

MAURITIUS FOURTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 16 of 2009

Sitting of Wednesday 03 June 2009

**The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,
at 11.30 a.m**

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

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MAURITIUS

Fourth National Assembly

First Session

UNREVISED Debate No. 16 of 2009

Sitting of Wednesday 03 June 2009

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment -

- (a) The Digest of Demographic Statistics 2007.
- (b) The Digest of Education Statistics 2008.

B. Ministry of Health & Quality of Life -

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Morris Legacy Fund for the year ended 30 June 2008 (In original).

PUBLIC BILL

THE APPROPRIATION (2009) BILL

(No. IX of 2009)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

(11.30 a.m.)

Consideration of the Appropriation (2009) Bill (No. IX of 2009) was resumed.

Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities – Programme Code 441: Utility Policy and Management was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson ...

The Chairperson: Can I make a request to all hon. Members that when they are talking they have to do so in the microphone, please?

Mr Bhagwan: At page 177, *Programme Code 441, under item National Energy Policy Study*, can we have some further details as to when this study would be completed and whether it would be made public in the national interest, at least, for Members of the House?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the study has been completed and we are now working on the Action Plan. Certainly, we will make it public.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 177, *Programme Code 441 – Introduction of Summer Time on a pilot basis and Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFL) introduced at national level have resulted into energy savings*, can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what will happen for this year? Has Government already decided whether we will continue or we will stop with that summer time?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I made it quite clear that it was on a pilot basis and when we will have all the facts available to the public and to the House, we will take the decision that is required. So, there has been no decision as whether to continue or to stop. We will look at all the features. Yesterday, I have said it, by the end of the month, we will give all the information and a decision will be taken accordingly. Yesterday, I ended only on the energy side of the Summer Time. The acceptability rate among the population is low and we have no plan to go ahead with it this year. We will submit it to the public. It is a very interesting data on the social acceptability of it, referring on the social aspect, the *défavorisés*, the age group and so on. It is very detailed and we will submit it by the end of the year. But we have no plan to continue with it in the foreseeable future.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 177, *Programme Code 442: Energy Services*. By experience, I will be making a general reference to the Electrical Services Division. I do not know whether it is this section which caters for the Government needs, for the preparation of plans. I see in Major Achievements for 2008/09 – *All requests for the preparation of electrical designs and specifications for Government projects attended to* - I am not saying that this division is not serious or professional - can I know whether particular attention has been taken by Government to beef up this Energy Service Division of the Ministry, will be given more professional manpower and if we can have some details? Secondly, *Programme 442*, under item *Radiation Protection Regulations*, the population at large, even schoolchildren are not aware of the different protocols and safety measures concerning this radiation protection. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether action will be taken to give more information to schoolchildren and the general public at large? What actions are being initiated by Government concerning the safety measures? At the Jawaharlal Nehru hospital, there is a

specialised section which is very effective concerning kidney problems where people have regular check-up. Can we know from the hon. Minister what are the measures taken by the Ministry to inform the population of this particular unit?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is a very valid point and we have discussed it at length. The safety measures could be improved much further and communication to the public also. The first step is to protect the workers. I think this is vital and I will make sure that this is done properly and also that it goes to the private clinics as well.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 177, *Programme Code 442*, under item *Feasibility study of South Mauritius Water Supply Project*, can we get some idea from the Deputy Prime Minister about this project? And concerning the Bagatelle dam, can we know where matters stand as at to date?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Both projects are ongoing. In the South, we are proceeding further with a detailed design. We have extended the contract, it is found in the water sector and the information will be given as and when we get to it.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in *Programme Code 441: Utility Policy and Management* –

“Under column 2010 Targets,

To insert “Apr-10”

And

To delete “Apr-09”

Amendment agreed to.

Programme Code 441, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 180, *Programme Code 441, Performance Indicator, P1: Enactment of Water Resources Bill; P2: Enactment of Energy Efficiency Bill; P1: Utility Regulatory Authority fully operational*, I see

the target is December 2009. Can I know from the Deputy Prime Minister whether all these targets will be met because there are quite a number of Bills that this Ministry is supposed to bring before the House?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, we no doubt appreciate the difficulties with drafting and so on, but having said that, the Water Resource Bill has been around for about 7 or 8 years. We have just started on it. I think the target of December 2009 is a little bit optimistic, but we will try and achieve this target.

As to the Energy Efficiency Bill, it is almost ready. The Radiation Protection Regulation and the Regulation for Product Labeling are almost ready. As for the Utility Regulatory Authority, we are waiting for the World Bank's advice and we will proceed as and when. Concerning the New Electricity Act, I cannot say for sure whether it would be ready by December but, on the whole, things are going fairly well in this section.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask one question on MID Fund? I won't go into the detail of the solar water scheme since we have been informed about it by the Deputy Prime Minister. Recently, the Deputy Prime Minister made a statement that there was something wrong concerning the legislation or regulation concerning the old MID set-up. Can we have some further details whether there are new regulations?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I said yesterday that when the project started, there was not in place a mechanism to look at the quality of the product and that is what we have put forward. Secondly, verification has actually been installed before payment is made. These two issues are being addressed.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given that *Maurice Ile Durable* is a new set up, can I know from the Minister whether this concept of *Maurice Ile Durable*, the whole problem of sustainable development and so on, there are programmes which have

been prepared, at least, to start from schools? We are discussing the different items, are there programmes which have been prepared? I see a total absence of the Ministry of Environment - this is my opinion - as far as the implementation of the MID Fund. In the last year's remarks, questions were asked as to whether the Minister of Environment is fully involved in one of the item of the old MID programme.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I can vow personally that the Minister of Environment has accompanied me on many workshops and seminars regarding the MID Fund. As to education in schools, the Prime Minister yesterday, paid tribute to the Minister of Education as to the many programmes and there are several. What is interesting and makes me happy is that the demand comes from the schools rather than we going to the school and we have to make provision for us to go to schools. So, it is a very valid project. The Minister of Education is working on this and there are many more programmes and I will say that the young seems to be more interested in it than the middle-aged and the others.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Chairperson, concerning the MID, I see that an estimate of Rs300 m., but I also remember that in the Budget 2007/2008 there was provision for Rs1 billion. May I ask how much money has been spent? Why is it that I do not see any provision for July-December 2010 and 2011?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, the Fund already exists at Rs1 billion. There is no further provision; the money is there to be spent. The Bank of Mauritius and the Accountant-General will pay for whatever expenses. So, there is no new provision.

Mrs Martin: With regard to the item *MID Fund - P4: Replacement of street lighting by low pressure vapour lamp*, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister

where have we reached with the replacement of this current system and how much it costs?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Let me give the details of expenditure so far. For the Solar Water Scheme, a sum of Rs78 m. has already been paid to the DBM. For the CEB- CFL project, it is Rs21 m. and for the Summer Time, a sum of Rs4 m. As for the street lighting we have yet to identify the sites for replacement. They will not be on the primary road, but on the secondary road.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to MID Fund *O9: Promote sustainable development through financial support for energy efficiency saving measures, P3: Sales of CFL lamps at reduced prices*, there is a sum of Rs1 m. I understand from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister that CEB has disbursed Rs21 m. with regard to the sale of the CFL lamps. Can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister how much of carbon credits that we have received concerning the CFL lamps and whether the CEB has already recovered that amount?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The CEB will not earn carbon credit from the scheme because, at some stage, during the implementation of the scheme, when we got about 500,000 CFL lamps already sold, the scheme stagnated and then we introduced the idea that you do not have to bring three lamps for exchange and this picked up again. From there on, we lost our carbon credit rate.

Mrs Labelle: On the same page, regarding *P2: The award of contract for wind farm at Bigara*, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister where matters stand regarding this issue?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I made a statement yesterday. We are at the stage of what we call the Transaction or Consultant Adviser. When it is ready then we will proceed with the implementation of the project.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 181, MID Fund - *P4: Replacement of street lighting, low pressure vapour lamps*, can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister

whether the project of 20,000 of street lamps will be on target end of December and the cost involved?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I have just replied to this question. The replacement is yet to be made. There has been a preliminary one which we stopped, because it was wrongly done. So, we are proceeding further after identifying the proper sites.

Mr Gunness: On the same item we see the target is 20,000, but where is the budgetary provision? When I was going through Programme 441 I was trying to see the budgetary provision for that, but I could not see. Can we be enlightened?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I think it would have been best if we proceed in another way. My proposition is to take the items for Programmes 441,442,443 one by one rather than to go different pages.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members should put their question by vote.

Mr Lesjongard: I will get back to those CFL lamps. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House as to whether we do not qualify for carbon credits with regard to the distribution of CFL lamps or were there some problems along the way and that is why we did not get those carbon credits?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, it is not easy to get carbon credits and I must say that a lot of the demands for carbon credits have not got any positive result and, in this particular case, as I said, if we had proceeded as the carbon credit scheme was, we would not have got any.

The Chairperson: Let us move to page 184, programme 441, the details are there.

Mr Gunness: Probably the Deputy Prime Minister can see it because here there are coming details concerning the money. Therefore, can I be enlightened of where the street lightening is found in this detailed estimate?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, we can only provide from the MID Fund the street lighting when we get the request.

Programme Code 441: Utility Policy and Management(Rs15,150,000)was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 442: Energy Services was called.

Mr Bhagwan: I will take two items on *Programme 442: Energy Services*. First, under item *Extend gradually the electricity network to vulnerable groups island wide to have access to electricity supply*, one of the major problems is the criteria when we refer to vulnerable groups. I do not know whether it falls within the same item, I wish to refer to request for displacement of poles and lines. For many of these vulnerable persons, handicapped or old age persons there are no definite criteria where it started. Is it at the level of CEB to define the criteria? Is there is any priority list? We all know that when people get bills from the CEB for displacement of poles, very often, the criteria are not respected. People who do not deserve, get this facility for whatever reason unknown to us and then this creates also problems, people say that there is corruption. Being given that this is funded and is given to the CEB, can I know from the Deputy Prime Minister, whether there are strict criteria, first come first served, a waiting list? Sometimes the Budget is lapsed. Can we have details from the Deputy Prime Minister as to whether action will be taken along this line?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the extension of electricity supply to vulnerable groups started in 2006. The displacement of poles is more recent. Government approved it a month or so ago and we have strict guidelines and the application is made to the CEB which visits the site and then recommends accordingly and there are very strict guidelines which, I am sure, if the Member has any representation, we will only be happy to look into it. There is a waiting list. So far, 600 have been attended to and we have a waiting list for both.

The demand for displacement of poles is tremendous and we will try and see according to priority what can be done. It is not on an area basis, it is on a basis of house to house.

Mr Bhagwan: Is it the CEB to decide on the priority list or is it at the level of the Ministry to decide which case is being sponsored by Government?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It goes to the Ministry only for disbursement of fund, but the CEB deals with it. There is a waiting list on a first come first served basis and also on the merit of the case.

Mr Bhagwan: I will ask the Deputy Prime Minister to go through this list and see whether, when we are talking about merits, that genuine cases are being sponsored and not people who do not deserve. Can I ask the Deputy Prime Minister to have an audit at the level of his Ministry on the cases?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I take the point of the hon. Member and I will look into it.

Mr Jugnauth: I see there is an amount that has been earmarked for displacement of poles, does that also include for the extension to vulnerable groups?

The Deputy Prime Minister: They are two separate schemes. One is removal and the other one is extension.

Mr Gunness: On the same item, I heard the Deputy Prime Minister saying that we have more cases in the case of displacement of poles, but I see the target that has been set for 2009 is only 10 displacements. If we have so many displacements why the target that has been set is only 10?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The scheme has just started, we have not put it in place yet, but I can promise the House that the amount that has been voted we can probably exceed that number.

Mr Jugnauth: To have some clarification, is the hon. Minister saying that for 2008/2009 there has been no amount that has been spent for displacement of poles?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is a new scheme, it has never existed before.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, very often, I am looking to intervene, but there is a problem, you are not looking on this side. At page 177, *programme 442: Energy Services*, under item *extension of electrical supply to vulnerable groups*, can I know where matter stand regarding the supply to some 30 families at Cité la Cure?

The Deputy Prime Minister: No, this does not come under that scheme.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, I would like to refer to the same item, that is, displacement of poles and lines. Today, we have a lot of people who have problems for the construction of a second floor and they have to displace the line. In fact, I know cases where people are waiting for months for the displacement and they are asking for money.

The Chairperson: No, we are talking about vulnerable groups and this item is extension of electricity connection. That is not the question.

Mr Lesjongard: I will get back to the same problem, that is, with regard to displacement of poles and lines. We understand that the performance targeted by the Central Electricity Board for 2009 is 10 and the amount earmarked is Rs5 m. If we take Rs5 m. and divide it by 10, it's Rs500 000 per project. Can I ask the Minister whether the Central Electricity Board has an outstanding list of those lines or poles that have to be displaced and what is the number of such projects at the Central Electricity Board?

The Deputy Prime Minister: All I can say, Mr Chairperson, is that it is a new project. There are so far 2000 outstanding applications and it is not a matter of Rs5 m. divided by 10, it is a matter of individual displacement of poles as per the schedule that we are talking about.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Chairperson, I would go back to the point raised earlier by hon. Bhagwan at page 177, *Programme 442*, the issue of extending gradually the electricity network to vulnerable groups. I do understand the agglomeration of vulnerable groups. Can I know whether the cases under the EAP will be taken care of under this item? Because we know that under the EAP programme we must have a very multi-dimensional approach concerning this access to services, water, housing and electricity.

The Deputy Prime Minister: It's another project.

Programme Code 442: Energy Services (Rs44,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 443: Water Resources was called.

Mr Bhagwan: I refer to *Programme 443: Water Resources* under item *O2: Rehabilitation of La Ferme Dam*. We are very happy to hear that the contract for the rehabilitation works is in the pipeline. While going to the La Ferme reservoir, starting from Saint Martin cemetery, we will be having a lot of development within that region concerning energy and other projects. Can I request the Vice-Prime Minister to effect a site visit to see *de visu* and to bring along the Minister of Environment? These are State lands. There is illegal dumping all along the roads. I think part of that dam has been given to a promoter for a project - I do not know what type of project - and there are also cases where people are removing items on La Ferme reservoir which forms part of the *patrimoine*. It was a hydro power station which we have to keep for history, at least, all the installations. Can I appeal to the Deputy Prime Minister to have first site visit and bring along the

Minister of Public Infrastructure and the Ministry of Environment to see it *de visu*?

Maybe the Minister of Tourism, who caters for environment, would be interested to have a look at that site.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, what the hon. Member has said is absolutely true. I have visited a site and it is a disaster, it is invaded by squatters and we are taking all measures. First, to see that they stop removing stones from the dam wall and secondly, that they throw rubbish elsewhere than at that site. Yes, we are taking action on that.

Mr Gunness: Under the Vote 443: Water Resources under item *28211004 Other Current Transfers – Charitable Institutions*, we have Rs3.8 m. for this present financial year, but I do not see any amount earmarked for July to December 2009. The same applies for item *28211024 Other Current Transfers - Subsidy to Religious Bodies* Rs4.5 m., but no amount earmarked for July to December 2009 and even in the plan. Can I know why?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, this item has been transferred to the Ministry of Social Security and National Solidarity and Reform Institutions.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the Water Resources Unit concerning efficiency projects in pilot zones, can we have an indication where the zones are located and if possible, the performances achieved in each zone?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will circulate the information, it is a detailed one. The zones have been changed as we went along during the year, but interestingly, as I said yesterday in my speech, they are micro projects, but the results are worthwhile.

Mr Soodhun: At page 187, I refer to item *32145503 Loan to CWA - Water Supply Development Project*. There is no provision made for the CWA project. Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House if there is any project for the

implementation of water supply in the constituency of my colleague in Moka where there are frequent water cuts and breaking of pipes, as you are aware, for half a decade?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Hon. Dayal had also raised the same issue during the year and I said yesterday in my speech that concerning the eastern zone, including this area, we will address the issue and the CWA will take it from its own budget.

Mr Jhugroo: Page 187, on the same item: *Loan to CWA - Water Supply Development Project*, can I know how much money has been spent in Constituency No. 4 and which regions are concerned?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will circulate that information.

The Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 443 (Rs91,850,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in Programme 444: 01; P1-

“Under column 2010

To insert Targets “35%”

And

To delete “52%”

Amendment agreed to.

The Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities - Programme Code 444 – Sanitation, as amended, was, on question put, agreed to.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 182, I will refer to *Programme Code 444*, under item *Wastewater Management Authority - P1: Contract implemented in*

Plaines Wilhems Lot 1B (4,000 units) during 2009; P2: Contract implemented in Plaines Wilhems Lot 2 (13,000 units) during 2009. Can I know from the Deputy Prime Minister if we can, as Members of Parliament, being given that works have started, be provided with a schedule of work so that we can know where there will be digging of holes? There are lots of problems. I know of one problem. I think that hon. Cuttaree and the Leader of the Opposition know about this problem. Along the road that stretches from Rose Hill Police Station to Boundary, there are shops, there is one filling station and they do not know what to do. They have not been aware of the problems, they have no revenue and they are in a very big problem. Apart from that, there is the problem of security. We have a lot of religious activities within the Ebène area. Can I know from the Deputy Prime Minister if he can request or, at least, direct the Wastewater Management Authority for that particular project? The public relation is very bad; it is not done properly. The owners of the shops and of the filling station as well as the public are suffering.

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is well taken, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Varma: Under item *31113408 Upgrading of Waste Water Infrastructure*, can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House of the details of the upgrading which will be carried out?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Provision is made for construction of a new sewer at Roche Bois for Rs2.11 m.; pumping station and rising mains at La Confiance, Beau Bassin for Rs5.85 m.; supply, installation and commissioning of submersible wastewater pumps for Rs10.74 m.; upgrading of small wastewater treatment plants for Rs32 m. and these would be at Bois Marchand, Rivière du Rempart, Flacq, Vuillemin and Dubreuil, and then jetting units, cess pool emptiers, CCTV for sewer inspection, the whole amounting to Rs40.25 m.

Mr Gunness: Under item (e) *Infrastructure Rehabilitation in CHA Estates*, I see a sum of Rs22.5 m. has been earmarked. Can we know from the Deputy Prime Minister where projects will be carried out in the CHA estates in this financial year?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have a list of 27 estates. I will circulate it and I will just read a few: Cité Rivet, Malherbes, Pavillon, Pitot, Theresa and so on. There are 27 of them scattered all around and I will send a list to the hon. Member.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, at *page 187, item 31113008 Environment West and Sanitation Project*, once again I see no provision for July to December 2009/2010 to 2010/2011. I would like to know whether there is no problem now and what will happen.

Mr Jugnauth: Concerning item *31113008 Baie Du Tombeau Sewage Projects*, I see a provision has been earmarked for 2010/2011. May I know for what it is for 2010/2011?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is for the *Baie Du Tombeau Sewage Project* to be completed. It is ongoing. There is consultancy, construction and upgrading.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I raised the issue through a PQ in this House, that is, problems related to waste water in Cité La Cure. May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he can give us an indication as to the amount earmarked for upgrading or rehabilitation if Cité La Cure is present?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I do not have the information specifically for Cité La Cure. I will provide it when I will get it. As the question of environment west and sanitation, it is a grant from the French Government and they paid directly to the consultant.

Mr Bhagwan: I have another point on the *Plaine Wilhems Sewage Project*. According to the schedule and notes, the Roches Brunes and the Mont Roches area

is only 1% progress. They have done the *tracé* and now they are being told that it will be two or three years after. By the time the *tracé* will wiped out. Can we know from the Deputy Prime Minister when major works would be done in the Mont Roches and Roches Brunes areas under the Plaine Wilhems Sewage Networks? Secondly, we have again the rehabilitation post works for more than one year ago. There have been major works. It is preliminary works on the road leading from Camp Levieux to La Chaumière and Rs10 m., Rs15 m., Rs 30 m. have been spent. The waste water has completely turned the road in a bad state. They are all the planters of St Martin going to the St Martin Kovil Temple night and day, special nights and they encounter a lot of problems. I request the Deputy Prime Minister to take this as a case study. I will not go to the roads of Quatre Bornes where there was digging, in what state the contractor has left these roads. Can we know in the interest of people walking at night and day, planters, that the Wastewater Authority be given directives not to *bousse trou* and also to do patching works because initially the roads were done with concrete premix?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There are two parts to it. The first is the safety aspect and I quite agree. We are going to ask - we did it in the past and we are going to do it again - the Road Safety Traffic Management and also the Municipal Council to take part in these projects, because they really do disturb people. The nature of the work often is unsatisfactory. There is delay in the implementation and I take the point about the rehabilitation of roads afterwards. We are making a separate budget now for road rehabilitation after sewage works.

Mr Jhugroo: At page188, *item 31121801 Acquisition of Vehicles*, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister enlighten the House about the vehicles purchased and the provision of Rs43.5 m.?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will provide the necessary information.

Mr Juganuth: I will come back again to the Baie Du Tombeau Sewage Project. The project is going to be completed at latest by the end of this year. I still cannot understand why that sum has been earmarked. It cannot be for upgrading, it is probably for consultancy. May we know for what purpose exactly?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The provision is being made for ongoing projects, consultancy and construction works for phase I and II and house connection. About 400 of them have already been done for Rs31.2 m. Phase III consultancy services for feasibility study and detailed design and tender documents for the region of Terre Rouge and Le Hochet. It is a sum of Rs11.5, the funding is from the World Bank and there will be also upgrading of water treatment plant at Baie Du Tombeau.

Mr Gunness: At page 183, under the *Waste Water Management Authority-(03) House connections*, the percentage of population connected, the evolution, seems very slow for I see from 2008/2009, it is 26.89% and at end 2009 it is targeted at 27% nearly 0.5 % evolving and then 2010 targets again 28%. Why is this house to house connection so slow?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I mentioned it yesterday, there is much delay in the implementation, even to house to house connection, and we are losing revenues from that. I will give some information of the Free House Connection Programme, up to 1,755 household. In Port Louis we spent Rs23,475,000; in Plaine Wilhems it is Rs23,425,000.

Mr Bhagwan: Let me be very brief. I am again coming to this Plaine Wilhems Sewage Networks, the state of the roads and dangers encountered. Can the Deputy Prime Minister take the overall responsibility at least for these major projects? The problem is that responsibilities are shared between the RDA, the Road Fund, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and the contractors. Can the

Deputy Prime Minister, at least, under the item *Maurice Ile Durable* take the full responsibility for the follow up because we trust him?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I think the wastewater sector should take the responsibility and have this coordination. We have done it in the past and we are going to do it again.

Programme Code 444: Sanitation (Rs586,890,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 445: Radiation Protection was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, page 188 item 22120, could the hon Deputy Prime Minister give details of the fees which have been paid?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is fees to the Chairperson and the Members of the Radiation Protection Council.

Mr Varma: Under the item *current grants to international organizations*, we can see that there is no provision made for the period July to December 2009. Could the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House on this matter?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It has already been paid.

Mrs Martin: On page 183, *Programme Code 445*, under *Performance Indicator, 03: Provide Thermoluminescence Dosimetry (TLD) service radiation workers*, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister in which sectors these workers are found since I see there is only a hundred that have been monitored for 2008/2009? How many actually are estimated to be exposed?

The Deputy Prime Minister: A large number. As I said, we have to review it again. The hon. Member has raised the right issue. It is probably about 600 people who eventually are exposed.

Programme Code 445: Radiation Protection (Rs2,800,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 341: Policy and Management for Tourism and Leisure (Rs30,437,500) was called.

Mr Bhagwan: I am referring to page 194. I address my question to the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism. Yesterday, he did a very good performance. He made a very good speech in which there were lots of good things.

Mr X. L. Duval: Thank you.

Mr Bhagwan: I will request him to serve a notice to the *Quartier Général* of the Labour Party.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order! The hon. Member should come back to the question.

Mr Bhagwan: There were very good initiatives, Mr Chairperson, on the old building.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member is congratulating the Minister.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: I was just making a joke, Sir. I'll ask the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, hon. X. L. Duval, to serve a notice on the building at Vandermeersch Street, where you have a *passerelle* and so on which is an eyesore for many years.

