of utmost importance that Members declare their assets. Such a measure would not only allow transparency, but would be one of good governance.

On good governance, Mr Speaker, Sir, for a Government which is all the time talking and saying that they are champions of good governance, let us see what is the meaning of good governance for them. For hon. Members on the others side of the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, good governance means that MLAs can write to Ministries and to parastatal bodies and can use their position to ask to be appointed as legal advisors on Boards and Committees. Mr Speaker, Sir, a reply to a Parliamentary Question has revealed that a hon. Member of Government had, in his former capacity as MLA, drawn Rs 2m. as fees for legal advice tendered to Board and Committee. And that same Member, do you know what he came and said on the departure of the MSM from Government? He said that the departure of the MSM from Government is a blessing in disguise. We can understand his frame of mind, because the MSM would never have condoned such things. Mr Speaker, Sir, *c'est la première fois dans les annales....*

(Interruptions)

Mr Soodhun: *(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker: I am saying order! I am asking you not to get excited with me! I am telling you! Or you are out of the House!

(Interruptions)

Out! Out! Yes go. I am asking you to go out.

(Interruptions)

Don't challenge me and don't impute motives or otherwise you will be named. Carry on!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Hanoomanjee : Mr Speaker, Sir, je pense que *c'est la première fois dans les annales de l'administration qu'on voit la réintégration d'un officier à son poste après....*

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bundhoo what are you doing? You are linking the talk between hon. Labelle and hon. Mohamed? Can't you keep quiet and sit down and listen!

Mrs Hanoomanjee : Je pense que *c'est la première fois dans les annales de l'administration qu'on voit la réintégration d'un officier à son poste après qu'il ait été trouvé coupable par un comité disciplinaire.* Cela s'est passé au *Duty-Free Paradise*, le cas d'un *Human Resource Manager* qui se voit réintégrer. L'injustice à son comble quand on voit ce qui s'est

passé dans le cas de Rehana Ameer ! Il y a eu un *Fact-Finding Committee* mais jusqu'à l'heure Rehana Ameer n'a pas pu réintégrer son poste.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, it does not stop here. I would like to know what about those who profess that tout *ce qui est ethique n'est pas moral*, what they think about taking their share of public funds for the *clan familial*. They have been talking of *clan familial!* Let us see, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am referring here to juicy contracts given to relatives of Members of Government, the retired father of an hon. Member of the Assembly employed on contract again; the mother of a Member of Government who is appointed chairperson on a board, the retired brother of another member of Government in a large Ministry, the daughter of another Member of Government in body corporate abroad. Brother in law, father in law, everybody has a share in the cake. Mr Speaker, Sir, c'est une honte que de voir ce partage des fonds public entre famille, tandis que ceux qui sont qualifiés attendent toujours des boulot. Et ces personnes, de l'autre côté de la chambre, viennent nous parler du clan familial ! Le ridicule tue !

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have heard both hon. Deepalsing and the Minister for Social Security stating that the former Minister of Finance, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, refused to give additional funds for children in distress. Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Jugnauth was right because what we found in the recent exercise of the Supplementary Estimates was revealing. In fact, funds allocated in the Budget of the Ministry of Gender Equality had not been totally spent, an under spending of Rs50 m. and the Minister is asking for more just like Oliver Twist.

Budget allocation goes along with Budget planning. It is all a question of establishing and setting your priorities right. All Ministers would have done the same and for that matter, I am thinking of the Ministry of Health where patients suffer from lack of beds, from lack of appropriate infrastructure, sophisticated equipment which can save lives. At the Ministry of Health, it is a question of life and death, but the priorities have to be set right. *Mais non M. le président, aujourd'hui c'est clair c'est une question de faire de la politique sur le dos des enfants en détresse !*

And this brings me Mr Speaker, Sir, on the women and children issues. Le budget prétend résoudre les problèmes des plus démunis et nous fait croire qu'il porte une attention particulière aux femmes mais la réalité est tout autre. Commençons par les choses les plus fondamentales qui sont directement liées au *empowerment* des femmes, l'éducation, la formation, la santé. Nous savons très bien que contrairement à plusieurs autres pays tels que le

Singapour et l'Inde et plusieurs pays d'Afrique où il y a une corrélation nette et claire entre l'éducation des femmes et leur *empowerment*, nous, à Maurice, nous ne voyons pas cela. D'ailleurs Maurice a chuté de plusieurs places sur le *Women Empowerment Index* comme l'a démontré le dernier *World Economic Forum* à Davos.

L'*empowerment* des femmes passe généralement par une autonomisation économique et une forte participation dans la vie politique du pays, mais ce gouvernement ferme la porte aux femmes. Au lieu de trouver des mesures pour aider à leur *empowerment*, la nouvelle ministre de l'égalité du genre juge bon de renforcer la subordination et l'oppression des femmes en proposant des secteurs tels que *housekeeping work, small scale farming* et c'est avec une grande fierté que le ministre des finances est venu nous annoncer au paragraphe 253 de son discours que le *National Empowerment Fund will train some 500 domestic workers next year*. Je me demande, M. le président, comment une ministre qui supposément milite pour la promotion de la femme, peut accepter que le gouvernement traite les femmes comme des *second class citizens*.

En ce qui concerne la protection des enfants, le ministre des finances n'a trouvé mieux que de créer six nouveaux *shelters*. Mr Speaker, Sir, creating new shelters does not solve the problem. I don't say that we don't need shelters. We may have two, we may have three, six new shelters, what would be the quality of services offered at these centres? Would these children be accommodated temporarily or permanently? If temporarily what measures are being taken to find suitable accommodation for them? For those of school going age, would they attend schools whilst in these shelters? So, many questions that need to be addressed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the place of the child is in the family as stipulated in the Convention for the Rights of the Child. La création de *six shelters* est un aveu de taille du gouvernement, c'est que ce gouvernement a failli totalement dans la consolidation de la stabilité de la famille. More in-depth measures should be taken. A sociological study is required pour attaquer les vrais maux de notre société. Si aujourd'hui, nous nous trouvons dans une situation où tant d'enfants sont en détresse, c'est que notre société est malade. Aux grands maux, les grands remèdes

We have heard so many times, and for so many years, with this Government, *l'école des parents*, imparting parental skills, encouraging foster care, *mais rien de concret*. And this is why the Ombudsperson for Children has been very critical in her analysis in her last report recently published. Most of her recommendations are not implemented, but still the Ministry concerned says that it needs more money and what is more surprising is that most of the recommendations

of the Ombudsperson for Children can be implemented without additional funds. It is clear that the Government is not going to the root of the problem, but is applying palliative measures.

M. le président, les petits planteurs et les petits éleveurs sont les parents pauvres de ce budget: des mesures creuses, des répétitions, mais rien de concret !

The Minister of Finance mentions at paragraph 116 of his speech that all small planters and all small breeders will obtain VAT refund on agricultural machinery, equipment and tool.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, it is a burden being put on those concerned. Does he know that small planters are not VAT registered?

Small planters very rarely buy agricultural machinery. Most of the time *ils louent ces équipements* and, therefore, most of them will not benefit from this measure.

On regrouping of small planters derocking and providing irrigation, Rs310 m. have been committed - very good - but when that scheme had been presented to small planters the latter were given the impression that productivity will be increased and that the cost of production will decrease. Most of the small planters, Mr Speaker Sir, are disappointed. Only last week, I was made aware that small planters in the region of Pointe aux Piments, who had joined the derocking scheme, have had to threaten the contractors to get their money. They have joined the scheme since 2008. The first harvest has been done in September 2011. From 2008 to 2011, they have not benefited from a single cent. They have bound their land for seven years. They were told that they would get a profit of Rs8,000 rupees per arpant, but, at the end of the day, they are getting Rs2,500. Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, what has happened? They have given away their land, around 200 arpents of land; they have not earned anything for about three years. All the rocks which have been removed in the fields have been sold. Nobody knows who has pocketed the money. The harvest has been done in September 2011 and although they should have received during the normal course of things, 80% of their dues after 15 days, now they have to threaten those concerned to get their money. This is the saga of the derocking project. Through this scheme, small planters have lost completely control on their land and they are losing financially also. An evaluation is important before more money is injected in the scheme, otherwise we will assist to the slow death of small planters. Already, they have dwindled in number, from 33,000 to 20,000.

Une parenthèse, M. le président, undoubtedly, knowing fully well that no new measures have been included in this Budget for small planters, *le ministre a voulu truffer les measures, et il dit*:

‘We are also maintaining the payment of an 80 percent advance to sugar planters as soon as their crops are sent to the mill.’

But, this measure was already taken by hon. Pravind Jugnauth and is already being implemented. So, I don’t know whether he meant to say that he could have withdrawn this measure.

Paragraph 120 of the Budget Speech talks about the historical deal made by the Prime Minister. This reminds me, Mr Speaker, Sir, of the re-negotiation of the contract between the CEB and the independent power producers. Since 2007, there have been talks about this re-negotiation which could have brought down the price of electricity, *mais depuis un bon bout de temps on n’entend plus parler de cette renégociation*. It appears that it is no longer on the agenda of Government. The *métayers* also have formed part of the so-called historic agreement, but we know, Mr Speaker, Sir, *quel a été le sort de ces métayers*. Some have been compelled to give away their land which they have occupied for 50 to 60 years for peanuts. *L’honorable Cader Sayed-Hossen s’en est occupé personnellement. En tant que président du comité de la démocratisation, il est au courant*. This is what is called democratisation of the economy. Instead of providing land to small planters, land is being taken away from them and given back to the sugar estates!

Still, the Minister of Finance thinks that the small planters will be able to produce. He says he is reintroducing a Freight Rebate Scheme. That scheme, Mr Speaker Sir, was introduced in 1991 when 50% of rebate on freight was given. That incentive was withdrawn by the Labour Government. In this budget 25% cost subsidy, and he says will be shared equally between producers and exporters. That measure is being introduced. There are lots of contradictions and confusion. We need clarification as to which products would be concerned. In the past, Freight Rebate Scheme was given on export of pineapples and litchis. As the name itself says - Freight Rebate Scheme - it relates to freight and freight concerns exporters. How are producers concerned?

Mr Speaker, Sir, nous assistons à la disparition des petits planteurs et des petits éleveurs. Amongst other things, small planters had requested for a land bank to be set up. They had requested for a review of the freight scheme to render it more transparent and efficient. They had

requested for a re-instatement of the Electricity Rebate Scheme and they had also expected the establishment of a central wholesale market, *mais rien dans ce budget*.

M. le président je ne peux terminer mon discours sans parler de mon passage au ministère de la santé. It is sad to note that the Budget of the Ministry of Health has been reduced. Bold measures had been taken from May 2010 to July 2011. These measures were greatly appreciated by the population. I have in mind the staggered hour appointment, the opening of health centres at 7 a.m. instead of 8 a.m. for taking of blood samples, the renovation of children's wards, improvement in the general hygiene and cleanliness of hospitals and health centres to mention but a few.

Furthermore whilst I was laying emphasis on prevention, I had charted out plans to combat the three diseases which top the list: *le diabète, les maladies cardio-vasculaires et le cancer*.

The National Diabetes Framework, *le plan d'action pour les activités physiques, le plan d'action contre le cancer* had all been worked out and the new Minister of Health only had to implement. Mais ce qui me chagrine, M. le président, ce sont les conditions dans lesquelles les personnes qui souffrent du cancer, et qui viennent à l'hôpital Victoria à Candos pour la chimiothérapie et la radiothérapie, sont reçues. Au temps de l'ex-ministre de la santé, ces personnes s'asseyaient sur des bancs et en période hivernale, dans le froid, en attendant leurs tours pour le traitement. Who cared? I wonder whether the former Minister of Health was even aware. When I was Minister, I took immediate action, with funds available, at least, to provide some minimum comfort to these patients. At the same time, I managed to find unutilised space which could be converted into a comfort zone for these patients where they could have their tests carried out, their chemotherapy done, where they could rest after their chemotherapy sessions. Works should have been completed by end of August.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government claims to be a caring government. How caring it is? Putting People First? *De vains mots pour épater la galerie!* Up to now, the patients are still being treated in very difficult situations. I have enquired and I have learned that, apparently, another site has been found in Vacoas. I make an appeal to the Minister of Health: chemotherapy is a complex matter and, at all costs, has to be carried out on hospital premises. *Si c'est délocalisé que se passera-t-il si un patient a des complications.*

In the name of all these patients, I am asking the Minister to look into the matter again and take urgent action. Cancer patients do not deserve the treatments that are being meted out to them, *spécialement quand il y a de l'espace à l'hôpital Victoria et que c'est mal utilisé.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, I note with regret that there are no new projects in the health sector. Je ne sais pas si le ministère de la santé est en panne d'idées. But, what is being done to remedy *le manque de lit à l'hôpital?*

I had told technicians of the Ministry that there was a need to redefine the zones to settle that problem. Work had already started on this issue:

- A 5-star hospital like Souillac Hospital where beds are available and underutilised.
- People from the south, from le Morne onwards have to travel to Rose Belle to be treated. All these projects were in the pipeline.

I would just ask the Minister of Health to enlighten us on this issue.

One word on the issue of civil servants having to work on Saturdays - the Minister of Finance comes up with a decision taken unilaterally, without a discussion with trade unions and announces it to the nation, most probably wanting to give the impression: '*nou pe kas enn gran paké, tou dimouunn travay samedi*'.

First, *il empiète sur les prérogatives du PRB*. Conditions of service are determined by the PRB. Second, he is no doubt not aware that already most Ministries have a skeleton staff on Saturdays to attend to urgent matters. *S'il voulait mettre de l'ordre*, he should have started by essential services like the post which closes its door for lunch between 11.30 and 12.30. *Les personnes âgées qui touchent leur pension à la poste* have to queue up and wait. Did the Minister of Finance take into consideration the number of women who work in the Civil Service? Did the officer responsible for the gender desk in the Ministry inform him how this decision will disrupt family life? What about the Minister for Gender Equality? On one side, we are talking of consolidating the family, protecting children, on the other side disrupting family life. But I foresee already that he will meet with a lot of resistance from trade unions, and will never be able to implement that decision unless the PRB comes with it, at least, at the appropriate time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, some few words on my constituency. I know that all the time this government tends to neglect the west in terms of projects. For about three years now, we have

been hearing of a project for the elderly in Riambel. If I am not mistaken, the Minister of Social Security had already proceeded to the laying of the foundation stone, but ever since no new development.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member; I will ask the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: So, I make an appeal to Government for, at least, three projects in Constituency No. 14. First, one on which the project committee had already given its approval, that is, to make of Yves Cantin Hospital a district hospital that would alleviate the sufferings of all the people from Le Morne to Rivière Noire, to Tamarin, who have to travel to Victoria Hospital for minor problems. Second, a market in Chemin Grenier. I raised the issue of hawkers at Chemin Grenier at adjournment time last week. Land can be compulsorily acquired in Chamouny road. At present, the royal road of Chemin Grenier is congested on market fair days, and it is high time to decongest the centre of Chemin Grenier and, at the same time, provide a decent market infrastructure to vegetable sellers and other hawkers. Third and last, I wish to draw attention that there is only one road leading Flic en Flac village. With the number of hotels in Flic en Flac, with all the ongoing development, *morcellements*, inhabitants as well as tourists have increased.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if ever there is a natural calamity like a tsunami or a major accident, can you imagine what will happen? The appropriate authorities should start thinking about, at least, a second entrance and exit to and from Flic en Flac.

Mr le président, ce budget est une trahison envers la population. Le masque du gouvernement est tombé, et la population n'est pas dupe. C'est un gouvernement caractérisé par des scandales et, j'en suis sûre, ils ne feront pas long feu. Nous sentons déjà leur agitation. L'inquiétude se lit sur leur visage, il y a plusieurs d'entre eux qui ne peuvent même pas descendre dans leur circonscription ; les gens sont révoltés.

To conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will refer to Shakespeare's Macbeth -

“Those on the other side, they are strutting and fretting their hour on the stage. They are full of sound and fury.”

But soon, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they will be heard no more.

Thank you.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as Mr Speaker, Sir, said earlier on, I had raised a point of order, but I was wrong; I should have raised a point of personal explanation. With your leave, and pursuant to the Standing Orders, I would like to raise it.

The Deputy Speaker: I think that you better see the Speaker in Chambers and try to sort out this matter with him.

Mr Mohamed: I wish to raise, as a matter of personal explanation, and this is basically subject to Standing Order 28 (3), where it says -

“Notwithstanding the arrangement mentioned in Standing Order 17(1) and paragraph (2) of this Order, Mr Speaker may, at any time, allow a Member to offer a personal explanation.”

And this is where I seek your guidance here because, since the Standing Orders do provide that I may, notwithstanding any arrangements, I wish to make a personal explanation now and, if you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, say no, fair enough, but I am duty bound to, at least, ask for your leave, and that's what I am doing.

The Deputy Speaker: Under which Standing Order?

Mr Mohamed: Standing Order 28 (3).

The Deputy Speaker: But, so far as I understand, whatever point of personal explanation you want to raise, we should, first of all, know exactly what you want to raise. This is what I understand.

Mr Mohamed: That is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Standing Orders clearly refer to clause 28(3), and I gather now that you can see which particular paragraph I am referring to. It clearly says -

“Notwithstanding the arrangement mentioned in Standing Order 17(1) and paragraph (2) of this Order, Mr Speaker, may, at any time, allow a Member to offer a personal explanation.”

True it is I have to clear it first, but there is a particular section here that says that, since this whole matter arose here and you yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was sitting, the issue is very simple. I can assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that I will only limit myself to one sentence, which the hon. Member, Mrs Maya Hanoomanjee, stated, which is that I allegedly imputed motives upon the former Prime Minister, and nothing more.

The Deputy Speaker: I read section 28(1), which states that there should be no controversial matter. If it is not controversial matter and if you have only one sentence, I will give you leave.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It would be one sentence but, in order not to be grammatically incorrect, permit me to have at least two, because I do not want to have a too long one. It is difficult. In fact, what I would like to say here is that the hon. Member said I imputed motives upon the former Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, when I referred to a particular section of Hansard, in a speech in the Constitutional Amendment Bill (No. VI) of 1995, in which I was only quoting what hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger was saying about the former Prime Minister. I, at no time, was imputing motives, and I had been very careful then to say that I am not saying it is true, I am not saying that it was the former Prime Minister, and that it was only hon. Bérenger who was saying that.

There is a second issue, which I would like to say here. I owe and everyone here owes respect to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. You had been presiding over the debates, and had I imputed any motives, you would have immediately, knowing your intelligence and ability, stopped me. The fact that you did not stop me, there was no imputation of motives.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

(*Applause*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, no comments now!

(7.18 p.m)

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr L. Bundhoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like, before I come to the main thrust of my speech, make a few observations and remarks, and comment on what was said earlier in the House by hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee.

To start with, at the very beginning of her speech, she mentioned about the *trahison du Parti travailliste* vis-à-vis the MSM. I would like, with your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to remind her how in 1982, when the MMM/ PSM Government was in power, how her party which was to be formed in April 1983, what the party represented. The Labour Party at that time represented after its defeat almost, as was said by the Leader of the Opposition in a recent interview, 30% to 35% of the electorate, and this PMSD, where today, Xavier Duval is the leader, almost 8% of the electorate. The PSM of hon. Boodhoo, at that time, dissolved his party and all of us teamed together to save Sir Anerood Jugnauth in 1983. If that is a *trahison*, then

she takes the responsibility. This was the first *trahison* of the Labour party in 1983 to keep Sir Anerood Jugnauth in power. Soon after, the same MSM party, Sir Satcam Boolell, who was then the Leader of the Labour party, after having sacked him, later in 1987...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, let the Minister talk!

Mr Bundhoo: ...when they were about to go back to election, this same Anerood Jugnauth, without any shame, contracted again an Alliance with the Labour party and asked Sir Satcam Boolell to bring the key back into the Alliance in order to win the next election of 1987. If this is *trahison*, then how come the MSM stayed in power in 1987?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have in this House several times, you have in your guidance and even Mr Speaker said...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bundhoo: ...not to bring in the name of the President and I shall not. But shall I remind the hon. Member of Savanne and Black River that it was this Labour party, under the Primeministership of Dr. Navin Ramgoolam that renewed the presidency of Sir Anerood Jugnauth in 2003, that he is still today in Réduit. This is the *trahison* of the Labour party, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Varma, please! There is no need to give the hon. Minister support.

