

No. 10 of 2010



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 03 AUGUST 2010**

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<i>Members</i>	<i>Members</i>
THE CABINET	
	(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)
Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebejaun, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities</i>
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment</i>
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development</i>
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo	<i>Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping</i>
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell	<i>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade</i>
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS	<i>Minister of Housing and Lands</i>
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	<i>Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare</i>
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha	<i>Minister of Tourism and Leisure</i>
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	<i>Minister of Education and Human Resources</i>
Hon. Satya Veryash Faugoo	<i>Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security</i>
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun	<i>Minister of Industry and Commerce</i>
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	<i>Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development</i>
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	<i>Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology</i>
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	<i>Minister of Youth and Sports</i>
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>

Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	<i>Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands</i>
Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum	<i>Minister of Information and Communication Technology</i>
Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK	<i>Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues</i>
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	<i>Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms</i>
Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	<i>Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment</i>
Hon Yatindra Nath Varma	<i>Attorney General</i>
Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

*Members**Members*

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
<i>Deputy Chairman of Committees</i>	Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
<i>Deputy Clerk</i>	Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 10 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 03 August 2010

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENT

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION –
CPA CENTENNIAL 2011

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I have a short announcement to make.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will celebrate the CPA Centennial throughout 2011. In that context, we have been invited to send high-resolution digital images which are illustrative of the best of our Parliament, namely Ceremonial occasions, Members speaking in the Chamber, Parliamentary buildings, the Chamber during sittings, the Mace and any other symbol associated with our Parliament and its history. These will be compiled to form part of the unique Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Centennial Calendar to be published on the occasion.

In the circumstances, as the high-resolution digital images are not available, I am exceptionally admitting two photographers of the Government Information Services to take a few shots as specified in the request of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association during today's sitting of the House.

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Office of Mr Speaker –

Declaration of Interest by the Honourable First Member for Curepipe and Midlands (Mr E. Guimbeau) in relation to Parliamentary Question No. 1B/372 (*In original*).

B. Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands –

The Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill (Fees for Outline Planning Permission and Building and Land Use Permit) Regulations 2009 (Government Notice No. 154 of 2010).

C. Ministry of Information and Communication Technology –

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) for the year ended 30 June 2009.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MÉTRO LÉGER PROJECT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Government's decision to reconsider the *métro léger* project, he will state –

- (a) the impact thereof, if any, on the Road Decongestion Programme, indicating where matters stand concerning the Request for Qualification for a Public Private Partnership for the Design, Construction, Operation as a Toll Road, Maintenance and Financing thereof;
- (b) the mode of financing of the project, and
- (c) if the employment of the employees of the bus industry will be preserved.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the President's Address clearly stipulates at paragraph 105 and, I quote –

“Government, in its attempt to alleviate and solve the traffic congestion problem, will soon embark on a Bus Modernisation Programme to upgrade bus services throughout the island. The aim being to offer fast, frequent, convenient and more attractive services to the commuters. This programme also includes the construction of an alternative mode of transport on the Curepipe-Port Louis corridor. The *métro léger* project will be reconsidered.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is therefore clear that Government is adopting a holistic approach to solve the problem of traffic congestion throughout the island and the *métro léger* is not the only option.

However, notwithstanding our focus on the Bus Modernisation Programme, we have also included the option of *métro léger* as an alternative mode of transport. I wish to enlighten the House that the last report on *métro léger* submitted by Halcrow Fox dates back to 2001.

In 2006, this issue was reconsidered in a Consensus Process Meeting with all stakeholders led by Dr. Jonathan Richmond, Consultant appointed by the Government. It was concluded that the preferred mode of transport would be the BRT within a package of measures.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a new Government is at the helm of the affairs of the country and we want to ensure that the best option is available for the country. As we have already stated, we are adopting a holistic approach exploring all options so as to achieve the optimal demand led solution rather than the technology led solution.

In the light of anticipated developments such as the Neo-town at Les Salines, the Bagatelle Mix-Use Development, the Ebene Cybercity, the Highlands new Administrative City between Curepipe and Port Louis, it is equally pertinent to reconsider the issue of *métro léger* project. The strategy of transforming Mauritius into a duty-free island will also require effective means of transport.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the Road Decongestion Programme, the status is as follows.

A contract was signed in April 2009 with SPP Project Solutions from South Africa to carry out a feasibility study for implementing the Harbour Bridge and Phase 2 of the Ring Road as a Public and Private Partnership project. The assignment was extended to incorporate other components of the Road Decongestion Programme in order to find a holistic solution to the congestion problem affecting the Curepipe-Port Louis-Terre Rouge Corridor.

The total cost of the services will amount to about Rs70 m. at its conclusion. In his study SPP Project Solution has considered the impact of the Bus Way on the traffic along the corridor Curepipe to Terre Rouge and concluded that the construction of the Harbour Bridge, the Ring Road and a new bridge on GRNW between A1 and M1 road are affordable as a PPP project and do not put into question the feasibility of the implementation of a mass transit system as a complementary solution to the congestion problem.

To finance the project, a tollable road network has been established which will comprise the Harbour Bridge, the Port Louis Ring Road, the Terre Rouge-Verdun-Ebène Road and part of Motorways M1 and M2. Toll coupled with payment of a service fee will generate enough funds to recoup the capital investment and maintain and operate the network during the entire concession period of thirty years by the private party.

The Feasibility Study Report was approved in January 2010 and in February 2010 Government agreed to the selection of a private developer for the implementation of the Road Decongestion Programme which includes the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the Harbour Bridge and the Ring Road Phase 2 which incorporates a new bridge over the Grand River North West linking A1 Road with M1 between Belle Etoile and Sorèze.

Private developers were invited on 19 March 2010 to submit their applications to prequalify for the project. Eleven applications were received and opened on 19 May 2010 at the Central Procurement Board.

Evaluation for selection of three bidders who will be invited to submit bids for the design, construction and operation as a Toll Road, maintenance and financing of the Road Decongestion Programme for the Road Development Authority has been carried out by the Central Procurement Board. The Request for Proposals documents are being finalised and bids will be invited from the three selected bidders before the end of August.

With regard to part (b), I wish to inform the House that all possible financing options are being explored, including financing from Budget, through borrowings from Development Partners and PPP modes such as Build, Operate, Transfer and the like.

As regards part (c) of the question, I wish to reiterate the stand of this Government on this issue. As a caring and responsible Government, we do not want to snatch the bread from the mouth of bus industry workers.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, only seven months ago, on 18 December, replying to a Private Notice Question which I put to the hon. Minister, he was absolutely adamant - and I am being generous when I say adamant - that the Light Rail Transport System was out and it was impossible in Mauritius, that the fare would be ten times that of the buses, that it would cost three times more than the Bus Rapid Transport System and that there was a need for 15,000 passengers per hour which was impossible in Mauritius. Can I ask the hon. Minister what has happened in that short period of seven months for Government to reconsider?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has, at that time, taken the decision to go along the BRT. It has been the decision of Government, I had to defend it. But, at the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir, in life, one has to be flexible, and we have to keep our eyes and ears open. New technologies are coming forward, new developments are taking place and, as a new Government, we have got fresh ideas coming, our doors and windows have to be open.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Minister was in the MMM/MSM Government, he was for the Light Rail Transit System - all out and adamant. Seven months ago, he was all out against the Light Rail Transit System and all out for the Bus Rapid Transit System. Now, he is in favour again of the Light Rail Transit System. Can he give us a guarantee that he will not change again in the near future?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that, in life, one has to be flexible. If you are adamant, if you cannot bend, you will break down. It is very important, Mr Speaker, Sir, as we move ahead at a skyrocketing speed at which these developments are taking place in the country and, at the same time, we are having new technologies coming up and we have to adapt. If we do not adapt, we will perish.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Road Decongestion Programme was presented and when there was a request for qualification, it was spelt out that it was from one private party to finance, operate, toll road, etc. Now, if I got it right - and I checked again - there were six components to the Road Decongestion Programme being the Harbour Bridge, the Ring Road, the Terre Rouge/Verdun Link Road, the Verdun/Ebène Link Road, the East-West Connector and the Bus Rapid Transit System. I take it that, therefore, international and local operators were invited

to express their interest. Now, if we pull out the bus rapid transit system, does that request for qualification hold or will we split it instead of going for one party to finance, operate and so on?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to make it clear. In fact, all this forms part of the Road Decongestion Programme, Part I. But, when the SPP Project Solution Company was appointed, it was to look after the Harbour Bridge, Phase 2 of the Ring Road, plus the new bridge which we want to construct. All these three are lumped into one and the cost is approximately Rs18 billion. The other projects, though they form part of the Road Decongestion Programme, are not under the SPP Project Solution because we will have to start tender procedures for those projects.

Mr Bérenger: I repeat, when a request for qualification for a private party was for six components...

(Interruptions)

Yes, it's a public document – the request for qualification! Are we going, therefore, to have to issue a new request for qualification since the consultant seems to have split the six components?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information that I have is that, in the beginning, it was a feasibility study for implementing Harbour Bridge, Phase 2 of the Ring Road and, thereafter, it was extended to incorporate other components. The request was not for six companies. It excludes the bus transit, the East-West Connector. It is only for the Harbour Bridge, Phase 2 of the Ring Road plus the new bridge that we want to construct, that is, A1 and M1.

Mr Bérenger: Since the Government Programme has been presented and Government's decision to reconsider the *métro léger* project was announced, can I know what has been done, or is being done, to put the *métro léger* project *sur les rails à nouveau*?

Mr Bachoo: As I have just mentioned, we are reconsidering, we are revisiting and we are having a fresh look at it and actually the financial aspect is being studied by the Ministry of Finance. I hope that in the near future we will come up with certain conclusions.

Mr Bérenger: I reread carefully what the Minister had said in replying to a PNQ in December: "Can I ask the Minister whether he agrees that it is clear that it will have to be one or the other. It will have to be the LRT or the Bus Rapid Transit system." I quote the Minister replying to the PNQ -

“Either it is BRT or LRT, the same length will be utilised, about 23 kms and, in fact, the same corridor will be maintained.”

Is this the case and what is going to happen? How much time are we going to waste again before deciding between the Light Rail Transit system or the Bus Rapid Transit system? Because nothing can start until a decision has been taken. It is the same corridor.

Mr Bachoo: I would only request the hon. Leader of the Opposition to be patient because, in fact, the Ministry of Finance is trying to study all the implications. Before coming to a conclusion, it is important that it should know all the technicalities. But I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the same corridor will be maintained. It can't be both systems; it has to be either of the two. In fact, we are having a relook; we are revisiting, reconsidering and re-evaluating the LRT and I do hope that, as early as possible, we are going to take a decision.

Mr Bérenger: My question related also as to how the *métro léger* project eventually would be financed. Has the Ministry worked out the increase in cost of the project between 2005 and to date? A cost had been placed on the *métro léger* project in 2005 and several years of work had been done with the World Bank. Can we have an estimate of what the same project would cost now, as compared to 2005?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sorry to say that in 2004 – I still remember in July 2004 – much work had been done but, unfortunately, at the time when the consultant had to be appointed for the final work, the order came from above, that everything had to be squashed and everything was squashed. In fact, in 2004, the dossier....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to submit a copy of the notes of meeting on the Table. In 2004, the dossier was taken from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and sent back to the Ministry of Finance, and from there to the Prime Minister's Office and, on the eve of the election, from the Prime Minister's Office back to the Ministry of Finance. So, unfortunately, nothing was done up to 2005. In 2006, we started afresh. The then vice-Prime Minister appointed a committee...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Please, let us have some order! Let the hon. Minister answer, please!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, what I am saying is nothing, but facts. In 2006, it started over again, but this time it was the BRT. In 2005, the cost was approximately above Rs8 billion;

in 2001, it was Rs6.2 billion. In fact, the cost has kept on increasing but, as at now, it must be around Rs10 to Rs15 billion. We have not worked it out thoroughly, but it is an estimated cost.

Mr Bérenger: Surely, the hon. Minister will agree with me that this is a lot of money. We have travelled a long way by 2005 and now we are going to pay – from what I heard – billions and billions of rupees more. Will the hon. Minister agree with me that five years have been wasted, it is urgent, time is of the essence, that the matter is thrashed out as early as possible, because the cost of the project will keep on increasing after five years wasted?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, when the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying that five years had been wasted, he has to agree with me that between 2000 and 2005, whatever work was done up to 2004 was also wasted. It is the talk of everybody, but the play of a few. Mr Speaker, Sir, a decision could have been taken in 2005, but it was not taken. In 2006 onward we started with the BRT, we were committed to the project, but now, in the light of new developments which are taking place, in fact, we want to go fast. At the same time, those people who have got eyes to see know the amount of work which has started. The Decongestion Programme has started at an accelerating and skyrocketing speed. We are doing everything with the exception of one issue which is pending, that is, the LRT. I would ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to bear with us, he will see that in the weeks to come the situation will be developed.

Mr Bérenger: Of course, in the current budget, there is nothing provided for the Light Rail Transit System. Can we expect that, in the next budget, we will have travelled far enough for provision to be made in the 2011 Budget for the *métro léger* or the Bus Rapid Transit system - but now we are talking about the *métro léger* - to get going?

Mr Bachoo: I have already made it clear, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the rate at which we are going, towards the end of the year, definitely, things will take a different turn. Whatever is amiss, we will try to complete.

Mr Bérenger: Moving on to the unemployment and welfare of the employees of the transport industry, may I remind the hon. Minister that, in December, replying to the PNQ, one of the reasons that he put forward for refusing to go the LRT way was the fate of the employees. And, I quote him, Mr Speaker, Sir, explaining why he had given up on the Light Rail Transit System -

“ I knew what were the hardships that those people would suffer in case the LRT would have come.”

He said that. I challenged him. Now, Government is reconsidering going ahead. Will Government pick up where we left, that is, the idea was for no employee of the public transport sector to lose his employment, for the existing companies to become regional companies, bringing passengers to seven or eight stations on the Light Railway transit corridor. Can we know whether work has started anew so that the guarantee required can be given to the employees?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the statement which I have made is very, very clear: Government does not intend to snatch the bread from the mouth of any of the workers. I can give an assurance to the House that that would not be the case, the feeder services will be there, but we have to organise once the decision is taken. But I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the workers are not going to suffer.

Mr Bérenger: I am sure the hon. Minister will agree with me that there is need, even before a final decision is taken, for Government, the bus companies, the individual operators and the trade unions to sit round the table and prepare for the future so that there should be no panic amongst the employees of the transport sector.

Mr Bachoo: I am pleased to announce to the House that, in fact, Government is thinking thoroughly how to improve the conditions of work of the workers and they will see, in the weeks to come, what decisions we are going to take and I am sure that the workers have faith in the Government and they know that Government will never let them down.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, my last question will be: in December last, the now hon. Minister of Finance was in the Opposition, he was for the Light Rail Transit System, the Minister was against the Light Rail Transit System; I won't go back to *le ton, l'arrogance* with which the hon. Minister treated the then Member of the Opposition...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: That was another Government, forget about that!

Mr Bérenger: On every occasion, the now hon. Minister of Finance presents the Light Rail Transit System as a priority, going so far as to say that the Light Rail Transit System and his project of a duty-free island are two sides of the same coin. Whereas the hon. Minister of Finance is presenting the Light Rail Transit System as a priority, I heard the hon. Minister even today saying that the Light Rail Transit System is but one of the options – the word used by the

hon. Minister – being examined by Government. Can I ask the hon. Minister which is which? Has a choice already being made?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not want to lose the time of the House by repeating what I have heard. I have said that we are going to revisit - we are relooking, reassessing, re-evaluating - the Light Rail Transit System once more. This is what exactly I have said and I do not believe that I have been so much arrogant in the House. This is the way of expressing myself and I do hope that the hon. Leader of the Opposition will not try to mistake me.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, if I can conclude - from what I understood, the hon. Minister is waiting for the green light from the Ministry of Finance; the hon. Minister of Finance being already in favour of the Light Rail Transit System. He is waiting for the financial green light from the Minister of Finance and then things will get going from what I understood. Has the hon. Minister of Finance given any kind of indication to the hon. Minister in what kind of time frame we are working?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the decision is taken by the Government as a whole. It is Cabinet that takes the decision, but, definitely, there are certain implications where we have to turn towards the Ministry of Finance and once we get all these, Government will have to decide. And unitedly Government will take a decision; this is a Government decision. Overnight, I cannot take a decision. But the hon. Member should be patient, he will see the result.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Minister about the *tracé*. Several studies have been done concerning the *tracé*. There was the initial *tracé* and there was supervision on the part of the Ministry of Housing concerning encroachment on the *tracé* which we have to use. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether Government has made a follow-up, either at the level of his Ministry or the RDA, to see to it that there is no encroachment on the *tracé* and even land has not been vested in individuals or companies which, ultimately, will make us lose time again?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, at my Ministry there is a Department of Urban Transport Programme Secretariat which is led by Dr. Reesaul. In fact, there has been encroachment for the past fifty or sixty years, but we are trying to see to it that there is no additional encroachment. Certain buildings have also been put and the Ministry of Housing will have to look after that problem. I can assure the hon. Member that we are very careful on this issue.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the Road Decongestion Programme, can I know from the hon. Minister whether decongestion means only the corridor from Curepipe to Port Louis or a more holistic approach spread throughout the island?

Mr Bachoo: Well, this has been the order of the Prime Minister all the time. He had been reminding me that when we speak in terms of decongestion, it should be every nook and corner of the country and that is the reason I have mentioned - those who have got eyes can see - that the programme of decongestion is a nationwide programme.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister has informed the House that Government has adopted a holistic approach with regard to the Road Decongestion Programme. We all know that the first phase of the Ring Road is under construction. Can the Minister inform the House how will that first phase alleviate the traffic problem and, secondly, whether the road, once it is completed, that is, the first phase, be a toll road?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to start somewhere. We had to start with the Ring Road Phase I and I know what the hon. Member means to say by that, but by the time it is completed, the second part would have already started and secondly, it forms part of the toll road.

Mr Barbier: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the implementation of the project will require compulsory acquisition of private residential property in the region of Camp Chapelon and in other regions?

Mr Bachoo: It depends where the *tracé* is being made. If that falls within private properties, of course, we will have to negotiate. That is the work which is done by the Ministry of Housing.

Mr Speaker: Any further question, hon. Leader of the Opposition?

Mr Bérenger: Between 2000 and 2005, a lot of work had been done and we had worked very closely with the World Bank because of their expertise in that area and their financial punch. Can I know, since the Government Programme has been presented, and Government has announced that it is reconsidering the *métro léger* project, whether the World Bank has been approached? Is the World Bank involved in any way?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, all the time throughout, whether it is LRT or bus way, the World Bank has always been consulted and, in fact, part of the programme was supposed to be financed by the World Bank. They do not impose upon us, we take the decisions and then we apprise them and they try to support it. At the same time, I would like to again remind the House that, in fact, in 2004 the entire exercise which was conducted by the Central Tender Board was quashed completely and we had to start anew in 2006.

Mr Speaker: Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. 1B/373 addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister will be replied by the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues. Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

VEHICLES – SPEEDING - CONTRAVENTIONS

(No. 1B/370) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to speeding, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of contraventions booked to date through the use of cameras, indicating -

- (a) if all the cameras are fully operational and, if not, why not, and
- (b) the purchasing cost thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since the coming into force of the Road Traffic (Photographic Enforcement Device) Regulations on 29 November 2008, 50,353 contraventions have been established for the offence of exceeding speed limit and other offences.

In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the Question, I am informed that three cameras were purchased in 2008 by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping at the cost of Rs6,614,448.10 and were handed over to the Police on 12 December 2008. The three cameras are operational and are being used by the Police.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that there is on the market radar detectors that drivers may use to know that there are cameras watching ahead? Will he amend the law so that drivers cannot install same in their cars?

The Prime Minister: This happens everywhere in the world, Mr Speaker, Sir. I know this very well because I, myself, have put one of these radars in my own car. The Police tried to make it illegal, but there is new technology coming up all the time. The purpose is, in fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, to stop drivers from speeding, although speeding is not the only reason for road traffic accidents. But the purpose is to slow them down if it is to choose this purpose. There is new technology coming up all the time, even in the United Kingdom.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the past week and this week are bad weeks. Every day we are hearing of fatal car accidents. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether instructions are given to the Police to be more rigid? If we are not tough, things will go on deteriorating. Every day, there are fatal car accidents.

The Prime Minister: It is not the fault of the Police if people are driving badly. The Police are doing what they can. In fact, the problem is that a lot of people do not know how to drive in this country. That is what I am going to look at very soon.

RAMADAN – MOSQUES – SECURITY

(No. 1B/371) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the forthcoming Islamic month of Ramadan, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the measures that will be taken to ensure security in the vicinity of the mosques during the night prayers.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it has been the policy of my Government to set up Ministerial Task Forces to ensure the smooth organisation of the main religious events celebrated in the country all the time - nothing new! In line with this policy, a Ministerial Task Force has been set up under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities to facilitate and oversee the preparations for the Holy month of Ramadan, including all necessary security and safety measures.

Mr Ameer Meea: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to request the Commissioner of Police to pay special attention regarding motorcycles in the region of Plaine Verte, Camp Yoloff, Vallée des Prêtres and Vallée Pitot because last year, several motorcycles, if not dozens, have been stolen?

The Prime Minister: I will certainly look into it. Mr Speaker, Sir, I should say that the Police always take precautions, but I will ask the Commissioner of Police to look into that especially. In fact, I am in presence of a letter from the Association of Mosques, signed by the General Secretary, who happens to be the hon. Member's uncle, I believe, congratulating and thanking my Government for the arrangements that we have made as a Government.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, during the normal work days, there are double and single yellow lines that are placed near the mosques. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister if, in the evening, especially during this prayer month, some flexibility could be shown, and vehicles be allowed to park on single and double yellow lines near mosques because traffic and parking are going to be a big problem? May I ask if, under the supervision of the Police Force, there can be some flexibility wherever there are single and double yellow lines near mosques?

The Prime Minister: I will transmit that to the Commissioner of Police, but I can't give him operational orders, as the hon. Member knows. But I will transmit that to the Commissioner of Police. I do not know whether it is possible or not.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether there will be special arrangements for civil servants of Muslim faith during this special period?

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. This question does not relate to the subject matter of Traffic Police. The hon. Member must come with a substantive question. Hon. Guimbeau!

TRIOLET STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL – LAND ACQUISITION

(No. 1B/372) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Triolet State Secondary School, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry is being carried out on the compulsory acquisition of land therefor and, if so, the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 13 November 2009, the hon. Member himself made a declaration at the Central Crime Investigation Division (CCID) regarding the payment of compensation for the compulsory acquisition of three portions of land situated at Triolet for the extension of the State Secondary School. He requested the Police to enquire as to how the Board of Assessment reached the amount of compensation paid to the three landowners.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Police enquiry into the matter is ongoing and one officer of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, responsible for the acquisition of land for Government projects, has been interviewed.

I am further informed that on 10 April 2008, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has, on its own initiative, started an enquiry in this issue. All documents pertaining to the matter have been produced to ICAC which has completed its enquiry and has referred the case to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for advice.

CHILD ABDUCTION - INQUIRY

(No. 1B/374) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if, on Tuesday 20 July last, a case of child abduction by one D. M. S. was reported, and if so, if an inquiry has been carried thereinto and the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Tuesday 20 July 2010, at 19.15 hours, Mrs M. P. S. M. S. reported to Curepipe Police Station that her husband, Mr D. M. S. had left the country for Reunion Island with their child, aged 4, without her knowledge. She explained that she is separated from her husband, but the latter has been granted a “*Droit de Visite*” by a Judge of the Supreme Court to their daughter twice weekly, namely on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 15.00 and 18.00 hours. On that day, she had left the child with her husband for the visit, but he had failed to return the child after the visit.

On the following day, the Commissioner of Police received a request from the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare for an enquiry to be carried into the case as Minor J. Z. M. S. had been taken away to Reunion Island by her biological father without the authorisation of her biological mother.

Enquiry into the case is being carried out by the Central Criminal Investigation Division.

ALPHA SQUAD, ABERCROMBIE - LARCENY

(No. 1B/375) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the case of larceny reported recently at the Headquarters of the Alpha

Squad of the Police Force, situated at Abercrombie, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police –

- (a) a list of the stolen items, and
- (b) information as to if Police Officers are still residing in the said quarters.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a case of larceny was reported on 25 July 2010 in the office of the Alpha Squad situated at the rear of the compound of the Metropolitan (North) Divisional Headquarters at Abercrombie.

Many items were stolen; some have been reported in the newspapers. I do not think it is correct for me to give details of the items stolen. But I can say that the case was immediately referred to the CID North Division. In the course of the enquiry, three persons were arrested and they all appeared before the Port Louis District Court Division II on a provisional charge of “Larceny Night Breaking” in breach of section 301(1) and 306 of the Criminal Code. All of them have been remanded to Police custody up to 05 August 2010 as Police objected to their release on bail. They appeared on 29 July of this year.

Following searches carried out at the respective residence of the three accused, some of the stolen items have been recovered. Police enquiry is still under way.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that currently five police quarters at Abercrombie are occupied. Other six unoccupied quarters have already been converted into offices and it is envisaged to convert one remaining unoccupied quarters into an office.

I am informed that remedial action is being taken to reinforce security around these offices.

Mr Baloomoody: Will the hon. Prime Minister agree to the fact that three of the quarters are still occupied by some Police officers? It makes it impossible for a proper security service to be effected at that place.

The Prime Minister: In fact, all the procedures have been started for them to vacate the quarters but, unfortunately, it is a long procedure.

Mr Baloomoody: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the wife of one of the officers who occupied the quarters is on bail for criminal offence and that the Police officer is interdicted?

The Prime Minister: There are procedures that we are following as before. Even if the person is interdicted, as long as he or she has not been found guilty, you cannot assume that he or she is guilty.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister will agree with me that what is very disturbing is the fact that, I think, eight police uniforms disappeared. Of course, I do not want to create panic, but the danger, if those uniforms have not been brought back, of some criminals using the uniforms to commit crime is very disturbing. I do not want to go into details. But have the Police recovered those uniforms and, if not, are the Police doing its best to prevent the use of those uniforms for criminal offences?

The Prime Minister: In any case, it is a criminal case if Police uniforms are used by somebody who is not entitled to. But my information is that it is still being looked up by the Forensic that these uniforms have been burnt. Samples have been sent to the Forensic Laboratory to ensure that these are the same uniforms.

Mr Bhagwan: I do not know whether the hon. Prime Minister's attention has been drawn to the fact that yesterday morning, at five o'clock, the Editor in Chief of Radio One was attacked by a few individuals wearing Police uniforms. Are the Police enquiring whether it is not the same uniforms coming from the larceny?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I am aware of it. It is not certain whether, in fact, this story has not been cooked up, but the Police are enquiring.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand from the hon. Prime Minister that the larceny occurred at the rear of the compound, more precisely, where the staff quarters are located. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that no control is exercised at any time of the day with regard to access to those quarters or even the offices found there?

The Prime Minister: The Police are looking at all the security measures in that area, Mr Speaker, Sir. But I am not aware that there was no control at all. It is a Police quarters in any case.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, since these Police stations have very sensitive equipment and uniforms, will the hon. Prime Minister consider installing security cameras in all police stations?

Mr Speaker: Is the hon. Member talking of police stations in general or a specific one? Is there a police station there? I do not know. Are you talking of this police station?

Mr Uteem: The Abercrombie Police Station.

The Prime Minister: In fact, they are not going to be kept there in the long term because they are being converted, as I said.

ELECTORAL REFORMS

(No. 1B/376) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to electoral reforms, he will state if Government now intends to move forward with proposals therefor, following his reported statement at the recent Kampala African Union Summit, and, if so, indicate a time frame.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, during the last electoral campaign we made a pledge to the nation to review our constitutional regime, including the reform of our electoral system. This commitment is also reflected in the Government Programme of 2010-2015, where it is enunciated that Government will take measures to strengthen our democracy, promote nation-building and further entrench the fundamental rights and freedom of all Mauritians.

I indeed had the opportunity of referring to the proposed reform of our constitutional regime during the meeting on the African Peer Review Mechanism last week, in Kampala, where Mauritius was again highly commended for being a model of a vibrant and stable democracy in Africa. And, as I said, there were some criticisms; some of them not, in fact, bearing out, but most of them were praiseworthy. In fact, everybody else thought Mauritius was a model, except, it seems, "*L'Express*" which does not see it that way. But, that is no surprise. However, I also underlined the fact that, given the specificities of the Mauritian society, the reform of our electoral system must not be looked into in isolation, but must be part of a global reform process, and this will take some time to be realised.

As I have stated in a recent past, Government will engage in a process of consultations and appoint a team of constitutional experts which will assess the application of the Constitution since independence and consider the appropriate constitutional reforms, including the reform of our electoral system. In fact preliminary consultations on the reforms have already started internally.

I should also add that when the previous Government was there, they appointed Mr Sachs and he made very pertinent comments on part of the reform that we should think of.

At this stage, no precise time frame can be set. However, I wish to reassure the House that the issue of constitutional reforms appears high on the agenda of this Government's Programme.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, between 2000 to 2005 we had a similar commitment to introduce electoral reforms. Will the hon. Prime Minister not agree that the time is not for further expertise since we have a number of reports over the last 15 years, and that the priority rather is to find the ways and means to forge a consensus as between the political parties represented in this House?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member seems to have forgotten; when they were in Government they also had a commitment with their partner, but nothing happened. Three Committees were set up; one was Sachs then another Committee by, I think, hon. Collendavelloo at the time, and then there was another one by the Attorney General. There were no results. The result was zero. The hon. Member knew this; it was between 2000 to 2005. We also have a commitment, not in our programme, but we had said that we will consider electoral reforms and that is what we are saying now.