(Interruptions)

Although the good work done, there is complete mismanagement, if I can express myself. The Minister has so many responsibilities, environment, tourism, etc. There is also the Tourism Fund. I saw the workers at *Stade Candos* where they are doing a good job, but where is the limit? People must know, because this Tourism Fund is public fund. Are they allowed to come in front of my place and

paint my wall? Are they allowed to paint a building and then, in the afternoon – I am not being nasty – have a meeting of a political party?

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: That's not true! The hon. Member is talking rubbish.

Mr Bhagwan: I am just asking questions. I am not talking rubbish, Sir. The hon. Minister says that I am telling rubbish.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister cannot say that.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member is making an allegation that I use the staff for political meetings.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let me put an order! I think the hon. Member has a right to put questions and the hon. Minister will reply.

Mr Bhagwan: We can come with specific questions. I am not being nasty. I say the hon. Minister is doing a good job, at least.

The Chairperson: Please, come to the point!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: If you are not happy, hon. Ms Deepalsing

The Chairperson: The hon. Member should not make remarks.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. lady is making remarks.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, come to the point. Order! Order now!

Mr Bhagwan: I am asking the hon. Minister of Tourism - although the good job is being done by the workers under the Tourism Fund – whether these workers are allowed to go and paint premises of private persons. I am talking about the Financial Regulations, whether there is a decision which has been taken. There may be good decisions. If there is an eyesore...

(Interruptions)

Let me finish, Sir. I have a few other questions. *Il y a les vieux bâtiments qui sont des eyesores.* I would like to know whether the Ministry has prepared official guidelines, approved according to our Financial Regulations to allow such type of job.

Secondly, I'll come again to the suggestion I made last time when the Minister of Tourism went on radio. It is good that we do lots of things in terms of environment to attract tourists, etc. But, what about our good brothers, *chauffeurs* taxis, who just parked outside hotels, with no amenities? They do not have any sheds and the Minister agreed to take up that suggestion. We would like to know from the Minister what action has been taken with the Tourism section.

My third question is about the payment for new projects. I will ask the Minister about one case. We have the Club Méditerranée projects, the promoters asked to pay about Rs10 m. or Rs25 m. in a Fund for specific projects. We asked questions here about the projects which are being implemented under the payments made by the promoters of Club Méditerranée for the villages of Albion, Canot, Gros Cailloux, and so on. And in reply to a Parliamentary Question concerning the Albion football ground, the Minister of Environment said that all the projects were prepared by the consultant of the Ministry of Environment - NDU - and were submitted to the Ministry of Tourism for implementation. It is more than one year now.

(Interruptions)

Is he the Minister who is replying for this item?

(Interruptions)

The hon. Minister will have to wait!

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: We are asking whether the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism can give us a breakdown of the amount spent for the project of Club

Méditerranée. Can he also give us a breakdown where payments have been made by hotel promoters for specific projects?

Thirdly, I will come...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let the hon. Member finish!

Mr Bhagwan: I said that I have seven questions - we are not tired, it is very early! Firstly, I'll come to the Bel Ombre Hotel projects. We see that there is a Police station now. If you tell me that it does not cater according to the environment of the tourism zone, but what about the Bel Ombre public beach which was a sort of integrated project which was done in connection with all the developments of Bel Ombre hotels which people funded. Preliminary works were done for the people of Bel Ombre. Can the hon. Minister let us have some details about this Bel Ombre public beach?

Mr X. L. Duval: I think there are five or six questions. I will try to remember all of them. I thank the hon. Member firstly. I think he has been quite helpful in getting the message across everybody about environment, even from the Opposition. The first question concerns the number of agencies that are operating on the environment. But, Mr Chairperson, the problem is very large, it is all over the country and I think everyone should give a hand, be it the various agencies, the MID Fund, the Ministry of Environment, the Municipalities. We should not forget that Municipalities also should help and, of course, my Ministry, because we are very keen. As I mentioned in my speech yesterday, the whole of Mauritius should be a tourist area; this is how we are operating. I think everybody is giving a hand, is welcoming this, but the amount of work is so huge that we have to do some catching up. That's the first issue.

The second issue is whether we should work on private property. We do not usually work on private property. I'll remind the hon. Member that he, himself, in

Grand Gaube, had fenced the whole of the street of, quite rightly, all the *cités* - from public funds I presume. The project cost Rs50 m. at that time. So, there are precedents as I am sure the hon. Member himself remembers. So, we do some light work rather than prosecuting someone. It is easier, if it is just a coat of paint, we won't do heavy work. We just do light work if it helps because, very often, we find that if we get rid of one eyesore, the rest of the region will actually take example from that and clean up. We have done a little bit of that; it is very, very limited.

The third question is about the taxi-stand. I'll take the point again. Some hotels have erected a taxi structure to house their taxi drivers, but I will look at that again for the hon. Member. As far as Albion is concerned, I will submit a list to the hon. Member of what has been done so far, the fisheries project and whatever. The same thing goes to Bel Ombre. I think Bel Ombre is a good case to note. For Bel Ombre, I think, a sum of Rs75 m. was paid by the promoters at the time - and the hon. Member should know this very well. A sum of Rs80 m. from the Taxi Fund was spent on the roads. Nothing was used by the previous Government for anything else apart from the roads to the hotels themselves. There was nothing left at all.

When we came, the Tourism Fund was, in fact, in deficit. Now there is another hotel that has paid Rs25 m. and we are waiting for more money from the Bel Ombre hotels. There is already Rs10 m. or Rs13 m. earmarked for the women's centre. Mr Chairperson, if you have 10 hotels in Les Salines, you cannot spend Rs250 m. just in Les Salines. That does not make sense. It does not mean that because the hotel is in that region - probably very beautiful, that's why there is a hotel there - you should not use the money for Roches Bois, Ste. Croix or Plaine Verte. We should give these people also a chance to profit from tourism. It does not make sense. We have to strike a balance. Let us take, for example, Les Salines

Koenig which is already a beautiful area. Five hotels are coming up there. There are Rs25m. Are we going to put another Rs25 m. in a beach of Les Salines Koenig? What is the point? We have to do a little bit there because it is already very beautiful. That is why there are hotels there and, of course, the rest has to go to other parts of the country. I think I have covered most of the questions.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Chairperson, I am taking three sentences, from page 194, which are really overlapped: “*Carrying out of sensitisation campaigns against fly-posting, Removal of obsolete and unpleasant posters affixed to public buildings and structures and Placement of wooden poster panels around the island.*” Je voudrais demander au ministre de mettre un peu d’ordre en ce qui concerne le collage des affiches sur les murs. Il y a eu un *code of conduct* pendant les dernières élections partielles et il est évident qu’une partie de l’opposition a joué le jeu, mais il y a des agents qui, le 01 mai, ont de nouveau étalé des affiches. Un *Unit* du ministère est venu ensuite mettre des croix sur ces affiches. Le message est passé. Qu’est-ce qu’on peut faire? Est-ce que le ministère compte légiférer? Va-t-on réserver certains panneaux uniquement pour les grands partis politiques? Il faut mettre de l’ordre, car cela ne peut pas continuer.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, there is already a regulation that was made against illegal fly-posting and it seems to be working. I must say also that the amount of infringement to this regulation is very minimum - even on 01 May. Maybe, we had 1000 posters all over the country instead of 40,000, 50,000 or 100,000 that we used to have before. That was dealt with very quickly. It is a very minimal thing and I must also say that, although we are placing these wooden poster panels, it is taking a bit of time. Actually about 200 are financed by the Standard Bank, some are financed by us and some are placed by the local authorities. It will take time, but it is working very well. I would like again to thank all the parties - Government and Opposition - for keeping to this.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Vice- Prime Minister why some wooden poster panels have been removed in Constituency No. 8? This is my first question. My second question is in the context of *Maurice Ile Durable*. I see, almost every day, that there is a dedicated team with green shirt along Shivananda Avenue doing several nice works. Can I know how many people have been recruited, whether these posts have been advertised and whether procedures have been followed for the recruitment? Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister also table a list of those persons recruited?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, there are, I think, 75 people working for the Tourism Authority. They are under contract. The same procedure applies for one-year contract. There is not a lot of advertising. People apply, and if they are good - they need to be good - they are recruited, and they are fired also. We try to keep people who are very good to work. We placed temporary posters in Constituency No. 8 and, because they were unsightly, we removed them after the election.

Mr Varma: I have got three questions under *Programme Code 342 - Sustainable Tourism Industry*, at page 195.

The Chairperson: We are still on programme 341.

Mr Varma: Let me then go to page 194 - *Control of stray animals/pests/ravens*. Could the Vice Prime Minister inform the House about the steps that have been taken to control the number of stray dogs around the island?

Mr X. L. Duval: In fact, there are two ways that we operate. Firstly, we finance on a per dog basis, the dog catching activities of the MSPCA and, secondly, we finance the sterilisation by PAWS on a per dog basis of the dogs sterilized.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, at page 196, as regards to “*Main Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*”, reference is made to foreign expertise and consultant whose services were hired to formulate appropriate policies under a Tourism Sector Strategic Plan. Can I ask the hon. Vice Prime Minister to enlighten the House who was the Consultant and the cost of that exercise?

Mr X. L. Duval: I told my colleague that I objected to the wordings “the Ministry had to have”. I told that to my Permanent Secretary. In fact, we do not have to have, but we have had recourse to a consultant. The report is here, but I haven't seen it, I must say, but obviously, a lot of these reports say what we already know. We are going on with what we are doing as far as our strategy is concerned, but this will come and fill in the blanks for us. As for the consultant, I understand it is Mr Oliver Bennet.

Mr Bodha: What is the cost of the consultancy?

Mr X. L. Duval: I'll give it to the hon. Member as soon as I have it.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I come back to page 194 regarding *the control of stray animals/ pests/ravens*. I would like to ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister regarding rodents – rats. I think every town in this country has a big problem of rodents. Is there any particular action that he is envisaging?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, I know that the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment are looking into the matter. We are not looking at it at the moment ourselves, but it is a very real problem and I agree. This is something I have in mind also.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to External Communications, there is a new Air Services Agreement with Sri Lanka. Is it being proposed to have this new route serviced in the future?

The Chairperson: We have not yet put the question. We are still with tourism. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he has looked at all our roundabouts? There was a project where private firms were given responsibility to look about the roundabouts; even the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture are concerned. We are talking about corporate social responsibility. Is this aspect linked with *l'image de l'île Maurice, de l'aéroport, des hôtels*? Different highways have roundabouts. Is this in the pipeline?

Secondly, regarding the islets, one of the main polluters on the islets are not Mauritians. We blame our people, but the tourists themselves go on catamarans and do whatever they want on all these major islets. Is there a study which is being done, at least, to put guidelines not only to Mauritians, but also to tourists about what they can do and what they are not allowed to do on our islets? We had a plan which we worked out, and now it has become a National Park. Is this aspect of islets being catered for by the Ministry? Secondly, in terms of marketing of Mauritius outside, we all know of the football matches in the big stadiums. The Ministry of Tourism has planned to sell Mauritius within these big stadiums, not only in UK, but also in France, even in the big cricket stadiums of India.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, firstly, if I can answer to hon. Bodha's question regarding the Tourism Sector Strategic Plan. The company is called Emerging Markets Group and the price quoted is 49,000 euros for that study. The second question concerns Sri Lanka. There was an ASA signed with Sri Lanka, but there are no plans to operate to that country at the moment. The initiative for the roundabouts was a good initiative and most of these roundabouts are being kept well. Some are not. But this is a question more for my colleague, hon. Bachoo who deals with the roads. But I must congratulate hon. Bachoo for the good work

that is being done on the motorways to keep them clean. Everyday I pass and I can see people cleaning the motorways. That's a very good initiative.

As far as the islets are concerned, I think the questions should go more to Ministry of Agriculture, but I must say that the Tourism Authority is going to have some new regulations concerning catamarans that go to these islets, in particular, the problem of regulation of food that is cooked on board, it makes a lot of smoke, people throw the bones outside, etc. For example, at Ile Plate, it can be a problem.

The second thing concerns chemical toilets. We are going to ask people who have boats to have chemical toilets otherwise you can imagine what happens when you flush.

Mr Chairperson, the amount of money that we have is fairly limited and we use it as the best means possible and, very often, the best means possible is via the Internet, etc. So, we have a mix. I will note it down.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 194, *Strategic Note, Major Achievements for 2008/09*, mention is made about a code of conduct which has been signed with hotels and hawkers. Could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister table a copy of that code of conduct and also inform the House the names of the 20 hotels which have signed that code of conduct?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, I will get the information for the hon. Member. But, basically, the idea is that in return for proper conduct from the beach hawkers, the hotels provide amenities as toilets and things like that and some organised interface between the hawkers and the tourists, say one night, a week or something. I will circulate it.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I have two questions under the same item, the code of conduct between hotels and beach hawkers. Concerning the place of hawkers of Coco Beach hotel, which is now demolished, can I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister where will they be transferred? My second question concerns

marketing the country as *Maurice Ile Sans Passeport* to redirect French tourists to Mauritius. We know now that it is more than French tourists. We have extended it to some other countries. Can we know up to where are we going with that project?

Mr X. L. Duval: As far as hawkers at Coco Beach Hotel are concerned, I know, in general, when hotels close for more than a few months, the Tourism Authority does its best to transfer them to other hotels. Often hawkers at other hotels object, they say they do not want 10 more people there. We do have a large number of hotels at the moment. Because of the situation, actually when they are renovating, we have a real problem. Some of my colleagues here have come to see me and say what they can do for those persons who were in difficulty because of the large number that we have at the moment that need to be repositioned elsewhere.

As far as “*Maurice Sans Passeport*” is concerned, it has now been extended on a test basis, I must say, for six months, to France without discrimination. Not only people who could not go to Guadeloupe, but anybody, any tourist can actually use it provided he is a French national or an Italian national. We will monitor that. It has just been done last week. It has been quickly done by the Prime Minister’s and now we have to market it. The information that we have is that in some destinations, that has had a great impact. We hope that it will have the same impact on Mauritius.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, at page 196, *Main Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*, at third paragraph, it is mentioned that there is inadequate expertise, manpower and equipment at the Tourism Authority and that additional funding will have to be sought. Can the Minister say whether there has been a study which has been carried out to determine which amount of funding would be needed and whether the search for funding has

already started, and, if so, whether there is also a time target to start or, at least, to cater to this deficiency?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, funding is always inadequate. It is never adequate. So, the Tourism Authority does some side activities like holding courses, etc. which generate some income, but I must say that the budget of the Tourism Authority is very little. It was Rs18 m. and now, I think, it is Rs11 m. for the six months. So, we presume that it will be Rs22 m. It is still a very small budget considering the thousands of licensed people that we have, but I must say also that by whatever means we have tried to improve the monitoring and the licensing so that it is much faster now. We have 10 new monitoring officers who monitor and they are present in restaurants. The state of the restaurants in Mauritius is sometimes incredible. So, they are much more present in all these areas. These are things that we were not doing before because of lack of funding. But now, more or less we are managing it. There is no form of study. We can see for ourselves.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, in the context of '*Maurice Ile Durable*', let me, first of all, congratulate the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for the wise decision taken for having placed wooden poster panels for the by-election in Constituency No. 8. In this context, can I know whether the same wooden panels or other panels will be placed around Mauritius in all the 20 constituencies? I hope that the same that has been experienced in Constituency No. 8 will be done in the 20 constituencies of Mauritius?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, I think, I have replied to that. These were temporary panels which cost very little money and which were to be removed afterwards. They were not meant to last. There are two types of panels that are being placed. There are wooden ones which have been placed directly by my Ministry, but the largest number has been placed by the Standard Bank. In fact, we

should thank Standard Bank. There are also metal panels which are placed by the local authorities. Obviously, as we go along, we are placing every week. Hopefully, by the time the general election comes, next year, there will be many.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, I am not going to congratulate the Minister, but I would just like to say that he has a very good ambition. We have to help him in his endeavour. It concerns the regulation only. Nowadays, there are catamarans spread everywhere in the sea and I have personally reported the case to the Grand' Baie coastguard. There are two catamarans. When they finish their journey, they come back and they throw all the *déchets* in the sea. They throw hundreds and hundreds of plastic bags in the sea. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether we'll have a regulation for that or whether he is going to add in the regulation that restrictions should be very tight?

Mr X. L. Duval: If the hon. Member wants to give me the name, I'll certainly have a look at it and inquire. But we have been more active, as I mentioned, with the new monitoring officers. We have suspended a number of licences, given warnings, etc., and we try to be good, but, obviously, we do rely on the Enforcement Agency which is mainly the coastguard. We do rely on them whether they are efficient or not. As far as the region is concerned, this is another issue.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, at page 196, the last paragraph, we refer to high calibre international professionals to advise us on appropriate marketing strategies, and, at page 202, we have PR representatives in 13 countries. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister how are we going to connect in what the PR companies are doing on a full-time basis and the high calibre international professionals?

Mr X. L. Duval: We have not actually recruited any high calibre international professionals to work for us and there is provision for it. We do not have any plans either. We have recruited some high calibre Mauritians to work for us. We are also constantly reviewing our PR. When we recruit, some of them are good, the French are extremely good, some are very good, some are less good and at the end of this month, in June, we will be reviewing and we will be getting rid of those we do not think are good and replacing them by the others.

Mr Cuttaree: I just want to come back to this issue of travel without passports. I think that it was a good initiative which the Minister took when there was this crisis in Guadeloupe. Yesterday, I was listening to the hon. Prime Minister when he was talking about no country is immune from terrorists. I am worried about that and I am sure many people, including the Minister, must be worried about this issue.

One of the advantages of people who have got passport is that you can have an idea about where they have been going before they come to Mauritius, where they have gone in various years. But if there are people here without a passport and only an identity card, they are going to deprive themselves of a very important means of checking for the security of the country. The hon. Minister has started with France and now he is going to Italy. Can I ask him whether that is going to be a general policy?

Mr X.L Duval: Mr Chairperson, the *Maurice sans Passport* was already applied for both countries, France and Italy and we have just extended it now and made it less cumbersome.

As far as the security risks are concerned, the whole issue has been taken care of, not only from a tourist point of view, but from a security point of view by the Prime Minister's Office. We think that there are sufficient safeguards with the *carte d'identité* and with the formalities that they have to fill in when they come

here. But I must say to the hon. Member that this is not something new that Mauritius is doing. I mentioned yesterday that many countries are doing it already. There are obviously risks and rewards associated with everything. If we do not do it, we will never cross a road. It is the degree of risks and the amount of rewards that have to be judged and we think that we got it right, but it is a tentative six months and afterwards we will see how it works.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, at page 196, as regards to '*the new emerging markets with relatively high growth potential*' we totally agree as far as India and China is concerned. May I ask the Vice-Prime Minister whether we are going to appoint PR in China and whether we are going to have flight to China soon?

Mr X.L Duval: We are definitely going to appoint a PR in China. Secondly, there are plans, obviously, for Air Mauritius flight to Hong Kong. There are plans to fly either to Guangzhou or to Shanghai, but it has been put on hold a little bit with the economic situation.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications– Code 341: Policy and Management for Tourism and Leisure (Rs13,437,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vice-Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications– Code 342: Sustainable Tourism Industry was called.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 200, *Ministry of Tourism and Leisure – Increase security at sea – P2: Number of Swimming zones/ski lanes/snorkeling/mooring zones*, I see that there is only (1) in 2008/2009 and the target for 2009 is (3) and it will go up by (2). Can I know the name of the two additional ones for the swimming zone?

At Tourism Authority, O2: Number of Pleasure Crafts Licenses issued – there are a total of 625, targeted to 225 in 2009 and then 300 in 2010. Does the Minister not feel that we are on the very high side? Concerning security at sea what

is being done for pleasure crafts and are we still on that policy decision of not issuing pleasure crafts on a commercial basis? Lastly, on the same *Programme 342*, at page 207, *Item No. 31113016 (b) Coastal Walkway at Trou D'Eau Douce - Rs2 m.* I am sure it has not been spent but the item has disappeared completely from the Budget Estimates. Can I, therefore, know where matter stands with that Coastal Walkway at Trou D'Eau Douce?

Mr X. L Duval: Mr Chairperson, I want to correct the statement I just made on China. I think the PR has recently been appointed.

As far as the swimming zones are concerned, I'll provide information as soon as I get it from my colleagues.

Concerning the pleasure crafts, I think we have to balance the economic use, the opportunity that is presented, because many of these are people living in the coast etc, *ti dimounes*, who like to have an opportunity to tap the tourism potential, but it also creates some disorder when you have canvasser and also the issue of security at sea. But, there has been no moratorium on the issue of commercial pleasure craft. It is being tightened out to avoid canvassing and to make sure that you have a proper contract, but there no moratorium on issue of commercial pleasure crafts. It is obviously decreasing. I think it is a good thing to decrease over time because you can't keep issuing the same number, but I do not think we are going to stop it completely because it is an important economic potential for a lot small entrepreneurs.

Mr Gunness: What about Trou D'Eau Douce?

Mr X. L Duval: As soon as I get the information I will let the hon. Member know. I'll just give the information concerning the swimming zones. Trou aux Biches, Casuarina Beach and Mont Choisy are swimming zones and there are ski lanes at Trou aux Biches and Mon Choisy.

Mr Varma: At page 195, Programme 342, I have three questions, Mr Chairperson. Firstly, which are the tourist attractions which are going to be improved? Secondly, about *Tourism Signage*, which are the locations? Thirdly, *cleaning of touristic sites*, whether we have the number of touristic sites which are going to be cleaned?

Mr X. L Duval: The general policy on the tourist attractions is to improve all that we can. We get requests all the time and we study these requests, for instance, in Trou D'Eau Douce and Grand'Baie etc,. I cannot say whether we have a definite list. On the Signage, we have done a good job. We have completed the east, we have done the south and the north and they are beautiful and very useful. The east is ongoing actually.

At 1.00 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.09 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I would like to know from the Vice-Prime Minister whether he has got the answer concerning *Trou d'Eau Douce Coastal Walkway*.

Mr Duval: I am still waiting for the answer, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, on page 201, *Tourism Authority - item 05: Cleaning of touristic sites (historical sites, bare lands, painting of buildings on main roads, etc)*, the indicators are such that the number of touristic sites to be cleaned up for the period 2008/2009 is 100. There is then an increase by 200 in 2009 and, again, an increase to 400 in 2010. Mr Chairperson, we all agree that, as set up under the Programme-Based Budget statement, under the MID campaign, all Ministries should get together to have a holistic approach to the issue of cleaning of bare lands or upgrading and embellishment of touristic sites. Can we have an indication what are the criteria that have been laid down and the touristic sites that have been identified? Earlier on, I understood that the Stade Guy Rosemond fell

under the touristic site. For example, we all know that *Le Caveau de Père Laval* is a touristic site. Are the buildings - there is one belonging to the Municipality of Port-Louis - next to the Church eligible to be upgraded or to be painted?

M X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, anything that is an eyesore which needs to be cleaned up will be done. There is no particular region, everything is important to me, whether it is here or there it does not matter, we will operate all over the island. There is an amount of work. I am happy, in fact, that what we did at Quatre-Bornes draws attention because the amount of money we spent in that region for cleaning, maybe Rs200 000, is a minimum amount compared to the rest that has been done. I understand the subtlety that the Member is trying to make on *Le Caveau de Père Laval*, but he should know ...

(*Interruptions*)

Can the hon. Member keep quiet and let me finish! He should know ...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Lesjongard: On a point of Order, Mr Chairperson?

Mr X. L. Duval: I fail to understand the point of order. What is the point of order?

The Chairperson: Please, continue hon. Minister.

Mr X. L. Duval: The hon. Member interrupted me for a point of order which was none! I understand the subtlety of it, Mr Chairperson.

I will go on to say that we have worked quite a lot. The Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Environment and my Ministry have worked and spent an enormous amount on *Le Caveau de Père Laval*. In fact, it was like a *dépotoir* when we took over and it is now beautiful. As for my Ministry itself, we worked and spent a budget of Rs500 000 on the *Caveau Sacristain*. We will continue every year to look after *Le Caveau de Père Laval* as we look at other religious sites.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, on page 199, touristic sites, apart from the Botanical Garden de Jardin of Pamplemousses which has a Trust Fund for its management, there are several beautiful gardens which could be considered like Jardin Balfour, the botanical garden in Curepipe and the one in Souillac. For the past years, the management has been left to local authorities, district councils and municipalities with limited means. Can I know from the Minister whether he has in mind, in the context of tourist promotion, keeping Mauritius clean, etc., to have a professional approach for all these gardens, having *paysagistes* and people who are well versed in trees and flowers so that, at least, it can be linked to tourism promotion?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, in fact, we have a project at Jardin Balfour. It cost us Rs3.5 m. I have not gone to see it, I hope it is nice. We are also operating at Trou D'argent in Rodrigues where we had a nice Budget there to do that.