Mr Bundhoo: After the general election of 2005, when his Leader was in the *caro cannes*, Ashock Jugnauth was elected in this Parliament and probably hon. Bérenger deemed it fit...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bundhoo: ... at that time to request Ashock Jugnauth to become the Leader of the MSM so as to continue the Alliance. Brothers were fighting with brothers, nephew was fighting with uncle, sisters and brothers were not talking, but Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Leader of the Labour party said: 'my son, you go in the by-election, my hand is over your head.' *Et linn faire li rente dans Parlement par la grande porte.* This is *trahison*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(*Interruptions*)

Trahison! *Trahison* in the last general election! 18 tickets were given to the MSM.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jeetah, please!

Mr Bundhoo: 6 Ministries to the MSM; 3 PPS to the MSM; you, yourself appointed Deputy Speaker ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! I want to listen to the Minister in silence. I am asking hon. Members not to interrupt because he is far away from me and there is so much noise. Let him make his point!

(*Interruptions*)

Please! Hon. Seetaram!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, recently now ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, there is no need. Please!

(*Interruptions*)

The hon. Minister is right! If somebody is interrupting him, he should stop talking. I want silence, please!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this recent general election, 18 tickets were given to the MSM and do you know what was the consequence? I was comfortably in Constituency No. 10, to make way, I was sent to Constituency No. 6.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bundhoo: Hon. Dr. Jeetah was comfortably in Constituency No. 11, to make way to hon. Seeruttun; he was transferred to Constituency No. 10; hon. Dr. Abu Kasenally who was so comfortably sitting in Constituency No. 15, he was transferred to No. 13. All this *trahison*!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you don't mind, can I take leave from the House and look in the Oxford English dictionary what is the meaning of the word '*trahison*'? Maybe the MSM's interpretation or the Larousse interpretation is different.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please! Order! Order! Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my hon. colleague spoke of the *trahison* of the Labour party. In the whole process, since 1983 till today, this party has survived either on the back of the Labour or the MMM. On themselves, they represent nothing, nothing and nothing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister should look at me and not on that side.

(*Interruptions*)

Order! Order! Hon. Jhugroo! Order!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they speak of *transfugisme*. Let me remind them that when they sacked Sir Satcam Boolell, the leader of the Labour party, how they managed through their own tricks and the power of money and the power of the corridors of power to bring in through the *Ralliement Travailiste Mauricien* (RTM) these people in Government. Let me remind my friend of the MMM here how when they broke up with the MMM after 1991, with de l'Estrac, Nababsing and the rest, they created the RMM in order to stay in power. If this party has been in power for some time not only with the Labour party or the MMM, it is with the MPs of the Labour party and the elected MPs of the MMM. The party had nothing and represented nothing either in terms of MP or percentage of votes and hon. Mohamed was right when he said not only the small party, but...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Bundhoo, please! Hon. Jhugroo! Order! Order! Hon. Jhugroo!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Khamajeet, what is the problem? You are getting excited. What's the problem?

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Jhugroo! Hon. Jhugroo, I am addressing myself to you.

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Faugoo, there is no need...

(Interruptions)

Calm down! You had the opportunity to make your point, you were helped by the Chair, everybody who wants to intervene has got the right to and now it is the time for hon. Bundhoo to make his point. This is his right and you will have to listen.

(Interruptions)

If you don't want to listen, other avenues are open to you.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, I am talking to you. Show respect to the Chair!

(Interruptions)

If you are not satisfied, you have got other avenues, but, here, everybody has got the right to debate and you should be able to listen and participate, but when you are not talking, you listen only. Please! Yes, hon. Bundhoo!

Mr Bundhoo: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me tell you ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry, please!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me say something else. Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee was talking about the rapport Rault with regard to drug trafficking and all this in Mauritius. But I think they have a short memory. The rapport Rault became public in 1986, but from 1982 to 1986, who was the Prime Minister? Sir Anerood Jugnauth! For the four years that he has been Prime Minister, we should ask ourselves what has happened in this country ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Virahsawmy, there is no need.

Mr Bundhoo: ...for the situation of drug trafficking to have reached such an epidemic stage and under the pressure of the then Opposition that a Commission had to be set up in order to address the issue. Therefore, in the words of the hon. Member, it is an act of acceptance that for the first four years of the mandate of the MSM leading the Government, there was a total breakdown of law and order under Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Seetaram, please!

Mr Bundhoo: To be quite honest, I did not want to be nasty. But since...

The Deputy Speaker: Don't be!

Mr Bundhoo: But since the point was raised by hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, with regard to my colleague Mrs Bappoo, that she had the possibility of reallocating unutilised fund in her Ministry in order to employ these 10 to 15 social workers. Mrs Hanoomanjee is an experienced civil servant, having reached the top in her career, she has been a Minister too. She is fully aware that in order to reallocate budget, we must have the authority from the Ministry of Finance. She should know that better than anybody - because she was there, as Minister of Health and Quality of Life, that the budget of reallocation for the purchase of Med Point was signed and approved in Christmas deed in order to allow the the *clan familial* to have a nice Christmas.

(*Interruptions*)

She should know that! But now, once they are in the Opposition, they pretend to be virgins about the rules and regulations of the civil servants. They pretend to be ignorant of the rules and regulations of the Civil Service and the Ministry. I think, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is *trahison*. This is *trahison* against *trahison*. *Trahison* vis-à-vis the Labour Party, *trahison* vis-à-vis the MMM, *trahison* vis-à-vis the people of this country, the only time and place there has not been any *trahison* is when it comes to money and *le clan familial*. That is why hon. Choonee was telling us yesterday, in his case, he was locked in overnight, in other people's case, they were locked in the Apollo Hospital. Is it because hon. Choonee is not of the *family clan*?

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, please!

Mr Bundhoo: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee was telling us that we get this for somebody. I think that she tends to forget who, in this Government, when I was PPS and the Secretary of the Labour Party, was appointed special adviser in the Ministry of Tourism in London. I think that hon. Bhagwan put a question, if I am not mistaken...

(*Interruptions*)

... especially on them.

(*Interruptions*)

Who was appointed there?

(*Interruptions*)

Who is Mr Ballah if he is not the brother of a special lady in this country? This is not *clan familial!*

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me also come to a few other points raised by the hon. Member. I have spoken about drugs, *transfuge*. I have spoken about a legal adviser. The hon. Member was accusing my friend, hon. Shakeel Mohamed, my friend, hon. Varma...

The Deputy Speaker: No, there was no name mentioned.

Mr Bundhoo: There was.

The Deputy Speaker: No, there was no name mentioned. The Minister should not mention names.

Mr Bundhoo: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. She was accusing X and Y of being legal adviser. I will give away on only this specific point if she decides to stand up and tell this House on how many parastatal bodies, including the State Bank, her leader was legal adviser before he became a Member of Parliament?

(*Interruptions*)

Especially when his father was Prime Minister!

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bundhoo: The Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund: adviser; State Bank of Mauritius: adviser; DWC: adviser.

(*Interruptions*)

Ahat else? Family Planning?

(*Interruptions*)

We would better stop here!

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Member has also made an allusion of how good they were, because they managed to top the list. Goodness sake! They only know what are the tricks and what are the *magouilles* and, if I may use the word '*trahison*', they did with the bulk vote of the Labour Party and with their minute vote in order to manage and secure a top position. How come that, in other constituencies, where the Labour Party put three

candidates, we had no problems and, on those constituencies, where there were two candidates and one candidate, all of them were ruffled with difficulties and problems? How come that the same hon. Dayal who held his hand and got him elected, had so much problems, if this is not *trahison*, what is it and how come they managed to top the list?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think, during the course...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Please!

Mr Bundhoo: So far, I have dwelled enough on what I have been said by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and if you would allow me, at a later stage, I will come back to what was said on health. But before coming back on what was said on health, I would like, with your permission - she was there for 14 months and I do not claim to be more knowledgeable than her; I have been there for only two months. But, let me tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what the hon. lady said during the...

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. Member is not here.

(*Interruptions*)

I stated no comments from a sitting position. Please!

Mr Bundhoo: Let me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, quote what was said by hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee in her speech on the Budget of 2010. When I was listening to her speaking about the health sector, I gathered the impression for some time that she created the Ministry. I gathered the impression for some time that it was she who decided that health should be part of an integral component of the Welfare State. I gathered the impression for some time that it was she who has saved and maintained that health should be free in this country. In order to reinforce what she just said, let me quote what she said in her speech on the Budget. I quote –

“I must also highlight here the initiatives of the hon. Prime Minister. I confirm that hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam has invested himself significantly in addressing problems relating to diabetes, cardiovascular diseases.

Personally, she confirmed this.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bundhoo: Let me continue! These are only her words. Let me refresh her memory and bring her back down memory.

“ It is through consultation which he had during his mission abroad and his personal intervention that we had the visit of eminent professors from UK, Australia, South Africa, USA and doctors in cardiology and diabetes are offering their expert advice on these problems, advice which is being implemented.”

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: It is from hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, please!

Mr Bundhoo: Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after having made a few comments on what was said on the political front earlier by the hon. Member of Savanne/Rivière Noire - I will come later on some of the comments made by my good friend, hon. Dr. Satish Boolell - to come back to the Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I think you were talking about the Budget all throughout.

Mr Bundhoo: I was talking about the political aspect of the Budget.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, continue.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: Let me again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, take the opportunity to congratulate hon. Duval, the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development for this Budget. I would like also to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for all the assistance that he has given to my good friend in order to ensure that this Budget is in line with the policies of Government.

I would like, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, keep silent! Hon. Varma, your friend is talking. Hon. Varma, hon. Mohamed, hon. Choonee, please your neighbour is intervening.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is the 12th Budget ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Bundhoo: ... that is being presented under the leadership of hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, that is, five Budgets from 1996 to 2000 and seven Budgets from 2005 to 2012. In spite of this, our Government is maintaining its commitment to sustain and enhance social and

welfare policies. This is evidence, but not a fact, that a provision of Rs30.6 billion is being made in this Budget, to service the health, education and social security sectors.

Earlier, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we took office back in 2005, we all remember the crisis that was around in the world and especially how it was hitting Mauritius hard, with regard to oil prices, soaring food prices, the global food crunch, whereby 36% of the price of sugar was reduced and the subprime international financial crisis and also the slumping world economy. It is through all these difficulties that we were presented the first five Budgets and now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, fear of a sovereign debt crisis developed among investors concerning some European states, which is being intensive in early 2010. Especially, in the Euro zone where countries like Greece, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and also non-European countries are being severely affected. Countries have been declared bankrupt, example of, Iceland.

With all these in mind, I gather again the impression, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that some hon. Members of the Opposition, either they pretend not to pay heed of what is happening internationally or they just didn't realise what is happening on the international front. This is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what differentiate them with us. We are different because we know what is happening and we are trying to be smart before the event, whereas they have always been smart only after the event. I'll tell why. It is only at the end of the mandate, at the year 2005, after having been in power in five years, then they realised *qu'on était dans un état d'urgence économique, la situation était dramatique.*

My good friend, hon. Cuttaree, in his speech said - he became wiser also at the end of his carrier – “*on perdait des emplois à une vitesse vertigineuse.*” How intelligent could they be, five years into their mandates? Whereas, we, in Government, in 2008, we were wiser before the event, when we created the Additional Stimulus Package, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This Additional Stimulus Package managed this country to serve through the economic difficulties and we maintained an average growth of 4 to 4.5% in this difficult moment.

Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this moment of difficulties, in what we are seeing and what is happening in the Euro zone, as I mentioned earlier, my good friend, the hon. vice-Prime Minister, has again deem it fit and necessary to earmark Rs3.7 billion to create a National Resilience Fund. This fund and this Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is presented in such a manner to address four of the major priorities of Government -

- (i) measures to maintain an accelerate economic growth;

- (ii) measures to address the looming financial crisis;
- (iii) strengthening measures for the protection of the most vulnerable person of the SME, and
- (iv) measures of the fiscal reform to encourage and promote investment.

When we do this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what have the hon. Members on the other side been saying? We are protecting the big fat cats. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they seem to forget the sale of the Illovo deal, that wasn't a cat. That was probably the biggest tiger, lion, leopard that they protected with the Illovo deal, which were sealed right at the dawn of midnight and whereby they are calling people outside the Attorney's office to make sure that what is not legal, to become legal. Protecting the big fat cats!

In this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me just remind them about this fat big cat. Small and medium enterprises, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, contribute 37% of our GDP and they contribute Rs120 m. worth of output. They are, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the small and medium enterprise of today that will become the large corporation of tomorrow. This Rs3 billion over the next three years that have been earmarked for the SMEs has been done on a special rate whereby cost of capital interest payable has been reduced by 8.5% to 14.5%. A simple calculation will enable us to understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a 1 million rent per annum instead of 14.5% he will have to pay Rs145,000 whereas on 8.5%, one has to pay Rs85,000. Meaning the cost of borrowing under this Government would be reduced by Rs67,000 per year, that is, for every single SME, they would save Rs500,000 per month. This is only restricted to countries whereby the turnover does not exceed Rs50 m.

Furthermore, registration duty ranges from Rs1,000 to Rs10,000 has been removed and on top of that we are protecting, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the big fat cats by constructing 175 units in industrial estate in five sites, in order to be rented to the Small and Medium Enterprise. But, if we were to protect the big lion, what we will have done? We would have needed to sell and create another new Illovo deal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me come to the casinos. My good friend, hon. Lesjongard, mentioned about the casinos. Other people also were making reference about how the casinos are making losses. Let me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the benefit of the House, tell you how the casinos were making losses and I quote –

“Casino de Maurice at Curepipe - in 2004/2005, we were in the Opposition and I left this House to imagine, who was the Minister of Finance, who was the Prime Minister and who was sitting comfortably somewhere else, up there.

Two or five loss Rs3,670,647, 2005-2006 Rs3,804,000. I turn the page...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bundhoo: Grand Casino du Domaine, I'll come to it in a minute, it is amazing when you think of these people, let me go through one sheet, Beach Casino at Trou aux Biches, we go back memory lane Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and now it is good for you if you can see some brain racking, who was PM 2002-2003. Casino Beach Trou aux Biches: loss Rs2.8 m. 2003-2004 loss Rs4.17 m., 2004-2005: Rs3.8 m. some people were sitting so comfortably somewhere they could not notice how much loss was being done. Sun Casino, listen to the name '*casino soleil*', Flic en Flac: loss 2001-2002 - Rs3.2 m., 2002-2003: Rs8 m. the sun is rising Sir, 2003-2004: Sir the sun rises again: Rs23 m. How can you have a sum which can rise more than this?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a shame what is happening in this country and I am going to be honest about this, some of us sit in this House under the pretence of parliamentary immunity says things that should not be said and one of them who is sitting somewhere else takes the pleasure and the benefit of the State saying things that should not be said because he hasn't been checking the records. For 14 months in this country, who was the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance when all five casinos were making losses, where was he? Did any report go up there? Any comment did not come through. Now that the family clan is in the political wilderness, they are trying to make a comeback on the mess that they have created themselves and they themselves make sure they will bury in this same mess politically.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me now to say a few words on the Health budget. I'll come back again, don't worry! I am on another issue. At every interlude, we will bring them to memory lane.

The Deputy Speaker: Please continue.

Mr Bundhoo: Later on, we will go, because it is not yet sunset.

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Assirvaden please!

Mr Bundhoo: I would probably have another half an hour. If you would wish to break....

The Deputy Speaker: No, I am waiting for you.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now say a few words about the health budget and the health services. I would, first of all, wish to extend my gratitude to the VPM who has, in my view, paid much attention to the health sector of this country by providing the sum of Rs7.9 billion which represents 7.8% of total expenditure and I would here like to correct Mrs Hanoomanjee, per capita expense on public health has increased to Rs6,260 for the year 2012.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I remind the House that the total health budget in 1999 and 2000 was only Rs2.8 billion with a per capita expenditure on health at Rs1.8 billion. In 2004 and 2005 the health budget was Rs3.6 billion and capita expenditure was only 3.8 and today by the year 2010 this Government has increased the health budget by more than a 100% making it the fourth largest single budget of this country. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like here to remind the House that the Ministry of Health is made up of 15,000 employees. The Ministry of Health is in a nutshell, five regional hospitals, two district hospitals, four specialised hospitals and 134 health centres around the island. The total yearly attendance at those various services represents almost 8 million patients attending either dental clinic, pre natal, everything in this country Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to say a few words on the health policy and the management programme. Almost Rs600 m., that is an increase of Rs190 m. have been budgeted for health policy and management. Further to that Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to curative services programme Rs6.1 billion have been allocated for curative services and on top of that Rs927 m. on medical supplies, Rs150 m. on trust fund for specialised medical care and the construction and extension of the programme of hospital to the tune of Rs780 m. Rs586 m. is being allocated for the construction and upgrading of Health Centres for proximity services.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we need human resources to manage such a complex system; 300 nurses will be taken and shortly 175 internship doctors will be taken and presently the Public Service Commission, I understand is going through interviews for RMO registered doctors. On top of that, many other people would be employed at different stages in the Ministry. Furthermore, the SAMU service is being called upon to cover more than 95% of the island. Concerning the budget of Rs926 m. there is an increase of Rs31 m. which has been provided for primary health care and public health. This includes Rs340 m. to public health service, 21 million visits effected by people in the health centres and 200 expected visits are

affected to our people at dental clinics. With regard to HIV Aids Programme, 100 millions or an increase of 8 million has been allocated for the prevention of the HIV aids. In order to provide and to cater for an increase in the number of people on antiretroviral drugs on Methadone Substitution Therapy and the Needle Exchange Programme and an increase of 17% in the budget for the rehabilitation of alcoholic and NATReSA by Rs51 m. With regard to non-communicable diseases programme Rs160 m. has been provided and almost Rs46 m. compared to last year. As regards the formation of doctors we are pleased to note that under the leadership of Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, we are now in the process - almost completed - whereby all our regional hospitals are being converted into teaching hospital for doctors.

With regard to the National Saving Fund, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all those people who contribute up to Rs300, they now can take the contributions whoever they are and in order to collect the money and to request the NSF to make a contribution to what is called the private or health scheme. Dr. Satish Boolell earlier mentioned this and he was talking about whether we are going to emulate what is happening in the USA. I can assure the hon. Member this is not the case at all. Since we have increased the budget to such an extent by almost 100% over years this shows the determination of this Government and, in particular, the Labour/PMSD Government determination to maintain and to reinforce the Welfare State. It's good news for everybody in this House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we have increased the grant from Rs200,000 to Rs500,000 for all patients inoperable in Mauritius. I am pleased to inform the House that, at the moment I am talking to you, this measure is taking effect. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we walk the talk, and this is how we care for the most needy.

A comment was made by hon. Dr. S. Boolell, whereby he requested us to reconsider the limit of Rs50,000 as monthly salary. This reminds me of the guy who went to the farmer and wanted to have one kg of butter. At a point in time, he said "Can I have one kg of butter?" He was given his one kg of butter, and then he said "Can I have my money back?" He was given his money back, but then he looked at the cow and said to the farmer "Can I have the cow also?" This is what comes to my mind. We created the scheme in 1999 under the able leadership of Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. We are the ones who have more than doubled the scheme from Rs200,000 to Rs500,000. We are the ones who are now going to review the criteria for which you are eligible for it. So, you have got the butter! You have got the money of the butter! And now you want me, Mr Lormus Bundhoo, Minister of Health and Quality of Life, to also give you

the cow! If this was possible, I would have done it but, unfortunately, I cannot do it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have mentioned about the medical hubs. I can reassure my good friend, hon. Dr. Satish Boolell, and other hon. Members who have made some observations on the medical hub. It is quite normal and, in fact, to the credit of Mrs Hanoomanjee. She praised this scheme in her last speech on the Budget whereby, when we started the scheme, only 2,000 people were coming to this country under the scheme of tourism medical hub. Today, under this government, six years, seven years down the road, it is 11,000 people. So, this means that we are in the right way of making Mauritius a medical hub.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to non-communicable diseases, I must here inform the House that it is becoming one of the major issues in the world. So important that, at the last UN Heads of State Meeting, one of the main components addressed was with regard to non-communicable diseases. This government has increased the budget for non-communicable diseases. But, here again, I would like to make a point with regard to a question raised by hon. Dr. Satish Boolell about how come CSR is now being used for funding NCDs. But, I would like to assure the hon. Member that, from zero, this government is now spending Rs119 m. on non-communicable diseases with regard to prevention. Before that, seven to ten years earlier, there was nothing allocated for the prevention of NCDs. It was probably allocated, but under a different form. But we have created a special item for that.

Why did we, at the level of the Ministry, request the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to include it under the CSR? Because we have come to the conclusion that non-communicable diseases and the social determinant of health go hand in hand. You know what I mean. In order to get involved, all the Ministries, the private sector and all the NGOs thought that it is appropriate to give the opportunity for all companies in this country to have the choice to contribute under CSR with regard to NCDs. I think that by doing so, we are pulling everybody together with regard to the fight against NCDs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these are a few other things we would like to introduce in the year 2010 like the National Health Literacy Programme, which will allow us to address the

issues of prevention, and to educate the people, the workers at all different levels, in order the appraise everybody of the dangers of NCDs in Mauritius.