Mr Obeegadoo: The hon. Prime Minister seems to have misunderstood. My point was whether the hon. Prime Minister will agree that the time is no longer for further expertise and further reports, since we have all the reports and expertise that we require. But, the time is now ripe for discussions between the political forces represented in this House to forge a consensus and lay down a clear timetable for electoral reforms to be introduced before the next elections.

The Prime Minister: I do not tend to agree with the hon. Member because every Prime Minister, whoever he is, has his own vision of what kind of reforms he also wants. He is also one of the persons who has to want to have reforms. I have some views which, I think, we need to have more constitutional experts to have a look at.

Mr Obeegadoo: The hon. Prime Minister made a statement in Kampala, presumed to be as result of observations in the Peer Review Report. Would the hon. Prime Minister agree to lay, before this Assembly, a copy of that report and of the statement he made in Kampala?

The Prime Minister: This is, in fact, in the public domain. This report is not hidden; it is available even on the Internet. I do not know if you can use the Internet, we will find it but certainly, there is no problem; it is in the public domain. We are not hiding anything.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Yes. MBC covered it very rightly.

CENTRAL FLACQ - TRAFFIC & ILLEGAL PARKING

(No. 1B/377) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the increase in the number of vehicles resulting in dense traffic and illegal parking in Central Flacq, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the -

- (a) number of contraventions booked during the month of May and June 2010, respectively, and
- (b) actions that have been taken by the Traffic Branch to address same.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 10 contraventions have been established in May and 42 in June 2010, relating to illegal parking in Central Flacq.

The region of Central Flacq, Mr Speaker, Sir, has undergone rapid development over the past few years - perhaps, no coincidence that the hon. Minister is a Member of that constituency - and it has become a major place of attraction for the surrounding villages due to the presence of several educational institutions, new commercial activities, supermarkets and the market fair. These activities have led to an increase in traffic and also, more pedestrians converging in the area, thus causing additional congestion and parking problems.

In regard to part (b) of the Question, the following remedial measures have been taken by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, in collaboration with the Traffic Branch of the police and the local authorities -

- (i) installation of traffic signals at important junctions, namely near the former Fire Station, Auguste Vollaire Stadium and at Boulet Rouge;
- (ii) street parking has been banned at Boulet Rouge near *Morcellement* Beeharry, and at different junctions;
- (iii) handrails have been fixed along some pavements to control the movement of pedestrians;
- (iv) regular mobile patrols are carried out by the local Police and the Divisional Support Unit to track down illegal parking and, lastly

(v) on a daily basis two police officers are deployed from 10.00 o'clock to 18.00 o'clock in the evening for policing the area around the traffic centre.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the long-term solution to address the problem of traffic congestion in Central Flacq will be to construct additional road infrastructure to bypass the centre of Flacq, itself. As the hon. Minister has just answered the Private Notice Question, we are looking at the whole island and not just congestion between Port Louis and Curepipe. The construction of the Flacq bypass from Argy to Hermitage has already started and will be completed by October of this year. In addition, a Link Road from Camp Garreau to Plaine de Gersigny is under construction, and it will ease traffic entering Central Flacq.

Also, to reduce the influx of traffic in the main arteries, the relocation of the existing market fair is being envisaged by the District Council.

Mr Bhagwan: Concerning the use of *sabots* – wheel clamps - may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether consideration will be given for the Police to put them outside Port Louis? From our information, it is used in Port Louis only.

(Interruptions)

We have no problem. You have put disorders in Flacq, so bear the consequences! So, if we can start using these wheel clamps in Flacq?

The Prime Minister: It is a consideration that we can look at. It depends how many they have but, as you know, in Port Louis the problem is worse, perhaps. But, we will look at even Flacq, Beau Bassin and everywhere else.

Mr Speaker: Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! The Table has been advised that PQ No. 1B/401 has been withdrawn. Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

MAURAS COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY & SIR SEEWOOSAGUR RAMGOOLAM DENTAL COLLEGE – STAFF & APPARATUS

(No. 1B/378) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the Mauras College of Dentistry and the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Dental College, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to –

- (a) the number of Professors, Assistant Professors, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers in each dental discipline and of other staff members who are presently -
 - (i) engaged in teaching only;
 - (ii) in private practice;
- (b) if they -
 - (i) are equipped with auto clave apparatus for sterilisation thereat, and
 - (ii) adhere to the prescribed international norms and, if not, will an inquiry be carried thereinto.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information requested for at part (a) (i), (a) (ii) and (b) (i) of the question.

With regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that there are no prescribed international norms and that each country applies its own norms.

Since 2002, the quality of the programme of the Bachelor of Dental Surgery at both Dental Colleges was monitored on the basis of guidelines of the Dental Council of India. In 2008, Government approved the Clinical Training Framework for Dental Education which sets out the minimum requirements that any Dental College wishing to establish itself in Mauritius has to comply with.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon Jhugroo! Could you please keep quiet?

Dr. Jeetah: I would like to inform the House that both SSRMC (Dental Wing) and the Mauras College of Dentistry have not been granted permission by the Tertiary Education Commission to recruit new students since 2008 and 2009 respectively because they did not meet the minimum requirements in terms of full time staff in the various departments.

I have, Mr Speaker, Sir, requested the Tertiary Education Commission to discuss actively with the two Dental Colleges and guide them so that they continue to operate and provide quality dental education to their students in Mauritius.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, since it would appear that these colleges do not meet the requirements of the Tertiary Education Commission and hence there is no new student intake, will the Minister say what ongoing mechanism exists to make sure that the teaching presently dispensed in these colleges, both in terms of staffing and in terms of equipment, does come up to requirements, at the present time, concerning existing students?

Dr. Jeetah: There is, Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand an International Monitoring Committee, of which the hon. Member who asks the question is a member of, and I think that he has sat on about nine occasions to monitor the quality of the institution.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to ask the hon. Minister whether there are international dental visitors to these institutions to guarantee the international status?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I did mention that there is an International Monitoring Committee in which we have representatives of TEC, two external members from outside Mauritius at the level of Dean, representatives of the Ministry of Education, Health, MIH and the Dental Council.

Dr. S. Boolell: Is it possible to know who are the two international visitors with the status of Dean?

Dr. Jeetah: I can submit the information later, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is not in my file.

Dr. Sorefan: True to say that I was in the IMC, the report was written, sent to the Ministry, but no action was taken. Could the Minister do the needful so that the actions and recommendations that came from us and the Dental Council be taken into consideration?

Dr. Jeetah: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is not true. I just answered that in 2008 ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, could you please keep quiet? If you continue like this, I will ask you to go out!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will repeat that is not true, because I did mention that since 2008, the Tertiary Education Commission has not granted permission to recruit students at SSRMC and in 2009 the same applies to Mauras. They have taken action and I have instructed in

a way at Tertiary Education Commission so that they work together to make sure that we have the quality standard that we need to have to provide this country with quality dentists.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am totally and utterly confused. If those two institutions are not good enough to take on new students, how can they be good enough for continuing with more senior students?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I did mention that there were difficulties. One of the main problems that they are facing is that they are finding it very difficult to recruit the number of professors, that's the information that the hon. Member asked for, and which I am providing. Another reason related to this is that these professors cannot practise here because of some difficulties that have arisen with the Dental Council that could have facilitated them to stay here. So, this is why I have asked the Tertiary Education Commission, together with the Ministry of Health, to try to see how we can resolve this matter. Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to add that in this country, 95% of the population suffers from tooth decay or one form or the other and we badly need these schools here in this country.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I be allowed to insist on an answer to my question?

Mr Speaker: No, not to insist.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I be allowed to rephrase the question, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: Being given that we are all concerned with the standard of dental care dispensed to our population, if the Tertiary Education Commission considers that the staffing level is not adequate for new students, how can these schools continue to operate with more senior students who require obviously better levels of staffing?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, there is this International Monitoring Committee that actually gives its opinion on the state of affairs and we have to rely on it. Maybe you can address the question to the hon. Member who has sat for nine occasions on these committees.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether these institutions are being allowed to issue a diploma, or degree or whether any kind of certification that is being issued by these institutions are being recognised?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, I would like to thank the hon. Member for asking this question. We have had two batches which have graduated so far, and I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that some students who have completed their bachelor in dental surgery at the Maura's College of Dentistry are now pursuing higher studies in China, Australia, USA and in India. The reason why I am mentioning this is that it appears that these countries have given recognition to these degrees.

CEB – ENERGY SAVING BULBS - SALE

(No.1B/379) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sale of the energy saving bulbs by the Central Electricity Board to the public, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to where matters stand.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, in the context of the Government's policy to encourage energy efficiency, in 2009 the Central Electricity Board sold one million Compact Fluorescent Lamps at the subsidised price of Rs40 for three lamps. MID Fund provided a subsidy of Rs20 m. I am informed by the CEB that the peak demand in 2009 was 387 MW, as compared to the projected 400 MW.

A second scheme is being implemented this year by CEB. I am informed that tenders have already been invited for the procurement of 660,000 lamps which will be sold at Rs10 each to households and that the project will be launched by next month.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister state whether there is some sort of mechanism for the disposal of used bulbs? If yes, how does it operate?

Dr. Beebejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, this was the question put about the 1 million bulbs and we did have collection points for them but, in this particular case, they won't be handling back used bulbs. They will just come with their CEB bills and we will sell them.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether there is a timeframe for the next sets of energy saving light bulbs that will be sold by the CEB?

Dr. Beebejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, with the experience we acquired last year for the one million bulbs, we are going a little bit cautiously. That's why we have gone for 660,000 although there is provision for two million. I would like to inform the House and those who were not present that we budgeted for one million bulbs, but by the time we got about 800,000, we had difficulties in selling them, because the public was saturated. And this time, we are going slower, and we have reduced the price. We are not saying three, but one for Rs10, which is almost giveaway.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether we have benefited from carbon credits under the CDM for the first batch of one million energy saving bulbs?

Dr. Beebejaun: The short answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, is no. It is a very difficult procedure to get carbon credit. They insisted on the one million and, by the time we got 200,000, we had to give up.

Mr Bhagwan: May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether his Ministry has thought about centralising the purchase of energy saving bulbs for street lighting? This is one of the major sectors where there is need for energy saving, and I don't think that leaving it to the local authorities will produce results. Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether consideration would be given for his Ministry or the relevant departments, through the CEB, to order these bulbs in order to have standardisation?

Dr. Beebejaun: I'll look into this issue. I think the question is interesting. So far, the Electrical Services Division has been helping the local authorities, and I would like to inform the House that 50,000 street lighting will be replaced soon and the MID Fund has contributed Rs117 m. to it. But, I take the point.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is saying that it is very difficult to benefit from the carbon credit. May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether it was because we didn't stock the incandescent bulbs being returned and we were in breach of an

important condition to benefit from the carbon credit, that we lost millions of rupees in terms of carbon credits?

Dr. Beebejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is no. As I said, they insisted on the one million, and they had a time frame for it. It is very difficult and costly. In the end, it might cost more to get the credit than the credit itself.

SCHOOL CANTEENS - NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON NUTRITION

(No. 1B/380) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the school canteens, he will state the reasons why the sale of yoghurts thereat has been discontinued, indicating if it is proposed to resume the sale thereof and, if so, under which conditions.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the context of the implementation by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life of the National Action Plan on Nutrition, which, *inter alia*, covers strategies and intervention for nutrition, my Ministry was informed of the new Food (Sale of Food on Premises of Educational Institutions) Regulations 2009 which were to be implemented as from January 2010. Consequently, with a view to ensuring compliance with the Regulations, the schools were informed that only food items in the Schedule to Regulations could be sold on their premises, and the Schedule did not include yoghurt.

Then, following representations made by school canteen operators, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life came forward in February 2010 with a general framework under which they may be allowed to sell additional items, subject to specific conditions in the Food Act and Regulations being met. Under the general framework, one of the additional items was reduced fat yoghurt with reduced fat milk, without fruits, flavouring, colouring or artificial sweeteners, and subject to certain specifications regarding sugar, milk fat and calcium content. The new framework was circulated to the schools for compliance.

As regards the last part of the question, I am informed that only a few of the schools resumed the sales of yoghurt subsequent to the issue of the new framework. Canteen operators will have to sell reduced fat yoghurt, as specified under the relevant Regulations and Framework on food items set by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that no company is ready to manufacture reduced fat yoghurt especially for schools.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, out of 456 school canteens inspected recently, 211 are already selling this type of yoghurt. So, I believe they must be getting that from the companies which are producing.

Mr Obeegadoo: Would the hon. Minister kindly inform the House whether yoghurt is still being distributed in ZEP schools and, if so, whether they need these requirements?

Dr. Bunwaree: This is a different question. But ZEP schools are having a favourable regime concerning diet for children.

RAMADAN - MOSQUES – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/381) Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the mosques, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the measures that are being taken or that will be taken to ensure an adequate water supply thereat, during the forthcoming Islamic month of Ramadan.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, a meeting of the Ministerial Committee mentioned by the Prime Minister this morning was held under my Chairmanship on 15 July 2010 with the representatives of mosques and various stakeholders, namely the Central Water Authority, the Central Electricity Board, the Wastewater Management Authority, as well as the local authorities and Fire Services Department, to discuss a number of issues, such as water supply, lighting, amongst others, during the month of Ramadan.

The Central Water Authority will, as in the previous years, take appropriate measures to ensure adequate water supply, namely -

- (i) in agreement with the representatives of mosques, hours of water supply will be extended from 3.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. On Fridays and Eid Day, the morning supply will be from 3.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. with possibility of further extension wherever practicable;

- (ii) water tanker services will be on standby. The Fire Services Department will also extend its collaboration in cases of emergency, and the representatives of mosques have undertaken to give early notice of requests to the Central Water Authority to fill water tanks of mosques;
- (iii) a list of CWA on call officers and their contact numbers will be sent to all mosques, so as to facilitate communication in case of any water supply problem or requests for tanker services;
- (iv) during the past months, Mr Speaker, Sir, arrangements have been made to monitor closely the water supply situation, and these will be maintained and strengthened.

Representatives of mosques have expressed their appreciation for the arrangements made, and have given the assurance that they will extend their collaboration to the various authorities.

Mr Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am very thankful to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister for his comprehensive reply and his personal monitoring of all the key issues. Following various representations made to me personally, I would humbly ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the CWA considers extending further the supply of water, exceptionally on Fridays and on Eid day, until noon?

Dr. Beebejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, this request has been put forward, and we are looking at it. The hours I have mentioned would be the minimum and, whenever possible, we will extend them.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister talk about measures taken in respect of various mosques. But, as the hon. Deputy Prime Minister knows, the holy month concerns all Muslims and there are a lot of Muslims in this country who still do not have regular supply of water, especially in Port Louis. Can measures be taken by the CWA, through water tanks, to supply water to these areas where there is a concentration of Muslims?

Mr Speaker: All these questions relate to mosques. I would allow the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to answer.

Dr. Beebejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, since 1998, I have been chairing committees, and it went very well. Last year, we had letters of appreciation that it went well, and I have no reason to believe that it would be different this year.

Mr Bhagwan: We all know that there are problems during the holy month of Ramadan. This is the planning, but, in fact, we, as MPs, have been called upon by different persons because breakdowns occur. Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, at least, circulate these names to MPs, so that we can help and assist? Because we are called upon to attend to requests which are being made either individually or by representatives of the mosques. Secondly, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister also look at not only the water supply - if I am not mistaken, I have heard about the meeting of the local authorities - but at the state of the roads where there have been pipe leaking, as well as street lighting and so on? There have been many representations.

Mr Speaker: I will have to allow this question, because the answer has gone beyond.

Dr. Beebejaun: Certainly, I will circulate the information as to the phone numbers and addresses. This will help everybody.

SUNEE SURTEE FOOTBALL GROUND - FLOODLIGHTS

(No. 1B/382) Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the installation of floodlights at the Sunee Surtee football ground at Vallée Pitot, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Ministry of Youth and Sports had, in April 2008, proposed to upgrade the football ground at the Sunee Surtee Government school at Vallée Pitot, with a view to providing sports and leisure facilities to the inhabitants of the region which were not available so far.

I am informed that, since the football ground was vested in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, it was decided to elaborate a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, my Ministry and the Municipal Council of Port Louis, to define the roles and responsibilities of each party for the ownership, management and maintenance of the football ground.

I am informed that the Memorandum of Understanding is being finalised, and the Municipal Council of Port Louis will invite tenders shortly for the installation of floodlights at the football ground. I am further informed that the floodlights will be installed once the Memorandum of Understanding will be signed.

TRANQUEBAR – FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. 1B/383) Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the project for the putting up of a football ground at Cremation Road, Tranquebar, he will state if a plot of land has already been earmarked, indicating, where matters stand in regard to the acquisition thereof.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, a plot of land of the extent of three *arpents* (3A), situated at Tranquebar, has already been acquired from the Arya Sabha Mauritius and vested in the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in January this year, for the construction of a football ground.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Can the hon. Minister inform the House when this land was acquired and whether it formed part of land previously given in lease to a socio-cultural organisation which has been bought back?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, this land was acquired from the Mauritius Arya Sabha. It belonged to the Mauritius Arya Sabha, otherwise we would have retrieved the land, but it was bought. I don't know whether it formed part of other land, but this is the information I have got. If the hon. Member will put a substantive question, I will be able to get the information and give it to him.

CITE LA CURE - STATE LAND - ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

(No. 1B/384) Mrs A. (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that more than 20 families living on the State land behind the National Housing Development Corporation housing estate, at Cité La Cure, are not connected to the electricity supply network of the Central Electricity Board and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to the reasons therefor, indicating if it proposes to supply them with electricity in the coming months and, if not, why not.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun):

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Government has approved the relocation of 39 families, presently living at Cité La Cure to a new site at Batterie Cassée, out of whom only 21 responded to the drawing of lots regarding their relocation.

However, as the relocation process has taken longer because of a court case regarding the ownership of the site, the CEB is considering the supply of electricity to them, on humanitarian grounds, pending their relocation.

I am informed that the CEB has met the families to discuss about an arrangement for the extension of electricity to them. Works will be completed within the coming month.

DARWIN COLLEGE – STUDENT - SUICIDE

(No. 1B/385) Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware if any student of the Darwin College is reported to have recently committed suicide and, if so, will he state if his Ministry proposes to conduct an investigation thereinto.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the PSSA that a student of Darwin College did, in fact, attempt to commit suicide on 01 July 2010.

The PSSA which has carried out an investigation into the matter has reported that the Manager of the college has met the mother of the student on 01 July 2010. The latter informed that her daughter had attempted to commit suicide as a result of being bullied by two of her classmates. The Manager immediately carried out an internal inquiry which, however, revealed that no bullying seems to have been committed on the student by her classmates. According to the Manager, the two students who had been incriminated were called in the presence of the mother and they denied the accusation.

It was also reported that, prior to this incident, the responsible party of the student had never registered any complaint of her daughter being bullied at school and this, since her admission in Form I in January 2007.

Subsequently, the student was absent for a few days from school until she came to take part in the second term examinations as from 08 July 2010 and during that period, she did not show any sign of stress or anxiety.

Nonetheless, the Manager of the college has been requested to closely monitor the situation and keep an eye on that student. He has also been advised to resort to the services of an Educational Psychologist to follow up on the case and to report developments to my Ministry and also ensure that the school maintains an environment which is conducive to learning for all students.

We have also been informed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life that, during her stay at hospital, that student had been seen by a Medical Specialist, a Psychiatry Consultant, a Medical Social Worker at Flacq Hospital and was also referred to a Psychologist. Subsequently, she is being followed up in the Outpatient Department of the Flacq Hospital.

CRÈVE COEUR GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND & GARDEN

(No. 1B/386) Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware of the derelict state of the playground and of the garden of the Crève Coeur Government School and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the renovation thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the playground of Crève Coeur Government School is in a usable state, but requires minor levelling works as well as grass planting in a few places. These works will be attended to by the Zone Directorate during the end of year vacation period.

As regards the garden, I am informed that, with a view to raising funds for the Parents/Teachers Association, the school had given permission to the watchman for growing ginger and banana trees on the plot of land at the far end of the school compound.

However, the latter has not made optimum use of that land lately for medical reasons with the result that there has been an overgrowth of grasses and bushes on that site since May 2010.

I am also informed that this bushy area will be cleared before the resumption of the third term and in case of continued non utilisation of the said land, the school will cancel the permission granted and arrange for the provision of additional recreational activities for the benefit of the pupils on that site.

BEAU BOIS, ST PIERRE - KOVIL - ACCESS ROAD

(No. 1B/387) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the access road to the kovil of Beau Bois, St Pierre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Moka-Flacq, information as to if way leave has been obtained from the Savannah Sugar Estate for the tarring thereof and, if so, indicate when works are expected to start.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka-Flacq District Council that the required way leave has been obtained on 09 July 2010 from the Savannah Sugar Estate for the construction of the access road leading to Beau Bois Kovil and that the construction of this road is starting this week and will be completed by the end of August.

LE POUCE ROAD, MOKA - HEALTH TRACK

(No. 1B/388) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the putting up of a health track along Le Pouce Road, Moka, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Moka Flacq, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following a request received from the Moka-Flacq District Council for the setting up of a health track along Le Pouce Road, Moka, the private road which is about 1.5 kilometres long needs to be declared public under the Roads Act.

I am informed that the Council will initiate procedures for the road to be declared public and once the exercise will be completed, the Council will undertake to spread crusher run and place kerbs along that road.

I am further informed that, meanwhile, the Council has decided to fix six street lanterns over a stretch of 300 metres and same will be carried out by next week. However, the Council

has indicated that the health track with the lighting facilities is estimated to the cost of R4 m. and the funds are not available.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I inform the hon. Minister that if this project is done in-house, it will be cheaper and done faster like many other projects done at the district council.

Mr Aimée: I will suggest the Moka-Flacq District Council to explore this advice.

MINISTRY OF YOUTH & SPORTS - ADVISERS

(No. 1B/389) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Advisers appointed by his Ministry, he will state their names, indicating, in each case –

- (a) their respective –
 - (i) date of appointment,
 - (ii) qualifications, and
 - (iii) terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (b) table copy of their contract of appointment.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that I am availing of the services of four Advisers on sports and youth matters and one Adviser on information matters. However, in view of the specificity of my Ministry and in order to assist sports federations in the promotion of their respective sports disciplines, my Ministry is also having 16 coaches appointed as Adviser/coach who are attached to various sports federations. I am equally having one Engineer as Project Coordinator Adviser to supervise the infrastructural projects of my Ministry.

Besides, in few cases, namely football, swimming and boxing, we are having the technical expertise of National Technical Director, that is, DTN for the overall planning and responsibility of these disciplines.

This is a practice which has been adopted by all my predecessors.

The names and details as requested are being tabled.

Mr Guimbeau: Is the hon. Minister going to table all the terms and conditions?

Mr Ritoo: I am tabling the contract of the Advisers.

Mr Guimbeau: Comment se fait-il qu'avec tous les conseillers du ministre à ce jour, ni le ministère ni le ministre n'arrive à relancer le football mauricien ?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: It does not arise from this question. I will suspend for one and a half hours.

At 12.58 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.32 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

ENTERPRISES - LOANS & OVERDRAFTS - INTEREST RATES

(No. 1B/390) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the interest rates charged by the banks to the enterprises on loans and overdrafts, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to if it is proposed to take measures to -

- (a) reduce same, and
- (b) waive all the bank fees and charges in relation thereto.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the interest rate charged by banks on loans and overdrafts is linked to their respective prime lending rate, which in turn is adjusted to the changes in the key repo rate of the Bank of Mauritius. Therefore, the only way the lending rate can be directly influenced is through changes in the key repo rate.

The key repo rate of the Bank of Mauritius is determined by its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). The MPC at its last meeting held on 22 June 2010 decided to leave the key repo rate unchanged at 5.75 percent. The next meeting of the MPC is scheduled to be held on 27 September 2010.

There are also other elements of cost and risk assessment which go into the determination of the interest rates charged by banks. These vary from one bank to another.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is not within the authority of Government to waive the bank fees and the charges. However, we are fully conscious of the difficulties of enterprises which have to face the impact of the euro crisis on their cash flow and we are working with all the parties concerned to find market conforming solutions.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I know whether there have been any changes recently in the composition of the Monetary Policy Committee?

Mr Jugnauth: As far as I know, I don't think there has been any change.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the banking sector and some banks are making billion of profits while many businesses are closing down due to abusive and excessive interest rates on loans and overdrafts?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I am aware that banks have been making profits although some of them have said that they have been making less profit. There are also enterprises that are in difficulties, as I have just said, but I don't know if the hon. Member is saying that we shall regulate the amount of interest that is charged. I think it is a very difficult and complex issue because, first of all, all the banks are not on the same footing. Also, there are different sectors concerned and all of them are not in the same situation. The policy of the banks, generally, is to charge different rates of interest to different enterprises operating in different sectors. I must say that we would all wish that the rate of interest is as low as possible. But, as I said, it is a very complex issue and we are looking at that also and we will see whatever decisions we can take in conformity with the operation of those banks.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the euro crisis and the difficult economic times, would the hon. Minister consider setting up a committee together with banks to precisely see how there can be waivers of interests or a respite period given to borrowers where interest can be frozen to alleviate the hardship of the industries?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the light of the euro crisis, in fact, I have already set up a technical committee, when I assumed office, comprising of JEC, Bank of Mauritius, technicians of my Ministry and technicians of other Ministries concerned also. I don't think it would be proper to have another committee. That committee is also looking at different

measures and as I have already announced, I will be coming shortly with a number of measures with regard to different sectors that are affected in the light of this exceptional situation.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Minister of Finance find it normal, in the spirit of the law, that in the days preceding the meetings of the Monetary Policy Committee, the Governor should canvass publicly his own views? For example, before the last meeting of the Monetary Policy, he canvassed for a rise in the LIBOR interest rate whereas a lot of people were suggesting that a small decrease should take place, he went on and on publicly, through the press and elsewhere, canvassing for an increase just before the Monetary Policy Committee was to meet.

Mr Jugnauth: Well, it is the Monetary Policy Committee that takes the decision with regard to the repo rate. The Governor has his views also, I don't know whether he has canvassed, but I have taken note also that he has expressed his views prior to the holding of the Monetary Policy Committee. I understand, of course, that he will express his views in the committee, but it is the MPC that, at the end of the day, would assess the situation and take a decision.

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, la démocratisation de l'économie est, avant tout, l'accès aux finances. Can I ask hon. Ms Nita Deepalsing, hon. Cader Sayed-Hossen to see...

The Deputy Speaker: Can the hon. Member put his question, please?

Mr Guimbeau: ...with the hon. Minister of Finance how he can regulate and, at least, come with some actions so that the interest rates on loans and overdrafts are brought down?

The Deputy Speaker: I don't think it is a question. It is more a suggestion. We move to the next question.

VIRUS A(H1N1) PRE AND POST-MORTEM – MAY-JULY 2010

(No. 1B/391) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the deaths that have occurred during the months of May, June and July 2010, she will state -

- (a) the number thereof attributable to respiratory causes, and
- (b) if these deaths have been screened for virus A(H1N1) pre and post-mortem.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is well known that during the winter season there is an increase in the incidence of respiratory illness, especially influenza, worldwide. This is also the case in Mauritius.

I wish to inform the House that during the months of May, June and July 2010, the total number of deaths due to respiratory causes was 209.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that not all these deaths have been screened for virus A(H1N1) pre and post-mortem. This is in accordance with WHO recommendation for the screening of A(H1N1) virus in the wake of the pandemic that evolved since its onset in April 2009.

According to this protocol, not all patients with influenza like illness needed to be typed. Instead, random specimens were taken for surveillance purpose only from patients in the flu clinics, whereas swabs are taken from all admitted patients. These specimens were analysed for the presence of influenza virus. As a second step, the Central Laboratory selected random samples from these positive specimens of influenza virus for A(H1N1) typing.

According to our routine surveillance, the first case of A(H1N1) for this year was detected in February 2010. As at 25 July 2010, 1,759 samples from public and private health institutions have been so tested at the Virology Laboratory, and 568 were found to be positive for influenza viruses. Out of these, 140 were found positive for influenza A(H1N1). This represents 7.96% of the total number of samples tested. Among the positive A(H1N1) cases, two patients passed away.

During the period of May, June and July 2010, seven post-mortem examinations were carried out on patients who died of chest infection.

I am informed that a meeting was held in August last year between the officers of my Ministry and the then Chief police medical officer, and it was recommended that post-mortem examinations for suspected A(H1N1) related deaths are to be carried out by the police medical staff on a case to case basis.

Subsequently, following the world trend, it was decided, since last year, not to screen for A(H1N1) on post-mortem samples in the pandemic phase.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I once again wish to reassure the House that all necessary measures, as highlighted in my reply to the PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition at our sitting on 13 July, have been taken at nationwide level to tackle the A(H1N1) influenza.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the figure of 209 includes death from generalised infectious conditions with a respiratory component?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just said that we have got a process of sampling and, out of 1,759 samples that were collected from flu clinics, as well as patients who were admitted, 209 were found positive for the A(H1N1).

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question is simple. Does the figure of 209 include death from generalised infectious conditions as well? Or, is it restricted only to respiratory conditions, as opposed to the general septicaemia with a respiratory component?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The question related to general URTI – Upper Respiratory Tract Infections - and those 209 cases were out of those samples. I do not have any other details on these cases.