(Interruptions)

I do not believe, Mr Chairperson, in master plans and all that. It will take us 4 years to get it, Ministers will be changed and then it won't happen. I believe in doing things. If I take too long to think about it, it won't get on. If the Opposition has a suggestion, it is not a political issue, we will be happy to react on it.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 201, *outputs 05: cleaning of touristic site (historical sites, bare lands, painting of buildings on main roads, etc)*, in my constituency at Vacoas/Floreal, there are caves which need to be rehabilitated. At Glen Park, for example, we have a cave which now has become a *dépotoire* and, from my understanding, people used to walk from this cave at Glen Park up to La Caverne, but now it is just a *dépotoire*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he can look into this for the rehabilitation of the caves in this constituency?

Mr X. L. Duval: The hon. Member is right. This is the point we are trying to make. There are places everywhere where tourists can go. We should not look at just one place. I will happily look into it.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 201, same item 05: *cleaning of touristic site (historical sites, bare lands, painting of buildings on main roads, etc)*, can I ask the Minister how he establishes his priorities with respect to these projects? Because he is, no doubt, aware that, for quite some time now, the inhabitants of Bel Ombre have been asking for the erection of a public toilet for those going to the Beach. That is my first question.

I have a second question with regard to 07": '*Enforcement of regulations to ensure that pleasure crafts operate according to set criteria.*' I understand that there has been a number of warning and suspension for those who operate pleasure crafts. Can I ask the Minister what has been done pour *encadrer ces plaisanciers* so that they can operate not in a vacuum but, at least, get some funds to put up a *kiosque* or something like that?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Chairperson, the toilet at Bel Ombre does not come under that particular item because it is part of the project to upgrade Bel Ombre. The problem with constructing a public toilet probably is to keep it clean. Usually they become eyesores in themselves very quickly. I will certainly note that down.

As far as the skippers are concerned, I must say that since the Government took over, we have trained and licensed thousands of skippers in terms of professional qualifications, that is what we have done so far and we can always look at other things.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, at page 199, *Programme 342, P1 indicators*, can I ask the hon. Vice Prime Minister whether the original and historical *cachet of La Citadelle* will be maintained when the upgrading and embellishment works will be conducted?

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, Mr Chairperson, we have to do so by law. One commercial park is already opened and there is a diamond shop there, which is a very beautiful shop, and you can have a look. And we are actually working on the rest of the Citadelle. Part of it will be a museum and part of it will be for other uses to generate income for the running of the Citadelle. I must say again that when we took over the Citadelle it was a completely abandoned piece of architecture. It is taking a bit of time, but it is beginning to look very nice.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I am still waiting an answer concerning the *Trou d'Eau Douce Coastal Walkway*. I put the question before lunch. I hope to get the answer before we put that item on vote. Rs2 m. has been voted and there is no item up to 2011. I would like to put another question, in the meantime, to the Minister. On page 200, *Tourism Authority - Delivery Unit (53 staff)* – the Minister said previously that some 75 people have been recruited and I would like to know why there is only 53 mentioned here.

Mr X. L. Duval: It is not the same. This is, as presumed, the establishment.

(Interruptions)

They are on contract.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, on the same page, with regards to *Tourism Authority, Output 03: Inspection of Tourist Enterprises*, I see that there have been *365 bungalows and villas and tourists establishments inspected and for 2009, 500 are to be inspected*. Can I know from the Vice-Prime Minister how many are actually in existence and what is the percentage that is being inspected with regard to the existing ones?

Mr X. L. Duval: I do not have the total number of licensed bungalows, but maybe I can quickly say how many licenses we have given so far in terms of the bungalows and villas and how many have been inspected. We have just recruited 10 monitoring officers. The big problem with Government, as we all know, is that

we issue licences and then we never monitor. Then once the licence issue is over, the thing changes completely, it degrades and nobody worries about it. In fact, this is what we are trying to do.

As far as the Trou d'Eau Douce project is concerned, would the hon. Member like me to circulate it for him? It is better as it is lengthy.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, *Programme 342, on page 199, regarding Output O1: Improved touristic attraction, P1: Upgrading/Embellishment works at La Citadelle*, I just heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister stating that we are going to have a museum and some economic activities at La Citadelle. Do we understand from him that La Citadelle will no more be used for cultural activities like giving concerts?

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes and no. Obviously, we have to have a choice. The type of activity will have to be something that does not disturb during the day. For example, we cannot have high-class shops and restaurants and, at the same time, a big tent erected there with chairs everywhere. We have to keep *la vocation de la Citadelle*. However, some of the activities can be done, for instance, now there is *les chercheurs de perles* that Paul Olsen is doing. We are managing to have this because it does not involve the erection of a tent. Some activities can go ahead and some will not be able to, but I do mention that we have taken over the old prison building, La Ferme du Rhum, especially for this type of activities also.

Ministry of Tourism – Sustainable Tourism Industry - Programme Code 342 (Rs23,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to -

- a) Code 343 - Ministry of Tourism – Destination Promotion – (Rs205, 000,000)*
- b) Code 344 - Ministry of Tourism – Promotion of Leisure – (Rs3, 067,500)*

Ministry of Tourism – Civil Aviation and Port Development – Programme Code 345 was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, on page 204, *Programme 345, Administration - Output 06: Increase air links to existing and new destinations*, can we know, over the past year, what are the destinations which Air Mauritius has cancelled or are out of service and what are the new destinations which are in the pipeline?

Secondly, as regards *Output 07: Strategic Planning and effective management in the External Communication and Department of Civil Aviation*, can the Minister give us some hints about where the Strategic Plan of the Civil Aviation service stands as far as security on our planes is concerned, and

Thirdly, with regard to *Output 08: A modernized Port Infrastructure and improved Cargo Handling services*, can the Minister inform the House where we are with the strategic partnership project for the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd?

Mr X. L. Duval: Concerning the first question, MK started to operate in Spain in the high season and that has now stopped. It has also stopped the service to Sydney. I think it was wrong, but it did so. Now there was a mission from MK, last week, in Australia to relook completely at the Australian position and, probably, there is going to be changes in Australia and once that is done, they are going then to look at what can be done to reactivate the Australian route which has suffered from that decision, I must say. Apart from that, I am not aware of any other routes that have been stopped or I can't say either whether there are, at least, in the near future, any new routes that are going to be started.

As far as the DCA is concerned, we have - touchwood - an unblemished safety record so far and I hope that it continues and if the hon. Member has a specific question on DCA, I am sure they will be happy to respond to that.

As far as the strategic partner is concerned, we have the assistance of the IFC for that. A pre-qualification exercise has been done and I think four firms have been pre-qualified. It is now a question of going for the Request for Proposal. There is, however, one thing that I ought to mention. As everyone knows, the world is in depression and the world trade has suffered tremendously and there is a question of timing, whether at this point of time, floating or putting up shares for sales in the Cargo Handling Corporation would fetch an appropriate price. So, it is now a question of timing.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the Minister aware that the workers at the Port Sector are very worried? Have they received representations? Has the hon. Minister met them in order to reassure them or, at least, brief them *pour la transparence* on this issue of strategic planning?

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, I met some of the unions and there is worry all over the world. It is the same argument all over the world whenever you want to find some form of strategic partner. I can assure the House and the workers that it is really in the best interest of the workers. We have shown in this Government, Mr Chairperson, that we have the best interests of the port, having invested Rs5 billion over the last 5 years. We are not going to do anything stupid. We are going to take everybody on board and provide necessary the assurance to the workers. We will cross that bridge when we come to it, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, on page 209, the *Sub-Programme 34502: Civil Aviation Services, 22010001 Electricity and Gas Charges*, I see a massive increase. Rs8 m. for one year and it is now Rs6.3 m. for six months. Can we have some explanations concerning this massive increase and also Rs13 m. for the plan for 2010? Regarding item *22060001 Maintenance of Buildings* for this financial year, it was Rs1.1 m. for one year and now it has jumped eightfold, to Rs8.8 m. Can we have some explanations?

Mr X. L. Duval: I think these are estimates for both years. It was underestimated one year and now they have put it to the actual figure given the electricity tariff charges have increased. What is the second one?

Mr Gunness: The second one concerns the *Maintenance of Buildings*. It was Rs1.1 m. and it has now jumped by eightfold, to Rs8.8 m.

Mr X. L. Duval: They have a particular provision for the maintenance of the buildings this year.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 204, *Programme 34502, Indicators P1: Number of aviation security audit (infrastructure, procedures and personnel) carried out to maintain the aviation security standard*, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister how far is the air trip of Agalega safe for the Dornier to land there?

The Chairperson: One concern is PMO and the second one is policy.

Programme Code 345: Civil Aviation and Port (Rs143,174,200) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment – Programme Code 361: Policy and Strategy for Economic Growth and Social Progress (Rs424,231,450) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment – Programme Code 362: Public Financial Management was called.

Dr. Sithanen: I move for an amendment as follows -

Programme 362; subprogramme 36203; 01 (Page 233)

Under column Indicators,

To insert “P2: Percent of Participants’ satisfaction”

And

To delete “P2: Percent of Participants”

Amendment agreed to.

Programme Code 362: Public Financial Management, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule..

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, on page 216, *Public Financial Management*, “*Manage and control public finances in a prudent and sustainable matter and ensure efficiency and effectiveness of public spending*”, we have all seen the last Director of Audit’s report. He submits his report every year. As regards the last one, the Government is doing nothing. Millions are being spent and to curtail our expenditure, we are being asked “*de serrer la ceinture*”. We have been in Government, we have been Ministers and we know. Honestly, can I know from the hon. Minister what concrete actions is he contemplating? Four years have elapsed and I think things can go on moving. We have results oriented action as far as the follow up of the report is concerned before expenditure is incurred. Many often, we, politicians, take the blame. The Chief Operating Officer in each Ministry has to assume his responsibility. What action is the Minister contemplating to take as far as the follow up of the Director of Audit’s report is concerned?

Dr. Sithanen: It is a very fair question, Mr Chairperson. The very idea of shifting from a traditional line budgeting to a performance-based budgeting should bring more transparency, more efficiency and more accountability in the system. In fact, we are seeing it in the quality of the question - you have been in the House for a very long time, Mr Chairperson - and the way the question is being asked. Now it will make sure that people who are accountable will ascertain that the money is well spent. It would take us some time, Mr Chairperson, to embed the performance-based Budget in our culture.

Secondly, we have set up some Audit Committees. I must confess, often, hon. Cuttaree, who is Chairperson of the PAC, keeps telling me: “We do that, year in and year out and yet not much then takes place.” I have spoken to people

concerned and we have told them that enough is enough. We need to do something to make sure that we have value for money. We are going to make sure also that in each Ministry there is the highest rank officer who is responsible. This has not always been the case. *On passe la boule avec les autres fonctionnaires.* We hope, with a combination of these Audit Committees, the acceleration to entrench the performance-based budgeting and also *plus de responsabilités* for the most senior officer in that particular Ministry, this will help to achieve the target that the hon. Member has said.

It will take time, Mr Chairperson, because we need to change the mindset and the culture of people, not only in Central Government but also in the parastatals.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Minister mentioned that I have, on several occasions, talked to him about that. In fact, Mr Chairperson, we all know that the Public Account Committee is not a political committee. It is a bipartisan committee and we do our work in an extremely bipartisan way and we criticise whoever has to be criticised. In the last report, which was deposited on the Table of Parliament, I read personally at length what hon. Duval, when he was the Chairperson, had been writing. Following that, I came up with a series of recommendations which had been approved by the bipartisan Committee. I talked to the hon. Minister and even to the hon. Prime Minister about this. There are a series of suggestions in that report. Can I request the hon. Minister to personally look at that and to liaise with the Speaker and try to find out how we can better, first of all, the work of the Chairman of the PAC and, at the same time, whether some of the recommendations which were made in that report can be adopted by the Executive in order to improve things.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, I have looked at some of these recommendations that have been made and I have also tasked a Committee to look into ways and means of preventing what the Director of Audit says every year goes unrectified. It is the same thing for the Public Accounts Committee. I must confess that it is systemic failure that we need to address collectively, Mr Chairperson, in making sure that there is a change in culture and in responsibility so that people make sure that we get value for money. I have just been informed that the Management Audit Bureau is looking into the recommendations to see how they can be implemented.

Mr Gunness: On page 242, item No. 31112001 - *New Customs Complex*, can we know from the Minister what is its status, whether the handing over has been done and when will it be operational?

Dr. Sithanen: The actual building is completed, Mr Chairperson. Unfortunately, in our zeal to give some of the contracts to small entrepreneurs for the furniture fittings and fixture, this particular company met some problems. It is being sorted out. I think it will be completed in September 2009. As I said, it is the sub-contractor for furniture who has not performed according to contractual obligations.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, concerning the same question of public funds and the Director of Audit's report, what concrete actions is the Government contemplating? We, politicians, who have to face the electorate, are taken to task. We have to answer, whether we like it or not. I still remember it is stipulated in the Local Government Act that when the town Treasurer fails to submit his final account to the Director of Audit he is fined.

Mr Duval: That was five or ten years ago.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister is saying that in a friendly way.

Mr Bhagwan: The public at large has requested that the Government should put up a system so that the Chief Accounting Officer in each Ministry is not taken to task. There are cases where officers have failed in their responsibility and have been taken to task.

Dr. Sithanen: That is why I was saying, Mr Chairperson, we are changing the line of accountability to make sure that the highest rank officer in each Ministry is responsible. This was not the case before. We hope that with this and the other measures that I have just stated we will improve the situation.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Chairperson, on page 242, *item No. 26313020 and item No. 26323020* pertain to *the Gambling Regulatory Authority*, may I ask the hon. Minister, as a matter of clarification, why there are two and what are the grants for Rs19.5 m. and Rs35 m. going forward?

Dr. Sithanen: If my memory serves me well, for the capital grant, it's for *l'informatisation de leur système* in order to better track, abuse in the system. You know in the past what used to happen, whenever you tried to enforce the regulations they would try to play dirty tricks. Now, they are investing in software and I think they would need some hardware also to do that.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, on page 237 under *item 21110 Personal Emoluments*, can the hon. Minister give details of the number of new posts created?

The Chairperson: Programme No. 361 has already been voted. I am sorry! We are under vote 362 now.

Mr Lauthan: I come back to page 216, No. 1, under item *Major Achievements for 2008/2009*, “*Ensure pre-primary age children from the 229 pockets of poverty attend pre-school*. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance acknowledged in his speech that, even in *poches* areas there are, maybe isolated, but cases of very poor people. My question is: what provision is being

made? Because before Quatre Bornes had become a *poche* area, people had inherited a plot of land from their ancestors, while provision is being made so that people who are equally poor, but who happened to live in a *poche* area do not benefit from the other facilities that others from poverty areas would benefit.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, when we vote next item, which is 363, you will see that there is enough money under the system. In fact, Mr Chairperson, we provided for many more. Unfortunately, what we actually found were fewer than originally told. We are trying to find a system where we can work with NGOs *en amont et en aval* to identify these kids and to make sure that they get the support. And I agree with the hon. Member that we have to start somewhere. It is easier to start where it is known that there are more poor children. I agree with the hon. Member that even in my constituency, which is also that of the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, hon. X. L. Duval and hon. Ms Deerpalsing, there are some poor people - even though I do not know many in my constituency do not actually go to pre-primary schools.

Mr Jhugroo: An page 226 under Performance Indicator, *P:1 Number of PPP projects where public institutions are assisted*. In Budget 2006/2007, much has been said regarding PPP projects. Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance explain to the House why only one PPP project has been targeted for the year 2001? And so much has been said in this House.

Dr. Sithanen: So much has been said by all of us. If the hon. Member goes and reads former Budgets he will see. It is a tricky one for a very simple reason. Very often, people are reticent on PPP, because they say: look, we have got an idea; we think we can make money out of it. However, we have to give the idea to Government and Government has to tender and we may lose out. So, that's why we have introduced a new system where in the event that the one who got the idea loses out in a bid, he or she will be compensated. So, we hope we will get some,

but I think the one on Highlands would be an excellent case for PPP. It is not as easy as many people believe.

Programme Code No. 362: Public Financial Management – (Rs742,954,750), as amended, was agreed to.

Programme Code No. 363: Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities, Economic Growth and Social Progress was called

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 221 under, *item 36302: Widening the Circle of Opportunities*. Last year, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance mentioned the Second Chance Programme. May I ask him whether a sum of money has already been spent under this item and what has been achieved up to now regarding the Second Chance Programme?

Dr. Sithanen: I do not have the exact number, Mr Chairperson. But let me reassure the hon. Member that Widening the Circle of Opportunities and fighting poverty has many components. We have started with what is the most difficult one by giving access to poor kids who do not go to kindergarten and, at the same time, we are doing a lot under the National Empowerment Foundation, where we have special training people to give them capacity in order to re-enter the labour market. But, I do not have the specific answer about this one. I will find the information and give it to the hon. Member.

Mr Gunness: At page 235, under item *Sub-Programme 36301, O2: Assist needy children in 229 pockets of poverty to attend school*. Also under *Performance Indicator, P1: Number of children assisted*, I see 7,500 in this present financial year. And, in *2009 Targets*, it is only 2000 and then for *Targets 2010*, again it is 4,000. I understand from the Minister that he will have to work with NGOs, but I think the target has to be increased.

At page 236, under *Performance Indicator, P1: Poverty Alleviation projects implemented*, I see that the target for year 2009 is 170, but that for year 2010 the

target is only 40. I can't see how the *Poverty Alleviation projects implemented* can drop drastically from 170 to 40. Then again, on page 245, in the *Sub-Programme 36301: Eradication of Absolute Poverty*, under *item 26313096 Current Grant – Eradication of Absolute Poverty*, I see the sum of Rs72 m., but under *item 26323096 Capital Grant - Eradication of Absolute Poverty*, the sum is Rs20 m. I would have thought that the sum would have been reversed, but I see the current grant is much higher than the capital grant. May we have some enlightenment on these items?

Dr. Sithanen: For the first one, Mr Chairperson, even though we give a particular figure, the actual work that we do with these people spans and straddles more than one year. This means that we are not going to eradicate the problem of poverty in one particular region in one Budget period. Let us be fair, hon. Gunness! Basically, what we are saying is that, we start with this number of projects and then we add to these projects and then you do the complete cycle, because we have to help the kids, their mothers and fathers.

The same thing applies to the second point which the hon. Member raised, when he said we have reduced the number. No, it is an ongoing programme. It is not like we have invested over six months and then we have finished with it. For instance, *pour les enfants il faut faire un suivi, en amont et en aval*, with these people.

For the eradication of poverty, Mr Chairperson, I have announced a measure in the Budget where we want to have better coordination, better harmonisation and better cooperation among all the public sector institutions that fight poverty. There is some duplication. Let me be very candid to the hon. Member. We have more money this year to spend, but we could not find NGOs to help us to do certain things. Government is very strong in providing infrastructure. But let me be very, very clear about it, we are not very good in finding the right people *pour faire le*

suivi after we have invested in these poverty alleviation initiatives. So, we are trying to partner with some NGOs, they will spend some money on providing *le suivi*.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I will like to ask an additional question regarding this question of assisting needy children. At page 235 under *item Outputs*, 02: *Assist needy children in 229 pockets of poverty to attend school*, I think I have heard the Vice-Prime Minister stating that we have reached fewer children than we expected. May I ask him whether he can give us an approximate figure of the number of children who have been touched by this programme?

Dr. Sithanen: We have started, I think, with 700. Mr Chairperson, we were given a figure of 5,000 kids of three and four years old who were not going to kindergarten. This is what prompted Government, Mr Chairperson, to say that this is unacceptable. We put Rs300 m., to make sure that all these kids could be identified. We started in some very poor regions. We started in No. 14, but, at the end of the day, we have been able to identify only 800 children. Out of these 800, 600 are still in the programme. If we know of cases involving kids of three/four years who should go to kindergartens but are not, we would refer them to a special desk at the National Empowerment Foundation, to make sure that those kids go to school. Very often, we realise *que c'est un problème avec les parents aussi*. That is why you will see that the integrated development that we have at Bambous is unique. We are trying to empower the women, the fathers while, at the same time, make sure that these poor kids go to school.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, page 245, under item 28213005 - *Contribution to National Empowerment Foundation*, will the Minister confirm whether the *Cité des Métiers*, now called *Espace des Métiers*, falls under this Fund and, if yes, does he not think that it should be under the Ministry of Employment rather than under the National Empowerment Foundation?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, at page 235, *output O2: Assist needy children in 229 pockets of poverty to attend school*, can I ask the Minister whether, for each region, he has somebody to supervise the whole operation of assisting children or whether it is the CAB office which does that? I would also like to know why - I raised the question the other day - up to now, children of Tamarin and Black River have not yet got their school materials.

Dr. Sithanen: This is a different issue, Mr Chairperson. The provision of school materials is done by the Trust Fund for Vulnerable Groups. And they have distributed many materials. There are some few cases, which the hon. Member conveyed to me last time, and I have referred them to the Trust Fund. Eradication of poverty is different. We should not mix these two programmes. There are certain things Government know how to do very well, but we need to employ some people in order to monitor, to evaluate and to make sure that objectives are being met. In some cases now, the EAP itself is supervising it. But I think, if we broaden the scope of the intervention of the programme, we will not be able to do that. That's why we have suggested that some large companies become our partners and do that component of the eradication of absolute poverty, in terms of delivering after Government has invested in infrastructure.

With respect to the question raised by hon. Soodhun, the funding has to come from somewhere, but the task is being accomplished by the Ministry of Labour.

Mr Bhagwan: With reference to the National Empowerment Foundation, can we know from the Minister who chairs this monster now, after the resignation of Mr de l'Estrac?

Dr. Sithanen: The job is being done, Mr Chairperson, and we are still trying to find another rare bird. I do not know whether the hon. Member would call him a monster once he is appointed.

Programme Code 363 Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities, Economic Growth and Social Progress (Rs465,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping – Programme Code 321 was called.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment -
"In the Strategic note (page 258)

Under Major Outputs (Services to be provided) for 2009-2011;

Programme 324; first bullet point

To insert "National Transport Authority"

And

To delete "National Transport Authority"

Amendment agreed to.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 257, item 2, *Programme Code 321 - Mauritius Land Transport Authority*, can I ask the Minister where matters stand, particularly with the setting up of that Authority? Will the Minister give assurance to the House that, being given the importance of that Authority, the right persons will be chosen, especially technicians and professionals? Secondly, through a Parliamentary Question, I asked the Minister about this Bus Rapid Transport System. I asked about the corridor, about the State land which has been reserved for the proposed Light Rail System. Has the Minister gone through the files? We had the *trace*, and there was a decision not to give land on lease or otherwise on the *tracé* of the Light Rail System. Is the Minister sure that no State land had been leased to anybody, even to Government agencies, Government departments? My information - I would ask the hon. Minister to go and check – is that, on one particular site, a portion of land has been leased to somebody - a very important person - *pou plante letchis*. I raised that issue the other day. I would again ask the Minister to go and

check whether that person *tous les jours pé arose pieds letchis* on the *tracé* of the light rail.

Mr Gunness: On a point of order! I see the amendments that have been proposed at Committee Stage. It is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Empowerment who has circulated the amendments, but it's the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping who has moved for the amendment. Therefore, are we in order?

The Chairperson: Any Minister in the place of the Minister of Finance can move an amendment, of course. Can the hon. Minister move the amendment now?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment -

"Programme 321 (page 263)

Under column OUTPUTS,

To insert "07: Strategic planning in an efficient management of the Public Infrastructure Division"

And

To delete "07: Strategic planning in an efficient management of the Land Transport and Shipping Division"

Under column OUTPUTS,

To insert "012: Strategic planning in an efficient management of the Land Transport and Shipping Division"

And

To delete "012: Strategic planning in an efficient management of the Public Infrastructure Division".

