

No. 25 of 2010



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 07 DECEMBER 2010

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK,
FRCP

*Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs
and External Communications*

Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebejaun, GCSK,
FRCP

*Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and
Public Utilities*

Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK

*Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social
Integration and Economic Empowerment*

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*Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and
Economic Development*

Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo

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Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration
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*Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development
and Family Welfare*

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Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha

Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree

Minister of Education and Human Resources

Hon. Satya Veryash Faugoo

Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security

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Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>
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Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
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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*

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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 25 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 07 December 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)

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

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

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILL*Second Reading*

THE APPROPRIATION (2011) BILL
(No. XVII of 2010)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2011) Bill (No. XVII of 2010).

Question again proposed.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming at the end of the debates on the Budget and a few weeks only after I made my speech on the Government Programme, I will try not to be repetitive either to what the previous Members have said during the debate and also not to repeat what I have said a few weeks ago in my speech.

Right from the start, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, le *fil conducteur* of the arguments from the Opposition has been the fact that this is a *budget de continuité*. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *il n'y a rien à rouvrir là-dessus*. It is a *budget de continuité*, and we are very proud that it is a *budget de continuité*. Of course, during the election period, during the campaign, there were promises made to the electorate. They have massively supported not only the record of the Government for the last five years, but also our manifesto, and in our manifesto there were various things that needed to be changed. We recognised that it needed to be changed, which the vice-Prime Minister has very ably changed during the Budget. I will come to that later on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We are proud that it is a *budget de continuité*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, five years ago, we were not just elected like that. We were elected avec *un projet de société*. We had an objective in mind. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a famous guru said a few weeks ago that, whatever you do, you should start with end in mind. You must start with what you want to achieve in mind, and then you plug the road to where you want to go. You don't just start like that, and see where you have got to at the end of five or ten years. So, we started five years ago with the end in mind. What was that end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? It was to achieve, firstly, a prosperous society, for all Mauritians to have enough income, to have enough purchasing power to be able to enjoy a decent life in Mauritius. That was the first thing.

The second thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was to create a fair and just society. *Ce projet de société* has been massively supported in the last elections and, therefore, it should come as no surprise to anyone that - this *projet de société* was massively supported *en continuité* with the last five years - this is a *budget de continuité*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We are very proud of what we have achieved. During the last mandate, the country, the Government went through a number of crises. You remember the chikungunya crisis; then, we got the commodities crisis, the financial crisis, and all through that period the Government had to steer its way through all these problems and issues.

Notwithstanding that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the last mandate, for three consecutive years, we managed a growth rate for the economy of above 5%. This is fantastic. It is much better than the previous record of the previous Government.

With regard to foreign direct investment, you know how critical it is for Mauritius to attract it. For two years over the last five years, foreign direct investment topped Rs11 billion per annum. In fact, in 2010 also, foreign direct investment was more than Rs11 billion. Let's compare that, because we may talk about billions, but sometimes *ça n'accroche pas*. The capital budget of the Government for 2010 was Rs8 billion - you can say only Rs8 billion. If you add up all the hospitals, schools, roads and everything that the Government did, it makes Rs8 billion. In that same year, there was foreign direct investment from overseas, people having come to invest in our country; foreigners came to Mauritius and invested Rs11 billion rupees. Is not that fantastic, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Of course, there are drawbacks to have so many foreigners in Mauritius; we all feel it. Sometimes, we feel that some areas, some pubs, restaurants are too full

of foreigners. There are some drawbacks to having so many foreigners in Mauritius, especially since they don't actually have to undergo a course *dans le mauricianisme*, which I think is regretful. But, nevertheless, it is fantastic for a country to be able to attract so much foreign direct investment. If you take the mandate when the Opposition was in power, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, foreign direct investment rarely was more than Rs2 billion. We can talk about a fivefold increase per annum in foreign direct investment.

Tourism earnings, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we took power in 2005, was Rs24 billion, and it peaked at Rs43 billion three years later.

Unemployment - that is important - has stabilised around 7% from about 9.6% previously. What does that mean? In figures, it means, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the number of unemployed has actually fallen from 52,000 in 2005 to 42,000 now in 2010. It has fallen by a little bit less than 10,000 people, despite the fact that the labour force has increased by over 30,000 people. So, that gives you an idea. When we talk about poverty alleviation, we are talking basically about creation of jobs and, therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government, during the last mandate, has created tens of thousands of jobs, which has, in fact, immensely helped the country. Perhaps, what is interesting is why this economic success. It's undoubtful that, economically, the last Government was extremely successful. Perhaps, it is interesting to discuss about why it was so interesting.

Firstly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was the opening up of our economy to the world. The fact is that we went all the way to attract FDI, as I mentioned before, making it easy for people to invest, giving occupation permits to foreigners not in three weeks, not in three months, but just three days; giving the work permit and the residence permit, combined into an occupation permit, in three days. The IRS, the RES, facilitation of business, all these things have made it possible to attract foreigners and made life much easier also for Mauritians, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the previous Government went a long way towards easing, doing business in Mauritius.

Perhaps, something else to mention also is the low taxation. As you may remember, taxation rate was 25%; income tax and corporation tax reduced drastically overnight to 15%. So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, success was also based on having a very low tax economy in Mauritius, something which appealed not only to Mauritian businessmen but also to foreign businesses alike. It is very often a fallacy - and I think the then Opposition also thought of that - of thinking

that the higher the income tax rate the more tax you bring in because, very often, when you bring down the income tax rate you have so much more profits that are declared, so much more companies that are interested in doing business in Mauritius that, in fact, your tax revenue is increased - and this is what has happened - instead of falling.

I must say an appropriate exchange rate policy was necessary, because we had to protect our export sector. We remember, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how jobs were being lost by tens of thousands in the then EPZ, the manufacturing sector. I am pleased to say today that the number of jobs in the manufacturing sector has stabilised. In fact, the figures show that, from 2005 onwards, there has been a slight increase in the number of people working in the manufacturing sector, which includes the EPZ. This is fantastic, because we were able to stop the rot in the EPZ. Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the same time, the sugar sector was able to restructure and was able to ensure its future viability.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our reaction during the financial crisis was a massive public sector investment which, in 2009, went to about Rs18 billion. I think we have shown quite clearly that we have every reason to be proud of our past record in government. We obviously are proud, and we have to congratulate the Prime Minister, who brought the country along with a steady hand. There's one thing I've found out. It is not easy to be Prime Minister of Mauritius. It is a very difficult job. It requires a number of qualities, and we are all very happy that the Prime Minister all through, all along, good times and bad times, has been able to show the qualities that are necessary to be Prime Minister of Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

So, *continuité* was there. We are proud that it is and, in fact, if we look at this budget, we continue with a massive public investment. This year, it is Rs11.4 billion. That's massive, compared to about Rs8.4 billion, as I mentioned, earlier last year. We are continuing with the low taxation - 15% with the 2% of CSR; still very low taxation with, as you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some changes in what I would call solidarity taxes, to ensure that, in fact, everybody chips in during difficult times. We are continuing with our massive effort to attract FDI. As I mentioned, this year, it's Rs11 billion and, next year, probably, it will be about the same. It's wonderful. Of course, the budget deficit at 4.1% is, I think, the right figure, and not too much so as to *hypothéquer l'avenir*. You remember, sometimes, in previous years, it was going to up to 6%-7% of GDP. 4.1% is enough to boost the economy but not so big as to create

a problem for future generations. Therefore, I would like to congratulate very sincerely my colleague, my neighbour here, the vice-Prime Minister, for an excellent Budget, a Budget that not only ensures that 2011 will be a good year for Mauritius. That is important, because we have to be prosperous and generous. You have to create prosperity, so that you can spend it afterwards. I think 2011 will be a fantastic year for the economy in Mauritius and, of course, I must say also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Budget has taken the opportunity to bring along or to encourage certain important changes in our society, which I'll come to perhaps a little bit later.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let's not forget: *continuité* yes. But - quite rightly so, the vice-Prime Minister has said it very clearly - the world is changing. So, we cannot stay in our own little corner and ignore what is happening all over. The world is changing; economic power is shifting, as it has been rightly said, to the new world, to the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). We have to look at that, and the Budget very cleverly, of course, allocates sufficient funds and attention to these new areas.

Let us not forget also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we are next to Africa. A few years ago, we were all very envious of Hong Kong, of Singapore. Hong Kong was on the doorstep of China; Singapore was on the doorstep of Asia, and these countries benefited from the pool factor of these huge economies. Today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are on the doorstep of Africa, and everybody concurs in saying that the 2010 decade, the second decade of the third millennium, would be Africa's decade. It started with the World Cup and, hopefully, it will be a successful story all along. Mauritius quite rightly is stated in the Budget as a gateway to Africa. So, we must, in fact, not only look east, but we must also look at our nextdoor neighbours, Africa, Madagascar, all the Indian Ocean islands. We have a sleeping giant on our doorstep, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The vast middle wealth, the agricultural wealth, the human resources and the tourism potential are there, and Africa is awakening slowly but surely. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the growth rate for Africa for the next three years will be about 5%, which is overall. Some countries are doing much better obviously than others, but it is fantastic, and we must be able to avail ourselves of the opportunities there.

We have, like it or not, a hugely efficient port. Our port is hugely efficient and is already very involved in container transhipment to the rest of the region, and we are becoming a more

financial services hub. The offshore sector has given hundreds and maybe thousands of our professionals experience in financial services. We don't talk of one stock market in Mauritius; now, we talk of two stock markets, because we have the Stock Exchange Company as well as the Trade Exchange. The Global Board Of Trade Ltd. was just set up a few weeks ago for commodities and derivatives. Our banking sector, which rests on very strong good laws, is an example for the region; the rule of law, security, our legal services, and we are fast becoming also a centre for arbitration, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

If you look at the Budget and at the prospects for the future, for the two hubs that are being mentioned, be it medical services or education, the obvious market for it to grow will be the region; it will be people around the region who will come to the wonderful hospitals and clinics that we have here. It will be people from the region who will come to our educational hub and to our universities. In fact, again, it shows how much of our future is linked to our geography and to what happens on our doorstep.

I welcome the efforts that are being made for economic diplomacy, for the posting of economic trade counsellors to various embassies. But, maybe, they should not be restricted just to the embassies, because we do not have that many embassies around the region. It is those people who will be able to identify trade and investment opportunities for Mauritian businesses. Let us not forget that the private sector *nous a devancés* in many ways, be it in sugar - obviously, all through the continent - trading, banking, hospitality, hotel and tourism, farming, financial services, textile. Mauritian companies - and we should be very proud of that - are present in Madagascar and all the Indian Ocean islands, in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, Namibia, Ghana, just to mention a few. I am sure there are many more places where we are, in fact, present. So, our economic diplomacy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should support these companies operating in our region, facilitate their trade, their investment, in the same way that foreign embassies quite unashamedly do it here in Mauritius. We should, we must, and we will, from what I can see, be properly helping our export industries and our local investors to invest in these markets and open up these markets for our businessmen. The time of Africa has arrived; huge investment from China, huge investment from India. Mauritius has great connections with both, with the Jin Fei project starting, with our great relations with India. All these, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, point to our unique role that we can play in the region and in Africa. Many years ago, we had foreseen this. In 1999, I had myself set up

what was then called the Regional Development Certificate, to bring regional headquarters in Mauritius. Of course, that is also mentioned in this year's Budget. This has had some success and, at that time, Air Mauritius had even purchased two aircrafts - I think it was A319 - to be able to service the region, because connectivity is important. It's no point in having to go to France and back down to Niger, if you cannot connect from Mauritius easily.

Obviously, wishing to play a regional role, which is also connected with the duty-free, relies on air access. At the same time, around 1999/2000, we set up the precursor of the IRS, which was a permanent resident scheme, which aim was to bring to our country people who, for whatever reason, probably around the region, were disenchanted where they were living for security and any other reason and wanted to come and reside in Mauritius. That was set up, and has now come to the IRS and RES, and what we see around us everywhere today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. For the Budget seeking to develop these areas is welcome and is, I am sure, a precursor, a very good omen for the future.

We should not forget Madagascar next to us, *un pays de peuplement*, which has had throughout a very difficult history and is now undergoing transition. Let us not forget that the present President has come to power probably in a very unorthodox way. The referendum that was held a few weeks ago has been in his favour, and I understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are moving to elections in a near future. Mauritius continues to play a leading role in Madagascar, and we should ensure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we are able to give this leading role and bring back Madagascar into the fold of legitimate countries in the region. I hope, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that very soon we will be able to welcome back Madagascar to that club of nations.

So, it is a *budget de continuité*, with some measures which are very welcome, and we shall bring welcome changes to our society, to Mauritius and to the taxation system, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It needed to be corrected, but you can correct in a good way and you can correct in a bad way. I am sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House will agree that corrections have been made in an excellent way. The NRPT has been abolished, but replaced, nevertheless, with a solidarity tax on very rich people who earn more than Rs2 m. a year, who have interests as income and who achieve benefit also from dividends as income; it is 10% additional, and it is not excessive.

We have reinstated fully and extended the school exam fees, and the tax on interests has been withdrawn, as mentioned.

Also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *il y avait un problème de société* with these betting shops all over the island. It was causing problems in the towns and villages, and a solution had to be found. For some time, we toiled with the solution of putting them all in some sort of special amusement park, but that would take time, and time was not what we had at hand. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, substantial increase in licence fees has been welcome by the population. It was getting excessive. These betting houses and casinos were infesting - that's the right word - our towns and villages, and I think this would go a long way towards controlling this particular problem. Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we look at the crime rates, we see that a lot of crimes - some of the most horrible crimes - are not economic crimes but crimes of passion.

Crimes of passion, very often, are encouraged by excessive alcohol. Two friends drink together; after a while, they are no longer friends and they become enemies. Some fight has blown up, and one guy hits the other one with a stick and he dies. It is the next day then that the guy realises what he has done. Excessive alcohol consumption in Mauritius is a fact, and it needs to be curbed. The increase in taxes on these items, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may not be popular for everybody, but I support it. I think that it's a good thing, because it is very necessary so that we get a better *société*, and Mauritius is a better place to live in.

Another *ligne conducteur* in the Budget has been the fight against poverty. All through his speech, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the vice-Prime Minister has mentioned the absolute need to fight poverty and to eradicate absolute poverty in ten years' time. Something I wanted to mention, which I think is important, is the extended repayment for NHDC housing and loans on houses. Every politician meets persons who are on their own, unable to meet the very hefty repayment terms associated with buying a house of NHDC. One of the reasons is the 25 years. Whatever calculation we do, if you divide it over a 25-year repayment period, you will end up with a heavy, hefty figure. I wanted to mention this extension of the repayment period from 25 years to 40 years. Probably, only the young will be able to have 40 years working life in front of them. Maybe, it is applicable to the young, but still the opportunity to be able to repay your house over 40 years will make a dramatic difference to your disposable income, because it will reduce dramatically the amount that you need to pay as capital and interest on your house.

In fact, if you look at the Budget Speech, it sets - I think it is 20% or 30% - the maximum amount that someone has to pay for his house. We will hopefully no longer find that people are unable to pay for their house because the repayment is too much, ending up in enormous arrears, and added to that all the costs pertaining to the court, with the result that hundreds of people are being dispossessed of their house, finding themselves, almost overnight, on the streets. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is one measure which hasn't had much publicity and which I thought I ought to mention. I don't know whether it will be applicable to existing tenants; maybe. But, for new purchasers of houses, it is going to make a major impact to their lives.

Another issue, which has to do with fighting poverty, and which hasn't perhaps been properly dealt with so far, is this very innovative move to entice, to encourage people to move away from the social security register and to be empowered into proper jobs to live decent lives. This is mentioned in the Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I ought to take it up again in my speech. If we talk about the social security register - which I mentioned last time - there are 20,000 people or so. Many are, in fact, on pension, because they are sick and old age etc. But a good chunk of women are on the social aid register, because they are called 'abandoned women'. It is not the right term for them, but they are called 'abandoned women'. They are women who are single mothers, heads of families; they have children and are unable to find somebody to keep them; they are unable to work and, therefore, it is a vicious circle of poverty.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what Government is going to try and achieve next year - this is completely new - is to work on that social register list of about 6,000 so-called abandoned single women, and see how many of them we can bring out of poverty and into decent jobs. How we are going to do that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is firstly by providing crèches and pre-primary schools to take care of the children. Because, if we do not take care of the children, never will we be able to get these ladies into jobs. And also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my colleague, hon. Dr. Vasant Bunwaree, will be extending the allowable hours for pre-primary schools from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. - because it does not make any sense for people to work only half day - and encouraging these ladies back to work by providing training and placement to them. They will come out of the circle of poverty and, hopefully, they will be able to join the mainstream and lead happy lives for themselves and their children. That's something that has not been clearly understood, but it is important.

I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it is voluntary. We are not going to force anybody out of the social aid register onto the empowerment. We are going to talk to them, encourage them and show them the way ahead, but it will be up to them to decide. And we hope that the majority of the 6,000 women - some will probably never be able to - will join our scheme and will, therefore, achieve success over the forthcoming year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is also a new approach to CSR which, I think, has been misunderstood by some Members of the House and also by some persons in the private sector, which I think is important for me to correct and put matters right. At the moment, as you know, for CSR, it's 2% of the profits of the majority of companies in Mauritius. Up to now, you could spend that 2% in a whole list of things. You could go into wildlife, poverty alleviation, children, sports facilities or whatever. There is a whole list of many other things that you could do.

What has been done in this Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is to cut CSR in half. 50% of the CSR should go to three priority areas: welfare of children, eradication of poverty and housing. 50% go to these three areas, and 50% can be spread around all the other areas that already exist. How will that work in practice? Because you have got to get it to work in practice. In practice, each company will have two types of CSR: one, the priority list, and the other one the other list. Obviously, you can spend more than 50% on a priority project. For example, if you have Rs200,000 CSR, Rs100,000 will go to the priority list. It has to go to the priority list. The rest, if I want to, will go to any other item on the guidelines. That's important to understand. The way that it is going to be spent is the same as before. We are not going to say: let's take that 50% and spend it. We are not going to do that. It is going to be left to the companies, through the NGOs, through their foundations, through their corporate partners to spend it, but with this requirement to keep the 50%.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, CSR has a particular beauty to it. I mentioned it before. It's not only the amount of money - hopefully, we want that to continue - but it comes through the involvement and the skills of the private sector into the projects that are developed jointly with the NGOs most of the time. And it is important that you have the skills. We always talk about capacity building. Here, we have the capacity in the private sector. There is willingness in the private sector, and that has to continue. This flexibility inbuilt in CSR needs to continue, and it will. So, there has been no change.

There are three schemes. One, no change; you just spend the 50% here, and the rest as you wish. As for the other one, we can imagine that some companies do not know where to spend the 50%. They will not know which project is a good one, and which is a bad one. So, they will be a bit stuck as to where to spend this 50% on priority projects. So, the National Empowerment Foundation, the NEF, will be calling for projects, asking NGOs and other guys to tell us what are the good projects that are available, and this information will be passed on to the companies which, by themselves, do not know where to spend their 50% priority CSR.

So, that's the second scheme. The first scheme, you do as you like. The second scheme, you work in conjunction with the NEF, and we'll give you suggested projects.

The third one, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is, if neither of these are of interest or, for some reason, there is a timing problem or whatever it is, there will be created within the NEF, a CSR Fund. But it will be absolutely voluntary. If someone does not want to spend it directly and does not want to give it to a NGO, then he will deposit the money with the NEF, and the NEF will spend that on the three priority areas.

So, it is quite simple, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is very flexible. It is not an additional or a traditional taxation. It will work in a very flexible way, and I think we have been able to keep the flexibility that is so good with CSR, whilst giving guidance on where the money should be spent according to the priority areas of the nation. I don't think it will make much difference, because in practice we find that many companies were already spending a lot of money on eradication of absolute poverty, on children and on housing. So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that's not going to make, I think, a huge difference to CSR, except that it is going to make sure that priority areas get the money that is required.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will quickly talk about one project which is mentioned in the Budget. It concerns plastic bags, which have been a scourge for this country for many, many years. The tax has been doubled. I don't think you will get a plastic bag with a handle for less than Rs2.30 in supermarkets. Obviously, the idea here is to replace these plastic bags by paper bags. But the beauty of this project has, as with some other projects, to do with recycling. It is to encourage projects from vulnerable groups to do that. We are already talking to the *Centre d'Accueil de Terre Rouge*, which wants to get involved in the production of paper bags. We want to talk to other people who are employing ex-prisoners, ex-drug addicts, because these

people need to get employment and, very often, it is impossible for them to obtain employment; people just do not want to employ them. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the taxation, with the encouragement of Government, we will be able to encourage social enterprises to rise in Mauritius so that these people do not fall back into drugs and do not reoffend, because that would be a danger to society.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just a few more words on the handicapped. The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and I were very pleased to hold a job fair recently. However, we were a little bit disappointed that many enterprises did not turn up, and we would be dealing with these people. I would be writing to them personally and, I am sure, my colleague, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, will do the same. We were a little bit disappointed, but we are very happy that 50% of the handicapped persons who turned up actually obtained employment on that day. That is fantastic, because it shows that the possibility is there, and it just needs to have the attention that it requires. We will be continuing on that trend.

An appeal that I would like to make here, through all Members of the House, is to have more handicapped people register. We have only 150 people registered at the moment. There may be hundreds of handicapped people looking for employment out there, but they do not register. We would like them to register, because it is only when they register that we can help them, and we want to help them.

A project that is ongoing at the moment and to which I would like all hon. Members to contribute is the ‘*SMS Lacaze Malheureux*’, where you use your ‘SMS’ to donate multiples of Rs10. Through the Lions Club of Port Louis, they want to construct/rebuild about a hundred houses within the amount of money that is generated through this ‘*SMS Lacaze Malheureux*’.

Another project which we have done with the Deputy Prime Minister is the prepaid electricity meters. We will be starting with 200, and we want to reach 2,000 prepaid electricity meters very quickly, at no additional cost to the persons although the meter is a little bit more expensive than the normal meter. This one is connected to the Mauritius Telecom and it is all done electronically, without the meter readers. It is a bit like when you recharge your mobile phone. In fact, 95% of people using mobile phones have prepaid phones.

We hope, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, with the prepaid electricity meter, we will be able to allow people to budget for their electricity. No longer are they going to wait till the end of the

month for a bill of Rs100 or Rs1,000. They can pay as they go. If they want to put Rs100 or Rs200 of electricity, they can do so. Therefore, they can manage their budget. I hope, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this will do away with the scourge that we have of hundreds or thousands of families living without electricity in Mauritius, for the simple reason that they cannot afford to pay the accumulated amounts on their electricity bills.

Before I conclude, I will speak about circular migration. I must say that this is going ahead very nicely. We have very serious and precise requests for about 450 people to work in some of the far away regions of Canada. But, still, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is an opportunity for about 450 people to work. We are hoping that we will put that into effect right from January and we will be able to send them. It is mostly in agro-industry.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office signed the agreement with France for circular migration. It provides for 850 jobs per annum in France, where people can stay for a number of years and they can also apply for another period there. We are confident that, next year, we will be putting this into practice, and we will start seeing people going to France on circular migration, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming to the end of my speech, I would like to say that it is clear from this Budget, and from our track record, that Government continues to move ahead with its agenda. I think that Dr. Stephen Covey mentioned some time ago that you have to live your life just as a project, like you have a masterpiece in mind. You have a huge painting in mind and everything that you do, you put a bit of colour, a touch of brush here and there to create this end that you have in mind.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government, throughout its previous mandate and this present mandate, will be continuing to pursue its objective of a prosperous country and a generous Mauritius, under the steady hand of the Prime Minister on my left and on my right *le grand timonier*. With these two in mind, and with all our colleagues from the Government and the backbenchers, we hope to put our project into effect and to come to a happier Mauritius.

Thank you very much.

(12.16 p.m.)

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listened to the hon. vice-Prime Minister who has been talking before me and I can understand very well why he has been defending this Budget, saying that he is proud that this Budget is a *budget de continuité*. In fact, he has been in the Government benches for the last five years as Minister of Tourism, and now as Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. He had no choice, and could not do otherwise but to defend what has been done by the previous Government.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please, order!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, as I stand today...

(*Interruptions*)

...in front of this House, it is with more concern about our country's future than I had last year when I intervened during the Budget debates. In fact, then, according to us, in the Opposition, our real economic situation was difficult, not to say calamitous. At that time, we had five successive ultraliberal Budgets that were all focused, as the hon. vice-Prime Minister just reminded us, on business facilitation, and we know what has been the result of these Budgets. They gave rise to what we, in the MMM, were lucidly aware of - a poorer population, a pauperised population, nearing social crisis with an economy which was *à bout de souffle*.

A new Finance Minister has now been appointed. We remember his virulence in criticising the former Prime Minister who was very distinctive. Expectations for a policy demarcation were very high, the more so as the hon. Minister of Finance himself promised things would be different. Hopes for an economic dawn and economic reboot and social fairness mounted pressure on him for a new vision and a new social justice. But when we look at the Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since it has been presented to the House, his attempt at rebalancing growth and consolidating social justice, unfortunately, to us on this side of the House, is a poor, incongruous set of proposals that is completely lacking in vision and appropriateness. To us, this Budget will accelerate social injustice, will cause economic downturn. Many hon. Members on this side of this House have brought evidence to that effect, and I will try to do this in a few minutes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Before doing so, I would like to just comment on the amusing side, the absurd situation in which the Government finds itself in today. Here is a Government which is presenting a Budget, a Government whose two main components are the Labour and the MSM parties. They have been at daggers drawn for five years, principally on economic orientation, on economic philosophy and on economic strategy. Today, the Budget comes and proposes to do away with unpopular measures, which the previous Government had imposed upon the population. What do we see, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? The hon. Prime Minister and the Labour Party are talking of *continuité*, to stress the point, in fact, that it is the Labour Party, which is the engine of this alliance, and stressing that this Budget is Labour doing.

Yesterday, my friend, hon. Baloomoody, gave many examples how the hon. Prime Minister rushed after Budget, how hon. Ms Deepalsing yesterday has been saying that this is a Labour Budget and reminding us all of the Labour contribution and so on, discarding what has been the role of the MSM, of Sir Anerood Jugnauth in the uplifting of the country's economy. Now, one can readily see the embarrassment of our friends of the MSM, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Nobody from the MSM is talking about *continuité*. This is not mentioned in the Budget. But, more importantly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - and I think this is a crafty move on the part of the hon. Minister of Finance - what has he done? In a subtle manner, he has posed himself by eliminating all these unpopular measures; the NRPT, the 15% tax on interests, the restoring of exemption for the small planters producing less than 60 tonnes, the duty-free benefit for the 4x4 and the sugar cooperatives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is clearly a move towards the traditional electorate, which is common to both the Labour and the MSM parties. It is a good move, a clever move. Now, it is the leader of the MSM, who poses himself as the best guardian of the interests of that traditional electorate, and he is preparing for the future. *C'est de la bonne guerre, M. le président.* But, be that as it may, one can understand why the MSM Ministers and Members on the other side are a bit embarrassed about this question of *continuité*. They are fidgety about this term *continuité*. What does *continuité* mean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? *Continuité* means not agreeing with this concept that the hon. Minister of Finance tried to talk about. You will remember the theory of the triple shock, imposing on this country an ultraliberal socioeconomic model which failed, ushered policies like the reduction of subsidies on rice and flour, taxation of interests on income, the NRPT implementation, the introduction of a flat tax that replaces a

progressive income tax system, the restriction of exam school fees, the removal exemption from income tax for small planters, the dismantling of the annual tripartite negotiations, the slashing of the corporate tax for the *grands capitalistes*, the depreciation of the rupee, the launching of the lotto, the *frénésie* of the issue of gambling licences, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. *Continuité* means espousing the philosophy of all these past budgets, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am sure the MSM Members on the other side of the House do not want to do that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is an absurd and odd situation. This is what I wanted to say. But I am not saying it; the hon. Minister of Finance, himself, has said it. Over the past five years, our people have suffered from significant purchasing power losses. These losses have been estimated by the hon. Minister himself at 17%, by the MMM at 18% and, more dauntingly, by the Economic Intelligence Unit, at 34% in US dollars at the purchasing power parity. The MMM estimated an average inflation rate for the period of approximately 35% compared to an average compensation over the same period of approximately 17%, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, meaning 18% of purchasing power loss. As I have just said, the Economic Intelligence Unit, in its report, established that our GDP per head in USD at PPP would have declined by 34%. Therefore, all statistics and econometrics exposed this significant fall in our purchasing power, whether it was computed by the opposition, by the Government or by reputed international institutions.

We insist, on this side of the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the salary compensation in this present year of low inflation ought to have started restoring the purchasing power. What did we see instead? The *volte-face* by the hon. Minister; and this can only aggravate the situation, and cause the already empirically established unfavourable skew in our income distribution to further aggravate.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the foundations laid by this Budget for this worsening situation are multiple. First, average salary compensation has been lesser than inflation, even in this low inflation year.

Secondly, with the labour laws remaining unchanged - and we all remember the promises of the MSM in the Opposition about amending the labour laws; all these gone to oblivion - job security has not been strengthened, leaving the working masses at an enhanced threat of

termination of employment, a threat that will be prominent, especially in the context of this very difficult economic situation.

Thirdly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, taxes; and this is a massive blow to the poor and the less favoured. A plethora of tax policies has been announced. Some, like the abolition of the NRPT and the tax on interests, but coupled with a tax on dividend income and capital gains, attempt to present a picture of fairness and justice. We are after all eliminating unfair taxes and introducing popular taxes on the rich, aren't we? But the real picture lies in the volumes. Like we say the devil lies in the details, in this case, the real picture lies in the volumes. What do I mean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

Estimates for 2011 indicate that 30.7% of the total taxes will come from taxes on income, profits, gains and taxes on property. This is in contrast, as more than two times higher, 64.8%, will come from taxes on goods and services. What does that mean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Volumes dictate a two times stronger impact on indirect taxes that we know will hit at the poor. This is not where it is hurting most, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. For next year, and notwithstanding the new taxes proposed, taxes on income, profits and gains, together with taxes on property, will rise by Rs1 billion. But, compared with five times higher, the increase of Rs5 billion of taxes on goods and services, which I do not have to remind the House, is mostly driven by the VAT. What does that mean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? The little that has been given to the poor, wherever in this Budget, is being instantly snatched away from these very poor by an ignominious, insatiable indirect tax **augur**. That is the bitter truth.

Fourthly, to add insult to injury, a cascade of price increases will follow, as a consequence of the increases in utility prices and the deplorable, despicable VAT exemption on zero rated commodities like wheat, flour, bran, edible oils, margarine, sterilised liquid milk, curdled milk, cream and yogurt, live chickens and chicks, animal feed and fertilisers. Here, too, Mr Speaker, Sir, we ask the hon. Minister of Finance this question: why on these products? Why products that will ignite cost push inflation? Why products that cost enormously in the basic daily alimentary habits of poor people of this country? Is this what consolidating social justice means, Mr Speaker, Sir?

This Budget talks a lot about eliminating poverty. Indeed, it is the prime duty of any government to combat poverty, the source of all sorts of social illnesses, strengthen the Welfare

State and provide housing assistance, etc. But, in practice, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Budget will be suffocating all people by such unfair tax and compensation policies. Poverty alleviation, which is central to achieve social justice, and purchasing power, which is primordial for poverty alleviation, is what I have just demonstrated, and we will end up by paying heavily for achieving what we are achieving in this Budget, namely social injustice, whilst claiming pretentiously to ushering measures for social justice.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now come to a few remarks concerning the Budget itself, and I will like to query the hon. Minister of Finance on a few issues. Let us take this issue about rebalancing growth - the Mauritian Dream.

At paragraph 9, the hon. Minister proposes to place the economy ‘on a modern development path to a GDP of one trillion rupees by the 2020s and to an income per capita of USD 20,000 and higher. This is the Mauritian dream!’ Mr Speaker, Sir, when I have looked at the figures, I shall put it to the hon. Minister that these statements which have been made in the Budget, in fact, on the contrary, point towards a lack of vision, a lack of ambition in his Budget. Why do I say so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? We have worked the figures; we have seen what the Central Statistical Office gives us as GDP estimates, at the basic and the market prices, and we have seen that, if we take the average real GDP growth from 2000 to 2010 and apply it to an average GDP deflator for the same period - in fact, on this basis and starting with a 2000 GDP at basic prices of Rs257 billion - what we reach is a GDP that exceeds this one trillion target before the end of 2025. What I mean to say is that we are boasting about a dream, but when we look at the statistics, we can, in fact, achieve what the hon. Minister is talking like a dream without even outperforming our own average growth over the past ten years. I would ask the hon. Minister to contradict me on this issue when he replies this afternoon.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I want to say is that, in the normal course of things, we can achieve what the Minister is describing as a dream. Therefore, not only this Budget is creating social injustice, not only is it devoid of ambition, it is also not really rebalancing anything. What is rebalancing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Let us take the paragraph where the Minister talks about targeting new markets, especially where growth is taking place.

We are a small open economy; we have always had to adapt to changing world dynamism. In the past, we have, therefore, rebalanced accordingly. Rebalancing, as it is

presented in this Budget, is limitative, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is not now that we are attempting to tap new markets for our industries. Ministers in this House, on the other side and on this side, hon. Minister Duval, hon. Minister Bodha, in their mandate, know a lot about tapping new markets for our tourism industry. In fact, market diversification has always been a major focus for all successive governments. We have seen the creation of BOI, Enterprise Mauritius, FSPA, and the MTPA, just to name a few.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is new in this concept of rebalancing our markets? The more important thing that should have been done is concerning our existing industries which are running out of heat. We needed to launch new industries; we needed to efficiently manage our economic fundamentals, namely the FDI, the balance of payments, the saving rate, unemployment, public sector debt and also sectors like the SMEs. This Budget, unfortunately, concentrates on peripheral rebalancing, and fails to address the cancers of our fundamentals that now necessitate intensive care.

Let us go through the Budget page after page, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There is no proposal, global or sectoral, that has the potential to unleash forces for broad-based economic expansion in the foreseeable future. This Budget does not provide any sense of direction to the corporates, to the business community in this troubled and turbulent world economy characterized by radical economic changes. Where is the economic policy to propel investors for more productive investment, which could ensure that Mauritius is less vulnerable to external shocks? Where is the policy to set the economy on a higher growth path? Nothing! In fact, for growth to occur, there has to be consumption and investment expenditures. Consumption, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, depends on purchasing power and savings. People consume when their purchasing power is high and will also save for future consumption, but when purchasing power has been eroded, as has been the case in the past five years, people will either consume less or out of their savings.

Over the past few years, we have seen in our country that both final consumption expenditure and saving rates have been on a declining trend, with saving rates now estimated at only 14% of our GDP. These trends confirm this *politique de continuité* and confirm the pauperisation of our society, as I just observed, and this, unfortunately, will be perpetuated by the present Budget.

Furthermore, rebalancing growth conveys the impression of a clear mark shift in policy regarding potential economic sectors. But do we see anything in that speech that suggests a major shift in policy emphasis with regard to the model of our economy? In fact, we will remember how the former Minister boasted about his achievements of resilience and business facilitation resulting in FDI flows, and I just heard hon. Duval talking about FDI.

But, we all know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the FDI flows went almost solely into the economic pillars, which the MMM/MSM Government put in place from 2000 to 2005, namely the IRS, the tourism schemes, ICT, BPO, financial services and the seafood hub. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Minister of Finance agrees with me. In fact, he was saying that during his speeches when he was in the Opposition, last year, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Indeed, a scrutiny of the FDI flows and official Bank of Mauritius figures reveal that, from 2000 to 2009, 91% of FDI went into accommodation, food services activities, real estate's activities, etc.

Therefore, my point is: rebalancing growth is about the structural changes we bring to our economy. Where are these new pillars? The new pillars we create in the economy, which obviously will drive in FDI, are totally absent in this budgetary exercise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Therefore, in a situation of falling saving rate, which will cause a fall in our local investment, economic diversification and the creation of new economic pillars were necessary and urgent to keep attracting FDI, ensuring growth. But there has been none of that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Left as we are with what is in this Budget, clearly - and I hope it doesn't happen, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - our FDI will soon fade out, and we may even underperform our average real growth rate and perhaps, unfortunately, never attain our one trillion rupees GDP, our Mauritian dream, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

What I am driving home, therefore, is that the hon. Minister of Finance must be aware that he is already missing out; that he has only caught a long ridden wave, which he knows was set before 2005, and whose thrust might fade out. We need new waves now, but this Budget simply does not attempt to set any new ones rolling. Worse, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - and this is why I said, at the beginning of my speech; this Budget is incongruent - its taxes on dividends and capital gains will kill the SMEs and free entrepreneurship, and even the RES. How can we, sitting on the verge of this difficult economic and social situation, pauperisation of our people,

declining consumption, declining saving rates, far too high public sector debt, tendency for unemployment, still introduce measures that will erode furthermore purchasing power, kill initiative and reduce dividend income?

I don't think that the hon. Minister is deliberately attempting to slow our economy down, but this is, unfortunately, what will come out of this Budget. Instead of proposing how we have to address issues like mounting public sector debt, current account deficit, unemployment and low saving rate, we come across measures that will, unfortunately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just do the contrary. Let us take the case of unemployment and the SMEs. We know unemployment has started to show an upward trend; we know that the SMEs employ 45% of our labour, and this Budget bizarrely notes that, to enable the duty-free concept to expand, we will remove all protection given to domestic-oriented enterprises, most of which are the SMEs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Let us look at paragraph 137 in the Budget. The hon. Minister himself says that he is levelling the playing field to encourage small enterprises to thrive and new entrepreneurs to invest. But, at paragraph 43, he provides for a further - *moratoire* - breathing space before removing the protection given to the SMEs and the small entrepreneurs. On top of that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he introduces this tax on dividend income. Clearly there are contradictions between what needs to be achieved for the betterment of our economy and what the hon. Minister himself wants to achieve. These are the incongruities to which I have alluded earlier, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like now to make a few comments on different sectors. I will come first to the issue of salary compensation. I wish, unfortunately - I say 'unfortunately', Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and the hon. Minister must know that there is nothing personal with what we have been saying - to denounce this mean and despicable attempt of the Ministry of Finance to deprive the workers of the private sector their compensation at the beginning of next year - I say 'this attempt' - and also to divide the workers between the private and the public sector. Let me quote from this infamous document; the discussion paper -

“Moreover, two effective dates are proposed for compensation; 01 January for the public sector and 01 July for the private sector.”

And, adding insult to injury, the paper comes up with a lame and spurious reason as to why 01 July should be kept as awarding date for the workers of the private sector. Listen to this cynicism, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Firstly, it says -

“There is no material time to set up a system, and to begin the discussions and eventual new negotiations for an agreement by January for the private sector.”

Firstly, there is no material time, but when there was fire, when there was the threat of the unions, how come the hon. Minister and the Government came up with the proposal?

Secondly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a paternalist and cynical manner, unashamedly, the paper goes on to say -

“Calculating the first increase for the private sector on the basis of 18 months will give the time to develop approaches and procedures that will allow a larger compensation.”

And the paper says -

“There is no need for compensation for the private sector to be in January, as the cycle for the private sector need not and often does not follow the calendar year or fiscal year.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, cynicism, callousness, I will say. Yet, it was public knowledge that, since October, correspondences had been exchanged between the Ministry and the trade union federations for eventual wage compensation. Had it not been for the prompt and courageous retaliation of the trade union federations, especially the *Confédération Syndicale de Gauche*, by threatening to freeze their participation in the national tripartite forum and starting *une mobilisation sur le terrain* - these are the exact words - the Ministry would have persisted in its course of action. We must today salute the dignified and brave stand taken by the trade unionists on this question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We hope that what took place will serve as a lesson to those who think that they can intimidate trade union federations and make use of the policy of divide and rule.

With regard to the quantum, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and the way it has been done, the whole exercise has been a gimmick. Within a day, the exercise has been wrapped up; the compensation was unilaterally imposed upon the proposal. Some of the hon. Members on the other side often try to tease us by saying ‘82! When MMM was in power, there was no negotiation. The Minister of Finance then came with 8%, kept to 8%, and ended with 8%.’ Even

so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that was in 82, but what the Ministry of Finance has done this time is worse. As far as the quantum is concerned, 3.2% - Rs150 - Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

I was reading the PQs in this very House when Mr Sithanen was Minister of Finance, when, in his first Budget of 2006, he lowered the threshold at Rs2,700, and Rs135 was awarded to the workers. Hon. Bodha was then Leader of the Opposition, and you remember how explosive was the following PNQs about salary compensation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is what hon. Bodha said: 'Putting People First, does not the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance consider the Rs135 as a *trahison de la classe des travailleurs*?' If Rs135 in 2006 was a *trahison à la classe des travailleurs*, what is Rs150 in year 2010? Worse than a *trahison!* This is a PQ, and I can table it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

So much for salary compensation. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one word on renewable energy and the *MID*. The *MID* is, unfortunately, still facing serious teething problems. After two long years of expectations, the baby has yet to be born. Every time Professor de Rosnay comes to the island, all of us become enthused by his marvellous ideas and mind boggling suggestions. As soon as he leaves the country, *MID* resumes its hibernation. *MID* is now under its third Ministry, namely that of Environment. After having moved from the Prime Minister's Office to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, now it's to - I will not say a Ministry down in the hierarchy - another Ministry, because it *coule de source*. We understand and agree to this shift, although this project, according to me - I have listened to many people, and even my friends on this side might not agree with me - should have been under the Prime Minister's Office umbrella, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I agree the Prime Minister should be commended for this project. To me, it is one of the most important projects launched by any government, and we should all unconditionally not only subscribe, but support it. The issue of environment is not an issue of political partisanship. It should transcend political barriers. We should all join hands to save our country and our planet, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and we should not politicise this issue.

On this side of the House, we have helped also to build on the edifice. I heard the Prime Minister say the other day - I think in the workshop - that those who have not done anything are now criticising. I hope he did not mean the MMM, because it is appropriate to remind the House of the achievements of our Government on the issue of environment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We legislated; we adopted a new Environment Act; we banned the extraction of sand from our

lagoons and so on and so forth. In fact, my friend hon. Rajesh Bhagwan - I don't say that because I want to please him - has been the best Environment Minister that this country has had.

(Interruptions)

I don't say that because I want to please him. In fact, I don't like him so much, as you all know! The main problem, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to *MID* is that of implementation. I will not come back with the issues that have been dealt with in the PQ of last Friday, but I would like to comment on two or three issues concerning *MID*, which I consider relevant.

Firstly, in spite of the good intentions of the drivers of this project, I think the multiplication of committees can give rise to a lot of bureaucratic red tape, liable to further slow down the implementation of the project. From the recent proposal made, we've been given to understand that the following structures will be put in place: the Steering Committee, the Interministerial Committee, the Mix Strategic Committee made up of the public/private sector and civil society, an Evaluation Committee made up of different stakeholders - university, academy, corporate sector and so on - and finally there will be the office of Mr *MID* or Mrs *MID*. I think that it is Mr *MID* who will be coordinating all these activities. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us beware of the risk of overlapping, of duplication we shall inherit in such a situation.

Secondly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in spite of the avowed aim of making *Maurice Ile Durable* concept a *projet de société* and not a *projet énergétique*, there is a *décalage entre* what is being said and what is, in fact, taking place. There is a credibility gap, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, I myself asked a PQ on 03 August of this year to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Utilities, and he gave me a right, clear and honest answer. Everything that he said is good, but from the answer which he gave - I do not want to waste time by going through this answer - 95% of the projects are all energy and related projects. Even in the speech which the Prime Minister delivered at Swami Vivekananda at the launching of the workshop on Wednesday last, he stressed - as he did in the House - that this *MID* is a *projet de société* and not a *projet énergétique*. But, then, in the same breath, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister said -

“Depuis 2008, le gouvernement a investi R 1.8 milliards dans le projet de MID, notamment dans les firmes éoliennes, dans la production d'électricité à partir des déchets ménagers. Le gouvernement a investi R 100 millions pour permettre au CEB

d'acheter de l'électricité du secteur privé. Le gouvernement investira R 6 milliards dans les trois prochaines années pour des projets d'énergie renouvelable.'

This is the *décalage*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, between what we want to do to make it a *projet de société* and, in fact, *R 1.8 milliards* have been disbursed for energy related project. Therefore, the challenge before *MID* is to identify these projects *mobilisateurs*, to use the word of the Professor, to draw the roadmap, to divide the action plans, obtain *l'adhésion* and rope in the youth and our society at large. Professor de Rosnay is right when he says '*le budget 2011 ne contient pas assez de projets mobilisateurs. La population mauricienne a besoin d'être mobilisée pour ce grand projet. Pour cela, il faut des projets clairs.*'

Thirdly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to underline the question of funds accruing to the *MID* Fund, and the astronomical sums invested for the different projects. I just quoted the Prime Minister; *R 1.8 milliards* have already been spent on different projects. In the PQ to which I just referred, the DPM also listed the several projects and all the sums invested thereon. The hon. Prime Minister, last Friday, revealed that the Fund has received €100 m. from the AFD. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know that the *MID* Fund is being *alimenté* by the levy. In the same answer, which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister gave to us, I saw that Rs1 billion rupees has been committed to this Fund from the Consolidated Fund. What I am saying, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that, in the very near future, other donor organisations will come and chip in, because the *MID* is an interesting project, and such projects are high on the agenda of donor organisations. Therefore, the question I am asking and the comment I am making to the Prime Minister and Government is about this issue of control and the issue of transparency.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to disturb you, hon. Ganoo. You will make it in how many minutes?

Mr Ganoo: Half an hour.

The Deputy Speaker: In that case, we'll break for lunch for one and a half hour.

At 12.58 p.m the sitting was suspended.

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

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I was saying before lunch, this *MID* Fund must be given the sanctity it deserves. In terms of financial control and transparency, I have no doubt that the

hon. Prime Minister has thought about the best mechanism to ensure that the *MID* Fund operates in all transparency, so that it earns the respect it deserves in the eyes of all our countrymen and also in the eyes of the foreign donor organisations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before ending on this issue of environment, earlier on I remarked on the non-partisan nature of the *MID* project and the duty of all of us to join forces, to give our support to this project in the interest of our country. In order to place this issue high on the agenda of our country and in order to rope in, to galvanise the Mauritian population - as the Professor rightly pointed out in the press - I think we all have a duty, therefore, to support that project.

Last time, during a PNQ, we were watching the hon. Prime Minister answering to the questions with his file, and with the amount of information that came out, I think it was not only an interesting intellectual exercise, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it sensibilised everybody in this House as well as everybody outside the House about this issue of environment. Therefore, I would have thought that Government should agree or wish to the setting up of a standing Parliamentary Committee on environment with, of course, Members from both sides of the House. The setting up of this standing Parliamentary Committee on the environment, Mr Speaker, Sir, will place us in the eyes of all other countries; will send the signal that the country, the Parliament, we are all engaged in this process of preserving the biodiversity, the ecology, the environment of our country. Therefore, I think that this would be an extraordinary signal that we would send to our population also, so that we galvanise the population, we rope them in behind all these *projets mobilisateurs* which, hopefully, the Steering Committee and the other committees will come up with. Of course, this is a suggestion that I am making, with the blessing of the Leader of the House, to place above board this issue of environment, to depoliticise it and to make it a real national issue. I think we should ponder, reflect upon the advisability of setting up a standing Parliamentary Committee. When I say 'we' I mean, of course, Government, because Government has the majority. It's up to the Prime Minister to respond to that humble suggestion - humble, but coming from the heart.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now come very quickly to the subject of renewable energy and the CEB, to say that the situation has evolved a lot since the last ten years. The world, as we all know, wishes to advance and promote the increased use of renewable at international level in

order to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels. New technologies have evolved and have resulted in lowering the cost - relatively - of the production of clean energy.

Marketing renewable energy is beginning to make headway, and there are new signs of sustained and accelerated market growth. Several billions of dollars of renewable energy systems are being installed annually, and ever more companies and individuals are purchasing green power. Nevertheless, the main problem of upfront costs, the prohibitive costs, Mr Speaker, Sir, constitutes still a serious problem because, as we all know, on the issue of renewable energy, the costs are very prohibitive; the investments are extremely high. Although, relatively, as I said earlier on, the cost is lowering, it still remains prohibitive.

In our country, as we know, Mr Speaker, Sir, since 2000, the concept started to make its way. When the MSM/MMM Government was in power, we set up a wind park at Trèfles in Rodrigues, and this has been pursued by the Labour Government. Negotiations had started at Bigara during our days, Mr Speaker Sir, with the Indian company Suzlon; but, unfortunately, at that time - I remember well because I was the Minister in charge of the utilities - the discussions did not materialise. The negotiations stopped at a certain point in time. There was disagreement as regards the tariffs between the CEB and Suzlon. At that time, we signed a MoU with the Republic of India for assistance in the promotion of renewable energy.

Our Government adopted the Utilities Regulatory Act, Mr Speaker, Sir, which came before this House during the last mandate, and the amendments were adopted unanimously on both occasions, that is, when we passed the legislation and when the amendments were brought by Government. It is a long and tedious process, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the recent years, I know Government has attempted to introduce a supportive policy framework to expand the use of renewable energy in the country, but still we have a long way to travel; a very long way indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir. True it is there is a need for supportive policy framework, for legislative regulatory framework, for incentives, for pricing mechanism but, yet, I must, unfortunately, underline the delay which Government has taken to promote the increased use of renewable energy, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Last Friday, during the PNQ, the House was gratified with the interesting exchanges between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition regarding geothermal energy, production of ethanol from molasses and algae, gasification of sugarcane, storage of wind and

solar energy, ocean thermal energy and so on. That is alright. But, to realise all these systems in our energy mix will take a lot of time and is, indeed, a tall order. Professor de Rosnay stated in the interview that, by 2030, that is, in 20 years, the country can produce 65% of renewable energy. We should be able to produce as much as that. Is this realisable? This is a formidable challenge for the Republic of Mauritius.

In April 2010, Government has adopted an outline of the energy policy 2007-2025. In December 2008, Government adopted a long term energy strategy 2009-2025 and, in this document, the aim is to increase the renewable energy share to 35% by 2025. So, the official Government document ‘Long term Energy Strategy 2009-2025’ states that, by 2025, *c'est-à-dire dans 15 ans*, the renewable energy share will amount to 35%, with the implementation of technologies to harness the various energy resources that the country is endowed with. In fact, the long term energy strategy 2009-2025 establishes targets for photovoltaic electricity generations at 1% by 2015 and 2% by 2025, Mr Speaker, Sir. I repeat: the strategy, as far as PV, photovoltaic electricity generation is concerned, is to reach 1% by 2015 and only 2% by 2025. This is to show how tedious is the process, although we are concerned only with one component, which is the photovoltaic system.

I understand that the Government is presently formulating a renewable energy plan in support of the long term energy strategy. Fair enough! Government is working on the renewable energy master plan and, hopefully, this plan will be ready and can elaborate on the action plan, on the road map, in order to promote renewable energy in our country, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have debated this issue in the House a few times. I have myself a few times asked hon. Dr. Kasenally whether we should set up a renewable energy authority and so on. Fair enough, Mr Speaker, Sir, *le travail est enclenché*. But we must go faster.