As regards cancer, this year, I have answered extensively questions in this Parliament, and Mrs Hanoomanjee has acknowledged how the Prime Minister has been personally involved - his personal commitment - with regard to cancer. We are about to launch the National Cancer Control Programme, and a National Strategy on Cervical Cancer is going to be launched in 2012.

With regard to the National Diabetes Framework, this also will soon be launched. Only this Sunday, at the Seewoosagur Botanical Garden, we are improving on the second leg of a survey which was started in 2009, whereby 5,000 people in 23 localities will go back to all the tests in order to see the progress of pre-diabetes.

Between 2000 and 2005, only an average of Rs10 m. was earmarked for NCDs, and today it is much more than this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

With regard to *Maurice Ile Durable*, sustainable island and sustainable health care, my Ministry will try to work in straight collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, because we believe that, as his Ministry put people in the centre of development, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life also put people in the centre of development. We believe that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment and the Ministry of Youth and Sports should work hand in hand with all those concerned in Mauritius to address the issue of non-communicable diseases, because the reasoning that health is only a matter for the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is long bygone, and we have to rethink and relook at it.

With regard to primary health care, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a Master Plan for Primary Health Care will soon be presented. This is being almost finalised by Professor Tuomilehto. Infrastructural, financial and human resources will be necessary for the implementation of this plan, and my Ministry will implement it in a phased manner.

With regard to public health, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the backbone of any health care system, and due attention will be given to that. As I said earlier, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been speaking about non-communicable diseases, but there is also the major threat of communicable diseases such as Chikungunya and Dengue. My Ministry will continue to lay emphasis on prevention, and to sensitise the population with regard to communicable diseases.

With regard to national drugs policy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir; if you don't mind, it will take me only ten minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Mr Bundhoo: But, if you allow me one more hour, I would not mind.

The Deputy Speaker: Five minutes!

Mr Bundhoo: But this is a matter of health, and it is very important.

The Deputy Speaker: No. There is a time constraint for your colleagues. If you could make it in five minutes, please.

Mr Bundhoo: I will try to rush through it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. With regard to national drugs policy, there is a master plan coming up and, probably, I will have the chance to make a statement in the House. With regard to a concern raised by my friend about fluoride, for the benefit of hon. Dr. Sorefan, I am going to give him a copy of what was said with regard to that. The use of it is not being banned; it is being used as and when required.

With regard to infrastructure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to dwell on that very quickly. Rs443 m. are being earmarked for the Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, namely Rs15 m. for the operating theatre; six operating theatres for Victoria Hospital to the tune Rs270 m. and with regard to the 134 beds Mrs Hanoomanjee was referring to earlier, this will be done hopefully in the next financial year.

With regard to the Emergency Department at SSRN Hospital, Rs16 m. has been earmarked and, as for the J. Nehru Hospital, a sum of Rs20.5 m. has been earmarked. The completion of the second phase of the Long Mountain Hospital is nearing completion and the laying of the foundation stone of the Medi-Clinic at Triolet will soon be done, because the contract has already been allocated. A good news for hon. Gungah, myself and hon. Choonee, we intend by the year 2012 to start the construction of a Medi-Clinic in Goodlands, and for hon. Bérenger in Stanley, and for hon. Bappoo and other colleagues in Floréal. Hon. Bodha must be pleased as well as and hon. Mrs Labelle who put the question to me in Parliament.

Coming to Curative Services, Mr Speaker, Sir, due attention will be given and also to the pharmacy division; a Pharmacovigilance Centre has been set up. The Pharmacy Council Bill will soon be presented in the House.

With regard to public health, food safety for the period 2012-2016, a National Plan for Food Safety will soon be implemented.

HIV and AIDS: the Day Care Services for HIV and AIDS patients are now available at Port Louis will be extended. Sensitisation campaigns shall continue, new Drop-In centres will be operational in Mahebourg, Port Louis, Beau Bassin to provide all these things.

We have not forgotten Rodrigues and Outer Islands, Mr Speaker, Sir, whatever we are doing in Mauritius shall be extended to Rodrigues. Due care and consideration will be given to both Rodrigues and Agalega, as have been requested to me by the Members of Parliament for Rodrigues, and especially by hon. Aimée with regard to Agalega. I wouldn't go into it because it will take so much time but, rest assured, hon. Members, due attention will be given to both Rodrigues and Agalega.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, now to take a couple of minutes to conclude in this speech. I should be clear from the general remarks I have made on the Budget that the package of measures being proposed for the health and medical services are fully in line with the social welfare philosophy of both the Labour party and the PMSD. The Labour Party is celebrating its 75 years of existence, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This February, we have celebrated the 75 years anniversary of the Mauritius Labour Party.

(Interruptions)

The House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will appreciate; the tone has been set at the Labour Party's foundation father, Dr Maurice Curé, as early as 1936. He launched the call for the workers of this country to unite and claim their place in this island, the Star and the Key of the Indian Ocean, *La Clé de l'Océan Indien*. They were staunch supporters of the Labour Party in its struggle for independence, under the wise leadership of the one whose destiny was to become known as the Father of the Nation, the late Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, and later, Sir Gaëtan Duval joined hands with us to continue the development of this country. He charted the destiny of this nation following the Welfare State model and, today, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, and the vice-Prime Minister, Xavier-Luc Duval. In this Budget we have consolidated with Welfare State further.

I consider it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an honour to have been a Minister of Environment in the previous Government, and I thank the hon. Prime Minister for giving me this opportunity to now pursue sustainable development through sustainable health in the spirit of *Maurice Ile Durable* project.

It is this Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which has created the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, another first which is so successful that I hear that a prominent hon. Member of the Opposition is now keen to become the next supa Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment in a *Cabinet fantôme*. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we welcome the Opposition to embrace the ideas, the philosophy of the Labour Party, but they cannot do it by remaining there. We invite them to come here and join us in our philosophy and in our ideas for a better Mauritius. But, first, they have to equal the Labour Party because some part of the Opposition think differently. People voted this Labour Party Government into power and we use our political power and our political mandate at different stages with our partners, be it PMSD and others to consolidate and to provide free education, free health, free transport and universal pension to the elderly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whereas others use their political power for the construction of massive buildings in Port Louis and on the beach, which they rented to themselves when they were in power, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they used the same political power to construct private clinics which they then sold, using the same political power, and so rightly said by the legitimate Opposition of the MMM: 'zot mem asté, zot mem vendé'.

This year, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my capacity as Minister, as a Member of the National Assembly and also, the Secretary General of the Labour Party, we all participated *dans la grande ferveur* on the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Labour Party.

The Labour Party with his allies, the PMSD and other, and those who want to come, are poised to make another great leap forward. We remain committed to inclusive growth and development, and the welfare of the population at large through this Budget and with our allies.

Mr Speaker, Sir, faithful to our policy of Putting People First and mindful to our electoral pledge of '*l'Avenir Ensam*', this Government will continue to assume its historical responsibility towards the people and the nation of Mauritius and the outer islands. To conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have the pleasure to invite the House and, everybody in Mauritius, who will be still around on the 23rd February 2036 - you will still be around, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will pray for you to be alive – to come and join in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Mauritius Labour Party and for those of you who would be elsewhere, with the help of my friend, Mr Pillay Chedumbarum, we will make sure that that you will receive a report on the celebrations on the worldwide web.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the mission of the Mauritius Labour Party in our view, in the views of all the Labour Party supporters and all of those who are in Government today, our mission is to shape the destiny of this country and we should not fail and we will not fail.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir

The Deputy Speaker: We suspend now for one hour and fifteen minutes.

At 8.18p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.38 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in Chair.

(9.37 p.m.)

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I proceed with my speech on the Budget itself, let me make something clear because whilst, in this House, on several occasions, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and hon. Members of the MMM, have raised issues about the Med Point saga, there have been remarks from hon. Members of the Government ‘Ah, asterla MMM pé associé pé dézassosié avek Med Point”, that now, we have changed position.

Let me make it clear for each and everybody in this House and to the nation. The MMM is the party which brought the issue of Med Point in the public arena. We are the one, when Parliament was on vacation in January and February, who learnt about this transaction, we went public. Each and every Saturday at our press conference, we released documents. We expressed our concern that public fund has been wasted on that issue of Med Point.

On the first opportunity that we had, in this august House, when Parliament resumed *le 22 mars 2011*, this was the first time that this issue of Med Point was raised by the MMM Opposition, through a PNQ.

And what we heard from the Government, from the hon. Prime Minister, hiding behind ICAC - I would not even call it an institution - refused to answer questions and went even further by saying that it was in their manifesto to have a geriatric hospital and that there is nothing wrong. And on the next opportunity, we pressed upon Government. What do we learn? That issue of a geriatric hospital was raised in Cabinet presided by the Prime Minister, a Labour Prime Minister. The issue was brought forward in Cabinet for the first time by a Labour Minister of Health. The MMM had nothing to do with that Cabinet or with that Government at that time.

And the next opportunity we had, when Parliament resumed again, there was a problem between the MSM and the Government. The MSM came in the Opposition, but the MMM carried on its fight to know the truth. The MMM carried on to pressure Government by PNQs and PQs to know exactly what happened in the Med Point saga because at all times from day one until the deed of sale was signed, it was under a Government headed by Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. So, the MMM never associated himself with the Med Point saga and we

disassociated ourselves again with the saga. When we asked questions about the fund, there were so many zig zag on the Government side.

At a certain time, we learned on the 18 October that Government, SIC and ICAC could not secure that money because it was already abroad. The money was abroad. It was the responsibility of ICAC, not even SIC. When we pressed upon again on 26 October, following a question while we had the Supplementary Budget, by hon. Pravind Jugnauth, there was a motion not to vote that sum, then, we heard that we can't do that because the money had already gone. It has already been paid.

On 25 October, what was said? SIC said that they tried, but the money has gone, already cashed and transferred to London. That's what we learnt on 26 October, a reply made by the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and there was an intervention, of course, on that issue by the hon. Prime Minister.

There was a new PNQ by the Leader of the Opposition on 09 November. We came back to the money again, because it is public fund. It is your money and my money. It is the people's money. We say...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Jeetah, what is your problem?

Mr Baloomoody: We said: where is the money? Secure the money, freeze that money! No, it can't be done and the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance went even further. He said: let's have an escrow account, ask them to give the money. What a mess, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

There was zig zag on the part of the Government themselves. They could not come clear and honest to the nation to say where is the money and then we learned that Rs120 m. – that was following the PNQ by the hon. Leader of the Opposition on 09 November, I remember they had ample time because that PNQ was supposed to be on 08 November. There was a traffic jam, the hon. Leader of the Opposition could not be here. So, they had ample time to go and check. At least, they did their homework this time and they came back and said: there is Rs120 m. still around.

Now, after 10 months of enquiry by that institution, you call ICAC. 10 months! And this should have been the first step taken by a respectable institution. Secure the money! Make sure that the culprit - if there is any - doesn't get the money! No, only ten months after, they go and

see the Judge in Chambers and they have a freeze on that money, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Fortunately, our Rs120 m. are still around, but the issue will not finish here. We, in the MMM - and I am sure our friends in the MSM - we will carry on to press upon Government to ensure and to know who is responsible because all these transactions were held under a Cabinet chaired by the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am on your guidance, I don't wish to be interrupted and yesterday when I interrupted, a hon. Minister told me to *ferme mo la bouche* and Mr Speaker said, it is parliamentarian. Let me tell you, if anybody interrupts me, I will tell them to *ferme zotte la bouche*.

Mr Deputy Speaker: Please, don't use threatening language.

Mr Baloomoody: No, the...

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Baloomoody: I am not challenging...

The Deputy Speaker: I am asking all Members that the hon. Member will be intervening, I don't want any interruption. Let him make his point.

Mr Baloomoody: So, our Prime Minister....

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker: Please, hon. Aimée! Please!

Mr Baloomoody: Our Prime Minister is very British. He always quote the British standard of parliamentary, he respects institutions, but we have the Westminster system in this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There is what we know, collective responsibility. If ICAC today has found that there is a *prima facie* case by arresting certain officials or certain people who are allegedly involved, but the Government *in toto*, the Ministry which sat in the Cabinet are as responsible as those Ministers and *hauts fonctionnaires* against whom ICAC has seen there is a *prima facie* case on the principle of collective responsibility. You are Ministers in a Cabinet, you are supposed to know your dossier, you are supposed to enquire before approving whatever has to be approved.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Baloomoody: So, the whole Government who took decision when there was a Labour party Minister of Health, subsequently an MSM Minister of Health, is responsible. You can't hide from that. So, the MMM - let it be clear - we started our fight in January this year when we knew about the transaction. It has not finished. We will keep putting pressure on the institution. We will keep asking questions in Parliament because we want to know whose idea was it to buy this and who was behind those who gave instructions to revalue that property; the price has been revalued. If memory does not come by questions, by pressure, I hope...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Baloomoody: I hope that gentleman who has lost his memory, has taken memory tablets by now, that he comes and enlightens the nation about who has.....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Please!

Mr Baloomoody: ... instructed public officials to overvalue or value - I don't know - that property. So, the truth will come out and the MMM will carry on to find the truth. So, stop, we have not changed direction because the MSM has left Government and come here. Our fight to find the truth with regard to the Med Point saga.....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Baloomoody: ...will continue and we will carry on until the day that the truth is known to the public and to the nation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Dayal, do you want to make a point? You will have the opportunity to talk later on.

(Interruptions)

Then, you will put on your remarks, please!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, every time there are interruptions, I sit down. I hope that the time allocated to me will not be counted.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Hon. Obeegadoo, please! Let your hon. friend continue.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, we have had a long day. Hon. Assirvaden, if there is any issue that you want to raise, you have got latitude to do it. If you want to draw my attention to any problem, I am here to listen but, at this point in time, hon. Baloomoody has got the Floor. Please!

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Aimée, please!

Mr Baloomoody: You should not have taken that last....

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, you address the Chair!

Mr Baloomoody: Yes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 04 November, we have listened to the hon. vice-Prime Minister delivering the seventh Budget Speech of Government headed by the hon. Prime Minister. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this time there was a main difference. It was the first Budget Speech presented by the PMSD. The PMSD, of course, *fidèle* to their tradition, *fidèle* with their *idéologie politique*, presented a Budget which is favorable to the private sector. This is a Budget of the PMSD with the four PMSD....

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Hon. Henry, what is the problem?

Mr Baloomoody: There is nothing wrong for the PMSD to *présente un budget PMSD. C'est normal. Il a eu l'occasion de le faire, il l'a fait.* But then, the Labour Party who is supposed to be a socialist party, which *tape* the table last time when taxes were *enlevées* from the private sector, the tax on dividends.

(*Interruptions*)

They *tape* the table and today when the PMSD *présente un budget ultralibéral* which favours the private sector, they had no choice, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but to *tape* the table again. They had to do it because the Labour Party is in power today thanks to deux *transfuges* and four PMSD.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence! Hon. Labelle and hon. Bundhoo, please!

Mr Baloomoody: So, they will have to dance to the tune of the PMSD today. They have no choice, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. They will have to....

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Baloomoody: They will have to dance to the tune of the PMSD. This is the only way for them to be in power today.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: I think that I should rise more regularly so that everybody can calm down. Please! Hon. Baloomoody, you can continue.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the PMSD, of course,

The Deputy Speaker: What is the problem, hon. Dayal? Please!

Mr Baloomoody: You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am a Curepipien, I know the PMSD very well and they have always been close to the private sector. There is nothing wrong to be close to the private sector and in so doing, they have made people, at the top of the ladder, happy.

(*Interruptions*)

Who are jubilating today with the abolition of Capital Gains Tax and the abolition of Solidarity Tax on dividends? Who are jubilating? It was the minority capitalists and this same tax which was imposed by the former Government, and they all *tape* the table again.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bunwaree, please! I know it is contagious.

Mr Baloomoody: It is clear that today the Labour Party is a *prisonnier du PMSD*.

(*Interruptions*)

What do we know?

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden, please! Where are you?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Baloomoody: They will know about the hotel! I will come back to the hotel! What do we read from *l'Express du samedi 12 novembre*: 'Xavier embarasse les rouges.'

(*Interruptions*)

You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, I did not want to quote this paper, but when I listen to hon. Ms Deepalsing – the *collistier* of my friend – it is only one year after, that she comes to tell us that when the Budget was passed last time, she was not happy. In fact, she said, we had meetings

between us, we put pressure. I am sure next year, if she is still around, the hon. Lady will come and tell us what happened after this Budget was presented

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Sayed Hossen, please!

Mr Baloomoody: ...because we know that there is

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Hossen, I am addressing myself to you!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Baloomoody: ... between Xavier Duval and *les rouges*. ‘Il embarasse les rouges’ and we will learn about it next year if she will still be around. Next year we will hear about what has happened in the corridor...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Labelle, please!

Mr Baloomoody: ... parlementaire. They have put pressure on this Minister of Finance to change things.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Quirin, don’t be provocative. Don’t point fingers and so on, please!

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Labour Party knows today that if they do not *tape la table* or if each and every one of them do not come here and speak not their heart, speak what they have to speak just to stay in power, they will be in the *karo canne*, because if the PMSD leaves Government, we know what will happen, general election, *karo canne*, and that’s what will happen. This is why probably they are not giving us municipal election.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Baloomoody: This is why we do not have election. But let us look at the reaction outside. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is dissatisfaction everywhere.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, I do not want to hear such remarks. Please, no provocation! Hon. Aimée, hon. Aimée! There is a problem somewhere. Please! Hon. Aimée, I

am addressing myself to you. Do me a favour, please. Let the hon. Member make his point and do not interrupt. Yes, hon. Baloomoody, you may continue.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us look what the reaction has been outside. The PME, *les pêcheurs*, *les petits planteurs*, the civil servants, they have expressed themselves all against the philosophy of this Budget. There is more discontent, Mr Speaker, Sir, to those who, unfortunately, cannot express themselves through a *syndicat* or through a trade union, the Police, the prison officers and even people from *leur rang* like Dharam Gokhool. What has he not said about the budget!

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Please!

Mr Baloomoody: Dharam Ghokool who was their Secretary-General

(*Interruptions*)

Dharam Gokhool, *qui sana sa*? Now, it is *qui sana sa*! This is your ex-Secretary-General.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, please! You should address the Chair.

Mr Baloomoody: Their guru, Mr Dalthaman.

The Deputy Speaker: You should address the Chair! You make your comments towards me, please! Do not interact directly to the...

Mr Baloomoody: They have all criticised the Budget. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me refer to what a gentleman who, of course, God knows how much he loves your good friend, Mr Mohamed Vayid. Look what he has to say following this Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir. After having criticising the Budget and giving a B+ - that is very generous - to the Minister of Finance, look, what he has to say: This is from somebody who is not MMM. I quote –

“This is the weakest council of Ministers the country has known since Independence”.

It was in the newspaper ‘Le Mauricien’ of 10 November – “The weakest council of Ministers this country has known since Independence” Mr Speaker, Sir. And who said that? Mr Mohamed Vayid, one of your gurus.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we look what happened in this House yesterday...

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Baloomoody: I am addressing the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: You were talking about gurus. I don’t know, you are meaning me.

Mr Baloomoody: No, no. I am meaning Vayid and Dalthaman, their gurus,

(Interruptions)

these people who run for them. What he had to speak: 'This is the weakest council of ministers'. Then, when we look what happened yesterday, Mr Speaker, Sir, we heard Ministers...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Seetaram, I am warning you!

Mr Baloomoody: We heard Ministers who could not answer questions put by the hon. Leader of the Opposition; they do not even know their files; they do not even know their *dossier*. We have another Minister who answers by arrogance. She decides this question is irrelevant; she decides that this Government cannot care for those children who are in need. And another Minister who answers questions, he was so embarrassed by the questions that one could have found him guilty by his demeanour, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Guilty by his demeanour, when he answers questions in this House, and do you not expect people to say that it is "the weakest council of Ministers this country ever had since independence."

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Budget of the hon. Minister of Finance lacks strategic direction and is not clear about the nature of the problems it is trying to solve. He has acted, Mr Speaker, Sir, like a *bricoleur*. *C'est un budget bricolage*, patching here and there, objective give to the rich, then we will patch here and there, probably by sitting next to the hon. Minister of Works, he has been contaminated with the work of patching. He has patched here, *c'est budget bricolage*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no clear objective with regard to the majority of the people in this country, but with a specific objective to give to the rich and makes the rich richer and the poor lives in their miserable, poorer and in very bad conditions, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Budget does not address the issues which concern the majority of people today - the cost of living, law and order, security of the place of work – the hon. Minister is not here – security on the road, security in public, security even in primary school, when we know what happened in Vacoas, a student, of four/six years old sitting in class, a *vagabond* came in that class, equipped with knife and God knows what, threatened these children, go out with the *cabas* of the teacher. This is the country we are living and this is the issue which this Budget fails to address.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, not a single word on corruption! When you quote their ex-general secretary, this is what he has to say: 'Today, younger generations with corrupt people and practising especially in the public domain is well-known" and there is no a single word on fraud and corruption in his Budget.