Amendment agreed to.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, as far as the Land Transport Authority Bill is concerned, I would refer the hon. friend of mine to be a bit patient because, in the days to come, it is coming to Parliament. I can give assurance to the House that the

right man will be in the right place. We mean business in that. The second issue concerns the corridor, which the hon. Member has just mentioned. The *tracé* is still there, and there is a Cabinet decision. If I am not mistaken, it stressed that State land should not be leased to anybody. Even if it is leased, it will be confiscated and snatched. I can give guarantee to the House.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I have two questions. My first question is on the Strategic Note at page 257, - *Land Transport Authority Bill passed in National Assembly in June 2009*. I think the wording, itself, is a bit confusing. It has not yet been passed. Can we have an indication by when it will come in front of the National Assembly? Second, at page 275, the last item under this vote - *28223990 Obligations following Winding up of the Development Works Corporation*, there is the sum of Rs1 m. and Rs4 m. planned for July-December 2009 and 2010. Can we know what obligations will be met with this sum of R1 m? And then Rs4 m. planned for 2010, can we know what are the obligations which will be met with this Rs1 m.? On the same page 275, *under item 22090001 – Security Services*, there was an increase from Rs550,000 to Rs1.2 m. for six months, and it is planned to be R1. m. for 2011. Can we get some explanations?

Mr Bachoo: Regarding the first issue on the Land Transport Authority, in a fortnight's time, it will go to Cabinet and, thereafter, the Bill will be brought to the House. Secondly, as far the Security Services are concerned, since the watchman has been replaced by the private security, there was a need to increase the number because of the risks of threats of all types of robberies and all. Secondly, concerning the DWC, we had to honour the outstanding claims of the previous contractors. That is the reason why it is so.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 321: Policy and Strategy Development for Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Maritime Services (Rs52,271,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 322: Construction and Maintenance of Government Buildings and Other Assets was called.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 275, *Programme Code 322*, under item 26313010 – *Current Grant – Construction industry Development Board*, I see a massive increase. It was Rs3 m., it then falls for one year to Rs2.7 m. and Rs2.2 m. But for six months, we are providing Rs6 m. Can we know why there is this massive increase?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, it is because the CIDB has been effective as from February this year and a new organisation has to be set up, where the structures have to be defined, staff has to be recruited. That is the reason why the cost has gone up. In the past, it was not properly structured, but being given that CIDB is being given additional roles to play in the construction sector, that is why we are putting up the entire structure properly.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Minister has just stated that the CIDB has been set up. We hope and expect that professionals have been appointed in the organisation. My problem concerns the grading of contractors. We have all been here for many years and we have seen the Director of Audit's report. At times, many contractors do not have equipment and they have been appointed Grade A, Grade B, Grade C and so on. Now that this Board has been set up, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has a say in the follow-up concerning the performance of contractors? I would like to know whether Government would be rigid on the contractors as far as performance is concerned. Being given that the

ceiling of tenders to organisations will be moved to millions of rupees, I would like to know whether Grade A contractors - as far as equipment are concerned - would be closely monitored?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, the MPI was looking after the bidding of contractors. Now, this responsibility has been shifted over to the CIDB and the reason why we are setting it up is to see to it that the quality is to be kept in mind and, at the same time, training be provided to the contractors. I will again assure the House that we will be very strict with all these.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, at page 257, *Programme Code 322: A national register of consultants and contractors established to systematically regulate, monitor and promote the performance of the construction industry for sustainable growth, reform and improvement of the construction sector*, can the Minister say whether he is referring only to Mauritian consultants and contractors and, if so, how does he proceed to go ahead with it? Or does he have in mind foreigners as well?

Mr Bachoo: Even foreigners who are working in our country will be compelled to get registered here. All of them will be under the same conditions of service.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at Page 277, *Programme Code 322, item 31112433: Refurbishment of Emmanuel Anquetil Building (a) upgrading of Electrical Network* where the sums of Rs20 m. and Rs10 m. have been earmarked respectively, can we know whether work has started and, if yes, when it will be completed?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, we are implementing the project of upgrading the Emmanuel Anquetil Building and the work has not yet started. We are working on the designs and, if I am not mistaken, that is going to take a bit of time because the work is a bit complicated.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 276, *Programme Code 322, item 22070 – cleaning services*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is any contractor who has been allotted the cleaning services and, if so, the name of the contractor?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Chairperson, it is Mauriclean which has received the contract.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping – Programme Code 322: Construction and Maintenance of Government Buildings and Other Assets (Rs235,098,400) was on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, *Programme Code 323, Construction and Maintenance of Roads and Bridges*, apart from the normal maintenance, my problem concerns the old bridge of *Grande Rivière*. I do not know if the Minister has seen recently that, over the years, people have been dismantling this old *patrimoine*. This is very serious. Can we know from the Minister where these *vieux ferrailles* go, because, at least, these can be repainted? Two years back, I asked the question and it was said in Parliament that the old bridge will be repainted, re-secured and so on, instead of that it is becoming an eyesore. The Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, hon. X.L. Duval must effect a visit there with his Unit. People are dismantling this bridge despite regulations, public notice and so on. Can we know what immediate action does the Minister intend to take to remedy this situation?

Mr Bachoo: I get the feeling that the hon. Member has read my mind. Decisions have already been taken and we are going to refurbish it.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 278, *Programme Code 323*, under item *31113003, (c) Upgrading of Q/Militaire Road B6 (Phase I)*, we see that Rs93 m. has been provided and, at the same time, under item *Upgrading of Q/Militaire Road B6 (Phase II)*, we see that a sum of Rs73 m. has been provided. Can I know from the Minister when will the phase I be completed? Concerning phase II, may we know whether acquisition of land has already been completed and by when it will start?

At Page 279, I see under the same item *31113003*, at (o), *Transaction Advisory Services for Ring Road and Harbour Bridge*, I see that a sum of Rs45 m. was earmarked in 2008/09 and now Rs15 m. has been earmarked for six months and then Rs25 m in Planned 2010. Can we get some more information about that item?

Mr Bachoo: Regarding Wootun to Belle Rive, the work has already started. There has been a slight delay and by the month of October this year, the work will be completed and we will have a new road to flyover under Phase I.

As for the second one, from Belle Rive to Quartier Militaire, the land acquisition is on, the section 6 probably will be published, and the work is going to start toward the end of this year, that is, the beginning of November. And thirdly, regarding the Transaction Advisory Services, in fact, they are looking after the technical feasibility of the Harbour Bridge and the second phase of the Ring Road. The contract has already been awarded to a South African Company.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, at page 267, *P4: Progress in construction of Phoenix-Beau Songes Link Road*, may I ask the hon. Minister when works are expected to start?

Mr Bachoo: The bids are being evaluated. Probably, by the end of this week, the evaluation will be over. We have to give a bit of time, let's say about 40 days, for the contractors to mobilize.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: On page 278, item 26323 - *Extra Budgetary Units - Capital Grant*, may I ask the hon. Minister the estimates for the bus way?

Mr Bachoo: I'll give it later, as I do not have it right now.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I would like first to thank the Minister for the Mare d'Albert/Grand Bois Road. Can the Minister inform the House when works are expected to start on the Mare d'Albert/Grand Bois Road? Secondly, with regard to item 31113003 (f) *constructions of Bidirectional Lanes from St Jean to Pont Fer*, I would like to know when this is likely to start.

Mr Bachoo: Regarding the Grand Bois road, the bids have already been evaluated. Works order probably has already been given, and the works are to start in two/three weeks' time because there has been a slight problem; a few planters were not willing to sign, because we were requesting them for an agreement *à l'amiable*. I do hope that everything will be settled.

Regarding the Pont Fer Road, the design is already completed. Decision was taken hardly a few days ago and, within a week's time, we will go for tender.

Thirdly, regarding the bus way, the estimated cost is Rs5 m.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 277, item 31112433 - *Refurbishment of Emmanuel Anquetil Building: (a) Upgrading of Electrical Network and Air Conditioning System; (b) Fencing and Wire Netting*, in view of the problems faced by civil servants recently, does the hon. Minister consider to replace the old lifts by new ones?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, the upgrading work is going to start and, as I have just mentioned, it will take a bit of time, because the older the building is, the more difficult it becomes for the technicians to find the faults. But, we have already started, and I'll transmit this message to the authority concerned.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister give us some indications on the Traffic Centre at Ebène? There was a project for a traffic centre, because Place Margéot is

too much congested. The Deputy Prime Minister replied once that land had been identified to have a traffic centre, especially for the eastern buses. Can we have some indication where this project stands? I hope the land is still there.

Secondly, I have seen a proliferation of filling stations on the motorway. The other day, I asked a Parliamentary Question as to whether a portion of land within the Cyber City area has been given to a *petit copain*.

The Chairperson: Under which item is the hon. Member talking?

Mr Bhagwan: It is on traffic. Can I know from the Minister how is it that there is a filling station at 100 metres? We are now also having another one within the Cyber city area belonging to a *petit copain*...

(*Interruptions*)

I won't mention names. I do not want to be nasty.

There is also the Signal Mountain, and now the *tracé* of the Ring Road has already been made. A health track has been built there, which is very popular, well utilised, and *c'est dans un état de dégradation*. I'll come to that in a Parliamentary Question next week. Can I know from the Minister whether, lately, there has been some sort of control over the use of the Signal Mountain road, and what actions have been taken? There have been contractors working, putting cables, and maintenance has not been to *la satisfaction des marcheurs*. Can I know from the Minister what will happen to that health track, in view of the *tracé*, and its maintenance?

Mr Bachoo: Regarding the Ebène Traffic Centre, that will be decided in view of the light rail, because it all depends where it is passing. This is what I have been told.

Secondly, with regard to Signal Mountain, Mr Chairperson, that does not fall within the purview of my Ministry. The *tracé* which we had in the past will be followed for the second phase of the Ring Road.

Regarding the petrol station, I think the hon. Member is perfectly right. It is more or less saturated, and no more permits should be given on this trunk road or the new roads.

Mr Bhagwan: *C'est une politique de deux poids deux mesures.* I am very upset. Many of these new filling stations on the motorway have been given authority to have an 'in and out' entry, while another petrol station, which is on the motorway, on the left, and has sufficient space, has been denied exit, and *la sortie* is on Moka Road. The entrance is on St Jean road. Is it not unfair? Can I ask the Minister, to seriously look into that *politique de deux poids deux mesures*?

Mr Bachoo: I am not aware, but the hon. Minister was himself a Minister and he knows that we do not poke our nose in such matters. The technicians of the Ministry look after such acceleration and deceleration lanes.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the bus way, the hon. Minister, during the debates, stated that, in the event that the country would have available resources to move on to a new system of modern transport, that would not jeopardise this project. May we know from what study the Minister has come to a conclusion, and if we are able to be provided with such study?

Mr Bachoo: It was a committee of technicians, which before my taking that office, had come to the conclusion that the way will be prepared, so that if we want to shift later on to the light rail we won't have any difficulties. I will request the hon. Member to be a bit patient because, in fact, another consultant is being appointed, and he will look into the detailed implications of the project, and that will take a few months.

Mrs Hanoomajee: At page 278, item 31113003 (d) - *Phoenix-Beau Songes Link Road*, I see that Rs29 m. had been earmarked for 2008/2009 and, now, for July/December, Rs80 m. has been earmarked. Can I know whether tenders have already been issued and where we are with the procedures with regard to that?

Mr Bachoo: We were not able to spend the Rs29 m. There were plenty of problems regarding acquisition of land. Many houses were built in that *tracé*. The bids are being evaluated. Most probably, this week, the evaluation will be over. Once the bids' evaluation is over, the works order will be issued. The evaluation is still going on.

Mr Gunness: At page 279, item *31113003 (n) - Performance Based Maintenance contract*, Rs6.6 m. and Rs33 m. have been earmarked. Can we get some more information about what this is all about, whether it has been awarded, and what they will do?

Mr Bachoo: This is meant for the major roads. In fact, it is for consultancy services. We are going to appoint some consultants to look at the performance based aspect of all the projects that we have.

Programme Code 323(Rs2,177,500 000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 324 – Land Transport Services was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, on page 281 item *31113020 - Construction of Infrastructure for Posters*. I will be grateful if the hon. Minister could give details about where these post panels are going to be put up.

Mr Gunness: Item *31113018 - Construction of Road Safety Devices*, a sum of Rs25 m. is being earmarked. The new road humps are very dangerous, for example, the one which has been placed at Montagne Blanche. The drivers, instead of *ralentir la voiture*, go faster on that, so as not to feel the shock. Therefore, I think this should be reviewed, because it has been put on a trial basis. It is more dangerous, because all drivers now go fast, so as not to feel it. Then, I see Rs150,000 being earmarked for the construction of bus shelter at Sebastopol. I would like to know what it's all about.

Mr Bachoo: In regard to the construction of infrastructure for posters to the tune of Rs1m., this is meant for the Ministry to have some infrastructure for

posters, especially billboards, posters frames, inside bus shelters, poster frames in schools and flag posters, and the amount is meant for that.

Secondly, regarding humps, up till now, it has been widely approved by the public. But I understand there have been a few cases of complaints from the region the hon. Member is talking about, namely Constituency No.10. I have requested the technicians to have a look at it. In Palma, we have got one type of problem and I have requested the technicians to have a look at it.

Thirdly, regarding Sebastopol, we have just issued the contract for the construction of 100 bus shelters, and Sebastopol is one among them.

Mr Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 281, item 31113019 - *Construction of Bus Shelters and Stands*. In my constituency, Vacoas-Floreal, there are many places where we do not have bus shelters, and it is a very rainy and cold area. I know that, several times, I have requested to have some bus shelters in the region of Floreal. May I know from the Minister whether, this time, Floreal will be taken on board under this item?

Mr Bachoo: We have established a priority list of 100, and we are issuing another 100 again. So, there won't be any problem. Once the request is made, inspections will be carried out and, definitely, the work will be done.

Mr Soodhun: On page 280, item 2206005 - *IT equipment*, will the Minister state why the NTA which is serving more than 500,000 people does not have a website to provide information to the public online?

My second question pertains to supply of the bus pass. I would like to know from the Minister who is the supplier and the cost per student.

With regard to item 25110006 - *Free Travel Scheme for Students, Old aged Pensioners and Disabled Persons*, I would like to know from the Minister how many complaints have been received from the elderly, and what the Ministry is doing to review the Scheme, in order to provide better services to the old people.

Mr Bachoo: Regarding the complaints, in fact, there are 225,000 people involved. Out of that, we received, in one year, 370 complaints. From January to May, this year, 201 cases were heard by the NTA, 96 conductors, 56 drivers and 12 bus owners' licenses were suspended. In fact, we have received strict instructions from Government to be pitiless against those defaulters.

Secondly, the bus supplier is Ecostar company and the price is Rs5 per card. As for IT equipment, we are providing them with same.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the free travel scheme for students, is the Minister happy with the way that the scheme has been implemented? Because I can recall, at one time, his predecessor had stated that there are a number of problems. I can recall the Government had even retained the services of the consultant to come up with a report, in order to see to it what other alternatives could be available for a better and more efficient implementation. Could the Minister enlighten the House?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, in the beginning, we had problems, but by means of trial and error, we are not getting much problem. There had been certain problems in certain areas, which we have been able to redress. For the time being, we do not feel the need to change the system. It is doing well.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, on page 290, with regard to sub-programme 32401-183455 - *Road Transport Inspector (Roster)*, I can see that the funded position in the year 2008/2009 was 45 and for July to December it is only 36. Can the Minister care to explain and say whether these vacancies will be filled?

Mr Bachoo: A few of them have resigned or have settled abroad. For the time being, we are able to manage with 36, and I do not feel the need of having them replaced, due to budgetary constraints.

Mr Bhagwan: With regard to road safety devices, can I ask the Minister whether actions have been taken concerning traffic lights?

Secondly, we have been told that there is shortage of traffic lights. I would like to know whether there has been planning.

Lastly, near *la chapelle d'Albion*, with the increase of traffic due to the Club Med, which has been inaugurated, that particular junction is very dangerous. We were made to understand that there is a priority list. Can I ask the Minister whether he can look into that and, at least, take action in the public interest?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, once requests are made, we definitely attend to them, except that it takes a bit of time because we have to do the commissioning. But I can assure the hon. Member that, once traffic lights are available, we'll do the necessary. This year, we are going to provide nine new ones. At the State Secondary School of Camp de Masque, one has already been approved, and I am waiting for the traffic lights to come.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, may I be allowed to go back to the free travel scheme for students? The hon. Minister just mentioned he is aware that, in some regions, there were problems but, now, we have overcome these problems. May I draw his attention that there are places where the problems are still ongoing? For example, on the western coast, like La Gaulette, Cascavelle, and so on students from my constituency go to the schools on the western coast, and they still face problems. May I take this opportunity to request the hon. Minister to look into this matter once again?

Mr Bachoo: There was a problem of bus over there; bus was irregular, and we are attending to it. We have requested the inspectors of the NTA to properly monitor the situation. In fact, we have increased the buses by one. I will look into it over again.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 280, with regard to item 25110006 - *Free Travel Scheme for Students, Old Aged Pensioners and Disabled Persons*, can the hon. Minister confirm whether NTC is being paid under this scheme and, if so, why

very old buses are put at the disposal of the Q.E.C. college for the route Vacoas-Rose Hill and vice versa? *La semaine dernière, les élèves ont dû descendre du bus, car celui-ci ne pouvait faire la montée. Allez demander au recteur du collège, M. le ministre! Ce n'est pas la première fois! La semaine dernière, à trois reprises, les élèves ont dû descendre de l'autobus.*

Mr Bachoo: This question has already been answered last week, Mr Chairperson. You are aware that we have got a problem of buses at the NTC. We have already tendered; the bids are being evaluated, and I do hope that we will get the buses.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order!

Mr Gunness: On page 281, item 2212002 - *Fees to Chairman and Members of Boards and Committees*. I think it goes in the opposite direction of the Minister's speech. When he presented the Budget, the Minister of Finance said that fees, privileges of Chairman and Members would be cut. But, here, I see it goes from Rs1.7 m. to Rs1.2 m. only for six months and, then, to Rs2.4 m. the Minister stated that all would be freezed. Therefore, why this increase?

Mr Bachoo: I will give you the information in a minute.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Page 259, *Sub-Programme 32402 - Traffic Management and Road Safety - Improve safety and security of commuters in hazardous locations through the provision of necessary public transport infrastructure facilities*, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider trying to see what can be done in the region of Hollyrood because buses cannot easily enter the region and serve the commuters in this region?

Mr Bachoo: I will look into this issue, because I know the route is a bit narrow, as well as the bends.

Regarding fees to Chairman and Members of the Board, that concerns the Motor Vehicle Insurance Arbitration Committee. The number of sittings has also increased, because the number of requests has also multiplied. We cannot do otherwise; we are bound to it.

The hon. Member was talking about Hollyrood. In fact, TMRSU is working on a one-way scheme. I will request the Member to bear with us. We will see the result.

Mrs Labelle: On page 259, *Programme 324 - Land Transport Services - Ensure provision of adequate and reliable public transport services through rigorous enforcement of traffic laws and conditions of licences*, I must avail myself of this opportunity to make an appeal to the hon. Minister, because my mandates, namely the women, particularly from Henrietta, La Caverne and so on, have been experiencing a lot of difficulties after working hours, waiting for more than one hour at Pont Fer bus stop. Though they finish work at 5.00 p.m, they reach their place at 7.00 p.m or 7.30 p.m. I have been witnessing these situations, and I make an appeal to the hon. Minister if he could look into this matter, so that we have regular transport from this part to Henrietta, La Caverne, and so on.

Mr Bachoo: We are very much concerned about the problem of transport, and I can assure the hon. Member that I will look into it.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping Programme Code 324 – Land Transport Services (Rs524, 036,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping Programme Code 325 – Maritime Services, was called.

Mr Varma: On page 282, item 22120008 - *Fees to Consultants*. I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could give the names of the consultants to the House.

Mr Bachoo: It concerns experts who are appointed to look into the Ballast water management issue. That is a very delicate and dangerous issue. In fact, South Africa has plenty of problems with it, and that is why we have been *avant-gardiste* and have appointed a consultant. I will give the name of the consultant in a minute.

Mr Gunness: On page 283, regarding item 25110005 - *Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd*, I do not see any budgetary provision as from the next financial year.

Second, under the same heading, can I know whether the Mauritius Shipping Corporation or the Ministry has issued any letter to any firm, giving a contract, a letter of offer to purchase a tanker for the transportation of petroleum products?

Mr Bachoo: That is not the responsibility of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation. It is a Government owned company. Secondly, concerning the question of Rs20 m., which appeared last year and is not appearing this time, in fact, we have got discussions with the Ministry of Finance as to how we can get funds for the payment of what we owe regarding the second vessel of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation.

Mr Bhagwan: What about the MARPOL Convention concerning the spill of oil in the port? I would like to know whether there is a specialised unit at the Ministry, which makes the follow-up on this MARPOL Convention, especially as there have been many requests. Can I request the hon. Minister to see to it that there is swift adherence to that Convention at the port?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, I am aware of the Convention, and we monitor the situation.

Mr Gunness: I come again with this question to the Minister. Has the Ministry of Shipping issued any letter to any company, giving it a contract of 15 years, and giving it the right to buy a tanker to transport petroleum products?

Mr Bachoo: That is a policy decision. It is a Government decision, and it has nothing to do with the Ministry of Shipping.

Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping - Programme Code 325 – Maritime Services (Rs34,862,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration, International Trade – Programme Code 381: Foreign Policy and Management, was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I have three questions on item 381. The first one concerns foreign policy initiative. Could the hon. Minister inform the House of the initiatives that are going to be taken?

Secondly, with regard the Strategy Plan, could the hon. Minister say whether the plan is ready and, if so, if he can table a copy of same?

The third one is with regard to the details about the inspectorate system that is going to be set up.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, in respect of the Strategic Plan, in the light of new events unfolding, the plan is going to be updated. Once it is ready, we will submit it to the House and lay copy on the Table of the Assembly.

In respect of the inspectorate system, it has been set up along the lines of the system of other Ministries of Foreign Affairs to ensure that there is proper transparency and accountability. In fact, an inspection team, comprising staff from the administration, human resource and finance will verify on an *ad hoc* basis that missions are not deviating from the provisions of the Financial Management Manual, Personal Management Manual and Public Procurement Act.

As to the foreign policy initiative with a view to enhance visibility and maximise economic gains, I think the results speak for themselves. I can give clear examples in respect of candidates who will sit in the different bodies of the United Nations in respect of our lobbying, which has been very forceful. I do not have to

highlight money which has been disbursed as a result of our lobbying mission. There has been the recent mission, conducted by the Vice-Prime Minister & Minister of Finance, to impress upon OECD countries that we have a compliant jurisdiction.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 297, *Programme 382 - Foreign Relations - to engage in Strategic alliances with like minded countries*, can the Minister provide us with some clarifications on this?

The second question is on page 299 – *O6: Assessing whether the Ministry is achieving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the employment of public funds*. We have learned that there will be a reduction in the number of embassies. Can we know from the Minister who will carry out the exercise, whether it will be the MAB or whether there will be a consultant?

My third question is on page 301 – *011: Provision of recurrent and ongoing training on diplomacy*. We talked, some time back, about an academy for training of diplomats. I cannot see that anywhere, except *ad hoc* training.

My fourth question relates to *012: Contribute to structure the process for collaboration between domestic and foreign stakeholders with a view to developing agricultural production in Mozambique*. We have been talking for quite some time on the establishment of that consortium between domestic and foreign stakeholders. I see that it is programmed now for December 2010. Can we get some clarifications on these issues?

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee. There are lot of works that have done in respect of the regional food consortium that has been set up, with the objective of investing in Mozambique, where land has been identified, with the objective of lessening our imports as a net food importing country. You may recall that, following the visit of the Prime Minister to Singapore, it was agreed that we are going to enter into joint venture with Singaporean investors, and

much work has been carried out by the Board of Investment and Enterprise of Singapore. There was also a ministerial meeting, which was chaired by the Vice-Prime Minister & Minister of Finance and Ministers from the region. Mozambique and Madagascar attended that meeting, following which there had been a technical meeting which went to Mozambique. Having said so, we are also discussing with the Mozambican authorities to find alternative site, which will be appropriate to produce the agricultural products which we consume. All these are being addressed, and there is a joint committee chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry Agro Industry at technical level, and we are waiting for them to submit the report to move the process forward.