VIRAL INFECTIONS - 2011 VACCINATION PROTOCOL

(No. 1B/392) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to viral infections, she will state if Government proposes to elaborate a new vaccination protocol for the year 2011, indicating if a new strategy will be adopted for subjects suffering from bronchial asthma, chronic bronchitis and other respiratory diseases.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand that, by viral infections, the hon. Member is referring to influenza like illnesses only. As the House is aware, the influenza season is not yet over, and we are still compiling data relating to the number of cases of Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (URTI). I wish to inform the House that there is a Task Force on Immunization (TFI) at the level of my Ministry, chaired by the Director General Health Services. It considers all issues concerning vaccination, including vaccination for influenza, and makes recommendations accordingly.

Once the flu season is over, the Task Force on Immunization Committee will examine all the data compiled, on the basis of which, and along with the inputs from the WHO, it will then elaborate and finalise the vaccination protocol for 2011.

This protocol will apply to all cases of chronic respiratory diseases.

Dr. S. Boolell: Am I given to understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, *valeur du jour, il n'y a aucune stratégie pour l'an 2011?*

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at now, how can I have a strategy without reliable data? I need reliable data. Let us see what are the figures for 2010, compile them and, on the basis of this, we will take from where the WHO tells us, combine everything together and come up with a strategy for 2011. According to me, it is too early to come with a strategy for 2011.

Dr. S. Boolell: A last question. May I remind the hon. Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there is data available, which is the first case of A(H1N1) diagnosed in February of this year. Consequently, this is important enough to consider a new strategy.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the season is not yet over. We are still in the winter season, and I cannot say, as at now, that we will not be having any other case. I believe that it is still premature to devise a strategy for 2011.

FUN WORLD CO. LTD (TI VEGAS), QUATRE BORNES - NEW LICENCE

(No. 1B/393) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Fun World Co Ltd, also known as Ti Vegas at Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to if the Authority proposes not to grant new licence(s) to the company, upon the expiry of its current licence on 23 September 2010.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that the Board has, at its meeting of 27 July 2009, decided not to issue any new

licences and only proceed with the renewal of existing ones, pending the deliberations of the High-Powered Committee.

It is to be noted that Fun World Ltd (Ti Vegas) is already the holder of a Gaming House "A" licence since 24 September 2004 and a Gaming Machine Licence effective from 30 September 2004 and, therefore, need not apply for a new licence. In this case, renewal procedures will be followed.

Before the renewal of the licence in September 2009, the Gambling Regulatory Authority advised that grounds for non renewal are statutory based, in line with section 99 of the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act 2007, and all procedures have to be followed before suspending or revoking any licence.

I am informed that it is the practice that management proceeds with the renewal before expiry of the licence, except in cases where section 99 of the Act has been invoked.

The case of Fun World Co Ltd is no exception to the rule and upon the expiry of its current licence on 23 September 2010, non renewal of the licence could only be considered in the event of any breach of the conditions of licence or of the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act 2007, or under one of the other grounds specified in section 99 of the said Act.

However, the House is aware that a High-Powered Committee has been set up, under the Chairmanship of the hon. Prime Minister, to examine the proliferation of gaming houses and discotheques in the country. A Technical Committee, under the Chairmanship of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, has also been set up along the same lines. The Committee has submitted its report for consideration to the High-Powered Committee. The subsequent course of action, including any policy decisions, will be indicated in the light of the recommendations of the High-Powered Committee.

Ms Deepalsing: In the past, we have had a Minister of Finance who gave more importance to the power of money than to the power of the people. So, I hope it is not going to be the same this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

Ms Deepalsing: This is to the credit of the current vice-Prime Minister. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister of Finance aware that there are several letters from the police? I am going to table some of them, including one of the articles where Ti Vegas was caught red-handed for theft of electricity, plus the following documents from the police –

- (i) 02 July 2009, where the police are strongly objecting to the renewal of the gambling house licence;
- (ii) 06 July 2009, where the Commissioner of Police himself objected to the renewal and said, I quote –

“The continued operations of Ti Vegas are detrimental to public peace and public order.”

- (iii) the letter of 25 September 2009 by the Police with regard to the objection to the renewal of the licence, and
- (iv) as recent as 03 April 2010, objection to the renewal of the licence by the Police.

(Interruptions)

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

Ms Deepalsing: Is the hon. Minister aware that there is sufficient evidence and sufficient disturbance of public peace and order for him to not go ahead and renew, or for the GRA not to allow the continued operations of Ti Vegas in the current location?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can confirm that there have been numerous complaints, including from the Police themselves. The information that the hon. Member has given to the House, I think, are correct. I have also requested my technicians to look at the law as it stands and we will be liaising also with the State Law Office. On the face of it, I agree that it is causing numerous problems, not only to the surrounding itself, but just to confirm that the Police have also given a view that this – I think that the hon. Member mentions that there was a letter from the Commissioner of Police to the effect that the operation is detrimental to the public peace and public order. We are looking at all these information before we can come to a decision.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow hon. Bhagwan one question first, and then I'll come back to the other hon. Member.

Mr Bhagwan: I hope the hon. Prime Minister is listening to what we are saying here. This is the system of modern equipment. We have been pursuing this subject long before the general election; questions have been raised here on both sides of the House, Government as well as the Opposition. The hon. Prime Minister stated in the House – as rightly pointed out by the hon. Member – that there would be a High-Powered Committee, then a Technical Committee. The Police fall under the Prime Minister's Office. Does this Government have the political will – if you have the political will - to close Ti Vegas?

The Deputy Speaker: I understand the hon. vice-Prime Minister did express his views and stated that he has to go according to the law.

(Interruptions)

If the hon. vice-Prime Minister has anything more to add, he can elaborate on it.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have the political will to deal with these gaming houses and gambling situations in Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Jugnauth: In fact, this has been canvassed in the electoral campaign. We have also in our Government Programme the reallocation of these gaming houses, but then we have to do it in an orderly manner. As I say...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Jugnauth: I had replied to a question, I think, last week, stating that the Technical Committee has now come up with a number of recommendations. Now, the High-Powered Committee has to look at all these.

(Interruptions)

It has to do with gambling, because there are policy decisions that have to be taken. If need be, if we have to amend the law we will consider it. I believe the High-Powered Committee will be looking at all the recommendations that have been made, including the issue of Fun World Ltd. also.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given that there is already a policy decision, as I understand it, it is in the Government Programme, therefore, this indicates a policy of this Government to relocate, or as the hon. vice-Prime Minister has rightly said, the policy is already there. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my question is prompted by the fact that the expiration of the licence comes in 23 September 2010, which is in about a month and a half. So, given that the Government has already explicitly expressed the policy in its Government Programme and given that there has already been a murder there, on 01 January - if I am not mistaken, a person from the constituency of the hon. Leader of Opposition - may I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance that, for this particular case - time is of the urgency - we need in Quatre Bornes for this scourge to be removed as soon as possible?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have looked at the information that have been supplied by the Police. There has been a case of murder. A number of people have been charged. Of course, we have to wait for the outcome, but we are not going to wait for the outcome to take a decision. With regard to abstracting electricity also, there is a case linking – in fact, I understand an employee of Fun World Ltd. They are being prosecuted before the Intermediate Court but, of course, we will look at all these.

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow a few more questions. I'll start with hon. Bhagwan, hon. Dayal and hon. Ganoo, and after that we will finish with hon. Ms Deepalsing.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, who is responsible for the Gaming Board and the Gambling Regulatory Authority which falls under his Ministry, give an undertaking to the House that when this question of renewal of licence will come, instruction will be given to the Gaming Board or the Gambling Regulatory Authority not to do so?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, the GRA is an independent body also. You have to look at the law. How can I - otherwise there would have been no GRA and the hon. Minister would have been

taking the decisions. I have to abide by the law also and I have to abide by the independence of institutions, but that does not mean to say that the institutions will have to implement any policy that is devised by Government. So, we will have a look at it and then we will act accordingly.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I put two Parliamentary Questions, namely Nos. B/195 and B/196 on 08 April 2008. Knowing the good intention of the hon. Prime Minister and the vice-Prime Minister, and in the light of what hon. Ms Deepalsing has just raised, is the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance aware that section 99 K and P provides him with more than adequate proviso or tools for him not to renew the licence?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had a look at section 99, but then I need also to be legally advised by the SLO. Although I am a Minister, a lawyer by profession and have my own views also, I need, as a matter of procedure, to seek the advice of SLO before acting.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. vice-Prime Minister enlighten the House as to why this file has not been sent to the SLO for legal advice, the more so as so many questions have been raised in the past? Hon. Dayal just reminded us that, in 2008, Parliamentary Questions were asked on the same issue. Why has it taken such a long time to refer the matter for advice to the SLO, for the advisability of closing down, not renewing the licence of Fun World Ltd?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, since he has himself said that he is in the presence of the recommendations of the High-Powered Committee, now he is going through the recommendations, whether any specific reference has been made by this High-Powered Committee as far as Fun World Ltd. is concerned?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, for the House to have a better and clearer picture, there have been complaints not dating from now. There have been complaints for a long time. I have a letter sent by the Deputy Commissioner of Police dated 25 September 2009, just before the renewal of the licence, enumerating a number of declarations with their respective occurrence book number but, even in the light of this, the licence was renewed.

(Interruptions)

I cannot say. I do not have the information whether this information has been sent together with the file to the SLO for advice. As at now, I cannot say and I do not want to speculate on that, but we will have a look.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said I would table these documents and I am going to table them. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance aware that, in addition to all these documents, there are also over 5,000 signatures on a petition of the inhabitants in Quatre Bornes who have protested categorically against the continued existence of that Casino in Quatre Bornes. And, if we are here, we are all elected to represent the people? If we cannot do justice to the people, then what is it worth for us to sit here and not look for all these things?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has made her point.

Ms Deepalsing: So, may I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to ensure that there is absolutely urgency for this to get out of Quatre Bornes and I hope there will not be any other murders before this gets out of Quatre Bornes?

The Deputy Speaker: No speech, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Order! Order!

Mr Jugnauth: I have not had a look at the petition that has been circulated but I understand that there is a petition with numerous signatures. And, of course, we all agree that the inhabitants, not only living nearby, but those of Quatre Bornes have been protesting against the operation of this gaming house.

LA SOURCE - COMMUNITY CENTRE

(No. 1B/394) Ms K. R. Deepalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether she is aware of a request made by the inhabitants of La Source for the extension of the existing building housing the community centre thereat and, if so, will she state if she proposes to seek

the collaboration of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, for the construction thereof.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that according to my Ministry's records, as at date no official request has been received from the inhabitants of La Source for the extension of the existing building housing the community centre.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I actually have the request since I represent the people; may I then, pass on the request from the inhabitants of La Source to the hon. Minister to consider the extension of the La Source community centre because this was built more than 20 years ago and it is really limited now for people to be able to go on with their activities. They are faced with a real problem.

Mrs Bappoo: I will, certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, transmit the message and the request to my colleague, the Minister responsible for Public Infrastructure because as far as construction and extension to any of these buildings are concerned, it falls under the responsibility of the authority of that Ministry.

PASTEUR AVENUE, BELLE ROSE – DRAINS

(No. 1B/395) Ms K. R. Deepalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Avenue Pasteur, Belle Rose, he will state if consideration will be given for the construction of drains thereat, as a matter of priority.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once sewerage works are completed, the request will be considered.

RÉSIDENCE ST JEAN – WASTE COLLECTION & CLEANING

(No. 1B/396) Ms K. R. Deepalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the discontent of the residents of the Résidence St Jean and of their repeated complaints regarding the collection of waste and of the general cleaning thereof and, if so, will he impress upon the relevant authorities to take remedial measures.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that no complaint has been received since the month of June 2010 regarding collection of household refuse at Résidence St. Jean.

I wish to inform the House that the Council provides a regular scavenging service once weekly at the Résidence St. Jean.

BUSINESS PARKS OF MAURITIUS LTD. – RELOCATION

(No. 1B/397) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom information as to the -

- (a) date on which decision was taken to relocate its Freeport activities, indicating the reasons therefor, and
- (b) cost of the relocation.

The Minister of Information and Communication Technology (Mr T. Pillay Chedumbrum): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed that it was on 07 August 2009 that Government decided that 2.5 hectares of land in Freeport zone 1, which were leased by BPML from the Mauritius Port Authority, would be released and that the activities which were conducted there would be relocated to an appropriate alternative site.

As a matter of fact, the Freeport operators currently operating in Freeport zone 1 will be relocated to another site in Freeport zone 6 where new infrastructure facilities would be developed by BPML. This relocation is being effected as the site in Freeport zone 1 is required for a major development project.

As regards part (b) of the Question, I am informed that the estimated cost of the relocation is about Rs200 m. It involves the construction of a steel warehouse of an area of 9,000 square metres to accommodate tenants of the ex-flour shed and the dismantling and remounting of the existing lux shed.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether, this relocation is in relation with the implementation of the cement plant in that area?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, it relates to the construction of Binani Cement Factory.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister zone 6 is where?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: You have zone 1 and zone 6 at the Freeport and zone 9 is at the airport.

SURINAM SPORTING CLUB – STATE LAND

(No. 1B/398) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the application submitted by the Surinam Sporting Club for the allocation of a plot of State land at Riambel for the construction of a club house, he will state –

- (a) the date of application;
- (b) if any letter of reservation has been issued and, if not, why not, and
- (c) if State land is available in the region for such a project.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question No. 1B/25 on the same subject in March 2009 - question put by hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee - wherein I stated that the Surinam Sporting Club had submitted a request as far back as January 2005 for a plot of State land at Riambel for the construction of a club house.

The Club has been occupying the requested plot of State land, which is of an extent of 120 m², for many years and is still occupying the same.

I also indicated in the reply that one of the issues was that whether the applicant had the necessary financial resources to implement the project. Subsequently, the applicant was requested to submit the relevant information supported by documents. This information, though belated, has now been obtained.

The application is in the final stage of processing.

Mr Ganoo: Does the hon. Minister have an idea as to when the letter of reservation will be issued?

Dr. Kasenally: After it has been processed it has to be submitted to Cabinet for approval before and then it will follow soon.

‘MAURITIUS - *C’EST UN PLAISIR*’ – LAUNCHING CEREMONY

(No. 1B/399) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the ceremony held at La Citadelle for the launching of “Mauritius - *C'est un plaisir*”, he will –

- (a) list out the names of the sponsors/contributories, indicating in each case the amount granted, and
- (b) give a breakdown of the costs incurred, indicating the names of the different contractors involved and the respective services provided.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that following the elaboration of the National Brand in the context of the branding exercise a launch ceremony was held on 08 October 2009 with the objective of securing maximum adherence of all stakeholders to the new brand identity. Accordingly, the Ministry of Finance had made available an additional amount of Rs4 m. for the financial year July to December 2009, in the budget of the MTPA for the financing of the expenses of the ceremony held at La Citadelle for the launching of “Mauritius – *C'est un Plaisir*”.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed that a total amount of Rs3,835,929.91 has been spent in connection with the ceremony. That amount includes expenses relating to podium, logistics, sound system, artists, food and beverages as well as advertising.

I am further informed that the financing of the ceremony was totally assumed by Government through the provision of the grant.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am circulating the detailed information requested for by the hon. Member.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister later on circulate to the House the amounts spent on champagne and wine? The amount paid to suppliers is very serious, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Can the hon. Minister also let us know whether, instead of police officers and official security agencies, the services of private bouncers were used for that particular function, how much has been paid to them and how were they recruited?

Mr Bodha: It is a multi-barrelled question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Well, I have the rundown of all the expenses. In fact, we have 24 services which were involved and 24 service providers.

As regards security, from the information I have been given, the event was attended by the hon. Prime Minister. So, I think that security must have been provided by the Police.

Mr Bhagwan: Even here the hon. Prime Minister is well protected! Can the Minister go and see in the files how much has been paid to these private bouncers and on whose authority have they been recruited? I have another question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. From what the Minister said in the House before the election, can he inform the House whether an assessment has been carried out, is being carried out, will be carried out, to see to it that the amount of public fund spent...

The Deputy Speaker: It is a specific question.

(Interruptions)

The original question is on the launching ceremony.

Mr Bhagwan: The launching ceremony was about “Mauritius - *C'est un plaisir*”. Public funds have been spent. Can we know whether we have obtained value for money and whether it is still a *plaisir* to be...

The Deputy Speaker: No, I won't allow this question. The Member should come with a specific question on that issue.

Mr Bodha: M. le président, il ne faut pas leur laisser prendre plaisir.

(Interruptions)

As from the list of items provided to me, there is no item regarding security. As regards the...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: You address the Chair, please.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: With the list which amounts to Rs3.9 m. As regards the tagline and to the branding, we are doing an exercise to evaluate what is the impact and then we will see.

TOURISM FUND – GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION - REFUND

(No. 1B/400) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the contribution of Rs62 m. made by Government, he will state the measures taken at the level of his Ministry for the refund thereof from the Tourism Fund, along with any accrued interests, indicating the reasons why the refund has not been effected earlier.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Government contributed Rs62 m. to the Tourism Fund in the context of the Integrated Plan for Tourism and Leisure Development Projects at Bel Ombre and St. Félix. The Plan provided for the creation of two Integrated Hotel Zones, one at Bel Ombre involving five hotels and another at St. Félix with three hotels. The total cost of the infrastructural works was estimated to be Rs236.1 m.

However, since expected contribution from hotel promoters was estimated to be around Rs173.9 m. Government had to contribute an amount of Rs62 m. to meet the shortfall.

I wish to point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this project has created substantial benefits with the setting up of five hotels in the region, involving private investment to the tune of Rs5.4 billion and the creation of 1,480 jobs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the Ministry of Finance was being kept regularly informed of the financial situation of the Tourism Fund. The issue of reimbursement never arose. In fact, the Ministry of Finance decided in the July-December 2009 Budget not to disburse any funds to the Ministry for the financing of the capital projects which were previously funded under the Budget and thus advised the Ministry to use the funds available from the Tourism Fund for that purpose.

**ROAD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, VACOAS –
LEASE AGREEMENT**

(No. 1B/401) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Head Office of the Road Development Authority, at Vacoas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to –

- (a) the name of the owner of the building;
- (b) the number of floors rented, indicating the surface area occupied;
- (c) the terms and conditions of the lease agreement, and
- (d) if it will be renewed after termination and, if so, whether the new terms and conditions have been agreed upon.

(Withdrawn)

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS – GRANTS & ALLOCATIONS -
BENEFICIARIES**

(No. 1B/404) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to grants and allocations by the Municipal Council of Port Louis in either cash or in kind, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, a list of the socio-cultural, religious and sporting clubs/associations which have benefited therefrom, since October 2005 to date, indicating, in each case, the –

- (a) names thereof;
- (b) quantum thereof, and
- (c) purpose therefor.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library in due course.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I know from the hon. Minister as to when the information will be tabled?

Mr Aimée: Very soon, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether all the associations, clubs benefiting from grants are duly registered with the Municipal Council?

Mr Aimée: The information is not yet compiled. I am waiting to, first of all, be informed. Then, I will bring in the information to Parliament or to the Library.

BINANI CEMENT PROJECT

(No. 1B/405) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Binani Cement Project, he will-

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to if -
 - (i) its Mumbai office was involved therein,
 - (ii) its former officer in charge has any direct or indirect interest in the project, and
 - (iii) the Board has approved the project, and
- (b) state if -
 - (i) his Ministry had earmarked and disbursed any funds to facilitate the project, and
 - (ii) the Competition Commission has been requested to carry out any investigation on the competitors in the cement market and, if so, by whom.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Board of Investment (BOI) operated an office in Mumbai till October 2009 with the aim of ensuring proper coordination and promotion of investment from India to Mauritius. In this respect, the Mumbai office was approached by Binani Cement Factory Ltd. to facilitate the cement project in Mauritius.

I am not aware as to whether the former officer-in-charge of the BOI Mumbai office having any direct or indirect interest in this project, except, of course, to the extent that it was in his remit to promote investments from Indian companies into Mauritius. I understand that apart from the Binani cement project, he was similarly involved with many other Indian companies which have invested in the country over the past few years.

As far as part (iii) of the question is concerned, I wish to inform the House that the project was approved by Cabinet on 07 August 2009 and subsequently the promoter applied for a Freeport Certificate on 26 March 2010, which was issued by the BOI on 02 April 2010.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Government has contributed, as has been stated earlier by my colleague, a sum of Rs100 m. in the 2009 Budget for meeting part of the relocation costs of the BPML from Freeport Zone 1 to Zone 6 in order to release 2.5 hectare (ha) of land for the Binani Cement project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Competition Commission has *proprio motu* started an investigation on the importation of cement and unloading facility at the port. The investigation has started since 27 July 2010. Other details regarding this investigation are available on the website of the Competition Commission of Mauritius.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister inform the House whether it is a coincidence that the officer-in-charge of the BOI Mumbai office is himself at the Competition Commission, and it was himself who canvassed all the different Ministries for the channelling of this permit?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, the officer at that time was posted in the BOI Mumbai office, but I cannot say that he has been canvassing for permits. I know he was there in order to see to it that many Indian companies are attracted and do invest in Mauritius, as I have said in my answer. I know that he is also a member of the Competition Commission.

Mr Bhagwan: I know that it is a coincidence that the Freeport falls under the Minister of Finance. Can the Minister inform the House who was the one who canvassed this project at the level of the Freeport, which falls under the Minister of Finance, to have the land being swapped?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think it is the objective of the BOI, especially as a matter of strategy having an office at that time in India, to try to attract as many Indian companies to come and invest in Mauritius. So, this is in line. He was an officer working for

BOI. We cannot single out an officer. I cannot, in any way, confirm whether he has any direct or indirect contact, but he must have dealt with the file obviously. As an officer of BOI, he must have dealt with the file when that project came as a matter of proposal. Of course, Government would have to facilitate as far as possible questions of location, licences and so on in order to see to it that those investors do come to Mauritius.

Mr Baloomoody: From what the hon. Minister of Finance has said, it is clear that this officer has handled the file. In fact, he has worked on those files and pushed in the direction of getting the investors to Mauritius. Is it proper that the same officer, today, sits in the Board of Competition? He is the vice-Chairman of the Board and I don't think that the Chairman is acting....

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Baloomoody: Is he the one acting Chairman or vice-Chairman? Is it proper that he should sit on the Board when there is a case before the Competition Commission? Is it proper that the same officer, who canvassed for that project to come to Mauritius, sits today on the Board and inquire about the competition?

Mr Jugnauth: Unless the hon. Member has evidence to the fact that he has been involved in one way or the other, I am prepared, of course, to look at the evidence, but, otherwise as an officer, he has to do his job. He was doing his job there at BOI; he is now in a different capacity at the Competition Commission and then it is not one person alone who decides. There is a Commission and, as I have said, the Commission has *proprio motu* decided to investigate into this matter.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister mentioned the procedure, the way that the officer in question is, himself, managing the Competition Commission. The way he has been behaving *laissez des doutes*.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question please!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: Hon. Dr. Jeetah is not the Director.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Bhagwan: Hon. Dr. Jeetah is replying for the vice-Prime Minister. My problem is the way the gentleman *en question* is behaving *est suspect*. Can the hon. vice-Prime Minister, at least, give an assurance to the House that he will see to it that the person in question at the Competition Commission separates his responsibilities as member of the Commission or vice-Chairman into that of a canvasser of that firm?

The Deputy Speaker: I won't allow this question! There has been no evidence so far or any allegation from any Member regarding anything sinister. We are merely speculating and if there is no precise allegation, I won't allow any question. It's only speculation. Next question, please!

(*Interruptions*)

BANK OF MAURITIUS – FOREX DEALINGS - INVESTIGATION

(No. 1B/406) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the forensic investigation commissioned by the Bank of Mauritius on forex dealings of commercial banks, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank, information as to

–

- (a) the terms and conditions of the investigation and the reasons therefor;
- (b) the bidding and selection process for the appointment of the investigator;
- (c) the total amount paid to the selected investigator;
- (d) if there was any conflict arising out of his relation with any of the commercial banks, and
- (e) the outcome of the investigation.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that, pursuant to the provisions of the Bank of Mauritius Act 2004, the information sought for by the hon. Member cannot be made public. As the House is aware, the Bank of Mauritius acts

independently and cannot be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority. It would not, therefore, be appropriate for confidential information pertaining to the affairs and management of the Central Bank, including the terms and conditions of appointment of the Forensic Expert, to be disclosed.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that all the necessary procedures have been followed as regards the forensic investigation.

Mr Bérenger: It is a new way of presenting things. Are we being told that when the Governor took a very serious decision, making very serious allegations against some banks; took it upon himself to appoint we know who to investigate; paid for it and it's a whole flop according to my information and the country is not allowed any information on that?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I have replied, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, exactly.

Mr Bhagwan: Can, at least, the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House of the outcome of that investigation?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I have said that this information is confidential to the Central Bank. How can I come with details now?

PUBLIC SERVICE – BANK DOCTORS - EMPLOYMENT

(No. 1B/407) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Medical and Health Officers in the public service, she will state –

- (a) if there is a shortage thereof;
- (b) the present policy concerning the employment of Medical and Health Officers as Bank Doctors;
- (c) the names of the General Medical Practitioners employed as Bank Doctors on session basis, since 1998 to date, and

(d) the number of General Medical Practitioners who have requested to work as Bank Doctors on session basis, since January 2010, to date, indicating the respective dates of application and the outcome thereof.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that all posts of Medical and Health Officer/Senior Medical and Health Officer on the establishment of my Ministry are filled and, therefore, there is no shortage.

Regarding part (b) of the question, since several doctors have proceeded on leave either for study or other purposes, my Ministry has had recourse to the temporary employment of doctors on a sessional basis under the Bank Doctors Scheme.

Concerning part (c) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information asked for.

As regards part (d) of the question, since January 2010 to date, eight doctors have applied to work as Bank Doctors on sessional basis with effect from dates ranging from March to May 2010 of whom six have been employed.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister what are the criteria to choose a doctor to work as bank doctor? What are the specific criteria he must have?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: First of all, they must be registered with the Medical Council. This is obvious. Secondly, as and when they make their applications, they submit them, they ask to be considered. We do consider them provided they are qualified.

Mr Baloomoody: May we know the reason why there are two doctors who are not selected out of the eight who are applied?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the end of May, there has been a decision to recruit 60 medical graduates who have just completed their pre-registration training. In fact, they've been interviewed only on Wednesday last and that is why we had stopped the decision to take medical doctors on a sessional basis pending the recruitment of these 60 medical officers. After the 60 medical officers have been recruited, maybe there will be a change in the policy of the Ministry with regard to doctors on a sessional basis.

(No. 1B/408) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the hon. Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the two-year old baby B., found dead in Grand River North West, she will state if her Ministry has been apprised of the conditions in which the child and the family have been living, and if so, the measures she proposes to take, if any.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that the case of a baby B., aged one year old, was reported to my Ministry as from February 2010 through phone calls on the hotline 113.

These phone calls were to the effect that the baby as well as other siblings were being ill-treated, and somewhat neglected by the biological mother. It is to be noted that the mother was living in separation with the biological father who was reported to have deserted the family roof a few months before. The mother and her three children were initially staying at Camp Samy, Moka and subsequently moved to stay at *Cité Grande Rivière Nord Ouest* with another partner.

Several site visits have been affected by the officers of my Ministry at both residences from February 2010 to April 2010. The mother reported that she was receiving support from her sister also to cater for her children. Counselling was provided to the mother, both on adequate childcare practices and on the need for the children to have a conducive environment for their development. On the other hand, the biological father, on a few occasions, expressed the wish to take the responsibility of these children. Officers of my Ministry explained to him the procedures to be initiated at the Supreme Court to request for the custody of his children. The last site visit was effected at the residence of the mother on 30 April 2010 at *Cité Grande Rivière Nord Ouest* as it was once more reported that the baby was left unattended and alone at home. However, at the time of the site visit, it was found that the mother was at home and really looking after the baby. By the way, the mother reported that she was having relational problems with her neighbours now and that they consequently are making false allegations against her on the hotline 113.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, whenever site visits were made at the residence of the mother, there was no evidence that the children were at risk or were in immediate danger, and needed to be removed from her care and responsibility for placement in

the shelter of my Ministry. Moreover, after the last site visit, no further complaints have been received at the level of my Ministry.

On 19 July 2010, officers of my Ministry and myself learnt about the tragic death of baby B on the radio. I have requested the Emergency Response Team of my Ministry, which consists of officers of the Family Support Bureau, including a psychologist, to visit the father now and the other siblings, and to provide them with adequate support services. It is to be noted that the biological father has now taken the responsibility of his two other children and, when they were last visited on 22 July 2010, it has been assessed that the two children are receiving appropriate family support.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this case is not an isolated one. This is an acute problem of poverty mixed with alcoholism, teenage pregnancy and other problems. Will the hon. Minister see to it that her services are more proactive when such cases come to the knowledge of the Ministry, to avoid further death?

Mrs Bappoo: Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are a series of services which are being offered by the various departments of the Ministry, mainly the Child Development Unit, and there is a lot of site visits and counselling for the parents who are faced with these sorts of difficult problems. There is a Parental Empowerment Programme just to empower parents about real parenthood; there is the normal and regular Information and Education Sensitisation Campaign which is on; there is also a Community Child Protection Programme which is on. There are various services being given to families and children who are in real difficulty. I should say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it is really a burden to families who have these sorts of problems, and the hon. Member will agree with me. It is not only the hon. Member's concern.

(Interruptions)

As I said, it is not only an issue of having laws, but it is also an issue of education. There are various problems, I do agree, like problems of poverty, problems of lack of information about rearing of children and so forth. I do believe that, with the partnership of NGOs and the civil society, we may improve, I should say, in our task in providing care to these families.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the regular visits to the child included a medical examination at any time?

Mrs Bappoo: I won't say only mental examination. For example, if we take one of the last problems...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Medical.