How about the measures to reinforce the nation fight against corruption? Not a single measure announced! Worst! The words corruption and fraud simply do not appear in the Budget, when we know this is the main scourge which is finishing the country, Mr Speaker, Sir. And one is not surprised that fraud and corruption is not mentioned, because fraud and corruption favour those who can afford – *to mette fort, to gagne fort*.

For a Budget of the Leader of the PMSD, you were expecting him to satisfy his *clientèle* and his *clientèle* is the private sector and the private sector *capav metter* for and *gagne fort*. So, this is why no mention of corruption! And who is the main victim of corruption in this country? *Ti-dimounes*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! *En ce qui concerne les petites and moyennes entreprises*, do you know how many people come and see me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? They could not get a contract in the public sector; they cannot enter that market, that *niche*. They could not get a contract in the public sector. They can't enter that market, that niche, because...

(*Interruptions*)

Pardon!

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Baloomoody: Of course! Do you want me to tell you what happened? And I did not put any question concerning that scandal at the CWA, that chlorine scandal!

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, please cool down!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Baloomoody: And the contract was set aside. The hon. Minister cannot come and challenge me on these issues because I know what I am talking about. I am the one who appeared as a lawyer, I declared my interest, but I did not put any question when there was that scandal at the CWA concerning the chlorine supply, where the Appeal Tribunal had to set aside that contract. I know, as a fact, what is happening in this country when it comes to corruption.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden, every day when I am in the Chair, I have to remind you. Again, today I am reminding you. Don't interrupt and each and every day I give warning, but it can't last for long. I will have to take action. Every night, I have to call to order a few Members.

(*Interruptions*)

Alright! The hon. Member may continue!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even yesterday we heard questions put by hon. Members on the land saga at the Roche Belle Sugar Estate. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know people ask for discounts, but to discount from Rs50 m. to Rs36 m. for plots of land and that is given just like that. And the hon. Minister wants us to believe that this has been done just like that from Rs50 m. to Rs36 m. to give a plot of land! He wants us to believe that the only action he could take was to sack these people. If there was nothing to hide, why don't we have an inquiry in this case? Papers have been laid on this Table where they were supposed. I am not saying that there has been. According to the *procès verbal*, there was one paper where there has been intervention of the Minister not to go and seek injunction. The other paper said that we should not go to court because we have no *locus standi*. Which is which? Rs17 m. have gone, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. You don't just sack people because they have *fané* like that. If there was nothing to hide, we should have had an inquiry, chaired by an independent person - I am not talking about ICAC - to know exactly what happened. The hon. Minister would have had an opportunity to clear himself. And the culprits, if there have been on the Board of Rose Belle ...

(*Interruptions*)

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

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Faugoo: The hon. Member is making allegations against me because he is saying that I could have cleared myself. I said yesterday I have got nothing to do with this case. This is something which happened in 2004 when they were in power, in 2006; I have got nothing to do with this, the hon. Member has to withdraw because he is making allegations.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, the hon. Member should withdraw.

(*Interruptions*)

Please!

Mr Baloomoody: I did not mention any name.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Faugoo, please you take your seat!

(*Interruptions*)

I am on my feet. Please!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Faugoo, you should mind your language. You know what I mean and you understand also.

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Baloomoody, no, I am on my feet, I'll just ask you to withdraw unconditionally.

Mr Baloomoody: I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Baloomoody: But we know from that issue there were three Ministers. So, the Minister who feels that the cap fits him tells me to withdraw, I withdraw. But there were three Ministers. I did not mention any name.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member can continue with his speech!

Mr Baloomoody: If that Minister who feels that the cap fits him tells me, I withdraw.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, order!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we are talking about fraud and corruption, it is not only the MMM which finds fraud and corruption, all people are talking about fraud and corruption in this country. The level of corruption at each and every level of Government, of the parastatal bodies, at the Municipalities, at the public authorities has gone to such a level that people don't trust this institution today.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Faugoo, please!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he does not do politics, he is *un homme de l'église*, he had a mass on Sunday or on the other day. I am talking about what Monseigneur Ian Ernest had to say, he said it honestly, he said it in a church, he said it in the presence of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition: '*la corruption est un mal qui mine la société*'. I am not saying it. It is an issue which concerns everybody. As a political leader, as a Member of Parliament, as a father, a country where we want our children to grow, this concerns us. Corruption, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is ...

(*Interruptions*)

And he made an appeal. *La corruption est un fléau qui a fait son chemin à tous les niveaux. Elle mine la société. Je fais un appel à tous afin de combattre ce mal.*

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Faugoo, please ! Hon. Faugoo, if you continue, I will have to take sanction.

(*Interruptions*)

Please!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been in politics since 1985. At no time in my career, I had to leave this country to go in exile because the corruption authorities were after me. And I hope he stands up and takes an objection.

(*Interruptions*)

Toi, to ti encore zenfant toi do couyon!

(*Interruptions*)

To encore baba, toi !

(*Interruptions*)

Tension are moi !

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, order! Order!

(*Interruptions*)

I suspend the sitting.

At 10.19 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 10.29 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a point of order. I refer to Standing Order 40(2), which states that it is out of order to use unbecoming language. It rules out of unbecoming words or expressions or offensive language.

As you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, earlier a Member of the Opposition was ordered out for using the word ‘*carapate*’, which is provocative language, and the Speaker ruled him out. Before you came back, Mr Speaker, Sir, Members of the House used the word ‘*deçanne caleçon*’, and they were simply warned for unparliamentary language, but not asked to withdraw. Just before the sitting stopped a few minutes ago, the hon. Attorney General was heard loud and clear by one and all to use the word ‘*soulard*’.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: I would make a humble request to the Chair that, in order that proceedings may go on in a peaceful manner, he be asked to withdraw this word ‘soulard’ addressed to hon. Baloomoody.

Mr Speaker: I was not in the Chair at the time the word ‘soulard’ or whatever word was used. It is now being that the Attorney General used the word ‘soulard’ towards hon. Baloomoody. Did the Attorney General use the word ‘soulard’ vis-à-vis the hon. Baloomoody?

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, I concede that I used the word ‘soulard’ against the hon. Member, and if your...

Mr Speaker: My ruling is that you withdraw!

Mr Varma: I do withdraw the word ‘soulard’.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I thank the hon. Attorney General for being courteous to the House.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, after having talked about corruption - which is not mentioned in the Budget - there has not been a single word about the strategy to control waste of public funds in the Budget, although we know that the Director of Audit each and every year comes out with not only a full report, but with recommendations on how to control waste not only in the public sector but in each and every other sector where the Director of Audit is the auditor. Not a single word, Mr Speaker, Sir! What we heard from the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was that, if I may quote -

‘Government will disinvest from -

- the casinos,
- Domaine Les Pailles Properties,
- Port Louis Waterfront Retail Outlets,
- Belle mare Tourist Village, Lakepoint Complex, and
- Offer a management contract for the Citadel.’

But this is not enough, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is not enough to come and say that you are going to disinvest. There should be an inquiry to find out why, in these casinos and institutions, there has not only been wastage, but abuse of public funds. It is so easy to say ‘okay, we are going to disinvest’, the gentleman who has made abuse of his position gets out. We have to know,

because there are many allegations. There are allegations of abuse, favoritism, fraud, corruption; we have heard everything in that institution. I am not saying that there has been, but what we know as a fact is that these institutions are doing very, very bad, and we have heard that they are going bankrupt.

We should have an enquiry, so that we know by whose fault it is. Is it by the Chairman's fault or the Board of Directors, or by Government? Whose fault is it? These companies have reached that situation. This is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, we insist, on this side of the House, that we must have a full-fledged enquiry in all these companies or institutions where Government money is involved. Don't just disinvest! Those who are found to be responsible have to pay the consequence!

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to an issue which is of my responsibility and concerns the Opposition. I have listened carefully to the hon. Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations. As you rightly pointed out at one of the sittings, Budget debate is very important. We, in the Opposition, not only we criticise, we make recommendations, but we expect hon. Ministers to come and tell us; they are full-time politicians and are paid to do a job ...

(Interruptions)

Yes, it is obvious.

(Interruptions)

No, for the people out there! For us, it is obvious. Many people do not know what the role of a Minister is. Some believe that Ministers are here only to give jobs. No! In a Budget speech, we expect Ministers ...

(Interruptions)

Some have done it. But, some have decided to go on a frenzy campaign: come and discuss about the MSM/MMM Government, come and tell what has happened in this House in 1995.

We expect the hon. Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations to come in this House, on such an important day when we are addressing the Budget issue to come and tell us what he is doing in his Ministry, when we know how workers out there are feeling insecure with that new law, which has been passed by this Government - Industrial Employment Act and Industrial Employment Rights. These two laws are doing a lot of harm, not only to workers, but they are feeling insecure. Not single word by this Minister! Instead, he has wasted 90% of the time allocated to him to tell us what happened in this House, what Hansard has said in this House by

the hon. Leader of the Opposition against the then Prime Minister. What a waste of time! What a waste of professional time!

This Minister, during the campaign ...

Mr Speaker: Sorry, you are now imputing motive on the conduct of an hon. Member of the House.

Mr Baloomoody: I withdraw. But, the hon. Minister could have enlightened the House and the nation what his Ministry has been doing, what his Ministry intends to do regarding such an important issue which concerns the majority of the people in this country. The PMSD has contented itself to bring a Budget for the majority at the top of the ladder but, at least, we expect the hon. Minister of Labour to come and tell us what he is doing with regard to the majority, the workers.

This hon. Minister, - I have nothing personal against him, I am addressing him in his capacity as Minister - since the electoral campaign, he was around to say that this law is not in favour of workers. PQs have been put to him as far back as last year, that is on 16 November 2010, by my hon. good friend, hon. Ganoo; then by my friend, hon. Reza Uteem, who came again, in 2011 and then there was questions put by myself in 2011.

On each and every occasion, the hon. Minister comes and tells us that he is going to amend the law, to make it more favourable to workers. Recently, there has been a judgment by the Industrial Court, where the Learned Magistrate comes and says that these new laws are unfavourable to workers. These laws make workers insecure with regard to their employment. These laws make it too easy for employers just to sack workers. This is what we expected from him. Nothing on this issue! Nothing with regard to the change in Labour Law and Employment Relation Law!

Mr Speaker, Sir, this morning we all woke up to hear a very bad news: another young person of 21 years old lost his life whilst working at Medine! Yesterday, I wrote my speech and I tried to look for statistics and I was informed that there were 13 fatalities up to date, and today I have to change it to 14, another young person has lost his life.

The question of Health and Safety at work is becoming so important that the hon. Minister was happy just to quote from statistics. The hon. Minister tells us that in such a year there were 21, then there were 24. We have not been informed in the House what he is doing exactly to make the working environment safer to workers. This reminds me, Mr Speaker, Sir, if

I may just say an anecdote. Years ago, I went to Johannesburg to spend the New Year. A good friend of mine came and picked me up at the airport, and I asked him how was Christmas there. He told me that Christmas was very nice and quiet this time, we had only 17 killings. Nice weekends for them! And this is the mentality, - I am sorry to say it - the approach of the Ministry, that they are happy with statistics: 21 this year, it was 25 last year, so I am doing very well. Not a single word of what actions he is taking!

It is the same hon. Minister who comes and tells us that in the construction industry, he has passed a regulation. And, the same hon. Minister comes on television and radio to say that he does not have enough people to enforce that regulation. Not a single word today to come and tell us what he is doing! Yes, there have been dialogues, *consultations avant la préparation du budget ! Consultations, oui, 'koz kozer quoi.* Monetary-wise, what has the hon. Minister received from that Budget to ensure a safer environment for workers? The hon. Minister will tell us that there has been an increase from Enforcement Officers - apparently there are 80, when in fact there are 42 Health and Safety Officers. And this is not sufficient?

Making regulations which cannot be enforced is of no avail. This is why I have referred to him as an academic Minister. If he was to choose the name of his Ministry, we change it from Ministry to academic institution! Because when you pass regulations, Mr Speaker, Sir, you have to ensure that they are obeyed. We have to ensure that they can be enforced. So, today, we don't have sufficient officers, and people are dying, people are being injured. Do you have the statistics, Mr Speaker, Sir?

There are two types according to the classification of the Ministry; we have one that is called *notifiable* and one which is fatal. In fact, both are rising. The *notifiable* is that if there is an urgent accident and you have to notify the Ministry - you have been practising as a lawyer, you know. Only the minority will go and report to the Ministry of Labour because the others are frightened to go. They don't go and report because the patron tell him '*to alle rapport sa, mo pou bizin met twa dehors.*'

So, they will take him either to the hospital or those who have got a bit better *sentiment* will go to a private clinic and it is not even reported. There is nothing, Mr Speaker, Sir, on these issues and when you look at the statistic itself which is on the website - I don't want to waste the time of the House to go through it - it is on the increase. From 189 in 2011, notifiable, as I said not 100% are notified, to 181. Not a single word from the hon. Minister about what action is

taken. But what is worse, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of TIC told us that now the BPO is flourishing, the BPO is doing excellent; we have 15,000 in the BPO today. But are you aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the BPO is operating outside the ambit of Factory Inspectorate? They are not registered as a factory. You know if you and me, we decide to have a garage at home, employ one person, we have to register as a factory and it is only when you register that the Labour officers are entitled to come on your premises to check the working environment. But are you aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the BPO is not registered as a factory? There is no check at the BPO, they are not allowed in by the Factory Inspectorate and, according to statistics, again, on the website of the Ministry of Health - my good friend, hon. Lormus Bundhoo is not here, probably he will take note of that - there are today what they call 'Occupational Disease' which is not checked, which is not within the ambit of the Health and Safety Officers like backache, muscular skeletal disorders, work-related stress and noise induce hearing loss. These are on the increase. Nothing is being done by the Ministry responsible for health and safety in this country, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Again, in the construction industry, yes there has been a regulation, but do you know how the people get away with the regulation? They subcontract. So, the law tells you if you have 100 people, you must have a Health and Safety Officer to ensure that all the scaffolding and everything is done properly, but they subcontract to small companies and there is no check. The small companies are not registered. Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, if I may make an appeal to the hon. Minister of Labour, we are talking of lives of people, we are talking of the health of people; we are talking of the sufferings of workers. Have a clear look at the issue of health and safety and make sure that foreign contractors, who come here, in this country, do respect our law and regulation. I don't want to name the countries, but we know that some import their standard and just wash hands with our law and regulation. Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that I have another 15 minutes. Let me go briefly.

Mr Speaker: The Opposition has been very generous to the hon. Member in allocating him so much time.

Mr Baloomoody: Injury time is more than what I have spoken. During my speech, I have sat down more than ...

Mr Speaker: No, but the Chair does not take account of the injury time.

Mr Baloomoody: Let me address one issue on the prison because it is of much concern again. The prison is overcrowded and is understaffed. It is the first time in the history of Mauritius that the Prison officers have to go to Court to get a promotion. *Moral bas!* Overcrowded! But there is one issue which is of great concern, the lack of Health officers, nurses at the prison. Do you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there are 800 persons suffering from HIV/AID in prisons? There are 354 persons on methadone and we don't have nurses to look after them. Medical dispensers are done, in some cases, by prisoners themselves and nobody from the Ministry of Health wants to go and work in the prisons because of security risks. So, we have to address that issue, but, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to say It. Because of overcrowding in the prisons, in the Budget, it is mentioned that we are coming with this bracelet so that people do not have to be in prisons.

My first reaction was: yes, I am very happy, as a Practising Barrister, this is a good solution, but then, Mr Speaker, Sir, we should not stigmatise people wearing these bracelets because these people are innocent until proven guilty. If we, in this House, we don't show respect to those who probably will have to wear that bracelet, then, of course, what do you expect the employer or the employee to do? We should not discriminate against them. So many times - when hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee or hon. Soodhun were talking - we have heard people on this side saying '*monn garde deux bracelets pu twa*'. This is disgusting, Mr Speaker, Sir! And what is worse, when I read the newspaper last Friday, I was shocked that the newspaper reported, and I have to quote it and I expect that we are not going once this bracelet is going to be introduced to discriminate against those who will wear this bracelet. Let me quote what is written –

“Bizin garde dé pu twa.”

And I quote the paper, it is an English newspaper –

“The Prime Minister at the National Assembly to Showkutally Soodhun after the announcement of introducing of electronic bracelet for prisoners on bail – *‘Bizin garde dé pu twa.’*”

(Interruptions)

Whether it is *gâté* or not, but we are sending the wrong message. How many times we have heard it in this House. We have to be careful...

Mr Speaker: I am not defending the Prime Minister, but there are so many times that ...

Mr Baloomoody: But there are some issues which are so fundamental and emotional.

Mr Speaker: I agree with the hon. Member!

Mr Baloomoody: We should not...

Mr Speaker: Prejudice.

Mr Baloomoody: ...do that, Mr Speaker, Sir. Now, let me come ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order now, please keep quiet!

Mr Baloomoody: Briefly, again, if I may come to the Police. Again, we try to rest on statistics. All the statistics are showing that there is less crime, but every time we go through the newspaper and we put on the radio in the morning, we hear of crimes because there is demoralisation in the Police. There is no promotion, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: But then I want to draw the attention of the hon. Member that the promotion exercise is carried out by the Disciplined Forces. If he wants to criticise the Disciplined Forces, he must come with a substantive motion.

Mr Baloomoody: I am not criticising but I am saying as a fact that there has been no promotion.

Mr Speaker: No, but then...

Mr Baloomoody: And those who have been promoted, for two years they have passed their examination, they have been promoted but they are not in their substantive post.

Mr Speaker: Who is to be blamed?

Mr Baloomoody: I don't know who is to be blamed. The hon. Prime Minister responsible for the Police could probably pass the message...

Mr Speaker: Yes, pass on the message.

Mr Baloomoody: ...to those concerned. He may address or pass the message to the Commissioner of Police that mileage allowance has been withdrawn from prosecutors. Do you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, prosecutors at the IC, they are going home in bus and most important criminal cases are in their bags because their mileage allowance has been withdrawn? Can you imagine that! We, as Barristers, we know what they have in these files and they are going home with three or four files under their arm because mileage payment has just been withdrawn,

Mr Speaker, Sir, in Port Louis for 8 Police stations, there is only one SP. In the Northern Division, there is only 1 SP for 13 stations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in Port Louis, for eight Police Stations, there is only one SP, Port Louis Nord. The Northern Division, there are only one SP for 13 Police Stations. Where are we going? If you want to have a proper law and order situation, you have to have a Police Force *qui est motivée*. But, unfortunately, we don't have this, and this is why we heard in this House two days ago a question on death in Police custody. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very important issue to us. Death in custody - it is supposed to be the safest place to be. Can you imagine people dying, hanging in Police custody when the Standing Order tells you that every hour Police officers should go and have look at the prisoner when he is in the Police cel?. What is worse? We have the Ramlugun case, a prisoner who was found dead in custody. The family has been compensated, but the culprit has not been prosecuted. There was a case which was brought, the DPP had to withdraw the case because he said that inquiry was *mal* done and he ordered another inquiry. But we have not learnt any lesson. Here, again, yesterday the hon. Prime Minister told us that the Police is inquiring on the Police.

Mr Speaker: What is the hon. Member suggesting?

Mr Baloomoody: We know that the law says that if anybody dies in Police custody, we should go to the Magistrate and the Magistrate has the power to start the inquiry himself. When we talk about the Magistrate, can you believe in a country where, we call ourselves a developed country, with the rule of law, the hon. Prime Minister stands up and tells us the Magistrate was so busy. When we know, according to law, that when somebody is arrested, he should be present to the Magistrate the next day.

Mr Speaker: No, I am sorry. The hon. Member has to be fair to the hon. Prime Minister. The hon. Prime Minister gave all the facts to Parliament. First thing, he is not in charge of the Ministry of Justice. The Magistrate was busy the following day, this was the information that was given. If the hon. Member feels that the Judiciary has not done its work properly, he can address the point elsewhere.

Mr Baloomoody: I am not blaming the hon. Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member said the Prime Minister.

I am saying that the hon. Prime Minister came and said that the Magistrate was busy. The law is that any prisoner should be presented to court, but then the Magistrate was busy.

Mr Speaker: What did the hon. Prime Minister do?

Mr Baloomoody: We have a problem. But if that gentleman was somebody of means, would we have the same results?