With regard to *011*, there is ongoing training at the level of the Ministry, hence the importance of setting up the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Trade, which was launched in October 2005. This initiative was the result of the State visit of the Prime Minister to India, following which we have decided to set up the Institute with the assistance of the Indian Government. There are resource persons from India who have travelled to Mauritius to deliver courses. I can assure hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee that these courses are enabling our staff to build on their capacity and to be more responsive to the needs to our diplomatic service.

With regard to embassies, as has been highlighted in the Budget, Government has taken the decision to rationalise ongoing activities and to make sure that we get value for money. We are going to work very closely with the Prime Minister's Office. We have in mind some of the chanceries or embassies that would have to close down. But we have to look into the merits and demerits and, following a thorough study, decision will be taken. Of course, there are other issues that have to be taken on board. We will act with a humane dimension also, because there are many officers working at the different embassies.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Chairperson, page 297 *Programme 383 - International regional and Bilateral Trade Negotiations and Implementation*, I find completion of full EPA negotiations, FTA with Pakistan. Can I ask the hon. Minister why he did not mention the CECA, that is, the comprehensive economic cooperation agreement with India?

Dr. Boolell: Probably it was an omission. Probably it is an error of judgment. But let me remind hon. Jayen Cuttaree that, now, that there is a new administration, we will kick-start the negotiations. I do not have to remind him what has been the contentious issue. But we can always bracket the issue and move the comprehensive economic agreement forward. The political will is there, but this issue is quite sensitive. Now there is a new Minister of Finance who is more responsive to the needs. I do not have to remind the House that the Vice-Prime Minister has met Mr Mukherjee, the present Minister of Finance, prior to general elections. Now that there is a more conducive climate, I hope they will be more responsive to our needs. But, at the same time, we have to live also with the harsh realities and look at different scenarios.

Mr Cuttaree: I have only one supplementary. Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the state of the negotiations as far as the rules of origin are concerned?

Dr. Boolell: It is a very good question. Now that India has opened up to least developing countries in the region, we have to make sure that they are more responsive to technical issues like rules of origin. We have to impress upon them that whatever concessions and, rightly so, that they need to give to least developing countries, it should not be to the detriment of Mauritius, hence the relevance of addressing the rules of origin.

Mr Bhagwan: These days, I have not heard the hon. Minister - since he has been appointed - talking much on the SIDS. I refer to page 296, under *item Foreign Affairs, Sentization of International Committee to the concerns of*

Mauritius as a middle income country (MIC) and a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) and mobilize donor support. The Minister is very silent, especially when we are talking of mobilized donor support. Can I know from the Minister whether Mauritius is still active on the donor ...

(Interruptions)

I have not finished yet. I would like to know whether Mauritius was a representative. We had this very successful conference. There was an action plan during that Conference of SIDS in Mauritius. Can we know from the Minister whether there is something in the pipeline as a follow-up, whether the Minister has looked into the file, taken cognizance of the decisions taken, especially now, with this burning issue of climate change? Can I also ask the hon. Minister whether recently he has met his colleagues of the Small Island States, whether he has sensitised, whether there is any conference in the pipeline and what he is doing for the promotion of our interests as a small island?

Dr. Boolell: If we so decide to call a Small Island Developing States Conference in Mauritius, certainly, we will make sure that we use resources judiciously, unlike what happened when the last SIDS Conference was held in Mauritius. But having said so, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee earlier talked of like-minded countries. This is the purpose of rallying towards a common cause and putting up a common front. We rely upon like-minded countries hence, because they all have high-vulnerability index. I do not have to highlight what was achieved at the level of World Trade Organisation, but we need to have as many like-minded countries as possible to ensure that they do not unravel what we've achieved at World Trade Organisation to protect the interests of all parties concerned here and, especially, to save jobs; and this is what has been the very essence of this Budget.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 307, *Programme Code 38202: Support by Mauritius Overseas Mission*, under *item 22110005 Mission Expenses - Other Expenses*. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House why the mission expenses have nearly doubled?

Dr. Boolell: I will give the information later on.

Mr Varma: I have one question, Mr Chairperson, at page 30, under *item 31112408 Upgrading of Chanceries*. Could the hon. Minister inform the House which are the chanceries which have been upgraded?

Dr. Boolell: One in India and one in London. If I am not mistaken, Pakistan also. But I have the relevant information with me which I can easily circulate to the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

In respect of overseas travel - my apologies to the hon. Member - it's provisions which represent payment of subsistence allowance to Ambassadors and officers attending official missions, refunds of medical expenses, warm clothing allowance to all the staff and payment of contribution to SADC and African groups.

Mr Jhugroo: In answer to a question the hon. Minister asked Mauritians to *serre ceinture*, but on his side, he is saying to *large ceinture*.

Dr. Boolell: Far from it! The hon. Member needs to be informed as to the harsh realities. When our officers travel overseas, sometimes the subsistence allowance which is allocated to them is not enough when you think of the cost of hotels. The cost of accommodation in a hotel in Africa is higher than elsewhere. I think you have to be fair to our officers who deliver, who are good and who certainly give better visibility to our country.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, Sir, since we are under *Programme Code 382*, I refer to page 307, under *item 21111005 Extra Assistance*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this extra assistance includes assistance to Mauritian students who are facing difficulties?

Dr. Boolell: According to information which has been handed to me, it is salaries to advisors and benefits that they are entitled to under overseas item.

The Chairperson: What about the extra assistance?

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister how much money has been spent regarding assistance to students in difficulties, whether we are faced with such cases and how much has been spent and what has been provided for such expenses?

Dr. Boolell: With due respect to the hon. Member, can she put the question again?

Mrs Labelle: Let me go to page 301, *Sub-Programme 38202*, under *Output(s) 02: Provide guidance and assistance to Mauritians, including students and distress cases*. My question is: Are we faced with such situations during this present financial year and how much money has been spent on these cases?

Dr. Boolell: In respect of support and assistance provided, this is to visiting Mauritians and the diaspora ...

Mrs Labelle: I am sorry! The Minister is referring to Mauritians and the diaspora. I was referring to Output(s) 02 regarding the students.

Dr. Boolell: The nation provides assistance to Mauritian students. Unfortunately, it is in terms of counseling and obtaining admissions. They also help students who encounter difficulties and also assist them when they are in distress. But, let me make it quite clear that it does not entail financial assistance. I am not saying that the Embassy or Mission would be flooded with requests, but I do not have to highlight also the undue hardship being faced by a number of

students. Only this morning I had a request from a family, saying that their children were in distress because they could not find jobs; they are studying in Australia where they are allowed and entitled to work for 15 hours a week.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade – International Trade - Programme Code 383 was called.

Mr Gunness: At page 302, under Indicator *P1: Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Community*, the target date for that to be concluded is December 2009 according to the targets and then to finalise the full EPA with the European Community is December 2010. Can the Minister give us the status as to whether this target will be met and what is the actual situation?

Dr. Boolell: This is the set target. I think, most African countries, members of the ESA, are keen to see the conclusion of this interim Economic Partnership Agreement. And then we will move towards a full agreement in respect of this comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. There are some contentious issues which are being addressed. We have put them in different baskets. The most contentious issue is the problem in respect of what our European friends want us to do. In fact, they want to have the same status that we can probably give to an emerging country. So, this issue is being addressed. Then, there are issues which are less difficult like the export duties because the ESA countries are keen to add value to their basic products. And now with new market access, that would also enable them to attract the investors in respect of the value to be added to the products. There is also that special safeguard in the agricultural sector.

Having said so, there is more convergence than divergence. We are going to bracket these issues. We are going to move towards the signature of the interim Economic Partnership Agreement. Countries like Mauritius and Seychelles which want to give new dimension and zeal to trade in services have conveyed the

relevant message to ESA Member States so that they understand that we are all for unity and solidarity, but there should be an asymmetric differentiation. So, the message has been conveyed. There is a workshop which is going to be held in Harare, but the feelings are that we need to sign this interim Economic Partnership Agreement. We have discussed with Baroness Ashton, the Trade Commissioner and, most likely, this interim agreement will be signed in Mauritius.

Mr Cuttaree: Mr Chairperson, I come again to this issue of CECPA. At page 302, I find that the target is to conclude in December 2010. That is a long time from now. The question which I am asking the hon. Minister is that this is not like negotiations with WTO. Surely - if I can use the term which is very close to the heart of my hon. friend, the Minister of Finance - there could be an early harvest on certain issues, for example, on trade issues. I do not understand why we have to wait until 2010 to get an agreement on trade issues when these negotiations started in 2004.

Dr. Boolell: We do not want only an early harvest; we want a bumper crop also. Do you know what is preventing us from concluding a comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement? I do not have to highlight that our friends in India seem rather strongly on this issue. If we could only decouple or uncouple that issue, we would have made much headway. But let us hope that with this new administration, they will be more receptive to our requests.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 304, *Industrial Property Office*, the target date for the amendments to legislation on Industrial Property Rights to be completed is December 2010. Could the hon. Minister inform the House why is it taking so much time for the amendments to be brought to this legislation?

Dr. Boolell: I thank hon. Varma. I wish we could accelerate the pace. The committee is chaired by the beautiful lady, Miss Bhima. She is doing a good job. As you know, we also need to enlist expertise advice from the World Trade

Organisation. There have been several workshops. There are ongoing consultations with WIPO. Let us hope that once all the thorny issues have been addressed, because it is quite complex, but you can rest assured that we would bring the legislation as soon as possible to Parliament. The draft legislation, we have been told, is almost ready, but let us hope that we will be able to do the needful.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I'll put a last question at page 309, item 26210055 - *Contribution to World Intellectual Property Organisation*. We have heard of an organisation, the African Intellectual Property Organisation (AIPO). I would like to know whether they have approached Mauritius to join in and what is the position on that.

Dr. Boolell: As usual, it is a classical reply.

(*Interruptions*)

We are considering.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade - International Trade - Programme Code 383 (Rs17,277,100) was, on question put, agreed to.

At 4.08 p.m, the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.40 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

Ministry of Industry, Science and Research – Programme Code 601: Policy and Management for Industry, Science and Research was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 317, I have got two questions under *Programme 601, Output 06: Improving competitiveness of Domestic and Export Oriented Enterprises*. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the steps that are being undertaken to improve competitiveness. My second question, at page 317, *Output 06: Improving competitiveness of Domestic and Export Oriented Enterprises, Performance Indicators P1: Number of firms assisted* - I would like to know from the hon. Minister the number of firms and the name of the firms.

Mrs Martin: My question is very closely related to that of hon. Varma. With regard to the same *Output 06 and Performance Indicators P1: Number of firms assisted* – I can see that the target for 2009 is 300 firms. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how this compares to the number of firms who have actually applied for assistance.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Chairperson, as regards improving competitiveness of our enterprises, the strategy is to reinforce the capacity of the enterprises and also the institutional capacity as well as to promote the marketing efforts. All these initiatives are contained in the MASMED projects which have been outlined in the Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund. There are some 51 projects which have been approved. 6 of the projects have been completed, 6 have been advertised and the rest are being prepared for implementation.

As regards improving competitiveness of domestic and export-oriented enterprises, as I said, the Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund, is now being implemented. The number of firms which have been targeted is 430 applications. Out of 430, we will choose 300.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund, Rs500 m. had been allocated. May I know how much has actually been spent?

Mr Gokhool: Well, I want to inform, Mr Chairperson, that out of Rs500 m. Rs100 m. have now been allocated to the SME sector. So, there are Rs400 m. which are available and the sum that has been disbursed till now is Rs103,034,218.

Ministry of Industry, Science and Research – Programme Code 601 - Policy and Management for Industry, Science and Research (Rs4,534,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Industry, Science and Research – Programme Code 602 - Industrial Development was called.

Mr Gokhool: Sir, I move for the following amendments –

“Programme 602 and Sub-Programme 60201 (page 322)

For Item No. 2631301, under column Jul-Dec 2009 Estimates,

To insert “5,000,000”

And

To delete “4,000,000”

For Item No. 26313036, under column “Jul-Dec 2009 Estimates,

To insert “4,000,000”

And

To delete “5,000,000”

Programme 602 and Sub-Programme 60203 (Page 323)

Under column Item No.,

To insert “26210153”, and

Under column Details,

To insert “Contribution to International Association of Assay Offices”

And

To delete Item No. “26210116” and “Contribution to United Nations Industrial Development Organisation” respectively.”

Amendment agreed to

Ministry of Industry, Science and Research – Code 602: Industrial Development, as amended, (Rs 132,566,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 322, under item 22120008 *Fees to Consultants*, I can see that for 2008/2009, the fees to Consultants were Rs50,000 and it is now being increased to around Rs15,700,000. Could the hon. Minister give details on that? This is the first question.

The second one concerns the same page, item 25110002 *Subsidies - Enterprise Mauritius*. Why is it that subsidies are being given to Enterprise Mauritius?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Chairperson, I take the provision for administrative and operating expenses for Enterprise Mauritius. Provision for Enterprise Mauritius has been reduced as Enterprise Mauritius will have a cash balance of Rs3.6 m. as at 30 June 2009. Estimated expenditure for July/December 2009 is Rs21 m. Rs18 m. have been provided so as to remain within the Ministry's ceiling. Project implementation will be met under the Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I think the hon. Minister has not given the details of the fees to consultants. If he can also give the details as to who are the consultants?

Mr Gokhool: Provision for the consultancy fee under projects financed by *Agence Française de Développement*. This is the provision that has been made as regards the Rs15,700,000.

Mrs Martin: At page 319, under item *Delivery Units - Enterprise Mauritius, Performance Indicator P2: Percentage increase in exports to SADC/COMESA countries*, the target for 2009 is 10%. Can we know from the Minister how far we have reached with regard to attaining that target in 2009?

Mr Gokhool: Can the hon. Member please repeat the question?

Mrs Martin: I would like the Minister to enlighten the House with regard to how far we have reached with regard to the percentage increase in export to SADC/COMESA countries which is targeted to be around 10% in 2009.

Mr Gokhool: I will give the answer to the hon. Member.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, at page 318, it has been mentioned that there are 16 firms. Can the hon. Minister give details of the names of the 16 firms? I

have a second question at *page 322, under item 26313011, Current Grant - Fashion and Design Institute* where the provision of Rs5 m. has already been disbursed and there is a provision of Rs4 m. And also under item 26323011, *Capital Grant - Fashion and Design Institute*, I would like to know how much has been spent and what was the result?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Chairperson, as regards *Output O6: Market Prospection and Export Promotion for Domestic Oriented Textile and Clothing Companies in SADC/COMESA countries*, the explanation is that the appointment of representatives in South Africa and Kenya delayed due to lack of personnel and the restructuring at Enterprise Mauritius is undergoing. There is a problem of staff. Staff is now being recruited for Enterprise Mauritius.

As regards FDI, it is a new institution. Action has been taken to operationalise FDI. Out of the Rs5 m., equipments have been purchased for the launching of the FDI in August/September.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at *page 318, Performance Indicator P1: Number of firms participating in Buyers-Sellers Meetings/Contact Promotion Programmes* and then we have again at *Performance Indicator P3: Number of firms participating in International fairs*, can we know how much Enterprise Mauritius has spent on these items in this current financial year?

Mrs Labelle: At *page 314, item Major Achievements for 2008/09*, I am referring to the *Setting up of a Gemmology Laboratory*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether it has been set up and how many gemmologists are working in the lab and the qualifications of these persons?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Chairperson, as regards the Gemmology Lab, it has been set up and it is under the responsibility of the Assay Office and the staff of the Assay Office looks after the Gemmology Lab.

As regards *Performance Indicator P1: Number of firms participating in Buyers-Sellers Meetings/Contact Promotion Programmes*, 9 companies have participated for Scandinavian markets, 5 for UK markets and 8 for Scandinavian markets, these are at different dates. And the number of contacts established for the Scandinavian markets in all these three cases is 77. For UK markets, it is Rs331,085 and for the Scandinavian markets it is Rs868,087.

The Chairperson: Hon. Soodhun, then hon. Varma!

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, I will come again with my question. It is at page 319 *Performance Indicator P1: Number of courses in Fashion and Design run*. For 2008/2009 there were none. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there have been cases and whether money has been spent.

Mr Gokhool: I just mentioned that the Fashion and Design Institute is a new institution. So, the programme is being launched for the next academic year starting August-September 2009.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk on item *Output 08: Promotion of Mauritius as a film shooting destination* at page 319. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House why the number of foreign film crews attracted is decreasing?

Mr Gokhool: For the attraction of film crews, in 2008/2009, it was 75 and we have reviewed it because what we are doing is diversifying the activities of MFDC with regard to capacity building and also film production. So, the activities are being diversified. That is why we have brought the target lower so that we can also focus on other activities of MFDC.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I am still waiting for my answer to the previous question. I put a question on the promotion of Mauritius as a film shooting destination. Can we know first who the actual Chairman of the MFDC is? Second, as far as the number of short films produced is concerned, there has been

none in 2008/2009 and it is targeted to have two short films for the coming six months. Can I know whether there is any Indian who has signed a contract with the MFDC up to now?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Chairperson, the Chairman of the MFDC is Mr Christian Nayna. As I explained, with regard to the MFDC, we are revisiting the overall strategy of MFDC in terms of the statute itself. There was a focus in one direction, now we are trying to diversify the activities.

With regard to short films produced, in fact, this is one area which we are trying to strengthen and we have to, of course, do the capacity building and also recruit the crews so that the film production can take place, whereas short films have been produced by film-makers with regard to certain competitions which MFDC has run, but we are targeting now for MFDC itself to go for production.

Mr Gunness: As far as the total sum spent on the Buyers/Sellers Meetings and the international fairs organised are concerned, I have not got the answer up to now.

Mr Gokhool: I have already given the answer.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, may I be allowed to go back to the Gemmology Laboratory? Can I ask the hon. Minister whether actually we have Gemmologists working in the Gemmology lab?

Mr Gokhool: The answer is yes, there are two gemmologists who have been trained overseas and they are working at the lab.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk on *Enterprise Mauritius* at page 318. We have witnessed, on many occasions in the past, some disorder, if I can say, *au sommet de l'entreprise Mauritius* where there have been responsibilities of a Chairperson involved in management affairs and this has been discussed here.

(*Interruptions*)

Star war at the level of the Enterprise Mauritius! Can we know from the hon. Minister whether he has been able to put some order in the house, whether clear directives have been given to the Chairperson as far as responsibilities as Chairperson of the Board, according to the Act, are concerned? Can the Minister let us know how many officers have resigned for the past years and whether they have been replaced?

I will come to item Delivery Units - Mauritius Film Development Corporation at page 319. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether this organisation, I would say, has been taking contracts for the preparation of short films for the private sector?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, address the Chair, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ministers, can I have your co-operation, please?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I come back to my question. Can I know from the Minister whether the Mauritius Film Development Corporation has been allowed or has entered into projections of films, local spots and so on for the private sector? If it is yes, it is yes, if it is no, it is no. I would like to know whether the Board has agreed to that, whether there has been such a case.

I will come to the Mauritius Standards Bureau which is a very important organisation as far as standards are concerned. This is an organisation which exists since a long time. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether provision has been made for the past year and for this year so that we can be provided with new and modern equipments for testing in the different fields? I still remember once they were given the responsibility to check the thickness of plastic bags and they had some problems of equipment. Can we know from the Minister whether

sufficient funds have been earmarked for the Mauritius Standards Bureau so that we can have capacity building and modern equipments?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Chairperson, let me, first, take the issue of Enterprise Mauritius and reference has been made to the situation at Enterprise Mauritius between the Chairman and the CEO. I have to say that there have been conflictual situations in the past and even in the media mention has been made, but since I took office, I have spoken both to the Chairman and the CEO and impressed upon them the need to work as a team. I am sure the hon. Member may have noted that things have calmed down and the focus is on the priority, that is, supporting export and capacity building for our enterprise. This is the priority which the CEO and the Chairman are addressing.

As regards the MFDC, the production of short films or spots for the private sector, I do not think this is the case. I am encouraging the MFDC to work with organisations like the MRC to produce films on certain topics. This collaboration is there, but as far as I know, I do not think this is the case for production of short films for the private sector.

As regards the Mauritius Standards Bureau, there are provisions made for new equipment, for example we have, in certain places, a micro biology lab. We have a capital expenditure of Rs300,000, an incubator of 2 units for Rs600,000 and there is also the purchase of fume hoods for Rs650,000. There is also the purchase of glasses. So, a number of equipments have been earmarked for acquisition by the Mauritius Standards Bureau. I can give all the details which are available here.

Mr Varma: At page 314, under item *Programme 602: Industrial Development - Participation in International Fairs*, I will be grateful if the hon. Minister could name the fairs in which there will be participation. This is my first question. Mr Chairperson, I have a second question at page 320. Under item *Delivery Units – Mauritius Research Council*, we can see at *P1: Number of*

research outputs developed for potential commercial utilization, for year 2008–09 there is none and for 2009, there are five. Could the Minister inform the House as to why there are no such researches carried out for year 2008-2009 and for 2009 what are these five researches that are going to be carried out?

Mr Gokhool: As regards the participation in fairs, Mr Chairperson, I have already given the information with regard to the buyers-sellers meetings, but there are a total of 14 fairs in which the companies have participated through Enterprise Mauritius and all the details are available. I can give them to the hon. Member.

As regards the shift in the strategy of MRC, I think, we all do recognise that this is a research-based organisation and it has been conducting research for a number of years. But with the creation of this new Ministry of Industry, Science and Research where the emphasis is on applied science research and innovation which helps the overall development of the economy, guidelines have been given to the MRC now to give priority, in fact, to give more attention to research which has an applied value. That is why we are indicating a number of projects which MRC is now undertaking.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun followed by hon. Bhagwan!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, under *Sub-Programme 60205: Harnessing Science and Technology for Development for National Development*, items 22900002, *Accommodation Costs* and 22900004 *Catering*, may I ask the hon. Minister what is he referring to, what are these items and how the costs are so high for a period of six months, Rs2.5 m. for each?

Mr Gokhool: With regard to Science, Technology and Innovation, as I just mentioned, there is a new Ministry now looking after the integration of Science and Technology for National Development not only in the economic sector but in all sectors. It is a broad-based approach that we are adopting.

As regards the sum that has been earmarked, I will give the answer in a minute.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 319, under *Sub-Programme 60203 the Assay Office and the Gemmology Lab*, with regard to the *Assay Office*, we all know that we have had recently the newly Amended Jewellery Act. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether in this very important department where there has been capacity building in terms of equipment in the past financial year, there is provision for new and modern equipment with regard to compliance to the Act?

As regards the Gemmology Lab to ensure genuineness of precious and semi-precious stones, again, we have had the opportunity to recruit, to have capacity building and to have up-to-date equipment because this is where we have our prestige as far as the goods which are being sold like gold or semi-precious stones and as far as the quality is concerned in the various duty-free shops or other shops where they are being sold and manufactured.

Mr Gokhool: As I just mentioned, Mr Chairperson, the gemmology lab is a new initiative and it is operational since 05 March 2009. There are equipments which have been provided to this lab to undertake sophisticated tests. The laboratory is equipped with conventional as well as hi-tech instruments. The laboratory staff has two gemologists who have been trained overseas and a total of 52 gem stones have been verified from March to May 2009.

As regards the question asked by hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun about the fund that has been earmarked, Mauritius has been requested to host the SADC-SET week which is planned for September 2009. Mauritius is the Chair of this event and the co-Chair is South Africa. So, the holding of this SADC Science Engineering and Technology week is the event for which the funds have been provided.

Mr Gunness: Under item 22900004 *Catering*, now that we know from the Minister that it is for a particular event for SADC-SET week, can we know how many foreign delegates will be attending that event and whether all the 14 countries of the SADC will be present?

Mr Gokhool: In fact, we have prepared a Concept Paper which we have sent to the SADC Secretariat and also to the Ministry of Technology of South Africa and we have set up a technical team. Now, we are awaiting that SADC examines the Concept Paper and they have informed us that they would like to meet the Mauritian counterpart to discuss the organisational arrangements. Of course we expect all the SADC countries to participate in that SADC-SET week.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 314, *Major Outputs*, there is the *Outreach Programmes in Science and Technology for students and the general public*. May I ask the hon. Minister the number of programmes that have taken place for the general public and how many participants have been reached? Did we have programmes, especially for the general public except for students? Furthermore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry has given up the idea of having a planetarium.