After many, many months, Government has formulated a grid code to facilitate small scale grid electricity generation, to enable the participation of small independent power producers. This grid code allows for the integration of renewable energy generating technologies limited to hydro, PV and wind. Mr Speaker, Sir, it took a few years, and this grid code applies to only producers below 50 kW. There is still no grid code yet for capacities higher than 50 kW. Except for this grid code, there is no appropriate regulatory and legal framework for the integration of grid connected PV into the national power system. The regulations are still being

awaited, Mr Speaker, Sir. I remember putting a parliamentary question, namely PQ No. 1B/472, to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, and he said that the regulations for the implementation of this grid code are being finalised and are expected to be promulgated soon. I hope they are promulgated once for all.

There are still no incentives to stimulate investment, Mr Speaker, Sir. The question of subsidies is important, as we all know. Renewable energy will succeed only if this question of subsidies is addressed. Take the case of the solar water heaters. Why was this project successful? Precisely because the question of subsidies was addressed.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to go faster and, in the meantime, il nous suffit de regarder en direction de notre île sœur. Il n'est pas nécessaire d'aller en Amérique, au Danemark ou même en Europe pour mesurer ce qui peut être fait ou ce qui se fait en la matière, M. le président. C'est vrai que nos amis de la Réunion ont l'appui de la France, mais cela suffit-il à justifier l'essor des énergies renouvelables à un tel niveau ? En vérité, M. le président, seul une réelle volonté, une ambition pour investir dans les nouvelles technologies peuvent enclencher une production d'énergie durable. Comme je l'avais dit tout à l'heure, nous assistons à une baisse des prix, au niveau mondial, de ces nouvelles technologies. On parle même de nanotechnologie avec les panneaux à couche mince, qui est la dernière technologie en matière de réalisation de panneaux solaires.

Aujourd'hui, donc, la Réunion représente un panel de nouvelles technologies en matière d'énergie renouvelable. En terme éolien, M. le président, ils ont atteint 16 mégawatts déjà. La plus grosse unité de production solaire à la Réunion est de 12 mégawatts, M. le président. L'île voisine a un total de production photovoltaïque de 75 mégawatts et 2 mégawatts de biogaz. 2,500 maisons sont équipées de panneaux solaires, pour une puissance unitaire variant de 3 kilowatts à 22 kilowatts.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, the technologies in renewable energy are diverse, as they are multiple. I would like also to reflect on the issue of how renewable energy can help us in agriculture, parce que, M. le président, nous savons qu'aujourd'hui, à la Réunion, la mise en place d'un nouveau concept du développement durable a allié le développement de la production d'énergie solaire conjuguée à la construction de serre agricole, dont l'objectif principal est le développement d'une nouvelle figure agricole sous serre. This is one way, Mr Speaker, Sir, how

we can use solar energy to promote agriculture in our country, without problem of food security. Here is an innovation. La capacité de la serre à réguler la lumière nécessaire à la photosynthèse des plantes et la chaleur, grâce à l'utilisation de panneaux photovoltaïques adaptés qui ne laisseront passer que la chaleur nécessaire au développement des plantes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Ms Deepalsing was talking the other day about how we can have water desalination by way of wind energy. We can have also water desalination by solar energy. This is also done now, but here I am talking of how to promote agriculture by way of renewable energy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one line on CEB, which is the utility provider. This decision to increase the tariff by 10% across the board is perceived as a move in the aftermath of the Budget presentation to further make life more difficult for the 350,000 consumers. *C'est une décision qui a été prise sans prendre en considération la situation précaire dans laquelle se trouvent des milliers et des milliers de familles, de foyers mauriciens.*

The justification for that is for investment. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are two things. When the Chief Executive of the CEB was still there, he said in a press conference at the beginning of this year that the CEB has made a profit of Rs900 m. Mr Speaker, Sir, we are not against an increase, but we all know that whenever increases have been effected as far as tariffs are concerned, it has always been graduated, that is, those *au bas de l'échelle ont toujours été épargnés* so as not to suffer the stress of the tariff increase. Can we ask the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, responsible for the CEB, why, in that case, this increase of 10% has been across the board? We also know how, in the past months and years, there has been a lot of controversy about procurement and so on. Today, there was something about the CFL lamps. The population does not bind this proposal of 10% increase across the board. The more so, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the tariff has increased four times during the past four years. Now, the weakest sections of our population are being made again to bear this tariff increase which, according to us, is unjustified for those at the bottom of the ladder.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the water sector, the main measure announced in this Budget, that is, the merger, *a fait couler beaucoup d'encre* - this proposal to merge the CWA, the Irrigation Authority, the WRU and the Wastewater Authority into one single authority. *Cette annonce concrétise la colère d'un chef d'Etat à l'égard de ceux qui sont responsables de cet*

établissement. Elle constitue aussi un firefighting measure, dans la mesure où nous savons tous que la colère gronde out there vis-à-vis de la CWA pour son échec total et sa faillite en termes d'utility provider. M. le président, villages et villes, en unisson et à gorge déployée, s'insurgent contre la CWA en ce moment. A qui la faute, M. le président ?

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister has taken the bull by the horns. Shall I say he has taken the ‘Booluck’ by the horns *en l’envoyant à l’échafaud!* *Et M. Booluck est-il seul responsable? D’après moi, les torts sont partagés, M. le président. M. Booluck est un ami ; je le connais très bien. Ce n’est pas pour cela que je le défends. Je pense que les torts sont partagés.* What do I mean, Mr Speaker, Sir? *Depuis 2005, nous savons tous que*, in view of this Government’s policy to reduce drastically capital expenditure in all sectors - and this measure which was subscribed to by the then Government was, of course, initiated by the Minister of Finance then - the necessary investment did not take place in the sector. *M. Booluck a dû porter le chapeau, même si d’autre part il est responsable pour le poor management de la corporation et d’avoir failli à sa tâche de gestionnaire.*

*M. le président, la question que je voudrais poser est celle-ci : la décision prise en vue d’un merger, sans aucune étude approfondie, est-elle justifiée? Our Singaporean advisors told us to do so, but sans aucune étude préalable, est-elle justifiée? True it is that a water authority solely responsible for the production and distribution exists in many other jurisdictions. There are operational synergies in linking water with sanitation, as is common in many jurisdictions. But the point is that a merger without any change at the level of management in all these institutions may not yield the results expected. Merger is not a magic wand. Merger *n’est pas un bâton magique, M. le président.* It may, on the contrary, give rise to a *lourdeur bureaucratique*, which might hamper the proper functioning of such a mammoth organisation. But we all know that the most important factor which has landed the CWA to its present state is the serious problem of unaccounted for water, Mr Speaker, Sir. Non revenuewater; of course, this factor is linked to the problem of an ailing management and the lack of investment in the CWA projects during the past six years, and all studies and reports concerning the situation of the CWA have pinpointed the urgent need of addressing the problem of unaccounted for water. Because we all know, Mr Speaker, Sir, unaccounted for water is loss, leaks, but also volumes of water stolen, and not only by the small men - I am sure you would understand what I mean - by the small individuals, the poor man who tries to connect without going to the metre and so on.*

This is theft, of course, but unaccounted for water, theft of water is not only restricted to that group of persons.

Mr Speaker, Sir, all the studies have urged the CWA to embark on a programme to address water as part of its corporate strategy and to reduce Non Revenue Water from the current 46/49% to 25%. This is feasible, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I remember in Perth, Australia, the unaccounted for water is 10% and 10% is considered to be a fair and reasonable figure. An analysis of the effect of reduction in non revenue water, Mr Speaker, Sir, has shown that this aspect alone will have a major impact on low future production. I am quoting, Mr Speaker, Sir -

“Accordingly, a vigorous and **concerned** programme in Non Revenue Water reduction is considered essential for optimal finance management.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, under our Government, I was Minister of Utilities at that time. I remember this problem did exist also during our days and the Non Revenue Water problem was addressed. I remember the EIB had agreed to finance a reduction of Non Revenue Water programme to the tune of 20 m. euros. The CWA had appointed the Consultant Severn Trent Water International to prepare baseline data on Non Revenue Water islandwide and an action plan for the reduction of Non Revenue Water to the acceptable level of 25%. Severn Trent had started a study, and the final report was submitted in 2005. I remember a special unit was set up for the reduction of Non Revenue Water, which was brought down at one time to 46%. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, I agree that it is a very complex problem which has wide implications.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wanted also to comment upon the fact that the prevailing situation at the CWA is also perhaps due to the time taken by the previous Government to look into the IFC report, which was appointed in our days, to act as a lead financial adviser in the structuring and preparation of a private sector participation scheme for the water and sanitation sector. In fact, to carry out its mandate, the IFC had assembled a large team of local and international consultants. The IFC recommendations were as follows: in the water sector, in the short to medium term, to solve the problem of unaccounted for water and service discontinuity and, secondly, in the long term, how to establish a sustainable water services. For the wastewater, the IFC recommended a management services contract for operation of existing infrastructure and supervision of capital works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the point is that, without proper management, the option of a merger can be fruitless. I understand that, at one point, Government did subscribe to the idea of entering into a management contract for a private service operator for water and sanitation sector, and that the pre-qualification process for such a contract was even launched. As far as I remember, even the Deputy Prime Minister, in one of his speeches, alluded to that possibility, and this is what he said -

“I am going to ask that we have a look at the overall management of the CWA and also, at the same time, introduce a private sector operator to manage the two sectors, wastewater and water.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, the tender process had started, but perhaps it was put to an end because of the new decision of Government to have recourse to the Singaporean help and, therefore, this question of merger has come on the table. Can I also remark to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister that the allocation of Rs454 m. over the next three years for the replacement of old and defective pipes is - I am sure he will agree with me - insufficient, in as much as one of the several projects of the *MID* Fund itself was a grant of Rs200 m. for the replacement of old pipes for one year. This Budget has earmarked Rs454 m. for three years for the replacement of old and defective pipes.

I would also like to reiterate my proposal, which I made last time, to appeal to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to see to it that La Ferme reservoir be transformed into a potable water reservoir. This decision would go a long way to alleviate the problems of water supply of the inhabitants of Bambous and the Black River area. I understand the hon. Deputy Prime Minister talked about squatters last time, but I can tell him that these squatters have been there for a long time - 15 years - and I am happy to hear that they have been relocated. The question of La Ferme reservoir is a very important one. I am sure my friend, hon. Hervé Aimée, will concur with me that we can, once for all, alleviate the problem of water supply to the inhabitants of the region from Bambous to Black River and La Galette.

To end up on this question of water sector, Mr Speaker, Sir, I think *il y a du feu dans la maison*. Every morning, we hear people complaining on radio. I heard on radio *que la CWA est en état d'alerte*; the high officials of the CWA, the cadres are meeting every morning because of this drastic situation. We do not know what will happen till the end of the year, Mr Speaker, Sir,

in terms of rainfall. I am sure that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is already reflecting on how to manage the situation. But we must think outside the box, Mr Speaker, Sir. Hon. Ms Deepalsing was proposing *la désalination ; je ne veux pas dire qu'on est parti pour la gloire*, but this will take a lot of time. It is a good idea, and it must be looked into. But I think there are more urgent measures and an action plan which, I am sure, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister will come up with in order to urgently and diligently address this problem.

We have about 26 rivers which everyday *sont en train de déverser leurs eaux* in the sea, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can we allow this to go on? Is there any action that can be taken? I do not know. Make shift reservoirs? Can that be done? Is it possible to catch volumes and volumes of cubic meters of clean and potable water, which can be used for domestic purposes after being treated, and prevent the loss of so much water when people in this country are really complaining about the water situation?

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure the Deputy Prime Minister and Government are picking the brains of cadres in the CWA. I would like to tell this to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister who, I am sure, will give a sympathetic ear to what I am saying. There are many cadres and professionals in the private sector who work for their own, small and medium companies, corporates and enterprises which work in this sector and have many ideas. We should also consult these people, and try to come up with an urgent solution to address this problem.

Mr Speaker, Sir, lastly, on the issue of poverty, housing and CSR, I would say a few lines. I have in the past commented on the eradication of poverty. Again, this question is one of implementation. I remember arguing with the former Minister of Finance upon the urgent need to rehabilitate all the ex-squatter areas, and I understand hon. Duval - I thank and congratulate him for that - has been in the area of Riambel and African Town - this is the name that it bears; it is an ex-squatter area - and I am sure that he has seen the living environment of the inhabitants of this region. There are many such pockets of poverty, not only in our constituency, but I am sure in many parts of the country. This is not about pointing a finger at anybody. Mr Speaker, Sir, the proposal of coming up with the CSR was, in fact - if I can use the words of hon. Deputy Prime Minister, and I hope he will not be angry with me - to rebalance what the hon. Minister Sithanen had done when he had reduced corporate tax from 25 to 15%. It was in the aftermath of this decision to reduce corporate tax that the idea of the CSR came up; imposing 2% of profits of

corporates for CSR activities. I, therefore, appeal to the hon. Minister for the rehabilitation of all these ex-squatters areas. Seven months have now elapsed since he is in charge of this Ministry, and I appeal to him to urgently rehabilitate and upgrade the living environment of all these families, and to provide them with the proper access road, street lighting and other social amenities. I will appeal also to the hon. Minister, for the second time, to come forward with a scheme for the poor families living in asbestos houses built - the CHA houses - in different parts of the island. These are poor families, old couples who have not been able to jump on the bandwagon and have not been even to replace their old houses of asbestos and CIS by a small concrete house. Their children have left them; they are mostly old age couples, and they are still living in these asbestos houses. I appeal to the hon. Minister to come up with a scheme for these families living in these houses.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another example of poverty in our country is the patients who have to travel, and who are given only Rs200,000. Very often, these patients' families have to go with their begging bowl, make fund raising activities, and we know how difficult it is today for everybody. We know cases where kids had to go Réunion Island, Belle Pierre clinic. Many children have been there with their mother, and the funds are not enough. The mother has to stay there with their kids, without any food, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, what I am saying is that, on a case to case basis, this amount of Rs200,000 can be looked into and increased for these patients going abroad. The hon. Minister, I am sure, will appreciate what I am saying.

Mr Speaker, Sir, finally, I have listened to what the hon. Minister has been saying about CSR, how 50% of the funds are now being dedicated to three specific areas. The hon. Minister has just listed the three projects, Mr Speaker, Sir; housing is being one them. But there is another request which I am going to make. I think that, in view of the pressing needs of our pauperised population, the hon. Minister should seriously think about providing a free lunch policy for all primary schoolchildren, by setting up school canteens and offering healthy free meals to all primary schoolchildren. I think the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment has explained what he is doing with the CSR Fund. In the interest of transparency and good governance, I am reiterating what the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, that is, to legislate with a view to set up a regulatory framework, and this enabling legislation will provide for the proper management, proper control and the judicious utilisation of the CSR Fund. This is not a *procès d'intention*, but the CSR Fund, Mr Speaker,

Sir, will be amounting to Rs2 billion. It's for the sake of good governance and transparency. There are guidelines which are on the website of the Ministry, which have, unfortunately, never been tabled in the Assembly, although promised by the former Minister. There is the list of the NGOs which are beneficiaries, as well as the criteria for qualification and so on. I think I asked the hon. Minister one day this question about the enabling legislation, and he told me that the MRA Act and the Income Tax Act have been amended for this 2%. But, I think we need now a specific legislation to cover what the CSR has now become, Mr Speaker, Sir, namely an important organisation with an important Fund of nearly Rs2 billion. For the sake of transparency and good governance, I think it will be in the interest of everybody, including the Minister.

For the housing problem, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have not much to say except that we were flattered when we saw the housing proposals in this Budget. We are convinced that the hon. Minister of Finance has been inspired by the proposals made publicly by the *Commission Terre et Logement* of the MMM. The framework of the housing proposal in the Budget bears a strange likeness to our proposal. In fact, a few weeks before the Budget, *la Commission Terre et Logement du MMM* came up with a public document - we had a press conference - and most of the ideas and suggestions that we made, Mr Speaker, Sir, had been taken up by the Ministry of Finance. So much the better.

Because of the failure of the previous Government to address the situation in the housing sector, the situation has deteriorated. There are today nearly 30,000 house seekers in this country, Mr Speaker, Sir, and 75 of these seekers earned less than Rs10,000 per month. There is a housing crisis, and what we hope is that the proposals do not remain *lettre morte*, as was the case during the past five years when Mr Sithanen was Minister of Finance, Mr Speaker, Sir. Year after year, proposals were made in the Budget, but we all know the *bilan* of the previous Government as regards the housing sector. The hon. Minister of Finance has himself, in his past speeches - I saw it - criticised the past Government on its housing policies. This is why, I think, he came up with this elaborate plan, and I wish him success. I would like to appeal to the hon. Minister of Finance also to review the threshold for the casting of slabs. The grant has increased from Rs60,000 to Rs65,000 for the casting of slabs, but, Mr Speaker, Sir, as in the case of examination fees, the threshold must be increased to enable more families to benefit from such facilities.

I come to the Police Force. My friend has ably canvassed the arguments on behalf of the Opposition, but I will just say one thing so that the hon. Prime Minister might hear me. I come back on this question of promotion exercise, and I will stop here. Mr Speaker, Sir, everything that has to be said has been said. There have been many PQs to which the hon. Prime Minister has answered. But, on 31 January 2009, the DFSC conducted the examination of Police Sergeant to that of Police Inspector. On 14 February 2009, the examination was done for the rank of Police Constable to that Police Sergeant. On Thursday 14 May 2009, a list of 123 Police sergeants who have successfully passed the competitive exams for the promotion to the rank of Police Inspectors has been published in Routine Orders, serial number 22/09, at paragraph 261. So, an official list has been published in the Routine Orders of the Police, serial number 22/09, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is worthnoting that such examinations are conducted according to Regulations 19(1)A of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission, upon the request of the responsible officer, who is the Commissioner of Police, where he considers that these vacancies are to be filled.

Now, according to Regulation 19(4) of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission, which stipulates that -

“Where the Commission has decided that a person should be appointed or promoted to a vacancy in any Disciplined Force, the responsible officer, on being informed of the decision by the Secretary, shall issue the letter of appointment or promotion to the person concerned, and shall make arrangement to complete the procedure for appointment or promotion.”

In this case, the Commissioner of Police or the responsible officer must have been informed, to have published the list of successful police officers in the Routine Orders. So, if he has been informed, the list has been published according to these regulations, and he should have issue the letter of appointment, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are not making this a legal issue, but we appeal to the hon. Prime Minister to once for all turn the page - *tourner la page sur ce triste événement* - and publicise the list of these successful Police Sergeants who have passed their examination. The last time this was done was February 2005, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I would appeal to the Prime Minister to also see to it that all the vacancies in the higher grades of police officers be filled. There are two vacancies for Deputy Commissioner of Police, eight vacancies

for Assistant Commissioner of Police, 27 vacancies in the grade of Superintendant of Police, 32 vacancies in the grade of Assistant Superintendant of Police.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to boost the morale, to implement the desiderata of the Budget as regards the Force, to have a more effective, modern Disciplined Force, I think, once for all, all these posts should be filled, and this promotion exercise should be completed.

M. le président, nous arrivons à la fin des débats aujourd’hui. Dans quelques minutes, les ténoirs, notamment le Premier ministre et son ministre des finances, vont donner la réplique à l’opposition. Ce que nous pouvons dire, c’est qu’encore une fois, ce budget a été une grande déception pour le petit peuple, a provoqué un désespoir, de la colère même, M. le président, un *feeling of let down*. Déjà, avant le budget, depuis les élections, il n’y avait aucun élan, aucun enthousiasme, aucune nouvelle énergie, aucun dynamisme - et même après les élections - dans ce pays, puisque le peuple sentait que c’est un gouvernement disparate, homogène et incohérent. Après cet exercice budgétaire…

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Especially those who have been rare in this House!

Mr Ganoo: Après cet exercice budgétaire, c’est davantage le désespoir. Quant aux mesures sociales, ce n’était pas difficile de faire mieux que le Dr. Sithanen. Mais avec la cascade d’augmentations, avec une fin d’année qui s’approche - qui est derrière la porte - M. le président, l’avenir est très sombre pour le petit peuple. Le mois de janvier de l’année prochaine sera encore plus dur. Les syndicats affûtent leurs armes et nous, au MMM, continuerons à jouer notre rôle d’opposition responsable ; nous n’allons pas pratiquer de politique de terre brûlée ; nous sommes là, M. le président, et nous ne ferons pas de cadeau au gouvernement. Aujourd’hui, le MMM, avec ses nouveaux cadres, ses nouveaux membres, est un MMM revigoré. Le temps n’a pas diminué nos ardeurs ; le MMM est comme le roseau de La Fontaine ; il se plie mais ne se rompt pas. Aujourd’hui, dans l’opposition, nous restons toujours le plus grand parti de ce pays, et nous sommes prêts à continuer le travail que le MMM a fait dans le passé. Encore une fois, pour nous, malheureusement, c’est un budget, comme je viens de le dire, de désillusion, de grande déception, de désespoir.

Merci, M. le président.

(3.24 p.m)

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, five or ten minutes ago, I would have got up and congratulated the previous orator for what I consider a positive approach to the problems of water, electricity and renewable energy, but while listening to the content I would disagree with some of the points he made. Whereas the tone, the approach was right - and I take note of the willingness of the Opposition to participate in the *Maurice Ile Durable* Project - he spoilt it. He had to spoil it, and this is the problem with the Opposition. Every time they end up by spoiling things. *Disparate!* What is *disparate*? There is only one Government, Mr Speaker, Sir; there is no MSM, no Labour, no PMSD; there is only one Government, with the Prime Minister at the head of it, and if everybody understands that, we will move forward in peace. This is important. Several times in the intervention of the Opposition, I noted this sort of wishful thinking. What is going on there; is anything wrong? Watching; seeing the body language and so on. What you see here is unity of purpose, sailing through rough seas with a captain who knows where he is going. So, let's stop this. Mr Speaker, Sir, sometimes it is good to 'let sleeping dogs lie', *pas grater l'édos maler couma Premier ministre ine dire.*

Yesterday, hon. Obeegadoo revived painful memories of what it was all about between 2000 and 2005; and hon. Dr. Rajesh Jeetah had to remind him what it was about *pain fourré*, schools that did not exist. But more importantly, I see here -

« *Une séparation claire et nette entre l'Etat et la religion* ».

I agree. Then, he went on to say « *le MMM a fait des propositions à la Commission électorale pour que, dans le cadre de l'organisation des élections, il y ait des règles très claires empêchant le mélange.* » When was this made? I would like to know! Where were you all during the campaign of 2010? It is alright to say we should not go to the religious, but don't call the religious to us. You have mixed some in a way that is unacceptable and is going to harm this country. Before you make propositions, before you say that you have been to the Electoral Commission, *gues ene tipé dans le miroir* and see what you have been doing.

(*Interruptions*)

You are not aware! Well, in what country have you been during the electoral campaign?

(*Interruptions*)

Of course, I am replying to what has been said yesterday...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Are you treating his intervention as nonsense? There it is!

Voilà....

Mr Speaker: Order, order please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me proceed. *La vérité fait mal*, and you know it. *La vérité fait mal...*

(*Interruptions*)

Mo pou koze délo là, but I am replying to what has been said...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I congratulate the Minister of Finance for this Budget. We have all done it. On this side of the House, we see all the positive things and, on the other side, they see the negative things. Fair enough! But, to me, this Budget is rooted in the realities of the day, with a look to the future, constantly bearing in mind social justice. This is le *fil conducteur*; social justice, responsible budgeting, and we hope that, in the years to come, this will bear the fruits that we have in mind today. Things are difficult, and we know it. Hon. Abdullah Hossen has said it: the Opposition behaves as if there is no crisis outside, there is no euro crisis; in all these features, there is no mention about external factors and external shocks. And yet, here we are getting ready for it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Budget is about what? It is about values; compassion, kindness, generosity, eradicate absolute poverty, ensure that every family has a decent home, support families who live at the margin and to pull up those whose lives are grounded in poverty and trapped at the lower rung, stay committed to an equitable sharing of the fruits of growth. This is what the Budget is about, and this is in line with the Prime Minister's commitment to the nation - social justice. We are developing this country. We are looking at IT infrastructure; Rs250 billion over the next ten years to modernise the country's physical fabric, water and energy

supplies, telecommunications and public services. The key to it all is to get out of poverty through education; giving opportunity.

Once we talked about a knowledge hub. We are on the ground, looking at pre-primary school and primary schools, looking at facilities given to primary schools, opening up tertiary education. What is more important is this increase in the number of scholarships, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have increased it from 12 to 50, and this to me is so important. From the 33 new awards, 24 would be reserved for students from families with modest income. The medical hub will create quite an impetus in the development of medical services. We will be able to train nurses and doctors here. So, we should open our mind. There is no threat. Foreign students will come here and we will go abroad, and it will be an interchange, *une synergie*. This is what future Mauritius is about; opening up medical hub, education and other sectors as well, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am particularly glad that, in the tertiary scheme, there is also talk of training for our needs, and I will come to that. And, what it says -

“To have a strategic advantage in education, training, research and innovation, we must connect research done in our tertiary institutions to the needs of enterprises and Government.”

This Government fosters a pool of qualified and trained labour force, to meet the challenges of the global economy, and provides a much needed adequate human resources to deliver in whatever sectors of the economy, particularly in infrastructural development, public utilities, and to boost up our new industry in the context of *Maurice Ile Durable*. I go along with what hon. Ganoo has said. We need to build up; we need to progress much faster than what we are doing.

I congratulate the hon. Minister who has talked very responsibly about impediments to quick progress. We are progressing, but there are impediments to quick progress. The first is lack of manpower and lack of knowledge. We don't have enough trained personnel. I wish the Opposition was here when I was talking on the Presidential Address, because the hon. Minister has elaborated on most of the issues I raised, and I thank him for it. I think we view the difficulties that come up.

He has talked about Suzlon. Do you know why Suzlon did not come? It's very simple. It's because they were sellers of equipment and not operation and maintenance people. So, that was one of the reasons, but I will come to that in a minute, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I was asked '*cause dilo*'. I will talk about water. We have talked about Non Revenue Water for 15 years, 20 years. It has remained static, either 50 plus or minus or whatever it is. We can argue on the figure, argue about leaks, about commercial losses - as they said frauds; and major frauds. The 2000 report showed major frauds in the system. But, the approach has been too piecemeal, too *timide*; the approach has not been global. And what happened, Mr Speaker, Sir? In 1998/1999, we realised there was a problem, and we had a management contract to look at Non Revenue Water. But, in 2000, it was stopped, and the management contract was with two top French firms that were dealing with water. We started, but it was stopped, for whatever reasons. They had the required know-how, the technology but, unfortunately, nothing much happened.

I am glad that hon. Ganoo mentioned the EIB project; the European Investment Bank project. It was a failure, because it was not a total approach again. It was a piecemeal approach. We had a consultant here; he started with the meters and, at the end of one year, nothing happened. Then, we went on piecemeal, looking at a sort of targeted and selected areas, not to change but to repair, and this has been the major mistake. Every government has done it. The 2000-2005 Government has done it, and we have followed on the model that was being used, because we ended up with the EIB project, which is not suitable for the purpose we have in mind. This is a massive reduction, and looking at a sort of chosen areas was not the solution.

So, quite rightly, the Prime Minister decided that enough is enough. We need to have a radical change, a radical approach. At the request of the Prime Minister - and I will give full details; this is the important part - the Singaporean team, led by the Public Utilities Board, has already made a preliminary assessment of the sector. The key observations - and it's good to know and see that what they see we also see it, but they put it so well; they package it so good that we cannot but agree with every word they say. And what do they say?

- We have enough water resources to meet future demand - but they don't say future - when; whether it's 2020 or 2030, I don't know - and support economic development. However, - they add this, and we all know it - seasonal shortages of

water continue to be a challenge - that's what they say. It is obvious, and we all know it - to ensure a sustainable water management network;

And, then, it talks about the second thing, and this is important again. I think it's hon. Lesjongard who went all the way, except to agree that we need a total water management approach. He argued but, then, at the last minute, he did not agree that we need a total water management approach. What do they say?

- multiplicity of organisations managing water assets and operations with lack of holistic, integrated and sustainable plans and delivery;

We agree with that. No one is going to quarrel with that and then, there is an important bit, again.

- a large part of our resources are used for non domestic and commercial needs, resulting in unbalanced allocation and low efficiencies in delivery;

The distribution of water is unbalanced and, again, it's just been mentioned.

- the CWA manages only 20% of the overall water demand, primarily for domestic consumers;

So what happens to the rest of the 80%?

- 40% goes to irrigation - and this is the interesting bit, Mr Speaker, Sir, - but, out of the 40%, only 5% go to the small planters, and the balance goes to private large scale planters;

This is the issue we have to address. Too much of our water goes elsewhere. 5% only to the small planters, 35% goes elsewhere, and it's not good for the country and,

- around 40% - and this is an interesting part again. We have to reflect on it in the future, not now; but, in the long term, we have to think about it - of our water resources are used for only 4% of total electricity generation;

And then - this is what hon. Ganoo has been hinting -

- we need catchment approach to enhance water resources in Mauritius rather than target areas or supply zone approach;

Today, we are looking at the zones and approach. We need a holistic approach to know what to do. I know everyone in Mauritius thinks that water that is being used cannot be reused, but we have to address this issue.

- at the moment, there is a negative public perception of recycle/reuse of water.

Most of the water that we are treating, Mr Speaker, Sir, is either put back in the aquifer or out at sea; it's a waste. We have to address this issue and address it thoroughly, and educate the public as to how we can use it.

The Singaporean team - this is the crux the matter - has recommended a "Total Water Management" framework - this is the key word - which would provide for the appropriate allocation of water resources to various competing sectors. And, I quote -

"The Total Water Management (TWM) approach integrates management of the water resources, land use practices and related resources to attain equitable economic and social solutions, while promoting ecosystem sustainability. Essentially, TWM is a problem-solving approach to address key water resource challenges in ways that are economically efficient, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable."

The TWM shall also comprise -

- Institutional re-structuring to redefine roles and responsibilities of the existing organisations, so as to benefit from potential synergies within the merged entity to make it commercially viable. (They are looking at the merger, at what it is going to be like).
- Formulation of a programme of NRW reduction.
- Capacity building.
- Non potable water recycling.
- Water tariffs.

The Singaporean team will take into account - and this is important again - all ongoing initiatives and activities to avoid duplication. We expect the Singaporean team to come up with a comprehensive proposal for the implementation of the next phase, that is, the detailed scope of works by end of this week.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Ganoo made mention of Private Sector Operator (PSO). Yes, we did launch a Private Sector Operator pre-qualification exercise in 2009. Unfortunately, following a challenge by one of the applicants on the financial evaluation, the exercise was annulled, and a fresh one is under way.

When it comes to investment, the figure of Rs454 m. over three years has been mentioned but, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have all the information here. The investment will be around Rs1.47 billion. It comes up in forms of loans and grants, and it will be used for water pipes and also for the Pailles Treatment Plant. So, it will come to a billion for the next three years. I can reassure the House that finance is there, but we have to get the technical know-how and the managerial forefront to go ahead. There we are; it is not only Rs 454 m., Mr Speaker, Sir, but nearest to Rs1 billion and more.

Hon. Lesjongard made a good analysis, and he came up with one thing. He said that it is evident that we must have more water storage; quite right. It is evident that we cannot rely on boreholes for our supply, and today the area that is most affected is the area that predominantly relies on boreholes, like Rose Hill, Beau Bassin, Coromandel and Quatre Bornes. The boreholes are now yielding less than 50% of the usual yield, and comments have been made about delay with boreholes. The problem about boreholes, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that we have got about 101 boreholes in this country since 1995, and only 38 have been found to be productive, and we have to know where they are, how they can be used and how near they are to the network. What is interesting is that you test them during the wet season. I give one example: 6,000 cubic metres per day; you test them during the dry season, and it is 1,000 only. There is a problem of variability. Sometimes, we are victims. Last year - 2009 - there was no outcry regarding water, because there was rain. In fact, we had so much rain last year that we could not do dry testing; testing of boreholes during the dry season. It is being done now. These are the difficulties. We all agree that we need to increase the storage capacity, we need dams.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been accused of delay regarding Bagatelle dam. But, here are the facts. Building a dam in GRNW has been there for a long time. First, it was SAJ Dam. It was near Beau Bassin; it was permeable and could not store water properly, and so it was moved up. In 2000, the site was moved upstream to Bagatelle. The feasibility study started in 2000, and the report was submitted in 2004. In 2004 - and this is the crux of the matter - the then Government, unfortunately, decided to change the most suitable dam site option proposed by the

consultant on the grounds that the site included around 100 hectares of Mon Desert Alma land, and the dam site should be limited to State Land Development Corporation (SLDC) only. Fair enough! The site was wrongly chosen. Probably we had fertile land, land that should not be used. Fair enough! But, Mr Speaker, Sir, when that decision was taken in 2004, we had to start all over again. And this explains why we are where we are today.

In 2004, it took another two years to complete the detailed feasibility study for the option approved by Government in 2004. So, it takes us to 2006; then, 2006, with detailed design for the new dam site, concurrently the Ministry of Finance explored sources of funding for the project from EIB, World Bank and African Development Bank, but to no avail.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for some reason, these funding agencies were not interested in Bagatelle. It is only after - unfortunately, hon. Li Kwong Wing is going - the visit of the Prime Minister to China that funds were secured at the 8th Sino Mauritian Joint Commission in 2009 from Exim Bank of China for construction works. I would like to reassure the House that the Bagatelle dam project will now be implemented as per schedule. Government has already set up two committees, namely an Evaluation Committee and a Negotiating Panel chaired by SLO, to ensure that we get value for money in respect of the works to be undertaken by the Chinese contractor.

I have taken good note where the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said to be careful, and we are going to be careful. We are going to set parameters. But, having said that, don't forget that the Midlands Dam contract was Rs975 m. We laid the foundation stone, and it was continued by the next Government. It ended up with Rs300 m. more under the next Government. So, when we criticise, we have to bear in mind that sometimes there are unforeseen circumstances. With the experience elsewhere, we are making doubly sure that we get value for money.

As regards the Rivière de Anguilles dam, I would like to assure the House *que c'est en bonne voie*; the procedures for acquisition for private land are ongoing. A consultant will be appointed shortly to prepare the bid document and to supervise the works. The bidding process will be completed in 2011, and funds have been earmarked for 2012 for construction works. So much, Mr Speaker, Sir, for explaining the limitations of our system, the boreholes, and where we are today with regard to the Bagatelle dam.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to Members on both sides of the House who have come to me and talked about the problems regarding water in their constituency, and how we have addressed them. But the solutions have to be addressed at source. We have set up, as hon. Ganoo has said - he seems to know more about my Ministry than I do, but I thank him for that - an emergency cell with the acting Chairman. The CWA coordination team wanted to meet at 9.30 every morning, but I said that, by 9.00 a.m., they should all be *sur le terrain* and meetings should be at 8.00 a.m.; and they are being held at 8.00 a.m.

(Interruptions)

For the time being, the Chairman is Mr Chumroo. He is on the ground. I am very indebted to him for having accepted to be on the field and everywhere. He is helping and making sure that everyone does his work properly. The hotline also is being relooked at. It is not acceptable that a hotline is run by young girls who answer the phone without knowing what they are talking about. In spite of the *formation* - we have them trained - there are still deficiencies. So, we are making sure that trained technicians are there at the call centre, taking note and, more importantly, to reply to people who want to know what the problem is and when they can expect to have water. The other thing, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the problem of sheer vandalism, unacceptable sheer vandalism.

On Saturday or Sunday, there were vandals who stopped water from La Nicolière Reservoir to go to the treatment plant at Nicolière. Unforgivable! I'll show them how heavy equipment is being damaged to stop the water. I cannot understand. They have broken the locks, they have got in. They have lifted heavy equipment, which needs four or five people. The police have been informed. Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the newspapers mentioned about leaks in the pipeline from Pierrefonds to Port Louis. Concerning the leaks, there are people stealing water; not only stealing water, but letting the water also wasted; and it's prevalent. They go and knock the pipes and make holes. I am appealing to each and everyone here who believes in values that we should condemn this. People - apart from valve operators - who go and manipulate the valves, so that people are deprived of water when they should be getting it. The police have been told to do what they have to do, and we hope that, on that score, things will improve.

Mr Speaker, Sir, so much for water. I think that this problem of total water management has now sunk in. It's not a matter of people doing wastewater and going to work in CWA. It's not that at all. It's a sort of overall look, and we hope things will move very fast.

I will end on this. Hon. Ganoo has said that when he was Minister - quite rightly - they did some work and it went down to 4%. Whether it's meaningful, I don't know. The question has been asked: do the data mean anything? What happened afterwards? Like we did! We dropped it, and it went up again because it is repairs and not replacement. This is the key issue; we have to replace, not repair. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, we'll address the problem in a comprehensive manner, and I thank the Prime Minister for being quite categorical. We are proceeding with it, and we are going ahead with it. The Singaporean team will work with the European Investment Bank, the World Bank, and the other institutions that are working in the water sector.

Going to the electrical energy sector, Mr Speaker, Sir, today, we have 2,300 GWh approximately to meet our annual demand. We have a mix of 40% coal and 16% bagasse, equivalent to independent power producers - 40%, which makes 56%; 40% fuel oil and 4% hydro. This is the state as it is now. We have talked about it. The coal/bagasse generating plants are still using the 1950s spreader-stocker technology, and are producing excessive greenhouse effect coupled with inadequate means for disposal and mitigation of the ash. We still have generation plants using coal/bagasse inefficiently, and the next step would be to see that they produce more optimally, at increased higher pressure of 82-110 bars instead of the 44 bars. With those changes, we expect to get 100 GWh of bagasse based energy and 50 MW net capacity with bagasse/coal ratio. This is the important part, Mr Speaker, Sir. The bagasse/coal ratio has varied. We cannot let a ratio of one unit from bagasse, four units from coal. It has to be as near as possible. So, we hope it will be a one-to-one or as near as one-to-one as possible.

I mentioned the diesel generator at Fort Victoria, the 2 X 15 and the 4 X 15 MW that will come up eventually. We will be able to adapt them for long term use with biodiesel. This is a positive step. Incidentally, whilst I am at it, the efficiency of the new engines is 20% more than what they are replacing, and this will be equivalent to 50,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide reduction yearly. I think the Opposition had expressed concern about the delay. We are also concerned about the delay. But one thing is for sure. I repeat: the CEB did not - and I say not - pay Rs500

m. more than was the price for phase I, Fort Victoria 2 X 15 MW. They did not. What had happened was that there was a controversy with the Procurement Board, and it was settled by two independent consultants - CEB consultant and the Procurement Board consultant - who agreed eventually that the price was the prevailing price at the time it was purchased and that the model used to estimate the price was wrong. Let's once and for all not talk about Rs500 m. spent more than was necessary. It does not hold water this time.

When it comes to the new technology, I agree with hon. Ganoo, but there is one thing, Mr Speaker, Sir. Progress will come faster than we think, and I have every reason to believe that, in 10 to 15 years from now, PV solar energy will be at half or less of the cost than what it is today. When you see the progress in the field in 20 years' time, it will be probably a tenth. It will be in every corner, in every window, in every house. But our problem, Mr Speaker, Sir, is capacity. We have the SIPP (Small Independent Power Producer). My concern is that we get value for money; we do not encourage people to buy PV units that are not up to standard. This is very important, and I think this is the biggest challenge. This is a challenge that exists everywhere. We've been warned to be careful of products that come from certain places, and to make sure that we have a quality product. We are setting it up, and on Thursday we will launch the SIPP. Quite rightly, we are limited at the moment to 50 kW production. But what we will do eventually is to launch a request for proposal and see what it is like to have 10 MW unit set up. The hon. Member previously said, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the market is expanding, and I'll use the same phrase as he did. The market is expanding into billions, and there is no reason why prices should not come down once the market is there. But we need to know-how; we need people who can verify. We have learned from the solar water heater episode how to be careful with products, and we are going to make sure that the products we get are worth.

There has been talk about Bigara. For the information of the hon. Member, Bigara is not suitable for a big expansion because of communication problems. We can put two or three, but we will go to Curepipe point. This has taken us another year to do it. You see the difficulty. When you start, it is alright, and then you find the difficulty. It is the same at Plaines des Roches, but we will see how it goes.

As to the new technologies, Mr Speaker, Sir, in 1999 we talked about OTEC, and they went to Chennai. They came back full of promises, but nothing has happened commercially - and I say commercially - since. So, OTEC is still in the pipeline.

As for geothermal, we have been following it up. There are different opinions, but we won't know until we test. There is no point hypothesising, making all sorts of theories. We will only know when we go and prospect, and have a serious study. I know for a fact that Iceland will help us, and we will go along with that. I have every hope that the renewable energy will pick up slowly. I am the first to say we do not agree with some of the consultants who come here. They see difficulties, but we say that we want to implement. They see difficulty of size; that we are a small place, and that what applies to Europe, from the North Sea to Spain, does not apply to Mauritius, from Cap Malheureux to Mahebourg. It does not apply. Secondly, there is a limit. We can talk about adapting wind energy to the grid. This is another debate; we'll come to that. But my firm belief is that solar is the future, and we should go up to it and see that it's done.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have faith in the future. I have listened to the proposals that *MID* should be a national effort, and I agree. I was the first to say, when I was given the *MID*, that it is wide, broad, all encompassing. Everything that we do in Government is about *MID*, from social measures to renewable energy, to economy - how we run the economy. Everything is about that, and we spent a lot of efforts.

Hon. Bundhoo, the then Minister of Environment and hon. Gokhool, the then Minister of Education went to universities, to TEC, to Rajiv Gandhi Centre, to schools to preach about renewable energy and also about sustainable development. A lot of work has been done. Unfortunately, not much of it comes out; two years ago, it hit the imagination. The Guerrilla Gardener! Guerrilla Gardener was someone in London who came and he caught on the imagination of the young people. He said: 'if you see a spot that is neglected, go and embellish it; it is yours, it is your quarters, it is your country, do it.' But I had a proviso: 'don't go and embellish it and then take it for yourself. You should embellish it for the community at large!'

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have every faith in my country, I have every faith in my Prime Minister, I have every faith in this Government, and I hope, from what I have heard from the Opposition, that they will join us with this *MID* effort and proceed.

If I have said anything wrong about what happened during the election, please don't take it badly. But what I am saying is that we must not talk unless we remember what we have been doing ourselves, and instead of giving lessons to others, think about your own behaviour first.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: I will break for tea now.

At 4.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.35 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair

Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Speaker, Sir, let me start by congratulating the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development for his first Budget Speech under this new Government led by the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, and also all the previous orators from both sides of the House for their comments thereon.

The population had high expectations about this Budget. This is the same Government that returned to power, but with a new shot in the arm, from a new ally coming from an erstwhile loyal Opposition. It created the impression of a new departure.

From what we heard and saw, the Finance Minister did have the *coudée franche* from the Prime Minister, the *bienveillance* of the backbenchers, and even the goodwill from the trade unions and the support of the private sector, who hailed him as a pragmatic comeback kid, *l'argentier-héritier avec un grand pouvoir d'écoute*. So, expectations were at their peak. The National Pay Council was summarily dismantled. The Employees Real Estate Investment Trust, which was put in deep freeze for five years, was quickly defrosted with the promise of high yield from released land development, and the Finance Minister was determined not to look in one direction only, that is, towards the big boys, but to redress the injustices caused to the working class by five accumulated years of drastic loss of purchasing power due to inadequate salary compensation, which is itself compounded by a runaway inflation and substantial depreciation. After an operation of shake-hand or *casse poignet* with all and sundry parties, he went into silent mode and started to spin to manage public opinion.

There was a deep euro crisis and global meltdown, he said. *La marge de manœuvre est limitée.* He was walking on a tight rope between *impératifs économiques et exigences sociales*, a

truly perilous exercise, where one has to be prudent and responsible. Who would argue otherwise? So, zero wage compensation was quietly in the works. How did he go about it? Let me just make a quick review of the pre-Budget consultations.

First, the hon. Minister of Finance refused to preside the newly set-up Tripartite Committee for wage compensation, and delegated his Financial Secretary, who then played *l'abonné absent*. Later, he issued in haste a so-called Discussion Paper to the trade unions, which did three abominations. Firstly, divide the workers into two distinct categories: the public sector workers who will get compensation in January and the private sector workers in June; a kind of *apartheid salarial*, which is a dangerous attempt at divide and rule.

Secondly, he proposed a wage freeze for the private sector until July next year and, thirdly, he dealt a deadly blow to tripartism by a unilateral imposition of zero to 1.5% wage compensation, pretexting that there is no material time to discuss. The stark truth obviously struck on the trade unions in the face, with a complete U-turn from what was proclaimed as the *rattrapage* for workers. So, he failed the unions on this count in his very first decision, and he completely swept to oblivion all that he had said in this august Assembly in December, last year, on the plight of workers bled to death by a callous regime sold out to big capital.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition had amply demonstrated this double standard in one of his PNQs and his speech on the Budget. But, worse still, he was to start distilling doubt and panic among the people, not revealing the true state of public finances. We, at the MMM, had all along persisted that the hon. Minister of Finance had adequate fiscal space for manoeuvre, owing to four things -

Firstly, the huge cash balances accumulated in the Special Funds set up by his predecessor that he can transfer to the Consolidated Fund, but which he gave the impression of having all been either committed or dilapidated.

Secondly, the two chickens laying the golden eggs, or *les poules aux œufs d'or*, just handed over again by his predecessor, namely the *lotto*, which yielded Rs700 m. and the CSR, with the potential of yielding Rs1 billion.

Thirdly, the grants from the European Union still to be collected.

And in the last resort, there is also fourthly the billions of pre-emptive foreign loans that had already been contracted by the Government in anticipation of a global credit crunch.

What is our conclusion about these pre-Budget consultations? It was a vast cinema leading to -

- (i) a unilateral imposition of a wage compensation of zero to 3.2 %;
- (ii) no intention to catch up the loss in purchasing power of the last five years, as promised;
- (iii) no will to reduce the inequality of income, and
- (iv) no mention of any attempt to install a minimum *salaire vital*.

One would understand that in times of high inflation rate, there used to be under compensation, especially for the middle and higher income groups. But in times of low inflation as now, it should have been an opportunity to catch up for that under compensation of previous years by way of an over compensation. But that was refused.

Let us come to the Budget Speech itself, Mr Speaker, Sir. Before I comment, allow me to quote what I said in *l'Express* a few days before it was delivered in the Assembly -

“This Budget is most likely going to be a non-event. As he holds the key to the Treasury and to the bumper harvest reaped by his predecessor, he has asked for some patience to do his financial reengineering with his new financial compass. We shall wait to see what kind of a different Budget he will be able to craft with his proclaimed humane and social approach. For sure, he will be judged on how he will use the fiscal resources endowed on him to hold on to his word to reduce the increasing inequalities of society, to strengthen the social safety nets and to make poverty history. I expect to see him coming up with bold, innovative, imaginative measures, to change course and to galvanise popular support for a new departure to a more just and balanced development as he has promised. I only hope that he will not mire himself in tinkering with timid peaceful measures here and there just to claim that he has been able to achieve a no-tax Budget. That would indeed be a travesty of justice that he has solemnly promised to the nation.”

What did we say actually? That the Budget is likely to be a non-event and that we should not expect too much from it, expect nothing actually imaginative, nothing transformational, no restructuring, expect from some piecemeal twists and tweaks here and there on the edges. But, at least, you would have expected that he would keep his promises. Otherwise, he would not have

been left with a single iota of credibility. What were these electoral pledges and promises? There were five major ones, which we at the MMM also were in agreement with -

- (i) remove the tax on interest on saving;
- (ii) abolish the NRPT;
- (iii) give back to small planters the tax exemption on the first 60 tonnes of sugar;
- (iv) give back to small planters and producers the duty-free on double cab vehicles, and
- (v) restore the full subsidy on SC and HSC fees for low income students.

What he has achieved in this Budget, unfortunately, confirms our opinion. But, to his credit, he changed course in the case of these five electoral pledges, making his Labour colleagues *brûler ce qu'ils ont adoré et adoré ce qu'ils ont brûlé*. However, unfortunately, the Budget has been a pure accounting exercise, a truly non-event without any new idea or project or even an inspiring thought, only a so-called Mauritian dream that has been translated into trillions and millions of rupees and dollars. But, basically, it has remained a tax and spend Budget. Actually, it is not even a no-tax Budget. It is, in fact, a More Tax Budget, with increases in everything; excise duty, customs duty, levy, solidarity tax, capital gains tax and land capital transfer tax. *C'est une rafale d'augmentation de taxes* with a time bomb of escalating inflation. We all know that inflation is a tax on the poor. So, it is a rip-off on the mass of consumers and workers of the country who have been made to suffer an immediate hike in consumer prices long before they even get their meagre salary increase at the end of next month. But, outside, the *grand secteur privé* called this 'a fine balancing act', *un budget équilibré*. Inside, his colleagues have been quite generous I must say, maybe in irony or in jest, saying that it was *a véritable tour de force, un coup de maître*. I may add also that it is a self-inflicted wound on the hon. Prime Minister.

Let us take the wage compensation announced in the Budget. The Finance Minister has awarded a 3.2% wage increase to those earning up to Rs5,000 per month, claiming that it is 0.5% above the inflation rate for the current year running at 2.7%. A magnanimous gesture! The compensation amount for those with a monthly salary of Rs5,001 to Rs12,000 per month is Rs175 and for those with a monthly salary of Rs12,001 to Rs30,000 it is Rs190, whereas for those above Rs30,000 per month it is nil. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, the devil is in the details. When I did ask a Parliamentary Question recently on what is the average rate of

increase across all salary groups, the Minister of Finance replied that it is 1.5%, which, therefore, does not fully compensate for the current rate of inflation of 2.7%. Why did he not give, at least, this full compensation, when he had solemnly undertaken to redress the gross injustice meted out to workers by way of a 17% loss in purchasing power over the past four years due to his predecessor? He said that it is because no preceding government had ever done that before. And so did his colleagues clap and thump their hands on the table. Trade unions would probably use their hands otherwise, but that is not the point.

Let us see how the abused predecessor of his dealt with the same wage compensation issue last December. The inflation rate last year for the six months, from July to December 2009, was 1.2%. How much did he award as wage compensation? It was 3.5%; nearly three times the inflation rate. This was given to those earning up to Rs12,000 per month. For those with salary above Rs12,000 per month, the compensation was at a flat rate of Rs420. The 3.5 percentage compensation was calculated on the basis of the National Pay Council formula, that is, half of the 1.2% inflation rate plus the productivity rate of 2.9%, that is, 0.6% plus 2.9%, making a total of 3.5%.

Let us see how this 3.2% compensation was calculated this year. It bears all the characteristics of being on the basis of the same old formula of the so-called dismantled National Pay Council (NPC), that is, half of the inflation rate plus the productivity rate, that is, 1.35%, which is half of the 2.7%, plus around 1.9% productivity rate, which gives us about 3.2%. Yet, the hon. Finance Minister has imposed a ceiling of Rs30,000, above which zero compensation was awarded, whereas there was no ceiling last year for a compensation of Rs420. So, what do we conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir? We have now a new ally brought on board, calling for the dismantling of the NPC, with its controversial formula of compensation and for the return of the tripartism, which were both duly accepted as a condition of the Alliance. But, now that it is on board, what does it do? It does a mix and match with no coherence, scrapping the NPC, but keeping its formula, restoring tripartism, but killing it in its spirit. It even awarded a lower compensation than what his decried predecessor had granted in more dire circumstances, when the growth rate was only 3.1% last year, while it is 4.1% this year.