Mr Speaker: Yes, the hon. Member is a lawyer.

In the past, Mr Speaker, Sir - I know personally - on a Friday, when there was Magistrates meeting, the ex-Chairman of the Shopping Paradise could get his bail, but a juvenile of Richelieu had to spend the night in custody because there was no Magistrate.

Mr Speaker: I have to tell the hon. Member that in accordance to Standing Order 40 Subsection (5), the question of administration of justice, if it is being criticised has to be brought by a substantive motion.

Mr Baloomoody: I am just stating facts.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is criticising. He is a lawyer.

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

Mr Baloomoody: When we speak about access to justice, in the Budget it is mentioned - I am talking about the Budget, I am not criticising the institution, but the Budget - that just to avoid a *justice à deux vitesses*, we are having legal aid increased from such sums to such sums. Will that stop justice *justice à deux vitesses*? This is my question. Are you aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, that now, if you want to apply for legal aid, it takes you three to four months for an attorney and a counsel to be appointed? Are you aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, that today, it takes three months to get an appointment, according to my information. I have checked it yesterday.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, you are an experienced lawyer and a very respectable member of the Bar, I must tell you that it is clear that whether it is the question of legal aid or the administration of legal aid depends on the Supreme Court, whether it is the Chief Justice, rules are made by the Chief Justice, rules are made by the Judges of the Supreme Court and it is administered by the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court. Now, if you want to make suggestions to shorten the delay, you can do it.

Mr Baloomoody: I will make suggestions. The Government cannot be a silent spectator. It is the Government which provides the fund. The Supreme Court cannot dictate the policy of Government. The Budget Speech wants to do away with *justice à deux vitesses*, but what do we learn?

Mr Speaker: If it is a lack of fund, you can state your point.

Mr Baloomoody: No, but what do we learn? Last week, to our surprise, the rules of the Supreme Court were to increase the cost of civil action by 900%. Today, to enter an action at the Supreme Court, just the cost to Government, is Rs10,000, Mr Speaker, Sir - from Rs650 to Rs10,000. To have a divorce, it is Rs20,000 now. What is worse? Victims of accident, workers who have been unjustifiably dismissed, they will have to deposit 1% of the claim before entering an action. Not only you will have to pay the cost to Government, and the cost to your Counsel and Attorney, but you have to deposit 1% and nothing is said about the insurance. Mr Speaker, Sir, you have been practicing at the Bar as a respectable Attorney and, of course, we have worked together and you know how long it takes by the time some insurance go bankrupt? Victims of accident! Victims of unjustified dismissal! Today...

Mr Speaker: I fully subscribe to what you are saying and to your concern about access to justice and about what has been published for the cost that you will have to pay to enter an action. But, with due respect to the hon. Member, who has published these? Who prepared the provisional regulations? Who has published? The hon. Member should tell me that and then, he tells me what the problem is so that he can address these issues.

Mr Baloomoody: As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Judiciary is independent. But, of course, the hon. Prime Minister is responsible for the Judiciary, **not only to day administration**; the Judiciary falls under his budget. I am talking about the Budget.

Mr Speaker: The question that the fees are being increased unreasonably is not a question of the Exchequer of the Government or money going to that. It is the Supreme Court, the Judges who have proposed the rules, and I will allow the hon. Member perhaps to make a request through the Attorney General to present his concern to the Judiciary for action.

Mr Baloomoody: Be it so! The Attorney General was quiet. He did not mention anything about that rule. This is why I am raising it and I hope that the Government will not be a simple spectator when this goes through. But, let me finish on the justice section and then, I will conclude.

There is another issue which is of main concern. We said we should not have a *justice à deux vitesses*. We say in the Programme Based Budgeting that civil matters should be over in 100 days, but by now we have had the arbitration. Are you aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, that Magistrates are presiding Disciplinary Committee? Magistrates of Industrial Court are presiding Disciplinary Committee in private. Are you aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, that Judges of the Supreme

Court are presiding arbitration,? When we know how the court is overloaded? When the Government is doing everything to increase the number of judges and courtrooms, judgements are being postponed, but then they are presiding private arbitration and disciplinary committees.

Mr Speaker: Again, this is administration of justice!

Mr Baloomoody: I am raising this issue in this august House because the hon. Attorney General or the hon. Prime Minister can at least voice the opinion of our concerns. Are we going now to have a justice for the poor who has to go through the normal channel for months and years and a justice for the rich, where not only you can hire a judge, you can now have a private usher and have your justice quick?

You know, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister is very British in his approach to the institution, which I respect, of course. But, you know according to the Arbitration Act in UK in 1996, even if judges of the Commercial Court were to go for arbitration, Section 93 of the Arbitration Act 1996, 'Arbitration of Judges as Arbitrators', this is the title. Even a Judge of the Supreme Court want to go to arbitration, he has to apply to the Law Chief Justice for permission. And if the Law Chief Justice is satisfied that the state of business of the High Court and the Crown Court, lower Court allows him to do so, he is allowed to go for arbitration. Mr Speaker, Sir, if he is allowed to go to arbitration, Section 4 tells you that, I quote-

"The fees payable to the services of a Judge of the Commercial Court or as official referee as arbitrator or umpire shall be taken in the High Court."

So, your fees are going in the kitty of the Court. This is matter which I hope either the hon. Attorney General or the Legal Advisor of Government or the hon. Prime Minister will take it to where it should be.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me conclude. Allow me to conclude!

Mr Speaker: Of course, I will allow you. It is high time to conclude.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, listening to hon. Members on the other side, on Government side, many hon. Ministers have said by concluding – "Don't worry; we will be here in 2015. We will be here after 2015."

Fortunately, it reminds me of two things; we are proud in the MMM to have in 1982 put in our Constitution that election has to be held every five years. So, they don't have any control on this. It is people out there who have in control. Let me remind the hon. Members in Government – go and read and have a look at the international television, you will see what is

happening in certain countries like the Arab countries where the people doesn't want you - even if you wish to stay for life, you will have to abandon power. The people don't love you. It is the people out there who have the power. Can they tell me that these countries are not democratic! Let's take what is happening in Italy and Greece where you have a democracy. We know how many Prime Ministers have had to resign. We know how many backbenchers did not support...

Mr Speaker: Now, Italy has no Prime Minister.

Mr Baloomoody: No, I think he has been appointed today.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, I have not listened to the news.

Mr Baloomoody: On l'appelle Le grand Mario.

Mr Speaker: The seat was vacant and nobody wanted to take it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: Let me tell them with their fragile majority to be careful! When the ships sink we know what happens to the rats and there are some people on the other side whose dossiers are not clean on that issue. We know what happened in 2005. Be careful with your majority! Don't be too arrogant! Listen to the wish of the people and do listen to the opposition voice because we represent today more than what the majority represents.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Perraud!

(11.05 p.m.)

Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port North and Montagne Longue): M. le président, je ne peux me taire et je ne peux pas ne pas remercier de tout cœur le MMM. Je leur dis merci. Merci au MMM pour la publicité qu'ils font au PMSD. Je sens que le MMM porte le PMSD dans son cœur. Je sens aussi que le MMM a peur et que le PMSD a le vent en poupe. On a tout essayé, M. le président, pour que le ministre des finances ne présente pas le budget. M. le président, l'honorable Baloomoody a insinué que, je cite –

« *The Labour Party have to dance to the tune of the PMSD, today.* »

M. le président, le MMM veut s'inviter à la danse, pour cela, il faut être un bon partenaire, bien sûr, il faut encore être dans l'alliance. Un partenaire patriote. Le pays avant tout loyal et ayant une ligne de conduite. Ceci dit, M. le président, j'aimerai partager une rencontre intéressante faite lors de ma visite dans ma circonscription.

M. le président, après le discours du budget, une dame de ma circonscription est venue à ma rencontre et elle m'a dit ceci. « *Madam, premye fwa mo tand coze mwa dan bidze, zamé sa pa finn arrivé avan, dir M. Xavier, mersi pour mwa* ». Je ne comprenais pas trop ce qu'elle disait. C'est là qu'elle m'explique qu'on a parlé des employés maison dans le budget de 2012, que le gouvernement va contribuer au *National Savings Fund* pour les employés de maisons et les travailleurs manuels entre autres. D'emblée, avec enthousiasme, elle me fait part aussi de sa joie d'entendre que le gouvernement lui donne le terrain de sa maison de cité CHA, que le gouvernement donne des facilités de crèches pour ces petits enfants, que son petit dernier va pouvoir bénéficier des mesures prises dans le domaine du sport.

M. le président, je l'ai écouté, écouté, écouté avec passion, avec joie. J'étais émue. J'étais fier. J'étais contente à voir sa joie, sa satisfaction, je me dis – 'Maurice, c'est un plaisir.'

(Interruptions)

Mr Perraud : Oui, M. le président, comment ne pas être contente et satisfaite de ce budget, un budget que le ministre de finances a travaillé, a préparé en seulement trois mois. Avant de poursuivre et démontrer pourquoi la nation mauricienne accueille favorablement ce budget, M. le président, permettez-moi de présenter mes sincères félicitations au vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval, mon leader. Aujourd'hui, M. le président, on constate à quel point le Premier ministre, Dr Navin Ramgoolam, avait raison de confier le portefeuille de la trésorerie de l'Etat à l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval. Car le travail abattu par ce dernier en si peu de temps est vraiment le chef-d'œuvre d'un grand patriote et d'un visionnaire. Il va s'en dire que le support du Premier ministre dans les préparatifs de ce budget a été dynamique et concluant.

Au niveau de PMSD, nous sommes tous fiers que notre leader, d'ailleurs le premier membre a s'occupé d'une telle responsabilité ministérielle, ait pu redonner confiance au monde des affaires pour le grand bien de tous. Et ce, en dépit des circonstances économiques mondiales précaires.

Mr Speaker, Sir, those who intervene to challenge the Budget were unconvincing. I do understand that the Opposition cannot come and praise the Budget. They have to do their job. The fact is that it is extremely difficult to find convincing arguments to challenge the fundamentals of this Budget. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is in life a basic principle: if you cannot convince yourself, how can you convince others?

Mr Speaker, Sir, after listening to the Opposition, we get the feeling that their appreciation of the Budget is : “Good, but there is room for improvement”. Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Opposition thinks, feels that the Budget is good, then it definitely means that it is very good. Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, very good, because we should keep in mind that hon. Xavier Luc Duval took office as Minister of Finance only three months ago, and he succeeds to produce such a brilliant Budget. Hon. Xavier Luc Duval took up the challenge, and he did it. He has always delivered, be it as Minister of Business, as Minister of Tourism, as Minister of Social Integration, and today as Minister of Finance. For him, we can say proudly ‘*résultat lor résultat*’.

M. le président, on se rappelle encore avec quel sérieux, quelle volonté, quel professionnalisme, quelle sensibilité l'honorable Xavier Luc Duval a mis sur pied et fait fonctionner le ministère de l'Intégration sociale. M. le président, nous sommes tous unanimes à dire que ce budget porte l'empreinte du passage de Xaxier Luc Duval au ministère de l'Intégration sociale.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, we have listened to the semblance of augmentations from the Opposition side. They have realised that they were miles away from public opinion. In fact, this public opinion has well understood our message and our objectives.

Les débats budgétaires démontrent que la démocratie parlementaire se porte bien. Les parlementaires de l'opposition ont disséqué, dénoncé, critiqué les projets, les mesures et décisions du gouvernement. Réponse du berger à la bergère : les membres du gouvernement ont répondu en étalant des faits, des projets, des mesures, des actions. Les uns plus honteux, plus controversés, plus critiqués que ceux qui leur sont reproché. L'opposition critique la nomination du *General Manager* du *CEB* directement par le *Board*. Le gouvernement rétorque qu'en 2003, le gouvernement MMM/MSM on a fait autant quand il fit venir Madame Donat Leclair, avec un salaire de 10,000 US dollars par mois. Et le gouvernement marque un but.

Les membres de l'opposition dénoncent ce qu'ils appellent *job for the boys*, et c'est au gouvernement de leur rafraîchir la mémoire en parlant de M. Ravin Dajee parachuté de la STC

au CEB ,et celui de M. Jean-Mee Desveaux qui siégeait sur 17 Boards et gagnait un salaire R 350,000 par mois. Et le gouvernement marque un but.

L'opposition fait une sortie virulente contre le gaspillage des *taxpayers' money*. C'est au gouvernement de démontrer que c'était pratique courante lorsqu'ils étaient au pouvoir. Le projet de la station de Victoria; l'exemple de l'achat des transmetteurs à la hauteur de R 100 millions. Et le gouvernement marque un but.

L'opposition dénonce et qualifie nos collègues, l'honorable Mireille Martin et l'honorable Jim Seetaram, de transfuges ! Le gouvernement réplique : Joe Lesjongard alors ? Et le MSM qui a *cross the floor*. Le gouvernement marque un but.

L'opposition critique la privatisation des casinos; le gouvernement dénonce la privatisation des hôtels La Pirogue et Le Touessrok lorsqu'ils étaient au pouvoir. Et le gouvernement marque un but.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Some allowances to be made to the nice lady! Let her speak.

Mrs Perraud: M. le président, je pourrais continuer aussi...

Mr Obiadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me raise this again as a point of order. Is this not imputing motives? May I recall that Mr Joe Lesjongard was elected to this House as an MMM Member of Parliament and has not switched allegiances?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Alright, forget about this. Carry on. Ce n'est pas si offensif que ça.

Mrs Perraud: M. le président, je pourrais continuer ainsi pendant longtemps. L'aurore se pointera, et je serai encore là à discourir. M. le président, qui a remporté le match ? Qui a gagné le match ? Question pour un champion. La réponse, M. le président, c'est le peuple qui a perdu. Le peuple a perdu le tournoi de l'honnêteté, de l'efficience, de la bonne gouvernance, de l'éthique. Jusqu'à quand continuerons-nous ainsi cette surenchère de qui dit mieux, qui fait mieux le gaspillage, la corruption, les promesses vides, les projets bien fondés mais non réalisés. L'opposition ou le gouvernement ? M. le président, des deux côtés de la Chambre, nous sommes tous unanimes à dire qu'il faut cesser le mal qui ronge notre société.

Oui, M. le président, nous l'Alliance rouge/bleu, le Parti travailliste et le PMSD, nous disons halte, *stop* ! La preuve, le ministre des finances a institué un comité, a fait un calendrier pour faire un suivi des mesures budgétaires, pour veiller à l'implémentation de ces mêmes

mesures. M. le président, une première dans l'histoire, et le ministre des finances mérite toutes nos félicitations pour cette décision courageuse. Une décision qui montre sa détermination et sa volonté à travailler pour le pays.

D'ailleurs, le titre même du budget donne le fil conducteur des mesures qu'il contient - *Growth for the Greater Good*. Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister of Finance means business. M. le président, un honorable membre de l'opposition, l'honorable Lesjongard, a dit ceci dans son discours. Je vais le citer -

'Nous avons été gratifiés d'un budget dans la plus pure et dure philosophie du PMSD.

Tout pour le grand capital, un semblant de mesures pour les plus démunis de notre société, car chez le PMSD, M. le président, pour les plus démunis de notre société, on a toujours fait semblant, et rien de rien pour la classe moyenne.'

M. le président, je voudrais répondre par cette épitaphe: 'Passant, ne pleure pas, je ne suis pas mort, je fais semblant.'

Oui, M. le président, c'est seulement feu Sir Gaëtan Duval qui fait semblant d'être mort. Nous, les Joes; nous les bleus, nous qui sommes dans l'alliance rouge bleu, nous les mauriciens patriotes, nous reconnaissons que ce n'est pas un budget qui fait semblant d'aider ceux qui sont au bas de l'échelle.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tempted to say: "come on Joe, do you think really this Budget does not cater for the poor and the needy?" mais je préfère dire: 'eh bann Joes, ce budget apporte une bouffée d'air frais aux familles au bas de l'échelle'. C'est un budget qui contient beaucoup de mesures courageuses. C'est un budget réaliste ; un budget novateur ; un budget qui relève de très grands défis sociaux et économiques; un budget qui accorde une attention particulière aux jeunes. Les vrais Joes savent qui sont ceux qui font semblant de défendre les intérêts des pauvres.

M. le président, on a cru nous critiquer en disant que c'est un budget dans la pure et dure philosophie du PMSD. Je tiens à rappeler que c'est un budget du gouvernement parti travailliste/PMSD mais nous sommes fiers, nous sommes très fiers qu'on nous dise que c'est du PMSD pur et dur. C'est un compliment qu'on accueille. Pour répondre à cette déclaration, permettez moi, M. le président, de lui rafraîchir la mémoire. Il lui suffit de faire une rétrospection des faits marquants de la transformation de notre île sortant d'une économie basée exclusivement sur la canne à sucre à l'industrie touristique en passant par le textile, il saura combien a été déterminant, M. le président, l'apport du PMSD au gouvernement - la zone franche, l'industrie

du tourisme, le travail de nombreux mauriciens à l'étranger, l'émigration, la construction des maisons pour ceux au bas de l'échelle sociale.

M. le président, le *cost of living allowance*, le treizième mois - le mois prochain beaucoup de mauriciens pour ne pas dire tous les mauriciens vont avoir leur treizième mois. Qui a fait cette proposition dans les années 70 M. le président? Le PMSD. Une autre mesure courageuse du gouvernement travailliste/PMSD est l'introduction de l'*Equal Opportunity Bill* au parlement. Toutes ces grandes réalisations portent le sceau du PMSD et du parti travailliste.

M. le président, l'apport du PMSD au gouvernement comme un allié naturel et solidaire du parti travailliste est incontestable. M. le président, comment ose-t-on dire que le PMSD fait semblant d'aider les pauvres, que le PMSD ne s'occupe que du grand capitaliste? Vous vous souvenez, M. le président, de cette célèbre phrase du feu Sir Gaëtan Duval: 'Solange amène mo diary' pour décrire une situation de plein emploi qu'allait connaître notre pays au beau milieu des années 80. C'est pour vous dire, M. le président, que le PMSD s'est toujours battu pour les faibles, les nécessiteux de la société mauricienne. Aujourd'hui le flambeau du parti avec un demi-siècle d'existence a été confié à l'honorable Xavier Luc Duval qui œuvre avec le même engouement, avec la même ardeur et avec la même passion pour défendre la cause du peuple.

M. le président, ce budget a suscité un véritable espoir à toute la population, particulièrement aux plus faibles, aux plus nécessiteux. Il cible une augmentation soutenue de la richesse nationale pour pouvoir améliorer le cadre de vie de nos citoyens. Les seuls deux arguments, qui ont été scandés pendant tout l'exercice du débat budgétaire, ont été, de ce côté de l'opposition, la taxe de 10 sous sur les SMS et de l'autre côté de l'opposition le micro. D'ailleurs je tiens à dénoncer ce langage ordurier, ce langage utilisé à l'encontre d'une femme par un homme, *a hon. Member* dans cette auguste Chambre lorsque les membres de l'opposition étaient à cours d'arguments. Nous avons eu droit, M. le président, à des phrases à forte connotation sexuelle se référant au terme 'micro' alors que le débat aurait dû rester au niveau des projets, des idées, des faits, des arguments démontrant la brillance intellectuelle des membres de cette assemblée ainsi illuminer et impressionner l'auditoire et non dévoiler la petitesse d'esprit, la bestialité, la politique de bas étage de certains membres de cette assemblée. On dit 'chasser le naturel il revient au galop'. Alors même qu'en ce moment, il y a une campagne contre la violence à l'égard des femmes, nous assistons horrifiés, dégoûtés, désolés à la décadence de certains membres de cette assemblée vis-à-vis de la femme. Je pense que *Men Against Violence*

(MAV) a du pain sur la planche puisque nous qui sommes des porte-paroles de nos mandants, nous qui représentons la société, nous qui sommes censés donner le bon exemple, or si certains d'entre nous se donnent la liberté de descendre à ce niveau, M. le président, effectivement « la société est malade » comme dirait l'autre. Nous savons aussi qu'une partie de l'opposition fait une campagne malsaine et communale dans les régions rurales accusant le ministre des finances d'avoir fait un budget pour favoriser une communauté de la population mauricienne. M. le président, à chaque fois que cette opposition est à court d'arguments; est prise au dépourvu; se sent dépassée par les victoires du gouvernement; prise de panique se sentant menacée de disparaître de la scène politique, elle tombe dans la bassesse. Comment peut-on avancer un tel argument alors que tous les mauriciens se retrouvent dans ce budget qu'ils soient les gros capitalistes ou ceux au bas de l'échelle en passant par les mauriciens de la classe moyenne.