Mrs Bappoo: Medical, yes. With regard to the two last cases of child abuse which cropped up and which were reported to my Ministry, I personally requested the officers, before carrying further on with the enquiry, to attend for medical examination.

The Deputy Speaker: In this particular case?

Mrs Bappoo: In this case, I am not informed whether there have been medical enquiries. But, in specific cases, there are medical enquiries. In this case, there has not been any sign of injury, wounds or whatever. The mother was taking care of her child; she was looking after her child. Each time there was counselling session and site visits, there were no evidence of going for medical examination. But if cases arise where there needs to be medical examination, we do proceed for that.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister kindly ensure that, whenever a child is at risk and if externally there is no evidence of any injury, maybe a medical examination is indicated for any suspected injuries which would otherwise escape notice?

Mrs Bappoo: I do take note of what the hon. Member has just said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

GOVERNMENT/MICROSOFT AGREEMENT

(No. 1B/409) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the Microsoft Agreement which was signed in June 2008, he will state –

- (a) if any prior study had been carried out to determine the software needs of Government, and
- (b) the procedures followed for the award of the contract for the supply of software products, indicating if other suppliers had been considered.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that no study, as such, was undertaken. However, a more important exercise was carried out, in that the National Information and Communication Technology Strategic Plan 2007-2011, which was elaborated, puts a lot of emphasis on the need to have a strong and effective unified collaborative platform to ensure efficient Government service delivery through ICT.

Acknowledging the fact that, in the past years, there had been a more or less fragmented approach to procure software products and that most of the products being used in the Public Service are predominantly Microsoft based, Government entertained favourably an offer made by Microsoft for equipping our ICT infrastructure with different state-of-the-art technological products and services as well as training facilities.

The advantages are numerous. Firstly, we are having the latest updates of those technologies and if we were to proceed on a fragmented approach, it would have cost Government a lot of money. Secondly, we enjoy the unique opportunity of operating on a unified ICT platform that allows for efficiency and productivity gains. Thirdly, these technologies allow for the exploitation of emerging and more cost-effective technologies.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the contract was awarded by way of direct procurement method, pursuant to section 25(2) (b) of the Public Procurement Act. This procedure presented itself as the preferred option, taking into account that almost all our software products are already based on Microsoft technology.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology opposed the decision to acquire those software when the question arose?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: At that time, yes.

Mr Uteem: May I know why Government still went ahead in spite of the objection from the Ministry?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I have been informed that, at that time, they opposed the idea of taking 7,000 licences, because they thought that it would have been proper to acquire only the number of licences that would be needed. We purchased 7,000 licences in 2008, and the lifetime

is for 2013. As at date, we have already used more than 4,528 licences. I think that, by 2012, most of the licences will be already used.

Mr Uteem: Is the hon. Minister aware that one of these licences relates to client access licences, which is underutilised and really not required by most of the 7,000 users?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: No, this is not the case. From information I have gathered, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can tell you that the advantages are numerous. As I have said, we are having the latest updates of those technologies and, if we were to proceed on a fragmented approach, it would have cost Government a lot of money, because nowadays we can update our whole system with those licences.

Mr Uteem: I have heard the hon. Minister stating that recourse was made through direct procurement. According to section 25(2) (b) of the Public Procurement Act, direct procurement is only possible where there is no suitable alternative available. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there is no alternative to Microsoft products in Mauritius?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have gone through direct procurement method pursuant to section 25(2) (b) of the Public Procurement Act, because this procedure presented itself as the preferred option, taking into account that almost all our software technologies are already based on Microsoft technology.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, did the hon. Minister get the approval from the State Law Office before having recourse to that section of the law?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at this stage, I cannot answer this question.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. 1B/420, 1B/421 and 1B/422 have been withdrawn. We move to the next question!

GLOBAL BUSINESS COMPANIES

(No. 1B/410) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the companies carrying out Global Business, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to the number thereof

which have been wound up or which have migrated from Mauritius, since 2005 to date, indicating if any study has been carried out to determine the causes thereof, and if so, the steps taken to reduce the number of Global Business companies migrating.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Financial Services Commission that the information is being compiled and will be circulated.

However, I wish to point out that there has been a net growth in the number of Global Business Companies since 2005. The number of new Category 1 GBC's has more than doubled between 2005 and 2007 going up from 706 to 1,562. It peaked at almost 2,000 in 2008 just before the financial crisis. As expected, the number of new incorporations went down in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, but has picked up again since then. Over the same period, the number of new Category 2 GBC's has stayed at an annual average of 2,000 but went down in 2009.

The license fees received from Global Business Companies has increased from Rs218 m. in 2005 to Rs518.7 m. in 2009. Over the same period, there has been a constant growth in the turnover of Management Companies which has increased from US\$48.6 m. in 2005 from audited accounts of Management Companies to US\$158.5 m. based on FSC survey as at December 2009 and that also which covers 91% of the Management Companies.

It should be noted that winding up of a company forms part of the normal course of a company's life, the more so in the case of a global business company which is often set up as a Special Purpose Vehicle or as a Limited Life Company. When the set objective of the SPV is achieved or the term for an LLC has expired, the company automatically has to wind up. It is also noted that some companies even never start business and are subsequently wound up.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding migration, it has been an occasional event over the years. However, it has recently been observed that a number of Category 2 Global Business Companies are migrating to less regulated jurisdictions. Management companies have stated that this is happening as a result of additional disclosure requirements and the need to file financial summaries introduced in 2009. However, these new requirements regarding GBC2's reinforce Mauritius commitment to supporting international norms relating to exchange of

information and to ensuring that our jurisdiction is one of sound repute. Mauritius is committed to adopting internationally agreed norms relating to availability of information and exchange of information with other jurisdictions. GBC2's which find the need to migrate as a result of the new requirements are surely those which do not wish to comply with international requirements enforced in an International Financial Centre of repute.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. vice-Prime Minister has indicated that the number of GBC category 1 has been on the increase. What about the number of category 2 Global Business Companies for that time period? Has they been on the increase or not?

Mr Jugnauth: As I have said, the information is being compiled and will be circulated. But the information that I have gathered from the FSC are as I have indicated to the House. We will have the compilation and then we will be able to give the exact figures.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY – TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

(No. 1B/411) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Financial Secretary, he will state -

- (a) his terms and conditions of employment, indicating the salary and other fringe benefits drawn, including Board Memberships fees, since his taking office to date, and
- (b) the number of official missions undertaken by him, and the *per diem* allowances drawn since his taking office to date.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information sought for is being tabled.

LE MORNE/LA PRAIRIE – STATE LANDS AND *PAS GEOMETRIQUES* - APPLICATIONS

(No. 1B/412) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether in regard to the State lands and the *Pas Géométriques* of Le Morne and La Prairie in the District of Black River, he will state the number of applications submitted to his Ministry for the construction of hotel projects in the region, indicating -

- (a) if any project has been approved;
- (b) if any letter of intent has been issued, and
- (c) the name of the successful applicant.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 15 applications have been received for the lease of State lands, including *Pas Géométriques*, in the region of Le Morne and La Prairie for hotel projects. After examination of these applications, it has been decided to approve the project submitted by Southern Comfort Resorts Ltd.

A letter of reservation was issued in favour of the said company on 01 March 2010 over a plot of State land of an approximate extent of 15A00 forming part of *Pas Géométriques* La Prairie for the setting up of a luxurious boutique hotel project under the Invest Hotel Scheme.

With regard to part (b) of the question, as at date, no letter of intent has yet been issued.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister tell us whether he has the information as to whether the site identified is on *Pas Géométriques* or on State land?

Dr. Kasenally: It is State land on *Pas Géométriques*.

Mr Ganoo: Is it on the beach front?

Dr. Kasenally: On the beach front.

CITÉ LA CURE – PUBLIC TRANSPORT

(No. 1B/413) Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to public transport from Cité La Cure to Port Louis, he will state if he is aware of the hardships caused to the public, especially the students of the region, as a result of the irregular bus services along that route and, if so, will he consider reviewing the situation.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by NTA that there is no hardship caused to the public as a result of irregular bus services from Cité La Cure to Port Louis and more so it has not received any complaint.

The NTA has further informed that formerly when UBS was providing 40-seater buses for school services from Port Louis North SSS, some students could not get accommodation. This issue has been addressed and UBS is now providing 64-seater buses since the resumption of the second term.

MAURICE ILE DURABLE FUND – PROJECTS

(No. 1B/414) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the *Maurice Ile Durable* Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to the –

- (a) number of programmes implemented under the Fund, indicating the cost thereof in each case;
- (b) amount of money appropriated to the Fund, since its setting up;
- (c) amount of money disbursed by the Fund on a yearly basis, and
- (d) projects which the Fund envisages to promote this year.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun):
Sir, I am tabling a copy of the information requested.

EX-CHA HOUSES – ASBESTOS

(No. 1B/415) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the ex-CHA houses made of asbestos, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof across the country, indicating their location district-wise;
- (b) if, for health safety reasons, his Ministry will consider devising a scheme to help the owners thereof to pull down same and erect new houses, and
- (c) if his Ministry was informed about the death recently of one of the occupiers thereof in Black River.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised that 3,113 EDC houses were constructed with asbestos and corrugated iron sheets as follows -

<u>District</u>	<u>No. of Houses</u>
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Black River	259
Flacq	528
Grand Port	649
Moka	430
Pamplemousses	312
Plaine Wilhems	40
Rivière du Rempart	360
Savanne	<u>535</u>

Total 3,113

With regard to part (b) of the question, I would like to inform the House that there are several existing schemes to assist these people to construct a new housing unit, such as -

- (a) housing loan scheme provided by the Mauritius Housing Company Ltd;
- (b) casting of roof slabs grants and purchase of building materials scheme, and
- (c) assistance/subsidies from Government, e.g. grants from the National Empowerment.

As at to date, around 300 such houses have already been demolished and replaced by concrete structures.

Residents who wish to carry out renovation/extension to their EDC houses should apply to the Housing Management Unit for planning clearance. They are also advised to liaise with the relevant authorities (Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development) for guidance and precautions to be observed prior to carrying out any work involving the dismantling, handling of asbestos panels and disposal of asbestos waste. Assistance is also provided on demand for the local Authority to arrange for the carting away of asbestos wastes.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, my Ministry is not aware of the case, as occurrence of deaths, be it private or in CHA housing estates, among others, is not reported to my Ministry.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the fact that the hon. Minister, himself, in his answer, has sounded a note of warning to people who want to pull down their houses by taking

all necessary precautions and so on, means that there is, in fact, a health hazard for those who are still occupying these houses. The Minister has just said that there are some loan facilities available. But, these facilities offered by the MHC or the NHDC for casting of their roof slabs are facilities offered to everybody in Mauritius, provided they are eligible, of course. The question that I want to ask the hon. Minister is, true it is that some 50 people have already pulled down their asbestos houses, but the majority of these people, from the figures that he has indicated, are still living in these asbestos houses and they are still doing so because they do not have the means to pull down these asbestos houses and erect new ones. So, can I therefore ask the hon. Minister if he can convey to Government the necessity perhaps to come up with a particular scheme for the occupiers of the asbestos houses so that, once for all, we can do away with these hazardous dwellings?

The Deputy Speaker: I think the hon. Member has made his point.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government has been involved in such numerous schemes of helping people to build their houses. As far as asbestos is concerned, I have to point out that asbestos as such is of no danger as long as it is not damaged. Once it is damaged or manipulated inappropriately, the particles are released which are then absorbed by breathing which causes silicosis. Perhaps he is wondering whether this patient had died following involvement with asbestos, but to be able to prove that, one has to carry out a lot of investigation before one can actually say that asbestos has been involved.

Mr Ganoo: I have with me a copy of a letter sent by the Ministry of Housing and Lands to a group of persons of Black River who had sent a petition to the Ministry. One paragraph of this answer, which I am going to table, says –

“The residents have been advised to take precautionary measures such as to maintain the asbestos sheets with oil paint as often as possible and not to interfere with the panels by using electric saws or drillers that could provoke dust to emanate therefrom.”

This is corroborating what the hon. Minister just said. But precisely, *en l'an 2010*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how can we allow our *concitoyens* to live in such houses, which constitute a health hazard whenever they drill or manipulate the asbestos.

(Interruptions)

True it is that these houses have been here for a long time, but now with the new situation, when people are sensitised about their health environment, is it not time - and this is my plea to Government - that the Ministry of Social Integration, the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Finance set up a committee and come up with a scheme which will be perhaps better than the other schemes and which can give people access to funds to build new houses?

The Deputy Speaker: Let us hear the Minister's response!

Dr. Kasenally: Of course, as the hon. Member has said, so long as you do not interfere, but, unfortunately, in Mauritius...

The Deputy Speaker: No, the question is merely to consider the advisability of putting up a scheme especially for those houses, so you have just to answer.

Dr. Kasenally: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we really want we have to erase all of the small houses, but it is a question of having the available resources. We are trying and perhaps we will have to look at a new system where we can help to remove this danger, especially if people started putting nails and drilling into these panels.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I may point out to the hon. Minister - I heard a lot of jeering on the other side – that this is not a party political issue. Being given that these kinds of questions have been hotly debated in other countries and in these countries, the authorities, for having delayed, have paid a very heavy price in terms of the death toll amongst the poorer sections. Being given that those concerned, whether in Cité EDC, Rivière Noire or around the country, are amongst the poorest and that the statistics indicated by the hon. Minister show that less than 10% of the houses concerned have been pulled down, will the Minister consider our plea that not only the Ministry of Housing and Lands - he should take the lead - but the Government as a whole should take a new and fresh initiative to address the danger posed to the lives of people of the poorer sections of our community by putting up a new scheme or whatever to address urgently this issue? That is our plea, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I think hon. Member is just confirming whatever hon. Ganoo has stated. We now move to the next question! Hon. Seetaram!

EAST-WEST HIGHWAY PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. 1B/416) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the East-West Highway project, he will state if Government will consider implementing the project now, in view of the increase in the traffic in the Plaines Wilhems, and, if not, will Government provide a tentative time frame for the implementation thereof and give an outline of the project.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a consultant is being appointed to carry out the feasibility study and decision regarding alignment and implementation will be taken thereafter.

Mr Seetaram: Concerning the outline of the project, can the hon. Minister consider whether it can start from the very east itself, that is, from GRSE towards Bel Air and then proceed to Flacq and to the West?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, probably the hon. Member is not aware that land acquisition has already started for a highway from Bel Air to Forbach and that work will probably be undertaken towards the end of this term.

CENTRAL FLACQ - CAR PARK

(No. 1B/417) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether he is aware that a car park is being put up on marshy land, behind the Winner's Supermarket at Central Flacq and, if so, will he state if any –

- (a) action has been initiated to stop same, and
- (b) legal action has been initiated against the contraveners.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry was informed on 26 May 2010 that a plot of marshy land was being backfilled behind the Winner's Supermarket at Central Flacq. During a site visit effected on the same day, it was observed that a plot of land, depicting characteristics of a wetland, was being cleared and backfilled with soil and rocks by a private contractor. In view of the sensitive nature of the land, the contractor was instructed to stop immediately all works on site.

Following further joint site visits and confirmation that the site in question is a wetland, my Ministry issued a Stop Order on 15 July 2010 on the proponent, instructing the latter to –

- (i) stop the land clearing and development works, and
- (ii) to reinstate the site to the satisfaction of the National Parks and Conservation Service and the National Ramsar Committee by 14 August 2010.

With regard to part (b), appropriate action will be initiated in case the proponent does not comply with the conditions of the Stop Order.

CENTRAL FLACQ - GAMING HOUSES/CASINOS

(No. 1B/418) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Central Flacq, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gaming Regulatory Authority, information as to the number of gaming houses/casinos which are actually in operation thereat, indicating if any licence was recently granted for the operation of a new gaming house/casino, opposite the Flacq District Court and, if so, give details thereof.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that there are presently two gaming houses operational in Central Flacq, namely *Flacq Jeux Limitée* and Miami Leisure Limited.

I have further been informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that no new licences have been issued since June 2009.

PONT JAMBON & MARE D'AUSTRALIA – WATER – SAMPLE TEST

(No. 1B/419) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water found at Pont Jamblon and Mare d'Australia, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if any test has been carried out to check the quality of the water and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the outcome thereof, and
- (b) if the Authority is planning to use the water for consumption.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a recent sample test carried out by the National Environmental Laboratory and the Central Water Authority in May/June 2010 revealed that the water from Ruisseau Jamblon can be used for domestic consumption, but after proper water treatment.

There are already several ongoing projects to improve water supply in the regions of Lallmatie, Bon Accueil, Brisée Verdière and Mare d’Australia. These works which are estimated to cost about Rs480 m. will improve water supply substantially in these regions.

However, the possibility of using water from Ruisseau Jamblon will be considered in our future plans for mobilising water resources.

PRIVATE SECTOR – RETIREMENT AGE

(No. 1B/420) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state if Government proposes to extend the decision to raise the retirement age to 65 to the private sector.

(Withdrawn)

CRIMINAL CASES (ASSAULT & INSULT) - MEDIATION

(No. 1B/421) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the provisional charges in criminal cases of assault and insult, he will state if he will consider introducing mediation as a compulsory procedure between the opposing parties, with a view to reaching a consensus or agreement not to proceed further with the matter before the formal stage is reached, as a means to use more efficiently the time of the courts.

(Withdrawn)

CRIMINAL COURTS - PROVISIONAL CHARGES - COURT FEES

(No. 1B/422) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to provisional charges being struck out before the criminal courts, he will state if Government proposes to legislate to make provision for the reimbursement of all court fees disbursed to the accused party.

(Withdrawn)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 14 - FISHERMEN - COMPENSATION

(No. 1B/373) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he has received representations from the *Syndicat des Pêcheurs de Maurice* regarding the difficulties being faced by the fishermen in Constituency No. 14 who were expelled from the lagoon, Riambel, following the construction of the Shanti Ananda Hotel, and to the effect that only 37 fishermen have been compensated therefor and, if so, state the measures that will be taken with regard to those fishermen who have not yet been compensated.

The Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues (Mr J. Von-Mally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to this Question.

I would like first to point out that this issue was first raised with me by my colleague hon. Hanoomanjee, Minister of Health and Quality of Life, who is also a Member of the National Assembly of the constituency. She also informed me that she had discussions with the director of Shanti Ananda Hotel on that issue. I would like to point out also that hon. Ganno also talked to me on that matter.

At the outset, I wish to point out that no fisherman has been expelled from the lagoon as a result of the construction of the Shanti Ananda Hotel and that fishers continue to fish in the lagoon at Riambel.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in August 2004 an EIA Licence was granted for the construction of the Shanti Ananda Hotel with no works to be undertaken at sea.

In September 2008, the then Ministry of Environment & NDU granted an EIA Licence to Shanti Ananda Hotel for the construction of a 26m x 2m jetty in the lagoon, opposite the Hotel at St Felix, subject to a set of conditions, including the requirement that the promoter should resolve any conflict that may arise with the fishermen before, during and after the implementation of the project.

However, the fishermen protested to the hotel against the construction of the jetty with the result that works had to be stopped in September 2009. The hotel had consultations with the fishermen and compensated 31 fishermen who were registered at the St Felix Fish Landing Station and 6 net fishermen registered at the Riambel Fish Landing Station, being given that those

fishermen were the ones who were directly affected according to the hotel. Each of the 37 fishermen had obtained Rs15,000 as compensation on 20 October 2009, as reported by the fishermen.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry was not involved, at any stage, in any negotiation or payment effected to the fishermen registered at Riambel and St Félix Fish Landing Stations by Shanti Ananda Hotel.

The *Syndicat des Pêcheurs* had, in a letter dated 13 November 2009, requested my Ministry for a meeting to solve the conflict between Riambel & St Felix fishermen and Shanti Ananda Hotel inasmuch as, compensation had been paid by the hotel to only some of the fishermen and to clarify matters thereto.

My Ministry is very supportive to the fishermen community and endeavours to give whatever support or assistance that is possible. However, it is not within its purview to enter into a negotiation process with a hotel management on claims of fishermen that they are being affected by a hotel construction having, as a member of the EIA Committee, supported the approval of an EIA Licence for the project. The *Syndicat des Pêcheurs* as well as the fishermen concerned were so informed during discussions and after consultations with the hotel.

On 24 February 2010, forty fishermen registered at the Riambel Fisheries Post called at the Ministry and requested for a letter addressed to the management of the hotel so that they be given equal treatment and to enable them to pursue negotiations for compensation directly with the hotel. On the same day, a letter was issued by the Ministry to the hotel to that effect.

In a letter dated 04 March 2010, the management of the hotel informed the Ministry that despite the fact that all the fishermen are registered at the Riambel Fisheries Post, they have not all been affected by the construction of the jetty since not all of them operate from the same fish landing station. The hotel was of the view that the construction of the jetty in front of its premises has only affected those who were registered at the St Félix Fish Landing Station. In this regard, the hotel considers that it has conclusively and fairly dealt with the compensation of those fishermen who were the most directly prejudiced by the construction of the jetty, namely, the 37 fishermen.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have requested my Adviser to contact the hotels and I have been made to understand that the hotel management will reconsider the matter. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that last Friday, I met the promoter of the hotel and he is agreeable to meet the fishermen and he told me that, as a gesture of goodwill, he will review his stand as far as the compensation is concerned.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I understood the hon. Minister correctly, he said that six of the fishermen who were registered at Riambel Fisheries post were, in fact, compensated.

Mr Von-Mally: Yes, these six fishermen are net fishermen. In fact, they said that they fish with nets about 500 metres long and they can fish all round the lagoon, even if Riambel is found about four kilometres from the site of the hotel.

Mr Ganoo: The case with this issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that some of the fishermen feel that they have been treated unfairly because they have not received compensation whilst others have. May I ask the hon. Minister, therefore, if he can confirm the fact that his Ministry on the 24 February 2010 issued a letter saying: “this is to certify that fishermen in the annex list are registered at the Riambel Fisheries post and should be treated equally”, that is, they should receive the same compensation and treatment as some of them have received?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, this is what has been discussed with the promoter, even though some of the fishermen, for example, those who are *batelages*, are six kilometers away and even though Riambel is four Kilometres away. Well, the promoter has said that he will meet the fishermen by mid-August and will consider this favourably. This is what I have been made to understand.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask a last question to the hon. Minister? I am very pleased to hear what the hon. Minister is saying in view of the fact that I, myself, represented the fishermen. I went to see their Counsel, Mrs Banymandub Boolell, who is the legal representative of the hotel owners. Many times I have appealed to the hotel promoters to change their stand. May I, therefore, appeal to the hon. Minister, in case nothing happens in the coming days or weeks, if he can be so graceful as to receive the fishermen and the hotel promoters also and once for all wrap up this issue, please?

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, surely, this is what I will do, but I can assure the hon. Member that we have discussed with the promoter. He said that he would favourably consider this. According to the discussion that I had with him, I am sure that in a few weeks' time the matter will be behind us and I hope that fishermen will be compensated fairly.

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow one last question from hon. Barbier.

Mr Barbier: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister informed the House that a delegation of fishermen came to the Ministry in February last and a letter was issued to

them. Can the hon. Minister table a copy of this letter? To whom was it issued? May we also have a list indicating the names of fishermen who have received compensation and the amount received by each fisherman?

Mr Von-Mally: I have been made to understand that there are 37 who have received Rs15,000. Concerning the letter, I do not have any problem to table it.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over! Please, proceed further.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S. O. 10(2)

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

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER DUBREUIL - SQUATTERS

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to make a statement on the squatting situation at Dubreuil. I wish to inform the House that a demolition/eviction exercise was carried out on Tuesday 27 July 2010 at Dubreuil. During the exercise, 88 illegal structures were found on site. 17 units were not demolished due to the presence of senior citizens, sick persons, pregnant women and young children. 47 out of the remaining 71 units were unoccupied and were, therefore, pulled down, with nothing in it. 23 of the occupied units were pulled down by the squatters themselves. One unit which was occupied was pulled down after removal of the personal belongings of the occupier.

In view of the prevailing situation of the squatters, steps have been taken by my Ministry to arrange for the ex-Dubreuil Tea Factory building to be used as a temporary shelter to accommodate the 24 or so families who were occupying the units and which have been pulled down. Prior to the families moving in a dedicated part of the building, arrangements have been made for that part to be cleaned and flushed and for basic amenities like water, electricity and sanitary facilities, to be provided. Spraying and larviciding of the premises and its vicinity have

been carried out. This exercise is currently under way and as soon as completed, the families will move in.

I wish to stress that this facility is being extended on a purely temporary basis and is in no way an expression of Government intention to grant a lease to these families. A building site lease will be granted only after ascertaining the eligibility of the families concerned, based on established criteria. A site for that purpose has been identified and will need to be provided with relevant amenities. In this context, my Ministry is working in close collaboration with my colleague, the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, and other relevant stakeholders.

The Deputy Speaker: We will take a break of half an hour for tea.

At 4.13 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.56 p.m with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

MOTION

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2010-2015

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the following motion of the hon. Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal (Ms S. Anquetil).

“This Assembly resolves that the Government Programme 2010-2015 presented to this Assembly on Tuesday 08 June 2010, copy of which has been circularised amongst Honourable Members, be and is hereby approved”.

Question again proposed.

Dr. R. Hawoldar (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Mr Speaker, Sir, may I, first of all, congratulate you on the occasion of your unanimous re-election as Speaker of this august Assembly. I extend my congratulations to the Deputy Speaker for his election too.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have known you now for almost 50 years; I have known you as a young professional, as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, a Minister and, during the last five years, as Speaker of this Assembly. I have been watching the Deputy Speaker, who is two seats away from me, for the last few sittings of this session. I am convinced that you both have the calibre, the wisdom and the attitude required to withhold the dignity of this Assembly, and I

wish both of you well, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is understood that the serenity required for the proper functioning of this Assembly does not depend entirely on you, but also on the attitude of Members.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the people get the Government that they deserve and the representatives they deserve too, because, after all, it is they who make the ultimate choice, and if their choice is wrong, then it obviously reflects on the credibility and reputation of the House as a whole.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to congratulate hon. Nagalingum who spoke just before me. I felt, in his delivery, a calm, humble, patriotic and well intentioned approach, and I hope that, as time goes by, he does not pick up floating viruses, which might change his mindset and his focus on the responsibility placed on his shoulders by the electorate of this country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened to most of the hon. Members of the Opposition who addressed this House before me, and I must honestly reveal that, apart from the interventions of three hon. Members, namely hon. Nagalingum, hon. Ameer Meea and my good old friend, hon. Dr. Satish Boolell, *ce que j'ai pu déduire des interventions des autres honorables membres, c'est que c'est du déjà vu, du déjà entendu*, the same rhetoric, the same old style reaction, the same type of destructive criticism, the painting of everything in black, with the same old conviction that, by repeating any statement over and over again or by making the same insinuation over and over again, one could convince others that what one is saying is the eternal truth. When hon. Nagalingum described this august Assembly as being the temple of democracy I was asking myself, Mr Speaker, Sir, whether this same august Assembly does not sometimes more resemble a stage where some hon. Members are simply acting.

Mr Speaker, Sir, *nous sommes au début d'un nouveau quinquennat et, à ce moment précis, on se pose trois questions : D'où venons-nous ? Où sommes-nous et où allons-nous ?* We have to look back, Mr Speaker, Sir, to where we were in 2005 when the *Alliance sociale* Government was voted to power, to what the *Alliance sociale* Government has achieved between 2005 and 2010 and, finally, to where we stand just now and in what direction we are going. In 2005, Mr Speaker, Sir, when the present Leader of the Opposition, himself, was at the end of his only 2 ½ years mandate as Prime Minister, what was the signal he sent to the nation? And what better description could we give to the then situation if not by using the words and expressions of the Leader of the Opposition and hon. Cuttaree: *état d'urgence économique, crise économique sans précédent, fermeture des usines à une vitesse vertigineuse!* True it was, Mr Speaker, Sir, the

main indicators as well as the sectorial indicators were in the red. *Panique à bord, M. le président!* The elections of 2005 came, the population reacted and the *Alliance sociale* Government was voted to power with Dr. the hon. Navin Ramgoolam as Prime Minister. Then, Mr Speaker, Sir, as if the burden of inherited economic backlog was not heavy enough, the country had to face further external shocks: the 36% decrease in the price of sugar, the skyrocketing prices of oil, the dismantling of the Multi-Fibre Agreement, the fluctuation of foreign currency, and finally, the American economic crisis which led to a world economic crisis. The *Alliance sociale* Government didn't talk of *crise économique sans précédent* but, instead, under the able leadership of our Prime Minister and his team, it came up with bold economic renovative measures, took sometimes difficult and unpopular decisions and with the comprehension of the nation - to whom we are thankful, Mr Speaker, Sir - Government managed to avoid our country to feel the real bite of the recession as so many countries bigger than us, richer than us, have experienced.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what struck me during that difficult period was that, none of the Members, sitting today on the opposite side of the House, came up to stand by Government and propose constructive measures to help the country to weather these threats. On the contrary, Mr Speaker, Sir, I had the impression that some hon. Members were waiting for the situation to deteriorate, for the economy to collapse, waiting for adversity to set in and then draw some political capital out of a situation - not created by us. Thanks to Government's efforts, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the nation's sacrifice, a dwindling economy was gradually changed to a resilient one. The country was put back on the path of a sustainable development with the creation and consolidation of new pillars of the economy.

Our performance during this period of difficulties has won us the admiration of countries across the world, from the US to Europe, Asia, and today we have become a country of reference for the African continent. No doubt, Mr Speaker, Sir, everything is not as perfect as everyone would have liked it to be. No doubt there is room for improvement, but let's be frank, Mr Speaker, Sir, and honest to ourselves, we are not that bad too.