This compensation works out at less than Rs100 increase for the old-age pensioners, Mr Speaker, Sir. All these have been done to this gleeful excited thumping of the tables by my Labour friends, knowing little that the hon. Prime Minister's work has been undone, redone and,

yet, undone again at the same time, in utter inconsistency. But, this wage compensation should also be seen in a broader perspective of our economic development model. This is an old model, which has outlasted its usefulness, based on low wages, low skills, low technology, low subsidised costs, and a weak rupee. And when all these are insufficient, on fiscal concessions and tax exemptions, on incentives for foreign capital, on dependence on foreign labour, and on State aid and stimulus package. Basically, a pro-export sector, a pro-foreign capital model, usually at the expense of workers and consumers who rely on the trickle down of the benefits of economic growth.

However, in an economy where resources are concentrated, where markets are cartelised, we do have lopsided uneven development, what we call *une société à deux vitesses*, with growing inequality and pauperisation of the working class. The wage rate, therefore, is kept at miserly level that leads to a precarious living and survival, through odd jobs in the underground economy. This kind of economic model, based on the exploitation of cheap labour and propelled by a few emerging growth sectors like ICT or seafood hub, leads to a fractured society and growth without job creation, with a widening gap between high salaries in certain sectors short of skills compared to general subsistence pay in areas where no standards are kept.

For far too long, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has indulged in such policies that tend to favour this type of economic model. Its market policies favouring the inflow of low wage migrant labour have contributed to a suppression of wage levels, pushing many working Mauritians below the poverty incomes levels. These distortions have become serious and require rectification. The ad hoc setting of wage levels for different occupations such as security guards, housemaids etc, raise an issue of equity. It is hard to rationalise why there should be different minima for different occupations, and these minima are either close to or even below the poverty line. It is imperative that wage levels in this country be not near or even below poverty line.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we heard a few of our friends on the other side of the House talking about the global crisis, saying that the MMM has always ignored this fact. In fact, the MMM has been the first to raise the alarm about the global crisis, and there has always been a denial from the other side. One would remember the Chairman of the Economic Commission of the MMM who had persistently called for the acquisition or investment in gold reserves, because the US dollar, as a reserve currency, was going in the doldrums.

The world is changing and is definitely moving from a unipolar world to a multipolar world. In the West, there has been and there is still a severe crisis. It was first a purely financial crisis, which became an economic crisis and, now, has become a full-fledged confidence crisis, because banks have failed the people, Government failed the people and the body politic failed the people. It is going to be now a very slow and long recovery process.

However, there is the silver lining, in the sense that all the countries now have better coordination and are cooperating, because they want to avoid a trade war or a currency war. Definitely, nobody wants to have a third world war. The rise of the East and the emerging countries is also a given, and this is a huge opportunity. Mauritius, therefore, enjoys the traditional *acquis* in the West and the historical blood ties with the East and, in this context, has all the advantages to tap.

However, one thing needs to be pointed out, Mr Speaker, Sir: the world recovery is already taking place in 2010. It would be unrealistic to come and keep on being right after the event, saying that the world economy is in the doldrums. However, the recovery is definitely taking place. If we look at the figures and compare last year 2009 to this year 2010, all the western countries had negative growth. The US had a negative 2.4% economic growth for last year, the Euro zone had -4.1% growth last year, the UK had -4.9% economic growth rate, and France had -2.2% economic growth in 2009. But, this year, all these western countries have positive growth. The US has 3.1% growth rate, the Euro zone much less, at 1% positive growth rate, the UK 1.3%, and France 1.5%.

We are not out of the woods yet, but the days of negative growth are gone. This is why, with all the positive growth in the western countries and the fast growth going on in the emerging countries, at double digits rates in China and India, the Mauritian economy is also having *des retombées positives*. That is why growth in tourism is positive, the BPO sector is having double digit growth, the SEMTRI, that is, the Index of the Stock Exchange of Mauritius, is at its highest peak, the offshore sector is in boom, and the textile sector has full of orders that have been diverted from different major supplier countries. All the different sectors like the seafood hub, the ICT and others are having positive contribution to a growth which is projected to be 4.1% this year and 4.2% next year. Of course, there is global uncertainty, Mr Speaker, Sir,

but this cannot be used now, late in the day, as a whip to scare people or to put burden on the population calling them to ‘*serre ceinture*’.

Rather than acting as a brake now, the global economy is in a situation of a lull that should allow us to take advantage, consolidate and restructure our economy. *Gouverner, c'est prévoir*. It is not time to sit and stare with institutionalised indecision. That is why I do agree with the three priorities set by the Minister of Finance in his Budget: Rebalancing growth, Drive up productivity and Consolidating social justice.

Let us see how his Budget addresses the three issues.

First, balancing growth. How to redress that lopsided growth, how to restructure the economy, to re-engineer and revitalise it, and create jobs? This has been the single most strident and virulent accusation leveled by the Finance Minister against the past *régime* and his new bedfellows, namely that it has ruthlessly applied an ultra-liberal economic policy that has only served the selfish interest of the greedy sugar barons and left all the ‘*ti-dimounes*’ in the lurch, and that only lip service has been paid to the task of democratising the economy. So, now that he is at the helm of the economy, how did he make the difference? We remember that he took three months after assumption of office to come up with an ERCP, which was aimed at facing the Euro zone crisis and the restructuring for long term resilience; but, in actual fact, it merely rehashed the old measures of Additional Stimulus Package of the previous Government with some more palliatives here and there. *Au fait, de la mauvaise continuité, M. le président!*

It has so far achieved nothing more than some classic bail outs, with now Rs247 m. dished out to four textiles factories and three non-textile enterprises, when that package was trumpeted to amount to some Rs12 billion for economic restructuring. What is even more damning, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that a new Equity Fund was announced as a trailblazing public-private partnership venture with billions of funds already on hand for the restructuring and competitiveness programme, but has not even seen the light of day till now.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Budget is disappointingly short of means and measures. Let’s start with the sugar sector. While the corporate sector is restructuring through centralisation and modernisation for efficiency gains and transforming itself into a multi-product cane-based cluster, what is happening to the shrinking world of small planters? They are relentlessly abandoning their lands at the rate of 1,000 acres per year, Mr Speaker, Sir, and will soon become

a rare species. Is there any original incentive or effective re-engineering in this Budget proposed to revitalise the small farming community?

On the contrary, he came up with only his personal electoral agenda on that score, Mr Speaker, Sir, to reverse the decision of the former Government, which denied the small planters a tax exemption on the first 60 tonnes of sugar produced. Much to the applause of the same guys who fully backed the measure that they find so bad now! But lo and behold, Mr Speaker, Sir! They did not even know what the new measure that they so noisily applauded is! I quote -

“We are re-introducing the tax exemption on the first sixty tonnes of sugar for small planters with less than 15 hectares of land and who rely solely on sugar income”.

The definition of ‘small sugar planters’ now has taken two new dimensions, out of the blue.

Firstly, small planters now have become planters with even 15 *hectares* of land, Mr Speaker, Sir, and ‘cane planters’ now mean those who live solely on sugar income. But how many planters are there who depend solely on sugar for their income? When pressed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition in his PNQ on this definition of ‘solely’, he gave shifting interpretations of who will qualify under the word ‘solely’, confirming the view that he has just made an *effet d’annonce*, making his colleagues applaud a measure that is not even meant to be interpreted as they thought it to be.

What an achievement, but what a divisive approach! Why divide the small farmers who are already a dwindling race according to such hair-splitting conditions as ‘ancillary passive income’, primary source of income and what not? Why not just grant those with less than ten hectares, as it used to be under cane cultivation, that tax exemption? This is a clear and simple proposal that would be much fairer and easier to implement, Mr Speaker, Sir.

That is the same sinister approach when it came to delinking the private and public sector workers for wage compensation. You want another example, Mr Speaker, Sir? Take the case now of the abolishing of the 15% income tax on cooperative credit societies. That will apply only to sugar operations under the cooperative credit societies - the CCS. Why this divide and rule approach, Mr Speaker, Sir? Are not the cane planters also members of water users’ cooperative societies, agricultural marketing cooperative societies, and multipurpose

cooperatives? Where is the logic of not granting them the tax exemption then? Is it worth the cost of tax compliance and administration in a cooperative movement that is already in dire straits? Why not just exempt all cooperatives from income tax, because cooperatives are non-profit organisations by definition?

Here is another proposal for a fairer and just tax system. We do not have to reinvent the wheel, Mr Speaker, Sir. Please, just restore that tax exemption on the whole cooperative movement.

Actually, if we have the will to reform the cooperative movement and give the resources and means to the agricultural cooperative sector to regroup the planters and amalgamate their cooperative societies on collective self-management on modern lines, that is the way to re-balance the agricultural sector. There will be no shortage of external technical and financial assistance to create a new class of modern professional farmers that would take the place of the ageing small part-time farmers. That is the challenge of the new cooperative movement, and it is this strategic alliance between a strong, modern, agricultural cooperative movement grouping small farmers and the large-scale corporate farming sector that will ensure adequate exports of sugar and its by-products, as well as agricultural diversification and food security. This can also create the critical mass for the launching of specific foodcrop and agricultural produce Insurance Schemes.

How is the sugar reform progressing under his Budget? What happens to the restructure of cess, the bagasse transfer price, the ethanol project, the IPP and renewable energy projects - I see that hon. Ms Nita Deerpalsing is here? I see that the Commission of Economic Democratisation has conveniently ignored a proposal that I have made in the past to tax the IPPs if they are found to make excessive profits. That would be my proposal; tax them, and get going with all the new power plants and new production plan.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to food security, what has the Food Security Fund been allocated in this Budget? I have checked through the estimates for the year, and I was shocked to see that the capital transfer under Food Security Fund for foodcrop, under Vote 28.225, has come down from Rs59 m. in 2010 to only Rs20.6 m. in 2011. But how do we promote food security with such a drastic cut in the Budget? And we have not heard anything about the Regional Development Company either. I see the Minister of Foreign Affairs nodding. I don't know

under whose remit it is, but we have not seen anything in the Budget concerning this company, Mr Speaker, Sir.

With regard to the textile sector, is there anything in the Budget, anything new that it is proposing to wean the export processing enterprises out of their addiction to cheap labour, the weak rupee and stimulus package? We see a repeat of the same recipe. In fact, an action replay of all that had gone wrong in the past, throwing good money after bad management; a sure recipe for the export manufacturing sector to decline further, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the meantime, jobs keep on being lost, and concentration is getting bigger, while all the schemes are not helping to upgrade the technology or diversifying products and markets for the smaller export-oriented enterprises.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Budget does not attack the problem of productivity at the core, because it is stuck in the same old model. It will not give any traction to job creation. Where are those fundamental corrective measures to redress the market concentration, to address the market failures, the captive markets and the uneven playing field? What role has been given to the SMEs, a key pillar of growth?

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to make a few proposals about the SME, because I think that if we want to rebalance growth, the SME is that key pillar that is required for that rebalancing. What would be required is a revisit of all the facilities now given to SMEs in regard to their access to credit. We need more than ever a specialised SME bank with non-collateralised funding and Government guarantees; with access to credit based on cash flow and transaction risk and not on assets and property; an SME bank that understands the problems of SMEs, that is engaged in proactive funding to deal with modern technology requirement, market research, ICT facilitation, green and eco-friendly production process, etc. This is one key aspect of SME development.

There are other factors to consider also, Mr Speaker, Sir, like we need to set up an SME Credit Reporting System and an SME Rating System by having a credit information network operating under the Central Bank.

The Budget is redefining the role of the DBM to become a development agency. One would wonder whether that is the right approach. Why not rather merge the DBM with SEHDA

and the National Women's Council for Entrepreneurs? That would have been a less unwieldy approach.

An umbrella organisation coordinating the activities of so many agencies is going to be more of a stumbling block to development. What would be the governance rules? How to implement this cumbersome umbrella organisation? Will it be a kind of one-stop agency like the BOI for SMEs? All this is not clear, Mr Speaker, Sir!

There is need, according to us, of a special legislation like the SME Business Facilitation Act, providing for the elimination of all the unnecessary formalities under the current licensing, permit, registration and regulatory system. One prime example is the Data Protection Act, Mr Speaker, Sir, which is supposed to protect the collection of data within SMEs, but its role has been just to collect money from SMEs because Rs1,000 is charged even from the sole proprietor and sole trader with very serious penalties in case of non-payment. We recommend that there should be a tax holiday for SMEs on these kinds of cumbersome tax and levies imposed on them.

There is also the need to organise what is called a Business Angels or Silver Wings network, where opportunities are offered for retired experts with skills and talents to take budding start-ups under their wings and counsels for handholding them into the fierce competition out there.

Another key factor is marketing; the need to open new regional markets, but also strategic alliance with large corporations and the possibility of preferred bidding for Government contracts, say up to 20% of smaller contracts with a transparent Government procurement process.

A regional export marketing plan also is absent and should be launched to create a new class of regional SME champions, with special quasi-ambassadorial recognition by Government.

What is required after all the experience that we have gained for SME development is the setting up of second generation business parks, common facilities estates like SME villages with free internet access, e-management, e-marketing, paperless trading, outsourcing and pooling of services of mentoring, training, consulting, factoring, microcredit available on the spot. This new facility is required and has been asked by all the SME associations, because what that implies is that they get access in one single area, where the authorities can also be present,

whether it is the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Business, the Ministry of Health or the MRA, everything is centralised and internet-based, so that the SMEs concentrate and specialise only on the work which they know best. If he is a trader, he is doing the trading; if he is a manufacturer, he does the manufacturing, and all the other support services are provided by a centralised platform. All this is housed in a common services area.

What has also been suggested is a kind of Marshall Plan, which we may call a Street Smart Transformation Plan, for the street hawkers, petty vendors, and micro-enterprises to bruce up and upgrade this seamy and grubby underworld of fake, pirated and defect products, largely smuggled or stock plundered somewhere without any quality standards, hygiene or sanitation. Everybody knows about it, but nobody has the will to do anything about it. A five-year plan for bringing them into the mainstream economy during which a tax holiday is granted, and special assistance is given during the transformation period. That is what kind of a programme should be launched. Such a special programme must be transparent, market-friendly and granted on the basis of needs and merit, not on political patronage for cronies who are not in the street business in the first place.

This plan would prepare the beneficiaries to graduate into the formal business community and gradually open the regional markets for them, to become regional champions and then, subsequently, trainers for new comers into the market. There can also be different kinds of support programmes to help to create new product designs and processes, to promote technology innovation, environment friendly ideas, to develop intellectual properties and protect the IP rights, to extract greater value for the local talents. Support initiatives such as these are required to promote the use of bio energy, traditional herbs and plants, inherited skills, cultural arts. All these to tap into the new field of sustainable development and eco tourism or medical tourism.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a comprehensive package would have been more appropriate to rebalance the economy through formalising and incentivising the SMEs, in order to move them up the value chain and make the local industries competitive on a regional level. All this and many more measures, which I cannot detail any further, will create a favourable ecosystem to unlock the tremendous growth potential of SMEs. Efforts are being made in the Budget to open the Development Enterprise Market within the Stock Exchange for the SMEs, in order to take advantage of increase in capital, merger and acquisitions. This is a positive step in the right

direction to transform the SME sector into a key player in this economic restructuring for greater competitiveness. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, this concludes our proposals for the SME sector, and it belies sometimes hysterical accusations of friends of the other side, which unjustly say that the MMM does not have any concrete proposal to make.

Going to the tourism sector, I do not see the Minister of Tourism here yet. There is now the need for a strategic shift to go East, towards China, India and Russia, for the new markets for our tourists. This makes sense in the international context. But I fear that there is not adequate planning and research, and we also need to tread with caution, because we are talking of hundred of thousands of visitors here. We must be careful not to rush for quantity and sacrifice quality, a strategy which appears to be preferred by the Government. Indian tourists and Chinese tourists are generally lower spenders and, on average, spend a lower number of nights than the Europeans. The relevant concept to look at here is more the income multiplier, the employment and output multipliers, the number of nights spent and amount spent, and where that money is spent. But, unfortunately, there is a silence on our air access policy with the fifth freedom rights and so on.

The question should be put, Mr Speaker, Sir, as to whether we should protect our national airline or promote our airport as a regional hub. Last night, I just contacted a friend from Singapore, so as to get a concrete comparison from him. He wanted to go to Johannesburg and had the choice of going direct or via Mauritius. Just see the air ticket price for yourself! A return ticket Singapore/Johannesburg/Singapore costs 1200 singapore dollars, whereas a return ticket Singapore/Mauritius/Singapore cost 1650 singapore dollars, and we have to add to that a return Mauritius/Johannesburg/Mauritius ticket costing another 500 to 600 singapore dollars, making a total of 2,200 singapore dollars compared to 1,200 dollars if he were to go direct to Johannesburg and back to Singapore, that is, 1,000 singapore dollars more. With 1,000 Singapore dollars, he can go to Tokyo or Osaka back to Singapore. A return ticket to Hong Kong from Singapore will cost him even less; 450 Singapore dollars.

How can you attract Asian tourists with such hefty priced air fares? We cannot dream of becoming Singapore, which has 40 million transit passengers per year, or Hong Kong with its 60 million transit passengers per year at its airport. We talk of rebalancing the tourist sector. How about these all-inclusive packages being practised in the hotel industry? Is our tourist model

socially and ecologically sustainable with the aim of attracting two million tourists in 2015? These are the questions that have not been addressed in the Budget.

With regard to the restructuring of the free port, logistics and financial services, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to declare my interest here. It has been my professional interest since the early years of 1984-1985, when the original plan was mooted for Mauritius to diversify from and add value to the export of textiles and tourism, by setting up a regional trade and finance sector based on the building blocks of a sea-air free port for the region, backed by an offshore trade finance and private banking sector, to serve an apartheid and conflict-ridden Africa. The vision was to serve Africa. The whole vision of this offshore centre was then based on the substance of a tax free and duty-free physical logistics hub to be integrated with a financial centre that would support and enhance the infrastructure development and the trade activities in the region. But this plan has been completely misunderstood and was translated into an uneasy juxtaposition of two disparate projects, with a free port project and an offshore project; the free port being taxed at zero percent, then 15%, and again with the tax suspended for another two years, while the global business sector is now taxed at 15% with a maximum tax credit of 80%, leading to a tax of 3%. After 25 years, it is time to bring to fruition that ambition of turning Mauritius into that integrated substantive hub of business services for Africa. In those days, we had already stolen a march on Dubai, which, by now, has developed its flourishing Jebel-Ali free port and the Dubai International Financial Centre. Now is the time for Mauritius to catch up and make its mark in the region.

Discussions are being held for the setting up of an enlarged free trade area of COMESA, EAC, and SADC. Tremendous opportunities can be tapped with the alignment of these various trade blocs and the establishment of an enlarged market for increased regional trade and investment opportunities, especially with harmonised trade rules for business.

At the bilateral level, trade negotiations should be extended for the conclusion of a free trade area with India, China and country members of ASEAN. Unfortunately, the Budget is silent on all these issues.

The share of exports to the region is still, however, on the low side, and represents only around 12% of our total exports. With the elimination of non tariff barriers in the region to facilitate regional trade and intensified efforts for export promotion, Mauritius can maximise its

trade opportunities available under the various trade agreements, and enhance the exports skills of local SMEs through a regional free port, with an international or regional logistics network. There is need, in fact, to extend that tax exemption to the free port operators for good.

With regard to the global business financial centre, Mauritius has been witnessing sustained growth, owing to the continuing Indian inbound and outbound investments, coupled with a resurgence of interests in Africa, which are now generating financial transactions of increasing volume and sophistication for our region. However, challenges still abound for the sector, and are rendered even more daunting by the uncertain nature of the recovery of our traditional and emerging markets. The weaknesses of the global business sector have long been identified as its overconcentration on India and its limited product and service range based on low cost and back office administration. While there is nothing wrong in optimising our use of the advantageous India-Mauritius Double Tax Treaty, it has led to such an obsession to assure its perennial nature as to neglect and underrate other potential beneficial products and services for development. This has led to a serious loss of business to other jurisdictions, especially in the case of fund administration and private wealth management. While product concentration is unhealthy and unsustainable, conducive to a rank seeking mentality of dependence on the India Treaty, the biggest challenge now is to make that strategic shift from low value passive back office administration of entities that are structured, designed and planned elsewhere to a more knowledge based, value-added and proactive treaty and wealth planning. During the last five years, in spite of all the proposals and representations made by the industry, Government has not made any effort to introduce the new markets or diversify products to enhance the competitiveness of the sector. Its main concerns have been concentrated on protecting the India Treaty and ensuring strict compliance with the OECD and FATF recommendations. This Budget has also been short on new path-breaking measures. However, the two measures allowing global business category, one company to undertake local activities and the non-charitable purpose trust to have unlimited duration, are steps in the right direction.

In the years ahead, the financial services will be called upon to play a key role for growth. However, the sector faces great dangers. On the one hand, the IPOs, the mergers and acquisitions, and FDIs, or even the portfolio investments in the traditional markets in Europe and US are dwindling, while the global scene is set for more State control, austerity package, Government equity participation and Government regulation, which will all hamper private

initiatives for cross-border investments. However, this presents a rare opportunity for Mauritius to be ahead of the curve. By taking innovative steps to make its domestic tax and regulatory regime more attractive while remaining compliant with the OECD recommendation on transparency and exchange of information, a comparative study needs to be carried out urgently to assess the global competitiveness of the financial services of Mauritius, so as to decide upon various issues like the adoption of a partial or full territorial tax system within a tax treaty network or a participation exemption system for foreign dividends and foreign-sourced interests and royalties.

In the same breath, opportunities should be seized to upgrade Mauritius to the status of a full-fledged established financial centre by amending all existing regulations and introducing new legislation for promoting e-business and developing new products like limited partnerships, tax exempt funds, foundation for Civil Code based clients and other ISDA related products and services.

Mauritius can achieve its ambition to be the business hub or the financial centre of the region. A special desk should be set up at the Ministry of Finance in liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to scan and negotiate with all the different African countries with which Mauritius has yet to develop double taxation treaties and investment promotion and protection agreements.

Given the new regional trade and global tax environment, time is now to fully integrate our financial services sector with the physical infrastructure through more air and sea connections and with the required integration of the infrastructure of the freeport with the airport logistics centre, while working to become the regional stock exchange and the clearing and settlement sector for SADC and COMESA, the regional commercial arbitration centre for Africa and the private public partnership finance centre for African infrastructure investments or even the reinsurance centre for Africa.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to ICT and BPO, the market for outsourcing has tremendous potential for growth. The local BPO industry can grow by 20 to 25% annually and can potentially double its size in the next five years, becoming the second or third pillar of the economy, employing even more people than the tourism sector. However, the tourism sector is getting some Rs800 m. per year for its promotion, while the ICT is getting almost nothing. We

need a review of the whole promotion package for the ICT sector. We do not yet have a blueprint for an IT sustainable industry. This also needs to be addressed urgently. Here also, we are too dependent on the Euro zone for the ICT industry. We should diversify into new markets such as North America and Asia Pacific and, while Mauritius is competing for business against competitors like India, Philippines, South Africa, Morocco, Madagascar and the rest of it, we should be looking for partnership with the service providers in those locations rather than compete with them. We should look at how we can complement each other to provide a broader skills set, multiple time zones, as well as mitigate the geopolitical risks of over dependency on one region. I believe this is a key aspect in the phase of ICT development which has not been addressed in the Budget.

Mr Speaker, Sir, while we need to encourage foreign investors to invest in ICT for long term sustainability, we need to draw attention to the fact that the business model in ICT has been more a foreign driven model like in the old days of the EPZ. It is important that we develop a domestic outsourcing industry with national players. This will have many spillovers and provide opportunities for young entrepreneurs, building dynamism in our local economy, improve competitiveness of our local companies, and increase our contribution to the GDP. We need to step up a collaborative engagement model with all the parties concerned, the industry, the various ministries of ICT, education, finance and all the parastatal bodies like the NCB, HRDC and Enterprise Mauritius, to facilitate the growth of the home-grown industry.

The ICT/BPO industry, therefore, needs to be more home-grown, and can act as a critical lever in the local knowledge hub. Given our bilingualism, we need to go beyond English and French, because we have also other languages being spoken and taught at schools. We need to become a true powerhouse of multilingual ability. This will differentiate us from the many competitors that we have in this field.

We need to have also bandwidth at much more competitive rates, and the cost of traditional international bandwidth services, the international private lease circuit and the internet protocol, the VPN should be decreased by, at least, 50%; not the 16% to 24% that has been announced in the Budget. The MT should be privatised sooner than later, because it is still dominating and stifling the market. Internet is too expensive for the population. We have a very low internet connection rate when we compare Mauritius to comparable countries. Working

with global companies means that Mauritians need to do business with foreign customers and colleagues in different time zones. This requires cultural realignment and a willingness to work non-standard hours. We have been hearing a lot about 24/7, but nothing concrete has been done to change the mindset about working the different hours or addressing such constraints as transportation and eating, and catering facilities. We cannot talk about a modern economy when public transport stops at 6.00 p.m. in many parts of the country. The NCB incubator itself has been a failure, and this is something also that needs to be taken very seriously to encourage research at universities and to create a new generation of techno players. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, how do we rebalance growth, create new growth poles? We have heard about the new sectors like medical hub, knowledge hub, land-based oceanic industry, but nothing new.

With regard to these sectors, the Budget aims at transforming the social rights, such as health and education, like a commodity, like merchandise, which has become a new business, a new source for profit. This is going to create gradually a social service *à deux vitesses*, a system of health and education *par excellence* for the rich, and another system of health and education for the ordinary people.

Let us not delude ourselves with such catch words or buzz words as hubs, high-tech, new generation technology, quantum leaps and what not. While efforts need to be made to propel Mauritius on a high development path to extricate itself from the middle income trap, we need to make sure that the development is sustainable in the long run, that it takes everybody on board in an inclusive manner and enable all Mauritians to reach a high income status. We already have a new phenomenon in Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, of not *les nouveaux riches*, but *les nouveaux pauvres*. In a small country like ours, it is just unbelievable the gap between the rich and the poor is widening by the day with this Budget. My fear is that there may be a genderisation and ethnisation of poverty. We just have to listen around everyday about the increasing domestic violence, insecurity, daylight robbery, rape and all kinds of deviant and anti-social behaviour. There is also a dangerous trend in juvenile delinquency. Hon. Mrs Bappoo is trying very hard to cope with this by appealing to all NGOs to support her Ministry's actions. But more investments need to be made in basic health and education services while we talk of medical and knowledge hubs. What difference does this Budget make to the daily living of a small guy out there when he queues up in the public hospital and sends his kids to school? You need only to tune up to '*Explik ou cas*' or *Enquête en direct*' to get a thousand and one examples of the *petites misères*

and *grandes souffrances de la population au jour le jour, face aux besoins essentiels et aux droits sociaux qu'elle est supposée pouvoir jouir dans notre pays phare de l'Afrique.*

In the health sector, we continue to have a low spending on preventive medicine and on detection of diseases. The school health service leaves a lot to be desired when we compare it to our own past experience with milk, dried fruits, vitamins, dental care, lessons of hygiene delivered on a daily basis to all primary schoolchildren in our time. It is at this early stage that we can do the detection, the prevention and the health education, and inculcate civic values, nurture healthy lifestyle and build up a nation. The health investment at the early age of childhood is now cut to the bones. What measures do we have in the Budget for a major overhaul of a whole delivery system in the health sector? I am afraid it is business as usual, with incremental provisions as a purely accounting exercise.

What about education, Mr Speaker, Sir? It is more of the same. The 35% failure rate at CPE exams is going to be a hallmark of our criminal school machine, which year in and year out will contribute to create a small elite but a whole class of rejects in the system, with all the stigmas of exclusion and lifelong failure. Our educational system is not producing the skills that the workplace and enterprise demand. It is a total misfit. More money is provided in the Budget year in year out for a system that creates a mismatch of skills required and labour supply. Unemployment becomes ingrained in the system and profoundly structural. Productivity on the other hand is progressing far too slowly, and the skill shortage and low productivity will stall our development path. The scarce local talents are already leaving for other countries with more world-class infrastructure and more opportunities to develop cutting edge technical know-how.

It is good to subsidise the SC and HSC fees for the low income groups and to increase the scholarship to 50. But why not give the scholarship to all students? How do we define the families of modest income? We can put a criterion of 3 'A' at HSC level. The discrimination will not be just on income, but on merit and, if need be, these scholars can be asked to pay back the scholarship gradually after they enter the job market. There is also the other problem that has been raised by hon. Dr. Jeetah in the course of his speech on the Budget yesterday. He referred to the drop in CPE pass rates in the years 2003 to 2005 to make the case that the MMM/MSM education reforms had been a failure. In fact, every year, the CPE pass rates are artificially boosted by the fact that several hundreds of students have passed the CPE at their first attempt,

but choose to resit the following year in order to try to obtain a seat in the very high demand secondary schools, such as Royal College and QEC. One fortunate result of the MMM/MSM reform was that, by ensuring that such very high demand schools no longer admitted Form I students, the number of students resitting, although having already passed drastically, dropped and practically disappeared by 2005. But, however, statistically this trend translated into a slight drop in the overall CPE pass rate, hence the figures quoted by hon. Dr. Jeetah. This interpretation is buttressed by statistical evidence from the MES, inasmuch as they show that, over the relevant period, the pass rate for the first-timers was tabled, whereas there was a very perceptible drop in the pass rate corresponding to repeaters. Further, the MES figures confirmed that very few students having passed entered anew for the exams. Since 2006, with the return to the star school system and associated ranking, the unfortunate practice for student to resit has resumed, with no pedagogical justification, but with a definite added economic cost to the country. Mr Speaker, Sir, we have talked about the educational system and the health system. Let us turn to the issue of economic restructuring.

Mr Speaker: I will have to interrupt the hon. Member. However much I wish to listen to you, you were given one hour, and it is already one hour and ten minutes. Could you please try to start winding up your speech?

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can I have another ten minutes, Sir?

Mr Speaker, Sir, let us look at some of the figures of this Budget. The total Government expenditure has increased from Rs76.2 billion to Rs84 billion, that is, an increase of Rs7.8 billion or over 10%, which is much higher than the estimated inflation rate for the year 2011, 4%. Prudent stewardship of public finance should have limited the increase in public expenditure to half the inflation rate, i.e by 2% and not over 10%. However, of this increase in the total expenditure of Rs7.8 billion, wages and salaries took up 20%, whereas interest rate took up 12.8%. But the key point to note, Mr Speaker, Sir, is how this increase in public expenditure is financed. Of the Rs7.8 billion extra budget expenditure, Rs5.1 billion will be financed by increased indirect taxes, of which Rs2.1 billion from the increase in VAT and Rs3 billion from the increase in excise duty. This Budget has relied overwhelmingly on VAT and indirect

taxation to pay for the increase in public spending. Not even 1% has come from the increase in direct taxes. This is a totally unbalanced budget in the sharing of the cost or the burden of public expenditure.

This is the first time, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, after many years, we have not had a no-tax Budget. But, in fact, we have been served with a more tax Budget. More tax, but unevenly distributed, with the burden massively falling on the consumers, on the lower income groups, owing to the maximum reliance on indirect taxation. This is a totally unbalanced Budget. It creates cost-push inflation, because the cost of increased taxation is passed on the public. It is anti-consumer, and has not made any fair discrimination on the way the direct and indirect taxation should be balanced. In fact, one has the impression that, after shaking hands with the trade unions, the Finance Minister has been merrily picking their pockets. This can be summed up as a pickpocket Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is a tax and spend budget, using all the easy routes; tax on cigarettes, alcohol, petroleum products, motor vehicles, gambling. It, in fact, smacks of the good old Ringadoo years. In fact, I have the impression that it is a reincarnation of the Ringadoo Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir. We remember those days, when people used to hoard all kinds of commodities, cigarettes, beer, soap, rice, edible oil, just a few days before the budget. As soon as they hear the Budget, all the housewives start getting shivers down their spine. This is what is happening now, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have to do with a tax addict. There will be a cascading effect on prices, where the levy compounds on the excise duty, which feeds on the VAT, and increases the input prices of petrol, electricity, transport, thereby raising all prices up. This is what in economics we call cost-push inflation. It inflicts a double whammy, reducing the disposable income and reducing the purchasing power of the consumers and workers. This Budget has done a social unbalancing act. It is not a fine balancing act, Mr Speaker, Sir. Worse still, it has created a cacophony, a terrible confusion, as in the case of the taxation of plastic bags, such that the same bags are being charged different prices at different places, and even the authorities are at a loss at how to apply the new taxes. This has caused dishonest pricing, unfair competition to domestic producers, compared to importers, and threats of factory closures, all adding further to the miseries of the people who are having to pay higher prices now, when the meager salary compensation is effective only next month. Do you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, at Monoprix, in Curepipe, they have started to put kraft cheddar cheese under lock and key, because it has been found that people are now stealing cheese and no more cosmetics as they

used to do in the past? What depth of despair have we reached! This is a Budget worse than what the hon. Prime Minister has promised. It has really *change nous la vie*, Mr Speaker, Sir, but for the worst unfortunately. This is surely not a caring Government, Mr Speaker, Sir. There has been no consideration, no consultation, not even with the BAT about the cigarettes, not even with the Plastic Manufacturing Association about the taxing of plastic bags.

Allow me to tell the House about a case of a price increase in the days of the MMM Government. I still remember ex-Minister Kader Bhayat was in charge of prices, and he had to increase the price of cement. The decision was taken in Cabinet and I was, at that time, the Chairman of the Price Advisory Committee. It was announced on Friday night and, on Saturday morning, I was called in the office of the Minister of Price, Mr Kader Bhayat, with other people. Do you know what he said? He said that he consulted all the traders, that he consulted even the riot Police and now he wanted to consult the Consumer Associations. He said anybody who is hoarding cement or refuses to sell cement will be sanctioned with very severely. What a different attitude! There was consultation and there was consideration for the people, because at the end of the day, it is the consumers who will pay.

Therefore, this Budget uses a regressive and unjust revenue maximisation tax system, supposedly aimed at punishing the sinners, the drunkards, smokers, gamblers and polluters. But this is a profoundly divisive and discriminatory tax system, Mr Speaker, Sir. First, it discriminates between solely producing sugar and non-sugar producers; then, between sugar cooperatives and non-sugar cooperatives. Now, there is even a contradiction with regard to taxation of interest on savings. First, he abolishes the tax on savings, making it an exempt income. He does even more, because Government will then refund within a deadline; otherwise, it will pay an interest if it is not refunded in time. But what happens actually? He gives with one hand and takes with another hand. He slaps a 10% solidarity tax on the high income earners, and this exempt income suddenly becomes a non-exempt income again. He will no longer refund the interest tax already collected at source by the banks now, but will pay it back only in 2012. Therefore, in the meantime, the high income earners will have already paid 15% at source, which will be refunded only in 2012, and will have to pay another 10% as solidarity tax; in all, 25% tax on their interests.

The subterfuge of a solidarity income tax of 10% has been shown also in the reintroduction of the 10% tax on dividend. What's in a name? It leads to double taxation of income paid out of profits in the hands of the shareholders. But what is now discovered is that a non-resident shareholder will not be paying this solidarity tax on his dividend remitted to him, because there is no deduction at source. Does this not lead to another discrimination this time between resident and non-resident shareholders?

The introduction of a capital gains tax on property or on transactions on immovable property is also a complicated tax, which shows that there will be uncertainty in its application, showing that, therefore, Government is again going to promote land development and property speculation as a means for raising money. Mr Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, there is a lot of stealth tax underlying the Budget, a lot of user charges that will be raised even after the Budget, but the population has already discovered that this Budget is totally antisocial and anti-consumers, and aims at raising revenue in order to fund prolific government spending.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to end.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Member end, please. Otherwise, he will take five minutes!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: There is so much to talk about social balancing, but I think the truth has now dawned on everybody that this Budget is a pickpocket Budget. Suffice it to say that we are all patriots, we all love our country, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we all have a sacred duty and a high responsibility to make Mauritius a better place to live for our children. That is why we have to put national interest above any petty and sectoral interest.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we must ensure that our economy builds up the necessary strong fundamentals and fiscal strength to engage in sustainable long term development, and to use our investible resources efficiently; to put our public spending and debt under control on a revenue generating path, and to spend each rupee of taxpayers' money wisely.

Let us, therefore, work together to keep Government lean and fiscally responsible, to keep our economy healthy and competitive, and to protect our people from unnecessary shocks, hazards and crisis. In short, to make Mauritius robust for the long haul and all Mauritians, irrespective of race, religion, caste and creed, share a better life tomorrow than today.

Thank you, Sir.

(6.01 p.m)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, sustained economic success requires two main ingredients. The first is a long term forward looking perspective aimed at generating economic growth and efficiency. The second is the focus on social justice, and ensuring growth is inclusive.

The 2011 Budget outlined by the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment has both of these ingredients in abundance, and he should be congratulated for this first Budget of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir*.

The forward looking nature of this Budget is evident in its focus on rebalancing growth and investment for the future. Investment is about building capital through measures today that will provide a flow of economic services in the future.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2005, I had come to the nation with an agenda to democratise the economy. I am glad that we have indeed made a number of inroads in that direction, especially in the cane industry. I reckon that there is a lot of ground to cover still. And, since I came to the people this time, that is, in May 2010, on a platform of *l'avenir ensemble*, our aim is to consolidate and keep building on what we have already achieved, while taking into account the changing international economic situation. This is why I said that it is *un budget de continuité*. I see that the hon. Leader of the Opposition and some other Members of the Opposition have made remarks about this. But, they should not have been surprised. I did what I have always done; a *point de presse* to comment on the Budget which had just been represented by the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development. Every year I have done the same thing. Yes, it is *un budget de continuité*, with some new initiatives to adapt to the prevailing economic situation. These measures were announced during the electoral campaign and are, in fact, reflected in our electoral manifesto.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we live in a dynamic and rapidly changing world. Conditions change, context changes and we, of course, need to have a certain degree of policy flexibility to adapt to changing social, economic and political parameters. That being said, I think there is unanimity that there is no radical departure from the challenge we set ourselves in 2005, that is, that of

building a strong and modern country through the empowerment of each citizen, thus allowing each woman and man in this country to achieve their full potential. It is precisely this focus on human centred development which will lead us to a modern nation characterised by inclusive development. This was the underlying theme of my previous Government's *projet de société* to democratise the economy and increase competition. Once again, this remains the philosophical compass which will continue to guide us in this mandate.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I find it incredible that no one on the Opposition side has mentioned the international context which continues to unfold, as the nasty waves of the financial and economic crisis keep washing country over country in the Euro zone. After Greece went bust in May of this year and needed a bailout of 110 billion euros, it had to adopt unprecedented austerity measures, which led to massive protest. We are now witnessing a similar unmitigated economic disaster unfolding in Ireland, which used to be called the Celtic tiger because it had become the richest per capita income economy in Europe.

Today, begging bowl in hand, Ireland has sought an emergency bailout from the European Union and the IMF to the tune of 85 billion euros. Perhaps some people do not realise it, Mr Speaker, Sir, but when a country is on its knees, goes bowl in hand to seek out a bailout, there are major consequences to this. First of all, all the big credit rating agencies promptly downgrade the country, not by one notch but by many notches.

In my introduction, I spoke of how economic success required long term planning and a focus on social inclusiveness. A government caught in the grip of a sovereign debt crisis can neither plan in the long term nor can it focus on social inclusiveness. When faced with a public debt crisis, governments cannot focus on the future, but have to focus on the current level of spending and taxation. They cannot invest for the future, but have to focus on returning money to the bond mark holders. As the market takes fright, all government programmes come under scrutiny, leading to significant cuts in welfare expenditure and reductions in social inclusion. Such cuts not only impact on the current economic growth, but they also lower long term expectations. Those who provide the money for the bailout do not just give money away and say "come on, I have got plenty of money, come and take some" with a smile. Austerity measures are imposed, Mr Speaker, Sir, by those who provide the money. Who are they? They are the foreign bureaucrats. Harsh conditions are attached to the bailout. The country, in fact, has to

surrender its economic sovereignty. In the case of Ireland, the Irish people are having to carry the can. They face unprecedented austerity measures, including six billion euros just in social welfare spending. They have to face savage public sector cuts, job cuts, massive tax rises, including VAT, and a reduction in the minimum wage. I think that this should be pointed out.

Ireland actually has to reduce the minimum wage. The Celtic tiger! The crisis in Europe is spreading - a contagion effect as we call it. Portugal is next in line; Spain, a much bigger economy than Portugal, Greece or Ireland, is not far behind with high inflation, a banking sector that is still heavily exposed, a property bust that is ongoing, and an unemployment rate of over 20%.

The Spanish Socialist Prime Minister has been forced to take drastic austerity measures already. He has cut - I emphasise on 'cut' - civil service pay by 5% across the board! He has raised VAT, and he is trying to change the same outdated system of collective bargaining for annual pay rises come what may - a bit of the attitude that we have seen by some here. He has just announced further austerity measures to come. Look at the massive comprehensive spending review adopted by the new United Kingdom Government; slashing hundreds of thousands - not ten, not twenty - of jobs across the public sector in the United Kingdom. They estimate, at least, 350,000 jobs will be wiped out just like that. And in the United States, the richest country in the world, President Obama has just announced a pay freeze for the public service. Now, compare them to us! Here, in Mauritius, we are still a low tax regime. We have not increased VAT. We have continued to invest massively in the welfare state. Instead of cutting civil service pay as the others have done, we have instead paid the PRB in full and, as promised, we are paying the increments for the public sector in January instead of April. We have continued to give a compensation which is higher than the inflation rate for those who are at the lower rung of the ladder. Still, some think it is not enough. Some are living in Cocoon land, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I wonder, Mr Speaker, Sir, whether Members on the other side of the House are oblivious to what is happening around us. The hon. gentleman who was speaking before me said that we have to be patriotic. But you cannot be oblivious to what is happening in the world. Do they think that we are not and cannot be affected by all these major upheavals happening on the international scene? I am sure they realised that the world is now a global village. There are

now no barriers to transfer our funds; it happens within seconds; you can transfer funds across borders. People and companies move overnight to different locations; it is happening in the UK at the moment. So, I ask the Opposition Members to stop behaving like ostriches with their heads buried in the sand.

Look at what is happening to economies much, much stronger than others, and recognise what we have managed to do. Everybody else can see except them. Mr Speaker, Sir, let us not kid ourselves! The global economic situation is still fraught with uncertainty. It is mind-boggling to see how hitherto strong and resilient economies, with impressive track records, can suddenly slide into precarious fiscal insolvency to the extent of the need for urgent bailouts. The case of Ireland is the latest example. But besides the lessons from the Euro zone crisis and what can still end up to be a real Euro zone total crisis, we are more directly concerned by the impact on our export sectors, on our tourism industry and, of course, on the overall economic growth.

Right after the elections, we responded promptly. The vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance presented the ERCP, and now this Budget is strengthening that response. A theme of this Budget is rebalancing; Europe, as we know, has traditionally been a major source of demand for our economy. Yet, the short term outlook for Europe looks poor as it wrestles with problems of Government debt. In the longer term, it is clear that the world economy is experiencing a historical rebalancing, with emerging markets such as China and India becoming ever more important in global trade and the world economy.

As hon. Li Kwong Wing rightly observed at the beginning, the United States of America's share in the world GDP, in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms has declined, Mr Speaker, Sir, from 23.7% in 2000 to 20.2% in 2010. We are talking about world GDP. On the other side, the European Union economies in 2010 accounted for only 20.6% of world GDP, again in PPP terms, down from 25.1% in 2000.

It is forecast that the BRIC countries, that is, Brazil, Russia, India and China, will account for about 40% of global GDP growth by 2020 - ten years from now; that is all we are talking about. In this game-changing rebalancing of the global economy landscape, we must be farsighted enough to position and reposition our country to take advantage of the world picture that is emerging. We have to adapt our strategy accordingly to the new global economic equilibrium which is taking place. That is why this Budget also focuses not just on economic

growth, but rebalancing growth towards new regions and new sectors. The Budget clearly spells out how economic diplomacy in an administrative support can be used to boost tourism and exports generally in those emerging markets.

Mr Speaker, Sir, that is why I heard hon. Li Kwong Wing saying that we should turn towards the East, but we are not doing enough. That is why precisely we are increasing flights for both passengers and cargo to those emerging economies. We have a more open air access policy now. We have just signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with Singapore for increase in the number of flights to and from Singapore, including cargo. I think, as far as I remember, it will ultimately be 14 per week. We are also looking at India and China; we are negotiating with them. Recently, I met the CEO of Kingfisher who was in Mauritius. He was not aware that we had changed our open access air policy, and he told me that he will certainly relook at the situation.

The principles underlying the Budget should now be clear, Mr Speaker, Sir. The first is to rebalance growth. As I have just mentioned, we are currently witnessing a game-changing rebalancing of global economic power. The outlook for our traditional trade partners, that is, the EU, is not exactly brilliant, as they grapple with major macroeconomic problems. That is why this Budget gives an additional impetus to the diversification of the economy and further democratisation of the economy, with measures aimed at targeting new markets in those emerging countries, which will increasingly be important players in the world economy, as we all recognise. We must adjust to the changing equilibrium of the world economy. Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are lucky. Even before China and India became the power they are now, our economic diplomacy at the times of SSR has always nurtured excellent relations with these friendly countries, and it has continued.

A second and very important principle underlined in this Budget is our aim to keep consolidating social justice. Mr Speaker, Sir, social justice has always been a major plank of the Labour Party philosophy. It is no surprise then that this Budget also includes wide-ranging measures to consolidate social justice and investing not just in our physical infrastructure and physical capital, but also our human capital. Just a few examples, without going into the details: the comprehensive housing schemes, the focus on poverty alleviation with a new Ministry, specifically for poverty alleviation and empowerment; the further boost to education, more

financial support for the young to invest in education, more scholarships, opening up the doors for tertiary education and making of Mauritius a hub of excellence for education. The third key principle behind this Budget is sustaining green Mauritius, which, as everyone knows, is an issue of paramount importance to me.

Let me say a few words on the subject of *Maurice Ile Durable*. The House will recall, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, as soon as I was sworn in as Prime Minister in 2005, one of the first decisions I took was to order the immediate stop of the ignoble destruction of the Vallée of Ferney. Everyone knows the importance attached to sustainable development of Mauritius. This is why, together with the help of Professor Joël de Rosnay, I introduced the vision of *Maurice Ile Durable*. As I have indicated in the House last Friday, in reply to a PNQ, we have set the foundation of the *MID* project. This was the start. Of course, when you start something new, there are going to be teething problems.

However long a journey, you have to start the first step. Nobody was even aware of the concept of turning Mauritius into an *île durable* until I evoked it. Today, there is awareness of the need for environmental protection and sustainable development, especially amongst the youth of our country, and that is very encouraging. As Professor de Rosnay said - because some Members of the Opposition were saying it is a *oquille vide* - 'those who say so only have to put the *coquille* to the ear and they will hear it like a reservoir filling up'. It is filling up.

Hon. Ganoo himself has said this morning that the *MID* project is the most important project launched by any government. We are now moving to the second phase. We need to have a clear vision of where we want to go from here. What are our priorities for the next five years with a clear road map? That is what is needed. In a spirit of participative democracy, I propose to set up a Strategic Committee, consisting of the public and the private sector, together with stakeholders from the civil society. I am also setting up an Evaluation Committee, consisting of scientists, economists and other professionals who can evaluate and follow up on the projects submitted.

Very often, we have this problem of evaluation, Mr Speaker, Sir, here in Mauritius. As I said, the *MID* project is *un projet de société*. It belongs to each and every one of us; we should all embrace it. I am glad what Members of the Opposition have said that they will embrace it. I have noted what hon. Ganoo has said about the Opposition which is also wanting to participate

in this visionary project, for it is not a partisan project. It is for the whole nation, and I certainly welcome the Opposition to help us, because this is a national project in the national interest.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now say a few words on economic diplomacy. When we talk of economic diplomacy, I believe that there is no need to underline the fact that Mauritius has a long history of economic diplomacy. The list of achievements is long. Just to give you a few examples - the sugar protocol, the renegotiation of the sugar protocol with the EU and the support for the reform package, the AGOA (Africa Growth and Opportunity Bill) with the United States, the development of the ICT sector with India that culminated in the Ébène Cybercity, the Jin Fei project from China - to name some of the prominent ones -, the increase from 15% to 19% for our share of AU accompanying measures, the recent grant of 139.6 billion euros, that is, about Rs6 billion from the European Union, under the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy.

We are taking economic diplomacy a major step forward. In addition to personally investing myself in furthering the interest of our country in the global arena, we are going to build capacity in all our embassies. This was mentioned in the Budget speech. The focus of our embassies must change. There will be more trade and investment driven. Their performance would be measured primarily by the contributions to support the economic diplomacy strategy of the Government.

Throughout our short history of the nation, the structure of our economy and economic relations has made it necessary to use economic diplomacy to realise and protect our economic priorities and our interest. In the years ahead - and I mean throughout the next decade, or even longer - that approach will be even more prevalent. We will intensify economic diplomacy, in other words, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Political leadership does change. With it, the approach to foreign policy and economic diplomacy must also change, but there has to be a greater permanence in terms of capacity on economic diplomacy. The logical route to follow is to equip our embassies with the relevant processes and systems to provide effective support.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to the subject of law and order. Since becoming Prime Minister, I have placed the security of law-abiding citizens and a commitment to a better, safer Mauritius as a top priority of the government. We will continue with the police reforms, which

we have started during my first mandate. My Government's priorities for the police, for the 2011 Budget, reflect our commitment to reinforcing police visibility, accessibility and responsiveness to the community, and we will continue to provide the police with the necessary resources to meet the new and emerging security challenges.

The budget of the police department for the financial year of 2011 is Rs5.6 billion compared to Rs3.1 billion in 2004-2005. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that the crime rate has shown a continuous downward trend since 2008. The latest figures show that while the crime rate was 5.4% in 2007, it came down to 5.1% in 2008 and 4.3% in 2009. However, we have also witnessed some horrible crimes which made the headlines. As I always say, Mr Speaker, Sir, percentages are one thing but one crime is one crime too many. We must ensure that those who commit criminal acts know that they will be caught and made to pay the consequences of their acts. We shall relentlessly pursue our policy to tackle crime vigorously, as well as the causes of crime.

With the installation of CCTV surveillance cameras in areas where criminal acts tend to occur, we are already seeing results. At Flic en Flac, for example, Mr Speaker, Sir, where the first CCTV surveillance cameras were installed, the crime rate has diminished dramatically by 81.8% compared to 2007. We will continue to invest in new technologies as well as ensuring that the police have the necessary equipment to perform their duty in a conducive working environment. Thus, a new digitalized 999 emergency management system will be installed soon to allow for faster response and also identification of blank calls.