Contrairement à son prédécesseur, le ministre des finances y préconise une série de mesures incitatives pour revigorer les petites et moyennes entreprises et il prévoit tout un chapelet de mesures sociales susceptibles à soutenir les gens contre la misère. Je vais vous laisser le soin de lire toutes ces mesures.

M. le président, toutes ces mesures démontrent la mauvaise foi, la démagogie de ceux qui prétendent que les *ti-dimounes* ont été laissés sur la touche au profit des gros bonnets. M. le président, ce budget vise prioritairement une croissance soutenue en enlevant les taxes bloquant le flux de l'investissement. La philosophie de ce budget est que pour avoir un meilleur cadre de vie, chaque mauricien a l'opportunité égale pour être un créateur de richesses.

M. le président, souvenez vous la folle rumeur véhiculée par l'opposition quelques temps de cela que *gouvernman pé kaser, élections derrière la porte*. On a même tenté une opération de débauchage pour déstabiliser le gouvernement. C'est dans ce climat socio-politique que le ministre des finances a préparé ce chef d'œuvre qu'est le budget 2012.

M. le président, le ministre des finances a su être à l'écoute du peuple. C'est un budget qui motive les gens à travailler, qui leur donne les facilités à se tenir debout, à être leur propre chef, un budget qui donne la dignité aux mauriciens.

Pour conclure, M. le président, je dirais que ce budget ne vient pas vendre des rêves aux Mauriciens. Ce n'est pas un budget mirobolant, c'est un budget réaliste, prévoyant, qui jette la base pour une société plus juste, une société inclusive, une société à opportunité égale pour tous

les Mauriciens, un budget sensible aux problèmes quotidiens des Mauriciens. M. le président, en avant tous pour une meilleure île Maurice !

Merci.

Mr Speaker: May I ask the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair, please?

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

(11.31 p.m.)

Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin &Petite Rivière): M. le président, le temps qui m'est alloué étant limité, je ne vais donc pas polémiquer avec l'honorable Mme Perraud qui m'a précédé, mais je ne lui dirais qu'une seule chose, c'est-à-dire que le MMM n'a pas de leçon à recevoir du PMSD.

(Applause)

M. le président, à l'heure où le peuple de Maurice constate l'érosion grandissante de son pouvoir d'achat, à l'heure où les poches de pauvreté ne cessent d'augmenter dans notre République, à l'heure où les licenciements et la fermeture des entreprises sont monnaie courante, à l'heure où la jeunesse de ce pays perd de plus en plus ses repères, il est regrettable de constater que le budget est loin de répondre aux attentes des 'ti-dimounes'.

Il n'y a pas de doute que nous sommes entrés dans une période de turbulence. Nous traversons une grave crise, non seulement économique mais aussi sociale. Et l'une influence l'autre. Cette grave crise s'appelle insécurité. Et ce que le peuple espère ardemment, c'est que le gouvernement lui donne l'assurance de rétablir la sécurité. La sécurité de l'ordre public - de *law and order* – la sécurité alimentaire, la sécurité du pouvoir d'achat et la sécurité de l'emploi.

"Growth for the greater good" sont des paroles qui résonnent bien à l'oreille de certains. Mais le petit peuple, M. le président, se demande : *"greater good" for whom?*

"Beware of jobless growth" ! Quand le ministre des finances annonce fièrement –

"I am pleased to announce that the capital gains tax on immovable property is being completely abolished and it will apply with immediate effect."

Le petit peuple ne se sent pas tout à fait rassuré de l'abolition de l'insécurité.

M. le président, le peuple vit l'insécurité au quotidien. Il est témoin de plusieurs cas où certains se font justice eux-mêmes. Il apprend que des policiers ont été agressés dans leur propre poste, que des uniformes et des armes et leurs munitions ont été volées dans un autre poste, que

des policiers sont poursuivis pour de graves délits tandis que d'autres poursuivent le Commissaire de Police.

La sécurité de l'ordre public est devenue un véritable cauchemar. Lorsque certains semblent être au-dessus de la loi, d'autres se voient inévitablement au-dessous de la loi et l'insécurité s'installe de plus en plus.

Lorsque des lois semblent protéger les employeurs pour "*hire and fire*" au détriment des employés, ces derniers souffrent de précarité et d'incertitude.

Lorsque le ministre conclut en disant –

"It is a Budget that reflects the values, compassion and pragmatism of our people."

Les ménages ne sont pas rassurés car ils subissent toutes sortes de pénurie, les coupures d'eau et l'escalade des prix des denrées de base. M. le président, c'est sur cette note grave qu'ils évaluent le budget.

M. le président, je me suis fait un devoir de recueillir les opinions des représentants de toutes les couches de la société en particulier les jeunes et les défavorisés. C'est avec une profonde tristesse qu'ils m'ont exprimé leur déception. Et je les comprends très bien. Car, si on continue à favoriser le luxe au détriment des nécessités de base, on ne pourra jamais répondre aux attentes prioritaires du peuple.

C'est une certitude, ceux qui subissent au quotidien les difficultés de la vie ne peuvent certainement pas remplir leur '*tente bazar*' avec des produits cosmétiques, pneus de véhicules, chaussures et autres produits de luxe sur lesquels le ministre des finances a enlevé les *customs duties*.

M. le président, si on favorise les étrangers au détriment des Mauriciens, à l'image de ce qui se passe avec l'éventuelle privatisation de certaines compagnies d'Etat, il va sans dire que dans pas longtemps nous deviendrons des locataires dans notre propre pays et Maurice sera finalement gouverné par des étrangers à travers des réseaux occultes. C'est un cauchemar, M. le président, qu'il nous faut faire disparaître tout de suite.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we expected concrete actions for leisure, which seems to have been forgotten by the Minister of Finance. Leisure should also include open areas, parks and gardens, recreational facilities, all these convivial places where our citizens, the productive workforce, the family cell, the constituents of our Mauritian nation should be given the opportunity to strengthen our bonds and create new ones.

Emphasis ought to have been placed more on leisure for productivity. The budget makes no mention of sustainable communities to be the lungs of socialisation and productivity. If we are to move to a modern Mauritius, it is not through cosmetic measures that we shall make the leap forward, but through serious measures and actions. Par contre le gouvernement a trouvé moyen de faire ce que j'appellerais un *hold-up* légal avec la taxe de 10 sous sur les SMS, n'en déplaise à l'honorable Mme Perraud. Une mesure aberrante quand on sait qu'il existe déjà une taxe de 15% sur les cartes prépayés ! N'oublions pas, M. le président, que cette mesure touche avant tout les jeunes.

M. le président, sur le plan social, le ministre des finances a annoncé la construction d'un centre pour les Sans Docile Fixe. C'est bien, mais qu'en est-il d'un vrai centre, pourvu de toutes les facilités pour traiter les usagers de drogue. Notamment, les jeunes de moins de 18 ans qui sont de plus en plus nombreux à fréquenter les centres de désintoxication.

Dans la liste des oubliés du budget, il faut aussi ajouter la lutte contre le VIH/SIDA. Pourtant les ONG qui travaillent sur le terrain avec les personnes atteintes de ce virus ne cessent de tirer la sonnette d'alarme sur la prolifération de la maladie à Maurice, dont les victimes sont de plus en plus les jeunes. Encore une fois, le gouvernement s'entête à ne pas revoir le fonctionnement du *National Aids Secretariat* qui se trouve être sous la tutelle du *Prime Minister's Office*. M. le président, à ce chapitre, comment ne pas déplorer le fait que le gouvernement n'a toujours pas estimé important de mettre sur pied un plan national de prévention pour combattre ce fléau qu'est la drogue.

M. le président, les spécialistes s'accordent à dire que la NATReSA ne répond plus aux exigences modernes du combat contre la drogue. Une refonte en profondeur de cette institution est plus que jamais nécessaire. D'autant plus que le conflit entre le directeur et le *Chairman* n'arrange pas les choses.

M. le président, je saisir cette occasion pour attirer l'attention sur le trafic de méthadone qui gagne du terrain en espérant que les autorités compétentes prendront les mesures qui s'imposent pour démanteler ce nouveau réseau de ce nouveau fléau. Il serait aussi souhaitable que les autorités prennent les dispositions pour un suivi plus soutenu de ceux qui sont sous traitement à la méthadone.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now move to youth and sports. It is a pity to see how the National Youth Council is functioning in a disorderly way, whereas the youth department of the

Ministry gives the impression that it is not aware or does not want to be aware of the real needs of our youngsters.

Both rural and urban areas suffer from a lack of adequate leisure and sports facilities. The existing facilities are very often in a state of disrepair and require therefore an urgent upgrading to be followed by regular maintenance. I would, therefore, propose that all the dormant Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund community centres be converted into modern youth centres. Activities like *Spéciales Vacances* are attracting less and less participants. At the launching of *Spéciales Vacances* at Belle Mare Waterpark last July, the Minister was himself shocked when seeing only 100 participants coming from 25 youth centres. The Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should also take into consideration that our youngsters are mostly free after 4 p.m. whereas the youth centres are open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for youth activities. From 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. the space is used for meeting and IT use mainly. As Government is more and more restricting over time, I come to say that we should review the opening hours of all the youth centres so as to respond effectively to the demand of our youngsters, including those who are aged from 18 to 29 years old.

M. le président, permettez-moi d'emblée de citer une proposition que j'avais faite dans mon intervention sur le Budget 2011 dans cette même auguste assemblée en décembre dernier –

« Government has increased the number of laureates to 50, in the same way, similar investment should be made on the best sportsmen and sportswomen of the country.”

Je ne peux qu'afficher ma satisfaction à l'effet que le ministre des finances ait pris en considération ma proposition pour en faire un, sinon le pilier de ses actions en faveur du sport pour l'année financière 2012.

En effet, M. le président, la décision d'octroyer six bourses pour étude aux sportifs Mauriciens sur une base annuelle à travers le *Trust Fund For Excellence In Sports*, de même que la hausse du budget de ce même organisme vont dans la bonne direction.

L'idée n'est certainement pas nouvelle, mais elle a le mérite de donner une autre orientation, voire même un nouvel espoir aux sportifs qui très souvent délaisse le sport pour se consacrer aux études uniquement, laissant ainsi passer la possibilité d'entamer une carrière sportive de haut niveau.

Reste maintenant, M. le président, à savoir comment cette démarche sera pérennisée et aussi quels seront les critères de sélection ? Il serait important, M. le président, que l'allocation de ces bourses se fasse dans la transparence la plus totale.

Et aussi que ces bourses financent la totalité des besoins des bénéficiaires et éviter ainsi que ces derniers se retrouvent à un moment ou à un autre dans la nécessité de débourser de l'argent de leurs poches.

Sans aucun doute également, la décision de permettre aux entreprises employant des sportifs de puiser 50% de leurs salaires dans le budget CSR est une bonne décision en soit.

Nos valeureux sportifs trouveront dans cette mesure un allégement de leurs contraintes et les firmes privées une raison valable pour non seulement faire de la place aux sportifs dans leurs entreprises, mais surtout leur permettant de bénéficier

du temps nécessaire pour les entraînements, les compétitions et les déplacements a l'étranger.

M. le président, j'avais moi-même évoqué ce dilemme dans une question parlementaire dans le cadre de la préparation pour les 8^{ème} Jeux des Iles aux Seychelles. Reste une fois encore comment dans la pratique les choses vont se faire. Et surtout comment faire pour éviter les pièges et les abus ? Mais je me pose aussi la question pour l'heure : qu'en sera-t-il des sportifs qui travaillent dans la fonction publique, qu'ils soient policiers ou autres qui eux aussi ont besoin d'être *released*.

M. le président, à part cela, une fois de plus, les dotations budgétaires pour 2012 sont très loin de celles auxquelles le monde sportif s'attendait. Dans le fond comme dans la forme, le monde sportif va se retrouver dans la même situation que celle de 2010 et peut-être même pire.

Dois-je rappeler à la Chambre combien les choses ont été difficiles pour le mouvement sportif dans son ensemble en 2011 ? L'argent est le nerf de toutes les guerres dit-on. Mais pour gagner les combats de haut niveau, les fédérations, elles, n'ont rien vu venir durant l'année financière 2011.

M. le président, cela malgré le fait que la grosse majorité d'entre elles était en pleine préparation pour ce que la population Mauricienne, voire même celle de l'océan indien, considère comme le rendez-vous sportif le plus important. C'est-à-dire les jeux des îles.

J'exprime, une fois encore, ma déception à l'effet que rien n'a été fait dans ce budget 2012 pour prendre en considération les problèmes financiers des fédérations.

Dois-je préciser qu'elles sont presqu'au nombre de 40 actuellement à Maurice à essayer de s'en sortir financièrement pour pouvoir assurer la promotion de leur discipline.

M. le président, cette situation, presque de mendicité à laquelle se livrent les fédérations à chaque occasion, est à la fois inacceptable et insupportable pour un pays qui est supposément une référence en Afrique.

Au sein de l'opposition MMM, nous nous demandons pourquoi les fonds du CSR ne sont pas accordés à toutes les fédérations et aux clubs de l'élite indistinctement '*and not to a few only*' comme c'est le cas actuellement. C'est inconcevable, M. le président.

Pourtant le ministre de la jeunesse et des sports sait plus que quiconque dans cette assemblée comment l'arrivée du CSR a tué le *sponsoring* sportif.

Pour preuve, M. le président, le ministre des sports lui-même s'est vu dans l'obligation de créer le Club Maurice Company afin de trouver le financement nécessaire pour assurer la préparation finale de nos athlètes pour les derniers Jeux des Iles.

M. le président, je profite de cette occasion pour suggérer que le Club Maurice Company soit transformé en une entité totalement indépendante avec la possibilité non seulement de financer la préparation des athlètes avant un important rendez-vous, mais surtout pour soutenir les projets sportifs des clubs et des fédérations.

Ainsi cette compagnie pourrait devenir l'intermédiaire entre le *CSR Committee* et le mouvement sportif. Mais je n'abandonne pas l'idée, M. le président, qu'on devrait revoir les critères du CSR afin de permettre aux fédérations et aux clubs d'être *CSR compliant*.

M. le président, l'absence de finance dans le sport en 2011 comme en 2010, a provoqué pas mal de situations conflictuelles dans le mouvement sportif.

Déjà, je peux dire que le sport mauricien est en pleine tempête. Voire même une situation sans précédent avec l'affaire de la *Mauritius Football Association* et celle de la Fédération mauricienne de Natation où leur fédération internationale ont dû intervenir. Dans les deux cas, la menace d'une suspension par ces instances internationales pèse sur Maurice. C'est dire que le mouvement sportif mauricien va de plus en plus mal et je pèse bien mes mots. Loin d'avoir été un *boost-up* les résultats ramenés des Seychelles pour les Jeux des Iles n'ont été qu'une illusion, M. le president. Une mauvaise illusion même, suis-je tenté, de dire, puisque Maurice n'a ramené qu'une seule médaille d'or supplémentaire par rapport à 2007. Ce qui est très loin des objectifs de 50 médailles d'or fixées par le ministre lui-même.

M. le président, nous sommes tous aujourd’hui sous l'impression qu'il y a une cassure qui s'est opérée entre le ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports et le mouvement sportif. Car, après les Jeux des Iles, il a été triste de constater que beaucoup de sportifs ont été privés de compétitions internationales. Je cite ici le Club M qui a dû renoncer à participer aux éliminatoires de la Coupe du Monde 2014. Pourtant cette même équipe avait donné une lueur d'espoir avec sa médaille d'argent ramené des Seychelles, après une victoire ratée d'un rien contre le pays hôte en final, surtout que cette équipe avait démontré de très bonnes dispositions, pratiquant même un meilleur football que les Seychellois. Mais que s'est-t-il passé depuis pour que le ministre aille jusqu'à dire dans cette assemblée que le Club M. *is the doing of the MFA?* Devons-nous déduire que le ministre *fine lave so lamé* avec le Club M? N'aurait-il pas été plus souhaitable de garder la même structure et les mêmes conditions pour les joueurs même si cela nécessite un financement conséquent?

Il y a aussi le cas de deux haltérophiles, dont la triple médaillée d'or des Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien, Shalinee Valaydon, qui a été privée des Championnats d'Afrique et du Commonwealth. Il y a les nageurs aussi qui ont été sevrés des Championnats d'Afrique junior de natation au Nigeria. Autre fait c'est que Maurice s'est retirée de l'organisation du combat final des championnats du Monde de boxe française féminin. Une occasion ratée pour notre compatriote, Jelina Bégué.

M. le président, ce désordre indescriptible est sans doute dû également aux nombreuses promesses non tenues malheureusement par notre ami le ministre des Sports, non pas durant ces 11 derniers mois, mais depuis qu'il a été installé dans le fauteuil de ministre des Sports.

M. le président, où en sont les amendements qui doivent être apportés au *Sports Act*? Depuis deux ans, le mouvement sportif attend ces amendements et nous ne voyons rien venir ! Comme rien n'a également été fait pour mettre sur pied ce comité de travail entre le comité olympique et le ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports pour revoir justement le *Sports Act*, comme recommandé par le représentant du Comité international olympique, M. Mustapha Beraff.

Pourtant le ministre lui-même avait constaté dans son intervention sur le budget 2011 que , et je cite –

« the weaknesses in the existing provisions have prompted us to slightly delay the introduction of the Sports Amendments Bill which is now overdue to the National

Assembly. The committee that I had set up to look into these issues has completed its work and we will now finalise the Bill.”

C’était le 03 décembre 2010 et nous constatons que le *slight delay* de notre ami le ministre des Sports a pris déjà une année.

Qu’en est-il de l’Institut National du Sport (INS) annoncé en grande pompe depuis 2 ans?

Dans son discours à pareille époque l’année dernière le ministre avait déclaré ceci –

“The setting-up of a National Institute of Sports is among the most ambitious project of my Ministry and a cherished dream for the sporting community and will start materializing soon. »

Il va révolutionner le sport mauricien dans sa globalité.

Effectivement, une somme de R 40 millions avait été identifiée pour 2012 et la même somme pour 2013 et cela dans les *Estimates* de 2011. Mais, à ma grande surprise, M. le président, en parcourant les *Estimates* de 2012, voici ce qu’on ne voit plus : l’INS a complètement disparu sous l’item «*Acquisition of non financial assets*», pour passer cette fois-ci au stade des ‘*Studies and Surveys*’ où une somme de R 1,5 millions a été *earmarked*. Le comble, c’est qu’aucune somme n’est prévue pour les années suivantes pour la concrétisation de ce projet. M. le président, qu’est devenu subitement cet ambitieux projet qui selon le ministre lui-même et je le cite –

« Un centre de référence de performance et d’excellence pour la communauté sportive mauricienne.»

Où en sont les travaux de rénovation de la piste synthétique du stade Camp du Roi à Rodrigues? Notre ami, l’honorable François, avait soulevé ce problème dans son intervention plus tôt.

Une année depuis que cette promesse a été faite à toute l’île Rodrigues, mais rien jusqu’ici, M. le président. Encore une fois l’année dernière dans son discours le ministre avait fait mention que, et je cite –

« Rodrigues n’a pas été oublié par le gouvernement ainsi nous allons refaire la piste synthétique du stade Camp du Roi. Sachant très bien que Rodrigues constitue un grand réservoir de talent, nous allons en collaboration avec le commissaire de la jeunesse et des sports de Rodrigues venir avec d’autres projets d’envergure afin de donner plus de facilités aux sportifs rodriguais. »

Nous savons tous à quel point l'état de la piste du stade Camp du Roi a perturbé la préparation de nos amis de Rodrigues pour les Jeux des Iles et qui continue à causer préjudice au sport dans ce pays. Une fois du plus, il est à constater que les travaux pour la rénovation de ce stade ne figurent pas dans les *Estimates* de 2012, donc ne figurent pas dans le budget présenté par le nouveau ministre des finances.

Où sont les projets d'infrastructure pour la région de St Pierre et Triolet comme annoncés en grande pompe, dans le discours du ministre des Sports en 2011? Des sommes colossales avaient été identifiées et mentionnées dans le Budget de 2011 et que les travaux auraient dû débuter cette année-ci. La encore, M. le président, ces deux infrastructures ont complètement disparu des projets du ministère des Sports et ne figurent même pas dans le Budget présenté récemment.

Idem pour le stade national qui devait être construit dans le sud et dont les travaux devaient débuter en 2011. Ce projet se retrouve cette fois-ci tout comme l'INS, au stade des *studies and surveys* en 2012 et aucune somme planifiée pour les années à venir pour la concrétisation de ce projet.

M. le président, dois-je déduire que cette infrastructure restera au stade de projet de faisabilité? Il est clair que ce ne sont que des effets d'annonce!