By that time, Mr Speaker, Sir, the mandate we had from the nation in 2005 was coming to an end. I must confess that I do not, till today, understand how the same hon. Members, who had been constantly levelling criticisms against the Government for five years, suddenly started their political gymnastics or *acrobatie* and were suddenly striving - I won't use the term begging

– for an alliance with the Labour Party. In the lapse of less than 24 hours, Mr Speaker, Sir, the *Comité Central* of the *MMM* had met. That was, I believe, on 05 March and, in the words of the present Leader of the Opposition: “*avait donné carte blanche à ses dirigeants pour négocier une bonne alliance avec le Parti Travailiste, mais sans le PMSD*”. The *MMM* had conveniently forgotten at the time, Mr Speaker, Sir, that it had the monopoly of intelligence, wisdom and virtue, and its leader was riding on his high horse and had started pontificating again, unbothered about the opinions of others, including all the Members, now sitting on the opposite side of the Opposition. Prospective *MMM* candidates were set aside, Mr Speaker, Sir, to please the Labour Party. Everything looked rosy, Mr Speaker, Sir, nobody on the other side objected. They were suddenly all in love with the Labour Party and ready to get married. *Certains, M. le président, rêvaient même d'occuper déjà un maroquin ministériel*. We know, Mr Speaker, Sir, what were the reasons for these sudden changes.

M. le président, comme l’île Maurice toute entière d’ailleurs, ils savaient qu’en fait, au-delà de toute autre considération, le docteur Ramgoolam était, et est toujours le Premier ministre incontesté et incontestable de notre pays. Il avait fait ses preuves, M. le président, et le peuple lui faisait confiance entièrement. Then, Mr Speaker, Sir, things suddenly changed again; their dreams had to come to an end. En dépit de leurs démarches à contacter une autre alliance, le *leader* du *MSM* avait fait son choix. Il avait appris ses leçons, M. le président, et dans sa sagesse, il a fini par choisir une équipe de bâtisseurs d’une nation au lieu de rester avec ceux qui passent leur temps à rêver du pouvoir seulement, ces messieurs ‘*conne tout*’, experts in manipulation of public opinion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we look at this backdrop, when we think of what happened behind the scenes before the elections came and this present Government came to power, then only we can understand the attitude, the show of the Members of the Opposition when they stand and talk today. And, I think, an hon. Member quoted it in this House before me. We have to remember one thing, Mr Speaker, Sir, a politician works for the next election only; a Statesman works for the next generation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when the *Alliance sociale* Government was debating on its Government Programme 2005-2010 - many of the new Members were not here – in spite of all criticisms coming from the Opposition, we, on this House, had warned them that the writings were already on the walls and that we were going to be back in 2010 with Dr. Navin Ramgoolam as Prime

Minister. We did it, Mr Speaker, Sir, and this time this Government has been given a clearer mandate with a bigger majority and let me now tell them in 2010: hon. Members of the Opposition, this present team will be back again in 2015 and beyond!

Mr Speaker, Sir, the opening remarks of my good friend, hon. Ganoo, on election not being free and fair caused a shock to me. It would appear that when the MMM is voted to power, always in a coalition Government, the rules of the game are good and when they lose the same rules become bad. Allusions have been made as to political bribery, without proof, of course. But let me give two flagrant examples of what happened in my own constituency, that is, Constituency No. 15, and confirmation can be obtained from the Police, Mr Speaker, Sir. On the day of the election, in the region of Quinze Canton and Hollyrood, around midday, there was almost a hold-up on a van transporting voters to a polling station. The windscreens and the side screens were smashed and voters inside that van were hurt, including the wife of a Police Inspector. I and my sons personally went to meet that lady. I talked to her, I suggested and offered to take her to the Police station, to help her give her statement, to take her to the casualty of the hospital, to have a Form 58 filled in. She phoned her husband and the answer she gave me was this: 'I won't go. My husband said it will be too scary for us to stay in this region after the election.' This is what happened in one incident.

The second incident, Mr Speaker, Sir, happened in Phoenix. Again, at midday, when the Opposition felt that they were losing the election in Constituency No. 15, teenagers were brought in to block the road to the Polling station, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think you had this experience in your days also, Mr Speaker, Sir. Police and riot had to be mandated to clear the way. *En fait, M. le président, des groupes menés par des récidivistes notoires et, je le dis très fort, appartenant au MMM, essayaient d'empêcher les citoyens d'exprimer leurs votes.* I can give their names; they should listen, I am talking...

(Interruptions)

N'est-ce pas là, M. le président, les preuves des abus et le non-respect des règles élémentaires d'une campagne électorale ? La vérité, M. le président, c'est que ces incidents, on les a malheureusement toujours eus pendant les élections, mais force est de constater que certains feignent de ne rien en savoir. Tout le mal est du côté du gouvernement, M. le président, et le MMM ne comprend que des saints. Franchement, M. le président, quand l'honorable Ganoo déclare que lui et ses amis ne s'engageront pas dans des campagnes de dénigrement pour ternir la

réputation du pays, j'ai personnellement des doutes et, je souhaite, M. le président, que je fais erreur. Puisque l'honorable Ganoo parle des mesures déjà annoncées mais jamais mises en pratique quand il s'agit du programme gouvernemental, puis-je lui demander si quand il était au gouvernement toutes les mesures annoncées alors avaient matérialisé. Et si la réponse est oui, pourquoi alors a-t-on entendu pendant les cinq dernières années, plusieurs fois, des remarques comme : *'ti dan nou program sa'*, when the Alliance Government came to this House to present Bills.

The truth, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that during the mandate of any Government, sometimes there crops up unforeseen circumstances which cause delays and we all know about it. No one almost ever sees a Government completing all its programme. We know this on this side, Mr Speaker, Sir; they know it on the other side. But, as usual, they will make a fuss out of it. *Des remarques faites pour la galerie afin d'épater le public !* Mr Speaker, Sir, the human being who has not mastered his ego is such that if he is no good, he always tries desperately to prove that the other one is bad.

Mr Speaker, Sir, democracy, though defined as being Government for the people, by the people, is a principle. It is a concept; it is a philosophy which evolves with time as it anchors deeper and deeper into a society. It has to change from the concept of one person one vote to one person one equal chance. This evolutive process can continue if at the helm of Government, there is a strong leadership, a profound conviction, an indomitable will, a vision and the tact to take the right decisions at the right time. It also implies that the citizen evolves at the same time, that he evolves in his mindset, his mentality, his share of responsibility, his moral values.

We have today, Mr Speaker, Sir, a Prime Minister who has the vision, the qualities required for the deepening of democratic principles in our country. And the Government Programme 2010-2015 based on the values of unity, equity and modernity reflects perfectly the will of Government to forge ahead along this path of deepened democracy. This is service to the people, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I hope that the younger generation learns from it. We are at the crossroads and we have the zeal to move forward, to be at par with developed countries of the world in all spheres, ready to face challenges. I hope and pray, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we succeed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am making an appeal to hon. Members of the Opposition. The general election is behind us and the next general election will come in five years. This

Government has had a clear mandate from the population and is putting into execution its programme. We, on this side of the House, are fully convinced that we are going to fulfill our obligations. Democracy is such that Members of the Opposition will have to wait for their time, if ever it comes, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the meantime, it will be fair to accept the verdict of the majority. One should not make mountains of mole hills, Mr Speaker, Sir. *Si le devoir de l'opposition est, bien sûr, de défendre les intérêts de son électorat, il est aussi de son devoir de sauvegarder sa patrie.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, during its last mandate, the *Alliance sociale* came up with a number of new measures and the results are already palpable. I remember, Mr Speaker, Sir, when we spoke about the Commission for Democratisation of the Economy, we were scoffed at in 2005. Today, five years afterwards, even the Opposition believes in the principles of democratisation of the economy.

Of course, Mr Speaker, Sir, one cannot go fast under these issues. Who would have thought that workers participation and the cane industry would one day go up to 35%? Who would have thought that *métayers* would one day have the opportunity to buy the land they have occupied, they have rented for generations, yet all these are gradually happening and things are going to happen in the future also.

We all know another issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, which the Opposition has been talking about is poverty. Sometimes listening to them, Mr Speaker, Sir, one would tend to believe that poverty started in Mauritius in 2005, that it never existed before and it is again this Government which has come up in the new Cabinet, with a new Ministry to take care of this delicate problem facing not only Mauritius, but the world at large.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I won't take much longer the time of the House. I think I have been given 20 minutes. I would rather, Mr Speaker, Sir, come to my Constituency, No. 15, which in a way is the replica of the rainbow nation of Mauritius, constituency where I have been working as a professional for 35 years and where I have been in active politics for 10 years only. I was first elected in 2005 along with my very good friend, hon. Dr. Abu Kasenally, and I was returned by my constituents this year along with hon. Patrick Assirvaden and hon. Soodhun. We won this Constituency by a 3-0, the only town constituency in Mauritius where the *Alliance de l'Avenir* scored a 3-0, Mr Speaker, Sir. This, by itself, proves the trust our constituents have placed in us. And more than that, Mr Speaker, Sir, the vote difference between the three of us was about 120,

showing the sense of discipline that prevailed in that constituency. Suffice it to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the vote difference between the three candidates of the MMM was about 2000 votes and everyone of us can make our own guess as to how they, on their side, managed the campaign. I wish to thank the electorate of Constituency No. 15 and they can surely rely on us to carry on with the good work.

I listened to the remarks of hon. Dr. Sorefan on the constituency and I asked myself, Mr Speaker, Sir, whether it was just this usual superficial, showy sort of criticism or was it ignorance. There too, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a difference between *vincible* and *invincible* ignorance and, for his sake, I pray this was not of the *invincible* type.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am the first one to admit that there is still work to be done in that constituency and that we shall probably never be able to satisfy the requirements of all the residents. But one has also to admit that the amount of work done during the last five years has been colossal and this is probably one constituency where we have tried, to the best of our ability, to provide the same type of facilities all over the nooks and corners of the constituency.

We are honestly hoping, Mr Speaker, Sir, that very soon the construction of the new satellite city in Highlands will start and that the residents of Constituency No. 15 will have more opportunities to secure jobs and improve their quality of life.

I have with me, Mr Speaker, Sir, a list of the work done in the Constituency No. 15 for the last 10 or 15 years or so, including the works that have been done during the last five years, and I am proud. I won't name them and I won't take the time of the House. But I will keep this list for hon. Dr. Sorefan to have a look and I shall challenge him to do half the amount of work that I have done in that constituency during the last five years when and if he comes to power one day.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.23 p.m.)

Mr R. Issack (Fourth Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): M. le président, tout en congratulant tous ceux et toutes celles qui ont retrouvé leurs sièges au sein de cette auguste Assemblée, et tous les nouveaux qui y sont, je voudrais vous féliciter, vous et votre adjoint, pour votre élection en tant que *Speaker* et *Deputy Speaker*.

Votre reconduction à ce poste et notre appréciation signifient que vous avez été à la hauteur, vous avez fait honneur à notre auguste Assemblée Nationale. Vous avez prouvé que

vous êtes un homme de droiture, de grande probité. Vous avez su garder un équilibre et, en même temps, vous avez su maintenir l'harmonie au sein de l'Assemblée Nationale. Je profite de cette opportunité pour remercier les électeurs de la circonscription No. 19. C'est grâce à leurs votes que je me trouve, aujourd'hui, à nouveau ici.

Nous avons, devant nous, un programme quinquennal. Ce programme est pour cinq ans. Il est pétri de nobles intentions. Notre souhait le plus sincère est que, pendant les cinq années qui arrivent, nous arrivions à appliquer ce programme et espérons qu'il n'y aura pas de contraintes, que ce soit financières ou circonstancielles.

Je ne souhaite que prendre un item de ce programme concernant les médias.

Il est dit que dans les cinq ans à venir, la *Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation* aura à passer du mode analogue au mode digital. *It is hoped that it will continue to cater for the intellectual, cultural, information and entertainment needs of its audience.* C'est peu et c'est beaucoup à la fois. La *MBC* joue un rôle important mais il a le devoir également de contribuer au développement de la nation, à l'harmonisation entre les différentes composantes de notre société et, en même temps, d'élever le niveau de présentation. Certainement beaucoup est fait. Le directeur général de la *MBC*, Monsieur Dan Callikhan, est d'une ouverture d'esprit appréciable et il fait des efforts. Mais il y a encore à faire pour que la *MBC* réponde aux aspirations de la communauté mauricienne. Et c'est bien de venir de l'avant avec une chaîne culturelle. C'est bien également d'encourager *additional TV channels dedicated to broadcasting in languages widely spoken and taught in Mauritius.* Nous sommes un pays multiethnique et multiracial. Il faut jeter des passerelles entre toutes les communautés. Après chaque élection générale, il faut reconstruire le pays. Il faut que tous les membres du Parlement contribuent à consolider les assises, l'unité nationale. Il faut oublier tout le mal qui a été fait pendant le temps d'une élection. Il faut se montrer responsable, il faut que nous soyons tous, non seulement, des hommes et des femmes de l'île Maurice, mais des authentiques mauriciens. Et là, le souhait du gouvernement, c'est aussi de revoir *the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act* afin que nous puissions *promote nation building.*

La nation mauricienne c'est nous qui l'avons construite et c'est nous qui la construisons et c'est nous qui continuerons à la construire. Les médias ont un rôle vital dans la construction de cette nation, et il faut ici saluer les radios qui contribuent dans cette direction. Et quand on parle des médias, il n'y a pas que la *MBC*, il y a aussi les radios, il y a une concurrence, une

compétition, une rivalité qui, aujourd’hui, nous amène à nous surpasser ; une rivalité qui nous mène vers ce qui est salutaire. Il y a des programmes qui sont véritablement intéressants. On a qu’à écouter les radios qui sont populaires aujourd’hui. Tous les jours il y a des émissions fort intéressantes. La population a les oreilles collées aux transistors. « *Explik ou cas, Enquête en direct, Koser do mo peuple* » ce sont autant d’émissions qui montrent que nous sommes vraiment des gens intéressés à tout ce qui se passe dans notre pays.

Il y a la radio, et il faut saluer les radios que nous avons. Elles forment partie de notre média. Je vois l’honorable Joe Lesjongard qui part, il me laisse, il va à la radio…

(*Interruptions*)

Li pé ale explik so cas et li quitte moi en place.

Mais, il n’y a pas que la télévision ou la radio dans les médias, il y a aussi la presse. Nous jouissons à l’île Maurice d’une liberté absolue. Ce matin, j’ai été étonné de lire un éditorialiste qui a osé parler de grandes manœuvres avant les élections supposément contre les journaux indépendants. Ce n’est pas vrai. Nous vivons une pluralité médiatique incroyable. Nous vivons dans un pays où la liberté est un bonheur.

Dans le dernier magazine « *The Parliamentarian* », il y a un article écrit par un député britannique et voilà ce qu’il dit sur la presse en Angleterre et voilà l’image des journaux enchainés : ‘gagging orders’ de la cour pour interdire à certains journaux de publier certaines informations pourtant importantes, des informations que la population doit savoir. En Angleterre, un pays démocratique, il y a des ‘gagging orders’ ! Ici, à l’île Maurice, de quelle liberté ne jouissons-nous pas ! A une conférence de presse, c’est presqu’un duel entre un Premier ministre et un rédacteur en chef, et le rédacteur en chef est parti tranquillement et personne n’a touché à un cheveu de ce monsieur jusqu’à maintenant. Et vous dites que nous vivons dans une république bananière ! C’est vrai qu’il y a des failles, mais, grande ou petite, la liberté est là. Mais il faut aussi reconnaître que tous les politiciens indistinctement souhaitent bénéficier de l’appui de la presse et que la presse contribue à positiver leur image. Nous avons besoin de la presse tout comme la presse a besoin de nous. C’est vrai aussi que la presse a ses défauts et ses qualités tout comme les politiciens ont leurs défauts et leurs qualités ; tout aussi comme le gouvernement a ses défauts et ses qualités.

Voltaire disait : « Je ne partage pas vos idées mais je me battrais jusqu'à la mort pour que vous puissiez les exprimer ». Ici, on n’a pas à se battre pour s’exprimer, on est libre. On est

totalement libre. On peut dire ce qu'on veut. Mais c'est également vrai qu'il y a des réactions par rapport à des actions. Parfois nous frisons un infantilisme, par exemple, la presse et le pouvoir ou encore la presse et les politiciens. On joue à *baté rendé pas faire di mal*. Il y a des réactions. Par exemple, on réagit par rapport à ce que nous, les politiciens, nous considérons comme des fausses nouvelles - *spreading false news*. Parfois on ne vérifie pas ses informations et quelque fois c'est de la méchanceté pure et simple ! C'est de la mesquinerie ! C'est, comme dirait l'autre, leurs plumes ont mauvaise langue !

Coluche, comédien et politicien français, disait : 'Les politiciens sont des menteurs selon les journalistes, mais ils continuent à répéter ce que les politiciens disent. C'est cela le plus grave.' La Charte de Munich parle des droits et des devoirs des journalistes. En France il y avait la Charte de 1918 et, par la suite, la Charte de 1938-1939. Les journalistes ont d'énormes responsabilités dans une société. Que dit-on dans ces Chartes ? L'essentielle, la quintessence, c'est la vérité. Il faut rester dans la vérité. Un journaliste doit vérifier ses informations. Il doit authentifier avant de dire n'importe quoi et de jeter en vrac au public son écriture. D'après la Charte de Munich, un journaliste n'a pas le droit de faire de la propagande. Il n'a pas le droit d'être propagandiste ni publicitaire. Il faut être honnête, juste et intègre. Le journaliste est quelqu'un de grande probité. On ne peut pas être des gens embusqués ou des *snipers*.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker : Order, please !

Mr Issack : Que ce soit pour la presse écrite, la radio ou la télévision, les mêmes règles sont applicables. La *MBC* a ses défauts et il y a des choses qu'on n'aime pas à la *MBC*.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Aimée, I just said that I want order in this House. You are sitting here and talking to people there. You are disturbing the speech of the hon. Member. Can you please keep quiet?

Mr Issack: En parlant de la *MBC*, le précédent directeur général avait dit que la *MBC* a toujours été le paillasson du pouvoir. Critiquer la *MBC* aujourd'hui est malhonnête. On aurait pu changer la *MBC* quand on était au pouvoir, mais on ne l'a pas fait.

Aujourd'hui on se plaint du mal qu'on a toléré. Mais la *MBC*, je le dis, a ses défauts, nous viendrons sur la *MBC*, les journalistes en général, dans un instant. Mais ce qui est important, c'est la formation. Beaucoup de nos journalistes - que ce soit de la radio, de la presse

et de la *MBC* - n'ont pas de formation. Ce ne sont pas des professionnels, ils n'ont pas été formés. Mais là justement, le gouvernement a signifié son intention de venir de l'avant avec des règlements, régulations et législations. Il faut qu'il y ait des règlements, des lois en faveur de la presse. Il faut que le gouvernement aide les journaux. Il faut qu'il y ait une distribution équitable des publicités. Il y a plusieurs journaux qui font face à nombre de difficultés. Il y a plusieurs journalistes qui subissent pas mal de contraintes. La presse est le poumon de la démocratie. Le gouvernement a le devoir d'approfondir la démocratie. Nous sommes pour la liberté totale mais une liberté à laquelle nous pouvons apporter notre bouffée d'oxygène. Donc, il faut donner aux journaux et journalistes de multiples possibilités pour qu'ils puissent s'épanouir. Ce sera dans l'intérêt même du pays parce que les journalistes ont un devoir d'éduquer, de rectifier, d'améliorer et d'assainir. Il faut leur donner des occasions. Je souhaite que le *Media Trust* sorte de sa torpeur. Nous ne devons pas négliger les outils qui peuvent nous aider à rehausser le niveau de nos journaux, de notre rédaction et de tous les médias existant à Maurice.

M. le président, il y a la presse, les médias et je suis sûr que le gouvernement n'a nullement l'intention de bâillonner la presse. Le gouvernement n'a nullement l'intention de tyranniser la presse, les journalistes. Ailleurs combien de journalistes ont été exécutés, pourchassés, traqués. Récemment en France, il y a un journaliste français qui a été exécuté. Les journalistes vivent des moments très difficiles. A Maurice, il y a quelques jours de cela, deux journalistes, les frères Ollite, ont eu à faire face à une situation très difficile. Cela nous ramène à ce que le président Sarkozy a dit dans une interview sur France 2, je crois, au journaliste Pujade : 'Le métier du journaliste est difficile', avait-il dit. Et nous dirons plus : le métier du journaliste est risquant, difficile et nous ne dirons plus le métier du journaliste est risquant. Mais à l'île Maurice, jusqu'à présent, les journalistes vivent bien malgré leurs plaintes et difficultés. Nous vivons dans un pays civilisé, il y a une belle entente entre les journalistes et les politiciens. D'ailleurs il y a même une complicité entre nous, nous avons besoin d'eux. Vous savez combien de journalistes...

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Member wants to communicate with the Whip of the Opposition, please go out! Don't speak loudly to disturb! I just call the attention of the Minister of Local Government.

Mr Issack: Vous savez combien de politiciens et membres de cette Chambre communiquent en secret avec les journalistes, qu'ils leur filent des informations ? Et parfois nous sommes étonnés de voir dans la presse certaines informations que nous avons données nous-mêmes. C'est comme celui qui vole avec le voleur, qui mène l'enquête avec les gendarmes et qui pleure avec la victime !

(*Interruptions*)

Donc, M. le président, je terminerai simplement sur cette note. La presse à Maurice est libre...

(*Interruptions*)

Si jamais l'honorable membre a un problème dans sa circonscription, il n'a qu'à venir me voir !

(*Interruptions*)

On se permet cette liberté comme la liberté de la presse existe bel et bien ...

Mr Speaker : L'honorable membre a un cœur neuf.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Issack: J'ai un cœur neuf tout comme le *Speaker* et c'est pour cela d'ailleurs que nous parlons avec le cœur !

(*Interruptions*)

Mais pas leur cœur ! Donc, M. le président, je vous remercie infiniment de m'avoir laissé cette opportunité de m'exprimer. Mais tout ce que je peux dire c'est que l'avenir de la presse à l'île Maurice est assuré avec des gens comme vous et nous. Merci.

(5.47 p.m)

Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all, allow me to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the House for the second time. It takes a man of great character to accomplish this twice, and I feel privileged to deliver my maiden speech before you, in the Chair of the House. Allow me also to congratulate my new colleagues on both sides of the House. Also I would like to thank my family, mother, sisters, brothers and my husband for their strong support.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am from the new generation of Mauritian politician. In my lifetime, I have watched my country make progress in technology and culture. I remember reading by an oil lamp and no modern conveniences and facilities. Today, Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has

become the second most advanced nation of the African continent and I give partial credit to the *MMM*, and its leader, hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, without whose wisdom and leadership, I do not think Mauritius would have been to where it is today. People like hon. Ganoo, Hon. Bhagwan, Mr Cuttaree, hon. Obeegadoo and hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie have represented the militant values and courage to stand by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, hon. Paul Bérenger, in the history of our party.

I wish to express my thankful appreciation to hon. Bhagwan for his dedicated leadership and sense of public service. He is a great role model for us and for all Members of our party. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of all other militants who have made of our party such a strong political force.

Mr Speaker, Sir, despite the progress of our society, there are Mauritians who are still using oil lamps to read, burning wood to cook their food, using latrines and have no safe drinking water. On this last point, as you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, the United Nations has just voted a resolution on 28 July to make access to safe drinking water a fundamental Human Right. They also have no proper shelter, no proper roads and transportation, no food security, no easy access to basic education, and full medical facilities. We need to close the gap between the rich and the poor, and create a better level playing field with equal opportunity.

Having said this, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would now like to comment on the Government Programme 2010-2015. The Programme 2010-2015 represents a paradoxical mix of ‘insight and blindness’. I do not want to elaborate lengthily on the contradiction between what is announced on paper and in practice. I will provide a few examples.

For instance, Mr Speaker, Sir, the discourse on freedom of expression is in contradiction with the attempt of banning and censorship of ‘*Paradis en dey*’ - we all feel relieved *que tout soit rentré dans l’ordre* - with banning access to some journalists at press conferences, with the arrest of Ananda Rajoo for publishing so-called false news ten months after their publication. However, Mr Speaker, Sir, some days after the arrest of Mr Ananda Rajoo, the hon. Minister of Health did admit on the MBC/TV that the virus A(H1N1) was indeed seriously affecting the population.

Another example, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Equal Opportunities Act. It is principle-based on values of unity, equity, and modernity but, in actual practice, it is too often used to justify the prevailing power and rewarding structures. Mr Speaker, Sir, since power and wealth are

unevenly distributed in and across many societies, at the end of the day such mechanisms often merely serve to rationalise the discrepancies between those who are at the top and those who are at the bottom.

Mr Speaker, Sir, equity versus liberty in the pursuit of democracy on our small island with scarce resources can be read as two conflicting forces. ‘Equity’ means a fair and just distribution of wealth, and that will lead Mauritians to see themselves as belonging to a more egalitarian and united nation. Therefore, the Mauritians will engage in collective action such as paying taxes, in order to contribute to the maintenance of our society, in other words, mirroring collective interests rather than personal interests. This perception provides an illusion of rainbow nation.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, development in a free market economy is based on competition, and competition creates greater inequality. Individuals will expect to get more than others, and individual interests prevail over collective interests or societal interests. On the question of fairness, unity, and modernity, we should not think in terms of “who gets what?” but “who should get what?”

Mr Speaker, Sir, in my observations, I have taken note of the increasing number of ‘pockets of poverty’. From the years 2006 to 2010, the number of pockets of poverty has increased significantly. In all parts of Mauritius, we increasingly see modern houses, residential housing compounds with tight security gates, guarded hotels, villas, flats. And, next to them, what do we see? Homeless people in shelters with leaky roofs and open sewage! Some live in dilapidated houses; others in houses built with asbestos in the materials, causing diseases like cancer. From village to village, we can see the glaring economic inequality based on social class, ethnicity and race, gender, and age. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, what is development with little or no alternative or opportunity to move upward?

As Amartya Sen, one of our great guest speakers at my former University of Brandeis Heller School of Social Policy and Management in USA argued in one of his lectures, development should be assessed in terms of “the expansion of the “capabilities” of people to lead the kind of lives they value – and have reason to value”. And this is what Sen means by development as freedom.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in my humble experience, I personally investigated into and contributed to the research and the report of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Mauritius

from 2001 to 2003; I was involved in the study of CPE failures in Rodrigues. During my postgraduate studies in USA, I participated in the evaluation of the Mental Illness Programme in Cambridge, USA, in the Health Improvement projects in the Mississippi Delta, among many initiatives, as an international social researcher. In these studies, I noticed and learned that poor people do not have the fundamental freedom of action and choice that the privileged takes for granted. This is the reason that inspired me to join the political arena and to contribute in policy making.

Mr Speaker, Sir, all men and women are created equal in the eyes of God, and I, as the Fourth Member of Constituency No. 14, and a militant, I feel very privileged to have been chosen to serve my country. I will live up to the trust my people have placed in me, and I will stand for the rights of the oppressed of our society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, under the colonial system, which was deeply patriarchal and racism, the slave women and men were subjected to abuse and exploitation based on gender, race, and class. Today, thanks to the efforts and struggles of many, our society has experienced some degree of social change. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, the dominant race, gender, and social class relationship has remained largely intact. Therefore, the institutional ideologies claiming equal opportunity hide the fact that race, gender and social class are interlocking systems with varying degrees of discrimination.

Look around us! What do we witness in our day to day life? A growing number of people living in a variety of deprived and poverty contexts: unemployment, illiteracy, homelessness, domestic violence, rape, crime, prostitution, drugs, and HIV/AIDS. Who are the victims, and why? Is it because of one's culture, or because of being a woman or being a man located at the bottom rung of the ladder that a person is left with no 'opportunities' and no 'capabilities' to move upward? For example, a poor Creole woman living in African town – yes, there is a place called African town in Riambel - with no roads, no health facilities, no schools, no water, no electricity, or other means to improve her quality of life or her capabilities to fight for gender equality.

The other issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, is unity. We keep on talking of unity as a national priority. But how can we achieve unity, when the cultural rights of many people in this society are not respected? Why does the educational system reward the children for being taught through English as the medium of education, rather than on their efforts and ability? Why is the

mother tongue not used as medium of education at school? Why are cultural studies not taught at school? Why are local artists not given the recognition they deserve? For these same reasons, just a very low percentage of one component of our so-called rainbow nation manages to complete a university degree and a very high level of the same ethnic group ends up in prostitution, drugs and prison.

Yet, Mr Speaker, Sir, arts and culture are catalysts for peace, stability and the consolidation of national unity. I have scrutinised the Government Programme on this item. It contains a long list of wishful prestigious projects: national symphonic orchestra, national awards for excellence in arts, etc. But how effective are these schemes when in actuality local and national artists still face many social, legal and economic barriers that hinder the effective development of Mauritian creators and performers as mentioned in the Government Programme 2010-2015?

In June 2009, the Mauritian Artists Movement (MDAM) claimed their rights as artists. Nevertheless, the Government loan scheme for artists is blocked by excessive bureaucracy; many cases of *piratage* and plagiarism are still pending at courts level, not to mention the high rate of 15% income tax deduction, the high cost of organising a concert. The flat rate of compensation, a mere Rs3,000, in tough economic times does not help to keep alive their artist creativity. And what about our elderly authentic artists who are the authentic roots of our Mauritian heritage?

I will take just one example, Mr Speaker, Sir. Fanfan, currently our greatest national symbol of authentic Sega culture, after *Ti Frère*, celebrated his 80th anniversary this Sunday. Does the stake have any special scheme of recognition and care for national figures like him?