The capability of the Forensic Science Laboratory is being strengthened to enable the latter to implement the provisions of the DNA Act. We must now go for an evidence-based conviction more and more. A new director has been appointed as from October of this year, and other professionals are being recruited. We must also ensure - and that is also important - that people learn to respect a police officer in his or her uniform, and they must expect the full rigors of the law if they attack a police officer in uniform. A Bill will be presented to the House to that effect.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is committed to implement the proposals contained in the National Policing Strategic Framework last February. This framework contains six pillars, including human resources management capability. We need to ensure that those who perform

their duties honourably, with courage, are rewarded. I have noted what hon. Ganoo has said about the promotion exercises. I have already answered questions in Parliament on this, and I have already explained the delay in completion of the exercise. But let me reassure the hon. Member and the House that the course is now clear for the exercise to be completed, and we have, since some time now, seen how the police have acted rapidly, promptly, and apprehended those who commit crimes. I need to congratulate the Commissioner of Police and his officers for their prompt action.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Government is unwaveringly committed to fight the drug scourge. As I have repeated many times, the fight against the drug scourge should concern each and everyone of us. Hon. Baloomoody referred to a country report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, where Mauritius is ranked among the countries with the highest prevalence of opiate use in Africa. I think that's the report he referred to. As indicated, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the House, in reply to a Parliamentary Question on this very issue, the UNODC itself has admitted that the 2010 edition of its report presents certain limitations, such as irregularity and incompleteness in reporting by Member States. The irregular intervals at which some governments report - I am stating what they said - may result in absence of data in some years. The lack of regular data for which the UNODC tries to compensate by referring to other government sources can influence the reported trend in a given year. Submitted questionnaires are not always complete or insufficiently comprehensive; many of the data collected are themselves subject to limitations and biases, and these issues affect the quality, the quantity and the comparability of information received.

In the report, mention is made of Mauritius, at page 157, in a paragraph entitled "Opiate use is perceived to be increasing in Africa", which writes about countries in the region with the highest prevalence of opiate use. However, the figures mentioned for Mauritius in the 2010 report date back to 2007. On the other hand, for other African countries with which Mauritius has been compared, figures mentioned date back to between 2001 and 2006. In some cases, no mention of any figure has been made in the absence of recent reliable statistics. The figures contained in the 2010 world drug report in respect to Mauritius do not reflect the current drug situation in the country. In fact, the figures of 2007 have been used to analyse the situation in 2010. Even the figures of 2007 are not collected in 2007; they are previous figures. The attention of the UNODC has already been drawn to the shortcomings contained in the report, and

they have acknowledged it. It is also important to note that, in 2004, a rapid situation assessment and response on substance abuse carried out in Mauritius, with the assistance of a consultant again from the UNODC, estimated a number of injecting drug users in Mauritius as being between 17,000 and 18,000 - the report of 2004.

As far as I remember, the hon. Leader of the Opposition was Prime Minister then, and I think - correctly - he rejected those figures as being inaccurate. However, another survey - to prove his point also - carried out in 2009, still with the assistance of UNODC and the World Health Organisation, estimated this figure - that is, what they have said between 17,000 and 18,000 - as being in the range of 5,699 to 10,444 which, therefore, represents a decrease of even more than 50%, as compared to the figures of 2004.

The conclusion must be: either the figures of 2004 were wrong or there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of opiate drug users during the past five years. This can only indicate - if that is so - that the measures implemented by the Government to counter the proliferation of drug abuse have yielded positive results, that is, over the last five years. This is why I should point this out, because there can be misrepresentations here. Notwithstanding, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government is fully conscious of the need to reinforce the measures taken to combat the drug problem. A multi-pronged strategy has been adopted, geared towards supply and demand reduction, education, treatment and, very importantly, rehabilitation. To fight drug trafficking and other organised crimes, we have to go after the illicit profits made by the drug traffickers and other criminals on the back of our citizens.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there was reference to the forfeiture of assets - I think it was hon. Baloomoody, himself. Let me put it in context, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Dangerous Drug Act was passed in 1986. The then Drug Commissioner inquired into 109 cases and, as far as we can see - we can't see any record of it - he didn't recommend any forfeiture of assets. The second Drug Commissioner submitted 204 reports, and recommended forfeiture in only one case. The third Drug Commissioner inquired into 49 cases, and recommended forfeiture of assets in six cases. With the appointment of the present Commissioner, administrative measures were taken to speed up the whole process and to make enquiries more effective. He now has a permanent office, and additional staff has been recruited - when I say now, I don't mean yesterday; since quite some time. Hearings now are being held in the office of the Commissioner every Tuesday and alternate

Thursdays at Beau Bassin Prisons. On a monthly basis, at least 40 hearings are held at the office of the Commissioner, and 20 at the Beau Bassin Prisons; in other words, 60 in all, at least - roughly - on a monthly basis.

The registry has been completely reorganised and a computerised database management system has been set up, which includes profiling of the dealer. The delay into the inquiry of the possessions of dealers has been, therefore, eliminated. There is practically, I can say to the House, no backlog. 1,407 inquiries have been carried out, and 25 cases have been recommended for asset forfeiture; compare this to zero, 1 and 6. However, it is clear that there are reasons why there are not more asset forfeitures. I will not go into the details now, Mr Speaker, Sir, but we are coming forward with a new Asset Recovery Bill, which addresses these difficulties and which will provide for the recovery of assets which are proceeds or instrumentalities of crime, of terrorist property, even in the absence of a criminal conviction. That is why it took a long time; there was a debate as to whether if there is no criminal conviction, we can go ahead with this. We have looked at other legislations; what other countries have done. We have discussed it; the Bill will also address the present difficulty that is being encountered by the authorities when dealing with cases where the tainted assets have been transferred in the name of third parties.

An enforcement authority, which will be headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions himself, will be set up, and it may apply to the Supreme Court for a retrieval or recovery order, seek a restraining or restriction order from the Judge in Chambers in relation to property or whatever other economic advantage. The consultation exercise for this is at the final stage, and the draft Bill will be introduced in Parliament at the earliest opportunity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said earlier, the best way to lower rates of crime is not only to toughen the law. That is one aspect of it. But we must also address the causes of crime. We have commissioned a study on crime and violence, which is actually being conducted by the Mauritius Research Council, and we expect the report shortly.

Coming to the prisons service, I must state that my Government will continue with the ongoing reforms, which include the improvement of the physical conditions and security in the prisons, with a view to providing a safe and healthy environment for the rehabilitation of detainees, to meet the requirements of a modern country. To ease the pressure in existing prisons, we all know a new high security prison is being constructed at Melrose, which will cater

for 750 detainees. In order to further tighten security in the prisons, additional security equipment are being acquired, namely handheld metal detectors, deep search metal detectors, day and night binoculars, under vehicle search mirror, and boss chair for all prisons. A new CCTV system is in place at GRNW Remand Prison, and the CCTV system at Beau Bassin Prison and the New Wing Prison has been upgraded. A new CCTV system will be operational at the women prison, Petit Verger Prison, and Barkly special prison for women during the course of next year.

We want, Mr Speaker, Sir, professionally trained prison officers to man the prisons. An adviser has been appointed to the Prison Training School. He has carried out a training needs assessment already for officers of the Prisons Service and is now mounting appropriate training courses for officers; some 625 prison officers have undergone inhouse training; opportunities are being explored for the training of officers in the Senior Management position overseas. Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Baloomoody, I think, insinuated that incorrect information was provided as regards the staff to inmates ratio in our prisons, if I heard him right; maybe I am wrong. But, in fact, the overall staff to inmates ratio in Mauritius is at present one officer to two inmates. Maybe he based the figures on one prison, whereas the figure I gave is for the overall staff to inmates ratio. I am not saying that one to one means in practice what happens, because some of them may be in different places.

(Interruptions)

This is what the Member said.

(Interruptions)

Then we agree. That is something that we are also looking at, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

No, he said ‘mislead’. I thought I heard him say ‘mislead’.

Emphasis will be placed on the rehabilitation of detainees Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to enhancing the detainees’ skills, so that they can return to society, they can be employed once they are released from prisons. Efforts will be made to reduce the reoffending rate which is, I must say, extremely high for a country like Mauritius. During my official visit to Singapore in September last, I met the Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Law and Ministry of Home

Affairs and the Director of Prisons of Singapore, and requested them to provide assistance to carry out a review of the security system in our existing prisons, with a view to ensure that there is more efficient management of prisons and effective rehabilitation of detainees. I have seen what they do in Singapore; they really have a programme of rehabilitation worth saying it is a programme for rehabilitation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another area where Government is devoting a lot of attention is HIV/AIDS. In response to HIV, our strategy is to allocate resources to the most affected people in order to prevent new infections, particularly among the most vulnerable groups such as women and the youth. The National AIDS Spending Assessment conducted this year has revealed that 75% of funding from the HIV programme is provided by the Government, 20% by foreign partners, 1% by NGOs, and the remaining 4% by the private sector. It also revealed that 48% of the financial resources are allocated to prevent from HIV, 15% to treatment and 11% to lab equipment. Apart from the Government funding this year, we have obtained assistance from the Global Fund to fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria to the tune of Rs87 m.; Rs48 m. being allocated to the Government, and Rs39m. to the NGO sector. I was present at the Summit, and I was among the first; and Mauritius was congratulated to adhere to this.

An AIDS Secretariat has been set up in Rodrigues, and facilities for HIV testing are available in three health centres, area health centres in Rodrigues. The HIV programme is now being implemented in Agalega, and the island is now equipped for HIV testing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I spoke earlier about democratisation of the economy as constituting a major plank of our mandate. We have done a lot in the cane industry and negotiations with the IPPs are ongoing, and I am confident that we will reach an agreement by early next year.

Let me reiterate my unflinching commitment to the planters, labourers, artisans in the sugar cane industry to ensure that, through the Cane Democratisation Fund, they are able to secure a 35% stake in the cane industry; all the way through the entire value chain from milling, refining, ethanol production and all the activities related to the production process and to the marketing of all final products. As the hon. Member knows, we also have ensured the metayers are taken on board in this democratisation process. Before that, nobody was talking about them.

Another aspect of economic democratisation is the existence of a level playing field, as far as the economic and trade players are concerned. Under my previous mandate, we presented

and voted the Competition Bill in this House. The Competition Commission of Mauritius became fully operational in December 2009 and, in the short lapse of time since its setting up, it has been able to effectively enforce the Competition Act with a high degree of professionalism, and it is a fact that the record of enforcement activity of the Competition Commission stands fair comparison with any newly established competition agency in the world. We have been lucky to have somebody who is very able at the head of that Commission. Unfortunately, when he took the contract, he stated that he wanted to leave because his daughter is going to school in the UK. But, despite being an agency, the Competition Commission is committed to a set of output targets agreed with Government under the Performance-Based Budgeting Programme, which will track the volume and the value of this enforcement work.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is unshakable in its determination to combat fraud and corruption, and my message is simple and clear. Some might not like it; but anyone engaged in acts of impropriety will be promptly flushed out of our institutions. I am not going to allow anyone, whoever he or she may be, to bring the Government and the country into disrepute by engaging in fraudulent and corrupt practices. This applies both to the public and private sectors. This year, the Independent Commission Against Corruption has lodged 65 cases and secured 27 convictions for corruption. During 2011, we will provide additional resources to ICAC to enable it to pursue its mission, by strengthening its anti-corruption initiatives and sustaining its activities in enforcing the anti-corruption vision of the Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has also to invest in physical infrastructure, physical capital. Government is investing massively, not only in the road works that you can see - my hon. friend, Bachoo, is 24/7 ensuring that things are being done.

Government is investing massively in the modernisation and expansion of our national airport as well. Our vision is to transform the SSR International Airport into one of the most modern airports of the region. Upon completion of this project, the passenger terminal will be able to accommodate four million passengers annually. Particular emphasis will be put on security, on the protection of the environment and comfort of passengers, including getting their baggages out quickly. We are putting a time limit. We want all the passengers to be treated like VIPs Mr Speaker, Sir; all Mauritians, including the foreigners who come here. We are also carrying out improvement works on the existing runway, with a new taxiway which can also be

used as an emergency runway. This project is estimated to cost Rs760 billion, and works will start next year. We all know the danger of having only one runway, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I am determined to ensure that every citizen of this country has an equal opportunity to attain his or her objectives, to live up to his or her full potential. The Equal Opportunity Act will soon be amended to provide for an Equal Opportunity Commission, which will be fully dedicated to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status. The hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned it last time. We have discussed it, and we have thought that this was the best way. We have come to think that it should stand on its own.

To promote human rights in the country, Government is finalising the necessary legislations in order to bring structural changes to the National Human Rights Commission, with a view to broadening its mandate, increasing its efficiency and strengthening its independence. Within this new set-up, the Human Rights Commission will be composed of a Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson and other members. They will have three distinct divisions within that Commission, that is, the Human Rights Commission, namely a Human Rights Division, a Police Complaints Division, and a National Preventive Division. We are working closely with the Commonwealth Secretariat for the introduction of human rights in the primary and secondary schools curricula. Two other projects are being finalised with this institution, that is, the Commonwealth Secretariat, namely the human rights training for prison management and the organisation of a human rights leadership seminar in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following the recommendations made in the report of the Fact-Finding on ex-Lola flooding, chaired by hon. Judge Domah, Government has set up a National Disaster Management Centre, under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office, to take overall responsibility for the management of natural disasters in Mauritius. I say overall responsibility, because this is a very technical area. The Government Programme of 2010-2015 has reiterated the commitment of Government for the setting up of the DMC, and a provision of Rs5 m. exists in the 2010 Budget for this purpose. A special unit of the DMC has been set up within the Mauritius Police Force, and the sum of Rs5 m. is being used to enhance the existing logistics of the police to operate the centre efficiently. Purchase of new equipment is underway, and also renovation to accommodate the DMC. A sum of Rs5 m. has again been provided in this Budget to enable the centre to operate to its full capacity, in a more structured manner, with training facilities and with

more sophisticated equipment, with a view to mitigating the impact of natural disasters on the people of Mauritius. Following my visit to France in September 2010, the French Government has agreed to provide assistance for the setting up of a Disaster Management Centre on the same lines as that of Reunion Island. Furthermore, on my invitation, the Director of Nanyang Technological University of Singapore will shortly visit Mauritius to undertake a complete risk assessment for Mauritius and Rodrigues in the event of a tsunami, and naturally Agalega will be included in that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Republic of Mauritius has an exclusive economic zone, as we all know, of 1.9 million square kilometres; an area which is about 1,000 times the size of our island of Mauritius. Our coastal and ocean territory holds an immense potential for development, and will play a vital role in the economic development of Mauritius. The Mauritius Oceanography Institute Act of 1999 established the Mauritius Oceanography Institute, with a view to rationalising and coordinating research and development activities related to oceanography. One important task assigned to the MOI was to assist the Government of Mauritius in formulating a claim to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, for an extension of the marine jurisdiction of the Republic of Mauritius.

In line with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Mauritius has submitted, jointly with the Republic of Seychelles, a claim for an extended continental shelf on the Mascareignes Plateau to the United Nations Commission on the limits of the continental shelf. The recommendation of the Commission is expected to be made in April next year. This submission, if approved - and we think it will be approved, because it is a joint submission - by the Commission, will extend the continental shelf of Mauritius and Seychelles in an area of 392,000 km square, that is, an area about 200 times the size of Mauritius, where joint exploration of natural resources and hydrocarbons would be possible.

As I said, this area will be jointly managed by Mauritius and Seychelles through the Joint Management Committee. In order to develop capacity in the management and exploitation of this huge resource base, a sum of 10 billion has been initially provided in the estimates of this year's Budget to the Mauritius Oceanography Institute for the construction of its headquarters and laboratory, estimated to be around 100 million, but we have put a sum for them to start. The

new building and the lab of the Mauritius Oceanography Institute will enable it to successfully manage its newly acquired satellite reception station and its projects on the commercial culture of corals and pearl oysters among others.

Maldives, Mr Speaker, Sir, had made a submission for the extension of its continental shelf beyond the 200 nautical miles to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. However, in its submission, Maldives has encroached on the EEZ of Mauritius in the region north of the Chagos Archipelago, of an area of about 21,200 nautical miles. The principles of public international law provide that, in a case of overlap, the boundary should be determined by a median line.

I am glad to say that - for the first time, in fact, because they were a bit reluctant at the beginning - we have now had fruitful discussions with the Government of Maldives. It has acknowledged that, in its submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, Maldives had not taken into consideration the EEZ coordinates of Mauritius in the Chagos Archipelago region. The Mauritius side was assured that this will be rectified in an addendum to the submission of Maldives, which would be prepared in consultation with the Government of Mauritius. The Maldives side further agreed to the proposal of the Mauritius side that a joint submission being now made to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, with regard to the area of overlap in the north of the Chagos Archipelago. The two sides, Mr Speaker, Sir, have also decided to exchange coordinates of the respective base points of Mauritius and Maldives as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the EEZ maritime boundary discussions. We have also agreed that other meetings would be needed to discuss whatever pending issues there might be.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the proposal for the co-management of Tromelin was evoked during my official visit in Paris in 2006. Subsequently, when I met the French President in June 2008, it was agreed that modalities for the co-management of Tromelin should be worked out by Mauritius and France. I, however, made it clear that the sovereignty issue should not be postponed indefinitely. I have repeated this to President Sarkozy when I met him recently this year at the Élysée Palace, and he agreed. Three meetings at senior official's level between Mauritius and France on the co-management of Tromelin were held in December 2008 in Mauritius, in October 2009 in Reunion Island, and in February 2010 again in Mauritius. As a

result of these meetings, Mauritius and France signed on 07 June 2010 a framework agreement on economic, scientific and environmental co-management relating to Tromelin Island and its surrounding maritime areas.

Mauritius and France also signed, at the same time, three implementing agreements relating to archaeological research, fisheries and the protection of the environment respectively. The framework agreement concluded by Mauritius and France on the co-management of Tromelin is of historical importance, and testifies to the existence of a strong political will on the part of both governments. The framework agreement on the co-management regime will initially cover the following areas: protection of the marine environment, conservation and promotion of terrestrial and marine biodiversity, fisheries, monitoring of natural phenomena in the region, and archaeological research. The framework agreement also provides for the establishment of a co-management committee for the implementation of the agreement. The committee, which will comprise an equal number of members from Mauritius and France, will meet, at least, once every year, alternatively in Mauritius and in France.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following the change in Government in the UK last May, I had a meeting in London with the Rt. hon. William Hague, the UK Foreign Secretary, on 03 June 2010. I expressed concern about the decision of the former UK Government to establish a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago, and added that the decision of the former UK Government is tainted with illegality. The UK Foreign Secretary informed me that he would revert to me, as he was not fully conversant with all the issues regarding the Chagos Archipelago. It was also proposed that a meeting be held between hon. Henry Bellingham, Minister for African Overseas Territories at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, that is, hon. Boolell, to discuss the way forward on the Chagos Archipelago issue. The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade had a meeting with hon. Bellingham on 22 July 2010 in Kampala, Uganda, in the margins of the AU Executive Council Meeting. During the meeting, Minister Boolell reiterated the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, as well as our objection to the unilateral establishment by the UK of a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago. In response, Minister Bellingham indicated that the new British Government would have handled the issue of the marine protected area differently. It appears that the new British Government does not hold a different view from

the previous Government on the issue of the marine protected area or the sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago. In respect of the marine protected area, it is now clear, especially in the light of what came out last week from WikiLeaks, that there was a Machiavellian agenda behind this project, to keep the Chagossians from ever returning to their homeland, and to push the sovereignty issue on the back burner, as I have always maintained. Suffice it to say at this stage, Mr Speaker, Sir, our stand has been vindicated. In the circumstances, the Government of Mauritius is now considering other options to counter the unilateral establishment by the UK Government of a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago, and for Mauritius to exercise its full sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. Mr Speaker, Sir, I won't say more on this issue at this point.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a Budget about putting people first, and that is why it has been so widely accepted by the population, by businesses, and also by investors.

Let me conclude therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, by stressing that the policies we have been pursuing since 2005, while adapting to the continuing changes in the global economy, are taking Mauritius in the right direction, to the right objectives, and at the right pace. As Prime Minister, what I want is that, when future historians write about our generation and about our leadership, they will be telling the tales of hopes fulfilled. They will be telling about opportunities fully seized, and they will be telling about potential fully realised. As importantly, if not more importantly, they will be telling about a government which left no stone unturned to integrate those who are less fortunate into the mainstream of economic development, thus pursuing the noble aim of inclusive development.

Mr Speaker, Sir, all my actions, as a political leader, have been motivated to a great extent by what Franklin Roosevelt said in 1937, after the great depression, and I quote -

“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(*Applause*)

At this stage, Members of the Opposition left the Chamber.

(7.00 p.m.)

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, before summing up on the Budget, let me, first of all, thank all hon. Members who have contributed to the debates on the Budget.

I must say that it is shameful on this Opposition. For such an important event as a Budget which is, in fact, the most important event throughout the year for this House, the least that we could expect of the Opposition if they were respectful of the institution, of the House, if they were responsible and if they had the courage, to remain in the House to listen to what I have got to say, Mr Speaker, Sir. Instead of showing respect to the institution - because they are paid by public funds, they have been elected by the people, they are here to represent the people of Mauritius - they have chosen to walk away. Where are they now?

Mr Speaker, Sir, they are an Opposition '*bye looké*'; they are just waiting in the corridor right now, waiting when my summing-up will be over, so that they will come back. My advice is that, if they want to go out, to remain outside; don't make a show, and don't make a fool of themselves.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I knew beforehand that the Opposition, through what the Leader of the Opposition has stated in the press, was going to listen to all the speeches, except mine. I have chosen to remain in the House and to listen to hon. Ganoo and hon. Li Kwong Wing speaking, because I am respectful of the institution and, as a truly democrat, I listened very carefully and patiently to their arguments. But let it be! People will judge them. I know it is 7 o'clock.

(Interruptions)

I can understand at 7 o'clock; we know there is a call. Mr Speaker, Sir, it reminds me of a person that we know who is called Johnny. He is of Scottish origin, but anyway he keeps walking away all the time.

(Interruptions)

Unfortunately, I do not see hon. Guimbeau; he was here, he also walked away. Hon. Guimeau has not intervened, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, I take it that silence means consent, that he is agreeable with the Budget. Otherwise, he would have taken the floor, he would have criticised and he would have said with what he agrees and with what he does not agree.

I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the success of the Budget amongst the population has been very encouraging. I must also say that the criticisms that were levelled, not only by the Opposition, by some members outside also, have been conspicuously mild and even disconcerted.

Let me recall the backdrop to the Budget, that is, after the general election, where people have expressed their preferences not only on leadership, but on the economic, social, cultural, environmental policies that they want the Government to pursue. In fact, we have spelt out our policies and we have outlined our vision very clearly in the manifesto so that the electorate could make an informed decision.

This Budget has very faithfully reflected many of our pledges that we have made. Obviously, there are more pledges to be fulfilled, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have a mandate for five years. It is impossible to fulfill all the pledges at one go. But when you look at the number of promises that we are able, not only to keep, but to translate concretely into measures, I think it is remarkable. The Budget shows our determination and our commitment to carry on with what we have promised we would do. Admittedly, some of the pledges are challenging, but we will see them through, I have no doubt. Another major event that has underpinned the 2011 Budget is the Euro zone crisis. In fact, this Budget adds a very significant way to the actions that we have already taken in the ERCP. I just listened to the speech of the hon. Prime Minister who has, in fact, elaborately mentioned about this prevailing economic situation. I must say I was very surprised when I heard hon. Li Kwong Wing say that the world economy is recovering. He has seen that the world economy is recovering. True it is that some countries like India, China, Brazil are doing very well in spite of the very difficult situation. The growth rate is fantastic. The hon. Prime Minister has just mentioned about the situation in Europe.

I had the privilege of meeting Paul Krugman when he was in Mauritius, as well as my colleague, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Social Integration, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. We discussed with him; we wanted to have his views about what is going to happen in Europe. I must say he was more pessimistic than most of the analysts that have been writing recently on Europe. This is the situation; there is no visibility.

Look at what is happening. As has been mentioned by the hon. Prime Minister, after Greece, Ireland, United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain, look at the difficulties France is facing. I

won't go into the detail of that. But for somebody who is an economist like hon. Li Kwong Wing, coming and saying that the world economy is recovering! In what world is he living in? In what country is he living in, first of all? I am shocked, I must say. Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of measures that have been taken in the ERCP are precisely to support our enterprises, our industries and the workers.

And we should not overlook the fact that only three months before presenting the Budget, Government has come up with some hundred measures and actions, in fact, to support our enterprises and industries. More recently, we have seen that the Euro zone crisis has taken another shaky turn. The crisis is, in fact, deepening, as has been mentioned by a number of analysts. That is why it fully justifies our stand that we should be prepared for the worst. But there is also positive and more long term development on the global scene that has greatly influenced the economic policies in this Budget. That is why I have talked about rebalancing of the global economy with BRIC countries in the driving scene.

As days go by, we find more and more reasons for rebalancing our own economic growth, which is the central thrust of the Budget. The Budget is, therefore, about adapting our economic growth strategy to the new global economy, and to the increase in potential for leadership role in the region. It is about Government's vision, and it is about the aspiration of the people. That is why it is comprehensive, reaching out to businesses facing difficulties, SMEs, to students, to families, to workers, to elders in retirement, to women in unemployment and to the homeless. And I can go on; the list is long.

On the economy, we have the vision. Let me repeat what I have said in the Budget Speech! A GDP of Rs1 trillion by the 2020s. This is what we aim at. And, as I have said, it is within our reach. We also want to triple *per capita* income to around USD20,000, and this too is within our reach. I listened and, again, I was surprised because there seems not to be agreement within the Opposition. For some days, when we have been listening to other Members of the Opposition, they have been saying that this is a dream. We are selling a dream to the people, and we will never be able to reach those figures. Today, I heard hon. Ganoo say 'if you look at past figures, past growth rates, this is something that will happen normally', as if it is automatic. But which is which? Are we selling a dream or this is something that is going to happen anyway? They are lost! *L'opposition est abasourdie.*

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, our target is not based on what we believe, not only on past growth records, but also the measures that we are taking, and we have a vision. There will be other measures that will be taken in the future to reach that objective. We cannot drive forward, as the hon. Member of the Opposition has been saying, looking always backwards. Our eyes cannot be reverted on the rear-view mirror. We have to be forward-looking, and we believe in the future. We are working for the future. In fact, our forecast was made after realistic assessment of the growth potential of our country over the next two decades, and on the conviction that the strategies and policies we are pursuing will enable us to achieve that full potential. This is why I said in the Budget Speech that the Mauritian dream is within our reach. And the Budget is paving the way, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is why the running theme is about rebalancing growth and consolidating social justice. For those who think that the Budget does not do enough to boost up economic growth - because, again, I heard hon. Li Kwong Wing say that there is nothing in this Budget; no measures to go towards that way - we are setting the stage for achieving this goal, and let me outline the main features of the strategy on growth that is in the Budget. They are -

- rebalancing growth to adapt to the new global economic architecture, and to reduce dependence on Euro zone economies;
- supporting industries through the Euro zone crisis;
- further diversifying the economy with emphasis on services and higher value added production.

And, again, en passant, I'll make a remark because hon. Li Kwong Wing is saying that we are just trying to protect the Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty that we have with India. We are contended with that. That is all! He does not know the amount of work that is being done together with my colleague, hon. Dr. Boolell. In fact, tomorrow we are signing the Double Taxation Agreement Treaty with Australia. We will be signing one with the UK. Next week, we will be signing another one with Italy, and there are others to come. He is suggesting that we have a committee looking at all the DTAs; we already have this. The work is being done.

- making a great leap forward on productivity by reforming our approach to the use of land and marine resources;
- making the necessary investments in education and training to have a better matching of skills on the labour market;

It is not easy, I agree, but this is the way forward; the massive investment that is being made. Hon. Dr. Bunwaree and hon. Dr. Jeetah have been lengthily dealing with this issue.

- creating the opportunities for women to be more active on the labour market;

Again, it's difficult. But a number of measures have been taken to address this issue. We will not be able to solve this problem; not only within years. It will take time. But, at least, we should see to it that we are helping women to integrate in our socioeconomic fabric.

- improving the mechanisms, rapid and effective clearing on the labour market;
- further democratising the economy by creating a level playing field for SMEs;
- further improving the doing business environment to facilitate investment and attract FDI;
- improving the flow of information by reforming the Central Statistical Office, in particular, to improve and speed up decision-making in businesses by Government and by households;
- reforming the institutional set-ups that are crucial to investment and production such as the merging of FSC and the Bank of Mauritius, and the institutional rationalisation in the water sector;
- revisiting the Monetary Policy Committee, and setting up a Sovereign Wealth Fund to ensure greater macroeconomic stability;
- improving regulatory framework in the gaming and the gambling sectors, and on the abuse of alcoholic drinks;
- encouraging innovation by linking student research to the real world of Government and businesses, and
- making massive and smart investments in the physical fabrics of the country knowing that it will be crucial for future economic growth.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these are some 15 measures of economic growth and development on which we have acted in this Budget, and it would be utter demagogic on the part of anyone just to say that this Budget has not done enough for the economy. We have acted on the entire wealth creation chain, and along with direct measures on these 15 areas of the economy, the Budget also look at long term policies to support the economic strategy.

There are actions to remove the bottlenecks at preprimary, primary and secondary schools, so as to achieve a higher tertiary enrolment ratio, and we are investing for future generations in tertiary education, reforming the scholarship schemes to reach out to more students and to open opportunities for students who come from families with modest income. We have increased the number of scholarships, Mr Speaker, Sir.

What did I hear today from hon. Li Kwong Wing? Every student who has obtained 'A' should be given a scholarship. How can we be more demagogical than that?

(Interruptions)

I heard him saying that. The richest countries of the world do not provide for scholarship for everybody. Mr Speaker, Sir, the measures in this Budget on education have the dual objectives of building the workforce of tomorrow while, at the same time, enlarging the opportunities of the workforce for better pay and for more satisfying careers. I need not go into the details of all the measures; on each of the areas we are focussing as part of our strategy to enhance growth. However, I should mention that if we were to count the number of measures and actions and the number of programmes, they will be in the hundreds. In fact, this Budget provides measures, actions and policies that cover the entire wealth creation chain, from investment decisions to financing, production technologies, cost minimisation, marketing. This Budget has addressed the issues that concern all Mauritians, our brothers and sisters in Rodrigues also, as well as the outer islands.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the other day, during the PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition on Rodrigues, he was talking about the crisis. He said that we should be careful, as there is a crisis. He has now become the supporter of Johnson Roussety. I am really amazed, but not surprised, because I know *l'acrobatie du leader de l'opposition; il a toujours été comme cela*. I will not go into the answers that were given at that time. I will give the figures later on, but let me just make a remark. The Chief Commissioner had, in the course of discussions for the Budget of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, made requests with regard to the Capital Budget and the Recurrent Budget. If I go according to his requests, he himself has voted a Budget in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly which is much more than the requests that he has made for the Budget. How irresponsible can one be, Mr Speaker, Sir? The Leader of the Opposition now is becoming a supporter of Johnson Roussety! He is talking about 'there is a crisis'. But if

irresponsible people want to make a crisis out of nothing and out of their sheer irresponsibility, they have to assume that irresponsibility. I am very surprised. If he is a responsible Leader of the Opposition, he can ask questions; that is his right. But he should not have tried to show that he is supporting the Chief Commissioner. He made a request for Rs510 m. for Capital Budget, and he voted a Budget for Rs608 m. in Rodrigues, Mr Speaker, Sir.

That is why we have, Mr Speaker, Sir, balanced the pursuit of economic prosperity with policies, to ensure that the wealth that will be created will be shared equitably, so that we can consolidate social justice as we move forward. As we create more wealth, we will also narrow the income gap and eliminate absolute poverty. The Budget also adapts the approach to social development. It is important that we understand that support to the poor will be provided on a hand up and not on a hand out basis. As we have said in the Budget Speech, we are cutting the remaining links with the social policy framework that has always been excessively centred on giving and spending. When my colleague, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, intervened on the Budget, he has explained how this social contract will be implemented. Government policy is not about supporting people to live in poverty; it is about empowering them to come out of poverty.

It is on this basis that we have firstly reviewed the use of the CSR money, with 50% of the money being used to focus on the three priority areas. Again, hon. Xavier Duval has clearly explained; probably, they have misunderstood this measure. I give them the benefit of doubt. But the merit of this approach is that we will not be short of financial resources to put an end to the social housing problem, to eradicate absolute poverty, and to significantly improve the welfare of children from vulnerable groups. In fact, there will be some Rs5 billion over the next ten years for these three priorities. These will be in addition to other programmes that are being run by Government, by the NGOs, and by the development partners. But the eradication of absolute poverty, Mr Speaker, Sir, would be achieved much before the ten years, and when this is done, we will set new social priorities to focus CSR money on.

The housing schemes with good living are also designed on the basis of hand up, and not hand out approach. It is a social housing programme that integrates the need for good living. Government does not just want to construct, hand out, and move on. The social contract that the potential house buyer will sign with the National Empowerment Foundation brings a number of other benefits besides social housing. These include -

- training programmes to enhance employability, including life skills training;
- provision of *crèche* facilities and after school care to relieve parents, especially mothers, to undertake income generating activities;
- ensuring well-being of the family, with special focus on care and education of children;
- upgrading their living environment;
- promoting harmonious community living, and
- social housing with good living.

This is an example of how we are going to cut the remaining links, with an approach that is excessively focussed on giving and spending. Moreover, this plan is about taking some 6,000 social aid recipients from the risk of developing permanent dependence on hand outs to being empowered and to integrating the mainstream of social development. Part of the social contract involves creating opportunities for employment of the NEF beneficiaries. I must also say that our housing policy is broad based, catering for middle income families as well. Probably, we have not highlighted enough that the housing schemes that we are proposing are the boldest and strongest measures that any government has taken in the field of housing, with a span of repayment capacity for 40 years, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have drawn lessons from the past. There have been quite a number of families, in fact, having taken possession of a house and, yet, because of the time period, which is too short and the amount of money that they have to remove from their salary in order to pay for this, that is the reason why we have decided to extend this to 40 years.

J'ai entendu l'honorable Alan Ganoo venir dire aujourd'hui - quel culot je dois dire ! - que le gouvernement est venu copier leur plan. I have never heard about this plan. I have tried to follow as much as I can, especially there must have been their housing or land committee. I never heard the MMM coming up, proposing that they will come with such a scheme. I have never heard them speaking about even the middle income families for a period of 40 years. *Aujourd'hui, il a le culot de venir dire que nous avons copié ! Mais copier sur quoi ?* They can copy on us now.

Along with the economic, social, cultural and environmental policies, we also need to have a matching set of macroeconomic policies, in particular fiscal policies. This Budget

manages to hold on to a sustainable deficit and debt, in spite of the intense and extensive efforts that are being made to progress on all the various areas of development that I have just mentioned. In spite of the comprehensive set of measures and policies on which Government will have to spend and in spite of an ambitious infrastructure plan, in spite of being more generous on paying exams fees, on the welfare of our elders, children and families with modest income, in spite of the highly governmental subsidised social housing policy, and in spite of fiscal support for taxpayers who have mortgages and are financing studies of their children, the deficit will be lower, as a percentage of GDP, than in 2010.

The Budget has eliminated the NRPT. Thousands of taxpayers will not be paying on interest income any more. In fact, only the very rich taxpayers will pay a Solidarity Tax of 10% on interest income, which is lower than the 15%. Even for them, that is lower than the 15% that they were actually paying. I heard hon. Li Kwong Wing saying again *qu'il était offusqué que nous avions décidé de taxer les* dividends, and taxing those high interest income earners. As I said, it is clear, on this side of the House, what kind of policies we are advocating and, on the other side of the House, who they are defending, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are many countries around the world - and the hon. Prime Minister has said it - where the personal income tax rate goes up to higher than 40%, with interest income being taxed at 40% as well. In these same countries, there is tax on capital gains and dividends as well. Mr Speaker, Sir, by any measure, even when considering the Solidarity Tax on the very high income earners, Mauritius remains by far one of the lowest tax jurisdictions in the world. Mauritius also remains by far one of the countries where the ratio of personal income taxpayers to the workforce is the lowest. The majority of businesses and corporate entities in our country will be paying tax at 15%. From both a personal and corporate income tax perspective, the competitiveness of our country has not been undermined an inch while taking those measures. Let me, however, state that the population has very well received the tax policy of Government, and we can feel that there is, indeed, a great sense of solidarity in our country.

Laissez-moi maintenant venir sur certains arguments qui ont été faits par l'opposition, surtout le *Leader* de l'opposition. Je m'attarderai sur ce qu'il a dit. Je vais, premièrement, prendre ses commentaires sur la compensation salariale. Il fallait prendre en compte le rattrapage pour la compensation salariale non accordée par rapport à l'inflation cumulative depuis 2006.

J'ai déjà répondu, lors des deux PNQ qui m'ont été adressées, qu'aucun gouvernement, depuis l'indépendance, n'a appliqué la notion de rattrapage sur la compensation salariale. M. le président, quand il parle de rattrapage, j'aurais pensé que lui-même *is an advocate of rattrapage*. Mais, si on regarde le manifeste électoral de l'Alliance du Cœur, à la page 3, parmi les 12 mesures prioritaires, il est mentionné, et je cite -

« Stimuler le pouvoir d'achat des salariés et des pensionnés avec des tripartites, pour une compensation annuelle en fonction de l'inflation seulement. »

Cette même promesse électorale est reprise à la page 7, se rapportant à l'économie et les finances. Je cite -

« Une compensation salariale sera payée en fonction de l'inflation et de l'augmentation du coût de la vie. »

C'est tout ce qui est dit ! Si le *Leader* de l'opposition qui se présentait devant l'électorat, à cette époque, comme Premier ministre alternatif, s'il était sérieux, M. le président, sur la question de rattrapage, il aurait dû le mettre noir sur blanc dans son programme. Déjà, dans le manifeste électoral, la démagogie, au fait, saute aux yeux. Ils sont en train de faire grand cas de mes précédents discours, lorsque j'étais dans l'opposition. M. le président, je ne renie pas ce que j'ai dit. Je ne suis pas comme eux. Je ne fais pas d'acrobaties.

Il cite mon discours sur le *Second Reading on the Appropriation Bill* du 07 décembre 2009. J'ai bien regardé, lu et relu mon discours et, à aucun moment - je le dis bien 'à aucun moment' - aucune part, j'ai préconisé la compensation salariale par rapport au rattrapage ; même pas le principe de rattrapage. J'ai dit que, chaque année, il y avait une perte de pouvoir d'achat, mais je n'ai jamais, à aucun moment, lors des débats, dit qu'il fallait rattraper toutes les années perdues. Ils ont lu ce discours, parce que le *Leader* de l'opposition, je le sais, est très méticuleux ; il va lire tous mes discours. Mais il y a eu deux autres discours lorsque j'étais dans l'opposition. Laissez-moi les citer - *The Additional Remuneration No. 2 Bill 2009*. Je suis intervenu le 18 décembre et qu'est-ce que j'ai dit, M. le président ? Précisément, c'était l'occasion - non pas idéale - pour venir dire ce que je devais dire en ce qui concerne la compensation salariale. Qu'est-ce que j'ai dit ? Je cite -

« Oui, c'est vrai que la compensation salariale a été jusqu'à présent payée durant l'année financière courante, mais le fait demeure, M. le président, que cette compensation *relates to the loss of purchasing power already encountered during the previous financial year.* »

This is what I said. Ce n'est pas terminé. J'ai fait un autre discours sur l'*Additional Remuneration Bill* le 07 juillet 2009, et je vais citer trois endroits où j'ai parlé sur la compensation. Je cite -

« M. le président, la compensation que l'on apporte aux travailleurs de ce pays n'est pas de l'aumône, ce n'est pas de la charité. C'est un dû pour compenser déjà la perte du pouvoir d'achat qui a déjà été encourue durant l'année financière passée.»

Et, en plus, lorsqu'on lit mon discours, j'ai bien précisé, M. le président, tout à l'heure, que la compensation salariale vise avant tout à rétablir le pouvoir d'achat que les travailleurs ont déjà perdu durant l'exercice de l'année financière écoulée, et cette perte de pouvoir d'achat est reflétée par le taux d'inflation.

Voilà ce que j'ai dit. Ce n'est pas fini ; je continue le même discours. J'étais dans l'opposition, le Premier ministre était Premier ministre, et je lui faisais un appel.

« Au nom de la population, au nom de la justice sociale, au nom d'un nécessaire et urgent début de réconciliation entre l'économie et le social, je fais un pressant appel au gouvernement pour sérieusement considérer d'augmenter le taux de compensation salariale 2009 de 5.1% à 7%, soit à l'équivalent du taux d'inflation officiel ».

Le taux d'inflation était de 7%, et on avait donné une compensation salariale de 5.1%. Voilà ce que j'ai dit, M. le président. Si j'avais préconisé, à cette époque, le principe de rattrapage, est-ce que j'aurais fait ce discours ? Est-ce que j'aurais dit, qu'étant donné que le taux d'inflation est de 7%, de donner 7% ! J'aurais dit de donner beaucoup plus de 7%, pour rattraper les années qui se sont écoulées. Alors, c'est de la pure démagogie de la part du *Leader* de l'opposition.

Mr Speaker: I would ask the hon. Minister to refrain from using the word *démagogie* vis-à-vis a single Member of the House.

Mr Jugnauth: Mais, M. le président, c'est de la démagogie ! Démagogie à l'encontre du MMM ; c'est le MMM. Je n'ai pas fini sur la question. J'ai entendu l'honorable Li Kwong Wing et je croyais que peut-être son *Leader* lui aurait reproché d'avoir posé cette question sur *the*

average rate of compensation, mais il est revenu à la charge aujourd’hui. Je lui ai répondu l’autre jour sur *the average rate of compensation*. Je n’ai rien à cacher. Ce que j’ai dit par rapport à la compensation salariale, nous avons donné plus que le taux d’inflation. *But the average rate goes down*. A chaque fois !

Let me repeat again what I mentioned the other day. En 2000-2001, l’inflation était de 4.4%, *and the average compensation across all salary brackets was 2.7%*. En 2001-2002, l’inflation était de 6.3%, *and the average compensation across all salary brackets was 2.7%*. En 2002-2003, l’inflation était de 5.1%, *and the average compensation across all salary brackets was 3.6%*. *Who was the Minister of Finance at that time?* L’honorable Paul Raymond Bérenger ! C’est pourquoi je dis que le MMM fait de la démagogie *when, at their time, this is what happened*. Maintenant, il vient dire que *the average compensation across all salary brackets is low*.

J’ai vu dans le discours, M. le président, que l’honorable *Leader* de l’opposition a dit qu’il y a aussi le fameux *discussion paper* qui a été clairement introduit par le ministre des finances, sans être passé par le conseil des ministres. Il vient dire cela lors des débats sur le budget. Il avait posé sa PNQ ; je lui ai répondu, et je lui ai dit, en réponse à une question supplémentaire, que *the discussion paper was Government’s position*. Mais, il ne comprend pas ce que veut dire *Government’s position* ! Laissez-moi expliquer, car je sais qu’on va lui rapporter les propos. *Government’s position means that it emanates from Cabinet*. Il ne comprend pas cela ! Il vient raconter toutes sortes de stupidités ici ! Il vient dire que cela a été introduit par le ministre des finances sans passer par le conseil des ministres, et même pas avec le *green light* du Premier ministre, s’il vous plaît ! Il croit que j’opère comme lui ! Moi, M. le président, *I go according to procedures. We have a Government, we have a Prime Minister. Of course, we have respect for the Prime Minister; we can’t go without his approval*. Tout a été fait *according to procedures*, et il vient dire qu’il a eu à retirer le *discussion paper* à la dernière minute, en catastrophe.

Let me repeat again, Mr Speaker, Sir, what is a discussion paper. *Je dis cela pour les syndicats, et non pour lui*. A discussion paper is a proposal, and whatever is contained in a proposal is subject to discussion and negotiation. We had expected the trade unionists to come forward, instead of going around, saying this and that, making a lot of noise. They should come

forward like they did, in fact, afterwards. They came forward and said that they were not agreeable to a number of proposals that were made in this paper. We discussed, and then we came to an agreement. *C'est ce qu'on a fait*, and then the mechanism was set. *L'honorable Li Kwong Wing vient dire que j'ai envoyé le Financial Secretary. Je n'aurais pas espéré qu'il implique* le Financial Secretary, because we are politicians, we are Ministers, and we take political decisions. I am responsible, and I am accountable. *Qu'il ne vienne pas faire allusion au* Financial Secretary, because it has never been the case. Nowhere is it that the Financial Secretary would preside over this tripartite.

Comme je l'ai dit, M. le président, le gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir est allé bien plus loin que ce que l'honorable Bérenger préconisait. Nous avons accordé une compensation salariale de 3.2%, soit 0.5% *over and above* du taux d'inflation de 2.7%. Et on a fait mieux encore ! On a augmenté le seuil qui donne droit à la compensation maximale de R 3,800 à R 5,000. Et plus important encore, comme je l'ai dit, j'ai moi-même présidé à la réunion tripartite finale, en compagnie d'autre collègues du gouvernement, pour démontrer la considération que nous accordons aux travailleurs.

Laissez-moi faire une remarque qui est très importante, quand l'opposition parle de l'inflation, et que les travailleurs n'ont pas été adéquatement compensés. And I wish to say it, because they want to downplay what they have said, especially what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said. He has said it just in two lines. Il a l'habitude de dire '*the devil is in the detail*'. Moi aussi, je vais dire '*the devil is in the detail of what he has said*'. Qu'est-ce qu'il n'a pas dit quand il a critiqué le Gouverneur de la Banque Centrale, en ce qui concerne la politique monétaire ! Il a dit que la roupie était trop forte. Qu'est-ce que les barons - je ne parle pas du secteur privé, mais des barons du secteur privé - ne sont pas venus me dire ! 'La roupie est trop forte ! Il faut dévaluer !' Lui aussi, il parle le même langage. Deux lignes seulement ! Subtilement ! Subtilement, il vient dire que la roupie est trop forte. Il dit cela pas trop fort. Qu'est-ce qui se passe, M. le président, si on déprécie la roupie ? D'un seul coup, tous les produits importés vont augmenter ; les prix vont augmenter. L'inflation va augmenter. Et cela, c'est une politique en faveur des consommateurs, des salariés ? C'est cela qu'il faut dénoncer ! Ce comportement ! Ce n'est pas fini ! Je suis sûr que les travailleurs et les syndicalistes n'ont pas oublié la façon cavalière avec laquelle l'honorable Bérenger les avait traités lorsqu'il était ministre des finances entre 2000 et 2003. Allons voir ! C'est ce même Bérenger qui, aujourd'hui,

se présente comme le plus grand défenseur des travailleurs. Qu'a-t-il dit ? Qu'il faut appliquer une politique de rattrapage ! Lui, il applique une politique de matraquage ! Il avait envoyé la *Riot Unit* lorsque les travailleurs manifestaient. Pauvres ouvrières, à l'époque, dans la zone franche ! Elles manifestaient, et il avait envoyé la *Riot Unit*, parce que, pour lui, la *Riot Unit* 'pa donne biberon !' La *Riot Unit*, quand il est au pouvoir, est faite pour écraser les travailleurs. Au lieu de venir critiquer, l'honorable Bérenger aurait dû revoir son histoire, son passé.

Et je n'ai pas terminé, M. le président, sur le *Leader* de l'Opposition. Vous vous rappellerez, certainement, que dans cette Chambre, lors de la *PNQ* du 09 novembre 2010, l'honorable Bérenger avait déclaré qu'il n'avait pas cessé de présider les tripartites pour la compensation salariale. M. le président, je vais déposer un document sur la Table de l'Assemblée et, pour qu'il n'y ait pas, comme on dit, '*pou pas tire l'ail*', j'ai demandé au ministère de *certify this as a true and exact copy*. Il ne fallait pas le faire ! Mais, par précaution, j'ai demandé à mon collègue - et il l'a fait - *to certify this report as a true and exact copy of the original, and I am going to lay it on the Table of the Assembly. This is the report of the Tripartite Committee of 2002*. Je suis témoin, et c'est pourquoi que je peux en parler facilement. L'honorable Bérenger était ministre des finances. J'étais au gouvernement ; j'étais ministre de l'agriculture. Il avait commencé une réunion avec les syndicalistes. Ce n'était pas le tripartite, mais avant. Au bout de quelques minutes, il avait déjà perdu patience. Il avait commencé à s'exciter, et avait traité les syndicalistes - je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails - d'imbéciles ; de tous les mots. A tel point que le syndicaliste Jack Bizlall lui a dit '*Paul, baisse to ton, to pas dans comité central MMM*'. Ici, c'est pas comité central MMM'. Tout a l'heure, j'ai entendu l'honorable Ganoo dire à l'honorable Xavier Duval, lorsqu'il parlait, qu'il n'avait pas le choix et devait apporter son soutien au budget. Parmi les premières personnes qui m'ont félicité, dont le Premier ministre, le *Deputy Prime Minister*, Xavier Duval m'a, non seulement félicité pour le budget, mais il était très enthousiaste. Il a fait un commentaire déjà à la presse tout de suite après, pour dire 'Bravo, Pravind, c'est un bon budget', etc. Je sais qu'il en a parlé avec plusieurs membres et, donc, lui, c'est *genuine*. Par contre, lui, il n'a pas le choix. Il parle d'Hitler ; Hitler est là ! Il était là tout à l'heure ! Il n'a pas le droit.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister cannot treat a Member of this House as Hitler.

Mr Jugnauth: No, I am not treating the Leader of the Opposition...

Mr Speaker: You said '*il était là*'. In the House of Commons, you cannot treat somebody as a communist.

Mr Jugnauth: No, Hitler is outside; he is not here, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(*Interruptions*)

I am not referring to anybody. I am just saying that Hitler is outside.

(*Interruptions*)

M. le président, voilà quelqu'un qui a refusé, et je cite l'honorable Bérenger -

"What I stopped chairing was not the tripartite meeting; it was a regular monthly meeting with the private sector and the trade unions. Go and check!"

Il m'a dit 'go and check!' Well, I went and checked! There was no need, but I went and checked. Mr Speaker, Sir, this document is proof that Minister Sushil Khushiram, at that time, presided over the tripartite. The Leader of the Opposition, who was Minister of Finance at that time, had refused to preside over the tripartite. This, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a big lie to the House. I don't expect anything, but if he is a gentleman, he has the possibility...

Mr Speaker: It's too late now. A point of privilege has to be raised at the first opportunity.

Mr Jugnauth: Never mind, Mr Speaker, Sir! I have already made the point. In fact, he will be intervening - I hope - on the Additional Remuneration Bill. He will have the opportunity. I leave it to his conscience. We will see on that day, when he intervenes, because I know he is going to read the speech that I made today. We leave it to his conscience. When he was going out just now, what did he say? He said '*menteur, menteur*'. We will see. Probably, when he reads this report, it will refresh his memory.