Mr Gokhool: With regard to popularization of science, Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre has run a number of competitions, workshops, talks and shows. There are, at least, forty activities which have been organised by the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre. I would like to also inform the hon. Member that Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre has also launched the Mauritius Science Portal which is accessible to the wide public.

As regards the planetarium, we have not abandoned the idea, but we will have to provide for it in the years to come.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, at page 322, item 26323011 - *Capital grant - Fashion and Design Institute*, may I ask the hon. Minister whether

this grant has been used for the setting up of the Institute and if it has been used for the building, where the building is found?

Mr Gokhool: As I said earlier, part of the grant has been used for the purchase of equipments in view of the launching of the Fashion and Design Institute. We are right now looking for a suitable accommodation to house the Fashion and Design Institute.

Mr Ganoo: At page 324, under items *26313077 Current Grant - Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre* and *26323077 Capital Grant - Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre*, we will remember that this Science Centre was set up with the help of the Government of India some three or four years ago and one of the purpose of this Science Centre was to organise exhibitions to outreach the population in general. I am not talking about competitions organized for students. I am talking about the objectives of this Centre to attract the Mauritian population in general, to expose science to our population. I have been told that, in the course of the past years, the number of visitors has been, in fact, plummeted. Can the hon. Minister confirm in terms of the number of visitors visiting the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre whether that is a fact, especially in this Budget I can see the sum of about Rs17 m. or Rs18 m. for this Science Centre?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Chairperson, true it is that the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre is a very important institution and it is expected to play an important role in terms of not only popularising science, but also in ensuring that there are high level events which are organised. It is not correct to say that the number of visitors has plummeted. In fact, when I took over as Minister of Education and Human Resources, this institution came under my responsibility and since that time we have taken a number of initiatives, I just mentioned 40 activities for the period 2008/2009. I must commend that Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre for the good work they are doing and, in fact, the figures that I have is that in 2008 the number of

visitors was 30,000 and for 2009 the number of visitors has doubled. Every effort is being made to increase visibility, make more people go and visit the Centre and to participate also in the programmes of Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre.

Mr Gunness: On page 325, under item *020085 Permanent Secretary*, I see that in 2008/2009 we have one Permanent Secretary, then for July to December, the post does not appear. Can we obtain some explanations from the Minister? On the following page 326, under item *19 59 75 Assistant Director Assay Office*, why up to now this post has not been filled? And same for item *19 65 75 Accreditation Manager*, the post appears, but has not been filled. Can I know why the post has not been filled up to now?

Mr Gokhool: As regards the issue of Permanent Secretary, there is no provision because, as I have said, Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre was previously under the Ministry of Education and Human Resources; it is now under the Ministry of Industry, Science and Research. That is the explanation. As regards the posts, the officers who are there are in an acting capacity and, of course, we will have to look into it and ensure that these posts are filled in due course.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 320, under *Indicators P1: Number of participants in Outreach Programmes*, can the hon. Minister give details about the five topics and where these topics have reached up to now?

Mr Gokhool: I have and I will give the information. Concerning the projects for MRC, one is the feasibility study of seaweed in order to set up a seaweed industry in Mauritius; two, outlining a policy of energy sufficiency for Agalega; three, geometrical energy project to look into the possibility of using geo-thermal energy in Mauritius; four, bio-informatics project outlining of a network system for bio-informatics based on a local cell unit, and five, feasibility study for the setting-up of a science park.

Ministry of Industry, Science and Research – Programme Code 602: Industrial Development (Rs132,560,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 641: Policy and Management for Housing and Lands was called

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Chairperson, I move for an amendment in *the Strategic Note under Major Outputs (Services to be provided) for 2009-2011; Programme 642 -*

To insert “Land for housing development identified”

And

To delete “Improved framework for public infrastructure”

In Programme 642 item 3111340 Upgrading of Site Infrastructure for Rehabilitation of Sugar Camps –

To insert “Rehabilitation of infrastructure of NHDC Estates”

And

To delete “Upgrading of Site Infrastructure for Rehabilitation of Sugar Camps”

Amendment agreed to.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 641: Policy and Management for Housing and Lands (Rs21,789,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 328 under *Strategic Note - 533 low-cost Firinga Type Housing Units constructed on 6 sites*, at Ville Noire there are 70 of such housing units. Could the hon. Minister inform the House when these units will be delivered?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, the final touch is being made to the allocation process and I hope by the end of the month or, at latest mid July, they will be allocated.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, Sir, page 329, paragraph 3 *Main Constraints and Challengers and how they are being addressed*, I can read from this paragraph – *the lack of primary data on demand for low cost housing, expertise to address this problem, major constraints to rational policy formulation*. Can the hon. Minister tell us whether there is a lack of primary data at the Ministry for low-cost housing, if not, can he tell us whether the Ministry has the figures of the number of applicants at the NHDC? How many have applied and are still on a waiting list for the low-cost housing in the NHDC? We were surprised to see that the Ministry confesses that up to now that there is a lack of primary data on demand for low-cost housing. If there is no such primary data how can we build a strategy to resolve this problem?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Chairperson, you know, we go all for transparency. If there is no data, we have to make it up. In fact, a policy paper is being prepared actually and one of the components is a house for everybody. We are getting the statistics and, as up to now, the demand is assessed by a number of applicants and NHDC. I can tell that the demand, as far as the applicants are concerned, has outstripped of what is available. The other problem, far as the NHDC is concerned, is that a lot of applicants do not qualify either they have not got the amount of money to put as deposit or plainly some of them just want to have a house, but are unable to afford and we will care for these. But, there is a problem in housing. We are trying to do our best under the circumstances.

Mr Jhugroo: Page 328, *programme code 643: Land Management and Physical Planning*, can I ask the hon. Minister when the new outline scheme for the five Municipal Councils will be ready?

Dr. Kasenally: In fact, the Town and Country Planning Board has already set up the preparation of the outline scheme, including modifications and these are the main functions of the Board. The outline scheme covering the area under the

administrative jurisdiction of the two of the Municipal Council area of Quatre Bornes has been prepared to replace the operational outlines scheme covering part of the area and dating as far back as 1984; it is being upgraded. The scheme has been put on public deposit on 21 March 2009, inviting for public representations, if any, within a period of three months from the date of publication and then there is the proposed modification to the district outlines scheme. Following representations by stakeholders and after these drafts were put for public scrutiny, the errors and omissions identified for the rural areas, the Board caused appropriate modifications to these outlines. A notice of deposit for the proposed modifications has been published in the Gazette on 25 April 2009.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: On page 328, under *Programme 642: Social Housing Development, Construction of 550 Firinga type housing units on 10 sites*, may I know where matters stand as regards the said construction and if we can have some information as regards the site on which the construction will be carried out?

Dr. Kasenally: In fact, Mr Chairperson, the construction of 533 Firinga housing units is being implemented over the six sites. These sites include Bambous: 78, Chebel: 54, Henrietta: 156 and Ville Noire. These are the ones which we have already constructed. But those that are to be constructed, it was supposed initially to be 774 housing units, but three sites were not recommended, because of geo-technical investigations, tests ruled them out. These were Cité La Cure, Vallée des Prêtres and Vallée Pitot. The actual project will consist of 550 over 11 sites. These are, namely, Glen Park which will accommodate 60 units, La Tour Koenig: 39, Roche Bois: 20, Petite Rivière: 36. There is Camp Diable: 60, Plaine Magnien: 60, Grand Bel Air: 50, Britannia: 45, Calebasses: 60, Cottage: 60 and d'Epinay: 60, making a total of 550 housing. The project cost is Rs325 m. and the buildings themselves will cost Rs188 m. whereas the infrastructure will cost

Rs137 m. The starting date is July 2009 and the contractual completion date is expected to be February 2011. The average selling price of these housing units is estimated to be Rs445,000 and the delivery target, as we will expect, will be February 2011.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, I have two questions, one is on page 328 under *Major Outputs (Services to be provided) for 2009-2011* with regard to *Programme 642: Social Housing Development*, second line, *improved access of the lower middle income groups to land ownership*. I would like to ask the hon. Minister what is being done. Under *Programme Code 643: Land Management and Physical Planning*, under item *A National Digital Cadastre for residential and commercial properties*, I can see at page 333 that the target is about 70% for 2009. May I know from the hon. Minister how far have we reached with regard to attaining the established target?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, there are about 242 service sites which are being earmarked and these are at Ville Noire: 56, Glen Park: 63 and Souillac: 123. We will provide the infrastructure and the people themselves will build their own housing. The project cost, in fact, is Rs45 m. and the award of the contract is expected to be by end of June 2009. The starting date is expected to be by the end of July 2009.

Mr Gunness: At page 328, under *Major Outputs (Services to be provided) for 2009-2011*, *Programme 641: Policy and Management for Housings and Lands, Strategic Plan on Housing, Land Planning and Development Bill to be passed in the National Assembly*, can I know whether work has already started concerning the strategic plan on housing and if ever work has started on the Land Planning and Development Bill, whether it will come before this House this year or when it is scheduled?

Dr. Kasenally: Indeed, the Land Planning and Development Bill has reached a fairly advanced stage of planning and we expect to come with the Bill after it has been vetted by the various stakeholders. Consequently, a number of sections of the Planning Development Bill of 2004 had to be revised. There has been another development with the new Master Plan for Highlands which will be prepared and it has to be taken care of. The Highlands project is a mega project and it has got certain specificities which will not be under the Land Planning and Development Bill and provisions have to be made for that in the new legislation. There are many sections of the PDA and following various meetings held at the State Law, the Ministry has been advised to come up with this new Bill this year. The new proposed legislation will put much emphasis on post control and self-adherence to regulatory framework and will provide the framework for private sector to prepare and take responsibility for project, concept, analysis, assessment, design and to develop plans and planning policy guidance. The Ministry is examining in details the proposed Bill prepared by the State Law Office. Extensive consultations had been carried out with local authorities, the Ministry of Local Government and an amended version has been submitted to the Ministry of Local Government and thereafter the draft Bill will be submitted to the State Law Office for vetting before it comes to Cabinet for discussions and then come to the Assembly.

Mrs Labelle: At page 328 under *Major Outputs (Services to be provided) for 2009-2011, Programme 642: Social Housing Unit, Provision of subsidised low-cost housing*, Mr Chairperson, while I recognised the efforts of different Governments to have houses for low-income groups, the situation is that those who have a maximum of deposit are the ones who have more chance to get a house. I do concur that people have to make a deposit, but when we encourage this practice, this does not allow other persons who cannot afford to have a high deposit despite

their regular efforts. I see hon. Mrs Bappoo is nodding her head, I am sure she has these cases. Is there something that we are thinking of? Because these persons are making efforts to pay the deposit and are ready to pay the regular instalments, but they cannot have Rs50,000 or Rs100,000 as a deposit for the low-cost housing. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry is contemplating some measures for these persons?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, as you know, my colleague, the Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment, recently spoke about this new concept in Bambous. These houses do not come under my jurisdiction. You may be surprised about it despite being Minister of Housing, but there are projects which are being done and I salute my colleague. This is a special project, where people at the lower rung of the society are being taken care of. This Government has left no stone unturned to come to the rescue of these people. Now, there is another project – Cité Lumière at Grand' Baie - which is in the pipeline. My colleague is trying to help these very desperate people. With all the goodwill, we will never be able to satisfy everybody, but this is not through lack of trying. I must tell you that the Prime Minister is so much concerned about it. His main concern is about poor people. The rich and the less poor can take care of themselves, but you are here and I am sure you are all motivated by this feeling for the poor people and we will try to find other solutions as the economic downturn goes up. I am sure they are going to be the people who will benefit. I say it from the bottom of my heart, we care for these people.

Mr Jugnauth: I heard the hon. Minister explaining earlier that, with regard to Firinga type housing, the intention was to construct more than that. And because of three sites that were found to be unsuitable, therefore, the number can be constructed, that's why, I suppose 550 only have been earmarked. In that case

could Government not identify other sides in order to go ahead with the initial intention?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, I forgot to mention that indeed, but we are looking for all these sites. Unfortunately, Mr Chairperson, it takes a long time to get all these geo-technical, but we are trying to stay fast track, because as soon as a report comes in, my officers go and look for alternate sites where we can provide site and services.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, the other time I asked two questions, but the Minister answered only one. The second one related to national digital cadastre, on page 328, *for residential and commercial properties and*, on page 333, *Survey Division - O1: A national digital cadastre for residential and commercial properties; P1: Percentage cadastral survey of 350,000 properties*. We can see that the target...

The Chairperson: The hon. Member would realise that the national digital cadastre is on programme 643; we are still on programme 641.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, I was actually taking it from the major output emanating from page 328.

The Chairperson: It is the major output, but for programme 643.

Mrs Martin: I'll wait then.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 329 - *Main Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed* - “*Lack of coordination for processing of applications for roof slab grants*”- there is a need for greater coordination of efforts of various units and departments within the NHDC and the Ministry of Housing and Lands. True it is on the next page, the Estimates provide for the reduction of this target and so on. We know that there are criteria which are taken into consideration before granting this roof slab grant, one of them being the monthly income of the applicant and the second one being the area of the house to

be constructed. In the recent past, I have come across many cases where people come to see us, because the application is turned down. For example, when the area proposed to be constructed is to 2 m² or 3 m² wider than what is the norm. So, can't we have a second chance and ask the applicants to correct their plans so that they can benefit from the grant instead of outright turning down the application?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, I understand that predicament of these people who have sometimes been misled by their *tireurs plans*. The casting of roof slabs scheme was introduced in 1998 to assist people of low income group who have a plot of land and who persevere to construct a house. Over and above that, we do give them right of elevation, but we have to put certain conditions upon that. Again there must be a cut-off point somewhere. This is the difficulty. The maximum somebody can get, as far as his salary is concerned, is Rs8,500; but if somebody gets Rs8,550, what do you do? He has to make an application. I must say that the said committee does take a very sympathetic view, but we must also be very careful in that we may be sued for that. In respect of the beam, it is 100 m². I understand now that the applications in respect of 150 m² are entertained. I was not very satisfied about the way and the undue delay. We have now reduced it to about three months. I have been approached by so many Members of the National Assembly and we have tried to see what we can do to help these people. We are trying to draw the line somewhere, but the 'somewhere' is trying to go a bit up. We are trying to see genuine cases but, however, I must point out that those people who are trying to play the tricks and there have had many tricks played. Some people have had, I understand, in the past, two casting of roof slabs and this is totally unacceptable when we are doing so much to help the poor. I think this is for the poor and it is the poor who are going to get it and I am going to make sure that this happens as from now on.

Mr Ganoo: I totally agree with what the hon. Minister said except that I think he did not come to my question. The question was whether we can give a second chance for the applicant to correct his plan if the plan is about two or three square metres wider than the norm.

Dr. Kasenally: In fact, this is what I have said. We try to help them. The important thing is to do it in transparency, in the open. People will have to assume their responsibility and, eventually, may come to the Ministry. In fact, we have been giving them a second chance; even then, there is a mistake, so we give them a third chance. In fact, for the fourth chance, I have asked my surveyor to go and advise them.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Chairperson, in the same paragraph, *Main Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*, with regard to *campement site lessees*, as far as I can remember there was a deadline that was given for the lessees to finalise their lease. May I know with regard to the 138 cases, what action is being taken?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, let me tell you something about the campement lessees. The policy was to optimise....

The Chairperson: We can't go into policy now. Can the hon. Minister just answer the question of the hon. Member? What are we doing about the 138 leases which are yet to be finalised?

Dr. Kasenally: I have not even started, Mr Chairperson, and you are stopping me. What I saying is that out of the 1,200 cases, the 38 outstanding cases are being looked into. We are trying, as far as possible, to get as much money from them. In spite of what is being said, we have collected over Rs787 m. from these new leases.

Mr Jugnauth: I agree with the hon. Minister, but I just wanted to know - a deadline was given for them to finalise their lease - what happens with the other 138 cases which have not been finalised?

Dr. Kasenally: Some of them are being processed. The others who have not opted for the lease are going to go by the old leases and, at the end of that lease, they will not be given the chance to renew it and will probably come back. But I am hoping that we will have fewer and fewer.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 328, *Programme 641: Policy and Management for Housing Lands*, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Land Planning and Development Bill is going to replace any existing legislation? At page 329, No. 3, as far as the main constraints are concerned, may we know what is being done to strengthen the legal capacity and institutional framework to promote judicious and efficient land use and development?

Dr. Kasenally: As I explained, the new legislation is going to replace the one which was in force in 2004. And as far as the main constraints are concerned, to make judicious use of our resources, we will be having what we call the LAVIMS project - there are three major components - which will have the proper evaluation, a cadastre and a parcel-based deeds registration system integrated and supported by an Appropriate Information Management System.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 641: Policy and Management for Housing and Lands (Rs21,789,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 642: Social Housing Development was called.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in the STRATEGIC NOTE -

“Under Major Outputs (services to be provided) for 2009-2011; Programme 642; 4th bullet,

To insert “Land for housing development identified”

And

To delete “improved framework for public infrastructure”

Amendment agreed to.

Programme Code 642, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Chairperson, at page 336, under item 26323206 – *Social Housing Development Fund*, with regard to the sum of Rs500 m. that has been earmarked, may we know how much money has been spent?

Dr. Kasenally: The ongoing capital project is Rs214 m. and actually the subsidy on loan and grants is Rs215 m. The sum of Rs449 m. was earmarked, but to date Rs319.3 m. has been spent, including a book adjustment of Rs82.7 m. Payment of Rs55.3 m. is in the process and an amount of Rs118.7 m. has already been committed to be disbursed before the end of June 2009, leaving a balance of Rs6.7 m. The revised estimates for the year 2009 is Rs1.2 billion which would also cover expenses in the financial years ending December 2009/2010.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I have four questions. At page 331, *Programme Code 642, Performance Indicator P1: Allocate completed housing units on 6 sites*, I see that the target is 2009. Can we know what are the six sites and when the allocation will be done? *Under Performance Indicator P2: Progress in construction of 550 low-cost housing units on 10 sites around the island*, it is only 20%. Therefore, can we know the sites?

At page 333, under *Output 06: Acquisition of private land for public projects, Performance Indicator P1: Duration time for processing compulsory land acquisition (months)*, the processing time is being reduced, but I do not see anywhere the payment time. Very often, we buy land from the people and they

have to wait for months and months before they get their money. Can I know whether this is being taken care of?

I have a last question. At page 336, under item *31113407 – Upgrading of Site Infrastructure for Rehabilitation of Sugar Camps*, a sum of Rs15 m. is earmarked. Can I know at which sugar camps these upgrading works will be carried out?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, concerning the last question, it is not sugar camps. That is why an amendment has been moved. It is NHDC. As far as the two houses are concerned – perhaps the hon. Member did not hear – I gave all the details. They were 533 and I enumerated the regions. There is Henrietta, Ville Noire, Chebel and Bambous among others. And for the 530 coming, as I have mentioned, in fact, we had planned to do 746, but three sites had been ruled out as a result of which we have 530. These are going to be started this year as from now on. Money has been earmarked initially for the infrastructural work, the planning and work will start by the end of this year and will go on, and will probably be ready, as I have again pointed out, in February 2011 when they will be allocated to people in that region.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Chairperson, at page 329, *Programme Code 642, Promote the integration of low-income families in mainstream society through the provision of subsidized, low-cost housing*, faute de pouvoir localiser un autre sujet, je voudrais dire au ministre que sous l'ancien régime, dans la démarche de régionaliser l'accès à l'éducation autour des écoles de l'endroit, il était prévu qu'une école allait être construite à la Route Militaire. On avait dépensé plus de R 50 million pour mettre sous terre les *high voltage cables*, etc. Dans un premier temps, l'ancien ministre du logement avait fait beaucoup de bruits pour dire qu'on allait construire des maisons pour les *middle-class*. Jusqu'aujourd'hui, quatre ans

après, on n'a rien entendu. Est-ce que je peux demander au ministre s'il compte aller de l'avant avec ce projet?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, in fact, the hon. Member is right. The previous Minister of Health did put his heart and mind for this project because ...

(*Interruptions*)

My former colleague! I am saying, the hon. Minister of IT. He put his heart and mind in this case.

(*Interruptions*)

At one stage, it was decided not to construct another school because so many schools have been built in the region. In fact, we launched for tenders recently and the response was not very good. So, we are revisiting the project, and we have asked the NHDC to see whether we can build an Exim type of house, which will be probably in the region of Rs600,000 to Rs700,000.

Mr Lauthan: I make an appeal to the hon. Minister. As the previous project has been abandoned, I would ask him to expedite matters on this one.

Dr. Kasenally: We are trying to put on a fast track. I can reassure my colleague and the people of Port Louis that we are trying to find a solution, because there is an acute crisis of housing in that region.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 332, *Programme 642, P1: Serviced Sites at Glen Park*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of plots which will be available for Glen Park and also the criteria?

Dr. Kasenally: In fact, I did mention that, apart from the serviced plots, there will be also 60 units of housing. As far as the lots of Glen Park are concerned, there are 63. So, it is 60 plus 63. The hon. Member's constituency is being well served.

Mr Varma: At page 335, item 22030001- *Rental of building*, we can see from the 2008/2009 estimates that the sum being spent is around Rs1.5 m. and the

projected increase is more than 100% for 2010. Could the hon. Minister enlighten the House on that?

My second question is on page 328, *Strategic Note*. The geotechnical investigations have been completed on a number of sites name Cité La Cure, Vallée des Prêtres and Vallé Pitot. I would like to know whether there is any plan to construct a low-cost housing on these plots.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, indeed, the increase in rental is the reason why we are looking for new accommodation. I find it unacceptable for the staff of my Ministry to work in very inhumane and unsafe conditions in a very old building at Edith Cavell Street. There is not only an environmental risk, because there are rats, fungus, but some of them have started getting obstructive lung disease. Therefore, we have launched tenders. We launched one tender, but we did not get suitable accommodation. We are trying again, and I want to put all the sections of the Ministry under one roof. As far as the geotechnical investigations are concerned, we cannot build on these sites. If we want to build, especially at Vallée Pitot, it will be too costly. We have to put *pilotis*, and it will not be cost effective. However, we are looking for alternate sites.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 642 - Social Housing Development (Rs28,734,200), as amended, was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 643 - Land Management and Physical Planning was called.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, with regard to *Programme 643 - National Digital Cadastre*, we can see that the target for 2009 is 70%. Can we know from the Minister how far we have reached with regard to the established target, given that quite a sum has been allocated to this project?

Dr. Kasenally: This has to do with the LAVIMS Project, and cadastral survey for 350,000 properties has been completed. The target in December will be

70%, the whole project will be finished in 2010. The letter of award for the LAVIMS Project was issued on 22 December to Infoterra UK based company, and the process for the cadastral survey has started through an aerial photography. This project will ensure that every single piece of land will electronically and digitally photographed and made available. This will require the current deeds based registration. Everything will be fully automised and digitally recorded. It will be one of the few countries of the world that will have this automated deed lodgement, from which everybody will have access easily, quickly and promptly.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 642 - Social Housing Development (Rs320,185,300) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands – Programme Code 461 - Policy and Management of Local Government was called.

Mr Varma: At page 343, mention is made about developing a new Fire Legislation and, at page 347, *O6 – A new Fire legislation*, it is mentioned that this will be ready in December 2010. Could the hon. Minister explain why has there been this long lapse of time for the preparation of the legislation?

Dr. David: I have discussed this morning with the officials of my Ministry and I have been told that, before that date, it will be ready. We are now discussing with all the stakeholders.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands – Programme Code 461 - Policy and Management of Local Government (Rs 13,683,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Dr. David: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment -
Programme 462; O4; (Page 349)

Under column Indicators (service standards),

To insert “P5”

And

To delete “P8”

Amendment agreed to.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, page 348, *Local Authorities Unit - 04: Key infrastructure constructed and upgraded.* We can see two items; *P1 – Construction of new Market Fairs* and *P3 - Construction of Multi Purpose/Sports Complex.* Last year, mention was made of the construction of a market fair in Plaine Magnien. I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could inform the House why Plaine Magnien is not mentioned this year. With regard to the construction of a multipurpose complex in Mare d’Albert, could the hon. Minister inform the House whether a plot of land has been purchased or where is it going to be built actually?