Mr Speaker, Sir, the artists symbolise the national heritage. We should see to it that they are not squeezed into limited ethnic dimensions and also diluted by the commercialism of the global cultural market. The bureaucracy of the Ministry of Arts and Culture does not allow artists to develop their talents fully and be recognised. We have the Copyright Act of 1997 that protects the rights of the artists, but piracy is still rife and represents a real threat to the very existence of our artists and their reproductions. The national television does not adequately promote arts and culture.

Another issue is the financial facilities to promote arts and culture. The Ministry of Arts and Culture should take action to reduce the bureaucratic, legal and other constraints to encourage the effective development of artists. Gaston Valayden, Henry Favory and many others

can be quoted as glaring examples of the mismatch between the policy and reality, here, the real needs of artists. Gaston Valayden and his theatre troupe '*Sapsiway*' are scheduled to perform at the San Francisco Fringe Festival scheduled on September 09 to September 19. However, he is constrained by the bureaucratic procedure to run the risk of not being able to participate for lack of financial support for which he has applied to the Ministry of Arts and Culture.

In short, Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that if there is no strong political will to address the roots of social discrimination, poverty, equality of opportunity in education and culture, economy and development, the Government schemes will remain a *miroir aux alouettes* or a catalogue of *folie des grandeurs*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now briefly speak of my Constituency No. 14. It has a rich culture and heritage of the past colonial life, enriched by the multicultural set-up. It is the birthplace of Sega music and dance. It has a beautiful landscape that is very attractive for development. Many places such as the Black River Gorges, National Park, Ile aux Bénitiers, the seven coloured earth of Chamarel, the old buildings of the sugar factory, the Batterie L'harmonie, and obviously Le Morne national heritage site, now world heritage, which we, Mauritians, are legitimately proud of. Immigrants from many countries have come to settle in the region for business and retirement. The region has undergone new economic development in tourism and commerce. However, the irony is that chronic poverty still prevails in the region, the more, as lack of infrastructure and facilities, I mentioned earlier, at national level is more acute here. This is vacation time for children and the youth, but here, there is no public library, no internet access or recreation facilities for them. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is only the big picture of the reality.

Now, allow me to provide some specific examples. As for the closure of the sugar factory of St. Felix, it has resulted in the number of workers still waiting for their land compensation. Hon. Bodha put questions in the National Assembly. Yet, remedial action has not been taken.

In the tourism sector, with hotels mushrooming in Riambel, Bel Ombre, Le Morne, Rivière Noire, Tamarin, the fishermen are not allowed to fish in the lagoon. They are left out of the development process with inadequate compensation in case they are awarded same, with the bad weather allowance varying between Rs1,200 to Rs1,700 and Rs3,000 per month. Fishermen who are allowed to carry out the *pêche à la seine* season are not compensated until a month after the season.

Taxi drivers of the region of Bel Ombre, Baie du Cap, St. Martin and Choisy were not allowed to apply to operate at the Tamassa Hotel. Hon. Alan Ganoo brought questions to the National Assembly. Yet, no remedial measures have been taken. The IRS project has brought lots of investors and cheap labour from abroad in the constituency and the country at large. For instance, Tamarin has become a niche for South Africans. Surinam has become a niche for Indians and Bel Ombre a niche for Chinese. We talk about *Maurice Ile Durable*; there is almost no space in the area of Tamarin for development to sustain the next generation.

Last but not least, Mr Speaker, Sir, from my very humble experience of being native of Constituency No. 14, I had first-hand experience of the transport difficulties here. Today, the young generation and our elderly are facing the same problem. Transport remains an acute problem for students living in the region of Chemin Grenier to reach the University of Mauritius by 8 o'clock in the morning. Public transportation facilities to the village of Chamarel and from Flic en Flac to Port Louis are hopelessly inadequate.

Health is a fundamental right to all and yet there is only one ambulance from Le Morne, Chamarel, Case Noyale, Rivière Noire and Tamarin to the hospital. Primary health care system is not available in regions like Surinam, Riambel, Rivière des Galets, Bel Ombre, Cascavelle and Choisy. There is only one hospital in Souillac that is not equipped to treat patients with complex diseases or emergency in cases of serious road accidents. Educational facilities exist. However, the rate of success at CPE has dropped significantly in some regions.

There is a huge problem of housing throughout the constituency. People are squatting State lands in these areas: Riambel, St. Martin, Coteau Raffin, La Galette, Case Noyale, Rivière Noire and Tamarin.

The other issue is the houses built with asbestos in its materials. There is a significant number of poor families living in these regions without funds to rebuild with safe building materials.

Mr Speaker, Sir, policy intervention is warranted as a matter of fairness and equal opportunity to all. I will end by strongly underlying that it is the Government responsibility to propose affirmative legal obligation for public policy intervention to improve not only the living conditions of people, but also to empower them by devising appropriate educational, training, economic and social development programme.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(6.10 p.m.)

Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): M. le président, permettez-moi tout d'abord de m'associer avec mes collègues qui m'ont précédé pour vous féliciter pour votre élection à la présidence de cette auguste Assemblée. Je voudrais aussi exprimer mes félicitations vis-à-vis de mon collègue d'à côté qui sera appelé à vous épauler dans votre délicate tâche.

M. le président, comme la collègue qui m'a précédé, je suis à ma toute première députation et c'est la toute première fois que je m'adresse à cette auguste Assemblée. Et vous imaginez, M. le président, l'émotion qui anime mon esprit, l'émotion qui anime mon cœur.

J'ai écouté avec beaucoup d'intérêt la collègue qui m'a précédé et je voudrais la féliciter et l'encourager de persévérer dans cette voie. Elle déborde d'idées. Elle tient à cœur l'intérêt, le développement de sa circonscription et je n'ai pas le moindre doute qu'elle aura le soutien des deux côtés de cette Chambre dans la tâche qui l'attend. Mais cependant, je l'ai écouté avec attention comme c'est la toute première occasion qui m'est donné de me prononcer dans cette auguste Assemblée en tant que député, et je constate cependant que le cheminement politique au fil des années - j'ose même dire au fil des générations - a connu, au niveau de l'individu, pas mal de bouleversements.

M. le président, on s'engage politiquement en tant qu'individu. On a une vision. On est animé par le désir, l'envie de servir; par le désir de mettre ses compétences au service de ses concitoyens, de son quartier, de sa ville, de son pays. C'est un engagement d'abord au niveau de l'individu mais, cet engagement, M. le président, ne peut se faire dans l'isolement. Il est impératif qu'on puisse se retrouver au sein d'un collectif qui partage ce même engagement, qui est animé par cette même envie de servir, et je l'ai fait. J'ai été patient dans mon cheminement politique et je me suis toujours laissé guider par une philosophie, celle d'attendre son heure. Je n'ai jamais exigé quoique ce soit. J'ai toujours voulu mettre mes compétences, mon service auprès de mes concitoyens au sein de l'organisation à laquelle j'ai appartenu ; c'était ça ma

conviction. Et à chaque occasion qu'on a fait appel à moi pour gravir de nouveau les différents échelons je n'ai jamais dit non. J'ai toujours veillé à répondre présent mais le cheminement politique connaît certains destins et je voudrais partager avec tous mes collègues de cette auguste Assemblée, la fierté, le bonheur, la joie que j'éprouve aujourd'hui en tant que député au sein de la majorité gouvernementale.

M. le président, je voudrais solennellement remercier celui qui a cru en moi et qui m'a fait confiance, mon *leader*, notre Premier ministre, le docteur Navinchandra Ramgoolam. Je voudrais exprimer, M. le président, ma profonde reconnaissance envers celui qui est non seulement mon colistier mais pour qui j'ai autant de respect que pour feu mon père, le docteur Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun. Et comment ne pas mentionner une personne que j'ai eue le bonheur de connaître lors de la dernière campagne électorale, qui a été candidate avec moi et notre *Deputy Prime Minister* dans la circonscription No. 2, qu'on a côtoyé pendant de longues semaines, une personne qui a fait très forte impression et qui a pratiquement charmé la circonscription No. 2, Port Louis Central et Port Louis Sud, je mentionne Madame Aline Wong. Je voudrais aujourd'hui avoir une pensée tout-à-fait spéciale envers cette grande dame, d'autant plus que je déplore et je ne cesserai de dénoncer cette campagne, bassement honteuse, qui a été initiée vis-à-vis de la personne de Madame Aline Wong durant la dernière campagne électorale.

M. le président, on a eu à subir toutes sortes d'humiliations. On a eu à subir toutes sortes de mensonges vis-à-vis de notre personne. On a été victime d'une circulation de *SMS* qui ne fait pas honneur à qui que ce soit. Comme je l'avais proclamé haut et fort à la moindre occasion qui m'était donnée lors de cette campagne électorale, je le proclame haut et fort aujourd'hui : notre *Deputy Prime Minister* fait toujours l'unanimité, non seulement dans la circonscription No. 2, Port Louis Central et Port Louis Sud, mais notre *Deputy Prime Minister* a démontré de par sa motivation, sa conviction et sa bonne foi, qu'il fait toujours l'unanimité auprès des très larges secteurs de notre population.

M. le président, je manquerais à mes devoirs si je ne mentionnais pas l'accueil qui m'a été réservé, la façon dont on m'a adopté au sein du Parti Travailliste et cela à tous les niveaux. Je souhaite exprimer, aujourd'hui, ma profonde reconnaissance, mes remerciements vis-à-vis de

mes collègues de ce côté de cette Chambre, mais aussi de tous ceux qui nous ont aidés, qui nous ont accompagnés lors de la dernière campagne électorale.

M. le président, le verdict des dernières élections du 05 mai a donné une victoire claire et nette à l'équipe de l'Alliance de l'Avenir dirigée par notre Premier ministre, le docteur Navin Ramgoolam. Les dés étaient déjà jetés bien avant les élections, M. le président. Sondages et éditoriaux - que ce soit éditoriaux d'une presse partisane ou d'une presse indépendante - donnaient victoire à l'équipe dirigée par notre Premier ministre. Si spéculations il y avait, M. le président, c'était des spéculations sur la nature qu'allait prendre cette majorité et la majorité a été claire et nette. On s'attendait tous à cette victoire car notre Premier ministre, malgré une situation économique internationale des plus difficiles a su mener les affaires du pays à bon port pendant ces cinq dernières années.

Le gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale sortant en 2010 a tenu à honorer tous ses engagements, a tenu toutes ses promesses. Les prestations sociales ont été maintenues en général. L'objectif de procurer un transport gratuit pour les étudiants et pour les pensionnaires, cet engagement, M. le président, a été respecté. Les subsides sur les denrées de base, non seulement ont été maintenus mais ont appréciés et tout cela dans un contexte économique international des plus difficiles. Mais il était surtout et avant tout une question de *leadership*. Jamais auparavant un Premier ministre n'avait fait autant l'unanimité auprès de toutes les sections de notre nation mauricienne.

(Interruptions)

Notre Premier ministre, durant le mandat écoulé, a consolidé son image de rassembleur véritable. A la fin de son mandat, notre Premier ministre a soumis un bilan des plus élogieux. C'est un Premier ministre qui a projeté une image de rassembleur avec force, qui a dirigé les affaires du pays avec sagesse et qui a incarné la beauté au niveau de sa personnalité, la beauté de notre nation arc-en-ciel, M. le président. Autant d'atouts de notre côté, du côté de l'Alliance de l'Avenir, autant de force, autant d'honneur, autant de sagesse et autant d'éléments qui ont fait défaut au niveau du camp opposé. Le 05 mai dernier, le MMM a malheureusement connu sa quatrième défaite successive. Malheureusement pour eux et il y a de quoi s'inquiéter, M. le président ! Et je pense qu'il est grand temps que le MMM puisse faire une introspection et ne

pas se cacher derrière prétendument des élections qui n'ont pas été *free and fair*. Je pense que l'électorat s'est effrité au fil des années, au fil des générations et l'équipe de l'Alliance de l'Avenir bien en place, confortable dans sa majorité, unie, stable, solide au niveau du gouvernement, va définitivement assumée ses responsabilités et ira bien au-delà, M. le président, de ce qui a déjà été annoncé au niveau du discours-programme présenté par le Président de la République. Et là, il faut rappeler que ce discours-programme a une valeur de symbole. C'est un des éléments majeurs qui marque la fin de l'ère coloniale. Auparavant, on appelait cela le discours du Trône. L'absence de l'opposition, lors de la prononciation de ce discours-programme, condamne cette opposition, car l'opposition a failli dans son devoir de véritable patriote, de véritable architecte, ayant contribué à l'indépendance de notre jeune nation mauricienne et on déplore cela.

M. le président, durant mon cheminement politique, j'ai été appelé en de nombreuses occasions à assumer des responsabilités, surtout au niveau des collectivités locales. Avec votre permission, M. le président, et celle de cette auguste Assemblée, je voudrais m'attarder sur cette question. Il est énoncé dans le discours-programme et mon cher collègue, l'honorable ministre des administrations régionales, a en maintes occasions annoncé dans les grandes lignes les orientations principales d'une nouvelle loi cadre qui va encadrer, gouverner nos collectivités locales. La municipalisation sera étendue à des nouvelles régions. Il y aura plus de responsabilités accordées aux conseillers municipaux, les rouages du conseil, l'organigramme du conseil municipal sera appelé à connaître un changement réel afin de rendre nos collectivités locales beaucoup plus rentables, beaucoup plus redevables vis-à-vis des citadins.

M. le président, municipaliser d'autres territoires du pays, c'est venir combler une disparité qui a trop longtemps duré. Dans toutes les démocraties avant-gardistes à travers le monde, c'est un processus qu'a connu les collectivités locales. Afin qu'il n'y ait plus de deux poids deux mesures, M. le président, il est temps que les services obtenus par nos citadins au niveau des villes soient étendues à d'autres régions d'autant plus que notre pays constitue un petit territoire et la gestion de ce territoire n'est pas autant difficile que si l'étendue était beaucoup plus grande. Donc, il est grand temps, M. le président, qu'on puisse veiller à ce que d'autres citoyens soient pourvus des mêmes facilités, des mêmes services sociaux. Mais, en même temps, il y aura beaucoup plus d'autonomie, une meilleure autonomie de décisions, une meilleure autonomie pour la gestion des affaires financières qui sera accordée à nos

municipalités. Une meilleure autonomie destinée à quoi ? A répondre prioritairement aux attentes de la population ! Il faudrait veiller, M. le président, lorsqu'on procède à la municipalisation des différentes régions rurales, que tout le monde ait voix au chapitre. Il faudrait que la structure existante au niveau des *Village Councils* soit tenue *on board*. Il faudrait permettre que réellement on puisse voir s'exercer, ce qu'on appelle en théorie, la démocratie participative. Pendant trop longtemps on a mentionné qu'au niveau des conseils municipaux, au niveau des *District Councils* - et cela depuis de très, très longues années - la gestion des finances ne se fait pas en toute transparence et d'une façon efficace. Je pense que la philosophie guidant l'élaboration du budget municipal est appelée à être revue et j'imagine trois composantes à ce nouveau concept du budget municipal.

Un premier budget municipal que je qualifierai d'un budget de développement sur le principe de *PBB*. Le conseil municipal est appelé à identifier déjà bien à l'avance les développements prioritaires qui concerneraient tout son territoire; identifier ce besoin au niveau du budget de développement, mais aussi établir une deuxième composante que j'appellerai le budget courant pour les services d'entretien, les services de maintenance, pour le paiement des différentes charges, des salaires, etc., mais aussi et, surtout, la grande innovation, le budget participatif. Il faudrait que chaque quartier, chaque village ait voix au chapitre. Il faudrait que toutes les bonnes volontés au niveau de chaque quartier, les travailleurs sociaux, les gens qui sont disposés à aider, les enseignants, les décideurs, les professionnels qui habitent dans les différents quartiers, dans nos différents villages, puissent être concertés et participés pleinement dans l'identification des projets prioritaires qui doivent animer leurs quartiers respectifs. Il faut permettre à nos conseillers municipaux élus démocratiquement d'avoir des séances de travail formel avec les bonnes volontés de chaque quartier, de chaque village afin d'établir en concertation, en accord avec les habitants, un budget participatif représentant cette troisième composante du budget municipal.

Il est temps, M. le président, qu'au niveau de nos différentes collectivités locales que leurs services aussi soient décentralisés. Ce n'est pas possible que lorsqu'il y a une panne au niveau du Marché Central de Port Louis, on doit d'abord soumettre une requête au niveau de la Commission de santé à la municipalité qui, à son tour, aura à attendre 15 jours pour soumettre cette requête au niveau de la Commission des travaux, par la suite au niveau de la Commission des finances, pour procéder à l'acquisition qu'il faut. Il faudrait décentraliser nos services, M. le

président, pour qu'on puisse réellement améliorer la qualité de vie de nos citadins, permettre au Marché Central de Port Louis, par exemple, d'avoir son propre budget, d'avoir sa propre autonomie, sa propre équipe de maintenance et d'entretien. Et c'est là qu'on aura vraiment la possibilité de répondre aux attentes prioritaires de nos citadins et répondre à cette attente avec diligence, M. le président.

M. le président, je suis natif de notre ville capitale, la ville de Port Louis. J'ai grandi, j'ai toujours travaillé et je travaille toujours à Port Louis. C'est avec une véritable nostalgie qu'on constate qu'à l'heure de fermeture des bureaux à partir de 16 heures, notre ville devient une ville morte. Cela doit nous interpeller, M. le président. Non seulement c'est une question qui doit interpeller la municipalité de Port Louis, mais aussi le gouvernement central et le secteur privé. Il y a eu, quelque temps de cela, une initiative d'une sorte de partenariat entre la municipalité, le gouvernement central et le secteur privé pour le réaménagement de la ville de Port Louis.

Ce matin, lors des séances de questions, on a évoqué le problème de congestion routière. C'est un sujet passionnant, qui me passionne, qui passionne le *Deputy Prime Minister*, nous, les élus de cette ville de Port Louis. Construire la *Ring Road*, améliorer l'accès à notre capitale, le métro léger aussi va permettre de décongestionner le trafic routier à travers notre capitale. C'est vrai, il faut le faire, mais en même temps, nous faisons un constat qui ne nous fait pas honneur, M. le président. A une extrémité de notre capitale, il y a eu un développement *hi-tech*, le *Caudan Waterfront*. On se propose d'avoir un autre développement du côté de Les Salines, à Port Louis. C'est une extrémité de notre ville. L'autre extrémité, c'est la misère ; ce sont les difficultés qu'ont à faire face les habitants des *State lands* du côté de Tranquebar et Vallée Pitot. Comme décideur, comme développeur, cela ne fait pas honneur. C'est une situation qui ne date pas d'hier, qui ne date pas de cinq ou dix ans, c'est une situation qui a perduré depuis de très longues années, M. le président. Si on vient décongestionner l'entrée de Port Louis, améliorer la fluidité du trafic routier à travers la capitale, en même temps, cela soulage les véhicules et facilite l'accès aux véhicules à travers notre ville, mais cela dérange les habitants de certains quartiers de Tranquebar et de Vallée Pitot. Cela vient les priver d'un droit fondamental - celui d'un logement. Il est vrai, M. le président, que la concertation va être entamée auprès de tous ceux concernés. Il est vrai aussi qu'au niveau des différentes autorités, toutes les mesures sont prises afin de minimiser les inconvénients que représente la construction de ce *Ring Road*. Mais il est grand temps, M. le président, qu'on puisse déjà entamer cette concertation car, malheureusement, les

prophètes de malheur ne manquent pas. Il y a certaines personnes qui essayent d'en tirer un capital politique, un peu la même campagne honteuse lors de la dernière campagne électorale, mais nous sommes là pour nous ériger en véritable rempart afin de veiller à ce que le développement soit fait et que l'intérêt de tout un chacun ne soit nullement menacé.

M. le président, dans la conception du développement qu'on voudrait avoir pour notre capitale et pour les nouvelles régions qui vont être municipalisées, il est temps quand même d'avoir comme priorité les attentes de nos citadins et de nos concitoyens. Il faut redonner la ville aux citoyens, aux piétons et aux habitants. Cette ville de Port Louis est morte le soir pour la bonne et simple raison, M. le président. Port Louis a connu beaucoup de développements. A travers Port Louis, il y a des *high-rise buildings*, M. le président, mais pas la moindre petite construction dans notre centre ville destinée aux appartements résidentiels. Bon nombre de Portlouisiennes et Portlouisiens, contre leur propre gré, ont été appelés à émigrer ailleurs vers d'autres régions. Il est temps que la mairie, le gouvernement central aussi bien que des partenaires potentiels du secteur privé puissent se concerter autour d'une table et venir avec une proposition pour planifier un développement futur de Port Louis, permettre à Port Louis de respirer, tous ces commerçants de Port Louis qui pratiquent leurs commerces depuis de nombreuses générations, M. le président, et aujourd'hui, qui sont privés de clientèle faute d'une espace de *parking* adéquate à Port Louis. Les développements ont été faits, on voit tout autour de l'île la construction de nombreux hypermarchés avec des galeries marchandes associées et cela n'arrange pas les affaires commerciales de nos commerçants traditionnels de Port Louis. Nous avons un devoir de conserver ce patrimoine, de venir en aide, d'ouvrir nos bras et d'aider pour que cette bonne tradition commerciale, spécificité de chaque quartier commercial de Port Louis, puisse être conservée, M. le président.

J'ai parlé avec mon cœur et avec beaucoup d'émotions, M. le président, puisque je tiens à cœur le développement du pays, ma ville natale. Je souhaite, ici, rendre hommage à tous ceux qui m'ont aidé dans mon cheminement politique. A pareille époque, l'année dernière, je me posais beaucoup de questions. On s'engage politiquement, en toute bonne foi, on donne le meilleur de soi-même et on n'attend rien en retour, sauf une reconnaissance. Cela je ne l'ai pas eu. Mais c'est du passé. Aujourd'hui, mon cœur est tranquille, mon esprit est éclairé et je sais qu'il y a une orientation qui est tracée. C'est un nouveau chapitre et je l'entame avec honneur,

avec force, puisque j'ai le soutien de tous mes camarades de parti et cela d'une façon inconditionnelle.

Je voudrais réitérer mon engagement vis-à-vis de ma circonscription, vis-à-vis de mes nombreux collaborateurs qui me sont restés fidèles, mais je voudrais surtout rendre hommage à notre Premier ministre, l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, qui a placé sa confiance en moi et je voudrais aussi remercier ce papa qui est à mes côtés, notre *Deputy Prime Minister*, l'honorable Dr. Ahmed Rashid Beebejaun, pour son soutien et pour l'orientation qu'il m'apporte quotidiennement.

Je remercie mes collègues de cette auguste Assemblée et je vous remercie pour votre attention.

(6.38 p.m.)

Mr P. Assirvaden (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a great honour and a privilege to stand here in this place to deliver my speech on the occasion of the victory of the new Government. Mr Speaker, Sir, this represents a history of commitment to giving all Mauritians a fair go regardless of race, colour and religion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, may I seize this opportunity to congratulate you and your Deputy Speaker for your election in this Assembly. *Je voudrais aussi profiter de l'occasion pour féliciter tous ceux et celles qui ont fait leur premier discours juste avant moi et tous ceux et celles qui ont été élus lors des dernières élections.*

I would like, with your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, to express my gratitude to the many people who have stood by me for long. First and foremost, I pay tribute to my family who continues to be my foundation and whose support strengthens my resolve to achieve every single day. I would like to say a special thanks to the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, for his trust and faith he put in me during the recent election by giving me the opportunity to serve my country.

I stand before this House, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the nation, overwhelmed by the responsibility that is being thrust upon our shoulder to act fairly at all times and I am truly humble by the opportunity to serve my country today. There are many challenges, Mr Speaker, Sir, ahead. Nowadays, where the world is facing financial, social and environmental crisis, I hope, and I am confident, that we will lead the country on a path of friendship, cooperation, harmony, unity and faster change. My privilege to be sitting in this House, Mr Speaker Sir, is

even more special as it contains a bunch of deputies devoted for their country and who helped to write the Mauritian history.

Je pense, M. le président, à des députés qui, d'une façon ou d'une autre, ont duré. J'ai en tête le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, qui depuis 1991 continue à être un député ancré dans sa circonscription. J'ai aussi en tête le *Deputy Prime Minister*, le Dr. Rashid Beebeejaun. Au delà de ce qui a été dit et propagé contre lui dans sa circonscription, il reste un député de proximité. J'ai en tête l'honorable Anil Bachoo qui fut élu successivement lors des différentes élections. Je pense surtout à l'exemple du député de proximité, l'honorable Dr. Arvind Boolell, celui qu'on cite très souvent. Et quoique ne pas être souvent sur la même longueur d'onde avec eux, je dirais que je suis fier et honoré de siéger dans cette Assemblée à côté des membres de l'Opposition qui, d'une façon ou d'une autre, ont duré aussi. Je pense au *Leader* de l'Opposition, élu lui aussi successivement aux élections, à l'honorable Ganoo et à l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan qui, j'ai cru comprendre, va prendre sa retraite dans quelque temps.

J'ai écouté avec attention l'honorable Bhagwan l'autre jour qui disait combien il est fier d'être élu en tête dans sa circonscription. Connaissant la composition de la circonscription No. 20, Beau Bassin et Petite Rivière, je n'ai pu, M. le président, faire la relation avec ma propre circonscription. Conscient de la composition ethnique de la circonscription No. 15 - vous avez été, M. le président, député de la circonscription No. 15 - et conscient de mon profil ethnique, je suis fier et honoré que les membres de l'électorat de la circonscription numéro 15 ont fait de moi le premier député de la Caverne/ Phoenix. C'est l'incarnation même de l'unité nationale la plus concrète, M. le président. En étant élu, j'ai eu la chance d'avoir deux colistiers d'expérience à qui je rendrais hommage aujourd'hui : l'honorable Dr. Hawoldar, celui qui a travaillé dans la circonscription pendant dix ans et aussi, l'honorable Soodhun. Comme je l'ai dit lors des élections, j'étais un peu comme la rose entre deux épines, pour ne pas dire l'épine entre deux roses.

(Interruptions)

Je voudrais dire, M. le président, que je suis très redevable de la confiance faite aux trois députés de l'électorat du No. 15. C'est une circonscription très marginale et difficile surtout quand on a eu en face des candidats qui se permettaient de faire n'importe quoi. L'honorable Dr. Sorefan qui, malheureusement, n'est pas présent, sait de quoi je parle car, comme candidat de

l'Opposition, il a subi le communalisme scientifique de son propre colistier. Je dirais que je suis très honoré d'être là aujourd'hui, M. le président.

A l'occasion de ce premier discours, je voudrais m'appesantir, M. le président, sur les sujets qui me portent à cœur et qui sont tout à fait dans le sillage de ce que la population attend de nous pour un nouveau départ. Comme dans bien des cas, la somme des partis, que constitue un Parlement issu des élections libres et démocratiques, ne peut qu'être égale à l'unité. Cette réalité ne doit toutefois pas nous empêcher d'œuvrer pour une société plus juste et fraternelle. C'est le souhait sincère que je viens formuler en cette occasion.

Nous avons gagné les élections parce que nous avions, et nous avons la meilleure équipe. C'est une équipe homogène, un bon mélange de ceux qui ont de l'expérience et de jeunes politiciens remplis de conviction. Mais, M. le président, nous avons été plébiscités par le travail remarquable entrepris par le Premier ministre et son équipe pendant les cinq dernières années. Le peuple a dit oui au développement et au progrès du pays. Mais aussi, le peuple a voté pour la continuité de la démocratisation de l'économie, initiée, il faut le dire, par un Premier ministre fort, rempli de convictions et surtout sincère. Bref, M. le président, nous avons triomphé lors des dernières élections générales principalement, à mon avis, parce que nous avions et nous avons le meilleur Premier ministre que l'île Maurice puisse avoir.

M. le président, vu que c'est mon premier discours dans cette auguste Assemblée, je voudrais surtout ne pas avoir à polémiquer. Mais, j'ai écouté avec attention mon bon ami, l'honorable Issack, qui disait, qu'après les élections, il nous faut oublier. C'est vrai. Mais je pense qu'il est un peu de mon devoir de dire certaines petites choses à ceux qui disent que nous avons abusé de l'appareil de l'Etat lors des dernières élections générales, surtout à ceux qui disent qu'on a abusé de la *MBC*. Vous vous rappellerez encore, M. le président, ceux et celles qui voulaient faire de la *MBC*, un *BBC* à la mauricienne. Ce que j'ai remarqué, M. le président, c'est que chaque soir pendant la campagne électorale, lors du journal télévisé à 7.30 p.m., l'Opposition *MMM* avait l'occasion officiellement - je ne parle pas du programme politique mais du journal télévisé - de faire un *meeting*, en direct, à la télé. Je n'ai jamais vu une campagne électorale où l'Opposition est aussi présente à la télé tous les soirs au *peak time*. A ce moment là, l'île Maurice tout entière avait l'occasion de voir ce qui était proposé par l'Opposition. La population, dans son ensemble, avait l'occasion de constater le niveau d'argument que l'Opposition proposait à la nation. La population avait l'occasion de constater comment nos

candidates de l'Alliance de l'Avenir étaient attaquées systématiquement chaque soir. On parlait de l'abattoir, de donner à nos candidates des biberons, on parlait de la vie privée de certaines candidates. On a même eu l'occasion d'entendre certaines choses des candidats de l'Opposition, mais le peuple a tranché. Nous sommes au pouvoir et nous dirigeons.