M. le président, j'ai terminé avec l'honorable Sushil Khushiram. J'ai le document concernant Rodrigues. Qu'est-ce que l'honorable chef de l'opposition a dit ? Dans son discours, il dit qu'il n'y a pas une somme ; que je donne tant d'argent et tant d'argent pour le budget ; il fallait mentionner Rodrigues. Je n'ai pas mentionné Rodrigues. Je n'ai pas donné tant d'argent

pour Rodrigues. Premièrement, laissez-moi revenir sur la question de M. Roussety. La requête qu'il fait pour le *Capital Expenditure* est R 510 millions.

Mr Speaker: I don't want to interrupt. How long is the hon. vice-Prime Minister going to take? It's already 8 o'clock. Another 30 minutes?

Mr Jugnauth: About 30, 40 minutes.

Mr Speaker: Then, I will have to suspend for one and a half hour.

At 7.59 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.34 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I was referring to Rodrigues. In the intervention of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, he mentioned, and I quote -

« Rien à part une somme pour La Digue. Pire ! Il n'y a pas une somme ; que je donne tant d'argent et tant d'argent pour le budget. Rodrigues mérite plus que cela ; il fallait mentionner Rodrigues. »

This is what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said and, again, this is another *inexactitude*. *Parce que le Leader de l'opposition voulait faire comprendre à la Chambre qu'on n'a pas eu de considération pour Rodrigues* and that, in fact, we do not care. Whereas it is the contrary, Mr Speaker, Sir.

If we go through the 2011 Budget Speech, you will find seven occasions where I mentioned Rodrigues, and there are specific financial provisions in five instances. I don't want to go back again into the PNQ that was asked the other day, whereby I said and I meant that, in the 2003 Budget, mention of Rodrigues was made, but there were no specific provisions with regard to what was said. There was - true it is - one block sum that was allocated for Rodrigues.

Mr Speaker: I plead with the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. This is a past event; the incident is closed. He can say that there were seven paragraphs, but he cannot go back on what has happened. The incident is closed.

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, this is what I am saying. In my Budget, I made mention of Rodrigues seven times, and five times I made specific provisions. But I am comparing. I am not going back to what has been your ruling, in fact. I am now referring again to 2003, and I am

saying that there has been mention of Rodrigues but that there have been no specific provisions. This is what I am saying.

Mr Speaker: When a ruling has been given, an incident is closed. This is the practice. Nobody can come in the House on the same issue. The hon. Minister has to explain his Budget. When the hon. Leader of the Opposition spoke, he said that not one line was written by the Minister. Now, he can argue and say that he had seven paragraphs in the Budget on this issue. Otherwise, I will have to give rulings upon rulings.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will go according to your advice. Let me move on now to what has been said with regard to the *budget de continuité - comme si on est en train de faire un grand cas sur la question de budget de continuité*.

Je voudrais rappeler les faits suivants. Premièrement, allons voir dans le manifeste électoral de l'Alliance du Cœur. Ils avaient promis aux mauriciens qu'ils allaient payer la compensation salariale en fonction du taux d'inflation, abolir le *National Residential Property Tax*, abolir la taxe sur les intérêts, exempter ceux qui font l'acquisition de leur premier terrain des frais d'enregistrement jusqu'à R 150,000, abolir la taxe de 15% frappant les coopératives, mettre en place le métro léger, rétablir les subsides sur les frais des examens du *SC* et *HSC*, construire 20,000 logements sociaux, n'accorder aucun nouveau permis d'opération pour les maisons de jeu, et créer un ministère qui aura la responsabilité de coordonner l'offensive nationale contre la pauvreté entre autres. Toutes ces promesses, M. le président, ont été copiées, reprises dans l'essentiel du manifeste électoral de l'Alliance de l'Avenir, et nous, au sein du gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir, les avons traduites en mesures concrètes dans notre premier budget.

M. le président, imaginons que c'était l'Alliance du Cœur qui avait remporté les dernières élections générales, et supposons que le gouvernement de l'Alliance du Cœur avait traduit dans la réalité toutes ces promesses que j'ai mentionnées. Est-ce que le *Leader* de l'opposition et les autres membres de l'opposition auraient parlé de continuité? C'est là la question que je me pose. Et comme je dis, le MMM fait de la démagogie, et moi je ne fais pas de la démagogie. C'est vrai que j'ai, dans l'opposition auparavant, contesté certaines mesures qui ont été prises. Tout le monde le sait. J'ai fait campagne sur la NRPT, sur les taxes sur les intérêts, sur le SC/HSC, et j'en passe. Mais, si vous regardez mes discours dans l'opposition, vous allez voir qu'à plusieurs

reprises, j'ai dit, à l'époque, qu'il y avait une situation économique mondiale financière difficile avec la crise aux Etats-Unis. J'avais dit que même si cette crise n'affecte pas directement notre économie, cela aura des répercussions. J'avais même dit que j'étais d'accord qu'il fallait avoir un *stimulus package*.

Mais, qu'avais-je dit d'autre ? Qu'en venant avec un *stimulus package*, il fallait aussi faire la part des choses, avoir un équilibrage, et certainement faire aussi pour la population en général. C'est ce que j'avais toujours dit. Donc, je suis égal à moi-même, M. le président, *and I have not changed*. C'est la raison pour laquelle je me sens parfaitement à l'aise dans l'Alliance de l'Avenir, avec le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam comme Premier ministre. Parfaitement à l'aise ! Et d'ailleurs, que s'est-il passé ? Nous sommes tombés d'accord sur un manifeste électoral, où nous avions déjà pris l'engagement avec la population qu'en ce qui concerne la NRPT, les taxes sur les intérêts, le SC et HSC, etc., nous allions prendre des mesures concrètes. Nous avons été plébiscités par le peuple ; nous sommes là au gouvernement, et nous sommes en train de traduire exactement les promesses que nous avons faites à la population. En fait, la grosse majorité des arguments avancés par les membres de l'opposition ne sont que des parades pour essayer d'épater la galerie.

M. le président, en ce qui me concerne, la première réaction est la réaction qui est la plus importante et la plus appropriée. Lorsque j'ai terminé avec le discours du budget, j'ai écouté toutes les déclarations du *Leader* de l'opposition à la presse et à la radio. Vous savez quelle a été sa première réaction ? 'Le budget est mauvais; c'est un mauvais budget ; les mesures sont mauvaises.' Il n'y a que 'mauvais' qui est *consistent*. 'Décevant, fade.' Mais il est venu par la suite avec quelques PNQs que je décrirais comme de véritables 'fusettes', à tel point qu'à un certain moment il a cessé de poser des PNQs. Il y a un jour, je crois, où il n'en a pas posé. C'est son droit. Mais j'attire l'attention qu'un mercredi, il avait la possibilité de poser une PNQ, et il ne l'a pas fait. Je laisse les gens conclure. D'ailleurs, moi je l'attends de pied ferme. Ils ne sont pas là aujourd'hui ; tout à l'heure, peut-être qu'ils vont revenir. Je les attends de pied ferme.

Que voyons-nous, M. le président? Ils ont leur porte-parole économique ; la commission économique ! Leur porte-parole, s'il vous plaît ! Monsieur Vishnu Lutchmeenaraaidoo ! Il s'est réjoui des décisions budgétaires concernant entre autres l'abolition de la NRPT, de la taxe sur les intérêts. Il s'est réjoui, lors d'une conférence de presse qu'il a faite, de la subvention accordée

sur les frais d'examens du SC et HSC, de la réintroduction de l'abattement fiscal sur les prêts logement. Pour être honnête, je dois dire qu'à part le fait qu'il s'est réjoui sur toutes ces mesures que nous avons prises au niveau du gouvernement, il nous a critiqués pour la compensation salariale. C'est vrai ! Mais je regarde ce qu'il a dit dans sa conférence de presse, et il est très content ! Il dit que nous avons respecté l'engagement que nous avons pris. Je lui accorde crédit ! Et, pour bien démontrer que l'écurie mauve est en total désarroi, le même porte-parole en matière économique du MMM dit qu'il va prendre un congé politique maintenant. Quelle est la raison officielle avancée ? Que les mauriciens n'écoutent plus le MMM ; les mauriciens ne sont pas réceptifs aux messages du MMM. Mais, ce qui est intéressant, M. le président, c'est ce que M. Lutchmeenaraidoo dit qu'ils ne sont pas réceptifs à ce que le MMM tente de faire passer depuis trois ans au sujet de la situation économique. Je trouve que c'est exactement ce que représente le MMM aujourd'hui. Je cite ce que M. Vishnu Lutchmeenaradoo dit : '*Mo couma enn jardinier ki pe plante contre saison. Alors, eski mo bizin kontinier planter?*' Je dirai au MMM '*arrête planter papa*'. Je ne sais pas ce qu'ils sont en train de planter.

Let me come to the tax exemption on the 60 tonnes of sugar. Again, I won't go back to the PNQ which I have replied, but I just want to say that the tax exemption will be applicable again. Let me reassure the planters that those who benefit from FORIP and from fair trade measures that are destined to raise the productivity and income, this will thus improve their viability. This is expected to apply to about 7,000 small planters in the first instance and probably about 8,000 planters eventually. Cela me fait me rappeler d'une chose lors de la PNQ. La dernière question que le *Leader* de l'opposition a posée était pourquoi ne pas rétablir l'ancien *scheme*, c'est à dire donner à tout le monde l'exemption de soixante tonnes de sucre. M. le président, l'exemption des premières soixante tonnes de sucre s'appliquait à tout le monde. Que veut dire tout le monde ? Cela veut dire que cela s'appliquait aussi aux plus gros planteurs, c'est-à-dire les établissements sucriers. Et c'est ce que nous ne voulons pas. Nous ne voulons pas que ceux qui en ont déjà beaucoup bénéficient donc de ce *tax measure*.

Let me say again that, with regard to the small planters, dans le ERCP que j'avais présenté le 13 août, on a un *package* de quinze mesures pour les petits planteurs. Je ne vais pas énumérer les différentes mesures, mais parmi il y avait un *actuarial review of the Sugar Insurance Fund Board* pour revoir la prime payable pour les planteurs, compte tenu de la situation difficile. Je dois dire que les 80 pour cent d'avance ont déjà été payés aux petits

planteurs deux semaines seulement après la présentation de l'ERCP. Ce n'est pas terminé. Mon collègue, le ministre de l'agriculture, est en train de travailler sur la question de *cess*. Comme promis, on va réduire le *cess*, et on a nommé un consultant qui a procédé à la révision actuarielle du SIFB, et je peux dire déjà que le consultant a terminé son travail. Le consultant a recommandé - je dis bien recommandé - un *premium discount* de 70%, à titre exceptionnel, pour l'année 2010. Je ne me substitue pas au *Board*; il y a un *Board*; on est respectueux des institutions. Le *Board* est en présence de ce document, des recommandations, et le *Board* va prendre une décision. Si le *Board* accepte les recommandations de ce consultant, les planteurs vont bénéficier des revenus additionnels de R 750 par tonne de sucre. Et si l'on ajoute les bénéfices de R 1,800 par tonne de sucre qui sont couverts par le *Fair Trade Initiative*, cela nous amènera à des revenus additionnels de R 2,550 par tonne de sucre.

Yet, again, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is our commitment to the small planters, and this is what concretely we are doing in favour of the small planters.

Je dois expliquer *the issue of zero rated to exempt VAT status*, parce que le *Leader* de l'opposition est venu nous dire qu'on est en train d'augmenter la VAT. Ce n'est pas vrai. On n'augmente pas la VAT. Let me explain this issue of zero rated supplies to exempt supplies as from 01 March 2011. The zero rating of the items that are mentioned in paragragh 402 of the Budget is, in fact, a deviation from international best practice, whereby zero rating should be limited to exports only. In fact, they were on the list of exempt supplies when VAT was introduced in 1998. The IMF policy recommendation has been to implement any concessions under VAT other than exports rather than zero rating. However, in 1999, those goods were exceptionally shifted to the list of zero rated supplies, in view of the following - and I will explain.

First, Mauritius has signed and was implementing as from 01 January 2000 the SADC Trade Protocol, whereby tariff barriers from South Africa and other SADC countries were being lowered. There were fears at that time; there was uncertainty about capacity of our local producers who, in fact, at that time were being sheltered by an 80% tariff protection to meet this new and higher competition.

Second, the VAT concession was meant to be of a transitional nature to give comfort to local producers.

Third, at that time, producers of goods that were VAT exempt were not allowed, in fact, to recover VAT that was paid on inputs that are used for production, even if these were for export.

The situation is now different. First, our customs tariff policy has radically changed and protection significantly lowered, and our producers have adjusted accordingly and are able to compete on the local market.

Second, as from 2008, exporters are able to claim input tax, even if the goods are in the exempt list. Thus, the impact of competitiveness of local producers would not be significant.

I have just been to the IMF World Bank Conference, and they have systematically, in all their reviews, including in the Article IV - Missions, requested that such goods be removed from the list of zero rated.

In fact, their recommendation in the context of revenue raising measures to counter shortfall in revenue, following difficult international economic environment, has been to make those items become vatable, which I have refused. According to MRA, I must say that there has also been certain abuse on the input tax that has been claimed by producers. I don't want to go into the details of this. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, these items now are going to be VAT exempt. We have done a survey, and I am informed that the impact on domestic sales, according to the data that has been provided, should be in the range of 1% to 3% only.

Là, également, tout comme la question de soixante tonnes de sucre, je me pose la question: quelle est la véritable motivation de l'opposition si ce n'est défendre certains gros *business*?

Let me come to one issue, which I was really surprised to hear from the Opposition, with regard to financing of scholarships by Funds. We have stated that funds that we will get from the Lotto will be used to finance scholarships.

M. le président, je n'aurais jamais cru que le MMM descendrait à ce niveau. Nous savons tous que tous les revenus, que ce soit du Lotto ou d'ailleurs, sont versés au *Consolidated Fund*, and from the Consolidated Fund we earmark, in terms of expenditure, how we are going to spend money, whether they are schemes or budgetary provisions. Je dirais que si le MMM était sérieux, si vraiment le Dr. Sorefan, qui parlait au nom du MMM, croit en ce qu'il dit, à ce

moment, M. le président, les salaires qu'ils touchent proviennent d'où ? Il y a les revenus provenant de la taxe sur les maisons de jeu, sur les activités des *bookmakers*, sur les différents paris, sur les boissons alcoolisées et tant d'autres items qui sont versés dans le *Consolidated Fund*, et qui sont utilisés pour payer les salaires.

J'ai entendu certains membres de l'autre côté parler d'un Etat laïque. M. le président, il ne faut pas avancer des arguments bancals. J'ai entendu l'honorable Obeegadoo hier dire que les politiciens n'auraient pas dû prendre la parole dans des fonctions religieuses. J'ai mon opinion là-dessus. Mais, il ne voit pas que les religieux font de la politique ? Il ne voit pas cela ? Il ne voit que les politiciens qui font de la politique ! Et d'ailleurs, il parle de politiciens. J'espère qu'il ne parlait pas que des politiciens du gouvernement ! Lorsque j'étais au gouvernement avec l'honorable Paul Bérenger comme Premier ministre, dans combien de fêtes religieuses on a pris la parole ensemble ! A ce moment-là, il ne fallait pas séparer la politique et la religion ?

M. le président, ce qu'il a dit est important, mais comment il l'a dit, je ne suis pas d'accord. Il faut une réflexion. Je suis entièrement d'accord que la politique et la religion sont deux choses différentes. Je suis d'accord qu'il ne faut pas mélanger la politique et la religion. Seulement il y a les deux côtés. Il y a certains qui ont fait la politique ouvertement pendant la dernière campagne électorale. Qu'est-ce qu'on n'a pas vu ! Certains religieux ont fait campagne publiquement. Il faut faire attention.

Laissez-moi répondre - parce que je considère que c'est très important - à ce que l'honorable Mme Navarre-Marie a dit quand elle a parlé de quelqu'un qui est au bas de l'échelle, comme si on n'a rien fait pour les gens qui sont au bas de l'échelle. Laissez-moi citer une liste des avantages.

Premièrement, une compensation salariale de 3.2%, soit 0.5% plus que le taux d'inflation.

Deuxièmement, pour un enfant qui prend part aux examens du SC, il bénéficie d'environ R 8,500 de subsides, soit environ R 700 par mois.

Troisièmement, il va obtenir R 3,000 de *grant* pour s'acheter un réservoir d'eau, ce qui représente R 250 d'économies par mois.

Quatrièmement, il obtiendra un *grant* de R 10,000 pour acheter un chauffe-eau solaire, soit R 833 d'économies par mois.

Cinquièmement, s'il fait des efforts pour construire une petite maison, il obtiendra R 65,000 gratuitement pour couler la dalle.

Et j'en passe, M. le président ! Par exemple, ceux qui touchent moins de R 5,000 pourront obtenir une maisonnette sous le programme du NEF, où la construction de 700 maisonnettes est prévue, au coût de R 40 millions. S'il touche R 5,000 par mois et veut avoir un logement, il va bénéficier d'un *grant* sur la valeur du logement. Le gouvernement paiera la totalité du terrain sous construction. La période de remboursement est de 40 ans. Je mets l'emphase sur cela, parce qu'on n'en a pas assez mis. Du jamais vu, du jamais fait par aucun gouvernement auparavant !

En sus de cela, il y a des économies sur le transport gratuit pour les étudiants, dont le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam a été à la base, sans oublier les sommes dépensées pour l'accompagnement éducationnel des enfants des groupes vulnérables, les frais gratuits de formation.

Il y a aussi les sommes que nous allouons pour les subsides, soit R 120 millions pour le riz, pour la farine R 490 millions, pour le *LP gas* R 600 millions, M. le président. J'ai aussi parlé sur le transport et la santé.

Ce sont là, M. le président, certaines mesures, parmi une longue série, en faveur de nos compatriotes au bas de l'échelle. Alors, venir dire, comme l'honorable Mme Navarre-Marie, que le budget ne va pas améliorer le sort des petits gens, franchement relève de la mauvaise foi. Je dirai que le temps dira. Le temps c'est quelque chose d'extraordinaire, M. le président. On peut en parler ; on en parle, on est en train de discuter comme on l'a fait auparavant. Mais ce n'est que le temps qui va nous dire pour ce qui est du combat que nous menons pour améliorer le niveau de vie des familles mauriciennes au bas de l'échelle. Nous verrons après ; nous allons faire un bilan. Je n'ai aucun doute, qu'avec l'équipe qu'on a, avec le Premier ministre qui met l'emphase sur le combat contre la pauvreté, avec mon collègue, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval, nous allons parcourir un long chemin. Je dirai simplement un long chemin. Et nous allons faire le bilan.

Malheureusement, je dois faire le point ; c'est un point politique. J'ai entendu plusieurs membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre faire référence, en parlant du MSM, que le MSM et le

MMM ont été en alliance. Ils se sont offusqués comment se fait-il que maintenant le MSM ait pu contracter une alliance avec le Parti Travailiste et le PMSD, et que maintenant nous sommes ici, en train de défendre une certaine politique.

M. le président, je fais de la politique. Je l'ai toujours dit. Je suis égal à moi-même, et je suis sincère dans les propos que j'ai toujours tenus. Malheureusement, je dois prendre le temps de la Chambre sur cet aspect politique. Lorsque j'étais en alliance avec le MMM, avec l'honorable Paul Bérenger, je n'avais rien à dire. Ce n'est pas maintenant que je vais dire que lorsque j'étais avec lui ce n'était pas bon. Lui aussi, d'ailleurs, qu'est-ce qu'il n'a pas dit quand on était ensemble ! Lorsque j'ai présenté mon premier budget lorsqu'il était Premier ministre - je parle du *Debate No. 21 of 23 June 2004* - qu'est-ce qu'il a dit ? Je cite -

« Coup d'essai, coup de maître ! Ce que notre jeune collègue a réussi en trois ans et demi, d'abord comme ministre de l'agriculture et, aujourd'hui, comme ministre des finances. Chapeau ! »

Il faut lui donner un chapeau maintenant. J'en passe ! Il a fait des éloges dans ce discours. Puis, il y a le *Debate No. 18 of 15 April 2005*, et je cite -

“(...) a year ago, to describe his first Budget - *coup d'essai, coup de maître*. This is how I described it; and that is what it was - *coup d'essai, coup de maître*! The expression that I will use this year to describe his second Budget - *un chef-d'œuvre*. C'est pourquoi je dis mille fois «bravo» au vice-premier ministre et ministre des finances. C'est le bravo sincère et réfléchi, bien sûr, d'un grand frère à un jeune frère. »

Ensuite, le 28 mai 2005, l'honorable Bérenger a réaffirmé que, considérant les qualités de Pravind Jugnauth, c'est avec confiance qu'il lui léguera la destinée du pays. Juste avant les élections de 2005, voilà ce qu'à dit l'honorable Bérenger : ‘*mo ti pe causer dans Rose Belle et mo ti pe calculer qui, en même temps, mo frère Pravind pe adresse zotte ici dans Rose Hill.*’

Mr Speaker: I think I will have to intervene here. Whatever has been said outside this House cannot be brought into the debates. That has been an established practice of the House here and elsewhere. What has been said outside cannot be brought in the debates in the House.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I explain?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Do you have something to say hon. Dr. Jeetah? I saw you grumbling at the back. Do you have anything to say?

(Interruptions)

No! Keep quiet then!

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I explain? I said that there were criticisms to my address and to the address of the MSM, namely that we had formed part of the Government with the MMM - you have heard it, you have been in the House - and how come that we contracted an alliance and we are now defending this programme with the Labour Party and the PMSD? I am quoting, and I will come to what, in fact, is my argument. Why am I quoting this? This was the attitude of the hon. Leader of the Opposition at that time towards me. Everybody knows that I have always been sincere, honest and loyal to him. Even after the general election, when we lost, I remained - let me speak for myself, because I know what was in his mind - sincere to him. We were still in the alliance. We went through the municipal elections; we lost the municipal elections; I was still sincere. But what happened? Because that was the criticism that was addressed to me. That is why I am replying. If that matter was not raised, I would have contented myself to the Budget only. What I am saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that, in fact, when you are not sincere, when you say things and do the contrary of what you say, this is what happens. This is why the MMM is in the Opposition today, and they will remain in the Opposition; I have no doubt. They will be, as we say, *opposition durable*. The biggest party in the Opposition! Remain the biggest party! Be in the Opposition! We are happy where we are also.

Let me conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir. Malgré le contexte économique difficile, le budget ne contient pas de mesures d'austérité. Nous n'avons pas réduit les salaires ou gelé les recrutements dans le service civil, comme c'est le cas dans plusieurs pays européens. Au contraire, nous avons accordé une compensation salariale au-dessus du taux d'inflation, et provision a été faite aussi pour recruter 2,000 fonctionnaires. Nous avons aussi à assurer un bon équilibre entre les impératifs économiques et les exigences sociales. Comme le dit si bien le Premier ministre, nous voulons marier l'efficience économique et la justice sociale. Nous avons créé les conditions pour que l'économie continue à progresser, que nous puissions diversifier nos marchés et tirer davantage de nouvelles opportunités, notamment en Chine, en Inde et la Russie. Et nous lançons,

sur une base solide, de nouveaux pôles de développement économique comme le concept Ile Maurice hors taxe, *medical hub, knowledge hub*, tout en consolidant les piliers économiques déjà existants. Le budget 2011 jette les bases de la nouvelle île Maurice moderne et avant-gardiste que le gouvernement de l’Alliance de l’Avenir veut construire dans la justice sociale. Cette île Maurice apportera de nouvelles opportunités pour tous, et notre pays deviendra un vrai *star and key of the Indian Ocean*. Le rêve mauricien du PIB d’un trillion de roupies et d’un PNB de \$20,000 par tête d’habitant est amplement réalisable. Le temps va démontrer si nous pouvons atteindre ces objectifs.

M. le président, Singapour, trois fois plus petite que l’île Maurice, avait un rêve 30 ans de cela. Ses dirigeants avaient placé leurs objectifs ; ceux chargés de l’implémentation ont fait le planning nécessaire et adopté les stratégies appropriées pour atteindre ces objectifs. Aujourd’hui, Singapour est un véritable modèle de développement dans le monde. Le niveau de vie de son peuple est l’un des plus élevés. L’île Maurice doit être ambitieuse, et le présent gouvernement est déterminé à faire du rêve mauricien une réalité.

Je terminerai, M. le président, en reprenant une phrase de mon intervention sur le discours-programme du gouvernement de l’Alliance de l’Avenir.

“Wherever and whenever there is trust, sincerity and solidarity, the scope for achievements is heavenly immense despite the hard times of the moment. I am confident that we shall weather the storm and put Mauritius on the path of a new socioeconomic miracle.”

Before my final conclusion, let me draw the attention of the House to a typing error which has cropped up in the Schedule to the Appropriation Bill on page 4 and on page 314, paragraphs 301 to 317, programme code 525 - Social Welfare Community-Based Activities, which should, in fact, read programme code 526, that is, Social Welfare Community-Based Activities of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

I thank you for your attention.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Baloomoody, I am asking you to keep quiet.

(Interruptions)

No, you were not quiet! You have no right! Cross talking is not allowed in the House.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PROGRAMME-BASED BUDGET ESTIMATES 2011

AND

INDICATIVE ESTIMATES 2012 & 2013

Office of the President – 001 Presidency Affairs was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, can we know how you will proceed, page by page or whatever?

The Chairperson: Yes, it is a good question. I am going to call the votes. According to Standing Order 73(7), we cannot talk about general principles of Government policy and administration; we can only talk about the details of the Programme. I am going to call the pages on which the details have been set out in the estimates and Members will turn directly to the pages. Here, the details have been given at pages 3 to 5. Does any hon. Member have questions at page 3?

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, we are at page 5, *President of the Republic*. May I know what are the main functions of the President?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Why are hon. Members laughing?

Mr Baloomoody: I want to know whether we have described the main functions of the Office of the President as the constitutional function of the President.

The Chairperson: The powers of the President and the functions of the President are fully described in the Constitution of Mauritius.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, can I ask whether that definition goes according to what is defined in the Constitution?

The Chairperson: I do not understand. I would like to know under which item the hon. Member is talking?

Mr Baloomoody: At Page 5, *Programme 001: Presidency Affairs, President of the Republic*. Can I ask whether the description that we have given to the President in that estimate is according to the description given in the Constitution?

The Chairperson: I disallow the question.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 3, *Programme 001: Presidency Affairs, item 22120 - Fees Rs60,000*. I would like to know which fees this relates to.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, it is the fees for training courses in housekeeping, management and IT courses for a period of 12 months.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, may I know who are the service providers for these courses?

The Prime Minister: I just said, Mr Chairperson, that it's for housekeeping, management and IT courses.

Mrs Labelle: May we know who are the service providers for these courses? Who gives these courses? Is it contracted out?

The Prime Minister: It is probably contracted out, because they do not have in-house training at Le Réduit.

Office of the President - Programme Code 001: Presidency Affairs (Rs51,912,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Office of the Vice-President - Programme Code 011: Vice-Presidency Affairs was called.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to page 7, *item number 22030 - Rent*, may we know where the office is located now?

The Prime Minister: The office is the same one, and situated at the same place, that is, Quatre Bornes.

Mr Barbier: At page 8, *items 024567, 085161, 082949 and 081845* about *Assistant Secretary, Personal Secretary, Executive Officer and Clerical Officer* respectively, I see that the

posts are there, but there is no provision for filling these vacancies. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether these posts are going to be cancelled, and why there is no provision for the coming year, just as last year?

The Prime Minister: The reason is that the previous Vice-President did not have these posts occupied. We will allow the new Vice-President to decide whether she needs them or not.

Mr Barbier: Are we going to fill these posts in the coming years?

The Prime Minister: I cannot say, as it will depend on the new Vice-President.

Mr Bhagwan: Regarding page 8, under item *Vice-President*, can I know from the Prime Minister whether the building in Quatre Bornes is a rented one, and if Government contemplates to purchase an official residence for the Vice-President?

The Prime Minister: It is a rented building, which I think, has been leased for a period of three years.

Programme Code 011: Vice-Presidency Affairs (Rs10,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Baloomoody: At page 13, regarding *item 021 - Administration of Justice*, the total sum is Rs469,304,000 and it has increased to Rs506,560,000. I understand that we have created additional posts for new judges. Can I know exactly where they will be located, and whether we have the appropriate staff to support these eight new judges?

The Prime Minister: In fact, my information is that probably all these eight judges will not be named immediately. I believe that two will be named, precisely because they want to make sure that everything is catered for. I cannot say, because that does not depend on me.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I know what provision has been made for the Court House, at least, for these judges? Because, as it is now, we not only have a shortage but it is a musical chair, if I can say so. Judges in the morning do not know in which court they are sitting. We have to wait for one judge to finish to take another case in the afternoon. So, may I know what we have budgeted for accommodation of even two more judges?

The Prime Minister: As I said, Mr Chairperson, this depends on the Administration of Justice. Whatever they ask for, we provide.

Mr Baloomoody: Will the new eight judges whom we are going to name shortly be part of the Appeal Court judges?

The Prime Minister: I cannot say. I know that this is still being discussed at the level of the Judiciary.

Mr Uteem: Under *item 21110 - Personal Emoluments*, I see that there is a reduction from Rs230,730,000 to Rs211,800,000. Can we know the reason why, when we are talking about appointing more judges?

The Prime Minister: Perhaps I should say to the hon. Member that there is a basis now with the new system, where there is requisition for additional expenditure. Then, it will come in. Until it comes in, it will not appear there. For example, we have said eight judges, but it looks as if there will be two judges at the beginning. That is my information. I do not want to interfere in the Administration of Justice.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on *Programme Code 021* and I am referring to *objective 03: Delivery of justice by Supreme Court and Subordinate Courts for civil cases*, at page 11...

The Chairperson: Sorry, the hon. Member has to go on page 13 where the details are.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, with due respect, we have the targets, objectives and the performance indicators for this particular programme. I am on the same programme, with due respect, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Yes, but the hon. Member has to give the items.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chair, I am talking of objective 03 of this programme.

The Chairperson: Let me cite Standing Order 73 -

"Discussions at the Committee shall be confined to the details of the expenditure contained in the programme, sub-programme or item of the expenditure, and shall not refer to the general principles of Government policy and administration."

So, this is why I am asking the hon. Member to come to page 13, *Programme 021 - Administration of Justice*, where all the details have been given.

Mrs Labelle: With due respect, Mr Chairperson, may I refer to how the debate went on last year? Because with this new PBB +

, this is the way we did it last year. I do have a copy of the Hansard of last year, where we were not only allowed to talk about the objectives, but we were encouraged to talk about the objectives.

The Chairperson: Yes, but the hon. Member has to link it with an item.

Mrs Labelle: It is a programme, Mr Chairperson, because all the objectives and performance indicators relate to a particular programme.

The Chairperson: I am sorry. If last year, we did not draw the attention of the hon. Members, it does not mean that we will continue to repeat the same mistakes. I am applying the Standing Orders. We have to talk about details; we cannot talk about the general principles of Government policy and administration. That is the point. If you link it with one of the items in 021, then I am happy.

Mrs Labelle: It is *Programme Code 021 - Administration of Justice*.

The Chairperson: Yes, but there is *Code 21 - Compensation of Employees, Personal Emoluments, Other Staff Costs, Goods and Services*. You have to link it with one of them.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am sorry if I insist. We are talking about the objective and the performance indicators because all the money spent under this programme relate to the objective and the performance indicators. The staff will work towards these objectives. The cleaning services will work towards these objectives. The maintenance relates to the objectives under this programme. I can take it under *Compensation of Employees*.

The Chairperson: Let me hear your question!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, I really appreciate. I was talking under *Objective 03, P1- Average time (months) for disposal of civil cases at the Supreme Court*. I see that we are keeping the same objectives for the next coming four years. I wanted to know whether we have reached the objective of 32 months and why we are keeping the same.

The Prime Minister: If I may explain, Mr Chairperson. On the top of the page, we have the indicators and objectives. These objectives are set by the Judiciary. They have tried to attain the objectives. Whether they will attain the objectives, it is difficult for me to say.

The Chairperson: We are still on page 13. Is there any further question on page 13? Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: On a similar point that was raised by hon. Mrs Labelle, if the hon. Prime Minister could provide some clarification. I shall, therefore, raise it on page 13; on the item *Compensation of Employees* if you so wish, Mr Chairperson. Could we have some clarification on the issue on average of time for disposal of cases?

The point raised by hon. Mrs Labelle concerned P1, on page 11 – number of cases, number of months. Here, it is 32 months and remaining the same throughout, up until 2013. And, similarly on the same point, so as not to waste the time of the House, P3, P4, P5, the objectives are arithmetically rather intriguing. Because, Mr Chairperson, if we only dispose in year 2013 of 82% or 65% of cases, then if my arithmetic is right, the backlog of cases will be increasing. So, is the hon. Prime Minister in a position to provide some clarification as to how this would make sense?

The Prime Minister: It appears to me that, in fact, their targets are increasing. It was 79% and it goes to 82%. So, the backlog is actually diminishing. If you look at what used to happen in the past, the hon. Chief Justice has made great efforts to reduce the backlog; we are having a reduction of the backlog for these recent periods that he has been Chief Justice. It is obvious that not all cases lodged within a year are disposed within that year and that is the problem. The hon. Member is a Barrister himself; he knows how Barristers tend to lose the time of the court.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I should give an opportunity to each and everybody.

Mr Obeegadoo: On this very same point, Mr Chairperson, if the hon. Prime Minister could just clarify. Let us not pass judgment on Barristers in this House. My point was – just for explanation - number of cases disposed would mean in that specific year, whereas for the number of cases lodged, does that refer to the cases lodged on a cumulative basis, or cases lodged before

that year or the number of cases lodged in that very same year. I am simply trying to make sense of the indicators as presented.

The Prime Minister: I am not quite sure that I understood the question, Mr Chairperson. I suppose the hon. Member is referring to page 11 and he wants to know how many cases are being disposed of.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am trying to make sense of the indicators, if the hon. Prime Minister says, for instance, that, *P4 – Rate of disposal of civil cases at District courts* is the *No. of cases disposed / No of cases lodged*. I presume that the number of cases disposed in year 2012 target, means disposed in that financial year, or calendar year, which is now the same. Whereas the number of cases lodged, does that mean number of cases lodged on a cumulative basis remaining up until 2012 or lodged in that very same year 2012, because if that is the case, then we will have an accumulating backlog?

The Prime Minister: No, it is not an accumulating from what I understand. We are talking about each financial year, a calendar year if you want.

Mr Baloomoody: On *Compensation of Employees* again – we are talking about disposal of cases, does this take into account when the case is over or when judgment is delivered?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is when judgment is given then the case is over.

Mr Uteem: At page 13, *under item 22030, Rent*. I see there is an increase of Rs3 m. Have we identified new buildings or is this an increase for existing rent?

The Prime Minister: This is rent for a third court room at Curepipe - one of them. There is one for offices at Astor Court, Bambous District Court and the Mediation Division. The Mediation Court, as you know, is new and this is renting of accommodation.

Mr Baloomoody: I come back to the question of *Compensation of Employers*, on page 13, where one of the objectives is to reduce delay in the delivery of judgment. May I know what is the time allocated now, the objectives with regard to judgment?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member is a Barrister and he knows that the judges take the time they want. Sometimes, the judges reserve judgment and we cannot give a fixed time when the judge is going to give a judgment.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Excuse me. The question of delivering judgment is at their discretion. If the hon. Member feels that a judgment is not being delivered, too much time is being taken, where does he address the problem?

(*Interruptions*)

Order, please! Address the Chair!

Mr Baloomoody: I have due respect to the Judiciary. I have been practicing for the last 26 years constantly. I am surprised to see written in the objectives: *Reduce delay in delivery of Judgment*. Are we putting pressure on the judges now to give quantity judgment instead of quality? This is my question.

The Prime Minister: In fact, the hon. Member is mistaken. First of all, we have increased the number of judges and we are continuing to increase the number of judges. I have explained that the hon. Chief Justice is well aware that there has been a backlog in the past and he wants to reduce the delay. This is what the Chief justice says. Nobody is putting pressure on anyone. I think it is a good thing if the delay could be reduced.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a number of questions, Mr Chairperson, with regard to page 14. Do I put them all at one time or one at a time?

The Chairperson: One item at a time, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: On item 22120005 – *Fees to Witnesses*. We all know, Mr Chairperson that, right now, witnesses are being paid a ridiculous fee of Rs150 per court attendance for a whole day, whoever they are. Since the amount budgeted for years 2011, 2012 and 2013 remain the same, are we to understand that the fees to witnesses will remain the same up to 2013?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the fees for witnesses have been increased already by the PRB; I don't know what figure you have mentioned. Is it Rs45?

Mr Obeegadoo: Rs150!

The Prime Minister: That is according to the last PRB report.

Mr Obeegadoo: Do I understand this to mean that it will remain Rs150 for a professional to attend court for the whole day in 2011, 2012 and 2013?

The Prime Minister: This is attendance allowance paid to public officers who attend court as witnesses on behalf of their respective Ministries.

The Chairperson: Do you have another question, hon. Barbier?

Mr Barbier: Sir, at page 14, item 31 - *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, there is a considerable fluctuation in the estimate from year 2010 to 2011 which, I suppose, is according to the upgrading of District Courts which is maybe ongoing. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister which District Courts have been upgraded during this financial year and which one we are going to cater for, for the coming financial year?

The Prime Minister: It is there!

Mr Barbier: What I would like to know is whether these provisions have been completed, because there are provisions for this financial year and the coming financial year. I would like to know which one is to be completed for the coming financial year.

The Prime Minister: Well, we are talking about this financial year. It is an ongoing project if that is what the hon. Member is talking about.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, under item 27210010, *Legal Assistance in “in forma pauperis”*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister how many staff are attached to that Unit and what is the threshold for one to be qualified to be afforded “*in forma pauperis*” by the Counsel?

The Chairperson: If I am not mistaken, there is a law for that.

Mr Baloomoody: For the staff, there is no law. I am asking what the threshold is so that I can make a recommendation to see whether you are prepared to increase the threshold specially.

The Chairperson: That is a different point as to whether it will be increased.

Mr Baloomoody: This is why I want to know.

The Prime Minister: The numbers have not been increased as far as I remember, but I don't know by how many you want to increase.

Mr Baloomoody: My question is that women who are married *corps et biens*, when they want to apply for “*in forma pauperis*” for either domestic violence problem, divorce or custody, they are not entitled because they are married *corps et biens*. And we know that the husband controls everything. This is why my proposition is whether Government will look into it so that women who are victims of domestic violence or who want to enter a case for divorce, if they are married *corps et biens*, they are entitled for “*in forma pauperis*” assistance.

The Prime Minister: That is something which is technical. I know, at the moment, there are three at the Supreme Court and one at the other court. The hon. Member is suggesting that if you are a married woman, *corps et biens*, then you are entitled ...

Mr Baloomoody: You are an owner of a property and so, you are not entitled; the threshold does not allow you.

The Prime Minister: He is the owner of a property, you are saying ...

The Chairperson: No, I think, this is a policy matter.

Mrs Labelle: I am referring to page 14, item 31112415 *Upgrading of District Courts*. I see that for next year there is an amount of Rs32.5 m. Last year we received an estimate of Rs10 m. but, this year, we are giving a figure which is three times higher. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what the difference is and whether new Courts have been added to the list which was proposed?

The Prime Minister: Where does the hon. Member see the figure of Rs10 m.?

Mrs Labelle: I was saying that in last year’s Budget, the estimate provided for 2011 was Rs10 m., but this year I see that the figure has tripled. It is 32. So, there have been some changes, maybe there are other courts, I don’t know, this is why I am asking.

The Prime Minister: Provision has been made for the upgrading of different Courts, for example, the District Court of Flacq, there is a new Court House, then there are other courts. Funds are also provided to undertake minor projects. For example, I see here there is the roof of Court No. 1 of the Supreme Court. Maybe, I should not go in all these details, but there is an electric gate lift at the Supreme Court and also measures to reinforce security measures for the buildings.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Chairperson, regarding the Privy Council, I would like to know the number of cases dealt with by the Privy Council last year. And second, regarding current grant to international organisations, I would like to know the names of the organisations which benefit from same.

The Prime Minister: First of all, the number of cases dealt with by the Privy Council last year, that is known. I don't have the numbers for this year, but they do the maximum they can.

As for the current grant to international organisations, the provision represents contribution to *Association des Cours Constitutionnelles ayant en Partage l'Usage du Français*, it is one of them. These are also: contribution to the Commonwealth Magistrates Association, contribution to the World Jurists Association, contribution to *Association des Hautes Jurisdictions de Cassation des pays ayant en Partage l'Usage du Français*. There is also a membership fee payable to AHJUCAF which has increased from 2,286.94 euros to 5,000 euros. There is a contribution to the Association of African Public Services Commission, Next year, the Judicial and Legal Service Commission will become a member of the AAPS and they will have different fees, there is a registration fee; an annual subscription fee and another fee for conferences and workshops.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 14, under item 28211006 - *Council of Legal Education*, may we know who are the members of the Council of Education, who are those who are providing the courses and who are those who are setting the examinations?

The Prime Minister: That is like a Parliamentary Question.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle, do you have any question?

Mrs Labelle: Sir, at page 14, under item 31122814 *Acquisition of Air- Conditioning System*, I see that a sum of Rs25 m. has been earmarked. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this air-conditioning system is for several Courts and, if so, which Courts will be privileged with this system?

The Prime Minister: It is for the New Court House in Port Louis, Mr Chairperson. I have just got the information that Privy Council looked into ten cases.

Mr Uteem: Sir, under item 28211006 *Council of Legal education*, I would like to have from the hon. Prime Minister a breakdown of this Rs2 m., in particular, to whom it is paid, and whether it is to examiners or for holding examinations?

The Prime Minister: It is for the whole Council of Legal Education. How they break this down, I can give details to the hon. Member.

The Chairperson: Let me go back to hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: If I may make a suggestion, Mr Chairperson, to help the Prime Minister and any other Minister answering, I would suggest that when we are on an item, we take all questions relating to that specific item to make it easy.

The Chairperson: That will come.

Mr Obeegadoo: So, maybe, I can go back to legal assistance in “*in forma pauperis*” at page 14. My suggestion was that we stick to the item if there are several questions. On this item, I take it that the Prime Minister is aware that, right now, it is very difficult to obtain young Barristers and Attorneys who volunteer to take “*in forma pauperis*” cases, which is why matters are being delayed. And my question is: can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, right now, in respect of the sum of Rs2.5 m., what is the fee which is paid to Attorneys and Barristers for “*in forma pauperis*” cases at the present time and whether we should take it again that this fee will remain the same over the next three years?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that Barristers, in fact, are keen to do that job and some of them volunteer to do it, unfortunately. But, in any case, that is a policy question, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can the hon. Prime Minister tell us what is the present fee paid to Attorneys and Barristers for “*in forma pauperis*” cases? This is what is covered in this sum.

Mr Barbier: Mr Chairperson, at page 14, 31132401 - *e-Judiciary Project - Phase 1*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister for which project provision is made for Rs35,000,000 this year and Rs75,000,000 the coming year? May I know for which project specifically it stands for?

The Chairperson: Any other questions?

Mr Baloomoody: On the same page, item 31122802 - *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, may I know what IT equipment we are talking about? We know that in all the District Courts, a few years ago, we have had computer, we are supposed to have recording of proceedings but, unfortunately, everything has been removed now. Magistrates are still writing in all these courts. May I know for what purpose the IT equipment is?

The Prime Minister: The project, Mr Chairperson, involves the implementation of an electronic filing system and case management system - that is basically what it is – and also the commentary of the *e-Judiciary Project-Phase 1* leading to electronic case management and filing system of civil cases before the Supreme Court.

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister if, for the District Court and the Intermediate Court, we will not have any recording system for court proceedings?

The Prime Minister: No, that is not what I said. This is what this item is for but, of course, everything can't be done in one day. Things are done gradually; they are starting with the Supreme Court and then they will move on to other courts.

Mr Baloomoody: With due respect to the hon. Prime Minister, it's not a question of doing it in one day. In all the courts there was this equipment but, unfortunately, it was not manned and it was not equipped and everything had to be removed. So, it's not a question of doing it in one day; it has been done, but there was no support staff and it was not maintained. My question is simple: whether we are going to re-introduce it or will we forget about it and the magistrates will keep writing proceedings?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member knows very well, this is something that we are progressing, so we are not going to remove it. There were problems and it's not right to say that it was just staff. There were other problems with the IT equipment.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am still on the last item on page 14, that is, *e-Judiciary Project-Phase 1*. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister how much money has been spent from this amount of Rs35 m. regarding this phase?

The Prime Minister: The whole idea is that they are progressing with the work and as they progress they will disburse this sum. This is what is earmarked for this year to be spent.

Mr Uteem: On the item 22900906 *Privy Council*, may I know whether this figure of Rs3,000,000 is for the Privy Council sitting in Mauritius or is it for transportation and other expenses when the Council is held in England?

The Prime Minister: I just said that they considered 10 cases in Mauritius and whether this also includes transport I can't say, but mainly it is for those cases that were dealt with in Mauritius.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am going back to the *Council of Legal Education*. As the hon. Prime Minister is aware, further to the examination results there has been a commitment taken in the House by the hon. Attorney General that the whole system is being reviewed.

The Chairperson: Policy!

Mr Obeegadoo: This is the preamble to my question, Mr Chairperson. Just to make it clear, to be fair to the hon. Prime Minister! So, my point is: the sum of Rs2 m. which we have here is going to be the same. Does that take into account this change in the organisation of CLE examinations for Barristers which has been announced and how will this work? The idea, I understand, is that some other body than the CLE will carry out these examinations. Will these same funds be reallocated to whatever body will come into existence?

The Prime Minister: Basically, these are the sums that are voted for. The Attorney General said in his speech that we are looking at it. It has not been done yet. When it is done, I am sure there will be a reallocation.

Mr Barbier: On page 15, item 12 26 52 *Court Officer*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister why there is a reduction in the number of Court Officers, from 54 to 50, for the coming financial year?

The Prime Minister: It basically concerns the administration of justice, Mr Chairperson. I believe that the combined number of funded positions which, I think, is 89, from what I remember, in the Court Officers and Trainee Court Officers. It reflects from what I understand, the need for technical staff at the level of Court Officer to provide services to the District Magistrate, to act as Registrar and also to operate the new digital recording system.

Mr Baloomoody: Under item 12 00 00 *Chief Justice*, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand with regard to the New Court House?

The Prime Minister: I think answers have been given in previous PQ, if I remember. They started the procedures; whenever it will be ready, it will be ready.

Mr Baloomoody: May I know whether we have identified a site, at least, because we are going to have 23 judges? We know that we don't have space at the Supreme Court where it is now. Have we identified a new site for a proper Court House?

The Prime Minister: It is not the Prime Minister's Office which goes and identifies these sites. We talk to the administration of justice and they work with the officials concerned to decide on the site.

Mr Obeegadoo: I don't know under which specific post, but I will take it under item 08 18 45 *Clerical/ Higher Clerical Officer* for the sake of procedure. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, right now, for somebody applying for *in forma pauperis* and going to the *in forma pauperis* Unit, which is staffed by Clerical officers or Executive officers, it can take up to three months to obtain just a very first appointment, whereas, often, it is very urgent; mothers need to have custody of their children. It takes time because the staff says there is a lack of staff. They do not have sufficient people to meet the public. So, three months just for a first appointment to take down the details of the applicant! Will the hon. Prime Minister tell us whether this has been taken into consideration? Which is the post which is concerned by this issue?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I cannot go into whether there should be more staff. If you look at any Ministry, any Department, they will all ask for new staff. How do you pay for the staff?

Mr Obeegadoo: Can I make a special appeal to the hon. Prime Minister, given the seriousness of this matter that he looks into it?

The Chairperson: I think this a vote for the Judiciary. These are pertinent questions which can be asked to the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court who is the administrator of the Court. If the hon. Member feels very strongly about it, as a Barrister he can go and see her.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, can I come to the post of ushers? It is a fact that if we increase the number of Judges, we should increase the number of Ushers.

The Chairperson: To which page is the hon. Member referring?

Mr Baloomoody: I am still on page 16, *Salary Codes 12 48 60, 12 41 56 and 12 26 52 - Principal Court Usher, Senior Court Usher and Court Usher* respectively. This is a question of fact and I can't go and ask it to the Master and Registrar. My question is simple. Government has decided to increase the number of Judges by eight and you know very well, Mr Chairperson, that if we increase Judges, we have to increase Ushers. Why is it that we have made no provision for an increase of Usher in the Budget?

The Chairperson: This is also a question of administration of justice which is under the Chief Justice and I think if the hon. Member is again so much interested with that, he can go and ask either...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Baloomoody: I can ask the Master and Registrar, but she will tell me that there is no budget for it. I have asked her, I have done my work. But the question is that Government is not providing the budget. This is the answer that we have.

The Chairperson: That is different.

Mr Baloomoody: So, my question is simple. Why is it that Government is not providing the budget for the Judiciary for increasing the number of Ushers?

The Chairperson: That is a different way. That is good.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, my understanding is, for example, mediation Judges will not need Ushers. That is what I was told by the Judiciary.

Programme Code 021: Administration of Justice (Rs506,560,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

National Assembly – Programme code 031: Parliamentary Affairs was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 19, concerning compensation to employees, let me take it on Parliamentary affairs or convention. We have had a reply following a Parliamentary Question by my learned friend that we have a *commission économie*, whereby the two parliamentarians who are sitting in that commission are paid an additional fees of Rs20,000 and Rs30,000 respectively. They have official cars, petrol allowance and driver and we have

been informed that it is personal. The report is only for the Prime Minister. May we know on which item of the Budget this money come from?

The Prime Minister: I can't understand. Can the hon. Member tell me specifically what job he is talking about?

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: I am talking about the post of hon. Deepalsing and hon. Hossen who are paid an additional fees of Rs20,000.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! You want to know whether they are paid from this item?

Mr Baloomoody: I want to know on which item?

The Chairperson: On this item you mean?

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, from the Budget, because it is public money.

The Chairperson: There is no need to say public money because all the money here is public!

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, are you asking about the compensation of employees?

The Chairperson: Yes, whether they are paid under that item?

The Prime Minister: I will have to check, but I know it comes under Prime Minister's Office.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 19, Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*, may we know whether this item includes cleaning services for Parliament and, if so, who is the contractor and how much is being paid to this contractor?

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle, are you talking of maintenance?

Mrs Labelle: Under *Item 22900*, which is the last item on this page, it is mentioned “other goods and services”. I want to know whether this item includes cleaning services and, if so, who is the contractor who provides cleaning services and how much is being paid for it? Mr

Chairperson, with your permission, I am putting this question particularly because of the toilet of ladies. I think all my colleagues are aware.

The Chairperson: I can assure the hon. Member that the work will be done. The contract is being awarded and the work will be done on this issue of toilet. It will be improved.

Mr Obeegadoo: I seek clarification concerning Parliamentary Affairs - *Programme Code 031*. It gave the breakdown in respect of projected expenditure for year 2011. I refer back to page 17 where there is a summary of financial expenditure on parliamentary affairs which shows a drastic reduction from 2010 to 2011. I would like to have some clarification as to why that is so and, the more so, as on page 18, for *Programmes 02, P2 and P3* concerning e-communication generally, both those projects have not targeted December 2011. So, how do we reconcile all this with a drastic reduction in the sums allotted to parliamentary affairs from 2010 to 2011?