The Chairperson: Maybe the Minister will circulate the answer to the hon. Member afterwards.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands – Programme Code 462 - Facilitation to Local Authorities (Rs 987,326,700) as amended, was, on question put, agreed to.

Dr. David: Mr Chairperson I have just been informed that for the Plaine Magnien and the Mare d’Albert markets, the land issue has to be cleared.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands – Facilitation to Local Authorities - Programme Code 462 (Rs987,326,700) was, as amended, agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Programmes Code 463 - Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities was called.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment -

“Programme 463:01; P1 (Page 349)

Under column 2008-09 Baseline,

To insert “4.2”

And

To delete “3.6”

Under column 2009 Targets,

To insert “4.5”

And

To delete “3.7”

Programme 463:02; P1

Under column 2008-09 Baseline,

To insert “50%”

And

To delete “-“

Under column 2010 Targets,

To insert “90%”

And

To delete “100%”

Amendment agreed to.

Mrs Martin: My question relates to page 355, item 31113409 *Upgrading of Solid Waste Disposal Facilities/Stations of which (a) Upgrading of La Brasserie Transfer Station*, I can see that for the period 2008/2009, Rs69 m. has been awarded for this project. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what amount of this sum has already been spent and when the project is due to be completed given that for July to December 2009 only Rs2 m. have been awarded to continue with this project.

Dr. David: Mr Chairperson, for the upgrading of La Brasserie Transfer Station, the 2008/2009 estimates were Rs69 m. and Rs2 m. from July to December 2009. From the notes I have, upgrading of La Brasserie Transfer Station contract for the operations, transport of waste and upgrading of the station have been allocated to Securi Clean Limited on April 2008 and the contract amount is Rs72 m. Rs55 m. have already been spent.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 344, item *Main Constraints and Challenges - Street Lighting*, could the hon. Minister inform the House when will all high pressure sodium lamps be replaced by energy efficient low pressure lamps as per the recommendations?

Dr. David: This is a very interesting question, Mr Chairperson, and perhaps I will give the hon. Member the number of bulbs that we have in the country and the bulbs which we are going to replace. We have got around 103,000 bulbs and then in lateral roads only 21,314, to be very precise. Now, these 21,314 bulbs in lateral roads will be replaced by economic bulbs by the CFL and the interesting part of it is that what we are going to spend for new equipment, and just to change these lamps would be about Rs5 m. which we will get from the MID Fund, but these Rs5m. invested will give us a profit and a saving of Rs4 m. per month. So, you understand that we are going very quickly with it. This morning, I got the information that tenders will be launched and specifications are being prepared for the moment.

Mrs Martin: Coming back to the completion of upgrading works at La Brasserie, at page 343, it is stated –

“Strategic Note

Major Achievements for 2008/09

Completion of upgrading works at La Brasserie Transfer Station. This project is meant to increase the waste transfer capacity resulting in a

reduction in the waiting time of scavenging lorries from an average of 45 to 15 minutes.”

Can the Minister say whether any study has been undertaken following this measure and how far it has been successful?

Dr. David: Mr Chairperson, we make studies before and after and, in fact, we've got inspectors in the Enforcement Units who give us feedbacks which are very positive.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to Mare Chicose, may I know whether all the inhabitants have already come to an agreement with regard to compensation that has been earmarked?

Dr. David: Mr Chairperson, this is a very interesting question. There have been lots of unfulfilled promises before as regards Mare Chicose and to date 80% of the inhabitants have signed out of these 43 families. This is why we could not go quicker. We were waiting for the signature of all these inhabitants. Now that this is done, we are moving forward and I can assure the House that we've had several meetings with colleagues representing the constituency and with the inhabitants of Mare Chicose and I am personally satisfied that we are moving in the right direction.

Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Programme Code 463 - Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities (Rs531,871,400), as amended, was agreed to.

The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to –

464 - Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands - Fire

Fighting and Rescue and Fire Prevention (Rs138,070,500)

311 - Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands –

Rodrigues and Outer Islands Development (Rs812,100,000)

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions - Programme Code 501 - Policy and Management for Social Affairs was called.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, at page 373 under item 27210002 *Social Aid*, will the hon. Minister inform the House of the number of persons benefiting from this aid and whether in the difficult economic circumstances he will increase the amount of the grant?

Mr Varma: At page 363 under *Strategic Note, Major Outputs (Services to be provided) for 2009-2011 – Amendments to the Legal Framework to bring them in line with the requirements of modern society*, could the hon. Minister inform the House which are the existing legislation which are going to be amended?

Mrs Bappoo: We'll have a social protection review. This will involve legislation like the Social Aid Act, the National Pension Act and together with that we are working on a social register for Mauritius and the outcome of the result of this social register will have consequential amendments to have an integrated sort of programme for assistance to most needy people.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Chairperson, the Minister answered on the Social Aid Act. Actually my question is on Programme 502. I would like to seek your guidance, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member will have to wait.

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Chairperson, since the Minister answered on the Social Aid Act, actually it is on Programme Code 502, so I would like to seek your guidance.

The Chairperson: So, we will wait for the Programme Code 502.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reforms Institutions - Programme Code 501 – Policy and Management for Social Affairs (Rs27,415,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reforms Institutions - Programme Code 502 – Social Protection – was called.

Mr Soodhun: I have five questions on this Code. At page 373, *Sub-Programme 50201: Social Safety Net*, under item 27210002: *Social Aid*, will the Minister inform the House of the number of persons benefiting from this aid and whether in the difficult economic circumstances, she will increase the amount of grants? Second, under item 27210005: *Assistance to Professional Fishermen*, will the Minister inform the House whether assistance was provided to all fishermen and what is the amount paid? Third, under item 28212012: *Other Current Transfers - Subsidy on S.C. and H.S.C. Examination Fees*, will the Minister provide the number of students who have benefitted from the scheme and inform the House if she will make a proposal to increase the subsidy for more students? Under *Sub-Programme 50202: Integration of Persons with Disabilities and Strengthening of the NGO's*, item 22130001: *Studies (Support to Non State Actors)*, will the Minister say whether there has been any study conducted by her Ministry on the impact of the economic recession on poor people, particularly women?

Mrs Bappoo: First question, so far as social aid is concerned, the number of beneficiaries per month goes up to 14,500, the amount being paid per month, and up to these social aid beneficiaries amount to Rs30.3 m. per month which goes to Rs394 m. per year. As to whether there will be any increase, of course, all the social aid benefits have been increased by 5.1%.

For the fishermen, there has been, of course, an increase in provision for their payment of allowance and all those who have been referred to my Ministry from the Ministry of Fisheries have been given their allowance. The amount paid for the year 2008-2009 - the bad weather rate is Rs200 - was Rs56,560,000, with a sum of Rs3 m. during the close season which brings a total of Rs60 m. I do not

know if the hon. Member would need the details about the allowance, as I do not have it.

Any study which is being done as far as poverty alleviation and absolute poverty are concerned is being carried out by the CSO. But this item of studies and surveys concerns mainly the disbursement of money for the Social Register of Mauritius which the Ministry of Social Security has embarked, together with the UNDP and the Ministry of Finance. The objective of this SRM - Social Register of Mauritius - is mainly to be able to better target the beneficiaries of social programmes and to manage the social programmes in an integrated way because we have different benefits at the level of different Ministries and also to better harmonise the criteria for the different social programmes run by the different Ministries and to have better Structural Poverty Reduction policies. I am being informed on the same issue that other studies, as far as poverty is concerned, concern the Ministry of Finance and the Central Statistics Office.

Concerning S.C. and H.S.C., for 2008/2009 the total number is 7,442 students which means against a breakdown of: 100% refund for S.C.: 5,074 students, 50% refund for SC: 164 students; 100% refund for H.S.C.: 2,114 students, and 50% refund for HSC: 90 students. The total comes up to 7,442 students which bring to a disbursement of Rs54, 418,232. If the hon. Member wants it for the S.C and H.S.C separately then it is Rs35.4 m. for S.C and Rs19 m. for H.S.C. There is no intention of reviewing the subsidy because we have already explained the criteria that have been set up to meet the most needy students of the very poor families.

Ms Deepalsing: On page 368, *Social Aid Unit, Ouput 02: Improved Social Assistance through better targeting, P1: Social Aid Act reviewed*, may we know from the hon. Minister whether we already know what provisions of the Social Aid Act will be reviewed or whether there is any idea so far, for what purpose?

Mrs Bappoo: I can't speak about the special provision at this stage because, as I mentioned, at the very beginning, we are coming with a whole review of the social protection in itself which will include a Social Protection Action Plan and for this we will have to go through the Social Aid Act, the result of the Social Register for Mauritius and then maybe having other consequential amendments on the National Pension Act. So, we need to wait for the Social Register first, then the CSO, with whatever survey it is carrying on, concerning the living conditions survey in order to obtain an estimation of the general poverty line and the poverty profile by July 2009. From there, we will embark, maybe by 2010, on the Social Aid Act and the National Pension Act.

Mrs Martin: My question relates to page 363, *Major Output, Programme Code 502: Review of the Social Protection System* which the Minister has mentioned. She was saying that we cannot actually say what are the criteria that are going to be reviewed but, at least, could she give an indication as to whether the threshold eligibility criteria regarding the 60% incapacity will be reviewed, because this is causing sometimes quite a lot of confusion to some people?

Mrs Bappoo: There is no confusion, Mr Chairperson, as it is to the issue of the 60% in capacity. I mean the medical assessment of BIP claims will be part of the whole review. So, I can't take anything piecemeal and give a sort of indication to it, for any such amendment; we need to wait for the review of the different items like the Social Register, the Social Act, the National Pension and then we can finalise and report.

Mrs Bappoo: It is a general review, that is why I call it a Social Protection General Review comprising of different policies.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 373, under items 27210005 and 2720006 – *Assistance to Professional Fishermen and Income Support on Rice and Flour*. In both cases there is a projected decrease by around 100%.

(*Interruptions*)

It is projected 2010/2011 as well! If we take assistance to professional fishermen, it is Rs60 m. for these six months and then it goes to Rs33,750,000 in 2010, in 2011 it is Rs33,750,000. There is a projected decrease of around 100%. For income support on rice there has been a decrease of around Rs15 m.

The Chairperson: It cannot be a decrease of 100%. It is a decrease of 50%. Could the hon. Minister explain the decrease of 50% as requested by the hon. Member?

Mrs Bappoo: I have not well followed the question, but I have already answered on the question of fishermen. Of course, the estimates give the figures for the six months compared to last year which was 12 months. As I have been informed concerning the fishermen, whatever we have to pay, the Ministry of Social Security, Mr Chairperson, is the only the paying agent. The whole policy comes from the Ministry of Agro Industry. Whatever the Ministry of Agro Industry recommends to the Ministry, we, as the paying agent, we just make the payment.

Concerning the income Support, as I gave the details in my intervention, it has increased to Rs115 per member and the number of beneficiaries till now is 96,554, and we shall continue on that same criteria. I mean all those who are on the social aid list, all those beneficiaries of the basic pension under the National Pension Act where these beneficiaries would have been entitled to receive a social aid, if the basic pensions were not payable to them, that is, the VRP, the BWUP, the BIP and the BOP.

The Chairperson: Thank you hon. Minister. Hon. Varma, you will put the question to hon. Faugoo later on. Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With your permission, allow me to come back to the fishermen. Under item “*the assistance to professional*

fishermen", from what I read, there is a sum of Rs32.750 m. for the six months July to December 2009 and I see the same figure for the whole year 2010/2011. So, ...

The Chairperson: If you would allow me, hon. Mrs Labelle, the same question was put by hon. Varma and the reduction would be subject, I understand, to hon. Faugoo. Could you keep the question to be put to hon. Faugoo later on?

Mrs Labelle: Yes, maybe the hon. Minister has the number of fishermen who are concerned under this scheme. This is one question. My other question, Mr Chairperson, concerns Programme 50202, *Improved Quality of Life of Disabled Persons and their families*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether she is reviewing the types of wheelchairs that are being given to the disabled persons? Because, right now, we do not take into consideration the accommodation of the person and many disabled persons are facing great difficulties in even to get into the house, to move into the house; they have small house, the wheelchair has big wheels and so on. I do not know whether the Ministry is looking into that and I would appreciate an answer from the hon. Minister.

Mrs Bappoo: I come back to the number of fishermen. The bad weather allowance for July to December 2009 is to 2,190 fishermen, the allowance being Rs200 and for six months it brings to Rs31 m. For the close season, 150 fishermen x Rs200, it goes up to Rs2.250 m. But these are figures submitted by the Ministry of Agro Industry. As I have said, we are just the paying agent and we just have to abide by it.

As to the wheelchairs, I do agree with the hon. Member. I do also witness some problems because year in year out I have been informed that the wheelchairs that are being purchased are standard wheelchairs. I am having discussions with the Ministry because we want to review the issue of purchase of wheelchairs they need to be customised wheelchairs, because the standard one is not suitable to the

small child. In fact, *adolescente, adulte* and even the elderly people are being given the same sort of standardised chair. We are working on it and we want to see whether we can have customised chairs according to the requirements of the beneficiary the medical recommendation.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Mr Chairperson, at *page 364* I can read *Prevention of Suicide* and then at *page 370*, I see *Increase Sensitisation Programme on Suicide Prevention*. May I know from the hon. Minister the number of programmes which have been carried out up to now and where those programmes have been carried out? Can we have an idea of the sum....

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo for *page 370*, this is programme code 504 which is not for now. What is your question?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, prevention of suicide. Maybe I have to wait for the Programme to be called?

The Chairperson: We are on Programme Code 502. Hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

Ms Deerpalsing: On *page 374*, just as a matter of clarification, may I ask the hon. Minister under item 28211024 – *Other Currents Transfers Subsidies to Religious Bodies* - what this precisely pertains to? I guess this must be over and above the one that we are appropriated yesterday under the Prime Minister's Office

Mrs Bappoo: It concerns the transfer of amount of money which needs to be paid as water rates. I was really surprised when I saw it. It should be payment of water rates to Religious Bodies. This was under another Ministry and now it comes again to the Ministry of Social Security, as a paying agent, to foot the bill.

Mr Varma: On *page 364*, under *Main Constraints and Challengers – Barriers to accessibility for persons with disability - Accessibility of disabled*

persons to building, transport and employment, I would like to know from the Minister what are the steps that are going to be undertaken to address this problem.

Mrs Bappoo: We have the national Plan of Action, as far as the disabled is concerned. We have also ratified the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. We focus, of course, accessibility to buildings and services. I do chair a National Steering Committee with different stakeholders and the Ministries concerned have brought already amendments to the Buildings act so that all new constructions need to have accessibility for disabled people. As far as employment is concerned, we focus a lot on training and employment and we are working together with the MEF which has till now worked out on two or three training programmes for disabled people.

I am very satisfied also to see that there are a few private companies giving a very positive response to the employment of disabled people on their employment roll. The Ministry for Transport - where my colleague, hon. Anil Bachoo, is - has already earmarked funds to have low floor buses which will be more accessible to disabled people. There has been an American consultant who has come for the Ministry, the report is there and, hopefully, we can have these low floor buses for disabled people.

Mr Gunness: On page 374, under *item 28212012 Subsidy on S.C and H.S.C. Examination Fees*, the sum earmarked for 2008/2009 is Rs85,700,000, but for July to December 2009 it is Rs1,300,000.

Mrs Bappoo: You should know, Mr Chairperson, that we do not pay the fees.

Mr Gunness: But I have not finished. I am asking why the sum of Rs1,300,000 has been earmarked and whether there is any arrear to the MES.

Mrs Bappoo: First of all, we do not pay any fees from July to December. All fees are being paid in March and April to the MES. We cannot earmark money

for payment of fees for these six months. There are no arrears to the MES, because in one-off payment, we completed all the refunds with the MES. There is no problem with MES.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I am afraid that, in fact, the Minister is confirming what I am saying.

Mrs Bappoo: What is the hon. Member saying?

Mr Gunness: April to July we do not pay fees. But Rs1,300,000 has been earmarked and I would like to know why. This is my question.

Mrs Bappoo: There are other hardship cases which have been referred to FSN, for example. These parents have already paid the fees, but they are not eligible, because they are far above the Rs7,500, but still they make an appeal to us and we request the FSN if they can pay. We still have a refund to make, but not to the MES. We can refund to the poor students or family. We do not pay any fees as such to the MES during these months.

Dr. Husnoo: On page 374, under *item 72720 Social Assistance Benefits in Kind*, does this item concerns the hearing aids? I would like to know how many people get hearing aids. The problem is that a lot of times we get complaints that it is broken and they have difficulty in getting it repaired. I just want to know the opinion of the Minister.

Mrs Bappoo: I am waiting the answer from the staff of the Ministry.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister can always circulate that reply afterwards.

Programme Code 502: Social Aid (Rs435,808,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 503: National Pension Management was called.

Mr Jugnauth: At page 377, as regards *item 27210103 Basic Invalid Pension*, in the sum that has been earmarked for this financial year, I see there is a decrease for 2010. Can we have an explanation on that?

The Chairperson: If the Minister has the reply, I do not have any problem, but you will please appreciate this is not for the Budget being discussed and represented now.

Mr Jugnauth: Logically, I would like to know why the sum that has been earmarked for 2010 is less.

The Chairperson: The point I am making ...

Mr Jugnauth: This is the forecast, that is why we have this PBB.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jugnauth, if you could please listen to me! If the Minister has the reply, it is fine, but because what has been prepared for today is the Budget Estimates for July to December 2009, she might not have it. If she has it, it is alright.

Mr Jugnauth: If the Minister is in a position to explain probably why, because this is also forecast as far as 2010 is concerned.

Mrs Bappoo: Let me first give the answer as far as social aid and purchasing of hearing aids are concerned. We have recently been purchasing 650 hearing aids and there were quite a number of hearing aids also in stock which have gone through maybe a long period like two years and their batteries needed to be changed. So, we have also embarked on this and, actually, we do have the hearing aids. We have Rs2 m. only for hearing aids for the month of July to December. I cannot give the exact answer as to what hon. Pravind Jugnauth was questioning. I do not think it should be a decrease, because it all depends upon the number of beneficiaries requesting BIP, it is not a fixed number. It depends on the request coming for BIP.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please! Can I please have some order? Order, please! Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, on page 377 under *item 22120001 Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of practitioners who effect the domiciliary visits? Maybe she can table the list of medical practitioners. My second question will refer to the last item No. 27210106 *Other Basic Pensions*. We have a list of different basic pensions, but may we be enlightened on the *Other Basic Pensions*?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, concerning the *Other Basic Pensions*, there is first the Carer Allowance for the BRP. You have another one the ABIP which is the Carers Allowance for Invalids. There is an allowance given to guardians who are taking care of orphans. There are other allowances being given to inmates, people living in homes and other charitable institutions and there is another type of allowance being given to them. All the patients who are inmates of the Brown Sequaret Hospital are being given an allowance. These are the various types of other pensions which we do have on the list. As far as the Medical Unit is concerned, I am informed that there are some 48 nurses who carry visits to the various charitable institutions, health clubs and recreation centres. There are 15 medical practitioners doing domiciliary visits to those above 90 years and to those people bedridden as from 75 years. Visits are also made to prisons and then there is the medical assessment at the level of the Medical Board.

Mr Soodhun: At page 377, under item 22120001, *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits* Rs6.5 m. were earmarked in 2008/2009. It is projected to increase to Rs9.6 m. in 2010. Can the Minister inform the House of the number of doctors who carry out these visits and the number of visits carried out yearly? Can she also give the reasons for the increase in the Budget in 2010? Will there be an increase in the fees or in the number of doctors?

Mrs Bappoo: The fees are according to what is mentioned in the PRB Report. It is Rs500 for domiciliary visits for 50 doctors and Rs730 for those going for assessment at the Medical Board. The fee has not changed; it is the same fee which has just been worked out by the PRB.

With regard to those doing domiciliary visits for July/December, there might be another 3,000 visits because in year 2008-2009, there have been 6,000 visits and Rs3 m. paid to these doctors. For medical assessment, at the level of Medical Boards, there have been 2,400 sessions and the payment has gone up to Rs1.7 m.

We do also have the Medical Tribunal where there are specialists. We have an average of 40 specialists. The session fee is Rs1,055.

We also have five Judges to chair that Medical Tribunal. Their session fee is Rs1,400 and they are assisted by two secretaries. For July to September, of course, the appropriate figures have been earmarked in the Budget.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House how the 50 medical practitioners have been recruited?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, I think that the hon. Member should know about it, it is being advertised in the press. And from there, there are interviews at the level of the Medical Unit. Then they are recruited, they do the medical assessment and they are paid on the sessions which I have just mentioned. And the hon. Member should not shout at me when he speaks!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Can I invite everyone to just keep the decorum of the House? I will be very grateful to everyone. Thank you.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions - Programme 503: National Pension Management (Rs4,432,587,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, I

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: I beg your pardon. Can everyone please be so kind enough as to keep the decorum of the House? Now we all calm down. Thank you for keeping the decorum.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions - Programme 504: Probation and Social Rehabilitation was called.

Mrs Labelle: At page 364, *under Programme Code 504: Probation and Social Rehabilitation, Sub Programme 50401: Probation and After Care - Reduction of the level of recidivism for offenders*. Mr Chairperson, I am referring particularly to juvenile offenders. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a particular measure to ensure that juvenile offenders are seen by psychologists, so that they can be diagnosed if ever they are suffering from any particular disorders, be it conduct disorder or any type of deviant behaviours which can be caused by a psychological problem? Is there any provision made to diagnose these deviant behaviours?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, yes, the Probation Service of the Ministry does cater for psychological support with the help and assistance of psychologists to juvenile offenders. The Juvenile Offenders Act also is a very old Act. I think it dates back from 1925 or something like that. We have just finished with the community service order the other day. The Probation of Offenders Bill is on the agenda of the National Assembly on Friday and, from there, we will be moving together with my friends, the hon. Attorney-General and the Minister of Education for amendments to the Juvenile Offenders Act. These various concerns will be taken care of through a national sort of consultation and inviting also proposals and suggestions from the public at large in order to help us to modernize and give the maximum assistance we should give to juvenile offenders.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: At page 364, *Programme Code 504, Sub Programme 50401, Prevention of suicide* and at page 370, *Output O3: Increased sensitisation programmes on suicide prevention* respectively. I thank the hon. Minister for such a very good initiative.

With regard to the number of programmes which have been carried out up to now, can we have an idea where those programmes have been carried out? I have not seen any sum being earmarked for the prevention of suicide.

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, we do have, Mr Chairperson, it is at the level of the Probation Service. In fact, it is a Suicide Prevention Unit which operates, as I just said, under the responsibility of the Probation and After Care Service of the Ministry with the Commissioner at the Head. In 2008, that Suicide Prevention Unit had attended some 66 cases and had carried out follow-up actions in respect of some 51 cases. The official figure in 2008 has been 84; 68 males and 16 females which represent about 7: 100 persons. I am being informed that the suicide rate is much lower. In fact, it is below the international accepted level which is 14: 100,000. Ours is much below.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, allow me to come back to page 384, at *Sub-Programme 50402: Rehabilitation of Juvenile Offenders*. When I look at the staff of Rehabilitation of Juvenile Offenders, I am tempted to say that it is really not gender sensitised, because we do not have any Female Assistant Superintendent. Whereas we have one for male, we do not have any for female. We have two male Chief Rehabilitation Officers and no Female Rehabilitation Officer.

We have two Chief Rehabilitation Officers and one is male. We do not have female Rehabilitation Officers. I think there is a problem regarding these officers. We do have male as well as female offenders as far as our juvenile are concerned; I fear that the staff is not following the path. I see that the staffing of the rehabilitation section is not gender sensitized.

Mrs Bappoo: At the Probation and Social Rehabilitation Unit itself, we have just filled in the post of a female Assistant Superintendent of the RYC. But I am informed that because it is the unit itself, the Assistant Superintendent who is a female officer can be of a helping hand. But this is a system that I have so far inherited. Maybe, when we will have the chance to recruit more, we will give special attention to that.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 504 (Rs30,213,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 505 – Social Welfare was called.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 379, *Programme Code 505*, under item 26323085 – *Capital Grant – Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*, Rs1,750,000 was earmarked. Can I know which Social Welfare Centre will be upgraded and what work will be carried with that.

Under item 28211022 – *Other Current Transfers – Social Welfare Centres*, an amount of Rs3,850,000 was earmarked. Can we know what are the other current transfers because previously we have current grants, sugar industry amounting to Rs82 m? Can we be enlightened on these two items?