Qu'en est-il de la commission d'arbitrage sur le sport et le National Council for Drug Free Sports comme promis par le ministre des Sports? Là encore, promesse quand tu nous tiens! Depuis ces derniers mois nous assistons à une recrudescence des conflits au sein des fédérations avec comme résultat dramatique l'arrêt des compétitions. Alors que Maurice risque de payer le prix fort en raison de ces querelles intestines et interminables au sein des fédérations

M. le président, l'exemple le plus flagrant n'est autre que le football. La MFA est dans une situation des plus ambiguë avec pour conséquence que les compétitions n'arrivent toujours pas à démarrer et les équipes de la première et de la deuxième divisions ne savent plus à quel saint se vouer pour pouvoir jouer au football.

Le 03 décembre 2010, dans son discours sur le budget 2011, le ministre des sports avait souligné que 'la Commission d'Arbitrage du Sports réglera tous litiges et conflits dans le domaine sportif.' Mais on constate, malheureusement, M. le président, que rien n'a été fait à ce jour.

Je me pose la même question pour le *National Council for a Drug Free Sports* qui, de toute évidence, est resté un projet sur papier. Les *estimates* de 2012 le prouvent, car aucune dotation n'est prévue pour ces deux items.

M. le président, je voudrais aussi m'attarder quelques minutes sur la promesse qu'avait faite le ministre des sports pour donner aux équipes de football de D1 et D2 et je le cite dans son discours de l'année dernière -

'Des terrains d'entraînement dotés de toutes les facilités, lumières et vestiaires. Elles pourront aussi jouer dans un stade permanent dans leur région pour le match dit *home*. Les clubs de première division auront les moyens pour être plus professionnels aussi bien sur le plan technique qu'administratif.

Mais où en sont toutes ses facilités, M. le président? Renvoyées aux calendes greques!

On peut en dire autant pour le Stade George V – voilà l'honorable Dr. Boolell, l'honorable Obeegadoo et il ne manque que l'honorable Guimbeau - donc, c'est pour dire que les députés de Curepipe et moi-même attendons avec une certaine impatience le rendez-vous que le ministre des sports nous avait donné en mars dernier pour sa réouverture. Mais, il est vrai, M. le président, que le ministre des sports n'avait pas précisé l'année dans son invitation.

En ce qui concerne le budget du ministère de la jeunesse et des sports, je puis dire, M. le président, que les années se suivent et se ressemblent en particulier au chapitre des contraintes et défis auxquels ont à faire face ce ministère. Encore une fois, on parle de '*limited sponsorship for sports and youth activities' and it is proposed to sensitise sport federations and youth organisations to enable them to tap CSR Fund*.

M. le président, a qui la faute, si les organisations sportives et de la jeunesse n'arrivent pas à bénéficier des fonds du *CSR*? Qui a le pouvoir pour modifier les critères du *CSR Committee*? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these sports and youth organisations should be made CSR compliant first and it is not the case actually.

On parle aussi d'employer des athlètes qui sont à la retraite pour pallier le manque d'entraîneurs. Nous ne pouvons qu'espérer, M. le président, que la compétence et l'expérience seront au centre de tout recrutement et non des considérations autres que sportifs. N'oublions pas que le ministre des sports dans son discours l'année dernière avait affirmé que son ministère regorge d'entraîneurs non qualifiés.

On revoit, encore une fois, le même constat en ce qui concerne la faible participation des femmes aux activités sportives. C'est dans le budget. Pour combler ce manque, le ministère préconise la promotion des activités pour les femmes à travers le Commission National du Sports Féminin (CNSF).

A moins, M. le président, que le ministre des sports ait des talents de magicien, car selon les projections, cet organisme n'aura que 25 licenciées additionnelles chaque année. Je le redis, le CNSF est un éléphant blanc, M. le président, et aucun progrès n'a été réalisé depuis l'année dernière et l'honorable ministre des sports le sait très bien.

M. le président, rien ne sera fait de positif aussi longtemps que les mêmes personnes seront à la tête du CNSF. Il est grand temps d'y mettre bon ordre même si ce sont les petits copains - je ne dirais pas petites copines, M. le président - qui doivent '*leve paké aller*' pour le bien de cette commission.

Autre constat qui est fait dans le budget est le '*poor public interests in participating in sports activities.*' Sur ce point, M. le président, au risque de me répéter, je dirai que les collectivités locales ont un rôle essentiel à jouer à ce niveau, sans pour autant, bien sûr, se substituer au ministère de la Jeunesse et sports.

Le sport de masse et le sport pour tous sont bien l'affaire des collectivités locales qui ont accès à toutes les régions de l'île. La commission des sports de chaque collectivité locale devrait avoir la responsabilité, avec les comités régionaux, d'organiser les activités dans chaque région et cela, bien sûr, avec le support financier du gouvernement. S'il faut que cela soit dans la loi, faisons-le.

Par rapport au recrutement des officiers, il serait bon, M. le président, que ce soit *the right persons* qui soient recrutés au lieu des habituels protégés politiques qui, bien souvent, ne sont pas en mesure de *deliver the goods*, car dans le budget il y a une quarantaine de postes à pourvoir.

M. le président, je voudrais attirer l'attention sur le fait que dans le budget, il n'est pas possible d'identifier la somme qui sera allouée aux fédérations. Alors que la somme de R 12.5 m. allouée au *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports* est bel et bien mentionnée, noir sur blanc. Donc, en l'absence des indications claires et nettes sur ce point, le doute subsiste concernant la somme qui sera allouée aux fédérations.

M. le président, un rapide bilan de la performance de nos athlètes sur la scène africaine et régionale nous laisse comprendre qu'il y a un potentiel certain. Ici, je pense à l'équipe cycliste du contre la montre par équipe, à Aurélie Halbwachs qui a encore une fois confirmé son potentiel, à nos boxeurs Richarno Colin, Bruno Julie, Kennedy St-Pierre et Ludovic Bactora, entre autres, à la triathlète Fabienne St Louis, aux tireurs Fabrice Baulluck et Fascon Perinnne, aux nageurs qui ont brillé lors des championnats de la zone 4 et 5 au Bostswana, à la badiste Kate Foo Kune, à la pongiste Jaisina Newraj et aux *beach* volleyeuses, Elodie Li Yuk Lo et Natacha Rigober.

Je salue au passage ces deux dernières pour leur engagement personnel puisqu'elles n'ont pas hésité à investir une grosse partie de leur propre argent dans leur quête pour une qualification olympique. Je profite aussi pour féliciter tous ces jeunes qui ont brillé lors des derniers Jeux des Iles. Donc, leurs performances nous appellent, M. le président, à plus de détermination dans nos efforts pour les soutenir. Mais à la place que voyons-nous ?

La diminution systématique des bourses de haut niveau du ministère de la jeunesse et des sports. Des coupures inexplicables et inexplicables ont été pratiquées lors du dernier exercice du *High Level Sports Unit*.

La guerre de pouvoir, de l'autodestruction et des disputes à n'en plus finir. A tel point que nous avons l'impression que notre mouvement sportif est en décrépitude, M. le président. Et pourquoi cela? La réponse est simple. Nous n'avons pas *the right persons in the right places*. Que ce soit au ministère des Sports, dans certaines fédérations et comités régionaux entre autres. Y compris le *Mauritius Sports Council* qui, d'année et année, est en train de perdre toute son importance et sa crédibilité dans le mouvement sportif mauricien. Plus que jamais, c'est un vrai *cheque book* et l'agence pour l'emploi du MJS.

M. le président, le mal qui ronge le sport mauricien se situe au niveau de l'incompétence de certains décideurs à pouvoir identifier les vrais problèmes et trouver les solutions appropriées.

M. le président, avant de conclure, je voudrais dire quelques mots sur ma circonscription, Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière.

Le nouveau PPS de la région, l'honorable Reza Issack - qui malheureusement n'est pas là - dans son intervention n'a pipé mot sur les développements à venir dans la circonscription. Je mettrai cela sur le compte d'un oubli de sa part et j'espère qu'il se rattrapera en mettant rapidement en chantier les projets urgents et '*long overdue*' à Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière. Et là, je citerai le terrain de foot à Morcellement La Confiance où les travaux devaient débuter en août 2010 et se

terminer en février 2011, de même qu'un terrain de foot à Canot promis par le ministre des Sports car trois arpents de terrain ont déjà été identifiés.

M. le président si le ministère des sports n'est pas disposé à aller de l'avant avec ces projets, que la NDU s'en charge et concrétise une fois pour toutes, ces vieux projets qui permettront aux jeunes de Canot et de Maingard de pouvoir pratiquer leur sport préféré.

M. le président, le mauvais état des routes nécessite une remise à neuf à travers la circonscription. L'aménagement de drains est une urgence, principalement dans certaines régions spécifiques nommément Montréal, Coromandel et Mare Gravier.

Le nombre d'accident noté quotidiennement dans la région de Beau-Bassin à Coromandel est inquiétant. Le nombre grandissant de véhicules qui empruntent cette route qui relie Beau Bassin à Coromandel à longueur de journée contribue à cet état de choses. Et il serait souhaitable qu'une étude soit effectuée afin de pouvoir décongestionner cette route tout en assurant une meilleure sécurité routière, car n'oublions pas que deux personnes récemment ont été percutées de plein fouet sur un passage clouté et ont ainsi perdu la vie.

M. le président le village d'Albion a connu ces dernières années un développement accru en termes de nouveaux logements privés et le nombre de résidents a ainsi connu une hausse considérable. Il est grand temps, je pense, de concevoir pour cette région un plan de développement intégré, incluant les infrastructures routières, sociales, sportives et de service.

M. le président Beau Bassin/Rose Hill est devenue aujourd'hui une ville mal administrée. Dommage que le ministre...

(Interruptions)

J'allais dire qu'il n'était pas présent mais heureusement qu'il est revenu à sa place. Beau Bassin/Rose Hill M. le président, je le disais, est devenue une ville mal administrée. L'insalubrité qui y règne démontre clairement l'incapacité de la Municipalité à assurer un service de base en terme de ramassage d'ordures et de nettoyage de la ville.

Dans son intervention, le ministre des collectivités locales a salué l'initiative de la MTPA de lancer une campagne de nettoyage à travers le pays, démontrant ainsi l'irresponsabilité et l'incompétence généralisées des Conseils Municipaux.

Les élus municipaux se font de plus en plus rares, M. le président, dans les réunions des commissions malgré le fait qu'ils perçoivent une allocation mensuelle; R 8,000 ou R 9,000 je ne sais pas trop. Et là, je tiens à préciser que les élus MMM à Port Louis et à Beau Bassin/Rose Hill

ont tous renoncer à leurs allocations depuis le jour où ce gouvernement a faussé le jeu démocratique en renvoyant les élections municipales pour je ne sais quand.

La liste serait trop longue, M. le président, si je devais énumérer tous les manquements existants au sein du Conseil Municipal de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill.

Au début de mon intervention, j'ai mis l'accent sur cette grave crise qu'est l'insécurité qui nous menace tous. La jeunesse de notre République n'en est pas épargnée. L'éradication de la pauvreté semble être un des objectifs de ce budget.

Malheureusement le chapitre Jeunesse et Sports en est le parent pauvre. En effet, la pauvreté des ressources humaines, matérielles et financières risque de faire sombrer la jeunesse, lentement mais sûrement dans une véritable et dangereuse insécurité.

C'est pourquoi je termine –

(Interruption)

Vous êtes mal placé pour parler de transfuge hon. Hossen !

C'est pourquoi je termine en faisant un pressant appel pour que les mesures nécessaires soient prises et les projets y relatifs soient mis en œuvre rapidement pour remédier à cette situation malsaine.

J'espère M. le président que mon intervention, si elle est retransmise à la télévision, sur les sujets que j'ai accueillis favorablement, sous certaines réserves bien sûr, ne sera ni charcutée, ni manipulée d'aucune façon comme nous voyons régulièrement.

M. le président, je me soumets sous votre protection, et je vous remercie.

(00.16)

The Minister of Youth & Sports (Mr S. Ritoo): M. le président, au début de son discours, l'honorable Quirin à dit que le MMM n'a aucune leçon à prendre de nous mais je vais lui dire que avons beaucoup de leçons à donner en ce qui concerne la culture sportive, surtout au MMM.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at a time when the whole world is worried about the persisting financial crisis and global economic slump year 2012 can only be viewed as a year of innumerable risk and challenges. In such a situation developing innovative and effective strategies is a *sine qua non* condition to provide a decent standard of living to our population while, at the same time, protecting our country from an external trauma.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me therefore express my appreciation to the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for having presented a budget geared towards the growth for the greater good. A budget that emphasises on the responsibility and on equity with a special trust on the poor, the helpless and the vulnerable. This Budget Mr Speaker, Sir, reflects the vision of the Government under the guidance of the hon. Prime Minister to establish *une société idéale* devoid of injustice, unfairness and misery and abounding in peace, justice and meritocracy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I congratulated the hon. Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for having granted a substantial increase in the budget of my Ministry, that is, an increase of over 15% in spite of the difficult economic context. A close look at the measures enunciated indicates that we want to invest in our youth and in sports, at the same time, we want to open up new avenues for promising athletes and unleash their potential so that they continue their studies and earn a livelihood while, at the same time, allowing to practise high level sports.

C'est pour cela qu'en prenant ces facteurs et ces contraintes en considération, je dois dire que pour son coup d'essai le grand argentier a réussi un coup de maître. Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened very attentively to all the hon. Members including those who expressed their views and opinions on the subject of youth and sports. I thank those who made valuable suggestions and constructive critics, but I am dead against a few nasty and unjustified remarks made. I am not going to waste the time of the House, but I wish to revert back to a few issues. L'honorable Quirin, je crois que c'est un lecteur assidu de mon discours, c'est un bon signe et il devrait s'en inspirer à l'avenir pour parfaire ses connaissances. The Member on the other side more particularly hon. Quirin has put up 61 questions mostly related to infrastructure and problems concerning federations from June 2010 to date. Some have even been to ICAC pretending that there was *maldone* in the case of new George Stadium. May I inform the House that renovation of the new George Stadium which was carried out in 2003 by the then Government finally resulted in the collapse of the drainage system. Il m'a dit que je suis un magicien, oui je suis un magicien mais eux aussi ils ont été des magiciens quelque part. Vous savez ce qu'ils ont fait, ils ont pu transformer notre plus jolie pelouse de Stade George V en une piscine en bloquant tous les drains and the rehabilitation works started under this Government. Works are on the final stage of completion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Quirin talked a lot about sports federations. I wish to inform the hon. Member que l'île Maurice est un pays unique. D'ailleurs, je pense que nous sommes le seul pays au monde à offrir autant de facilités aux fédérations. Nous payons les frais pour les voyages à l'étranger de tous les athlètes et les dirigeants dans le cadre des compétitions et des stages de perfectionnement. Chaque fédération reçoit un budget annuel couvrant les frais suivant : organisation des activités sur le plan régional et national ; participation dans les compétitions internationales ; achat des équipements généraux et spécifiques ; organisation des compétitions internationales sur le sol mauricien ; formation des cadres techniques à travers le brevet d'État. Nous aurons aussi des aides financières au niveau de la formation des jeunes, c'est-à-dire, les écoles de sport et les centres de formation. Nous accordons une allocation financière à plusieurs athlètes à travers le *High Level Sports Unit* de mon ministère. C'est-à-dire, on donne des aides variant entre R 2000 à R 20,000 mensuellement. Nous avons aussi le *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports* qui s'occupe du projet sport-étude. Nous mettons aussi, à la disposition des fédérations, des encadrements techniques, des entraîneurs, les DTN. Nous prenons à notre charge le transport des athlètes. Nous mettons à la disposition de plusieurs fédérations des infrastructures sportives, c'est-à-dire, les stades, les gymnases, les piscines etc. Nous faisons régulièrement un suivi médical des athlètes de haut niveau. A travers le *Mauritius Sports Council*, nous encourrons les frais suivant - toujours aux fédérations sportives ; les salaires des secrétaires administratifs, achats des équipements de bureau, paiements des affiliations des fédérations à leur fédération internationale ; ça aussi, c'est le ministère qui paie. C'est-à-dire, à peu près R 107 millions ont été payés pendant ces trois dernières années. Et dire que, malgré toutes ces facilités essentielles qu'offre l'État Mauricien, certaines fédérations se disent autonomes quand le ministère demande un droit de regard. *These are all the help that we extend, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to the Federation.*

When we speak of collaboration, we also mean commitment. As Minister responsible for Youth and Sports ,*et surtout en tant qu'un ancien athlète je préfère être sur le terrain et, là, I have witnessed unbecoming acts at the level of certain federations and sports institutions. A tug of war for power, for favour and personal interest, et tout cela au détriment des intérêts des athlètes.* To the handful of such prophets of doom, my advice is that they should put our athletes first. They should emit powerful vibrations from within, so that they are awakened from the

deep slumber and see *la réalité en face*, and acknowledge that our athletes deserve better treatment and better *encadrement*. As Eleanor Roosevelt rightly said -

“Great minds discuss ideas. Average minds discuss events. Small minds discuss people.”

M. le président, certains - et ils se reconnaîtront - disent que le sport mauricien se porte mal, surtout depuis ces dernières années. Comme vous le savez, un sportif se doit de respecter l’opinion des autres, même s’il n’est pas d’accord et même si les réflexions faites sont primaires. Pour avoir été pendant longtemps un athlète de haut niveau, je peux vous affirmer que, dans le sport, seul les résultats et les médailles sont les véritables baromètres pour juger de votre valeur. Dans ce sens, laissez-moi rafraîchir la mémoire de certains avec quelques exploits de l’île Maurice sportive durant ces dernières années.

En premier lieu, je mettrai en lumière le fait que c’est sous ce présent gouvernement que les mauriciens ont vu le quadricolore mauricien flotter haut dans une compétition olympique; une médaille historique qui porte la signature de Bruno Julie. En 2009, pour la première fois, Maurice a terminé sixième sur les 42 pays en lice lors des Jeux de la Francophonie à Beyrouth, devant le Cameroun, le Sénégal, la Suisse ou encore le Liban.

De 2009 à aujourd’hui, Maurice a remporté trois titres mondiaux, onze titres de champion d’Afrique, et trois titres de champion de la Francophonie. En football, nous sommes double champion de l’Océan Indien chez les jeunes. Malgré l’héritage lourd laissé par le précédent gouvernement, notre football, petit à petit et grâce aux mesures prises depuis ces six dernières années, remonte la pente. Les deux médailles d’or obtenues par des jeunes sont des preuves que nous inversons le cours des choses.

Vous le savez, la critique est aisée et l’art est difficile. Dans ce sens, si certains de l’autre côté de la Chambre ont l’art de critiquer, de ce côté de la Chambre nous avons l’art de travailler. Et le travail, M. le président, porte ses fruits - *résultat lor résultat*. Ainsi, je dirai que notre ministre des finances est couronné de médailles d’or aujourd’hui.

De l’autre côté de la Chambre, l’honorable Bhagwan et l’honorable Jhugroo ont l’habitude de dire que nous portons la médaille ferraille. Les médailles ferraille évoquées par lui et par d’autres seront plus que jamais misent au rancard ; un peu comme eux-mêmes. Toutefois, il est obligatoire que les dirigeants fédéraux prennent leurs responsabilités et travaillent réellement pour le football et non pas pour leurs intérêts personnels.

Concernant les Jeux d'Afrique de Maputo et malgré un nombre très élevé de participants, Maurice a terminé à une très belle douzième place, avec treize médailles, dont quatre en or. C'est le meilleur total de médailles d'or jamais obtenu pour Maurice lors des Jeux d'Afrique. Et cerise sur le gâteau, notre île a enlevé une médaille d'or historique dans le Beach Volley féminin. Un véritable exploit de la part de nos volleyeuses, c'est-à-dire, Natasha et Elodie. Elles terminent à la première place sur un continent qui compte près d'un milliard d'habitants; l'île Maurice termine devant les Seychelles, devant Madagascar.

Let me remind the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that ever since I took office as Minister of Youth and Sports, my main objectives and top priorities have always been centred towards the upliftment, well-being and betterment of our athletes. Hence, the very first policy, which I reviewed in January 2009, was the increase in the number of beneficiaries of assistance to high-level athletes, that is, from 40 to 80 beneficiaries. Pocket money granted to athletes and officials was equally increased by 50% in the same year. The innovative scheme of six annual scholarships to our best athletes has not only marked the history of our Mauritian sports, but has also given a new dimension to our local sports. A sense of good feeling and confidence has been instilled among our athletes sporting community and even the parents. At least, today, we can look forward with serenity.

Moreover, the increase in the number of beneficiaries of the *Sport-Étude* under the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports from 80 to 250, is another confirmation of the commitment of this government to valorise the practice of sports at a higher level and, at the same time, change the mindset of many who are still repulsive to the idea that an athlete can pursue his academic studies parallel to his sports career.