Nous avons des défis très importants à relever, mais je n'ai pas de doute, M. le président, que nous avons l'équipe, des hommes et des femmes capables pour affronter l'avenir et les challenges qui nous guettent. Nous avons, à mon avis, quelques grands challenges. Le combat contre la pauvreté, gagner la bataille de la diversification de l'énergie, protéger notre environnement et répondre aux attentes de la population sont, à mon avis, M. le président, les quelques grands défis qui nous attendent dans les années à venir. Je voudrais ici saluer la décision du Premier ministre de créer un ministère de l'Intégration Sociale. Après le concept révolutionnaire du MID, qui commence déjà à prendre forme et à changer notre vie, voilà que la création du ministère de l'Intégration Sociale montre clairement que le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, est un homme de conviction, qui est dans la ligne des grands, à côté de Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam et de Sir Anerood Jugnauth ; ajouté à cela, le rayonnement international du Premier ministre contribue énormément au pays.

Mr Speaker, Sir, lots have been done for the poor during the past five years. I would like to mention, with your permission, a few projects that have been implemented since 2005. For the last five years, the Trust Fund has been providing immediate assistance to vulnerable families in terms of CIS housing, provision of school materials to needy children, such as uniforms, school bags and shoes. With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me have some figures. More than 3,120 houses (CIS Project) have been implemented for Rs175 m. More than 34,000 school children have received materials for an amount of Rs43 m. More than 700 microcredit projects have been implemented for Rs26 m. *C'est l'option préférentielle pour les pauvres, M. le président.* As you may be aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, the objective of the ZEP project is to help poor children after school hours on a pilot basis. These projects are located in underprivileged areas, so as to improve their performance. *Nous avons eu, pendant les cinq dernières années, un gouvernement de cœur.* Mr Speaker, Sir, provision for 2010 for CIS housing for the poor is more than Rs56 m. and school materials for the poor Rs21 m. *Ceci pour vous dire, M. le président, que plus de R 160 millions* have been earmarked for the poor only for 2010.

At this stage, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to make an appeal with regard to the loan for needy students. The Trust Fund was operating a revolving loan scheme through the DBM, but this has stopped. The objective of such loan, Mr Speaker, Sir, was to assist the needy students to pursue their tertiary education at the University of Mauritius or the University of Technology. Since the setting up of this scheme, 622 students from very poor families have benefitted from the facilities offered under its creation. More than Rs38 m. have been disbursed. Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, as from 01 July 2009, the granting of loans to needy students by the Trust Fund has stopped, as I am informed that a similar scheme is being handled by the commercial banks.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let's call a cat a cat. We all know how these vulnerable students and their families, with their realities and backgrounds, are afraid to seek facilities from these institutions, and how they are also being treated. I would like to appeal to the newly appointed Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment and also to the Minister of Finance to reconsider the granting of loans to needy students through the Trust Fund, in order not to close the doors of professional, vocational and tertiary institutions to these vulnerable families.

Mr Speaker, Sir, great expectations is today a reality after the general election. In spite of all our achievement, we need to realise that much need to be done with renewed vigour for the poorest of our society. During the electoral campaign and before, I have come across the reality of many families who are still living without that basic commodity, which is electricity, on account of insufficient financial means to meet the cost needed, as claimed by the CEB; *des fois exorbitants !* It is with great dismay that I have been made aware that, in a recent past, the CEB has even refused to consider giving facilities of payment to these people to meet the cost, particularly in Cité La Cure. *Ce matin, en répondant à la question de l'honorable Mme Perraud, j'ai été heureux d'apprendre du Deputy Prime Minister que le problème sera réglé, et que ces gens de Cité La Cure seront pourvus d'électricité.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, a dozen of places and a few hundred of families are in such a situation in 2010. *Je suis assez bien placé, M. le président, de par les cinq ans que j'ai fait au CEB, pour savoir comment il est difficile pour ces familles de se connecter au réseau du CEB et comment c'est cher.* I would personally, once again, appeal to the new Minister of Social Integration and to the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Rashid Beebejaun, *pour que cesse de perdurer cette situation de drame. Pendant les cinq ans où j'étais au CEB, M. le président, à maintes reprises je suis personnellement intervenu, que ce soit à Lallmatie, Chemin Grenier, Barkly, Port Louis et*

Albion, pour que certaines familles puissent se raccorder au réseau du CEB. Giving them electricity, M. le président, n'est pas un luxe. Nous dénonçons tous les jours les cas d'inceste, de viol. Des parents, - j'ai été voir – notamment maman, papa et quatre enfants dorment dans une seule chambre non pourvue d'électricité. Je suis heureux que, de 2005 à 2010, le gouvernement du Dr. Navin Ramgoolam a mis en place un schéma, pour permettre à certaines personnes qui ne se peuvent se connecter au réseau du CEB d'en bénéficier.

The concept, Mr Speaker, Sir, of Corporate Social Responsibility in our liberal society is yet to be translated with more vigour, in both the public and the private sector, with basic justice to all components of our society. Indeed, the budget of many profitable institutions and companies are not yet sufficiently geared to CSR, in spite of the huge profits they regularly publish. A major drawback of our liberal society is the paradox of the huge discrepancy between the remuneration of capital and that of labour. Although difficult, Mr Speaker, Sir, our responsibility is obviously to strike the right balance, with due attention being given to the poorest of our society. The world's financial crisis is a perfect illustration of this mismatch in my opinion, with the greed for *toujours plus* in profits. *Nous avons vu cela avec les fameux IPPs.* As a result, many private companies and banks have collapsed. So, a real effort needs to be done for more equity and justice, and we shall be judged on our actions and initiatives.

M. le président, je voudrais saluer la décision du Premier ministre de créer un ministère de l'intégration sociale. Ceci démontre la volonté du Premier ministre non pas de faire reculer la pauvreté, mais d'éradiquer la pauvreté dans ce pays. Je vous ai cité, M. le président, le budget alloué, depuis les cinq dernières années, pour combattre la pauvreté. Aujourd'hui, en nommant pas moins que le No. 3 du gouvernement à la tête de ce ministère, cela démontre la conviction, la volonté du Premier ministre d'éradiquer la pauvreté dans ce pays.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the world is today confronted with many challenges, many potential threats, which would significantly change our comfortable lives, if no effective mitigating measures are timely implemented. Little Mauritius will not be spared from the world...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I said that I do not want any talking across the floor!

Mr Assirvaden: ... gobal crisis, and, Mr Speaker, Sir, the time has now come for us all to put our imagination at work together and forget our petty quarrels and differences in the best interest of our deserving nation which has successfully strived for survival in the past.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the same vein, we need to strive by all means towards the reduction of our imports of liquid fuels. Indeed, the *Maurice Ile Durable* concept is now a well accepted and recognised imperative in our development strategy. Interesting results have already been reaped from the campaign for the promotion of compact fluorescent low energy bulbs and the initiation of micro hydro projects at La Nicolière and Midlands, the gas-to-energy project, although modest, has given the signal that no stone should be left unturned in the quest of maximising our renewable energy potential.

M. le président, beaucoup de pays avant nous ont réussi cette transformation de l'énergie conventionnelle à l'énergie renouvelable. M. le président, les pays tels que le Portugal, l'Espagne, l'Allemagne, la France, et l'île de la Réunion tout près de chez nous, ont réussi cette transformation de l'énergie conventionnelle à l'énergie renouvelable, en passant d'abord par cette bataille de la maîtrise de la demande de l'énergie. *La maîtrise de la demande de l'énergie, M. le président, a été initiée il y a trois ou quatre ans déjà ; 30,000 chauffe-eau solaires vendus, un million d'ampoules à basse consommation vendues.* Les 450,000 leaflets distribués dans les foyers pour conscientiser la population sur la nécessité d'économiser et de ne pas gaspiller l'énergie, comme le disait si bien l'honorable Abu Kasenally, pour qui j'ai beaucoup de respect –

'The era of cheap oil is over. Nobody owes you anything.'

Les causeries dans les écoles, initiées il y a déjà trois ans avec le ministère des Utilités Publiques et le *CEB*, démontrent que nous sommes sur la bonne voie pour gagner d'abord la bataille de la maîtrise de l'énergie. Le Portugal, M. le président, a pu réduire sa demande d'énergie de 15%, de 2,700 MW. L'Allemagne a gagné cette bataille de la maîtrise de la demande d'énergie tout comme l'île de la Réunion avant de gagner la bataille de l'énergie renouvelable.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what is valid for Mauritius is valid for Rodrigues and the Outer Islands. With the new Grenade Wind Park, the contribution of wind power in the Rodriguan context will, as from next year, reach nearly 15% of total annual energy generation and such impressive result in a short time should be a strong impetus for similar development in Mauritius main island.

Je voudrais ici, M. le président, avec votre permission, dire que l'Etat Mauricien et le *CEB* perdent chaque année plus de R 100 millions sur Rodrigues en terme d'*Operational Costs*. Nous perdons plus de R 100 millions et déjà le *CEB* est en voie d'allouer un contrat pour la construction d'une Centrale à Pointe Monnier. Ici, je voudrais lancer un appel au *Deputy Prime*

Minister. J'ai des réserves, M. le président, en ce qui concerne la nécessité d'aller de l'avant avec un tel projet à ce jour. La demande est telle, qu'à Rodrigues, nous utilisons nos machines à 50% de leur capacité. Le *load factor* à Rodrigues est de 35%, vous imaginez. La demande en pointe à Rodrigues tourne autour de 5.5 MW, alors que nous avons une capacité autour de 10 MW. Aucune étude, aucun rapport n'a jusqu'ici démontré la nécessité ; au temps où j'étais au CEB, j'ai dit que j'ai des réserves en ce qui concerne la nécessité d'aller investir, aujourd'hui, R 600 millions à Pointe Monnier.

Je lance un appel au *Deputy Prime Minister* et au Premier ministre de revoir, avec la direction du *CEB*, la nécessité de repousser, de deux à trois ans, la construction d'une Centrale à Rodrigues. Je ne dis pas que dans les deux ans la nécessité ne se fera pas sentir, mais le fait que la croissance à Rodrigues, M. le président, tourne autour de 1.9% à 2% alors que la même croissance à Maurice tourne autour de 3% à 5% en terme d'énergie. Allez mettre R 600 millions dans un projet à Pointe Monnier, je dis qu'il faudra bien y penser !

Mr Speaker, Sir, however, the challenges facing us today is mainly an economic one and we must place the environment in its true place in a realistic perspective. We should above all avoid the copy and paste temptation on what is being attempted in well developed countries. We must today rely on the imagination of our fellow countrymen for new initiatives to reach realistic goals and improve our well-being. Too often, the widespread consultation of the internet by many has prompted us to focus on issues which are out of reach and unrealistic. *J'ai écouté ce matin, je ne me rappelle plus qui posait une question sur* the CO₂ abatement. One example is the CO₂ abatement and the choice of technology for our future requirement.

In Europe today, Mr Speaker, Sir, more than five hundred thousand megawatts of electricity are derived from conventional coal plant technology whilst in Mauritius, a 100 MW power plant with comparable technology is considered by some as a major mistake, almost a crime! It is high time, *et je le dis très sincèrement, M. le président*, to state clearly and loudly that, in my opinion, in the short to medium perspective, coal technology for power generation has no credible competitor in our specific context. The incremental energy potential from all our renewable energy combined will remain marginal for at least a decade from now. The volatility of fuel oil prices and its availability should be sufficient factors for prompting a limitation of its use as far as possible.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the emergence of such technology as electric motor cars in many parts of the world, needs, in my opinion, to be given more timely attention in an insular configuration. So far, we have only focussed on the corresponding CO₂ emissions from power stations without realising the positive impact of such technology on human health through better air quality. More importantly, Mr Speaker, Sir, in spite of the plethora of experts in all fields - *surtout certains fonctionnaires* - we have not come across any study on the real economic interest for the use of the electric car in our small island. Without being myself, Mr Speaker, Sir, an expert in the matter, and from the little precious experience at CEB, I can state that in the medium-term perspective, our balance of payments could benefit from, not millions, but billions of rupees annually from this single technology of the future.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our world is evolving in the direction of more specialisation in all fields of activity. This is indeed a requirement for better results for the benefit of one and all, and such an evolution has unfortunately not necessarily been accompanied by the enhanced professional integrity of our experts or professionals. Too often, the complexity of certain matters has been the occasion for many to satisfy their personal greed and selfish interests rather than strive for the benefit of many. Typical examples, Mr Speaker, Sir, of the recent past are the unnecessary huge wastage, in my opinion, in financial resources allocated to major financial institutions and banks worldwide. The sense of responsibility of any citizen, whatever be his academic achievement, starts at primary school level with dedicated teachers to inculcate values. It is high time, Mr Speaker, Sir, that our school curriculum be revisited and I know we can put our trust on our Minister of Education.

M. le président, beaucoup a été dit et écrit sur le thème 'Maurice Ile Durable', une très brillante initiative prise il faut bien le préciser, par le Premier ministre, voilà déjà deux ans. Certains, avides de résultats immédiats, ont même parlé de coquilles vides alors qu'un tel projet ne peut s'inscrire que dans le long terme. Certaines initiatives du ministère des utilités publiques et du *CEB* ont déjà porté leurs fruits, ce qui augure bien de l'avenir du pays. Il est toutefois dommage que ceux concernés n'aient pas jugé utile de publier des résultats chiffrés pour l'information de tous, sans doute devant la crainte de certains ici même qui, peut-être, n'auraient pas manqué l'occasion de réclamer un allègement du tarif d'électricité. A cet égard, M. le président, je dis personnellement, vivement la mise sur pied d'un organisme régulateur

indépendant dans le meilleur délai, pour plus de transparence dans les informations sensibles touchant de près au porte-monnaie de nos concitoyens.

M. le président, après l'écoulement de plus de 30,000 chauffe-eau solaires, d'un million d'ampoules à basse consommation vendues, et une croissance sensible à Rodrigues de l'ordre de 15% de la part d'énergie éolienne dans la production d'électricité, le régulateur aura pour tâche immédiate de quantifier les retombées financières et relatives dans le but d'élaborer, à mon avis, une tarification plus équitable et flexible pour tous. J'espère que le régulateur aura l'occasion aussi de voir de très près la profitabilité des *IPPs* - les fameux *IPPs*, M. le président. J'ai trop !dit sur les *IPPs* pour ne rien dire ici. Mais, M. le président, les règles du jeu ne peuvent pas être changés après un match. Ces fameux *IPPs* qui font des profits exorbitants - scandaleux - sur le dos de la population. Et nous avons vu, l'autre jour, le vice-Premier ministre à la Chambre, démontrant comment la cendre, le charbon dans le sud est en train d'être propagé dans les champs de cannes ; et ces fameux *IPPs*, qui se prennent pour des donneurs de leçons, font des profits aujourd'hui. Je peux vous dire, M. le président, pendant les cinq années que j'étais au *CEB*, plusieurs dizaines de milliards de roupies ont été payées à ces *IPPs*, alors qu'en terme de risque, c'est zéro, comme le dit si bien l'honorable Ms Deerpalsing. Après la dure négociation que le Premier ministre a pu avoir avec ces fameux *IPPs*, ils ont décidé du *Commissionner* de l'arbitre qui doit départager ce que nous sommes en train de dire et ce qu'ils défendent aujourd'hui après le rapport. Moi, personnellement, comme mes camarades, j'ai déposé devant le *commissionner* et, aujourd'hui, après le rapport, ils essayent de changer les règles du jeu. C'est honteux! C'est scandaleux!

Mr Speaker, Sir, what we need to do is to re-invent the energy future. Given the volatile fuel prices in the world market, we should continue the process of exploiting alternative and renewable sources of energy in order to reduce our dependence on fossil fuel, which is at present our main production cost driver.

Within the framework of the Prime Minister's vision of *Maurice Ile Durable*, Government should, in my opinion, continue in its endeavour to shape a sustainable energy future for the country. In 2010, Mr Speaker, Sir, out of the total electricity generated, some 21% were from renewable sources, namely *bagasse* and hydro. In Rodrigues, five wind energy units are already operational at Grenade and Trèfles, but we must go much further as regards renewable energy usage. In this respect, much ahead was achieved regarding the micro-hydro

project at la Nicolière and Midlands. The setting up of a wind park at Bigara must be seriously envisaged. *On tarde trop sur ce dossier, M. le président.*

Moreover, the CEB and the Ministry of Public Utilities have been actively working on the development of a grid code and the elaboration of a feeding tariff which will set up the parameters for the production of electricity by small producers, *les fameux SIPP*s (Small Independent Power Producers), from renewable energy sources. In my opinion, Mr Speaker, Sir, this project is a major stride towards the democratisation of electricity generation and it fits well in the Government's energy policy.

M. le président, ce que nous voulons avoir c'est le fameux bouquet énergétique, préconisé par Professeur Joël de Rosnay. Les *SIPP*s, M. le président, comme préconisé par le Professeur de Rosnay dans son bouquet énergétique utilisent l'huile lourde et pour les dix années à venir il nous faudra utiliser the *oil*. On se sert du charbon, de la bagasse, de l'eau, hydro, et les fameux *SIPP*s, M. le président, viendront démontrer dans le concret la démocratisation de l'énergie. C'est presque une réalité. Il nous fallait deux choses. Le côté technique de la chose, M. le président, c'est le fameux *grid code* qui va permettre à tout un chacun, petit producteur, gros producteur, moyen producteur de se connecter sur le réseau du *CEB* tout en respectant les protocoles techniques d'accords. Ce *grid code*, *Mr Speaker, Sir, is ready*. Il nous fallait avoir le côté financier de la chose.

En ce qui concerne le *feeding tariff*, j'ai cru comprendre que c'est déjà là pour que le *CEB* achètent de l'électricité aux petits producteurs. Le *feeding tariff* est prêt. Nous verrons dans quelque temps la concrétisation des *SIPP*s comme préconisé par le Premier ministre.

The CEB, in my opinion, should continue to recognise the need to diversify its energy mix, *le bouquet énergétique*, M. le président, with a view to reducing its dependence and, by extension, the country's dependence on fossil fuel. Unfortunately or fortunately, we all expect the power to be there at a flip of the switch. What we fail to realise, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that behind that switch is an amazing interconnected grid of power lines, substations that must be continuously maintained, updated and expanded if we are to secure a sustainable energy future.

M. le président, la récente panne du *CEB* survenue le 18 juillet dernier, qui nous a valu a *PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition*, doit susciter notre réflexion sur l'état de nos réseaux du transport et de distribution. Je l'ai dit l'autre jour, M. le président, la panne du 18 juillet est un problème de transmission et de distribution à Dumas. Certes, avec raison, des milliards ont été

investis ces dix dernières années pour accroître la capacité de production de nos centrales *CEB* et privées. Mais le renforcement de nos réseaux de transport et de distribution n'ont, à mon avis, pas eu suffisamment d'attention pour garantir une qualité de service amélioré pour tous les secteurs de notre économie. Je ne veux guère être un prophète de malheur, mais je crains les effets d'un cyclone sur nos réseaux de distribution. J'en ai parlé d'ailleurs au *Deputy Prime Minister*. Nous avons des dizaines de milliers de colonnes en béton qui datent de très, très longtemps et qui pourraient nous causer d'énormes inconvénients avec les effets économiques secondaires considérables. Il est temps de revoir les investissements dans ce créneau spécifique, et j'invite ceux concernés et le *CEB* à une réflexion approfondie.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the global recession has made the situation more urgent. The crisis increased stimulus money, but this has also increased the path of development. China has become a leader in green manufacturing, producing 40% of the world's turbine firms. It typically uses high-carbon fossil fuels to manufacture these products out. It's so ironic that we are using coal power plants to manufacture energy-efficient lights.

Mr Speaker, Sir, increasing the cost of oil could make other energy sources cheaper by comparison. But it is the speed with which we can discover and refine those alternatives - more than the price of oil - that will decide our energy future. The question, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not just what a gallon of oil costs, it's what a gallon of anything that replaces oil costs. That is what we should start asking.

M. le président, pour conclure, je dirais que nous préparons actuellement les bases pour nos enfants et nos petits-enfants d'une île Maurice de 2025-2030. La responsabilité de préparer l'avenir de ce pays repose sur nos épaules. Je suis convaincu que, dans cette auguste Assemblée, au-delà de nos différences économiques et politiques, nous avons tous à cœur l'intérêt de ce pays. L'éradication de la pauvreté d'ici 2015, protéger notre environnement, gagner la bataille de l'énergie renouvelable seront, à mon avis, M. le président, les grands défis que nous aurons à relever.

L'avenir de nos enfants et de nos petits-enfants se décide aujourd'hui. Nous sommes, malheureusement, M. le président, la seule génération qui pourra influencer les décisions pour assurer notre future. Cette génération à venir ne pourra que subir les effets de nos mauvaises

décisions. C'est pour dire, M. le président, combien la responsabilité qui repose sur nos épaules est de taille. Je n'ai pas de doute, M. le président, que nous avons au sein de notre équipe les compétences voulues, des hommes et des femmes capables d'emmener l'île Maurice de demain à bon port. Je vous remercie, M. le président.

(7.22 p.m.)

Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): M. le président, permettez-moi de vous féliciter ainsi que votre adjoint, pour votre élection.

M. le président, bien que le fait d'être membre de cette auguste Assemblée n'est pas une fin en soi, c'est un honneur pour moi de représenter la circonscription de Belle Rose/Quatre Bornes pour la première fois.

M. le président, le discours-programme fait mention de beaucoup de bonnes intentions, comme c'est la tradition, mais il convient de révéler certains aspects qui, à mon avis, à tort, ont été omis. Parmi on retrouve l'endettement de la population qui cause un tort immense aux mauriciens et, ce, quelque soit leur rang social. Beaucoup a été dit lors de l'adoption du *Protection of Borrowers Act*, mais il convient de souligner que le nombre de saisies n'a pas diminué au *Master's Court* et le calvaire des mauriciens vulnérables continue. Il convient de s'attaquer à la source du problème. Bien que le champ d'action des casseurs soit limité, la pratique bancaire reste toujours excessive à travers la comptabilisation des intérêts, des pénalités des *bank charges* et autres *early repayment fees*. Il est temps de légiférer pour rendre plus juste cette pratique bancaire.

M. le président, il est vrai de dire que nous sommes dans une société de consommation, où règne la loi du marché. Le gouvernement doit assumer ses responsabilités pour rétablir l'ordre social et le pouvoir d'achat des mauriciens. Depuis 2005, le foyer mauricien s'est appauvri à travers la *NRPT*, la taxe sur l'épargne, l'élimination des subsides sur les *fees* du *SC/HSC*, l'abolition des *incentives for first time buyers* pour l'acquisition des biens bâties ou non bâties pour la première fois, l'introduction de la taxe de vente sur les biens acquis des successions. La taxe de vente sur les terrains sous plantation de cannes a été introduite pour la première fois

et, là, je citerai aussi, à un moment donné, l'augmentation du quantum de l'*Automatic Pricing Mechanism* à vingt pour cent.

M. le président, à travers les recherches au *MCIB* et au bureau du *Registrar General*, les institutions créancières peuvent juger le degré d'endettement grevant les biens immobiliers des débiteurs. Toutefois, rien n'est prévu pour cette frénésie d'achat à travers les ventes à crédit. Les mauriciens, il faut le dire, sont à la merci de la campagne plus qu'agressive des centres commerciaux. La baisse du *National Savings Rate* ne doit pas constituer une surprise car tous les ingrédients sont réunis pour pousser les mauriciens à une consommation à outrance et, très souvent, au détriment de la famille.

M. le président, le jeu est devenu la règle dans la société mauricienne. Avez-vous joué au Loto aujourd'hui ? C'est cela la règle, M. le président. Il serait intéressant de faire un exercice dans les quartiers du pays et vous serez surpris de constater le ratio de maisons de jeux par rapport au nombre d'habitants des différents quartiers. Permettez-moi de faire une petite parenthèse, M. le président, pour la ville de Quatre Bornes. C'est un fait qu'il y a des problèmes engendrés par le casino de Ti Vegas. C'est vrai, c'est une réalité et c'est un véritable calvaire pour la ville de Quatre bornes. C'est un fait, mais il ne faut surtout pas passer sous silence l'existence des autres *bookmakers*: Play on Line; Bet On Line, *SMS Pariaz* qui polluent les quartiers résidentiels de la ville depuis 2005. Il faut le reconnaître, les maisons de jeux ont violé la vocation résidentielle de la ville de Quatre Bornes. Par contre, la productivité est scrupuleusement respectée avec le concept 24/7 dans le secteur des jeux. Il n'y a plus de *off or peak season* dans le monde des jeux, M. le président.

M. le président, l'effritement du pouvoir d'achat des familles mauriciennes est un fait. On ne peut parler de démocratisation de l'économie sans le rétablissement du pouvoir d'achat des mauriciens.

M. le président, la campagne électorale est derrière nous. Permettez-moi d'aborder en tant que député et habitant et, non pas, comme candidat de Belle Rose/Quatre Bornes, les défis auxquels doit faire face cette ville. Il n'est nullement mon intention de vous énumérer les longues réalisations de l'administration MMM. Je regarde l'avenir. Quatre Bornes est en plein

expansion avec l'annexion des régions telles que Trianon, Ebène et Pierrefonds à Bassin. De grands chantiers sont en construction dans ces régions. Il convient de venir de l'avant avec une vraie politique d'urbanisme, avec une délimitation des zones commerciales, résidentielles et industrielles. Les casinos et autres maisons de jeux seront ainsi limités à des zones spécifiques hors des zones résidentielles. Il suffit d'avoir une volonté politique pour cela. Les petites entreprises mauriciennes, qui forment partie de notre culture, seront ainsi mieux encadrées. La construction d'un nouveau marché est long *overdue*. Il a été annoncé la démolition du stade de Codos pour faire de la place à un grand espace commercial. J'accueille favorablement le projet d'un nouveau marché pour Quatre Bornes. Moi-même, en tant qu'ex-Maire de Quatre Bornes, j'ai fait des propositions concrètes mais, malheureusement, avec le changement de gouvernement, il y a eu une nouvelle culture pour cela. J'accueille favorablement la nécessité d'un nouveau marché. Il convient toutefois de rassurer les sportifs de la construction d'un nouveau stade digne de ce nom avec l'aménagement des gradins, d'une piste synthétique et des facilités de lumières pour la pratique du sport en nocturne. Sachons faire la différence entre un terrain de foot et un stade!

La construction d'un nouveau marché à la place du stade de Codos soulève un certain nombre de questions, notamment, quant à l'aménagement du trafic routier dans cette région. Pendant toute la journée la situation est complètement bloquée, notamment pour ceux qui empruntent la route de Vacoas à Quatre Bornes ou en sens inverse. On ne peut nier l'importance de l'hôpital Victoria et du centre nerveux que représente le carrefour de La Louise. C'est un fait que les élections municipales sont derrière la porte, mais il convient de procéder à un *proper traffic impact assessment* avant de s'embarquer dans un tel projet. Il est vrai de dire que la nouvelle route, reliant Paillotte à Beaux Songes, soulagera d'une certaine mesure le trafic, mais il convient de se rendre à l'évidence que le gros du trafic provient de l'hôpital Victoria et de Vacoas vers le centre-ville et vice versa. D'ailleurs tous ceux qui empruntent le tronçon de La Louise au rond point de St Jean prennent plus de temps, M. le président, pour relier le rond point de St Jean à Port Louis. L'élargissement de l'Avenue Tulipes va dans le bon sens. La construction des complexes résidentiels et des centres commerciaux dans la périphérie et dans le centre de Quatre Bornes multiplieront par cinq ou plus le nombre d'usagers de la route. L'aménagement d'un trafic routier digne de ce nom est un *must* pour l'ensemble de la ville de

Quatre Bornes. Le *management by crisis* est révolu, il est temps de travailler en amont face aux défis d'urbanisme que la ville de Quatre Bornes est appelée à faire face.

La ville de Quatre Bornes subit un manque de fourniture d'eau dans les régions de SSR et Goyavier au morcellement St Jean, et à La Louise, Palma et Northern Boundary plus précisément.

Le *Land Drainage Committee* qui a été gelé à un moment donné doit être réactivé. Mettons de côté la politique partisane. Le *Land Drainage Committee* doit être réactivé pour aménager des drains appropriés dans les régions de Candos, Lall Bahadoor Shastri et de Coriolis/Ollier.

Il semble que la construction d'un nouveau cimetière commence à prendre forme. C'est très bien. Il convient de préciser toutefois si ce cimetière sera ouvert à toutes les religions et qui va l'administrer. Les travaux de *sewerage* sont en cours dans l'ensemble de la ville de Quatre Bornes, mais il convient de souligner que malgré quelques efforts notables le problème de pollution persiste et la circulation demande à être améliorée.

Le centre ville de Quatre Bornes malheureusement - et c'est un fait - est en proie à la prostitution et le trafic de la drogue semble être banalisé comme un fait divers par les autorités. Il n'y a pas de quartier populaire et cela affecte tous les quartiers de Quatre Bornes. M. le président, il est important d'inculquer un sens d'appartenance à la population. Une véritable politique culturelle doit constituer la priorité des administrateurs. Les infrastructures municipales doivent être accessibles aux artistes de la ville. Que la politique culturelle ne se résume pas à une question de '*bout*' ou de quota, mais constitue bien un élément important dans le *nation-building*.

M. le président, l'île Maurice est passée au statut de République en 1992, avec un gouvernement dans lequel le pouvoir n'appartient pas à un seul et, où, les fonctions politiques, publiques ne sont pas héréditaires. Le chef de l'Etat n'est pas d'origine héréditaire. Jean Jacques Rousseau écrit dans son contrat social –

« J'appelle donc République tout Etat régi par les lois, sous quelque forme d'administration que se puisse être : car alors seulement l'intérêt public gouverne et la chose publique est quelque chose qui permet à tout gouvernement guidé par la volonté générale qui est la loi. L'égalité devant la loi est reconnue ».