The Prime Minister: I don't know whether it is drastic, but it probably means that some works have already been done and probably there is less need for expenditure.

Mr Lesjongard: An page 19, with regard to *Item 22060- Maintenance*, we see a sharp increase in the Budget. We all know that the major part of the building is under renovation until year 2012. May we know why that sharp increase and what are we going to maintain?

The Prime Minister: In fact, this is the provision for maintenance of buildings generally - government buildings, plant and equipment and vehicles also.

The Chairperson: Page 20!

Mr Barbier: Mr Chairperson, Item 211008 – *Facilities Allowance to hon. Members*. My question is not quite related to that item of expenditure. What I want to raise is about the IT facilities which we have at the Library. Members of Parliament are complaining as the equipment is very slow. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he will consider upgrading the said equipment? There is new technology which can be used to upgrade the equipment. Will the hon. Prime Minister consider the possibility of upgrading the equipment?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, as far as I know there is a House Committee, but we can tell them to look into this.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 20, I have two questions on *Upgrading and Refurbishment of the Old Government House*. May we know from the Prime Minister what will be the total cost of the project?

The Prime Minister: Which item, if you don't mind?

Mr Bhagwan: *Upgrading and Refurbishment of the Old Government - Programme Code: 2421.* What is the total project cost and when is the schedule of work expected to be completed? Mr Chairperson, I raised an issue, last time, concerning the first Mauritian Speaker, Sir Harilal Vaghjee and there was a PQ here *pour commémorer* our first Speaker and the reply was in the positive. Can I know from Government where matters stand?

The Prime Minister: First of all, for the upgrading of the equipment, the estimation for the whole Parliament House is Rs330 m. The project started in March of this year and is expected to be completed by June of next year. As for the statue, as you know we have answered questions on this and we have said that we are very keen on this ourselves because it belongs to the Labour Party.

Mr Baloomoody: Under item *31112 Non-Residential Building*, may we know what that building is and where is it situated?

The Prime Minister: It is the same building. It is a Government building. It is non-residential.

Mr Obeegadoo: Chair, I want to go back to the question put by hon. Bhagwan. I am not clear what the date was that the Prime Minister mentioned for completion of the building and also I would like to know what facilities in the new refurbished building will be available for Members of Parliament.

The Prime Minister: It is expected to finish in June of next year.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The administration of Parliament building is under the gist of the Speaker of the House. Please come and see me, I will explain it to you.

Mr Uteem: Under *Programme 031: Parliamentary Affairs - Members of Parliament*, I see 28; I would like to know who the 28 Members of Parliament are?

(*Interruptions*)

Well, there are only 27. The hon. Member does not know that there have been only 69 Members not 70. Why is provision made for 28 when there are only 27 Members?

The Chairperson: There are only 27 Members.

Mr Uteem: Yes, because there are only 69 MPs, not 70.

The Chairperson: So, if you add all this it makes 70.

Mr Baloomoody: It makes 71.

Programme Code 031 National Assembly (Rs258,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 041 - National Audit Office was called.

Mrs Labelle: At page 26, under *item 22900 Other Goods and Services*, may I have some details which goods and services we are talking about?

The Prime Minister: This is provision for uniforms, for accommodation and for catering. Accommodation is for officers who proceed to Rodrigues.

Programme Code 041 - National Audit Office (Rs91,990,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 051 Public and Disciplined Forces Services Commission was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 32, Sir, I'll take the general item, the *code 051* which gives the breakdown. I refer to what has been said in the Budget Speech about delays in recruitment for the public service and I refer also there is not a reference later on the Ministry of Finance to discussions to expedite matters for recruitment of public servants. Now, on page 31, linked with this item the objectives are set out and the objectives under 02, 03, 04 and 05 are strikingly unambitious over the period of three years. The reduction in time taken for processing recruitment, for processing promotion, for addressing disciplinary cases, for approving Schemes of Service - the very same issues that are mentioned later in the memorandum for the Ministry of Finance. Either the targets remain the same over the three years or there is insignificant progress targeted. May we have some clarification? How is it that, on the one hand, we are being told things are not

moving fast enough and yet here in the targets presented to us, there is no marked improvement proposed.

The Prime Minister: That depends on where the Public and Disciplined Forces Service Commission decide. That depends on them not on us, how they proceed, it takes time. I know even for a single appointment it takes so long that is why I was complaining. If I had a three-quarter majority I would have changed it.

Mrs Labelle: I am still under this programme. Further to the question that my colleague has just put, I want to put a specific question on a specific objective and performance indicator. I take the objective *O3: Promotion of officers - P1: Reduction in time taken for processing*. What has been done to meet this target and have we reached it. How far are we from this target when we know that there are officers who are waiting for two years? What has happened to this target, to this objective of reducing the time for promotion?

The Prime Minister: This is again an issue that does not depend necessarily on Government, it depends on how – we would like to see more done more quickly, but that is the time it is taking.

Mr Obeegadoo: If that be the case, hon. Prime Minister, I note that on page 35, in terms of increase in the number of employees, there is hardly any increase from 2010 to 2013. So, as hon. Baloomoody put it in the case of the Judiciary, is it not that the means are not being provided in this Budget by Government to ensure that the Commissions can deliver?

The Prime Minister: No, no, that is not the case I can say.

Programme Code 051 - Public and Disciplined Forces Services Commission (Rs52,529,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ombudsman's Office – Programme Code 061 – Ombudsman's Services (Rs7,411,000) was called and agreed to.

Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission – Programme Code 071 – Supervision of Electoral Activities and Reviews of Electoral Boundaries (Rs3,250,000) was called and agreed to.

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

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! It is for me to tell them to go home.

Mr Baloomoody: They don't disturb us.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: Chair, on a point of order, we cannot systematically be subjected to provocation in this matter to do our job.

The Chairperson: I will take care of that. Carry on!

Mr Uteem: At page 47, under *item 22120016 - Fees icw Election*, I see there is a provision of Rs190,000,000 for 2011. Does that include elections in the village councils and municipal councils or only municipal councils?

The Prime Minister: This is precisely, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr François: Mr Chairperson, Sir, on page 47, *items 22120015 Fees icw Registration of Electors* and *22120016 - Fees icw Election*. In view of the forthcoming 2011 Regional Assembly election, a new polling station in region No. 5, Port Mathurin, has been announced. I would like to know whether it will be ready, and if any site visit has already been conducted for an audit of existing infrastructure?

The Prime Minister: Yes. I believe that a site visit has been conducted, and we will proceed with it.

Mr Bhagwan: Concerning the electoral services, the hon. Prime Minister just mentioned the municipal elections. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether it is contemplated to use electronic voting machines for the forthcoming election?

The Chairperson: This is policy.

Mr Bhagwan: I would like to know whether funds are provided.

The Chairperson: No, this is policy. We are discussing about details.

Mr Bhagwan: I am asking about funding.

The Chairperson: As far as I know, no decision has been taken whether electronic voting machines will be used. Am I right?

Hon. Members: Yes.

The Chairperson: So, we have to agree first.

Mr Ameer Meea: At page 47, *item 22030 - rent*, a sum of Rs9,665,000 is earmarked. Can I know to whom is it payable, and why there has been a substantial increase in the rent figure?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that the increase is due to the need for additional office space area, and the provision is for Max City Building Office premises and Fatima building.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 47, *item 22020 - Fuel and Oil*. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister why is it that we have spent some Rs2,360,000 on fuel and oil, and then this has been reduced to Rs125,000 for the present estimates?

The Prime Minister: This was due to the National Assembly elections. That is why it was increased.

(*Interruptions*)

No, there will not be general election next year. In five years!

(*Interruptions*)

Programme Code 081 (Rs255,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Employment Relations Tribunal - Programme Code 091 was called.

Mr Uteem: At page 53, under *item 22120002 – Fees to Chairman and Members of Boards and Committees*. May I know why the sum earmarked does not form part of the personal emoluments in *Code 31*? Does it relate to additional fees payable to the Chairman and Board members?

The Prime Minister: I think that's the way we now present it, because it is non-executive. It is the fees to the Chairperson and members of the Boards and Committees.

Mr Uteem: Members of the Tribunal?

The Prime Minister: But the fees include provision for the Chairperson and members of the Boards and Committees.

Mrs Labelle: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister the name of the Chairman and the Board Members? Maybe, he can give us the list of Board members, the name of the Chairperson and the fees paid to them.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member wants to know the name of the Chairperson and the Members of the Tribunal. Regarding the composition of the Tribunal, Mr Rashid Hossen is the President, Mr Seebaramen, I think, is the vice-president. The members are Mr Boolram Tackoury, Mr Gangaram, Mr Sara, Mr Venkatasamy. Then, there are representatives of employers, namely Mr Abdool Feroz Hansraz, Mr Philippe Edouard Blackburn, Mr Pradip Dursun, Mr Marie Pierre Jacques Henri De Marasse Esnouf, Mr Soobagrah, and then you have three independent members, namely Mr Maurice Christian Aimée Lorette, Mr Renganaden Veeramootoo and Mr H. Sooriah.

Mr Uteem: I heard the hon. Prime Minister mentioning the name of only one vice-president. When will the second vice-president be appointed?

The Prime Minister: The actual vice-president has been there since February of this year. So, already there is one vice-president. But, maybe, there will be another one later on, but I cannot say when.

Mr Ameer Meea: On the same item, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why there has been a decrease of about Rs500,000 in the fees to Chairman and members of the Board.

The Prime Minister: The fees also include fees to the members, depending on the hearing they have and all this. That is why the fees can increase and decrease.

Employment Relations Tribunal - Programme Code 091 (Rs22,175,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Local Government Service Commission - Programme Code 101 - Local Government Service Commission was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Chair, I have a question along the same line I asked earlier with regard to the PSC. On page 60, the number of staffing positions hardly increases from 2010 to 2013. In terms of funding, likewise, there is hardly any increase. In fact, if we look at the summary, the

sums seem to go down and, yet, on page 57, in terms of objectives *P1: Reduction in span of time taken for processing of applications and other related papers (weeks), Timely settlement of human resource related issues (weeks)*, no progress whatsoever is envisaged in terms of the targets. So, I want to ask Government again why is it that the LGSC is not being provided with the financial resources that would allow it to, first of all, set itself appropriately ambitious targets, and to be able to be more efficient time-wise?

The Prime Minister: In fact, 35 persons have been recruited for the local authorities between January and September of this year.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether we are going to increase the manpower of the Local Government Service Commission, in view of the fact that we are going to have, as proclaimed by the Government, other Municipalities and more staff in the Local Government?

The Prime Minister: We have not mentioned it, this is a question of debate and it is a policy.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I would like some clarification. The hon. Prime Minister just said that 35 persons were recruited this year. But when I look on page 60 – *Staffing positions by programmes and sub-programmes*, the total is 43. Correct me if I am mistaken.

The Chairperson: It is there. The hon. Member should read what is there.

Mr Obeegadoo: So, does that mean that the LGSC had only eight persons at the beginning of this year?

The Prime Minister: I did not quite understand the question.

Mr Obeegadoo: I thought I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that 35 persons had been recruited this year, and yet, the document which is before us, at page 60, seems to indicate that there are only 43 persons in post.

The Chairperson: 43 persons in post, yes. So, where is the problem?

Mr Obeegadoo: 43 minus 35, that's 8.

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Member well knows people decide to retire from the service, maybe, because of age or because of other reasons. There is this number. I said 35 members have been recruited and have been offered appointment.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am sorry, Mr Chairperson, I don't understand. What we have here is: persons in post, 43. This is the figure for 2010, including Chairman and members. Now, if this does not include the 35 who have been offered employment, then the additional 35 should appear in the positions for 2011. But in 2011, we only have 46. So, which is which?

The Prime Minister: In fact, what I understand from this is that the figure will be 46. But as I say, some people leave because of old age, some people died as well and the figure is 46. 35 people have been offered employment, whether they will actually take employment or not, that we have to see.

Mr Obeegadoo: This would mean that we have 46 minus 35 in post, which is 11, and that all the others have retired or have left?

The Prime Minister: No. The hon. Member is getting it wrong. He does not have to minus anything. It is 46.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister the names of the Chairperson and members of the LGSC and when their terms of office expire?

The Chairperson: Are the names gazetted? I don't know.

(Interruptions)

If they are gazetted, the hon. Member cannot ask. He has to check. It must have been gazetted. It is an official body.

The Prime Minister: I can tell the names. I know it by heart; I don't have to have this paper to tell the hon. Member. I don't need the paper. I can tell the hon. Member who the names are. The Chairperson is Mr Nathoo, if he really wants to know. With regard to the four members, as far as I remember, there is Mr Bala, Mr Beekaye, Mr Fine and Mr Husnoo.

Programme Code 101: Local Government Human Resource Affairs (Rs20,451,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 64, item 26313025 – *Current Grant – Independent Broadcasting Authority*. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister how many cases have been referred to the IBA during the year ending 31 December for hearing with regard to complaints against the MBC/TV? How many of these complaints have been dealt with and what are the outcomes thereof?

The Prime Minister: This was asked as a Parliamentary Question, but I can entertain the hon. Member. Is he asking from the beginning of 2005? Is that what he is saying?

Mr Bhagwan: This year.

The Prime Minister: I don't have the figure for this year, but I have the figure from 2005 to 2010.

Programme Code 121: Supervision of Broadcasting (Rs8,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Prime Minister this morning just stated that the fight against corruption was carried on and

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No, please come to the matter.

Mr Baloomoody: There is a problem of legal advisers at that office. I am talking about legal advisers, on page 67. If truly and honestly we want to carry on the fight against corruption, we have to increase the number of legal advisers. May I know why we maintain four legal advisers all throughout, when we know the number of cases pending in court for lack of legal advisers?

The Prime Minister: My understanding, Mr Chairperson, is not just a question of advisers. They have not asked for an increase in number as far as I can remember. Maybe, I am mistaken. Many of these cases are taking a lot of time. I think we should relook at the law

because the procedures are so long - this area cannot investigate on that area. They have been asking us to look at the law again. Perhaps that is what we should do.

Programme Code 131 (Rs140,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

National Human Rights Commission – Programme Code 141: Protection and Promotion of Human Rights was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 69, under Human Rights Commission, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister who are the Board members, whether there is any vacancy on that Board, and if so, since when?

The Prime Minister: I have explained on a Parliamentary Question. I have answered that question already, Mr Chairperson. We are relooking at the whole organisation of the National Human Rights Council. The Chairperson who was there is still acting as Chairperson. He is still working. We are not going to replace the members now, because we are changing completely the Board and the way it will be restructured. It is pointless for us to do it and then to have it changed again.

Mr Baloomoody: If we look at the Act creating the Human Rights Commission, he is supposed to submit his report to the Minister responsible for Human Rights. May we know who the Minister responsible for Human Rights is, because on the official list of the Ministers there is no mention of human rights?

The Prime Minister: I remember that he submitted the last report to me.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Chairperson, on the same page, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Sex Discrimination Division is still operational.

The Prime Minister: It is still operational. But, as I say, we are relooking at the whole structure. In fact, I think I mentioned it this morning in my speech. I also answered Parliamentary Questions on this.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, on page 71, Programme Code 141 – *Protection and Promotion of Human Rights*. I refer to page 70 with regard to date limit set for 5-working day rule. I noticed that for all these targets, there is no 2010 base line. We don't know what the starting point is. Would the hon. Prime Minister clarify? I take it the 5-day working rule is to respond to public queries. Why is it that there is no base line?

The Prime Minister: Probably it is because this has not been done and that is why there is no base line. They are going to start in 2011.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, for 2010, there was a budgetary allocation of Rs12.5 m. for the National Human Rights Commission. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister how much money has been spent out of this Rs12.5 m. for 2010 because we do not know if any case has been dealt with?

The Prime Minister: It is not true to say that cases have not been considered. They are still being considered, but we are not replacing new members because we are changing the law. That is why we are not doing it, but cases are still being considered.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand regarding the Human Rights Centre? We had one which was inaugurated by the ex-Attorney General and now it is being used as the Commercial Court. We still have the statue of Anjalay in front of the Commercial Court. May I know whether we will have a Human Rights Centre? Where do matters stand regarding this centre because, as I said, the Commercial Court is sitting at Port Louis, vis-à-vis the Supreme Court? Where are we going to have a proper Human Rights Centre?

The Prime Minister: Again, it is all a question of having the money for policy.

The Chairperson: It is a policy question; we will not tolerate, general debate on policy, yes.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Chairperson, I would like to have a clarification. I think I understood that there was no Board meeting of the National Human Rights Commission. May I know who is dealing with the cases; who hears the cases when there is no meeting of the Board? How it goes on?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the Chairperson, Mr Seetulsingh, is still there and, I believe, the vice-Chairperson also is still there.

Programme Code 141: Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (Rs12,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ombudsperson for Children's Office – Programme Code 151: Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights and Interests was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 73, Sir, I note that the number of officers in post will not increase from 2010 to 2011. I would wish the hon. Prime Minister to explain to us how is it that despite the horrendous crimes that have occurred lately and the very obvious understaffing of this organisation, why is it that Government is not providing for an increase of staff?

The Prime Minister: We have a very active Chairperson as the hon. Member knows very well and I think we agree she is doing a lot of work. As for the crimes, these offences are being dealt with. I think hon. Mrs Bappoo did mention that for many of these offences we are getting extra budget to deal with them.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 74, under item *P1: Number of People Trained*, would the hon. Prime Minister agree to provide us with some clarification as to what is this about whereby there is a sacred figure of 300 persons to be trained year in and year out? There is an artificial character to this Programme-Based Budgeting that I cannot grasp. How is it that we can decide right now that for 2011, 2012 and 2013 we will train 300 persons, no more, no less? I don't understand that.

The Prime Minister: I know it is very difficult to understand. When the new system was introduced, we all felt it was very difficult to understand. I still feel sometimes that it is very difficult to understand. But they are targets and it does not mean that they will be attained. The training is for Police officers, educational staff and also for front line officers.

The Chairperson: Unless the hon. Member has the information that the 300 people who are being trained are not sufficient to carry out the programme, then he can put the question. But the fact that it is stated 300 and if the hon. Member has no qualms about them - unless he has the information that the programme is not being done or run properly - then he can ask for an increase.

Mr Obeegadoo: We need to understand it.

The Chairperson: But it is written there and we have to accept it.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am still on the same item. Maybe, we can have the information on how many persons have been trained for 2010. There was a target of 300; I would like to know how far we have reached this target.

The Chairperson: With due respect to the hon. lady, it is stated: 'Number of people trained', that is, 300 have already been trained unless it was stated 300 and 200 had been trained. It is stated there.

Mrs Labelle: Yes, this was the target stated because since it is the same thing as last year this was the target for 2010 and we are being supplied with the same target for 2011. So, I cannot just rely on it that 300 persons have been trained. It was the target at the beginning of the year, with due respect, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 73, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister on this very same issue, we have a sum of Rs6,847,000 which were the Estimates for 2010, may we know what the revised Estimates are?

The Chairperson: It is there. If the hon. Member would look at page 75, at the bottom, he will see the details; for 2010 it is Rs6,847,000 and for 2011 it is Rs7,340,000.

Mr Uteem: At page 75, item 21: *Compensation of employees*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister when is the contract for the Chairperson going to expire and how long is the duration of the contract?

The Prime Minister: That is a question that can be asked. As far as I remember, it has just been renewed last year, if I am not mistaken. So, we will go for the period that it has to go.

Mr Baloomoody: Sir, I would like to talk on page 74, item 02: *Training of educational staff, police officers and other front line officers*. My friend, hon. Mrs Labelle wanted to know how many people have been trained and you replied 300. In fact, this is the baseline for 2010 and the target for the other is 300. May we know how many of these people are Police officers and what do we mean by other front line officers?

The Chairperson: That is a different question.

The Prime Minister: You explained, Mr Chairperson, that when we say it is trained, it is trained, we keep having targets. The training is done at one go for the educational staff, Police officers and front line officers altogether; they are not trained separately.

Mr Baloomoody: What is meant by front line officers? This is what I want to know. Are they public servants?

The Prime Minister: These are the officers who perhaps are the first officers to go when they have to investigate things.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I would like to go back to what I was asking. In the past, the previous mandate in which we approved the Budget, there were the Estimates and then the revised Estimates which told us at the end of the financial year, how much had in actual fact been spent. So, my question here with the new PBB is that we have the initial 2010 Estimates, but we do not have the revised Estimates. So, I would like to ask the Prime Minister since last year we budgeted Rs6.8 m.; for next year we are being asked to approve Rs7.3 m. How much was spent in 2010? Where are the figures for the revised Estimates?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member knows very well that at the end of every year, we have an additional Estimate to see where it has to be adjusted. Now, we are doing the Budget on a yearly basis, one calendar year. The hon. Member can't ask for what was spent last year. We are now doing for this year. If we overspent, it would have been taken care of at the end of the year.

Mr Obeegadoo: With all the due respect to the hon. Prime Minister, my point is since we had budgeted Rs6.8 m., may we have an indication now, at the end 2010, how much of that sum would have been indeed spent?

The Prime Minister: As somebody has just been saying – whatever is left, we are meant to spend it by the end of year.

Mr Obeegadoo: Does the hon. Prime Minister not agree that this is a crucial piece of information? When we are being asked to approve the Budget for next year, that, at least, even if the accounts are not closed, we be given some indication as to how the money voted for the present year have been spent or not spent?

The Prime Minister: As you know, we have changed the way – I know the Member has been away - now we have a new system. With all the due respect, we have a new system. We can't have the Budget on 31 December, I think, they will agree. We have to use this system.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, just for a matter of clarification ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: In fact, the matter is already in the estimates. If you look at page 13, at the *Summary Table of Expenditure by Programme*, you will find approved estimates for 2010 and a revised estimates for the same year. You can have the figures, Mr Chairperson, for your information.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much for helping the Chair!

Programme Code 151: Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights and Interests (Rs7,340,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions - Programme Code 161: Criminal Advisory and Litigation was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 79, O2 – P1 and O3 – P1, there seems to be absolutely no change in the targets being set concerning processing time for prosecution of offenders and, as we know, this is still a very live and serious issue. Would the hon. Prime Minister indicate whether the sums being voted should not have allowed for some progress to be expected of the DPP's office in relation to those targets?

The Prime Minister: That is the target that the Director of Public Prosecution Office puts. I am not going to go and ask him to change his target or whatever.

Mrs Labelle: I am looking at the service to be provided, at O5: *Certificate of Morality* and the P1: *Certificate of Morality issued within four weeks of request*. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that this is far from being the case and what is being done? It was mentioned that the base line was 80%. Has the hon. Prime Minister an indication of what has been attained?

Mr Baloomoody: I have a similar question ...

The Chairperson: On the same issue?

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, on the Certificate of Morality. We are talking about two things: one is Certificate of Morality and then Certificate of Good Behaviour. I raised the issue at Adjournment Time last time. Now we have a problem. When somebody is sentenced for good behaviour, he is not being issued with a certificate. The DPP used to do that. I have personally spoken to the DPP, and he tells me that this is not the work of the DPP. If you give a certain sum

of money, Rs20,000, for good behaviour for two years, and after two years, you must get a certificate ...

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, with due respect ...

Mr Baloomoody: My question is: who is going to ...

The Chairperson: We are talking of Certificate of Morality, not of Certificate of Good Behaviour. Is the Certificate of Good Behaviour included in Certificate of Morality?

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, prior to a few months it was issued by the DPP. Now, the DPP does not issue the certificate. My question is on two issues ...

The Chairperson: Sorry again! The Certificate of Good Behaviour was issued by the DPP previously. Now, it is no longer being issued. Are you asking the hon. Prime Minister? It is a question of policy; we are talking about Certificate of Morality. You can come with a Parliamentary Question.

(*Interruptions*)

The Prime Minister will reply.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 81, under item 31133801, acquisition of Furnitures, Fixtures & Fittings ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry, can you keep quiet?

Mr Bhagwan: On a point of order, Sir, can I have your indulgence to call the hon. Member? Each time we put questions, hon. Henry says '*assizé, assize!*'. We will end up by losing patience.

The Chairperson: I will take that into consideration. Order now! The hon. Members have raised the point! Carry on!

(*Interruptions*)

No, please! There is no point of order. I say: sit down! Order, now! Please, carry on!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, under item ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, I said!

Mr Ameer Meea: Under Item 31, *Acquisition of Furniture, fixtures and fittings*, there is an amount of Rs51 m. which has been budgeted. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this is for a new office or for the existing office?

The Prime Minister: Just to clarify one thing, Mr Chairperson. I know that you have given your ruling, but all these questions concern Certificates of Morality and they are all being relooked at, that is why the DPP has said it. We want to increase the speed at which it is being given.

The Chairperson: For the Morality Certificate, yes.

The Prime Minister: For the question of *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, I do not actually have the details here. I know that there are some office equipment and furniture that are being acquired and then there are office expenses which include office sundries as well.

Mr Ameer Meea: My question was: is it for a new office or for the existing office?

The Prime Minister: I have no indication that it is for a new office here, Mr Chairperson. I know that office equipment furniture are being bought.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 80, item ...

The Chairperson: The hon. Member cannot come back on page 81 and then come to page 80. We have to go page by page.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson. On item 22120, *Retainers Fee to Counsel*, I see Rs2 m. May I know who the Counsel is?

The Prime Minister: I don't think it would be proper to say who the Counsel is. I am not sure whether it would be ethical for me to say so.

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: It is the Retainer Fee. There are two items fees in respect of *Privy Council Cases*, which is an *ad hoc* fee, and then there is a retainer fee, which is a flat fee, which, I understand, is paid. I think we are entitled to know.

The Prime Minister: I don't think it is proper because these are retainer fees for counsels who are appointed by the DPP to appear on his behalf.

Mr Lesjongard: I will go back to page 79...

(*Interruptions*)

This is important because I could not follow the reasoning behind that.

The Chairperson: I am sorry, the hon. Member cannot go back. I gave him a lot of latitude but I am sorry on this point. We have reached page 81, I am not going back.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 80, on the question of retaining counsel. We know that due to a lack of officers at the DPP's office we do retain certain young barristers to assist the prosecution in the District Courts. May we know what fees we pay and whether we have sufficient young Barristers who are willing to do that job? What are the fees paid to this prosecuting council? They are not members of the DPP, they are young Barristers, but they assist prosecution in District Court. What are the fees paid to them?

The Prime Minister: Does the hon. Member want to know how much they are paid on the whole?

Mr Baloomoody: They go twice a week for certain specific cases in specific courts. I know there is a shortage of young barristers. They do not want to be there because, unfortunately, the fees are so low. May I know what are the fees paid?

The Prime Minister: The fee is Rs15,000, plus Rs2,000 for travelling expenses.

Mr Ameer Meea: At page 80, item No. 22030 - *Rent*, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why there has been a drastic decrease from Rs4.1 m. to Rs1.2 m. in the item Rent?

The Prime Minister: It is because the office of the DPP will actually move to a Government-owned building in 2011. That is the reason.

Programme Code 161 – Criminal Advisory and Litigation (Rs104,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal – Programme Code 171 – Determination of Appeals by Public Officers was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, there are cases which this Tribunal has heard and has jurisdiction, as in the PRB, to give the Prison Officers right to associate. May I know whether this Tribunal has jurisdiction to hear complaints from Prison officers?

The Prime Minister: First of all, the number of cases they have received is 176. They have heard 35 cases. The number of cases actually being heard now is 25; the number of cases which have not been entertained is 88 and there are 28 cases at a preliminary stage.

Mr Baloomoody: The Prison officers were not allowed to associate to become a union, a sort of association. Now, with the PRB they are allowed to do so. My information is that they can't go to the Tribunal. My question is whether that Tribunal has the jurisdiction to hear complaints from Prison officers?

The Prime Minister: I will have to check; I cannot say offhand, Mr Chairperson. In fact, I am told that the Employment Relations Act gave the officers of the Prison Department the right to be unionised, as you rightly said. I know that the Prison Officers' Association has made a request to enable them to go to the Tribunal, but I believe precisely about what the hon. Member said. It is more likely that the Act would have to be amended because that provision was not there when the Act was passed.

Programme Code 171 – Determination of Appeals by Public Officers (Rs8,967,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 201- Prime Minister's Office was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 91, on item 201 – Prime Minister's Office, concerning the major permits issued, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister ...

The Chairperson: Is the hon. Member talking of page 91?

Mr Baloomoody: At page 89, Item No. 201, with regard to 992 professionals, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister in what field these people are professionals? And, secondly, concerning the 992 permits which have been issued for the self-employed non-citizens to stay in our country, may we know in which sector of the economy they are professional? And in what trade, in what business, in what economic activity are the 50 self-employed?

The Prime Minister: I can't say exactly which profession they belong to, but generally the policy is where we need and where there is a need for more, but we can't get enough. As for the self-employed non-citizens, I must tell the hon. Member that we are re-looking at this because we have seen cases where Mauritians can do the work.

Mr Baloomoody: Do we insist for a Certificate of Morality from these people before we issue one of these resident permits? Do we ask and insist that we get a Certificate of Morality from their country of residence before we give them any permit?

The Prime Minister: It is my belief that we do, Mr Chairperson. I should add perhaps that for the occupational permits to the professionals, the non-citizens must have a salary of more than Rs75,000.

Mr Baloomoody: I have one question again. This is very important, Mr Chairperson, and probably it will enlighten the Prime Minister as well if he wants to review that sector. When you say that he should have a salary, who gives the salary? He is self-employed. He comes and just makes a budget and says I am going to do...

(Interruptions)

How is it? Is it his money or his own business that he is going to put?

The Prime Minister: Yes, like any self-employed, Mr Chairperson, he gets a salary, he declares it, he pays tax, he has to fill whatever tax form he has to. He can't just say that he is earning Rs1 m. per month.

Mr Baloomoody: Are we ensuring that this business activity is being done in Mauritius to get that salary, to get that residence?

The Prime Minister: That is why the salary has been reduced.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, at page 94, Item No. 21, *Personal Emoluments*, there has been a sharp decrease in year 2010 to year 2011, from Rs44 m. to Rs25 m., almost 40%. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why there has been a sharp decrease?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, it is because there are some vacant posts that were not being filled at the moment; this takes time; I think it will be done shortly, but I can't say when.

Mr Uteem: At page 94, under the Item No. 22900, *Other Goods and Services*. I see there is a sharp increase on other goods and services from, Rs73,000 to Rs1.7 m. May we know what this Rs1.7 m. is catered for ?

The Prime Minister: This is because of the Presidential Round Table which will be held this year in Mauritius, of which the hon. Member's father is a member.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same page, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, under Item No. 564, *Human Rights Awareness*, which Unit of his office provides that service, who are the personnel and to whom these services are given.

The Chairperson: Sorry, we are on *Programme Code 201*. The one the hon. Member is referring to is in another programme.

Mr Baloomoody: I said, *Programme Code 564*.

The Chairperson: It is another programme. We are looking at *Programme Code 201*. Yes, at page 95, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: At page 95, Mr Chairperson, item 26313008 – *Current Grant - Competition Commission*. We have been informed that the CEO of that Commission has left already and the post has been advertised. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister who is heading that important institution, pending the filling of that vacancy?

The Prime Minister: In fact, just to clarify. This gentleman, who is very competent as you said, has not left. His contract is coming to an end. He had indicated when he took the job that he would not be staying for long because of his daughter, I think, who has to attend school, but he is prepared to stay until the next person comes in. We have advertised the job; we have shortlisted; we have done the interviews, and I believe it is imminent that the other person will be appointed, but we don't know whether the other person can come straightforwardly or it will take two or three months; the other person, I believe, will stay here.

The Chairperson: Page 95! Page 96!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 96, item 22900908 – *Women and Children's Solidarity Programme*. There was an amount of Rs50 m. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, whether he will give us a list of the programmes that have been carried out under this item?

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, Mr Chairperson, will the hon. Prime Minister explain what the objective of this programme was? What does it consist of?

The Chairperson: Any other questions on the same programme?

The Prime Minister: This item was introduced, in fact, in the 2007-2008 Budget and the main objective was to support NGOs who are deeply committed, especially in helping women and children who are victims of abuse and violence or are generally in distress. I think, I can say there were 14 projects which have been approved and four other projects are actually at evaluation stage and the amount of Rs11.1 m. has been disbursed in 2010 for those ongoing projects.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to item 22900907 – *Truth and Justice Commission*. Can we have an indication from the hon. Prime Minister, where matters are as at today and when will we have the final report from the Truth and Justice Commission?

The Chairperson: Any further question on this item?

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to page 89, where what the Truth and Justice Commission has been up to this year, is described, and reference is made to ten research projects and on page 96, it would appear that 2011 is the only year for which funds are expected to be disbursed. There is nothing on the 2012 and the 2013. So, along the same lines as hon. Lesjongard, are we to understand that the Commission is to submit both its overall report as well as reports on these ten research projects in 2011 when all its work is to be completed and done with?

The Prime Minister: This Commission is expected to submit its report by June of next year. My belief is that they will put altogether, but I will have to confirm this. But, I believe the report will contain all the work that it has done.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan! Same page!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I have a few items. One item is 22900921 – *Special Road Safety Unit*. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister, how that unit is being manned and how many persons are running that Unit? Whether, there is no - I would say - conflict between the Road Safety Unit and the Traffic Branch of the Police? There are two heads; there is one at your Office and one at the Traffic Branch. The second question is, the *Expenses related to Counter Terrorism Unit*, can we know whether that unit has been set up, whether it is in force?

The *Disaster Management Centre*: where is it found and it is manned by whom? And, regarding the Grand Bay Conference Centre, may we know who is responsible for its management? Whether, it is being contracted out and paid to another firm or is it at the PMO itself?

The Chairperson: There are three questions that have been put. Let the hon. Prime Minister answer!

The Prime Minister: First of all, I thought this would come under a different item, Mr Chairperson, but I can answer the question. I will answer it off the mark, but the question about the conflict between the Unit that has been set up under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office and the Road Traffic Unit, in fact, they work in collaboration. I set up that Unit because there are far too many deaths on our roads; far too many people are drinking and driving; far many people don't know how to drive, I see it every day with my own eyes. I hope it does not include the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

That is why this Unit has been set up because we are not satisfied with the results we have so far.

The Counter Terrorism Unit, I have answered a Parliamentary Question on this. It has been set up and, in fact, we have had help from foreign countries, I must tell you, to start setting it up and it is working at the moment. We used to have the National Security Adviser at one point, but it was clearly specified that he would be there just to help us set up the Unit and we will want somebody to run the Unit afterwards. The new National Security Adviser, I think, is arriving tomorrow, and we will continue that work until we will ourselves look after the Unit, but it has been set up. As for the Grand Bay Conference Centre, I believe, it is managed by the State Property Development Corporation.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, item 22120022 – *Fees for Parole Board*. May I know who are the members of the Parole Board and when was the last time they met?

The Prime Minister: To which Board is the hon. Member referring?

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, under Item 22120022 – *Fees for Parole Board*: Rs450,000. Who are the members of the Parole Board and when was the last time it met?

The Prime Minister: I have the names here somewhere, Mr Chairperson. In fact, it is Mr Bissessur who is the Chairperson of that Board. There is a secretary and members. If the hon. Member wants all the names, I can circulate the list. I don't have all the names with me as far as I can see.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to item 22900915 – *Multi sectorial Response to HIV/AIDS Programme*. Mr Chairperson, from a figure of Rs21,430,000 for this present year, we now have Rs16,500,000 and we are having a projection of Rs10,500,000 for year 2012 and Rs10,000,000 for year 2013. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he can enlighten us on this trend for the financial implication of this programme?

The Chairperson: Any other question on this item? Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to page 96, item 31113430 – *Espace Culturel et Artistique, Château Mon Plaisir*. Can we have an indication from the hon. Prime Minister about the total cost of the project and maybe, a brief description of the works?

The Prime Minister: With regard to the National AIDS, Multi Sectorial Response to HIV/AIDS Programme. The Secretariat was set up and became operational as a special unit, again at my office, in May 2007, and the mandate is to develop policies in strategies and plans to guide for the prevention of HIV/AIDS, for the care and treatment, and to facilitate also the multi sectorial and multi departmental collaboration. One of the things we found, Mr Chairperson, is that there is not enough collaboration. There is need to have collaboration between the different sections which are working on this. It has also the responsibility to mobilise financial and technical resources from donor partners. I can say that we have applied to be eligible for the global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. I think I mentioned it this morning in my speech. We are now qualified for this. There is a proposal for a grant of Rs7,890,632 for a grant, and that will be used to fund activities within the national strategic framework. Again, the purpose is to prevent newly infected people while, at the same time, providing care to those who have already been infected. That also forms part of the Millennium Development Goal - I think it is number 6 - which we are party to. I don't know whether the hon. Member wants more details.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I realise that there is a considerable decrease in the allocation for this programme from Rs21 m. to Rs16.5 m., and less for the coming years. Is there an explanation as to how we will spend so much money on this programme in the coming year?

The Prime Minister: As I said, that's because we are now getting money from different sources. Of course, we need as much money as we can, but we are getting quite a bit, as you see, from the Clinton Global Initiative, which I have mentioned as well.

With regard to the *Espace Culturel et Artistique*, the project, in fact, is *autour le Château Mon Plaisir* at SSR Botanical Gardens, and consists of upgrading and landscaping of the grounds surrounding the *Château*. The provision of the new building is to be designed in harmony. There is a new building that they are doing. It is a big development. There will also be an underground, from what I understand, a place where you can actually go and look at different expositions and all this. That is what is being done. There is a consulting architect who is reviewing the drawings at the moment to design the project.

Dr S. Boolell: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister what is the name of the contractor in this particular case of *Espace/Mon Plaisir*?

The Prime Minister: Are you talking about the local contractor?

Dr. S. Boolell: Local or foreign contractor.

The Prime Minister: I know there is a foreign architect from India who is working with a local architect. He is the brother of the former Prime Minister of India.

Mr Uteem: Under *Item No. 31113027 - Construction of Walls, construction of concrete and security shelter for VVIP cars*, may I know where the wall and the shelter being constructed for the VIP cars are?

The Prime Minister: It is at the VIPSU Headquarters. In fact, it has already been completed, and there is also a security shelter for VIPSU cars.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Chairperson, *item No. 26313050 - Current Grant - National Adoption Council*. I would like to know the name of the Chairperson, and the number of missions the Chairperson has effected abroad together with expenses incurred.

The Prime Minister: That is a question that could have come through a PQ. I can't give the number of times she has travelled but, as far I know, it is nothing exaggerated; very few. As far as I remember, it is Mrs Bacha.

Mr Bhagwan: One clarification and information from the Prime Minister. Can I know from the Prime Minister whether this *Château Mon Plaisir* project is an integrated project, with the same architect, Mr Gujral, for the Father of the Nation and the whole set up there - which I agree? Is there a permanent follow-up on that?

The Prime Minister: The short answer is yes. It is an integrated project. I think there will be Mauritian people helping. In fact, they had done quite a bit, and then we had to slow it down. They are starting it again.

Mr Bhagwan: *Item No. 2290002 - National Security Services.* I think it is the same NSS. I have these persons in front of my office as permanent watchmen. So, I am not happy. Can I know from the Prime Minister whether these people - I won't say harass - are entitled to spy on Members of Parliament? This issue is very serious. I know what I am saying. Sometimes, you see them on bicycles, sometimes on motorcycles. I know I am a very important VIP or a VDP. Instead of looking for terrorists, they are spying on Members of Parliament, especially on the Opposition.

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member could take a photograph, because they are not supposed to do that. But I must say to the hon. Member that sometimes people see a guy and think that he must be from the National Services. If the hon. Member knows the person very well, he should tell me, because that is not what they are supposed to do.

Mr Bhagwan: This is very serious, and I know what I am saying. I was on the point of writing to the Commissioner of Police recently. Some time back, I queried the Director of that Unit. So, can we have the assurance, in Parliament, that members of that unit would be taken to task if they do such type of activities?

The Prime Minister: You might like to know that there were six people following me everywhere when I was Leader of the Opposition. But that does not matter. I have asked them to stop that practice, and I hope they have stopped. But if specific people are still doing it, they will be taken out of the Service. I give the hon. Member the guarantee of the House.

Mr Barbier: Mr Chairperson, all the items under 22 are new. There was no provision for this financial year, but for the coming financial year. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether it is provided for a new building and, if so, where?

The Prime Minister: I am sorry, but I did not get the number that you are saying.

Mr Barbier: Under *Programme Code 20105 - Public Sector Governance, item No. 22 - Goods and Services*. Under these you have cost of utilities, rent, office equipment and furniture, office expenses, maintenance, publications, etc. There was no provision for this financial year but, for the coming financial year we have all these provisions. May I know whether it stands for a new building and, if so, where?

The Prime Minister: Now, I understand the question. This is, in fact, for the new office of the Public Governance Office, which was the ex-MAB. This has been transferred now from the Ministry of Finance to the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr Ameer Meea: At page 94, under *Programme 201: Prime Minister's Office, Sub-Programme 20101: Cabinet Office, under item no. 21110 Personal Emoluments*; also at page 99, it is related.

The Chairperson: Yes, page 99, it is Cabinet Office.

The Prime Minister: The other question was about certain vacancies in the service. Here, we are talking about the Prime Minister's Office which practically hasn't changed.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, it is the same. It is Cabinet Office. I think this figure is in contradiction with the answer given by the hon. Prime Minister on the reason why personal emoluments have sharply decreased. The hon. Prime Minister answered that there are vacancies which have not been filled. But I can see that the number of staff has increased from 50 to 51, and for the emoluments, it has decreased from Rs44 m. to Rs25 m. - almost 40%.

The Prime Minister: As I have explained, there are vacancies which have been filled; the whole procedure is going on and it is about to be filled. That is the reason. We are referring to two different things. For the Cabinet Office, it is different because the other one was about Senior Chief Executive, Permanent Secretary and Principal Assistant Secretary, whereas here they are not attached; they are separate from the Cabinet Office.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 99, under the general *Programme 201: Prime Minister's Office*, since I could not find another place where to put the question. Since the memorandum earlier speaks of 'Support the Prime Minister in formulating policy proposals' as one of the objectives, I would like the Prime Minister to tell us whether we are voting funds for a dedicated adviser on drug matters. Does the Prime Minister have a dedicated adviser on drug issues? Who thinks through policy formulation on the issue of drugs? Is there somebody who does that or is there a dedicated Drugs Unit within the Prime Minister's Office and, if not, why not?

The Prime Minister: It is because my office will become too big. There is a person who is doing the job, and doing it very well. I answered questions, I think. During my speech, I said the Drug Commissioner, who is like a drug tsar – that is why I call him drug tsar - also advises on policy. He has, in fact, indicated that he would like to see amendments on the forfeiture of assets because that is what is holding them back. For example, that is policy.

Mr Obeegadoo I come to the very same issue. I would like to have more clarification. We are voting funds for the Prime Minister's Office. Now, beyond the issue of seizure of assets which concerns the Drug Commissioner, the drugs' crux issue in this country relates to prevention; relates to detection and repressions; relates to medical support, rehabilitation. On all these issues, does the Prime Minister have either a dedicated unit or a dedicated adviser that the funds can be applied for, so that we have appropriate policy formulation in this crucial area?

The Prime Minister: In fact, there are lots of interactions between myself and the Commissioner of Police on the issue of drugs and all the other officers concerned, and also get their feedback from different Ministries. I must say to the House, as I said earlier, that even though we say one crime is one too many, in fact, the situation is not as alarming as in some other countries.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 99, under *Programme 201: Prime Minister's Office*, the very first item which is 'The Prime Minister'. We have one Prime Minister, we will have one next year. I would like to know whether, on the next vote, the *Maurice Île Durable (MID)* - I have looked for it everywhere and I cannot find it - there is again a dedicated Unit or a dedicated Advisor to support the Prime Minister on this issue because we are willing to vote the funding for that?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I did mention that Mr Osman Mahomed is the person we have designed to drive this programme. We would like him to be full-time but, at the moment, he is occupying another post. So, we are looking at that. It also falls under different Ministries, but it is going to be coordinated from my Office.

Mr Bhagwan: He is a competent officer – I know him personally, but don't take him to task because of that. From what I gather he is also the Chief Executive of the NHDC which should implement the housing projects of Government. So, could that competent officer have the time to look after the *MID* project as well as the NHDC - *malgré toute sa bonne volonté* ?

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, if you would allow me. Given the importance of this *MID*, given the cross party agreement, would the Prime Minister not agree that we need to vote funds for him to have not one part-time person, not one full-time person but a proper staff unit to coordinate the action of all of Government so that it is not a *coquille vide* ?

The Prime Minister: In fact, that is precisely what I said earlier. He is occupying another post. I did not mention what post he is occupying, but I said he is occupying that post. We put him in there because he is a very competent officer, as you say yourself.

(Interruptions)

I wouldn't go into those details, but that is precisely and you know the difficulty in Mauritius to get the right person in the right place. You know that very well. The Funds for the *Maurice Ile Durable* - actually for this financial year they allocated to specific Ministries. For the PMO itself, because I have this special unit, Rs1.2 m has been provided. But as we need, we will ask and we will get.

Programme Code 201: Prime Minister's Office (Rs514,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 564 - Human Rights Awareness was called.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 98, *Programme 564: Human Rights Awareness*. May we know who are the persons who manage that Unit and how is that awareness being communicated to members of the public? What is the function in fact of that Unit?

The Prime Minister: In fact, it is a PAS in the Home Affairs Division who is in charge of this programme. I mentioned, during my speech earlier this morning, if you remember, about

the Human Rights Awareness which is being given to Police officers. We are, in fact, going to put it in the curricular of school children. We are also training Prison officers on human rights as well.

Mr Baloomoody: Does this Human Rights Awareness apply to the Police officers as well? Do Police officers get training with regard to Human Rights Awareness?

The Prime Minister: The answer is yes.

Programme Code 564 - Human Rights Awareness (Rs800,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 211: Government Information Service and Provision of International News was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chair, at page 106, I have only one question under *Programme Code 211 - Government Information Service and Provision of International News*. Now that elections are over, my newspaper is on line; you won't have any problem. May I know what the policy is now as far as Government publicity is concerned? This issue has been lengthily canvassed on many occasions on Budget. There is an office of good governance. Can that office be commissioned to see about those newspapers which are issuing less than one hundred copies? We are talking about public money. Those with less than hundred copies - I know what I am saying - are having Government publicity and are making a lot of money. There are official statistics for newspapers which have dailies and even *hebdomadaire*. Now that we are being asked to vote Rs46 m., can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether there is a no policy? And will he commission that office of good governance to make a survey and come with a new programme of giving Government publicity to newspapers?

The Prime Minister: In fact, as I mentioned in Parliamentary Questions, it is because we are coming with a new media law. I had commissioned a very eminent Barrister, Geoffrey Robertson, who is known for press freedom, defending the press, media freedom; that is why I asked him. You need to look at antiquated laws that we have in this country which have not changed. All this is being taken care under that media law. This is being looked at under one item, that is, media law. That is why I am not saying much about it, because this is coming very soon, hopefully.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 107, under *item 26313048 Current Grant – Media Trust Fund*, Mr Chairperson, we find that provision has been made for the Media Trust Fund. May we know where matters stand and who are the members of this Fund and what will happen? *Quel est l'avenir de ce Fund?*

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I just answered the question.

The Chairperson: The question has just been answered.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Prime Minister said that we are going to review the law, but I want to know what happened to the Fund, because we have made provision for Rs2 m., at page 97. So, I would like to know what the fate of that Fund is.

The Prime Minister: As I said, I just answered, but I do not mean just now. I just answered a Parliamentary Question on this. The Media Fund is still being funded. People resign and all these things and we cannot replace them, but because we are changing the law, we are still providing the Fund. I think the law will probably come early next session.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, Sir, is the Media Trust Board at present properly, legally constituted so that we may allow public funds and trust public funds to this Body?

The Prime Minister: In fact, money is being provided. There are people who are actually looking after this, but the elected Board members who have resigned have not been replaced because they do not want to be there.

Mr Obeegadoo: Precisely, if I may insist on this point since we are being asked to vote these funds! I put it to the Prime Minister and I seek his explanation or guidance that the Board at present is not legally proper, is not constituted as per law. The Chairperson is supposed to be there, not for more than, I think, two years. There has been no renewal of the Board. So, would the hon. Prime Minister not agree that unless and until that Board is reconstituted, we cannot entrust public monies to it?

The Prime Minister: I am speaking offhand, Mr Chairperson. I believe that a sum is given to the Media Trust because there are some works which are being done there, but, I hope, the Board will be about to be reappointed as soon as this media law is ready.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, I have a few questions. One is on page 106 under *item 22100 - Publication and Stationery* worth Rs16 m. Can we know the names of the largest

beneficiaries? The second is on page 107 under *item 32145 Loans*. I see a loan of Rs253 m. that has been made last year and, for 2011, suddenly it has disappeared. Does it mean that the loan has been repaid?

The Prime Minister: As for the publication and stationery, these are for papers and materials of the news service, Reuters on a yearly basis, the *Agence France-Presse* on a quarterly basis and then it is also for printing and stationery for books and periodicals for public notices, publications and publicity. As for the other item, could you tell me which number you were referring to?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: At page 107, under *item 32145 - Loans*.

The Prime Minister: The project has been completed. The handing over of the Headquarters at Ebène is under due process; it is coming soon.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: It is for which project, please?

The Prime Minister: If you'll remember, we took a loan from the Government of the People's Republic of China, that loan has been disbursed.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two questions, Sir. The first is on page 105, *Programme Code 211 Government Information Service and Provision of International News*. Looking at the objectives which are being set for the GIS, *P1: Production of Year book, brochures and booklets on subject of public interest and topical issues*, I take it this is ongoing, this is the normal activities. But then the two others appear to be new. *P2: Scanning of selected documents for safe-keeping and quick retrieval*, we have a National Archives, we have a National Library. The next one, *P: Scanning of selected Negatives frames from 1950's onwards*, again, we have a *Musée National de la Photographie*. I would like some clarification from the Prime Minister. Why is it that we are voting funds to entrust such a task to the GIS? Is the GIS really the most appropriate Body to be going on to these new ventures – these appear to be new ventures?

The Prime Minister: Because there are lots of documents that cannot wait to go to the Archives. The documents are there, they want to scan. We don't go to the Archives if we need any information quickly, we will not go there, we need the information ourselves and they have the ability to scan. In fact, it is going to cost us less at the end of the day.

Mr Obeegadoo: More generally, I am looking at page 107.

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Obeegadoo: The total budgeted sum, the very last line, on page 107. Last year, we were asked to vote Rs298 m. I note that, at page (xiii), the revised estimates speak of Rs471 m. So, we spent something like Rs200 m. less. I have been looking at the figures and it would appear that this is related to *Acquisition of Financial Assets, item 32* on page 107. Correct me if I am wrong! Then, for next year, the sum is radically brought down to Rs46 m. So, could the Prime Minister clarify what exactly is happening? Why did we vote such a large budget? What was it for? Was it really for financial assets and, if so, which financial assets for the GIS? How is it that we spent Rs200 m. less and why is it that we are budgeting only Rs46 m.?

The Prime Minister: I thought I explained that earlier, Mr Chairperson. Unfortunately, in this item, maybe that is not clear, I just answered that for the construction of the new MPC Headquarters that project has not been completed. Therefore, there is no loan to repay for next year. That is why you see the dramatic change.