Secondly, the amount of financial aid as per the higher level sports scheme granted to athletes has been increased substantially. A total amount of Rs6.4 m. has been disbursed under this project this year. Thirdly, with the blessings of the hon. Prime Minister, the Cash Prize Scheme was equally reviewed in June 2011, with a consequent increase ranging between 10% and 150%. A total sum of Rs9.8 m. has been rewarded to athletes as financial rewards for their performance in major international competitions.

Today, I can but rejoice of the consideration given by the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to our sportsmen on whose behalf I would once again extend my gratitude. This Budget translates the vision of this government into concrete actions.

M. le président, la somme de R 452.1 millions destinée à mon ministère est une nouvelle preuve que le sport et l'épanouissement continu de nos jeunes occupent une place particulière au sein de ce gouvernement et ce, malgré un contexte économique actuel difficile. Cette somme permettra à mon ministère d'atteindre ses objectifs, et permettra d'envisager l'avenir avec plus de sérénité.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the impact of sport extends beyond the confines of participation. It is felt in many other spheres like health, education, economy, nation building and international relations. I am glad that the integral role which sports plays in the process of nation building is fully recognised by this government. Sport is an investment. It is, firstly, an investment in the health and productivity of a nation. Secondly, it is an investment in the future. The social benefits include an overall improvement in the quality of life and physical, mental, and moral well-being of the population. But, perhaps, the most important of all is the role of sports in fostering national unity.

The opening of all government-owned infrastructures, particularly gymnasiums of State secondary schools to the community, once again, confirms the consideration that this government has for sports.

I, now, turn to the investment and achievements of my Ministry for the year 2011, which has been marked by the 8th Indian Ocean Island Games in Seychelles and the All-Africa Games in Maputo. Our athletes have delivered and done their best to represent the nation with honour, and the number of medals won in major international events speaks for itself - 49 gold medals, 72 silver medals and 71 bronze medals. Only at the Indian Ocean Island Games in Seychelles, Mauritian athletes won a total of 157 medals; 38 gold, 65 silver, and 54 bronze medals and we finished third in the medal ranking.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would enlighten the House, here that my Ministry has spared no efforts to provide the best preparation to our athletes in view of these games. A sum of approximately Rs 90 m. has been spent on these games. These covered cost for participation of our athletes in International competitions, training camps both locally and abroad; the provisions of adequate technical equipment, the coming of sparing partners and foreign experts. Other general expenses incurred by my Ministry included the following –

- (i) Provision of water filters on sports site;
- (ii) Purchase of technical equipment for training purposes;

- (iii) Provision of funds for the purchase of a specific equipment for the use at IOIG games;
- (iv) Provision of funds for meals for athletes;
- (v) Provision of funds for payment of national coaches and assistant coaches;
- (vi) Provision of medical and para medical facilities, including the service of psychologists, nutritionist and massage therapists;
- (vii) Expertise from *Institut National du Sport et l'Education Physique*, France, for evaluation physical preparation, and
- (viii) Provision of food supplements and vitamins as from October 2010

A total of amount of Rs9.6 m. by Ministry was spent to cover these general expenses. In addition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all major sports infrastructure were put at the disposal of the Sports Federation for training of the respective National Squad. Foreign expertise was also made available in Badminton, Football, Swimming, Table Tennis, Volleyball and Weightlifting. Transport facilities were provided, at least, to attend training session.

The *Club Maurice* Company collected about Rs15 m. from the CSR Fund which were used for provision of financial assistance to athletes and coaches and to meet partly cost of training camps competitions both locally and abroad. The expenses for participation in the games amounted to about Rs26 m. and covered cost with air tickets, travel insurance, pocket money and participation fees amongst others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, performance of our athletes at the games was, in my opinion, satisfactory. Mauritius topped the medals tally table in cycling and table tennis. Our national football team reached the final of the football event.

Our swimmers won eight gold medals; our handy sports athletes won a total of five gold medals in athletics and swimming. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that in certain sport disciplines our athletes did not perform up to our expectations.

Our boxers faced a fierce opposition and a deficient refereeing - as witnessed by hon. Quirin who was there.

The performance of our volleyball teams was disappointing.

The performance of our weight lighters was unfortunately far below expectation, winning only four gold medals out of 45.

Athletics too was a major deception at the games and it is high time that these federations review their strategies for development of young talents.

At the All Africa Games, Mauritius won four gold medals, three silver and five bronze medals.

These results demonstrate that there has been a clear progress in the number of sports discipline. However, there is need to review our actions and refocus our attention on certain sports where they have not perform to expectations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although I have been emphasizing throughout that we should be result-oriented, I should admit that it is not easy to win all the times.

The courage and determination of our high level athletes must be recognised. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I seize this opportunity to, once again, congratulate all those athletes who represented and honoured our country with bright colours. The result obtained in 2011, show the pertinence of actions taken since I assume office as Minister of Youth and Sports in September 2008 and with the collaboration obtained from the different stakeholders for the continuous development of sports in Mauritius, namely the National Sports Federation, the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports, the Mauritius Sports Council, the National Women Sports Commission, the Mauritius Olympic Committee, the different departments of my Ministry and other sponsors; *les sponsors du privé qui on répondu favorablement à notre appel et qui ont collaboré pleinement avec Club Maurice pour la préparation de nos athlètes.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we all know Rodrigues is a *pepinière* buzzing with talented athletes which has always been in the forefront to defend the colours of the Republic of Mauritius. In order to further assist those potential athletes, the Trust Fund for Excellence Department of my Ministry has set up in October last an antenna in Rodrigues under the Chairmanship Alain Wong So.

At this stage a “*Pôle Jeune, Pôle Espoir*” and a “*Pôle Maurice*” have been set up in athletics. We are in pursuit of extending such structures in other disciplines and we are looking forward to open such facilities in judo equally.

May I also inform the House that a site has been identified at Grande La Fourche, Corail for the construction of a multipurpose “*Sport de Combat*” gymnasium. A feasibility study will be carried out soon. If we want our sportsmen to outdo their competitors and if we want our young people to hold the reign of the country, we have to create an enabling environment and act

as a catalyst by providing them the facilities required to develop their potential. One of such facilities is proper sports infrastructure. There is no sports development without proper infrastructure and the vice-Prime Minister has rightly emphasise that one of the four main objectives of the 2012 Budget is infrastructural development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government through my Ministry is leaving no stone unturned to put at the disposal of the whole population relevant facilities to encourage them to practice sports both for leisure purposes and at elite level. For the period January 2011 to date, we have spent a sum of Rs11 m. for repairs and upgrading and renovation works on our sports and youth infrastructure.

With regard to complaints made concerning lack of sports infrastructure in Mauritius, I wish to inform the House that in January 2009, I commended an audit of all sports infrastructure in the country. Hon. Members of this House would be surprised to note that all over Mauritius, we have 352 football grounds, 256 volleyball pitches, 140 basketball pitches, 81 *boulodromes*, 58 *gymnasia*, 27 handball pitches, 45 tennis courts, 10 swimming pools and 6 athletic tracks among others.

My Ministry owns 80 of these sports infrastructures, including 30 Youth Centres. The operation and maintenance call for huge manpower, financial and other resources. In fact, I just heard hon. Quirin stating that the Youth Centres are closed after 4 p.m., but this is not true. Because, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all the Youth Centres are opened after 4 p.m. so as to allow all the youngsters in the region to benefit from the facilities put at their disposals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I agree that the public may not be aware of the existence and availability of these sports infrastructures, but the practice of sports requires a personal involvement and interest of every individual of this country. I encourage the public to use sports facilities available and in this context my Ministry will shortly publish a guide that will provide information regarding sports facilities and sports training centres available in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now make mention of the progress achieved during the current financial year in this sector.

- Lighting facilities have been provided at Morcellement St André and Arsenal football grounds, as well as football training grounds of Anjalay and Germain Comarmond Stadia. That, in fact, is in line with the facilities I was supposed to provide to the football teams. I mean, training ground of Anjalay and Germain Comarmond Stadia.

- A lawn tennis/handball court at Bon Accueil has been constructed; 20 sets of fitness equipment having placed in our sports infrastructures and Youth Centres to encourage our citizens to keep fit and be in good health.
- Morcellement St André and Petit Raffray football as well as Sir Robin Ghurburrun Stadium have been upgraded and are operational.
- The Mare d'Albert swimming pool is now fully operational.
- Upgrading works have already been started at Helvetia Youth Centre, the National Table Tennis Centre, Vacoas Sports Complex and the Flic en Flac Outdoor Centre. All these works will be completed by the end of this year.
- The construction of *gradin*, including office, toilet/cloakroom, etc. at St. François Xavier Stadium will be completed by the end of February 2012.

Besides providing the best possible sports infrastructure to the population, my Ministry provides technical and financial assistance to the various stakeholders involved in the promotion of the sports. In spite of the persisting world economic crisis, all necessary financial, logistics and technical support have been maintained to the Sports Federation to enable them to achieve their objectives.

- The FIFA Grassroots Programme for primary school children in collaboration with the Mauritius Football Association and the FIFA has been introduced.
- The « *Jeux de l'Avenir* » and the « *Jeux de l'Espoir* » have been re-activated. The concept of the “*Jeux de l'Espoir*” was reviewed whereby athletes and teams from Reunion Island and Seychelles were invited to participate in order to upgrade the level of competition.
 - The Inter-University Games have been introduced.
- A football for health programme was also launched in February 2010 by the Mauritius Football Association in collaboration with my Ministry, the FIFA, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. More than 17,000 students, including over 8,000 girls have already taken part in this programme so far.
- My Ministry in collaboration with the concerned authorities has also launched the Futsal, the *football en salle* and beach soccer.

- Furthermore, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Integration, my Ministry has equally launched the street football programme in Mauritius and Rodrigues.
- The Club Maurice Committee has been set up with the main attribute to raise funds to follow and support the preparation of national athletes for participation in major international games.
- Hockey, as a new sport, has been introduced at school level.
- To ensure an optimum use of our sports infrastructure across the island, my Ministry has, through the Mauritius Sports Council, set up a unit for maintenance and management of Government-owned sports infrastructure with necessary financial and human resources.
- A Statistical Unit has also been set up in 2009, to maintain a sports database.
- Continuous financial support has been provided to 1st and 2nd Division football clubs and regional sports committees as follows -
 - o 1st Division football clubs, they get Rs1 m. each,
 - o 2nd Division football clubs, Rs400,000 each, and
 - o Rs80,000 is granted to each sports region through the local authorities to implement the concept of regionalisation of sports other than football.

In addition, my Ministry has provided financial support to sports federations for the setting up of various «*Écoles des Sports* » at regional level.

- Sports equipment on government-owned sports infrastructure has continuously been renewed to offer the best possible conditions to users for training and competition purposes.
- Bilateral cooperation with friendly countries, especially China has been strengthened and has enabled the country to benefit from scholarships and donations in terms of sports equipment, which have been used to promote mass and high-level sports in Mauritius as well as training of our sports cadres.
- The Anti-doping Unit has been provided with more financial resources to conduct its mission in the most efficient manner.
- Federations responsible for the promotion of sports amongst others with disabilities (aural, mental, physical and visual) have been provided all possible

assistance for their development. I must here highlight the excellent performance of our handisports athletes at the Indian Ocean Islands Games.

M. le président, permettez-moi ici de brosser un bref tableau de ce qui nous attend l'année prochaine. 2012 sera l'année des Jeux Olympiques de Londres et des Jeux de la CJSOI aux Comores. Les enjeux sont importants et les attentes grandes. Ainsi, nous ne resterons pas les bras croisés. Comme toujours, le gouvernement, à travers mon ministère, mettra à la disposition de nos sportifs, toutes les ressources nécessaires.

These games are important to gauge the progress of our athletes at both regional and international levels.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, sports is a dynamic sector where change occurs rapidly. Records keep on being broken. In this context, it is important to continuously assess our actions and plan for the future. It has become imperative to review our current policies concerning –

- sports infrastructure,
- high level sports,
- sports for all,
- training and
- relation with the Sports Federations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in line with the Government Programme 2010-2015, my Ministry is formulating an Integrated Strategic Plan for sports with the objective to pursue the policy of democratisation and regionalisation of sports. We want to inculcate a culture of sports among our fellow countrymen as sports transcend all walks of life.

The following major infrastructural projects are scheduled to be implemented during the year 2012:

- Replacement of synthetic track at Maryse Justin Stadium. The other synthetic at Germain Comarmond, Anjalay and Auguste Volaire stadia as well as the one at Rose Belle need some patching and repairs. These works are scheduled for early next year;
- Provision of lightings to a number of football grounds among others, at –
 - o St François Xavier stadium;
 - o Riche Mare football ground;
 - o Beau Vallon football ground.

- The construction of the Triolet Multipurpose Sports Complex;
- The Plaines des Papayes football ground will be upgraded;
- Provision has been made with the Mauritius Tennis Federation for the extraction of a plot of land from Petit Camp Tennis Centre to be allotted to the Mauritius Squash Federation for the construction of a squash court.
- Feasibility studies will be carried out for the following projects –
 - o a ‘Velodrome’ with all amenities at Roche Brunes. Le terrain sera bientôt mis à la disposition de l’Association Mauricienne de Cyclisme;
 - o un centre pour the kick-boxing toujours dans la région de Roche Brunes et encore une fois un terrain à la Fédération Mauricienne de kick- boxing ;
 - o a football stadium in the south, and
 - o the National Institute of Sports - I heard the hon. Member just talk regarding the Institut National des Sports. Les *requirements* ont déjà été soumis au MPI pour les *preliminary designs* et à partir de là, on fera le *cost estimate* et on soumettra le projet au *Project Plan Committee*.
- Construction of a swimming pool as per international norms, including diving facilities at Camp Garreau, Flacq, where no such facility exists at present.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to give a further boost to our football, we are introducing the Mauritius Saturday Schools Football League. This will be organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, and the Mauritius Secondary Schools Sports Association. This event will certainly help to give a new dimension to football in Mauritius and is expected to arouse interest among our young population. Besides, it will also provide an opportunity to detect young talents.

Concernant le *Sports Act*, M. le président, les amendements viendront. Au niveau du ministère de la jeunesse et des sports on est déjà prêt avec les amendements. Toutefois je dois dire que cette loi n'a pas été amendée depuis ces dix dernières années et demande à être réactualisée. Un comité a travaillé sur les amendements en consultation avec nos partenaires depuis assez longtemps. Les *stakeholders* qui ont d'ailleurs été invités à soumettre leurs propositions y compris le comité olympique. Malheureusement, après avoir finalisé les amendements, certaines institutions, comme le comité olympique, ont amendé leur statut sans consultation avec nous et cela nous pousse maintenant à revoir certaines clauses et les harmoniser avec notre loi. Sans rentrer dans les détails, les amendements effectués visent à

simplifier la lecture de cette loi cadre du sport Mauricien, c'est-à-dire à le rendre cette fois encore plus user-friendly et à combattre les clubs fictifs et leur prolifération.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the current budget provides new hopes to our sportsmen and sportswomen. It has laid the foundation of a culture change by providing some revolutionary measures.

- First, companies employing high level athletes will be eligible to claim 50% of the salaries of these employees from the CSR Fund. While this measure will provide higher employability to high level athletes, it will also provide an incentive to employers to release the athletes for further training purposes.
- Second, the award of six scholarships annually to our promising athletes to train overseas. A provision of Rs4.5 m. has been made in the 2012 Budget. This will not only encourage competition to win the scholarship, but will also provide athletes opportunity to undergo top level training at institutions like INSEP and Patiala Institute of sports. These athletes will be able to compete at international levels and eventually assist in the training of other young athletes.
- Third, the “Sports Etudes” Programme has been extended from 80 beneficiaries to 250 and will cover 12 sports instead of 8. This will obviously add impetus to the efforts being made to boost up the *morale* and standard of our athletes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, apart from these enunciated measures, my Ministry is proposing to target “sporting tourists” through the organisation of international tournaments in sports like cricket and golf with the collaboration of the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure. Only in terms of TV rights, Mauritius can earn significantly for the international coverage of such events. The exposure that the country would get from such events would also be highly beneficial to our economy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these measures will no doubt gradually change the old belief that “*le sport ne nourrit pas son home*”. C'est nouvelles mesures présentent davantage d'opportunités à nos athlètes et créent l'espoir d'un futur meilleur.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like now to dwell a bit on “Sports Études” Programme of my Ministry.

En parlant du projet Sport-Études qui tombe sous la responsabilité du *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports*, une structure de mon ministère, j'ai beau y réfléchir mais je dois avouer

que je ne comprends toujours pas que certaines personnes s'offusquent sur le fait que ce présent budget fait la part belle à ce programme.

Je n'arrive toujours pas à comprendre ces personnes qui s'élèvent contre le fait que le gouvernement veut offrir non seulement un présent à nos sportifs mais surtout un futur, en préparant d'ores et déjà leurs après-carrières.

Oui, nous voulons beaucoup de médailles d'or. Oui, nous voulons vibrer aux rythmes des performances de nos athlètes sur le plan mondial. Oui, nous travaillons pour avoir encore plus de Champions du Monde, des Champions d'Afrique, des Champions du Commonwealth ou de la Francophonie. Mais non, nous ne voulons surtout pas qu'après avoir fait la fierté de la nation Mauricienne, le Champion se retrouve sans perspective d'avenir et d'intégration dans la vie professionnelle.

Non, nous ne voulons certainement pas que le Champion soit livré à lui-même. A travers nos actions et la somme accordée au TFES, nous voulons consolider encore plus ce concept. Nous voulons, plus que jamais, associer, réconcilier excellence académique à performance sportive et nous voulons donner tous les moyens possibles et imaginables à nos jeunes espoirs. J'espère surtout que les mesures annoncées inciteront plus de parents à croire dans le sport.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would now wish to give an overview of the youth sector. The future of any country lies in the qualities and achievements of its youth. Mauritius is not an exception. However, we are unlike many other African countries where youth and unemployment is a major threat to social stability, economy growth, sustainable development and where the youth face a critical bottleneck to access higher education which is a key driver of technological economic and socio-political progress. Instead in Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our youth are given equal opportunities to move ahead in life and to participate in the socio-economic development of the country.

Swami Chinmayananda, while speaking on youth values, once said, I quote: "Our youth are not useless, but they are only used less". We are, therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ensuring that we use our youth to the optimum and we make them an equal social partner who are totally involved and committed to the cause of their country. An increase of Rs20 m. has been allocated in the Budget for two programmes which are youth empowerment, recreation and community-based. Before highlighting the various achievements made in the youth development sector, I am

pleased to note that young people have benefited from many laudable measures like soft loan to enable them a living.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry offers free training to more than 1,000 young people annually in youth enterprises and now with the flexibility from banks to administer small loans, our youth can benefit more from this type of activity. Empowering young people means creating and supporting the enabled conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf rather than being directed by others. These enabling conditions have been endorsed by the Commonwealth and the United Nations and are used as guidelines.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, youth empowerment is not about shifting responsibilities of other stakeholders onto young people shoulders, instead it is about assisting and guiding them to assume their responsibilities in an efficient and disciplined manner. The National Youth Council operating under the aegis of my Ministry is working in this direction.

M. le président, plus de 100,000 jeunes ont bénéficié de cours et conseils prodigués par la section jeunesse de mon ministère. Permettez-moi d'énumérer quelques-uns: training of youth leaders to face social evils like violence, suicide, juvenile delinquency, alcohol and drug abuse and HIV Aids; training in leadership, life skills management and youth enterprise; community development projects related to alleviation of poverty; training in disaster response to natural calamities such as tsunamis and flood; youth civic training programme; extension of the National Youth Achievement Award Programme to schools.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, finally, before resuming my seat, let me assure this House of my relentless dedication and commitment to the cause of sports and our athletes in general. I will continue to closely monitor and ensure the measures initiated in the Budget 2012 are implemented effectively and in the shortest possible delay, and that new ideas are generated in this sector.

We made a breakthrough on the world map when Mauritius won its first-ever Olympic medal in Beijing in 2008, but we have to aim higher still if we want to reach the top of the podium and grasp the ball which is within our reach. What we need now are sports people who are determined, dynamic, creative, hardworking, gold oriented and patriotic. I, therefore, make a pledge and call upon our partners and stakeholders for their active involvement to further improve our performances in 2012 and onwards.

Si comme l'a dit Shakespeare: 'le passé n'est que prologue', je peux alors vous affirmer que le présent et l'avenir du sport et de la jeunesse mauricienne sera encore plus étincelant sous ce présent gouvernement. Merci, M. le président.

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

Mr Baloomoody rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Thursday 17 November 2011 at 11.30 a.m.

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

Question put and agreed to.

At 00.55 a.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Thursday 17 November 2011 at 11.30 a.m.