La Constitution du pays garantit cette égalité de droit et cette égalité devant les lois. Il nous appartient, en tant que législateur dans notre société multiculturelle, de préserver cette égalité. Au sens strict du terme, M. le président, la laïcité préconise la séparation de l'Etat et de la religion.

La dérive sectaire à Maurice est omniprésente. N'a-t-on pas entendu un chef religieux dire qu'il a entre les mains le vote de plus de 400,000 mauriciens. La distribution de la méthadone a même été stoppée dans l'enceinte de l'hôpital Victoria. L'embarras du ministre de l'éducation de venir de l'avant avec une éducation sexuelle appropriée pour les enfants dans le cursus scolaire est expliquée par cette crainte de levée de boucliers des organisations sectaires de par cette sacrosainte expression « *dan nou pena sa* ». Le constat de l'État est sans ambiguïté. Plus de 75% des jeunes découvrent et s'instruisent de la sexualité à travers la pornographie. M. le ministre de l'éducation, nous sommes derrière vous pour un tel projet!

La laïcité est le principe de la séparation de l'Etat et de la religion. L'État n'exerçant aucun pouvoir religieux et les religions aucun pouvoir politique, mais l'État garantissant le libre exercice des cultes.

La laïcité est avant tout, et surtout, un effort constant, une dynamique, une volonté tendue vers un idéal de progrès moral, culturel, social et scientifique. La confiance et le respect de l'homme sont ainsi reconnus et valorisés.

M. le président, il nous appartient, en tant que législateur, de défendre ces droits et aussi ces devoirs qui sont garantis par notre Constitution et cela même aux dépens de quelques votes. Il nous appartient, pour la sauvegarde de la nation multiculturelle, de pérenniser ces valeurs républicaines et de la laïcité.

M. le président, nous sommes tous issus d'un système électoral communément appelé le *First Past the Post*. C'est une opinion largement partagée qu'est le fait que notre présent système électoral est source de grandes injustices. Le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, *leader* du Parti Travailiste, était perplexe en 1991. Son parti, avec 20% de suffrages, n'avait récolté que 13.7% de sièges. En 1995, Sir Anerood Jugnauth...

(Interruptions)

L'honorable membre a parfaitement raison. En 1991, c'était 40% de suffrages et il n'avait récolté que 13.7% de sièges. En 1995, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, avec 20% de suffrages, n'avait récolté zéro siège. Le Parti travailliste, avec 37% de suffrages en l'an 2000, n'a récolté

que 11.4% de sièges et le MMM en 2010, avec 43% de suffrages, n'a récolté que 30% de sièges. La nécessité d'une réforme se fait de plus en plus sentir. Dire qu'il y a lieu de réforme ne signifie pas qu'on révèle son appartenance politique. Ma démarche ne tend nullement à insinuer que la responsabilité des aberrations incombe à un parti distinct.

Il est reproché que c'est la classe politique qui est à blâmer de par son hypocrisie lorsqu'un tel système lui est bénéfique. Venir affirmer et venir de l'avant pour dire que tout système électoral doit refléter toutes les nuances physiques ou idéologiques et que l'Assemblée Nationale doit être un microcosme, une réduction parfaite du corps des représentants, c'est tout simplement afficher sa couleur pour la démocratie.

La réforme du système électoral passe, bien sûr, par une représentativité plus juste. Il est vrai de dire que le scrutin majoritaire plurinominal à un tour est une mauvaise indication de la volonté du peuple. La solution ne se situe pas nécessairement uniquement dans la proportionnelle qui est, très souvent, source d'instabilité comme c'est le cas en Italie. Il convient de trouver un système mixte qui inclut le *First Past the Post* et la proportionnelle. Le mode de scrutin choisit le modèle pour modeler la scène politique et aussi la réaction du public. Il n'est un secret pour personne que la bipolarisation de la scène politique tente à accentuer le réflexe communal des mauriciens.

M. le président, quand on parle de réforme du système électoral, il convient de parler aussi du financement des partis politiques. Le *Representation of People Act* dresse les contours des dépenses des candidats des partis qui sont limités à R 150,000. Très souvent, on nous accuse de ne pas dévoiler les vrais chiffres de dépenses. La loi ne fait aucune mention du support financier provenant des partis politiques qui, très souvent, il faut le dire, dépasse les limites de l'imaginaire. La volonté du peuple est violée pour une question de sous. N'est-il pas temps que l'État assure le financement des partis ou des candidats ayant atteint un certain quotient électoral?

Le rôle de l'*Electoral Supervisory Commission* ne doit pas se limiter qu'au déroulement des élections, mais bien agir comme chien de garde même pendant la campagne électorale. Cela ne se fera qu'avec un code d'éthique ayant force de loi. Est-ce qu'il faut appeler cela un code d'éthique ou tout simplement un code électoral ? Les inégalités du poids électoral des différentes circonscriptions est un fait. Les récentes recommandations de l'*Electoral Boundaries Commission* sont restées lettre morte. La prise en compte du pourcentage des suffrages au niveau

national atténuerait d'une certaine mesure les conséquences des inégalités du poids électoral des différentes circonscriptions.

M. le président, avant de terminer, permettez-moi, avant tout, de remercier le *leader* du MMM pour la confiance placée en moi, mes deux colistiers, Vijay Makhan et Robert Hungley, qui n'ont pas été élus, mais qui quand même sont en train d'abattre un travail d'équipe formidable dans la circonscription No. 18, et aussi je tiens à remercier toute cette famille militante et, bien sûr, je suis redevable vis-à-vis de cet électorat de Belle Rose/Quatre Bornes.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

Mr Gungah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the debate.

Mr Varma rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

PUBLIC BILLS

The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Choonee): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I do not propose to move for the second reading of the following Bills today –

- (a) The Arabic-Speaking Union Bill (No. VII of 2010)
- (b) The Bhojpuri-Speaking Union Bill (No. VIII of 2010)
- (c) The Creole-Speaking Union Bill (No. IX of 2010)
- (d) The Mandarin-Speaking Union Bill (No. X of 2010)
- (e) The Sanskrit-Speaking Union Bill (No. XI of 2010)

ADJOURNMENT

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 10 August 2010, at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Bachoo rose and seconded.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTER RAISED

LONG MOUNTAIN – CREMATION GROUND

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for granting me the permission to raise a specific matter at adjournment time, addressed to the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, pertaining to the need to earmark an alternative site at Long Mountain for the putting up of a cremation ground in view of the state of the old one and the fact that the Terre Rouge/Verdun highway passes through the new one.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the existing cremation ground found at Boulingrin, Long Mountain, is very old and is in a deplorable state. I have also been informed that the existing cremation ground is found on a private land. Between 2000 and 2005 the then Government acquired a plot of land in Long Mountain and built a new cremation ground. For reasons still not known, Mr Speaker, Sir, the new cremation ground was never put to use during the past five years. A few weeks ago a new cremation ground was demolished. The reason given was that the cremation ground fell on the road alignment of the Terre Rouge/Verdun highway, the construction of which is in progress. The inhabitants of Long Mountain are very much concerned and worried and need to be reassured. Although the inhabitants of Long Mountain welcome this project, that is, the Terre Rouge/Verdun highway, they want to know whether they are going to have a new cremation ground. They want to be informed whether Government has already acquired a piece of land to build a new cremation ground.

I am also informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the actual Government, during the last mandate, promised the inhabitants of Long Mountain, a modern cremation ground but, up to now, they have not heard anything about this new project. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, through this matter, I would request the hon. Minister to inform the House as to where matters stand as at today and reassure the inhabitants of Long Mountain that they will have a new cremation ground and in a reasonable time frame. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a statement on the issue raised by the hon. Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue on the need to earmark an alternative site at Long Mountain for the putting up of a cremation ground in view of the state of the old one and the fact that the Terre Rouge/Verdun highway passes through the new one.

I am informed by the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council that it is fully aware of the need on an alternative site for a new cremation ground at Long Mountain and consultations are being held with the Long Mountain Village Council in this regard.

In the meantime, prompt action is being taken by the Council to upgrade the existing cremation ground at Boulingrin. I am closely following up the matter with the District Council for the future.

At 7.45 p.m. the sitting was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 10 August 2010, at 11.30 a.m.

**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
BANK OF MAURITIUS – NET PROFIT**

(No. 1B/402) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Bank of Mauritius, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank, information as to the amount of net profit made and the amount of dividend paid to Government in 2009, indicating the estimates thereof for the year 2010, and
- (b) state -
 - (i) how the change, if any, would impact the current budget, and
 - (ii) if Government holds a view on the investment of the Bank in gold reserves in regard of fiscal revenue optimisation.

Reply: For the accounting year 2008/09 the net profit of the Bank of Mauritius amounted to Rs1.4 billion. As per Section 11 of the Bank of Mauritius Act 2004, Rs1.2 billion, representing 85 per cent of the profit, was paid in January 2010 into the Consolidated Fund.

For the accounting year 2009/10, I am informed that the Bank of Mauritius is projecting a profit of around Rs60 m. This means that only around Rs51 m. will be paid into the Consolidated Fund. As per the Bank of Mauritius Act, the amount will have to be paid into the Consolidated Fund as soon as practicable.

As regards part (b) (i) of the question, there will be no impact on the 2010 Budget as the Rs1.2 billion estimated in the Programme-Based Budget (PBB) has been credited. For 2011, it is anticipated that lower profits will be remitted to Government by the Bank of Mauritius. Clearly,

this situation will have to be taken into account in preparing the 2011 Budget as part of the 2011, 2012 and 2013 PBB.

Regarding part (b) (ii) of the question, our reserves are managed by the Central Bank, and is not and should not be driven by fiscal revenue optimisation objectives, but rather to ensure that the country's reserve position is adequate and safe.

TOURISM INDUSTRY & FINANCIAL SERVICES - SUBSIDIES AND GRANTS

(No. 1B/403) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to subsidies and grants, he will state the amount thereof disbursed in 2008 and 2009 and budgeted in 2010 for the –

- (a) protection of the local industry;
- (b) promotion of the Tourism Industry, and
- (c) promotion of financial services, giving the names of the beneficiaries and state if an evaluation study has been carried out to determine the efficiency of use.

Reply: Under Budget item subsidies and grants, the sums disbursed for protection of local industry, promotion of tourism industry and for promotion of financial services are effected through contributions to Enterprise Mauritius, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) and the Board of Investment (BOI).

The subsidies which are being given through the Budget to EM and SMEDA are meant to cover their staff, administrative and running costs. For the year 2008-2009, an amount of Rs40 m. was provided to EM while for the six months ending December 2009, the subsidy earmarked was Rs18 m. For the year 2010, a provision of Rs43 m. has been made.

As regards SMEDA, for the year 2008-2009 an amount of Rs33.5 m. was provided as grant while for the six months ended December 2009, the grant earmarked was Rs15 m.. For 2010, a provision of Rs34 m. has been made.

With regard to part (b), grants are provided through the Budget to Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) to finance promotion campaign to raise the visibility of Mauritius in existing markets as well as short and medium haul destinations. In financial year 2008/09 and the six months ending December 2009, Rs458.8 m. and Rs204.0 m. on respectively were provided to the MTPA. For 2010, a sum of Rs360 m. has been earmarked in the Budget.

As regards part (c), promotion of financial services, I am informed that in October 2006, the Financial Services Promotion Agency (FSPA) merged with the Board of Investment (BOI). Following the merger, the Investment Promotion Act 2000 was amended to extend the role of the BOI to include the promotion of Mauritius as an International Financial Centre.

Since then, the BOI has engaged with local financial services stakeholders for the effective promotion of the sector through a number of activities supported by private sector operators through sponsorships. I would like to inform the house that as such, no subsidies or/and grants are disbursed to stakeholders in the financial services industry by the BOI.

Our vision is to transform Mauritius into the financial hub of the region. In 2009, financial intermediation accounted for 11.60% of our GDP. In order to sustain the growth of the financial sector, in 2008, promotional expenses made by the BOI amounted to Rs4.5 m. while in 2009, this figure stood at nearly Rs15 m. Promotional activities undertaken by the BOI included

-
- (i) investment promotion missions to Europe and India,
- (ii) recruitment of a PR agency in India to address the negative perception of the Mauritius offshore jurisdiction in India;
- (iii) organisation of two major conferences in Mauritius, namely the 2008 Financial Services symposium and the 2009 Private Equity Conference in Mauritius, and
- (iv) featured articles in major international publications as well as technical promotional materials like brochures.

These promotional activities have allowed Mauritius to be positioned as an International Financial Centre of substance and repute and address the negative perception issue of our financial platform in some jurisdictions.

I am also informed by the BOI that major international financial and legal institutions have expressed their strong interests to establish a presence locally. I understand that the BOI is closely following the leads generated from these activities.

I am equally informed by the BOI that as per their 2010 financial services marketing plan, a total amount of Rs10 m. has been allocated to further enhance the visibility and marketing of the jurisdiction.

As regards the last part of the question, monitoring and scrutiny in reference to the utilisation of the said funds are undertaken at a decentralised level at the specific line Ministries, taking into account the targets earmarked in the PBB process.

EVENTS MAURITIUS LTD – CHAIRPERSON AND MANAGING DIRECTOR

(No. 1A/52) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to Events Mauritius Ltd, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the -

- (a) names of its Chairpersons and Managing Directors, since its incorporation to date, indicating their respective terms and conditions of appointment;
- (b) cash sponsorships obtained since 2006 to 2009, on a yearly basis and from January 2010 to May 2010;
- (c) names of the Auditors and Legal Advisers, indicating the fees paid to them since 2006 to date, and
- (d) number of vehicles attached thereto, indicating their make and date of purchase.

Reply: With regard to part (a), Events Mauritius Ltd was incorporated in June 2007 to identify, organise and manage national and international events. The company was set up to take over part of the activities of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority relating to the organisation of these events.

Mr Michael Sik Yuen was appointed as Chairman as from 05 July 2007 and he resigned on 16 April 2010. Mr Thierry Henry was appointed as Manager (part-time) on 05 July 2007 and he resigned on 15 April 2010.

After the resignation of both the Chairman and Director, the posts have remained vacant since then. Details of the salaries, allowances and fees paid to each of them are as follows -

Chairman			
Period	Monthly Fees	Monthly Petrol Allowance	Monthly Phone Allowance
From July 2007 up to November 2007	10,000	Nil	Nil
From December 2007 up to June 2008	25,000	Nil	Nil
From July 08 up to December 09	25,000	8000	2000
From January 2010 up to April 2010	25,420	8000	2000

Manager			
Period	Monthly Salary	Monthly Petrol Allowance	Monthly Phone Allowance

From August 2007 up to November 2007	10,000	Nil	Nil
From December 2007 up to June 2008	25,000	Nil	Nil
From July 08 up to December 09	25,000	8,000	2,000
From January 2010 up to April 2010	25,420	8,000	2,000

With regard to part (b) (i), cash sponsorship obtained since 2006 to 2009 (yearly) -

Year	Sponsorship obtained (Rs)
2006	Nil
2007	3,026,695.00
2008	20,946,732.06
2009	35,760,905.53
TOTAL	59,734,332.59

(ii) Cash sponsorship obtained from January to May 2010 (monthly) -

Date	Company	Amount (Rs)
25/01/10	Mauritius Commercial Bank	50,000.00
04/03/10	Body Guard Ltd	1,000.00
04/03/10	Striker Production Ltd	4,025.00
08/03/10	MTPA	3,769,590.01
Total:		3,824,615.01

With regard to part (c) (i), name of Auditor and Legal Adviser -

	Name
Auditor	Mr Niganah Ramdoo
Legal Adviser	Mr R. Bucktownsing

(ii) Fees paid to Auditor and Legal Adviser from 2006 to date -

Fees Paid to Auditor

Date	Amount (Rs)
14/04/2008	36,840
23/12/2009	69,000
08/03/2010	34,500
15/04/2010	103,500

Fees Paid to Legal Adviser

Date	(Rs)
11/06/2008	11,500
22/11/2008	28,750
11/08/2009	57,500
21/12/2009	115,000
22/11/2008	28,750

(d) Events Mauritius Ltd neither owns and nor has purchased any vehicle since its incorporation to date.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - ADVISERS

(No. 1A/53) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Advisers appointed by his Ministry since May 2010 to date, he will state their names indicating –

- (a) their qualifications;
- (b) their terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (c) if they have been appointed to represent him or his Ministry on the Board of Parastatal Bodies and/or of Government-owned companies and, if so, give details thereof, including the fees paid to them, in each case.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled.

MUNICIPALITY OF VACOAS/PHOENIX – COUNCILORS - OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. 1A/54) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the overseas missions undertaken by the Mayor and the Municipal Councilors of Vacoas/Phoenix, since October 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, information, in each case, as to the –

- (a) countries visited and the duration thereof;
- (b) composition of the delegation;
- (c) total amount of money spent in terms of air tickets, *per diem* and/or any other allowances, and
- (d) purpose of each mission.

Reply: The information requested is being placed in the Library.

MON CHOISY BEACH - TOILETS BLOCKS

(No. 1A/55) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the conversion of the toilets blocks at the Mon Choisy Beach into a restaurant, he will state the name of the promoter thereof, indicating when authorisation was granted for such a project.

Reply (Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands): A policy decision was taken by the Board of the Beach Authority to upgrade some existing old unused buildings found on some public beaches for eventual renting for trading purposes, for the following reasons -

- (a) these buildings represented an eyesore and a potential source of attracting illegal activities, and
- (b) it was also a measure to generate a source of revenue to the Authority.

I am informed by the Beach Authority that following invitation of open bids on 21 October 2009, the three unoccupied buildings at Mon Choisy public beach have been allocated on 30 December 2009 to the following highest bidders -

Bidders	Building Nos.	Amount Quoted (Rs) (Monthly)
Red Shrimps Ltd	1	41,000
Cheval Marin Co. Ltd	2	24,000
Water Lake Co. Ltd	3	14,000

I am, however, informed that the lease agreement signed on 30 December 2009 between the Beach Authority and the bidders provides at paragraph 6(2)(iii) that the occupiers shall “effect modifications or alterations to the structure of the premises, any expenses incurred thereon are not reclaimed to the Authority at any point of time”.

MUNICIPALITY OF BEAU BASSIN/ROSE HILL – COUNCILORS - OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. 1A/56) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the overseas missions undertaken by the Mayor and the Municipal Councilors of Beau Bassin/Rose

Hill, since October 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information, in each case, as to the –

- (a) countries visited and the duration thereof;
- (b) composition of the delegation;
- (c) amount of money spent in terms of air tickets, *per diem* and/or any other allowances, and
- (d) purpose of each mission.

Reply: The information requested is being placed in the Library.

BEAU BASSIN - BUS SHELTERS

(No. 1A/57) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to bus shelters, he will consider causing a survey to be carried out on the need for adequate number thereof at bus stops along the Pope Hennessy, Pasteur and Chateauneuf Streets, in Beau Bassin and take actions for the putting up of same.

Reply: The TMRSU has informed that a survey has already been carried out on existing bus stops along Pope Hennessy and Pasteur Streets. Based on this, it was found out that there already exists one bus shelter at one bus stop at Pope Hennessy Street. As regards Pasteur Street which is a one-way road, there is only one bus stop and it is not equipped with a bus shelter.

It has further informed that the Chateauneuf Street is not a bus route.

CIRCULAR MIGRATION PROJECT

(No. 1A/58) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Circular Migration project, he will state when it will be operational.

Reply: As the hon. Member may be aware, the Government of Mauritius has approached friendly countries, including France, Canada and the Commission of the European Union (EU) to conclude bilateral Circular Migration Agreements with a view to increasing employment opportunities and assist professionals to acquire knowledge, experience and international

exposure. So far, a Circular Migration Agreement has been signed and ratified with France and this Agreement will become operational in September 2010.

In addition, a labour migration project with Canada is already under implementation with Canada, with the support of the International Organisation for Migration while discussion with Canada is being pursued for the conclusion of a Bilateral Agreement on Circular Migration.

Bilateral Circular Migration with France

The Bilateral Circular Migration Agreement (hereinafter referred to as “Accord” with France entitled: “*Accord relatif au séjour et à la Migration Circulaire de Professionnels entre la République Française et de la République de l’île Maurice*” was signed on 23 September 2008 by the then vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment, hon. R. Stamen, on behalf of the Government of Mauritius and Mr Brice Hortefeux, in his capacity of *Ministre de l’Immigration de l’Intégration, de l’Identité Nationale et du Développement Solidaire*, on behalf of the French Government. This *Accord*, concluded for an indefinite duration, has been recognised as a model agreement, the first of its kind in the world.

As per Article 6 of the *Accord*, the Bilateral Circular Migration Agreement with France shall enter into force: “... *le premier jour du deuxième mois qui suit la date de la dernière notification de l’accomplissement par chacun des Parties des procédures constitutionnelles requises*”. The *Accord* will, therefore, enter into force after having completed the ratification procedures by both parties.

In line with Article 4 of the *Accord*, Mauritius and France have decided to set up a “*Comité de Suivi*” on yearly basis, comprising representatives of both parties, to discuss the implementation of the *Accord*.

Ratification of the *Accord*

In 2009, the French Senate examined the *Accord* and recommended it to the French National Assembly for consideration and adoption. In April 2010, the French National Assembly approved the *Accord*.

Through a *Note Verbale* dated 15 July 2010, the French Embassy in Mauritius forwarded a letter dated 03 June 2010 signed by the French Minister of “*Affaires Etrangères et Européennes*”, Mr Bernard Kouchner, confirming that France has completed all Constitutional procedures for the entry into force of the *Accord*.

Following the communication from the French Authorities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade after consulting the Prime Minister's Office and the State Law Office has confirmed to the French that ratification procedures by Mauritius have also been completed.

Pursuant to Article 6 of the *Accord*, it is, therefore, envisaged that the *Accord* will enter into force in September 2010.

Employment opportunities under the Accord

I would like to inform the House of the potential benefits of the *Accord*. Once the *Accord* would enter into force, in addition to the special regime governing students, each year 850 Mauritian Nationals would be eligible to work in France in the categories defined hereunder -

- (i) “*Métiers autorisés*” (61 job categories for skilled workers has been jointly identified as being priority areas of demand. These include broadly, sectors such as Construction, the Hotel Industry, Agriculture, Mechanical and Metal work, Electronics and Electricity, the Processing Industry, Maintenance and Community services amongst others) : Each year, 500 Mauritians would be provided with a visa of “*long séjour temporaire d'une durée maximale de 15 mois avec la possibilité de prolongation pour une durée équivalente*”.
- (ii) “*Echanges de jeunes professionnels*” (18-35 ans): Each year 200 Mauritians (and on the basis of reciprocity) who are seeking professional experience would be provided an “*autorisation de travail de douze mois, susceptible d'être prolongée de six mois*”.
- (iii) “*Cartes Compétences et talents*”: Each year 150 Mauritians (“*susceptibles de participer, du fait de leurs compétences et de leurs talents, de façon significative et durable au développement économique ou au rayonnement, notamment intellectuel, scientifique, culturel, humanitaire ou sportif de la France et, indirectement, de Maurice*”)) would be accorded a visa of three years, renewable once only.

Dissemination of Information on Circular Migration

With the growing interest among the Mauritian public in migration opportunities abroad, the Government of Mauritius launched the Mauritius Circular Migration Database (MCMD) in February 2010. The MCMD, an online job matching tool is designed to match labour supply with demand of foreign employers. It is a permanent database that offers the services of a pool of potential employees with a variety of qualifications, skills, experience and interests. This tool also serves to expedite the selection process, reduce overall costs and time, thereby making recruitment in Mauritius more competitive and cost effective. The main functions of the MCMD are to register Mauritians who are interested in temporary employment abroad and to enable employers to make an online selection of candidates who best suit their desired profile. As at July 2010, 2,959 candidates have been registered.

Mauritian nationals who are interested to work abroad can also consult the website www.myjob.mu, which is under the supervision of the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), to obtain information on employment opportunities abroad.

VALLÉE PITOT - CANAL ANGLAIS

(No. 1A/59) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Canal Anglais in Vallée Pitot, he will state the measures that are being taken to ensure that there is no overflow during heavy rainfalls.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that cleaning is being done on a regular basis all along Canal Anglais, which is more than three km long, to ensure that there is no overflow during heavy rainfall. However, prior to the heavy rainfall period a special cleaning was effected from the month of December 2009 to February 2010 which consisted of removal of earth and debris which were accumulated due to rainfall and steep slope.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT - PROSECUTIONS

(No. 1A/60) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state the

number of prosecutions lodged by his Ministry for breach of the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, over the last three years, indicating the outcome thereof, in each case.

Reply: The information asked for is being tabled in the National Assembly.

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS (STATE) –
TEACHERS & HEAD TEACHERS - TRANSFER**

(No. 1A/61) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the State Primary Schools, he will state the number of –

- (a) General Purpose Teachers in post, indicating the number thereof who have been transferred, since January 2010 to date, and
- (b) Head Teachers, including Acting Head Teachers in post, indicating the number thereof who have been transferred since January 2010 to date.

Reply: As regards part (a), the answer is as follows -

No. of Teachers/Senior Teachers in post	:	2,320
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No. of Teachers/Senior Teachers who have been transferred from January 2010 to date	:	342
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As regards part (b) of the question, the answer is as follows -

No. of Head Masters (formerly Head Teachers) in post	:	167
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No. of Acting Head Masters	:	46
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213

No. of Head Masters/Ag. Head Masters who have been transferred from January 2010 to date	:	58
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**STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS & COLLEGES - FOOTBALL PITCH ,
GYMNASIUM & MULTI-PURPOSE HALL**

(No. 1A/62) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the State Secondary Schools and Colleges, he will state the number thereof in which there is a –

- (a) football pitch;
- (b) gymnasium, and
- (c) multi-purpose hall.

Reply: The information in regard to State Secondary Schools and Colleges is as follows -

<u>Amenities</u>	<u>Number</u>
(a) Football Pitch	42
(b) & (c) Gymnasium / Multipurpose Hall	32

GARDEN TOWER - PURCHASE

(No. 1A/63) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the purchase of levels 2 to 16 of the Garden Tower, he will give details of the -

- (a) cost of each floor;
- (b) date of purchase;
- (c) area of each floor, and
- (d) name of the vendor.

Reply (Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands): With regard to parts (a), (b) and (d) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development that the promise of sale document in respect of the Garden Tower was signed on 30 December 2009 for the sum of Rs415.5 m. and the vendor is DBM Properties Development Ltd registered as a Private Company Limited bearing registration No. 50805 issued by the Registrar of Companies on 10 May 2004.

As far as part(c) of the question is concerned, I am informed that the built up area is as follows -



- (a) cost of each floor;
- (b) date of purchase;
- (c) area of each floor, and
- (d) name of the vendor.

Car Park	Level 2,
	Level 3, and 2005 sq. mt. each
	Level 4
Floor 5 (office)	825 sq. mt.
Floors 6-13	682 sq. mt. each
Floor 14	496 sq. mt.
Floors 15&16	478 sq. mt. each

GARDEN TOWER - LEASE

(No. 1A/64) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the lease of the ground floor, mezzanine floor and level 1 parking of the Garden Tower, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Development Bank of Mauritius Limited, information as to if tender procedures have been followed, indicating, in each case -

- (a) the name of the bidders;
- (b) their respective bids;
- (c) the name of the successful bidders, and
- (d) the space rented.

Reply: I am informed that the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd is one of the shareholders of the DBM Properties Development Ltd, which is the legal entity responsible for the Garden Tower Project.

In February 2006, the invitations for Expression of Interest were advertised in the local newspapers, namely “*L’Express*”, “*Le Mauricien*”, “*Le Matinal*” and “*Mauritius Times*” for the following -

1. City Centre Supermarket covering an area in excess of 2,000 sq. mt.
2. Food Court Operator.
3. Car Park Management.
4. Property Marketing Agent for Retail & Developments.

As at closing date, which was 15 March 2006, the following submissions for Expression of Interest were received -

<u>Company</u>	<u>Expression of Interest</u>
1. B. Hassanal & Co Ltd	Shop in Garden Tower
2. Winners	City Centre
3. <i>Immobilier Conseil</i> Consultants for Expansion	
Holding (Mtius) Ltd.	City Centre Supermarket
4. Soprges Ltée	Property Marketing Agent
5. Shoprite	City Centre Supermarket
6. High Security Guards Ltd.	Car Park Management
7. Aida Ltd.	Food Court Operator

The Board of the DBM Properties Development Ltd. has, after analysis of the offers made, awarded the lease in respect of the City Centre Supermarket to the best offer, namely, Expansion Holding Ltd.

After analysis, the offer of Aida Ltd, a South African Company, for the Food Court Operator, was accepted. Subsequently, the South African Company pulled out of the deal.

The DBM Properties Development Ltd re-advertised for Expression of Interest for Rental of Food Court and Shops on the mezzanine on “*L’Express*” and “*Le Mauricien*” on 09 July and 19 July 2009.

The following Expressions of Interest were received -

1. Redeemer Ltd.
2. Venilla Luchmee Marimootoo.
3. Happy Eater Ltd.
4. Restaurant Noor Ajoumal Nabee.
5. Coffee Mystica Ltd.
6. NR Consultancy Ltd.

7. Mrs Z Jackaria c/o NAFY Snack
8. Invest Seventy Four Co. Ltd.
9. Aditya & Ajinkya Co. Ltd.
10. Sen & Ken Restaurant
11. Jugdish Ramjug

After analysis, the Board of DBM has awarded the lease for the mezzanine to NR Consultancy for the rental of the entire floor with the condition for sublease to other tenants.

DBM Properties Development Ltd. still owns Level 1 parking which is open to public for rental.