Programme Code 211 (Rs46,170,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Forensic Science Laboratory – Programme Code 221: Provision for Forensic Services was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I have a number of questions. I will begin with page 110. May we have some indications on this Mauritian DNA Population Statistical Database? I put this question because afterwards, on page 112, there are other databases which are referred to: construction of a convict database which is to be completed in 2012 and then, the construction of an offender database & unknown or missing person database which are supposed to come up in 2013. What is the distinction and how does this relate to this DNA Population Statistical Database that has already been constituted?

The Prime Minister: I must say I don't quite understand the question. I don't think the hon. Member was here when we debated the DNA Bill, maybe that's why he is not aware. We are doing a database and we need to have the different data on people who have committed crimes and all these things.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is: in what way will the two other databases that are to be constituted in 2012 and 2013 be different?

The Prime Minister: Which item is the hon. Member referring to?

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 112, items 03, P2 and P3 where we are talking of two further databases. I want to understand what exactly these consist of?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member looks at it, it says here construction of convict database, that is different from those who are missing persons or unknown persons who have been lost or also persons who have offended, but not necessarily ...

(*Interruptions*)

The DNA data would be one of them.

(*Interruptions*)

It is not already there, it is being done. We are still building on the data, it is not finished; also addresses and things like that. We need those data to be able to match with the DNA.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 110 concerning accreditation of the FSL, can we know whether our Forensic Science Laboratory is internationally recognised and internationally accredited?

The Prime Minister: I am not sure whether I have heard the question. Is it whether the test we are doing are accredited?

Mr Baloomoody: Whether the test we do in Mauritius is recognised internationally?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the answer is that we have not reached accreditation, that is why we are making major changes at the Forensic Laboratory with a newly appointed Director.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the defence will have access to the services of this laboratory?

The Prime Minister: This is about policy, but I think we had debates about this. We must make sure that the laboratory can also work, but I am sure in court the Member will be able to challenge whatever he wants.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 114, *item No. 22060003 – Maintenance of Plant and Equipment*. The FSL is of fundamental importance in combating crimes. Would the

hon. Prime Minister indicate what exactly is happening here? How we have a dwindling budgetary provision for maintenance of plant and equipment which, presumably, is of critical importance in the case of the FSL?

The Prime Minister: Among the equipment there is a genetic analyser. But that is not the only equipment. There is also other equipment for photocopy and air conditioning. All these are being used under the same item. But the main one is the genetic analyser.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is why the funding is actually decreasing from year to year?

The Prime Minister: Once we buy the analyser, we won't need to buy another one. Hopefully, it won't get broken. So, it will have to decrease.

Programme Code 221: Provision for Forensic Services (Rs35,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Pay Research Bureau – Programme Code 231 Public Sector Compensation and HRM Policy and Strategy was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 121, on *item 026575 Job Analyst*, I am just intrigued by the increase in the number of posts of Job Analyst which accounts for the increase in staffing of the PRB. Why is there a sudden increase of more than three-fold in the number of Job Analysts?

The Prime Minister: That is a request. Maybe, they need more.

Programme Code 231 Public Sector Compensation and HRM Policy and Strategy (Rs27,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Civil Status Division - Programme Code 241: Civil Status Affairs was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 127, under *item 187582 Registrar of Civil Status*. We, Members of Parliament, have again this problem of officers not available when somebody passed away. We have to run after certain officers. Even the hon. Prime Minister, some time back, in one of the Budget debates, stated that he will see to it that this does not occur again. Can the hon. Prime Minister give the guarantee to the House that we won't henceforth have such problems, especially in the afternoon and during weekends, when we have mortality?

The Prime Minister: It is a legitimate claim. This is something I have passed on, but I will recheck on what is the situation.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 123, on *Birth Certificates*. I remember having put a question and the hon. Prime Minister said he would look into it regarding registration of birth at prison. I would like to know whether the issue has been looked into and whether now a prisoner would be allowed to register his/her son/daughter.

The Prime Minister: I did take that commitment, Mr Chairperson, during the debate.

Programme Code 241: Civil Status Affairs (Rs60,230,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Religious Subsidies – Programme Code 251: Financial Support to Religious Organisations (Rs74,600,000) was called and agreed to.

External Communications – Programme Code 345: Civil Aviation and Port Development was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 131, concerning *Major Achievements for 2010*, the Scheme of Charge that has been introduced as from 01 February 2010, does this apply to Air Mauritius flights to and from Rodrigues and, if so, what is the revenue generated in that regard?

The Prime Minister: I believe I answered a question in Parliament on this. I remember I said it did not apply to Rodrigues.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 133, *sub-programme 34501: Ports and Civil Aviation Policy, 03, P1: Strategic Partnership project for the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd*; this is a very old project. It has been years now since we have been discussing this. I remember in the mid 1990s when we were in Government together, and it is still now being scheduled for 2012. Would the Prime Minister tell us where exactly things stand in that regard?

The Prime Minister: This is actually a new partnership. There was an old one for the project for the selection of a strategic partner. In fact, I have the dates and we agreed to the services of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) which is, as you know, the private arm of the World Bank. They have been enlisted to act as transaction advisors for the project. The first phase of the project, namely, the request for prequalification, I think, was launched last March,

following which, I understand there were five companies prequalified and that is going out to the second phase.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, another question on the same page, the next programme, *sub-programme 34502: Civil Aviation Services, 01 P1: Number of aviation security audits carried out to maintain the aviation security standard*. My attention has been drawn to the fact that Qantas Airlines have recently experienced problems with its airbus which our national carrier uses as well. We are approving funding for these security audits and there seems that, within the PBB perspective, we mechanically have 12 audits per year. Should the funding be approved this year to provide for increased security checks on these airlines which are raising serious issues elsewhere?

The Prime Minister: This particular problem is with the Qantas and Rolls Royce, I believe. But, we and other countries as well have been told that there is absolutely no problem. There might be a particular problem with that plane, we are not sure. Investigation is still going on and all our audits are done at international level and we get all the reports which say that everything is safe.

Mr Uteem: On page 134, *Programme 345: Civil Aviation and Port Development, Item 22120 Fees*, there is Rs3,080,000 for *fees to Consultants*. May we know it was in respect of what?

The Prime Minister: The amount was provided in the 2010 Budget for payment of consultancy services in the field of Civil Aviation. However, due to unavailability of professionals in this sector, consultancy services could not be resorted to and therefore no payment has been effected in the actual Budget, hence the sum that has been forwarded to the 2011 Budget.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same page, the last item: *Loan to Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd.* May we know who are the Chairperson and the Director of the Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd?

The Prime Minister: The Chairperson is Mr Pazhany and the Director is Mr Serge Petit.

Mr Uteem: The hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance announced in his Budget speech the possibility of having a port in Mahebourg. So, I would like to know whether there is any sum which has been budgeted for consultancy.

The Chairperson: No, the hon. Member has to identify the item first.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 135, under *sub-programme 34502: Civil Aviation Services, item 22090 Security*, again I have the same preoccupation. We are going from Rs2,100,000 voted for this year down to Rs1,000,000 for each year over the next three years. How is that to be accounted for?

The Prime Minister: The Department had contracted out security to a firm but, as from this year, I am told that because of the sensitivity of equipment and the other outstations, it is proposed to revert to in-house security by aviation patrolmen. Consequently, that is why it is being reduced for next year.

Mr Obeegadoo: May we know which equipment is being referred to?

The Prime Minister: I know that in the aviation we have a lot of security based equipment. I might be a doctor and a lawyer, but I am not an engineer.

Programme Code 345: Civil Aviation and Port Development (Rs1,495,491,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Police Force – Programme Code 261: Security Policy and Management was called.

The Chairperson: Please, go page by page! The details are on page 147 and if Members want to talk about other pages they can connect it with the items.

Mr Obeegadoo: I was proposing to start with page 143, but I can also take it on the detailed programme, if you so wish. It is *Code 26204: Combating Drugs* where we are being asked to approve an overall budget of Rs155,657,000, which is a very slight increase on the previous budget. The same item, further down on the same page, giving the summary of staffing positions...

The Chairperson: Sorry, we are on *Programme 261: Security Policy and Management*. We will come to that programme later on.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am not sure that there is a separate programme on drugs, Sir, which is why I am raising it here.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: I have a question about the Commissioner of Police, under Code 154.

The Chairperson: Wait, let me check. This is Programme Code 261. Carry on!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I have two questions on item *Commissioner of Police*. The first one concerns *la Police de l'Environnement*, a Unit which was created and we had Police officers. Can I know from the Prime Minister whether this Unit is properly manned with regard to the number of Police officers attached to that Unit and whether it has been reduced over the years and, if yes, why?

Secondly, our brothers and sisters of different grades of the Police Force are working within the precincts of the Parliament. Can we know whether they are on special assignment and whether in terms of salaries there is a special allowance paid to the Police officers on duty in Parliament? There are lots of Police officers during and after Parliament sessions. Can I know from the Prime Minister ...

(*Interruptions*)

Mo bizin diman twa permission Jhugroo pou pose question? Ale dormi lacaze!

(*Interruptions*)

Jeetah reste tranquil ! Mo pena l'ordre pou prend are twa. Reste tranquil !

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Jeetah, what is happening to you?

Dr. Jeetah: With your permission, Mr Chairperson, can I raise a point of order, with regard to Section 73(12). With your permission, I would like to raise this point.

The Chairperson: What are you reading?

Dr. Jeetah: I am reading the Standing Order.

The Chairperson: Let me hear the Standing Order first. Which section?

Dr. Jeetah: Section 73(12), "Discussion shall be confined to ...

The Chairperson: I overrule the point of order!

(*Interruptions*)

I overrule the point of order!

(*Interruptions*)

I said, I overrule the point of order!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairman, he is challenging your authority as usual.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member wants to know whether the Police officers working here are paid an allowance.

Mr Bhagwan: And for the *Police de l'Environnement*.

The Prime Minister: For the *Police de l'Environnement*, the Commissioner of Police is re-arranging and I did mention there was a new audit being done for the Police. I have also mentioned this morning about the National Strategy Plan for the Police. Regarding the Police of Environment, they now operate at a divisional level and there are four officers per division in that group. As for the payment of allowances, this is subject to the same criteria for the Police and subject to whether the performance is extra or not.

Mr Obeegadoo: On Programme *Code 261* on page 148, - my colleague wants to finish 147.

Mr Barbier: Mr Chairperson, under item 22030004 – *Rental of Equipment* ...

The Prime Minister: On which page?

Mr Barbier: Page 147 – I repeat, under item 22030004, *Rental of Equipment*, this is a new item for the coming financial year, which does not exist for this current year...

(*Interruptions*)

I mean that this is a new item on the Budget. I have just mentioned *Rental of Equipment* which is a new item, so I would like to know for which equipment the sum stands for?

The Chairperson: Rental for the year 2010, you mean!

Mr Barbier: Yes, under item. 22030004 - *Rental of Equipment*, on page 147. Being given that this is a new item on Budget, I would like to know for which equipment it stands for?

The Prime Minister: This is basically rental for building and also rental for the connection for the CCTV cameras that we are putting at Flic en Flac, Quatre Bornes, Port Louis

and Grand' Baie and also for radio equipment. I think there is a multi-carrier connected with this.

The Chairperson: Page 148!

Mr Obeegadoo: On this very same issue of CCTV ...

The Chairperson: Which item is it?

Mr Obeegadoo: It is under item 31122811.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, *bann la pe trop interrompe nou. Banne là-bas sa!*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Quiet! Hon. Barbier, why are you talking to him?

(*Interruptions*)

Order! Order now! It is already one o'clock in the morning! Cooperate with the Chair and we will finish this job, instead of creating problems in the House! Yes, carry on!

Mr Obeegadoo: I just wanted some clarification from the hon. Prime Minister concerning *CCTV Street Surveillance*. Am I right to deduce from the amounts budgeted that the installation of the system in Grand' Baie and Port Louis is now practically over? Since the hon. Prime Minister mentioned Flic en Flac and possibly other regions, I would like to know where that provision is being made, if at all, for the other regions apart from Grand' Baie and Port Louis. The Prime Minister said that it has already been done. My question is, therefore, do we have any regions where funds are being voted for installation of *CCTV Street Surveillance* and, if so, where?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I did mention - even today in my speech - that the first one was at Flic en Flac; this has been completed. That is why we have a drastic reduction in crime in that region, compared to 2007; it is over 83.1% and I mentioned the figure today. We have put CCTV cameras in Quatre Bornes; we have practically finished with Port Louis; there a very few left to be put. At Grand' Baie, it is nearly finished. We have said that we are going to put at different spots where we think the rate of crime is perhaps slightly higher than other places. We are going to expand on the CCTV cameras.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is where are we approving funding for expenditure on CCTV Street Surveillance, apart from this specific item, which relates only to Grand Baie and Port Louis?

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo, you cannot ask the hon. Prime Minister. The item is here.

Mr Obeegadoo: The item here relates to Grand' Baie and Port Louis. I am very happy to learn that this has proved effective in Flic en Flac. The Prime Minister said that there will be other areas, as advised, where he will have the same system installed. I am asking whether we are budgeting funds because I cannot see any other item. Are we budgeting funds for that?

The Prime Minister: Basically, I should have explained. There are settlements for claims for things that have been done and this is being done now.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 147, still on the same item, Security ...

The Chairperson: No, we are on page 148.

Mr Baloomoody: It is the same programme ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, we have finished with this page. I said that we are going page by page. We have finished with page 147.

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Baloomoody: I come to page 148. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether we are going to have an increase in the Police Force? Under item 2290001, the same amount is being prescribed for uniforms. On the same page, *Acquisition of Non Financial Asset*. I see that we are going to construct an office for IT. May we know exactly where the office will be and by whom it will be manned? In the acquisition of IT equipment including digital radio, CCTV, etc. there is no mention of a scanner for fingerprinting. May we know whether provision will be made for a scanner for fingerprinting?

The Prime Minister: First of all, for the uniforms, it is a new budgetary system, where we have also requisition whenever the expenditure comes up and that is the new system that has

been adopted here. I think that the other question was about office building. Can the hon. Member tell me which one he is talking about ?

Mr Baloomoody: Under item 31112001, on page 148.

The Prime Minister: That is the IT office which is going to be at Line Barracks itself. We are not acquiring the offices.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, at page 148, under item 31122811, *Acquisition of CCTV Street Surveillance System for Grand' Baie and Port Louis* can we get an indication from the hon. Prime Minister whether the system will be centrally monitored and, if possible, where will it be located and whether it will be manned by the Police Force or private companies?

The Prime Minister: I can't give details about security matters, but it will be manned properly. I think there was a question earlier from hon. Baloomoody about the scanner for fingerprinting. We already have the fingerprinting for this and it is being upgraded because it needs to be adjusted.

The Chairperson: Page 149!

Mr Barbier: Under item 22060, *Maintenance* ...

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Barbier: At page 148, under item 22060 - *Maintenance*, there is a considerable increase of Rs10m. from last financial year to the coming financial year. May we have some clarification?

The Chairperson: No, that is not the item. We are dealing with item 261, and this is 262. On which page, hon. Member?

Mr Obeegadoo: I am on page 149, Programme 262, sub-programme 26201...

The Chairperson: I am sorry. This is item 262. We have not reached there.

Mr Obeegadoo: I thought we were on page 149.

The Chairperson: The last page for item 261 is 154.

Programme Code 261 - Security Policy and Management (Rs1,327,122,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 262 - Community, Safety and Security was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 149, under *item 31121 - Transport Equipment*.

The Chairperson: Do you have any question on page 148?

Mr Barbier: At page 148, *item 22060 - Maintenance*, there is an increase of more than Rs10 m. from the current expenditure to the coming year 2011. Can we have some clarification about the increase of Rs10 m. on that item?

The Prime Minister: One of the main reasons is that we have acquired many more vehicles. In fact, there are 364 vehicles and 157 motorcycles. That is the main item, but we have other items.

Mr François: Does *item 22030 - Rent* cater for Petit Gabriel and Grande Montagne Police station? If yes, I would like to know till when renting will continue or otherwise when construction of the two stations is scheduled?

The Prime Minister: I can't say the exact date for the two stations, but it is renting for Petit Gabriel and Grande Montagne. I cannot say when they will switch to acquiring buildings.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 149, under *item 31121 - Transport Equipment*. I refer to a perennial problem, which is transport facilities for Police officers who are on the last shift, and who complete their shift after public transport has stopped. This has been an ongoing problem, and Police officers still complain. I want to know from the Prime Minister whether provision is being made at long last, this year, for this problem to be addressed, so that Police officers are motivated and can perform properly.

The Prime Minister: I have been told by the Commissioner of Police, Mr Chairperson, that, in fact, very often, transport is provided, but many officers don't take the transport. There are certain areas where transport is not provided and he is relooking at it. But, apparently, a lot of people take lifts from other people, and they don't go in the transport. So, you will have a bus which will go with only one person.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 149, I have two questions on *item 22060004 - Vehicles and Motorcycles*. There is no mention of bike patrol. Each year, I ask this question. This is a very efficient section. Over the years, I have witnessed that, instead of being on the increase, this Bike Patrol Unit is on the decrease, unless I am wrong. Can I know from the Prime Minister

whether provision is made to have this Unit around popular areas, like near the market, near bus stands, and even on beaches, being given the good results they have given?

Secondly, about the purchase of motorcycles by Traffic Officers. I don't know who has chosen motorcycles for the Traffic Unit. The Police Department has recently purchased motorcycles, *la selle en bas, guidon la haut*. We have seen the low level of the saddles, thus creating health problems. I hope many of you don't have parents working in the Police Force who have back problems. Can I ask the Prime Minister to see to it that specifications are properly set? The ones attached to the Deputy Prime Minister are of very good type and make. At least, for the reputation of the Police Force, vis-à-vis foreigners, we should have good motorcycles, taking into consideration the health aspect.

The Prime Minister: This is an administrative problem for the Police. I will pass on that piece of information. As for the bike patrol, this policy is being reviewed. It was decreased; the hon. Member is right to say so. We are reviewing the policy.

Mrs Labelle: Regarding *item 31121801 - Acquisition of Vehicles*, there is a considerable increase for the coming year. Maybe, the hon. Prime Minister can enlighten us on the number of vehicles that we propose to purchase and whether it is a different type of vehicles for the next coming year.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same item, *Acquisition of Vehicles*, are we including the number of vehicles to carry Police officers who are on duty? As the hon. Prime Minister just said, many refuse and ask for lifts. I think the Prime Minister is aware that, sometimes, it takes them two hours to reach home, because there is one bus per district and it has to go round four to five police stations, picking up all the staff, and then they go home. I would like to know whether extra vehicles will be bought - mini bus or whatever - to take the police officers home.

The Prime Minister: In fact, there are provisions made for the purchase of 15 vans and two 4 X 4 vans, which is, in fact, going in the direction that the hon. Member has asked.

Mr Baloomoody: I have received complaints from police officers that the 4 X 4 van does not turn 90 degrees; *c'est serré au niveau du volant*. So, they can't enter certain *cités*, certain small areas. Will the hon. Prime Minister look into it when we do acquire new vehicles?

The Prime Minister: There is no power steering? That's a surprise to me! I'll pass on the information.

Mr Barbier: On page 149, *item 31121 - Transport Equipment*, there is a considerable increase for the coming year, from Rs2 m. to Rs35 m. Can we have some clarification?

The Prime Minister: Again, this is provision for the purchase of 24 motorcycles of 750 cc, 20 motorcycles of 250-350 cc, and one double cab.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 149, *item 3112014 - Construction of Regional Detention*. Is it a detention centre for people on remand? I found that no provision is made for the Rose Belle Detention Centre. May we know where matters stand regarding the Piton Detention Centre and what is the fate of the Rose Belle Detention Centre?

The Prime Minister: I know that they have started all the procedures for the one at Rose Belle. At this point, I can't say when it will be ready. For the Regional Detention at Piton, the structural drawing, I believe, is in progress; it is not terminated yet. The project, hopefully, will be implemented in 2011; that is the target. Provision is also made here to meet part payment for that project, which is estimated to cost Rs37 m.

Mr Bhagwan: One last question on this item, Mr Chairperson. On the *item – Vehicles and Motorcycles*, we can have it from the hon. Prime Minister through the Commissioner of Police. Our attention has been drawn to the problems concerning the mortuary vans of the Police Department, which is one important tool when there are crimes and when in difficult periods. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether provision has been made in this Budget for the increase, even to replace the mortuary vans actually of the Police Force?

The Prime Minister: I can't see often whether provision has been made but, if need be, we can arrange; but I don't think there has been provision for it.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 150, *Sub-Programme 26203: Support to Community*. I shall take the general ...

The Chairperson: We are on page 150. One item, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: I will take the item *Personal Emoluments* and then refer back to page 145, which has the programme service indicators. So, at page 145, under *Sub-Programme 26203: Support to Community*, mention is made of the *Police Family Protection Unit*. Will the

hon. Prime Minister indicate whether, within the sums budgeted for next year, provisions are being made for better coordination between this Unit and that of the Ministry of Women's Rights because in practice this causes enormous difficulties? For instance, there is a Police Family Protection Unit based in Vacoas for the Upper Plaines Wilhems; then, there is the Ministry's Unit which is in Phoenix. The service offered is not the same and, for instance, these battered women go to one centre and are referred to another, where the opening hours are different. This creates real difficulties in practice. Will the hon. Prime Minister indicate or consider, within the sums budgeted, whether there can be some streamlining of the assistance provided to battered women by this Unit and that of the Ministry?

The Prime Minister: I know the policy. We decided on the streamlining of these Units and I believe this has been taken into account here.

The Chairperson: Any questions on *Support to Community*?

Mrs Labelle: I am referring to item *Support to Community*. We find that the counselling services to victims of domestic violence and abuse ...

The Prime Minister: Which page is the hon. Member referring to?

Mrs Labelle: Page 145, where the objective and the performance indicator are described. I would like to know the number of victims who have received counselling under this programme and by whom? Because, at page 157, under Sub-Programme 26203: *Support to Community*, when I look at the staffing of this programme I do not find any psychologists or counsellors attached to this Department. I would like to know by whom this counselling was being given. Furthermore, still under this programme, there is a decrease in the number of *Woman Police Constables*. There has been a decrease in the post and I'll come back to that. I will just stop at the counselling services provided for victims of domestic violence. So, may we know by whom this counselling was being given and the number of counsellors or psychologists attached to this Department?

The Prime Minister: Again, the answer was given in a Parliamentary Question. The post of Psychologist was created in 2008. The proposed Scheme of Service for that post is under consideration at the Public Service Commission. The Scheme of the Service was drafted after consultation with the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms and

forwarded to the Public Service Commission for approval. However, from January 2007 to June 2009, there was a part-time Adviser in Psychological Counselling at the Police Department. She left the Department for the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. The counselling is done by Woman Police Officers from the Police Family Protection Unit.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, at page 150, under item 22160 - *Overseas Training*. Can we have an indication from the hon. Prime Minister as to how many officers benefit from overseas training on a yearly basis?

The Prime Minister: I cannot give a number at the moment, unless I am getting it here. This year, some 309 Police officers have had training overseas. The 309 officers, I am told, have followed overseas training, courses, conferences and workshops, and they are in different fields.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 150, *Personal Emolument* and I also refer back to page 145 - *Brigade des Mineurs*.

The Prime Minister: Page 145?

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 150, item *Personal Emolument*. I also refer to page 145 for the programme objectives: *Brigade des Mineurs*. As the hon. Prime Minister is surely aware, this *Brigade des Mineurs* has been subjected to criticisms lately. It is not clear what the objectives of the *Brigade* is and it would appear that members of the *Brigade* are not clear as to the objectives; they spend their time repressing normal adolescent behaviours, such as boyfriends and girlfriends holding hands in the street or trying the odd cigarettes rather than attacking real crimes and protecting minors against serious crimes. Now that this is being widely publicized and subjected to much criticism, can I appeal to the hon. Prime Minister that, within the funding which we are offering to combat crime, the precise role and mandate of the *Brigade des Mineurs* be better defined, so that they may be more effective in combating crimes rather than being some sort of a moralistic body repressing normal adolescent behaviours?

(*Interruptions*)

The Prime Minister: Different opinions; maybe there – I don't say - are bad apples in every profession; but generally I have not had this complaint, I must say.

(*Interruptions*)

Well, what the radio says is not the Bible.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same item, at page 145, the *Crime Prevention Unit – O3: Crime prevention awareness, P1: Number of lectures, talks and meetings at schools, colleges and universities*. The hon. Prime Minister will surely agree that this, again, is of critical importance; we are going to prevent crime. Now, in this country, if we add the number of primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions, we reach the figure of 400 or about. Surely, we need to be able to target, at least, one lecture in each institution once a year. So, will the hon. Prime Minister consider revising the funding that is being proposed, to ensure that this Unit can, at least, offer one lecture, one awareness event, in each of our educational institutions each year?

The Prime Minister: This is what they are targeting. It does not mean that they will not be able to do it. We must also remember, Mr Chairperson, we might want a lot of things but we need to have the money to be able to ensure that we can do it. I think that is very important. And I agree with the hon. Member, but my belief is that they are targeting all the educational institutions; that is my belief.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am referring to the targets on page 145 which say that for 2010, only 50 of such events, and then for next year, 100, which will increase up to 110 in year 2013. So, clearly there is no ambition whatsoever of reaching out, once a year, to each educational institution. Will the hon. Prime Minister please reconsider?

The Prime Minister: We are also doing the crime awareness through other means. There is going to be a television campaign very soon and also in schools. I agree with the hon. Member that it is important, but we can't do everything at one time.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I would like to talk on Sub-Programme 26204: *Combating Drugs* and my entry point would be *21110 Personal Emoluments*. I will refer the Prime Minister again to page 143 which summarizes both the financial allotment and the staffing position. Will the hon. Prime Minister please explain? We know that this is a very, very serious problem in the country. Even if we have made progress, it still remains a fundamental problem and I know that the budgetary allocation increases marginally Rs148 m. to Rs155 m. but, worse still, the staffing in the Police Force to combat drugs increases only from Rs354 m. to Rs357 m. for the year 2011. Now, surely the Prime Minister will agree that we need to put in more resources to combat drugs and on this issue again, I won't ask for explanation, but reconsider so that a special effort can be made targeting the fight against drugs.

The Prime Minister: The fight against drugs, Mr Chairperson, is also being shifted to an intelligence led Police system, not just those Police officers. They are part of the Police officers, but they are also gathering intelligence, they are becoming more efficient, I can tell you. That is why we say that there is this decrease that we have seen. We are not just going to use one section; there is the intelligence that is being gathered as well. As I said earlier, everything is important, education is important, health is important, but we need to have the means, otherwise we will have a budget deficit of, God knows, 10% or 20% like some of those countries. So, we have to know what we can afford and what we can do and in which areas.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Prime Minister recall that hon. Baloomoody made the point that normal Police officers in Police stations are not willing to act when there is a complaint concerning drugs. They have to wait for the ADSU officers to come and this is why I am raising the point. We need to be able to have officers in the hot spots in the Police stations willing to act there and then when there is a complaint, when people are ready to identify a drug dealer in the vicinity and not wait for ADSU to arrive.

The Prime Minister: I don't know whether that would be practical, Mr Chairperson, because that would mean many officers will have to be put in different Police stations and we keep increasing the number of stations. But I will pass this on to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Police officers in Police stations are allowed to refuse a person who comes to report a drug offence?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that anyone has been refused, but I am sure the hon. Member is raising it because he has known a case. I will pass this on to the Commissioner of Police.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, under this item of combating drugs, when I look at the staffing, I note there is a decrease in the number of Police Constables. I refer to the staffing list on page 157; there is a decrease in the number of Police Constables: 14, 22 and 50. From 208, we decrease it to 187 and this does not apply to this programme only. I don't feel the staffing is gender sensitised. You will see that there is less Woman Police officers in the different ranks and, under other programmes, there is a decrease of the number of female officers and I am not going to take the time of the House to mention all of them, but under different programmes, there is a decrease of the number of female officers.

Under this particular one, for example, there were 208 Police Constables and only 30 Woman Police constables, just as a matter of example. It is not that much gender sensitised and there is a decrease in the number of Police Constables. I don't know if we have some explanation for this.

The Chairperson: I will request hon. Members to shorten their intervention, please.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, in fact, the hon. Member is not aware but, in fact, there were much less Woman Police Officers before, but I agree with you, we should increase it further. In fact, the Commissioner of Police is aware of this and this is being addressed.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will put a three in one to be short. At page 150, under *sub programme: combating drugs*, I want some clarification if the hon. Prime Minister will oblige. Under item *22120 Fees*, a sum of Rs600,000 is being budgeted. I would wish to know what this refers to. Under the next item *22140 Medical Supplies, drugs and equipment*, again, I would like to know what this refers to. In fact, this is a regular item which comes under each different programme and I would like some clarification as to what it refers to. And finally under item 31 Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets, the sums being budgeted here increase dramatically, jumping from Rs3 m. this year to Rs6 m. next year and doubling yet again to Rs11 m. and then Rs12m. So, could we be enlightened as to what are the projects of the ADSU which explain such increases?

The Prime Minister: The fees are the stipend paid to Police officers attending training abroad and as regards the medical supply drugs provision is for purchase of vaccines, medicines and drugs. For the Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets, the provision is there for purchase of vans; again there are five vans. These are for replacement of vans that are seven years old, at least. Also, there is provision for the purchase of specialised equipment that they need.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 150, under item *21 Compensation of Employees*, may I know whether the ADSU officers do get a special allowance for being in the ADSU and do they get any compensation whenever they make a big catch?

The Prime Minister: I believe that is the case.

The Chairperson: Last question on this item!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chair, I take it you will not be allowing us to put questions later on when we go to the detailed staffing position?

The Chairperson: Which vote?

Mr Obeegadoo: Pages 154 to 160!

The Chairperson: No, we have already finished with page 154.

Mr Obeegadoo: So, we won't be entitled to put questions. Can I then ask the hon. Prime Minister if he can ...

The Chairperson: Which page now?

Mr Obeegadoo: Page 157, Sub-Programme 26204 *Combating Drugs*. Hon. Mrs Labelle raised a number of issues. I don't know whether those have been answered and I have some similar preoccupations.

The Chairperson: No, but the hon. Member cannot repeat the questions that have already been asked.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will not repeat. My question to the Prime Minister is whether the Budget we are voting reflects a restructuring in terms of staff composition because the figures here seem to indicate that, at Constable level, the number goes down.

The Chairperson: No, I will not allow this question. Structuring is a policy matter.

Mr Obeegadoo: Shall I reformulate, Mr Chairperson?

The Chairperson: Yes, reformulate, let me see what it gives!

Mr Obeegadoo: So, it is the funding that we are being requested to approve. It indicates that, at Constable level, the number will be reduced and at Inspector level increased and in terms of female Constables, the number will decrease again.

The Prime Minister: I explained earlier on. The answer is no.

Programme Code 262: Community, Safety and Security (Rs2,491,512,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 263: Emergency, Disaster Management and Surveillance was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Is this the SMF when we talk about this emergency?

The Chairperson: Emergency, it is at page 151.

Mr Bhagwan: I want to ask the Prime Minister if it is SMF, whether the SMF Unit ...

The Chairperson: No, please! We have to record the page and the item.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 151, under item *31112036 Construction of SMF Buildings*, can we know from the Prime Minister whether the SMF Unit in Rodrigues is still operational and whether they have a building there? It is of what use that building in Rodrigues?

The Prime Minister: I have reduced the number of SMF personnel after I went to Rodrigues, but they have a building, I believe. What is the other question?

Mr Bhagwan: How many officers are there?

The Prime Minister: I don't have the exact number of officers, but we have reduced considerably the number of officers. I think the hon. Member knows that. But if he wants the exact number, I will give it to him.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, Sir, I presume this is the Unit that handles the cases of missing persons?

The Prime Minister: No!

Mr Obeegadoo: Because it speaks of internal emergency rescue. Is this the Unit that handles missing persons?

The Prime Minister: If there is a rescue operation.

Mr Obeegadoo: If so, may I raise this issue? There seems to be an increase in the number of missing persons in the recent months and the Police Force seems to be stretched to the limit in this respect. Again, is provision being made to be able to respond effectively to such cases? Often these cases require persons to be found in a very short period of time, otherwise it is only their bodies that are found a couple of weeks later.

The Prime Minister: What was the question then?

Mr Obeegadoo: The question is: whether in terms of budgeting for that unit, we are specifically addressing this growing problem of missing persons within the country?

The Prime Minister: If we talk about the same item, in fact, it englobes that as well, if that is what the hon. Member wants to say.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same page, Mr Chairperson, item *31111001 Construction of Quarters & Barracks*. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister in which area these will be?

The Prime Minister: It is for the construction of one floor of the existing building to cater for accommodation for three platoons; that is the SMF building.

Mrs Labelle: I am referring to item *31122 Other Machinery and Equipment*. This year it was Rs45,400,000, now it is Rs47,600,000. But my concern is the maintenance of the equipment. What about the maintenance? There is an item above concerning maintenance of vehicles and motorcycles. I don't know whether maintenance of this equipment is included in this figure. If it is so, may I know whether the maintenance is in-house or it is being contracted out?

Dr. Sorefan: Under the same item regarding acquisition of security equipment, may we know from the hon. Prime Minister what kind of security equipment we are going to buy?

The Prime Minister: First of all, for the maintenance, these are for the acquisition of the assets. There is another item for the maintenance, but for certain items, these also include maintenance; it is a bit mixed. It is mainly for acquisition, but I should have said also for maintenance. Concerning the acquisition of equipment, there are surveillance equipment, CCTV cameras and other security equipment.

Mr Baloomoody: Under item *31122802 Acquisition of IT Equipment*, why is it that no provision is made for acquisition of IT equipment for that Unit for the coming years? On the same page, with regard to item *31122806 Acquisition of Generators*, again why is it that no provision is made for the year 2011? There was no provision for 2010, no provision for 2011, but there is provision for 2012 for generators.

The Prime Minister: Again, the whole idea is that the Police Department does not feel the need for new generators, but they still provide it because of the age, life span and all these things. It is as if they are trying to think ahead and see whether they will need it or not. As for the other items, yes, they do need these. In fact, IT equipment is involved in that.

Mr Baloomoody: There is no provision, if the hon. Prime Minister would look at item *31122802 Acquisition of IT Equipment*.

The Prime Minister: Yes, I didn't understand the question.

Mr Baloomoody: There is no provision for acquisition of IT equipment for the next four years. There is no provision for 2010, 2011, and 2012.

The Prime Minister: It is because they have the equipment that they need. They are buying other equipment, but they don't need this specific equipment. That is why there is no provision. If they need, they will ask.

Mr Barbier: Under item *31121801 Acquisition of Vehicles*, again, there is a considerable increase from Rs7,000,000 to Rs63,500,000. Can we have a list of which type of vehicles are going to be bought under this item?

The Prime Minister: The provision for purchase of vehicles, Mr Chairperson, is in replacement of old and damaged ones. It includes twenty units of double cab, two units of high proof roof vehicles, three units of telescopic load-haul, one lorry, one unit skid steer, two unit black-haul and one unit for remotely operated vehicle. As for the previous question on IT, I just want to add something. Was the hon. Member asking for maintenance or new equipment? It is not quite clear in my mind. I suggest clarifying this. For the acquisition of IT, this falls under – because the hon. Member was saying why there is no acquisition here - the Police budget and that is why it goes there.

Mrs Labelle: I am referring to item *22060 Maintenance*. I see that the figure for maintenance remains barely the same. Why are we providing for an increase in the purchase of equipment? How come that the figure for maintenance remains the same when we have increased considerably the number of vehicles and so on? Can we be enlightened on that?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member remembers, I was saying that if we started giving maintenance to the people who import the cars, it will eventually bring the cost down, that is part of the reason, but also there are probably other reasons, but the main reason is, in fact, we get more efficient return on what we are doing.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 152 *Sub-Programme 26302 – Police Order Policing* under item *31 Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, may I ask the Prime Minister

whether this Budget for next year provides for the replacement of the telephone exchange system at Curepipe Police Station as, right now, it is extremely difficult for members of the public to phone Curepipe Police Station to get through? According to the Police officers there, the system is inappropriate. They have requested that it be replaced and nothing has been done. This is most urgent. It is extremely important that people can have access to the Police over the telephone. May we know whether this Budget provides for renewal of the equipment for Curepipe Police Station?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I will pass this on. Are you talking about the telephone in the Police Station itself?

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes. There is a central system where all incoming calls come in which needs to be replaced according to the Police officers themselves.

The Prime Minister: I will pass this on to the Commissioner of Police.

The Chairperson: *Sub-Programme 26303 – Coastal and Maritime Surveillance.*

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 153 under item *31121402 Overhaul of helicopter*, can I know from the Prime Minister about the number of helicopters there are in the Police list and whether provision is made for Rodrigues? Is it not the time for Rodrigues, at least, to have a helicopter service *en cas d'accident*? Is provision made or will be made in the future for Rodrigues?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we have six helicopters in the Police Force. We have a new one, as you know, a twin engine helicopter. There is one which is on lease from India which is included in the six. The twin engine helicopter can go to Rodrigues very quickly. But I think it is a point that we should have one station there.

Programme Code 263 – Emergency, Disaster Management and Surveillance (Rs1,766,366,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 271 - Government Printing Department was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 165, under *Programme 271 - Government Printing Services*, can I know from the Prime Minister whether all works are effected by the Government Printing itself or whether the Government Printing Service contracts out its services for the printing materials for Government to the private sector?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I am not aware that they are contracting out. Whatever we ask we get. I can double check on that, but I am not aware that they contract out.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 163, under *item 161647 Machine Minder/Service Machine Minder (Bindery), Machine Minder/Service Machine Minder (Pressroom)*, we have been told that one of the major constraints was that the Government Printing Department is understaffed, in particular having regard to pressmen and binders. Do we understand from its number of staffing positions that this constraint will be altogether removed next year with the new Budget being approved?

The Prime Minister: I can confirm that they do not contract out at all. The question was about the constraint. I did not catch the item page.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 163, it is said that one of the major constraints and challenges is in respect of understaffing, technical staff, pressmen and binders. There is a small increase in the numbers. As indicated, on page 167, I wish to know whether that would mean that, by next year, this issue of understaffing as a constraint to the Government Printing Department would have been addressed.

The Prime Minister: In fact, I know some of the vacancies have been advertised on 25 August and it is said that this year the selection exercise will be carried in December of 2010 and that is for eight of seven additional officers. Again, for the machine, binders and senior machine binders, they have been advertised on the same date and the PSC will carry out the selection exercise on the same date as well.

Mr Barbier: Mr Chairperson, concerning the staffing position on page 167, there is no provision for the posts of Deputy Government Printer, Assistant Government Printer, Printing Officer, neither for the current year nor for the coming years. Can we know why these posts are not being filled?

The Prime Minister: In fact, in Programme 271 we talk about Government Printing Services. There is a post of Deputy Government Printer, Assistant Government Printer, Senior Graphic Artist and two Printing officers. These are promotional posts filled from serving officers of the Printing Department. However, for the time being, there are no qualified candidates. Therefore, for the smooth running of the Printing Department, exactly what I am

telling you, even for the Deputy Government Printer, no one is qualified for the time being. So, they will relook at it.

Programme Code 271 - Government Printing Department (Rs102,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 281 - Meteorological Services was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 172, under *item 281 Meteorological Services*, can I know from the Prime Minister if he can give us the latest information concerning the radar? We have been made to understand that the main radar of Trou aux Cerfs is out of service. Government was supposed to approach donor countries. What is the latest situation? And, secondly, can I ask the Prime Minister whether he has time - because it is not far from his residence - to have a look at the control centre of the meteorological services? He can make a surprise visit. Modern Mauritius cannot afford to have an operation centre so badly manned in the physical appearance itself and this is a very important institution. Can I make a request to the Prime Minister that funds be given to modernise the operation centre with training, equipment, mobile radio equipment and also new modern equipment which can be linked to satellites, not only in the region, but around the world? There is an ordinary TV and now we are having plasma everywhere.

The Prime Minister: In fact, there is an overhauling of all the meteorological services. This morning, I mentioned two bits of it in my speech about disaster management and the need for communication with the SAFEN, but I certainly take on board what the hon. Member is saying. I must say they will try to purchase the radar, but it is felt by many that there is no need, because there is other equipment. They are in discussion with the Japan International Cooperation Agency; it is very expensive. They, in fact, obtain weather information from other different sources which are quite adequate, but people think there is need for a radar, they are looking at it.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have three questions, Sir. I will take them one by one. I refer, of course, to Programme 281 on page 171, under *item 22150 on Scientific and Laboratory Equipment and Supplies* and on page 173 item 31 *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*. Looking back at page 169 in the *Major Constraints and Challenges*, it would appear that equipment is,

indeed, a major problem, *Monitoring of stand-alone equipment and aging of automatic weather stations* appears to be a problem.

As regards dissemination of warnings to the public, some equipment is no longer compatible with present requirements, and as pointed out by hon. Bhagwan, whether radar is available. I would wish to know from the hon. Prime Minister how these constraints are being addressed in the Budget that we are being asked to approve. That would be my first question, Mr Chairperson.

The Prime Minister: Again, on the limits that's what we can afford. But these are, in fact, overseas purchase of apparatus and supplies. There are many technical apparatus that we need and these are being purchased. Of course, in an ideal world we will purchase everything from radar to whatever. But we have to limit ourselves to what we can and what we need.

Mr Obeegadoo: My second question is even more specific, Mr Chairperson. Turning to page 171, *item 04, P1 - Monitoring of Tsunami*, we know this is very controversial. There have recently been tidal waves, shall we call it, which affected Rodrigues and there was controversy as to whether this resulted from volcanic eruption after coast of Indonesia or not, and here we have been told improvement in forecasts based on real time data from tide gauge. So, again, how is the budget we are being asked to vote relate to that because the danger is real?

The Prime Minister: The danger is real but, unfortunately, any expert will tell you it is very difficult to be very precise about a tsunami. We have taken views from very eminent persons. It is very difficult, but we must try our best and that is what we are doing. We are putting what they call alert systems in place and also what we have seen in Singapore. I have asked the Director of this service to come to Mauritius. We have already forwarded him data that he needed because they are very advanced there and they are nearer the Sumatra region and, therefore, they can give us very good advice. They have already given us some preliminary indications. They explained to us, for example, why we did not get the waves when this big tsunami hit all those countries in the past.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 174, *staffing*. You will note, Mr Chairperson, that the human resources remain stuck at 135. It is 135 for this year, 135 for next year, the same figure for 2012 and the same figure for 2013, whereas at page 169 we are being told that one major constraint again is the problem of release of personnel for training. The technical staff need to be

constantly upgraded and trained and the Meteorological Services cannot release them for lack of personnel. So, why is it that the budget we are being asked to approve this year and even the projections for the next couple of years do not allow for any increase in staffing?

The Prime Minister: I again say the same thing, Mr Chairperson. We would like to have many more if we can, but we have to do with whatever we have and we are limited with. But we are also relooking at the organisation of this Unit. As I said, there is a Director of a similar Unit which encompasses this as well, he is coming to Mauritius. We have already sent him the data. He can advise us because they are very efficiently running the Unit in Singapore. Hopefully, we will be able to find out the solution.

Mr François: Mr Chairperson, I was going on the same line as hon. Obeegadoo regarding monitoring of tsunami. Will the hon. Prime Minister consider installing, at least, three real time tide gauge around the island of Rodrigues, in the Eastern, Western and Southern part of the island?

The Chairperson: I am sorry. It's policy.

Programme Code 281: Meteorological Services (Rs70,317,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Mauritius Prisons Service – Programme Code 291: Management of Prisons was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I take it we are starting with Programme Code 291.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 178, *under Performance Indicator 02, P4 - Number of convicted detainees empowered and rehabilitated.* The hon. Prime Minister would surely agree that rehabilitation is crucial. I am astonished that, in spite of the budget we are being asked to approve - which is a sizeable one indeed - for this programme, Rs34 m. The objective suggests that only 30 convicted detainees are to be empowered and rehabilitated in 2010. We have the same figure 30 for 2011, 2012 and 2013. Clearly, there is something obviously wrong here.

The Chairperson: Any other intervention on this issue?

The Prime Minister: In fact, again, in my speech this morning, I did say that rehabilitation should be stressed because I have seen also what they have done in Singapore. The reoffending rate in Mauritius is very high again compared to Singapore. We have not changed anything because all this is being reviewed. As I said again, experts are coming from abroad to look at this. That is why we have not changed anything here, but we are concentrating on this.

Mr Uteem : Mr Chairperson, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister to what non-profit institution are we referring here?

The Prime Minister: This is the provision for contribution to discharge persons AIDS Committee.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 178, *Performance Indicator 02, P5, construction of the Melrose Prison*, are we to understand that Melrose Prison will only be operational in 2012? Of course, we know that overcrowding of prisons is the major constraint. Are we to understand that in spite of what sums we are going to vote this year, Melrose will not be ready and operational before June 2012, which is a year and a half?

The Prime Minister: In fact, again we keep complaining about the procedures. We have to follow those procedures. The hon. Member is right. It is going to take the time that it is going to take and it will be in October 2012, in fact.

Programme Code 291: Management of Prisons (Rs35,272,000) was, on question put agreed to.

Programme Code 292: Custody and Rehabilitation of Detainees was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, under this programme I will refer firstly to page 177, *Summary of Financial Resources by Programmes and Sub-Programmes*. The figures here, I won't say are erratic, but vary greatly from Rs731 m. this year, Rs1.145 m. next year, then it goes down again to less than a million in 2012 and it is then cut by half to Rs500,000 in 2013. I have tried to make sense of the figures, but it is very difficult to follow.

The Chairperson: Put the question and let the Prime Minister explain.

Mr Obeegadoo: Would the hon. Prime Minister give us some indication as to what explains these figures?

Mrs Labelle: Regarding this *Programme 292: Custody and Rehabilitation of Detainees*, when I look at the performance indicators, I would like to know the number of detainees who took part at the CPE exams and passed. Have detainees followed distance education programme? We also talked about detoxification services. I would like to know what programme detainees receive, because we are talking about 1,200 detainees following detoxification programme. If we could have some details regarding this programme, which is supposedly touching so many detainees?

Mr Obeegadoo: Should I put some other questions in the meantime?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am referring again to page 178, *Programme 292: Custody and Rehabilitation of Detainees - 01: Induction services at New Wing Prison - P1: % of detainees medically examined on admission*. Of course, we know that detainees cannot be forced to submit to a medical examination and, yet, this is crucial to separate those who are drug addicts from the others. Will the hon. Prime Minister indicate, within the perspective of the present Budget for next year, what new measures are being envisaged to induce more detainees to agree to medical examination, which would be related to detoxification?

My second and final point will relate to the education endeavours at page 179, *O3: Education and vocational training to detainees - P2, P3, P4*. Again this Programme-based Budgeting seems to be very artificial. The Prime Minister will agree, in view of the figures of 25 each year to pass the CPE, and 5 boys per year to follow self-skill training. Clearly, we have a problem there. Will the hon. Prime Minister agree to look into these targets and make it more ambitious and realistic at the same time?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we are looking at the whole issue. I think I have mentioned, at some point, that we are even going to involve the NGOs in this, because I think that it will be helpful.

The hon. Member wanted to know about the rehabilitation programme for detainees convicted. One thing that the hon. Member has rightly said is that we cannot force them. So, we try to persuade them as much as we can. In any case, the figure is not low. Was it for detainees convicted for drug addiction or for detoxification - because, there were two similar questions.

The Drug Secretariat was set up in the Prisons Department in 2007. They have worked out a comprehensive drug strategy and, currently, drug free units are operational at Beau Bassin Central Prison, Women Prison and Petit Verger Prison. In 2010, about 700 detainees have followed the rehabilitation activities, which include all sorts of things that they do. I cannot remember if the hon. Member asked for the detainees not necessarily infected.

There were 14 MITD courses, which were given to 316 male and 47 female detainees in different areas.

Mr Baloomoody: Regarding page 180, *item No. 21 - Compensation of Employees* and *item No. 21110 - Personal Emoluments*, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister when was the last time that uniforms were supplied to the Prison officers? Further, can we know whether those who are working in banks have been paid or whether there are any arrears due to them?

The Prime Minister: These are operational matters for the Commissioner of Prisons, Mr Chairperson. So, whenever they need, they will ask and they will get.

Mr Uteem: With regard to page 181, *item No. 31122811 - Acquisition of CCTV Surveillance System*, I note that nothing is provided for the 2011 Budget Estimate. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he is happy that all the existing prisons are properly equipped with CCTV surveillance system and that they are all working properly?

The Prime Minister: You can buy the equipment but it depends whether the person uses it properly. We know what happens very often. In fact, we need to buy less as we have already given to certain prisons. In some cases, we are looking on professionals to monitor those CCTV cameras, and it is giving good results so far. We hope that it will continue.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, the hon. Member said it was a final question. I am sorry, the Prime Minister has answered.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: Acquisition of vehicles...

The Chairperson: I will take that one from the hon. Member and then I will put the question!

Mr Baloomoody: ... item no. 31121801 - *Acquisition of Vehicles*. I see that there is no provision for acquisition of vehicles. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that there is a shortage of vehicles? In fact, all the vehicles are old and are based only at Beau Bassin. So, the other centres do not have a vehicle, and this creates not only administration problems, but also security problems, because when there is urgency there is no vehicle. It also creates delays for attending court, because prisoners who are on remand reach court at 11.00 a.m. or 11.30 a.m., because there are no vehicles.

The Prime Minister: My understanding was that there are vehicles attached to different prisons but, maybe, there have been some cases of delay. I will again ask them to look at this.

Programme Code 292: Custody and Rehabilitation of Detainees (Rs1,145,760,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, may I seek your guidance on a question of procedure?

The Chairperson: Yes, the issue has been fully debated, questions put and answers given. This is not the last life of this Parliament. The hon. Member can come back through parliamentary questions if he so wishes.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I seek your guidance, Mr Chairperson?

The Chairperson: On what?

Mr Obeegadoo: I would seek your guidance on a question of procedure. May I be allowed to put my question?

The Chairperson: Yes, carry on.

Mr Obeegadoo: This is my 15th year in this National Assembly.

The Chairperson: Yes, I agree. You were a Minister, and you know the procedure.

Mr Obeegadoo: When a question is put at Committee of Supply, to be fair to the hon. Prime Minister, ...

The Chairperson: No, I am sorry! You have to rise ...

Mr Obeegadoo: ...it should be...

The Chairperson: No, I am sorry, hon. Obeegadoo! I have been listening to you all throughout. When you rise on a point of order, then you tell me, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: But the question has not been answered.

The Chairperson: You very well know, as you have been a Minister, that the Prime Minister has answered what he can answer. Next vote!

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 441: Utility Policy and Management was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to page 189, under *Programme 443: Water Resources*. The objectives are set ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: I am sorry! Can I make a small observation? Hon. Members who are interested to intervene at the Committee of Supply on items must have their homework done, and not come and stand up and try to find out where they are going and what questions they will put. Could you please make up your mind as to which item you want to intervene? Hon Bhagwan!

(*Interruptions*)

Order! Yes, hon. Obeegadoo, you have found your way now?

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 191, under item 28222006, *Solar Water-Heaters Grant Scheme II (MID Fund)*. Would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister kindly provide some information as to why, on this item, the funds which are budgeted are projected for year 2012 and not for this year? May we have some clarification, why it appears in the Budget, whereas with apparently nothing specific budgeted for the next coming year?

Under item 31122999, *Solar Water-Heaters for Hospitals (MID Fund)*, we see the same provision for year 2012, but not for year 2011.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, may I ask my colleagues to take it one by one and page by page?

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, one question at a time.

The Deputy Prime Minister: With regard to the Solar-Water Heaters Grant Scheme, we still have the Rs250 m. voted last year and we are going to use it this year.

Mr Lesjongard: Under item 26313098, that is, the *Utility Regulatory Authority*, can we have an indication from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, where matters stand with regard to the nomination of the Chairperson and members of that Authority?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, we did have a Chairperson, but we have some difficulty getting him, so we are waiting; it will be done next year.

Mr Bhagwan: I have a question on the *Solar Water-Heaters Grant Scheme*. Can we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister how many solar water-heaters have been installed, as at today, under this scheme?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, so far, we can say that 22,790 grants have been disbursed.

Mr Lesjongard: Under the same item, that is, *Solar Water-Heaters Grant Scheme*, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister indicate to the House whether new criteria have been defined for those bidding for solar water-heaters?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, Mr Chairperson, strict new standards.

Mr Baloomoody: Under the same item, with regard to solar water-heaters for hospitals, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister tell us why is it that no provision is made for 2011, but we have provision for 2012, and which hospitals will be given priority?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, it is taking time for ESD to sort out the problem. It is a technical problem more than anything else.

Programme Code 441: Utility Policy and Management (Rs146,362,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 442: Energy Services was called.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 191, under *Programme Code 442, Item No. 25110008 Subsidy to Central Electricity Board*. Can we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, concerning the *Electricity Supply for Hardship Cases and Displacement of Electric Lines/Poles for Hardship*

Cases, whether there is an established policy by Government, and if so, what is the policy? And whether this said policy can be circulated to Members of Parliament so that we can attend to request - whenever we have the request - and give us an idea of a number of such cases which Government has consulted during this financial year?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Can I take one by one, Mr Chairperson?

Dr. Jeetah: If I could be allowed, Mr Chairperson? Can I bring your attention, once again, to Standing Orders, Section 73(12), where it is clearly stated that: 'Discussion shall be confined (...)'.

The Chairperson: I know that and there is no need for the hon. Minister to read it. Make your point! I know it by heart.

Dr. Jeetah: But it appears that it is possible to question policy. I would like to know from the Chairperson, ...

The Chairperson: The question which has been put is not a policy matter.

Dr. Jeetah: I am sorry?

The Chairperson: It is not a policy matter. It is my ruling.

Dr. Jeetah: It isn't? So, it is okay to raise question about policy.

The Chairperson: Yes!

Dr. Jeetah: Against the Standing Order?

The Chairperson: Are you challenging my ruling?

Dr. Jeetah: No, I am just asking.

The Chairperson: I said it is not policy. Do you understand that? Please sit down!

(Interruptions)

Order!

The Deputy Prime Minister: If I may reply to this question. Mr Chairperson there were two schemes formerly. We introduced a single scheme and it is as follows: for displacement of poles and assistance for elderly; if you are earning less than Rs8,500, the assistance is Rs65,000. I have already circulated it in answer to a PQ. As to the information required, we have received

105 applications this year. The number of applications approved: 64; 38 are under process and 35 have already been completed.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 191, under item 25110008, with regard to (c) *Feed in Tariff to Small Independent Power Producers (IPPs)*, we have understood that the green code is ready and the feeding tariff also is ready. Do we also understand that it is only in 2012 that the project will be launched?

The Deputy Prime Minister: No, Mr Chairperson. We will have it from a *MID Fund*. The *MID Fund* will finance for the projects and we are launching it on Thursday – in two days time.

Mr Bhagwan: Under *Purchase of electricity from landfill Gas*, from what we understand there was a site visit and the project was launched.

The Chairperson: On which item?

Mr Bhagwan: Under item 25110008, Subsidy to CEB, (b) *Purchase of Electricity from Landfill Gas (MID Fund)*. Can I know from the Deputy Prime Minister whether a contract had been signed for that project - which was launched according to my information? How many kilowatt or gigawatt would be sent to the grid from that particular project? Can we know the name of the promoter also?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is Sotravic - Bilfinger Berger. We expect a 20-gigawatt hour output yearly as from 2012.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what will be the cost of subsidy on one kilowatt?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It will be the difference between the actual and the operative cost. It will be roughly between Rs4.88 and Rs2.87.

Mr Uteem: With respect to item 22120, *Fees*, may I know what these fees relate to? Why has it gone up in 2011 and then it will fall drastically in 2012?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will get the information.

Mr Baloomoody: Sir, at page 191 under item 22090 *Security*, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the security is being contracted out and if so, which firm is offering its services or is it part of the establishment?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the security is being contracted out.

Mr Baloomoody: Can we know which firm is now offering this service?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Barbier: At page 191, under item 22030 *Rent*, we can see that there is an increase in rent of nearly 50% from Rs2.2 m. to Rs3.1 m. May we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether it stands for the same building and, if so, why this considerable increase in the rent?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There has been new accommodation at Curepipe and Plaines Wilhems.

Mr Obeegadoo: Referring to item 25110008 *Subsidy to CEB, Electricity Supply for Hardship Cases and Displacement of Electric Line Poles for Hardship Cases*, would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister kindly explain why the subsidy provided drops from Rs13 m. projected for this year to Rs5 m. for each of the next three years and, the more so, as on page 189, number of cases to be attended to in that regard is fixed at 75 baseline and then for the three next years, it is still 75, whereas we know there are a high number of requests that come in concerning supply of electricity and displacement of poles?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I have partially answered this question, there are lots of requests but they don't fulfill the criteria unfortunately about the household earning and so on and so forth. So, we are not getting the number that we think but, one positive step will be that we will be introducing in Rodrigues as well and make provision for that as we go ahead. I understand the backlog has been cleared already.

Mr Baloomoody: The security firm?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: We'll never finish! The hon. Member must say that he wants to put questions.

Mr Uteem: At page 192, under *item 32145502 Loan to Central Electricity Board*, can we know the interest rate that the CEB will be paying on those loans?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will find out.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 192, item *32145502*, I've got three questions and I will ask one by one. With regard to the Fort Victoria Power Station Phase II, can we have an indication on the real cost of the project and where matters stand as at to date?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, we are talking about the 4 x 15 megawatt at Fort Victoria Phase II, it is still at the Central Procurement Board. It is being reviewed at the Procurement Board. I can't say more than that.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the Pointe Monnier Power Station in Rodrigues, can we also have an indication where matters stand and whether the CEB is going ahead with the project?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, yes, the CEB is going ahead with the project. As to where matters stand, it is between the CPB and the IRP.

Mr Lesjongard: Under the same item, with regard to the *Les Salines Development Project*, money is earmarked for 2011. Can we have an indication on the scope of works?

The Deputy Prime Minister: All we have at present, Mr Chairperson is for a low demand of 66 MVA which is about 50 megawatt.

Programme Code 442: Energy Services (Rs3,116,878,000), was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 443: Water Resources was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, the Deputy Prime Minister himself had referred to defective pipelines that needed to be replaced. I refer to page 189, under indicator P1 : Number of kilometers of defective pipelines replaced. Having regard to what the Deputy Prime Minister has stated earlier in this House, may we know how he would account for the targets that we are being asked to approve? I am referring to page 189, Programme Code 443 Water Resources, Central Water Authority, 01 *Provision of regular and reliable water supply*. My question is: Given the public statements made by the Deputy Prime Minister here, and elsewhere, as to the

magnitude of the problem and what needs to be done, how will he explain to us that, having regard to the Budget we are being asked to vote, the target is only 80 kilometres for 2011 and the same for 2012 and 2013, when, at that rate, will we resolve the problem of defective pipelines?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I spoke at length about it this morning and gave some details. I'll circulate the information.

Mr Lesjongard: At page 192, under Programme 443 *Water Resources*, item 28223010 – *Capital Grant to CWA for the replacement of old and defective pipelines*, an amount of Rs110 m. was earmarked for last year and we have Rs155 m. for this year. Can we have an indication on the length of pipes that have to be replaced and what length will be replaced by that amount earmarked for the year 2011?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, this is part of the answer that I just gave and if you want, I will give it in detail. We have two projects, one is major replacement, and one is of repairs and so on. The major replacement will cost us a lot and this is the information I am going to circulate.

Mr Ganoo: When we look at the provision for the three years, on the same issue for year 2011 it amounts to Rs150 m.; for year 2012, it amounts to Rs54 m. and, for year 2013 it is Rs18 m. When you add up, it amounts to about Rs218 m. roughly. But, in the Budget Speech, it was announced that Rs450 m. have been earmarked for the coming three years. Can the Deputy Prime Minister explain this contradiction?

The Deputy Prime Minister: As I have said, there are two parts to it. One is the minor works and one is the major works and we will get a request to review expenditure. There is no problem there. As I have said, we have two separate programmes, one is minor and one is major. The major work is already there; it is part of grant and loan money which come to almost Rs1 billion.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 192, item 22090 *Security*. This morning or yesterday afternoon, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, on addressing the House, did show us some picture of vandalism in substations of the CWA and we know that we are spending that much for security. Can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister which firm is offering the security service so that we can know that we are not voting money to throw it around in water?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I don't have the name of the firm, but I know that the firm is under contract for the past two years and it will soon come to an end. We will have to renew it.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, maybe, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister could clarify what has just been stated by hon. Ganoo. It is clearly stated that a sum of Rs454 m. is earmarked for the replacement of pipes for the coming three years. The major replacement is under an EIB loan. We are talking about what is in the Budget, that is, Rs454 m. When you add up the amount which is stated in the document we have, it does not sum up to Rs454 m. May we know why?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the answer is very simple. We made a budget, if we need more - it depends on the capacity to do the work - we will requisition for incurred expenditure.

Mr Barbier: At page 192, item 28223010 *Capital Grant to CWA for the replacement of old and defective pipelines*. May I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, whether there has been any report to identify all the defective pipes island-wise which need replacement, and whether there is any forecast of investment in that direction to replace all these pipes?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, there has been a survey of pipes in the past. I am sure hon. Ganoo will confirm this, but we will have to do it again.

Programme Code 443 – Water Resources (Rs1,326,907,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 444 – Sanitation was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to page 193, *Programme 444: Sanitation; delivery unit; Wastewater Management Authority – P1: Number of additional kilometers of sewer pipelines*; indicator is given for this year, next year and so on, and also, *P2: Number of additional houses connected*. My question is: with the Budget being voted, by the end of 2011, what percentage of the Mauritian population will be connected to the sewer network?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the National Sewerage Plan covers Plaines Wilhems and the North as well. I'll get the figures in a minute and will give it to the

hon. Member for the extended plan which we are going to do for the next five or ten years. But it will not cover, by any means, 35% or 40% of the population. I'll give the figures.

Mr Obeegadoo: My second question, Mr Chairperson, is under the same programme which addresses broadly adverse effects of environmental degradation.

May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what steps, if any, are being taken to address the issue of use of pesticides in agriculture affecting our underwater resources?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, of course, we are all aware of this danger, but till today, there is no evidence that it is seeping through into the aquifer. But that does not mean that we don't have to be careful.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 193, under item *31113008 Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project*, can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what is the target date for the completion of works of the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project? I am talking about rehabilitation. We all know the problems that inhabitants of Quatre Bornes, Rose Hill and other regions have suffered through the good work of the Sewerage Rehabilitation work. Can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether funds have been earmarked for the complete rehabilitation of the roads, would it be partial rehabilitation where there have been trenches or rehabilitation of the whole road system?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, it depends on the road. If it is a major road, it would be complete. If it is a minor road, it will be partial.

Mr Ganoo: At page 193, under item *31113008 Infrastructure Rehabilitation in CHA Estates*, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister be so kind as to tell us which of the CHA Estates will be sewered?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the priority sites are Cité La Cure, Cité Paul et Virginie, Cité Vallée des Prêtres, Cité Atlee, Cité Malherbe and Cité Palmerston.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 194 under item *Upgrading of Wastewater Infrastructure*, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister where matters stand with regard to the Pailles-Guibies Sewerage Project?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, funding from BADEA and OPEC have already been secured and the scope of works are 1,800 houses connections and 5 km trunk sewer and the feasibility study is still going on.

Mr Ganoo: At page 194, concerning *Social Housing Project*, a sum Rs10 m. is earmarked for next year and Rs5 m. for the two years, 2012 and 2013. Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister tell us what is the *social housing project*? He must know that, very often, there are complaints and requests from certain *cités* which are not seweraged yet and, unfortunately, the inhabitants are made to pay for the cesspool emptier. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether in this item there is any form of subsidy, whereby inhabitants of CHA estates or even NHDC could be provided freely the lorries to empty their cesspools?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Unfortunately not, Mr Chairperson. This is meant for operation and maintenance of sewerage infrastructure in the NHDC.

Mr Ganoo: Is there any problem to help these CHA people or NHDC people?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Not that I know of.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, under the same item, on page 194, with regard to part (h), that is, *Port Louis Rehabilitation Project*. Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, inform the House whether rehabilitation works will include the region of Cité La Cure where we have had a lot of complaints recently?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I answered this question extensively in a PQ not so long ago, Mr Chairperson.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Chairperson, under the same item, (e) *Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project*, will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister say what are the measures taken to eliminate bad smell emanating from the plant there?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I have been made aware of the problem and we are looking into it. It's not an easy problem to solve.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, again, under the same item, part (d), with regard to *Infrastructure Rehabilitation in CHA Estates*, can we have an indication where matters stand? Have tenders been awarded? Have works already started on site?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I just answered this question.

Programme Code 444 – Sanitation (Rs1,258,252,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 445 - Radiation Protection was called.

Mr Uteem: May I know under item 26210, on page 194, what are the international that are receiving Rs 1.9m. of grants?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The IAA.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, Programme Code 445 – item No. 31112 – *Other Machinery and Equipment*, an amount of Rs2 m. is earmarked for 2011 for the acquisition of equipment. Can we know what equipment will be acquired?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is thermo luminescence **dosimetry and monitoring equipment.** It is to measure radiation.

Programme Code 445 (Rs9,044,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Obeegadoo: In respect of this programme, may I refer the hon. vice-Prime Minister
...

The Chairperson: Please, quote the item, the page and everything!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, we are on the programme you have indicated, which is Programme Code 731, at page 202. Could I be allowed to relate to page 200, Major Achievements for 2010 and ask the vice-Prime Minister for some clarification on three issues? First, the educational support to around 19,000 needy children and students, whether he can explain what this consist of? May I go on to my two additional points? The next one is the dedicated child welfare programme to enhance social protection to children in pockets of poverty, what that consist of, and finally, support in Rodrigues 463 primary students, may we be enlightened as to the nature of such support?

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, we provide different types of assistance to needy children, basically it is provision of school materials, uniforms, bags, shoes and socks. That is for pre-

primary. So, the average cost is about Rs1,000 for pre-primary. For primary, the average cost per annum is about Rs1,500 per student; for secondary, it is about Rs1,900 per student. Basically, they are school uniforms, bags, shoes, socks and stationary. We have recently set up a dedicated child welfare programme. The NIF has done so and it is an integrated programme and not all of it has been started, but it consists of the setting up of nurseries, of giving after school care, taking kids out of schools, remedial classes. It is an integrated service, because we think that these things need to be provided to the kids, so as to break the cycle of poverty. The last one was in Rodrigues. What was the question in Rodrigues, Mr Chairperson?

Mr Obeegadoo: My question was: what is the nature of the support? But I take it that this relates to school equipment. May we know which areas of the island of Mauritius are concerned by the educational support to the 19,000 needy children and students?

Mr Duval: It will be 229 pockets of poverty.

Mr Uteem: In respect to *Item No. 22120*, on page 203, may we know who the appointed consultants are?

Mr Duval: Nobody yet!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, regarding the two integrated projects at La Valette and Cité Lumière, may I ask the hon. Minister about the number of families who have benefitted from Cité Lumière and whether this project has been completed? Moreover, regarding water tanks, I see that ...

The Chairperson: Please, quote the item and the page!

Mrs Labelle: At page 200, regarding the major achievements where everything is stated, I have raised the point regarding Cité Lumière and I will take the other question later.

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, out of the 38 potential beneficiaries, only 19 have adhered to our social contract which is essential for provisional housing. Those houses are being completed and we expect to deliver them before the end of the year. Part of the road will be completed only next year.

Mrs Labelle: My next question concerns the purchase of water tanks for 442 families. It seems that some 400 families have benefitted from the water tanks. May we know which criteria are used and the major achievements?

Mr Duval: I know that we have a special project in Rodrigues. Because of the water shortage and lack of proper connection, each house that is built comes with a water tank and it costs us about Rs10,000 per water tank.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, on the same issue of the major achievements for 2010 concerning the construction of the 500 CIS houses for the homeless, can I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister where these houses were constructed and what was the cost of this project?

Mr Duval: There was a grant of Rs65,000 each. I will give the list where they were constructed: Black River: 35, Plaines Wilhems: 35, Moka: 53, Flacq: 21, Pamplemouses: 42, Grand Port: 114, Savanne: 30, Rivière du Rempart: 123 and Port Louis : 59.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 203, may I refer on the same item which was raised earlier by hon. Uteem, that is, *fees to consultants?* This is the item where the Minister had earlier stated in the House that there was one gentleman who had come to run this observatory. May we have some clarification? Is that gentleman on the permanent establishment, whereas the fees here are supposed to be for outside consultants and, if so, what will these consultants be required to do? What will be the role of that observatory and which consultant will be involved?

Mr Duval: It is a nice work. I will say too nice, in fact. The expert is called Dr. Bucket. He is employed by the NEF and he runs a continuous assessment of what we are doing. This, in fact, relates to provision for commissioning about two reports a year from an independent firm on how things are moving on poverty. We have not yet defined exactly what it will be.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 204, Item No. 26, *Grant to National Economic and Social Council*, can I know from the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether the Board of the National Economic and Social Council has been properly constituted and, if so, who are the members?

Mr Duval: I can circulate the names. There are many of them, but we are going, in fact, to renew the board very shortly.

Dr. S. Boolell: At page 204, under Programme Code 363, can I have some details as to ...

The Chairperson: No, no! We have not reached there.

Programme Code 731: Policy and Strategy for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Rs35,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 363: Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities was called.

Dr. S. Boolell: At page 204, last line, under the Programme 363, item 28223008 *Other Capital Transfers – National Empowerment Foundation (b) Emergency Housing under Trust Fund*, can I have some idea about this emergency housing, what it implies?

Mr Duval: Yes, in fact, it is a good question, Mr Chairperson. We used to provide purely CIS housing in Mauritius, which are not very good, they do not last that long. They are uncomfortable, whereas in Rodrigues the same sort of thing was provided. In fact, concrete walls, but CIS roofs. We are moving to that in Mauritius wherever we can, depending, of course, on the type of person we are dealing with. He must have a decent contract and a decent lease or right to the land, then we will build a better house. If it is very, very temporary then we will continue with the CIS housing. That's the plan.

Mr Ganoo: I see that the sum of Rs85 m has been budgeted for next year.

Mr Duval: Yes.

Mr Ganoo: What are the circumstances which warrant the emergency construction of these houses, in what situation, in what conditions and does the hon. vice-Prime Minister think that we should go on with constructing houses, CIS houses or even CIS roofs or shouldn't we once for all put a stop to that and provide decent concrete houses to these people?

Mr Duval: We would love to provide a bigger and a better house, Mr Chairperson. Often, there is a problem of space as you may know. Usually, these houses are add-ons to the actual houses. You know, somebody gives a bit of room, a bit of land to a sister or something and we add it on to the actual house. As I mentioned, we are trying to move away where we can to a better housing system. We are providing, as I mentioned, CIS roof because, of course, the cost also is an element. We are constructing a minimum, I would say, of 500 next year and you know we have got to find the money for that.

Mr Ganoo: What emergency?

Mr Duval: Basically, emergency. Somebody who needs accommodation; the family earns less than Rs5,000 per month and also there is some sort of right given to the person for us to be able to construct something on the land. These are three main conditions.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Chair, same Programme Code 363, same item 28223008 *Other Capital Transfers – National Empowerment Foundation - Social Housing - Rs200,000,000*. I would like to know if the regions where these houses will be built have already been identified, if yes, where? Going back on page 200 ...

Mr Duval: I'll answer it and then the hon. Member can come back with another question.

Mr Chairperson, we are liaising with the Ministry of Housing so that land can be made available. It will depend on where land is available exactly for us to be able to construct the houses. Obviously, we have a database at the NEF of about 2,000 or so people and we will try and match the database that we have with the land that is available.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: I have another question on page 200 regarding circular migration. I would like to know how you proceed to prepare the candidates for that project.

Mr Duval: The NEF has a job placement department and *un espace de métiers* and we work, I think, in conjunction with the International Officer Migration (IOM). They have an office in Mauritius. In fact, we need to be able to identify firstly two things. We need to identify the potential employers – that is very important - because we have got to have the employers before someone can actually go. Secondly, we have got to find the potential candidates. Obviously, we don't choose, we just provide a list and we try to match the two together. We need to have the candidates and we need to have the employers.

Mrs Labelle: Under the same programme, the emergency housing. I see that there is an amount of Rs123 m. which was earmarked for year 2010. I would like to know whether this amount relates to the 500 of basic shelter to the homeless. The amount of Rs123 m. relates to the 500 basic shelters which, I believe, is the provision of CIS and so on. This is my first point. Can we take another one or we stop here?

Mr Duval: Yes, it is in fact, but this is the amount voted. Unfortunately, we spent much less over our whole budget and the amount voted.

Mrs Labelle: I would like to have, if possible, the amount spent under this project and whether this target of 500 houses has been reached. There is also the implementation of 40 projects. It is said that there are 40 poverty projects which have been implemented or were to be

implemented. So, can we have some details, whether we have reached this target of 40 poverty projects and how much money has been spent? Maybe, the hon. vice-Prime Minister can give us the list of the projects that have been implemented.

Mr Duval: I don't have the information at the moment. I'll get the actual amount spent from my staff. As far as the production is concerned for 2010, in fact, I am given to understand that we have actually completed 78. They were financed at the DCP 1, which is the Decentralised Cooperation Programme. I'll read what it says. There are: poverty alleviation, focusing on non-formal education, care of the handicapped, promotion of good governance, capacity-building and organisation development of NGOs, improved resources management in Rodrigues.

Mrs Labelle: I just want to confirm. Are these the poverty projects that the vice-Prime Minister has been reading?

Mr Duval: This is what I have.

Mrs Labelle: The vice-Prime Minister seems to be surprised too. I am!

Mr Duval: This is the 40 which has turned out to be 78.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the Emergency Housing Programme, can we know the cost of one unit first? And second, whether those units do resist cyclonic conditions?

Mr Duval: In fact, if I may give the information about the amount spent on emergency housing? It is Rs65 m. for this year. Now, the budget for each house was Rs65,000, as I mentioned earlier. It is a standard sum and the person will provide materials and there is some money also for a carpet, etc. I don't know whether they resist cyclone because we haven't had a very nasty cyclone for some time, but we are moving away as much as possible from that to better housing.

Mr Barbier: Under the same vote, concerning the community projects and the Trust Fund, may we know from the hon. Minister if these projects have been implemented for the current year?

Mr Duval: In fact, these are small projects that they do. They may, for instance, repair a basketball pitch. These are the little projects that the Trust Fund does around the island. These are small projects here and there just to make things better for poor communities.

Mr Obeegadoo: If I may refer the vice-Prime Minister to page 202, *Indicators P1: No. of cases provided with outreach facilities*. May that be explained to us? What about the outreach facilities in relation to the targets which are revolving from year to year? May I ask the two in one on that same page, the number of persons trained and placed which is meant to double from this year to next year, and how this is to be achieved?

Mr Duval: Mr Chairperson, I'll read what we have. For the number of cases provided with outreach facilities: Target for year 2010 was 1,000 households, achieved is 966 households, based on the need assessment carried at community level; outreached services arranged and monitored by a ratification of absolute poverty programme and delivered mainly by NGOs and others. These facilities include integrated health, medical screening, family planning, education support, remedial classes, pre-primary schooling, adult literacy, enhanced employment through placement and training, support for micro-enterprise, kitchen-farming, life skills training, and provision of public utilities. Basically, there is a whole set of support to the community. This is the outreached programme.

We did train and place 1,800 persons, and we want to double that to 3,600. About 75% of the people that we trained and placed are retained by the employers, and we think it is a very good programme. That's why we want to double it next year. It covers a whole range of sectors.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I know, in that respect, who is providing the training?

Mr Duval: It depends on the type of training that you have. I have got the number of companies where we have placed people; it's 134. It will depend. If it is a Call Centre, it may be someone else; if it is a *maçan*, it will be someone else.

Mr Lesjongard: At page 204, under *item 28213005(d)*, that is, *SMEs & Micro-enterprises Development*, can we know the target earmarked by the Ministry?

Mr Duval: I am told 200, basically.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 204, *item 28212 Transfer to Households*. Am I to understand this is direct income support?

Mr Duval: In fact, it is a DCP (Decentralised Cooperation Programme I), which does not exist anymore. The Decentralised Cooperation Programme II, which is Rs60 m., has been shown elsewhere. Why they have shown it this way, I don't know, but that's what it is. DCP I was a lot

of programmes for support to NGOs, capacity-building, provision of a lot of things to the poor. It is a big programme. It is completed now anyway.

Programme Code 363: Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the circle of opportunities (Rs688,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development - Programme Code 361: Policy and Strategy for Economic Growth and Social Progress was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 212, *Programme Code 361 - Policy and Strategy for Economic Growth and Social Progress*, the number of posts to be funded has increased from 178 to 252. Would the hon. Minister provide some clarification in that respect? It relates apparently to analysts and officers. Could this be explained to us?

Mr Jugnauth: The number of staff is being increased, as it has been mentioned in the Budget.

Mr Obeegadoo: My point was, if we could have some explanation as to why, precisely in terms of analysts, it increases threefold or fourfold? Is this policy formulation? What is the precise objective of that specific category of staff shooting up in numbers?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Chairperson, at the level of the Ministry, there is a requirement for additional staff.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 220, under *item 28212 - Transfers to Households*, may we know from the hon. vice-Prime Minister what campaign has been carried out, and whether that has been effective to develop this culture of savings?

Mr Jugnauth: I understand that there has been a savings culture campaign which has been on for some time.

Programme Code 361 Policy and Strategy for Economic Growth and Social Progress (Rs448,301,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 362 - Public Financial Management was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I refer to page 214, item *P1: Sufficient quality control to ensure good response from the market (minimum number of respondents)* being one for this year, two

for next year, and so on and so forth. Could we have some clarification as to how the Ministry intends to proceed to get this long awaited PPP business off the ground, with one or two respondents a year?

Mr Jugnauth: This is self-explanatory, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Uteem: At page 222, under *item No. 22120 - Fees*, there is a provision of Rs12 m. Can we know to what these fees relate?

Mr Jugnauth: I just explained, while summing-up, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! I said, order!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, we are doing our job in asking the questions, and I pray that the Minister gives us the required attention. On page 229, there is projected a quasi doubling of the post of Financial Operations Officer, which is salary code 014155. That has certainly not been mentioned in the summing-up. So, may I ask the Minister to kindly explain to the House why the number of posts here is being doubled?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, again, this has been explained in the summing-up, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo, let me give a chance to other Members.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk on item *22120 Fees*, at page 222, relating to Rs5.5 m. Can we know this is in relation to what?

Mr Jugnauth: This has also been explained, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 229, under item *012955 - Internal Control Officer*, the number increases from 16 to 36 next year. Will the hon. Minister explain why this is so?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, because we require additional manpower.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, at page 221, item *22030 – rent*, the amount earmarked is Rs2 m. Can we know what building and office does that rent refer to? And under item *26313043 – Current Grant - Mauritius Revenue Authority*, an amount of Rs874,000,000 has been earmarked, is rent paid by the MRA also covered under the Rs2 m. rent under the vote?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, this is rent for offices so that the MRA can staff its members.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can we know the address of the office the hon. Minister is referring to? And whether this rent covers the money that is provided under the grant to MRA?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Hon. Member, I am calling you to order! Do you understand?

Mr Jugnauth: The building is at CNR Court, Labourdonnais Street.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the MRA grant, can we know the portion that is allocated for rent?

Mr Jugnauth: I can circulate the answer later.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, under item 26313020 – *Gambling Regulatory Authority*, a sum of Rs23,300,000 has been earmarked. Can we have the details of that current grant, and for what purpose it is being used?

Mr Jugnauth: I can circulate those details also later.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the capital grant, can the hon. Minister circulate the details of the use of the capital grant for the Gambling Regulatory Authority?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Under item 31112001 – *New Customs Complex*, can we have details about how a new customs complex is worth Rs5.7 m. Is it a whole complex or just an office?

Mr Jugnauth: This is retention money and outstanding liabilities.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 216, *Performance Indicator 02, PI - Mobilising support from a minimum number of countries*. Will the hon. Minister care to give some explanation?

Mr Jugnauth: But this is self-explanatory, Mr Chairperson.

Programme Code 362: Public Financial Management (Rs1,114,463,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 364: Procurement Advisory and Contract Award Services was called.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 223, under *item 22120 – Fees*, an amount of Rs4.7 m. has been earmarked. May we know to what it relates?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, they are fees as stated in the Budget.

Mr Uteem: Yes, but we want to know the amount of Rs4.7 m. is in relation to what?

Mr Jugnauth: I have answered, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Under item 22120 – *Fees*, the Procurement Advisory Services require fees to the value of Rs4.7 m. Can we have details to which consultants or contractors are the fees being provided for?

Mr Jugnauth: I have answered that question.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Which answer is that? Can we have some details of these fees? What kind of fees are they? Are they consulting fees?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 216, *Performance Indicator 01, P1 – Reduction in procurement cycle time*. Being given that the hon. Minister himself informed the House some time back that half of the cases going on appeal for procurement, award of contract were being reversed. Will the hon. Minister, in this instance, give us some explanation as to how he intends to proceed?

Mr Jugnauth: Again, this has been fully explained at page 216, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, at page 223, item 31132103 – e-business Plan Procurement. Can the hon. Minister supply some details about this e-business plan? Who is doing the plan and who has been paid that sum?

Mr Jugnauth: The e-business plan is about the ICT that is being installed.

Mr Uteem: At page 223, under *Sub-Programme 36402: Contract Award Services, item 22120 Fees*, there is budgeted Rs18,300,000 for each of the next five years. May we know what process has been carried out to choose the consultant for these fees?

Mr Jugnauth: The usual transparent process, Mr Chairperson.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, on *Programme 364: Procurement Advisory and Contract Award Services*, at page 216, *Promote efficient public procurement system, including e-Procurement based on international best practices through reviews of procurement procedures and capacity building O1: Improving framework to allow fast and transparent procurement...*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Order! Hon. Henry, out!

(*Interruptions*)

I said, out!

(*Interruptions*)

Order!

Mr Jugnauth: Can hon. Ganoo repeat the question, please?

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, I was querying the hon. Minister of Finance about the *Programme 364, O1: Improving framework to allow fast and transparent procurement*, to promote efficient public procurement system. Can I ask the hon. Minister of Finance whether there is an obligation to advertise all the tender exercises and other bidding processes and whether this is being done by all the Ministries and estate agencies?

Mr Jugnauth: This is being done, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Ganoo: How is it being done?

Mr Jugnauth: I just answered; it is a question through the website.

Mr Ganoo: Although the hon. vice-Prime Minister is saying that this is being done, in fact, if we did go and check on the Government portal, no publicity is given to any tenders. I will ask him to....

(*Interruptions*)

It is not against him; but, all the Ministries say that they do it, but they do not do so. I have checked personally, Mr Chairperson, and this is why I am drawing the attention of the hon. vice-Prime Minister to that.

Mr Jugnauth: Probably he should double check, but we'll check also.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: At page 223, under item *31132401: e-Government Projects Computerisation of Central Procurement Board* for the sum of Rs2.1 m. Can we know which Contractor or Department is responsible for this computerisation project for the Central Procurement Board?

Mr Jugnauth: I can circulate this information later.

Programme Code 364: Procurement Advisory and Contract Award Services (Rs96,698,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 365: Government Accounting and Payment Systems (Rs92,644,000) was called and agreed to.

Programme Code 366: Provision of Statistics was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 232, *Salary Code 20 29 49*, there is a very significant increase in the number of Statistical Officers to be employed by the Ministry. Would the hon. Minister care to provide us with some information as to the purpose thereof?

Mr Jugnauth: Because this is required by the Ministry.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: At page 224, regarding item *22010: Cost of Utilities*, can we know what is this cost of utilities worth Rs3,210,000?

Mr Jugnauth: The usual: electricity, telephone, water and so on.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the *Cleaning Services*, Rs100,000 under vote 22070, can we know to whom the cleaning services have been contracted?

Mr Jugnauth: I can circulate the information later.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the publications and stationery, can we have a list of all the publications and stationery that are usually contracted under this item 22100?

Mr Jugnauth: We will circulate this also.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the *Fees*, under item 22120, for which a sum of Rs2,000,000 is provided, are these fees paid to existing staff or to outside people?

Mr Jugnauth: Council Members and training of staff.

Mr Uteem: With regard to item 31132: *Intangible Fixed Assets*, may we know what these intangible fixed assets are?

Mr Jugnauth: There is migration of units to centralised database, development of workflow applications, centralised point of contact for queries, centralised relation database management system, data integration computer, that is, based overview workflow application.

Programme Code 366: Provision of Statistics (Rs272,373,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 367: Valuation of Immovable Properties was called.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: At page 225, under the item 22030: *Rent*, can the Minister inform us why the amount of rent has been reduced from Rs17,700,000 to Rs16,200,000?

Mr Jugnauth: It is for less space which is required at Ebène.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: May we know where the building is?

Mr Jugnauth: At Ebène.

Mr Uteem: For item 22101: *Overseas Travel*, may we know who undertook the overseas travel?

Mr Jugnauth: Passage cost, hotel accommodation and other expenses in connection with mission to Rodrigues.

Programme Code 367: Valuation of Immovable Properties (Rs80,673,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes of the vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development were called and agreed to –

Code 368 Regulatory Framework of Companies (Rs93,809,000), and

Code 369 Registration of Deeds and Conservation of Mortgages (Rs100,753,000).

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Cader Sayed-Hossen, this is the last time I am calling you to order! If you are sitting there and relaxing, I am working!

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 321: Policy and Strategy Development for Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Maritime Services was called.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Chairperson, at page 250, under item 22030001 *Rental of Building*, can the hon. Minister give us a list of the buildings?

Mr Bachoo: Yes, it is Moorgate House and Viad House.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 250, Programme Code 405 *Land Drainage*, can the hon. Minister provide a list and the number of sites actually under progress?

The Chairperson: We are still on Programme Code 321.

Dr. Sorefan: At page 250, under item 22120008 *Fees to Consultant*, can the hon. Minister give us a list of the consultants and the consultancy project?

Mr Bachoo: The consultant is meant for LTA, that is, the Land Transport Authority. I can give the hon. Member the name of that consultant but, unfortunately, I don't have it with me.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 251, under item 28223990 *Obligations following Winding up of the Development Works Corporation*, can the hon. Minister give us some details of the *reliquat* following the closure of the DWC?

Mr Bachoo: It has already been closed and we have a part payment of Rs4 m. to make and money has already been given. We are left with a few cases and that is the reason why a sum of Rs1 billion has been earmarked for it.

Mr Uteem: At page 251, under item 22120008 *Fees to Consultant*, may we know to whom the Rs24 m. will be given as fees? Who are the consultants?

Mr Bachoo: That is the fee of the consultant who is working on the new Land Transport Authority.

Mr Baloomoody: Under item 27210 *Social Assistance Benefits in Cash*, can I ask the hon. Minister about some details?

Mr Bachoo: The sum of Rs12,000 is for the funeral grants on the demise of the staff; each one gets Rs3,000.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to page 250, under item 22 *Goods and Services*, can we get an idea why we have a 100% increase?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned that the sum of Rs24 m. is for the fees, which is meant for the consultant. It has been added up and that doubles the sum.

Programme Code 321: Policy and Strategy Development for Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Maritime Services (Rs135,679,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 322: Construction and Maintenance of Government Buildings and Other Assets was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Under item 26313010 *Current Grant - Construction of the Industry Development Board*, can the hon. Minister tell us the composition of the Board, who is the Chairperson and how this sum of Rs6 m. will be spent?

Mr Bachoo: For the *Construction of the Industry Development Board*, the Chairman is the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry and that money is meant for the payment of salary compensation to the workers.

Mr Obeegadoo: I want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to page 245, with regard to *Government Building and Vehicles Maintenance Services*. I was looking at the targets set in terms of request from line Ministries to be attended to. The figures are Rs3,000 for every year and that is where there is something artificial to this Programme-Based Budgeting approach. I compared this to page

Mr Bachoo: I don't believe in what the hon. Member is saying. It can't be artificial.

Mr Obeegadoo: If I may be allowed to explain, this is not an insult.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, the word is not appropriate.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I used this term referring to the Prime Minister's vote

...

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo, I will be grateful if you can be direct with your question.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question relates to the fact that it is difficult to understand how, in terms of targets, we have the same number for three years. If we look at page 242, which gives

the number of posts, the summary under the code 32203, the posts actually decreased from 903 to 901. My point is: given that there is a crying need for maintenance of public buildings in particular schools, will the hon. Minister explain to us how with this funding proposed and the number of posts proposed, Government will be able to ensure the appropriate maintenance of public buildings?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, the fact that we have mentioned that 3,000 requests have been received, I can assure the House that almost 100% requests are being attended to. In fact, we have adopted a sky-rocketing line and that is the reason why we have been able to satisfy different Ministries. I have no problem with it.

Mr Obeegadoo: That was precisely my point. It cannot be that we have 3,000 requests for year 2010; 3,000 for year 2011; and 3,000 for year 2012. That is where I used the term - and there was no offence meant - artificially. All I am saying is: how do we propose to bring some flexibility into a budgetary provision for next year to be able to ensure proper maintenance of schools, for example?

The Chairperson: The Minister has answered that all the requests are being met - 100% requests are being met. There is no need to argue with the hon. Minister. Next question!

Mr Uteem: At page 252, under item 31112433 *Refurbishment of Emmanuel Anquetil Building*, may I know from the hon. Minister why is it that in 2011, there is hardly anything budgeted in respect of that item?

Mr Bachoo: No provision was made because the project had to be reviewed. In fact, if I am not mistaken, we are going to appoint a consultant to look into the building because it is a very, very complicated issue.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Chairperson, at page 252, under item 31112401 *Upgrading of Office Buildings*, may we have from the hon. Minister a list of those buildings?

Mr Bachoo: The information will be circulated.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 263, under item 240216, *General Workers*, the number of posts is on the decrease, can we have some explanation as to how the Ministry will be able to cope?

Mr Bachoo: 70 workers have been promoted and we have already started the procedure to recruit additional workers.

Mr Barbier: At page 252, item 22090 - *Security*, there is an important decrease. It moves from Rs4 m. to Rs1 m. this year. Can the Minister give us some clarification?

Mr Bachoo: It is because instead of contracting the work, we are doing it in-house.

Programme Code 322 – Construction and Maintenance of Government Buildings and Other Assets (Rs415,943,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 323 – Construction and Maintenance of Roads and Bridges was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 254, *Rehabilitation of Steel Bridges*, can I know from the Minister whether the old Grand River Bridge is scheduled for repairs in rehabilitation?

Mr Bachoo: Regarding the Grand River Bridge, I have announced yesterday that a consultant is being appointed because it is a very dangerous bridge and that is the reason why it is not mentioned here. After the study, then next year, action will be taken to refurbish it.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, on page 254, item 31113004 – *Footbridges*, may I know whether the budget for next year includes the footbridge on the La Vigie motorway near the entrance to Curepipe? Does the Minister know what I am referring to? This is near the road leading to Quartier Militaire.

Mr Bachoo: In fact, this footbridge is meant for Port Louis. Unfortunately, there was a tender exercise carried out and nobody tendered for that. Once the enlargement of road or refurbishment of road in that region will take place, we will negotiate with the contractor and we will see to it that the work is completed.

Mr Uteem: At page 253, under item 31 – *Transaction Advisory Services for Ring Road and Harbour Bridge*, may we know who is providing the advisory services?

Mr Bachoo: It is a South African firm which is providing the services that is under PPP. I will give the hon. Member the name of that consultant later on.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I will come back to the *Construction of Bridges*. Some two or three years back I asked for a bridge at Camp Savanne and I think the hon. Minister replied that it will be considered in the next budget.

(Interruptions)

It is at page 254, item *31113004 - Construction of Bridges*. I just want to know whether the construction of the bridge at Camp Savanne will be considered in this financial year.

Mr Bachoo: Well, I don't find Camp Savanne. There are Rivière des Galets, Souillac, Tamarin, Ferney, Pailles and Macondé. It has already been completed and it is not in this list.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to page 253, under item *Transaction Advisory Services*, can we have an indication of the total amount to be paid to the advisor and could the Minister report on progress until now?

Mr Bachoo: The advisor will be responsible for the PPP project that consists of design, finance, construction, maintenance and operation as a toll road throughout the concession over a period of 30 years. The Harbour Bridge, Lot II of Port Louis Ring Road has two sections: starting with a tunnel at Coin Boeuf and ending at Château d'Eau and from Nicolay Road to Quay 2 roundabout on M2, and a new link between A1 Road at Belle Etoile to Soreze on M1 *via* a bridge across the Grand River North West. The same consultant, under the PPP Project, will have to maintain and operate as toll road the Terre Rouge/Verdun/Ebene Link Road, Ring Road, Lot 1 from Soreze to Bain Boeuf, the Motorways M1 from Valentina to Place d'Armes and M2 from Quay 2 to Terre Rouge. The Procurement for the project is being done in accordance with the relevant provision to the Public and Private Partnership Act. The Public Procurement Act is actually ongoing and, so far, the requests or qualifications have already been completed. Three firms have been issued the requests for proposal document on 29 October 2010; the bid will be closed on 06 May 2011. The name of the consultant is SPP Solution, South Africa. The cost is 1,500,000 dollars.

Mr Ganoo: May I come back on the question of *Rehabilitation of Bridges* and ask the hon. Minister whether the Tamarin Bridge has been included among the list of bridges?

Mr Bachoo: I have already mentioned Tamarin. No need to get disturbed about it!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Page 253!

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 253, item - *Construction of Roads*. Footbridges do not concern Curepipe. I notice that under *Construction of Roads* as well there is no road included.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, this concerns the big road that we are constructing. In fact, in Curepipe the need is not felt. We can't put up a dual carriageway there, but the hon. Member knows that most of the classified roads are in very good condition.

Programme Code 323 – Construction and Rehabilitation of Roads and Bridges (Rs2,352,900,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 324 – Land Transport Services was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 247, under *Sub-Programme 32402: Traffic Management and Road Safety*. Here again, I am completely puzzled by these indicators. I would like the hon. Minister to give us some explanation.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member must go to the item!

Mr Obeegadoo: Under items *P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5* respectively. The indicators are identical for the years 2011, 2012 and 2013. Number of pedestrian crossings/road junctions signalised : for year 2011: 10; for year 2012: 10; for year 2013: 10. Number of speed reduction measures undertaken: for year 2011: 100; for year 2012: 100; for year 2013: 100.

Kms of handrails and guardrails fixed: for year 2011: 1; for year 2012: 3; for year 2013: 3. Number of road safety programmes carried out in schools and other institutions - for year 2011: 200; for year 2012: 200 and for year 2013: 200.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, this gives an indication that we have already done a lot of works and whatever is left to be done, we are doing.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, at page 255, under item *22120004 - Fees to Mauritius Posts Ltd*. May we know why fees have to be paid to Mauritius Posts Ltd for road maintenance?

Mr Bachoo: The reason is very simple, before all the transactions were being held at the main office of the NTA. We have decentralized the office and, by next year, all the 96 Post offices will be requested, at least, to accept the registration fees. So, drivers won't have to come all the way from different parts of the country to Port Louis.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 255, item 25210003 - *Free Travel Scheme for Students, Old Aged Pensioners and Disabled Persons*. I find that there is a high increase from Rs590 m. to Rs727.5 m. Are we expecting a rise in the bus fare?

The Chairperson: The hon. Member has put the question as to why there is an increase.

Mr Bachoo: It is because there has been an increase in the population and the compensation also. We had to - at regular intervals - negotiate with the bus companies.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, regarding the *Free Travel Scheme*, I see two items, namely 25110006 and 25210003. So, these two codes relate to the same item. Is there any explanation?

Mr Bachoo: We have put it separately, because one concerns the National Transport Corporation and the other one concerns the other private sectors.

Mr Uteem: At page 255, under *Item No. 25210003 - Free Travel Scheme for Students, Old Aged Pensioners and Disabled Persons*. May I know from the hon. Minister, whether an agreement has been reached with all the private operators as to the amount to be paid to them?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, the relationship is a bit sour and, at times, sweet also. So, it's very difficult for us to come to an agreement. They keep on complaining and, at our end, we always try to negotiate. So far, it is more or less satisfactory. But there have been requests and demands, which we are considering.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 256, *Item No. 31113001 - Construction of Traffic Centre* and *Item No. 31113019 - Construction of Bus Shelters and Stands*. Since there are no footbridges and roads in Curepipe, may I know whether the traffic centre here concerns Jan Palach and the bus shelters Curepipe?

Mr Bachoo: We are constructing small bus shelters throughout the island and, if I am not mistaken, we have constructed about 90. That does not concern the big traffic centres.

Programme Code 324 - Land Transport Services (Rs1,204,489,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 325 - Maritime Services was called.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 257, with regard to *Item No. 22090003 - Global Maritime Distress and Safety System Services*, can I know from the Minister whether the Shipping Department is working in accordance to the Marpol Convention? This is the Convention which regulates safety in port. Can the Minister let us know whether Mauritius has signed that Marpol Convention, and whether his Ministry is abiding to all the relevant provisions of the Marpol Convention?

Mr Bachoo: In addition to this, we are also a member of the SOLAS Convention, because safety is the concern of SOLAS.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 267, *Sub-Programme 32503 - Maritime Training*. There seems to be some good news here. The posts are increasing from 10 to 15, with filling of posts of Principal, Mauritius Maritime Training Academy and Head, Deck Department. Will the hon. Minister tell us whether, at long last, the training programme here is to start again and, if so, when and how?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, we have already started the training programme together with the Ministry of Tourism but, unfortunately, this is a scarcity area and it is very difficult for us to procure the services of technicians and engineers.

Mr Obeegadoo: Have these posts been filled?

Mr Bachoo: Unfortunately, no! We have advertised many times, but we have not been able to get someone. That is the reason why, under capacity-building, we have made an appeal to the Ministry of Finance to, at least, help us, so that we can get a few from outside.

Mr Lesjongard: At page 257, with regard to *Item No. 22090005 - Radio Communication Services*, can we get an indication from the hon. Minister as to who provides those services and why that sharp increase?

Mr Bachoo: Last year, Mauritius Telecom had purchased high frequency equipment, radio communication equipment to the tune of Rs13 m. on behalf of the Government of Mauritius, to provide weather forecast and safety information to our fishing vessels and those fishing in our waters. This is under Mauritius Telecom. They had provided us equipment.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: At page 257, *Item No. 22120 - Fees*, there is a provision of Rs1 m. Are these fees dedicated to ship surveyors, local consultants or international firms?

Mr Bachoo: We have partly utilised the money to pay for the drafting of the shipping regulations. This is a scarcity area, and we have been able to enlist the support of one expert from abroad, namely Professor **Mukherjee**.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to *Item No. 22120008 - Fees to Consultants*, may we know who is that consultant and for what advice we are paying such a sum?

Mr Bachoo: The port baseline survey is being conducted. A contract of service will be signed between the Ministry and the Mauritius Oceanography Institute. The consultant is MOT.

Mr Barbier: At page 257, *Item No. 22900903 - Awareness Campaign*. A sum of Rs500,000 has been provided for this expenditure. May we know which awareness it is all about?

Mr Bachoo: It is awareness for baseline surveys. We have got the problem of ballast water, and we are utilising the money to conduct an awareness campaign. In fact, in Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, we have also created a special corner for that. The money is utilised for this, because ballast water is very dangerous for the health of Mauritians.

Programme Code 325 - Maritime Services (Rs79,991,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 404 - Community-Based Infrastructure, Amenities and Public Empowerment was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 259, *Item No. 31113422 - Upgrading of Cremation Grounds/Cemeteries*. Does this include Bigara Cemetery in Curepipe?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, any number of cemeteries that the hon. Member wants to have will be provided. He should not worry.

Mr Bhagwan: I would like an explanation from the Minister at page 259, *Item No. 31112023 - Construction of Community*. What does that mean?

Mr Bachoo: This is the outstanding payment which you had left yourself.

Mr Bhagwan: It is a community.

Mr Bachoo: Yes, it is a community centre which you had left. Payment to the tune of Rs4 m., for example, in Curepipe, Ilot; Nouvelle Decouverte and again at Villebague. This is money which was left.

Mr Uteem: With regard to *Item No. 31113006 - Construction of Sports Facilities*, does this include the construction of any sports facilities in the region of Tranquebar?

Mr Bachoo: I'll give the hon. Member the list. That concerns volleyball, football, basketball pitches and *pétanque* courts. The list is too long, I can circulate it.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 259, under item *31112022 Construction of Market Fairs*, as long as there is no sum allocated for any market fair, do we take it that for the next financial, there will be no market fair?

Mr Bachoo: Normally, the money is not voted in my account. That is in Local Government and I am an implementing Ministry. There will be three market fairs: Roche Bois, Rivière des Anguilles, and if I am not mistaken, Quatre Bornes. The money is voted elsewhere.

Mrs Labelle: At page 259, under item *31113403 Upgrading of Roads*, Mr Chair, I would like, once again, to ask whether the access road to Rivière Sèche would be included in this financial year?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairman, the list is very long and it would be difficult for me to read the list.

Programme Code 404 - Community-Based Infrastructure, Amenities and Public Empowerment (Rs317,114,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 405 - Land Drainage was called.

Mr Bhagwan: With regard to land drainage, can the hon. Minister inform the House as to the number of sites that have been identified for the budget which we are being asked to vote?

Mr Bachoo: Many, many sites have been identified. Mr Chairperson, I may tell you over fifty sites. There are certain big sites and smaller ones also, but it must be above fifty sites.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister inform the House whether he can table later on the list of the sites which have been approved for projects to be implemented?

Mr Bachoo: I am proud to announce that Chemin La Mort, which was there for the past twenty years, has already been completed in the constituency of the hon. Member to the tune of Rs20 m.

Programme Code 405 - Land Drainage (Rs232,101,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Sir, I beg to move that we do report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and agreed to

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 08 December 2010, at 11.30 a.m.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 4.22 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 08 December 2010, at 11.30 a.m.