Mrs Bappoo: As far as the Community Centres are concerned, the estimate proposed disbursement also because these centres are used yearly as cyclone refugee centres. From time to time, we have to bring some repairs just to put it in order in case of cyclones.

Concerning equipment and amenities to the Community Centres, we have also earmarked money for all infrastructural works, recreational space and, at times, extension works in Community Centres.

Under capital project, we have the construction of a kitchen at Cité Immaculée Community Centre, fencing work and addition of toilets at GRNW, addition of toilets at Beau Vallon and fencing work at Triangle Community Centre.

Concerning Social Welfare Centres, we have an increase from Rs52,000 to Rs56,000. On the same item, the sum earmarked for Day Care Centres has increased from Rs11,000 to Rs16,000 and including two Day Care Centres for disabled persons and Bois Savon for administrative cost like electricity, telephone bills etc. These are the information I have so far.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 379, under item 26313085 – *Current Grant – Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*, Rs82 m. has been earmarked. Can I know from the Minister whether provision has been made in this present budget – because we have a few community centres around the country, brand new which are not in operation? There are 14 new community centres which have not yet been inaugurated and since four years they have remained idle.

Mrs Bappoo: All the new community centres are not at the level of my Ministry or the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund now. It is still under the Ministry for NDU which is responsible for the construction. So, once they complete the last bit of the structural works etc, then the decision will be taken which centres are ready and which one the SILWF is going to take. But I am informed that provisions have been made for three of these new centres which have been taken care of by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. One is at Ilot, the other one at Pont Praslin and the third one is at Camp Caval. These three are mostly completed and will be handed over to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions – Programme Code 505 (Rs153,976,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare – Programme Code 521 – Policy and Management for Women's Empowerment and Family Welfare was called.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 387, *No. 1, Major Achievements for 2008/09*, from what I read there are eight programmes that have been identified. May we have more information from the hon. Minister about these eight programmes that have been identified to ensure gender balance?

Mrs Seebun: My Ministry came up last year with the national gender policy framework and we have already initiated implementation, where the four Ministries will mainstream gender in all the four Ministries, like Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Sports and Ministry of Social Security.

Mrs Seebun: We have already initiated action for the four Ministries to mainstream gender while formulating their policies, namely Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Sports and Ministry of Social Security. We are going to do it with other Ministries as well so that they are gender sensitive while formulating the policies.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, maybe, the hon. Minister has received the answer now regarding the eight programmes.

The Chairperson: I think the Minister has already mentioned about the implementation of a National Gender Policy Framework. The other point raised concerned the eight programmes identified to ensure that gender balance and gender equality are given due consideration. This item is at page 387.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Chairperson, these are the eight programmes formulated with the four Ministries -

- (1) Human Resource Development and Capacity Building.
- (2) Social Economic Empowerment and Widening the Cycle of Opportunities.

- (3) Pre-primary and Primary Education.
- (4) Sports for all.
- (5) Employment Facilitations.
- (6) Livestock Production and Development.
- (7) Empowerment and Integration of Vulnerable persons.
- (8) Women Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming, Child Protection Welfare Development and finally Family Welfare and Protection from Domestic Violence.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the same item, *Major Achievements* for 2008/09, can the hon. Minister say whether the eight programmes have been done on a pilot basis or for the first time, and when they have actually started?

Mrs Seebun: Since July 2005 we have initiated Economic Empowerment of Women and most of the programmes are ongoing.

Mr Lauthan: At page 387, *Programme Code 521*, under item *Formulating policy proposals that can be implemented and that are financed and costed*, Mr Chairperson, when we go through the whole programme of the Ministry we see all sorts of items about victims of domestic violence, gender equality, rights of women and children and protection of women. That's the mission of the Ministry; I do not have any quarrel with it. I would just like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to an emerging problem - not really new. In fact, it has been there for quite some time, *mais c'est l'ampleur que cela prend qui est inquiétante*. This has to do with violence by children on children and even on adults. This week itself we have seen a case of gang rape where 6 out of the 9 rapists were adolescents/minors. Yesterday, we heard of students under the influence of alcohol at Lady Sushil Ramgoolam SSS, Triolet. May we know what the hon. Minister intends to do to redress the situation? We can't do enough for protection, gender

equality, etc. Maybe, there should be supplementary funds to extend other programmes/modules and, at the same time, *responsabiliser les jeunes pour éviter que de telles choses se produisent à l'avenir.*

Mrs Seebun: I concur with the concern of the hon. Member. We are doing a lot of work on the Parental Empowerment Programme and we are laying a lot of stress on behavioral problems among our adolescents. Recently, I announced that we are already working with 12 schools to sensitize students of the types of behaviours they should have vis-à-vis their parents, teachers and peer groups. We are also ensuring that adolescents have a proper behavior pattern.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 387, *Programme 521*, with regard to *Gender sensitive policies and strategies in line with the Government Reform Programme and the needs of women and children*, could the hon. Minister inform the House what are these gender sensitive policies, whether there is any guideline which has been established by the Ministry about what policy amounts to gender sensitive?

Mrs Seebun: A few minutes ago, I enlightened the House on our National Gender Policy framework. In fact, it sets very well defined guidelines to all Ministries and how they have to mainstream gender in their different policies.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, can we know what the Ministry considers as gender sensitive?

Mrs Seebun: Just now, there was an example in this very House, when hon. Mrs Labelle intervened to ask why there are only male employees when it concerns juvenile delinquency and juvenile problems. This is one solid example that we should have more women in the implementation of all programmes.

Mr Lauthan: I come back to the same issue. The hon. Minister just mentioned that her Ministry is targeting 12 schools for these programmes. Can we know where these schools are situated? And I make an appeal to the hon. Minister

to avoid always making reference to schools which are in what we would call 'high risks regions', because who would have imagined that in a school situated at Triolet we would have such problems? I know there may be a problem of capacity building, but the soonest we can have these programmes in these schools, the better it would be.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Chairperson, I was at Renaissance College a few days ago. We have selected schools so that it covers island-wide as well as mixed schools in rural and urban areas. We have made sure that all categories of students are reached and are made aware of the different realities.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 387, concerning the Implementation of a National Gender Policy Framework, I presume it is different, because mention is made of an Action Plan on Participatory Advisory Committees formulated to cover seven critical areas for development. Can we know what are the seven critical areas for development on which the Action Plan will work?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Deputy Chairperson, my Ministry is going through a paradigm shift since last year. Women Centres were normally visited and getting services only meant for women but, since last year, like I said, we are going through a paradigm shift and we are allowing children as well as men to participate in all developmental goals. The projects implemented are: the setting up of an information desk to Economic Empowerment of Women at the level of Women Centres, promotion of Legal Literacy Programme, Consolidation of Women Sports Associations attached to Women Centres as well as Home Economics programme. This programme was normally meant only for women but, of late, we have extended it to men as well. The Women Centres are opened on Saturdays. An Action Plan 2009/2010 on Participatory Advisory Committees (PAC) prioritizing the various axes of development was elaborated and launched in March 2009,

taking into consideration legal, social and environmental issues. It also caters for education and training, sports and physical activities and Economic Empowerment.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I must say I am very happy that these centres are now opened to men and children. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this will result in a change of name, in that, instead of being known as 'Women Centres', it is going to be 'Family Centres'? Is there also a change in the time that these programmes are being delivered? Because usually it was during the day for women, now that we are welcoming more men and children, will the hon. Minister see to it that the time is more appropriate for these groups of participants?

Mrs Seebun: Of late, we have made arrangement so that some of our women centers operate after 4 p.m. We have also changed the name, it is no more known as 'Women Centre', but as 'Empowerment Centre'.

Programme Code 521: Policy and Management for Women's Empowerment and Family Welfare (Rs25,315,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 522: Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming was called.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, at page 387, *Programme 522, Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming*, under item *Make women economically and socially independent*, I take it that it is one of the means to achieve women's empowerment. At page 391, *Performance Indicator, P1: Number of new enterprises set up through the National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWEC)*. Here, the target for the year 2009 is 50; Year 2010: 55. May we know why for the year 2008/2009 no new enterprises have been set up?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Chairperson, I guess there is a small mistake here, but we have already empowered 1,110 new women entrepreneurs who are ready to start a business.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, at page 395, item 31112018, *Construction of Women Centers*, may we know from the hon. Minister whether for item (b) Phoenix, it is a new centre being created or an extension of the present centre?

Mrs Seebun: It is a new empowerment centre with a new vision of empowerment at Phoenix; it is the same building.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, at page 390, *Programme Code 522*, under *Gender Units, Performance Indicator P2: Number of pilot Programmes of the Programme Based Budget engendered*, for Baseline 2008/2009, no programme has been put in place. May we know why and can she give details with regard to the eight programmes that are to be implemented in 2009?

Mrs Seebun: With regard to year 2008, the programme started late, that's why it is nil. I guess I have already spoken on the eight programmes which are in process. I won't repeat them again.

Mrs Martin: No problem; but then, why does the hon. Minister tell us that there was no pilot programme done before when I asked the first question?

Mrs Seebun: I did not say there was no programme. I said it started late in 2008.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, at page 395, item *Current Grant – National Women Entrepreneur Council*, I see that a sum of Rs6.5 m. is earmarked under this item. For year 2011, it is planned to have Rs9 m.; for 2010: Rs8 m. For Financial Year 2008/2009, may we know how much of this amount went for the personnel and how much actually went to the women entrepreneurs?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Chairperson, personnel emolument: Rs1,864,849. There are many figures; I prefer to table the list.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, I wanted to know globally the amount which went to the Personnel and what amount actually went to Women Entrepreneurs? I do not want the details.

Mrs Seebun: Could the hon. Member be more explicit on the question?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: At page 395, if the hon. Minister look at the Budget, she will see that there is a current grant which her Ministry has given to the National Women Entrepreneur Council. For Financial Year 2008/2009, there was a sum of Rs6.5 m. which was given as grant. From that sum, I want to know how much actually went for the personnel of the Council and how much actually went to the Women Entrepreneurs.

Mrs Seebun: Personnel Emolument: Rs1,864,849. I guess this is the figure which the hon. Member wanted to know. I did mention the figure earlier.

Mr Varma: At page 395, *Programme Code 522*, item 31112018, *Construction of Women Centres*, where centres like Triolet, Phoenix, Notre Dame and Plaine Verte are mentioned. As the hon. Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix mentioned about Phoenix, I will take the three others. A sum of Rs2 m. is earmarked for the centre in Triolet; for Notre Dame: Rs1 m. and Plaine Verte: Rs1 m. Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether her Ministry will go ahead with the construction, because we do not find any sum allotted for the forthcoming financial year?

Mrs Seebun: As for Notre Dame, it is nearing completion. For Plaine Verte, we have a problem with regard to the acquisition of land and this is why we have some delay. The hon. Member can rest assured that Plaine Verte will have its women centre. The one at Triolet is already operational.

Mr Ganoo: I would like to come back on the same item with regard to the construction of women centres. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there are other areas in the country where women centres are envisaged to be built?

I would like to remind the House that in Bel Ombre when the hotels were being constructed, as part of a land exchange mechanism, one of the promoters offered Government 50 perches of land on which a women centre was to be constructed. I do not see this project in the Estimates today. Can the hon. Minister enlighten us on whether Government intends to go forward with this project and to build this centre at Bel Ombre?

Mrs Seebun: We have in all 15 women centres. We do realize that in the western region, especially at Bel Ombre there is a shortage of such infrastructure. We already got the fund to the extent of Rs10 m. from the Tourism Fund. The designs are ready and we are going to initiate action so that, maybe, early next year, we can have an empowerment centre. We have another one which is envisaged in the southern region, that is, at Rivière du Poste where land has already been identified.

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Minister said that the design is ready for that Women Centre, why is it then that it does not figure here as a project that would be carried out?

Mrs Seebun: This is from the Tourism Fund.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare - Programme Code 522 – Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming (Rs52,050,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare - Programme Code 523 – Child Protection, Welfare and Development was called.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment -

“Programme 523; item No. 22900912 (Page 395)

Under column 2008/09 Estimates,

To insert “5,873,000”

And

To delete “350,000””

Amendment agreed to.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, under item 22900912 *Running Expenses of Shelter for Children*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether she has a separate centre for children who are victims of sexual abuse? Secondly, may we know whether there is a particular management for the shelter at Albion, if so, who is responsible and what are the running costs of the different shelters?

Mrs Seebun: Concerning the victims of sexual abuse and sexual assault, we do give services in collaboration with the Mauritius Family Planning Association and we have a drop in centre.

As far as the shelter is concerned, it is now La Colombe transferred to Pointe aux Sables. Is there anything else the hon. Member wants to know?

Mrs Labelle: What is the management team for the running of these shelters?

Mrs Seebun: Since last year, the shelter is run by the National Children’s Council and the running cost is Rs500,000 per month.

Mr Gunness: At page 395, under the same item 22900912 *Running Expenses of Shelter for Children*, I see that for this present financial year, it is Rs350,000, then for the next six months, it goes to Rs3 m. I presume Rs3 m. is the good figure, for 2010 it is Rs6 m. Can I know how this shelter is being managed because it seems in the next financial year...

Mrs Seebun: We just brought an amendment, there was a mistake in the figure; it is actually Rs6 m.

Mr Gunness: All right! My next question concerns item 27210011 *Foster Care*. I find that the number of children placed in foster care is 50 and the targeted figure is 65. Can I know whether the Ministry has a follow up with these children

with their foster parents and what is the frequency that the officers of the Ministry go to visit these children?

Mrs Seebun: We encourage orphans to live with their particular families and, after a year, if everything is all right; if there is no problem and if the child is comfortable and emotionally secured, then we carry out procedures for adoption. We have in all, so far, around 63 children who are with foster parents. We carry out regular visits to ensure that the children get the proper care. We also ensure if the foster parents have the financial means to sustain all the needs of the child whether academic, emotional or other material needs.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: At page 396, under item *27210011 Foster Care*, may I ask the hon. Minister how long are these children allowed to stay in the foster family before adoption?

Mrs Seebun: Actually, a year is enough for us to assess whether the child can stay with those foster parents or at the most two years.

Mr Soodhun: I have three questions, Mr Chairperson. At page 396, under item *26313053: Grant to National Children's Council*, can I know what projects have been financed by the Ministry with regard to the protection of children against commercial sexual exploitation? Will the Minister give the number of cases of child commercial sexual exploitation reported to her services?

Secondly, at page 396, under item *28211 Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*, will the hon. Minister say whether *SOS Femmes* is being provided with a grant under this item and whether there are any specific criteria for qualifying for this grant?

My last question is at page 396, item *31112428 Upgrading of Creativity Centre de Mahebourg*. Will the Minister state why the creativity centre has not been carrying out activities on the same basis as the Bal Bhawan of India as per the initial project and the agreement with the Government of India? Will she consider

obtaining the expert advice of the Indian institution to improve the operation of the centre?

Mrs Seebun: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member mentioned about *SOS Femmes*. We do not give any fund to SOS Women. We normally give funds to SOS Children, to CEDEM, to Crèche Coeur Immaculée De Marie and others, but not to *SOS Femmes*.

As concerns the Creativity Centre of Mahebourg, we do carry out activities as initiated in the initial programme. I do not think there is any change; we follow the same vision and the same objectives.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I have got two questions. The first one is at page 388 *Summary of Financial Resources, Programme Code 523: Child Protection, Welfare and Development*. From the estimates, it seems that there will be a decrease in the year 2010 by Rs1 m. from Rs54,829,000 to Rs53,800,000. Could the hon. Minister explain that decrease?

My second question, Mr Chairperson, is at page 392 *Family Welfare and Protection Unit, P1: Percentage of Victims of domestic violence provided with adequate assistance*. We do not find any figure for the year 2008-09. Could the hon. Minister enlighten the House on that?

Mrs Seebun: All cases are being attended. As the Minister of Finance said, it is 100% because all cases are attended to.

Mr Varma: But there is a decrease.

Mrs Seebun: The decrease is all the better for us.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 396 under item 28211004 *Charitable Institutions of which (a) SOS Village, (b) CEDEM, (c) Crèche Coeur Immaculée De Marie, (d) others*, can the hon. Minister give a permanent list so that, at least, we know, for example, Gayasingh Ashram is a charitable institution, whether it forms part of it

and whether it gets money apart from the Ministry of Social Security because we have women there? I would also like to know what the meaning of 'others' is.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Chairperson, there is a full list. I just mentioned all of them as the hon. Member requested it. I can circulate it. In all, we have seven inmates who were sent to Gayasingh Ashram. SOS Children and all the others mostly have children as inmates.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 392 – *Child Development Unit, Output 05: Licensing and monitoring of Child Day Care Institutions to ensure compliance with standards*, at *Performance Indicator P1*, I find that the number of Child Day Care Centres licensed is only 100. Mr Chairperson, we know that we have nearly 1,000 Day Care Centres in this country without any norms and we know what happened in the past. Therefore, can I know from the hon. Minister how many trained officers she has in her Ministry to visit and to issue clearances for licences? Because the target up to 2010 is only 175, that will be licensed when we know we have thousands of such Day Care Centres where people leave their children and which are not in good condition.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Chairperson, we have only 250 Day Care Centres. What the hon. Member is talking about is pre-primary schools which are 1,000. But we are mandated only to ensure that all criteria are respected in Day Care Centres which are 250.

Mr Gunness: Can I know the number of officers in the Ministry who look after these Day Care Centres?

Mrs Seebun: We have four officers in all. I do agree that we have got a staff shortage, it was even worst before. We are ensuring that all Day Care Centres are visited and all criteria respected.

(Interuptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order please! Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, with your permission, I would like to come back to item 27210011 *Foster Care*. I heard the hon. Minister say that there is an economical evaluation of the foster parents. May I know from the hon. Minister whether a psychological and social evaluation is being effected?

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle, if you do not mind, it seems to me that it is a matter of policy. Hon. Soodhun!

Mr Soodhun: I said I have three questions, Mr Chairperson. At page 396, under item 26313053 *Grants to National Children's Council*, I would like to know what projects have been financed by the Ministry with regard to protection of children against commercial sexual exploitation. Will the Minister give the number of cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children reported to her Ministry?

Mrs Seebun: All victims of CSEC are taken care of by my Ministry in collaboration with the Family Planning Welfare Association. We have got our drop in centre where such cases are being care of. We take care of the emotional stability of the child and we carry out psychotherapy to victims. We also ensure that adolescents are given adequate training so that they can stand on their own feet. It also concerns training and education.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, I would like to go back to page 387.

The Chairperson: Just a second hon. Mrs Martin.

Mr Soodhun: I would like to know the number of cases reported to the Ministry?

Mrs Seebun: The number of cases varies. Up to July 2008, there were 46 CSEC cases.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Martin!

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk at page 387, *Strategic Note – Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed* -

Lack of baseline sex disaggregated data to engender sectoral policies for pilot Ministries - Setting up of a comprehensive Gender Information System (GIS). I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether she has a dedicated team to do this and who is the responsible person who carries out the Gender Information System, when it has started to do that and whether it has yielded, up to now, any sectoral policy with regard to this situation of gender equality and gender balance.

Mrs Seebun: I am very happy to inform the House that we are the first country in Africa to be initiating GIS. It was not there before and we already have a consultant whose services are made available by the UNDP. It is funded by the UNDP.

Mrs Martin: When did it start?

Mrs Seebun: It is already on.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, can I know from the hon. Minister the number of officers who carry out the evaluation of foster parents and their ranks?

Mrs Seebun: We had a staff shortage last year, but now we have about 20 Child Welfare Officers.

Mrs Martin: I have another question with regard to page 387 – *Strategic Note – Main Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed - Inadequate networking with different organisations and NGOs to promote multi-agency partnerships to tackle the scourge of domestic violence and promote family welfare. Efficient Network system should be established with the participation of various Ministries, Local Authorities and NGOs.* Can I know what is being done by the Ministry to improve the situation?

Mrs Seebun: I seize this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Minister of Finance who is giving Rs30 m. and I suppose now this is more than enough for us to seek the collaboration of NGOs and to combat the issues of family and children in distress.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I would like to talk at page 391 *Performance Indicator P3: Number of Children placed under Mentoring Programme*. May we have more information as to who are the mentors and how they have been selected?

(At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair)

Mrs Seebun: Our mentoring programme is on now. The committee met last Monday and the number is very small; it is a pilot project. Luckily, we have more funds from now on and then we shall be able to recruit more mentors. But the mentors won't get a salary, this is something voluntary. We can't seek the collaboration of NGOs to do it and people who are willing, who are retired as school teachers are going to help us to work this programme out. We do not want children to be facing with difficulties. We just take them, effect an EPO and then put them in a shelter. We want them to be made comfortable and get the necessary care and guidance within the home itself, because it is not done abroad anymore. So, why should we do it in Mauritius? Children should be encouraged to stay at home and get all *l'encadrement* by mentors at home.

Programme Code 523: Child Protection, Welfare and Development (Rs27,550,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 524: Family Welfare and Protection from Domestic Violence was called.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 392, I refer to *Output 02: National Action Plan on the Family implemented*. Can I know from the Minister when this Action Plan was released and, among the recommended actions, which ones she has chosen as her priorities and why is it that for financial year 2008/2009, only 10% of the plan has been implemented? That's my first question.

My second question is on page 396 under *item 22900919 Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress*, the

hon. Minister has just said that she is being granted Rs30 m. by the Minister of Finance. This programme, I believe, will be implemented from July to December, only in six month's time. What are the projects that have been prepared already for implementation under this item?

Mrs Seebun: As you are aware, in 2008, we launched our policy paper on family. We have not yet launched our National Action Plan, but we have already initiated some actions and this is why you see the 10%. Concerning the Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women, the Ministry of Finance has made available Rs30 m. to my Ministry. We have a lot of money to be spent in six months and we shall exhaust all the funds and this is what we needed. It was long awaited and now it has come. How do I intend to use the money? In Mauritius, we have got, luckily for us, many social workers, many NGOs and the Ministry cannot offer all those services. This is the time now and this is the change we were waiting for to empower all NGOs with necessary funds so that they can help us in combating violence and child abuse.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, allow me to come back to this item of Special Collaborative Programme. We are not that much interested to know whether the money will be exhausted, but we would like to know what is the particular programme that will be carried out by the NGOs, even if it is not the Ministry, because it is supposed to start in some weeks. Will the hon. Minister inform us whether she is aware of the different programmes that will be carried out by the NGOs during the coming months?

Mrs Seebun: I will give a few examples of problems like teenage pregnancy. We were in dire need of funds and now it is the time, we can take on board NGOs to work on programmes so as to decrease teenage pregnancy or alcoholism among women and adolescents. These are examples of programme and we are going to carry out extensive sensitisation programme.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, I would have a question with regard to page 396 *item 22900919 Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress*. I would like the Ministry to clarify this point. She was saying that the money was going to be given to NGOs so that they can work and combat domestic violence. This is very good. But how is she going to determine that? How is she going to allocate that money? Who are the organisations that will benefit from this? Has she already established a list of those organisations or are they going to come forward? What is she going to do?

Mrs Seebun: Such funds have just been transferred to my Ministry; we are going to put up a mechanism. We shall require the consultancy services, but we shall ensure that funds are judiciously used.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: On page 392 under *Programme 524 - Family Welfare and Protection Unit, Output 02: National Action Plan on the Family implemented*, I understand from the hon. Minister that the National Action Plan is not ready...

Mrs Seebun: It is ready to be launched incessantly.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: If it is not yet implemented, may I ask from the hon. Minister how is it that on the assessment of performance - it is mentioned here that 10% has already been covered in the past year - the baseline is of 10% and we are moving to 15% by the end of 2009?

Mrs Seebun: We have an Action Plan which I am going to bring in the weeks to come to Cabinet. But then we do not stay put without any Action Plan. There are some family policies that have to be implemented. We did not wait for the Action Plan to be brought to the Cabinet, to be approved, and then we start working. Some actions are already in operation. I guess the hon. Member understands.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she could circulate the list of NGOs who will be responsible for the conduct of the programme under this *item 22900919*, that is, the *Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress*? May we also know whether these NGOs have the particular expertise in the fields that they will carry out?

Mrs Seebun: We have already enlisted the collaborative support of many NGOs and in a meeting to be held in a week or so, we are going to give very definite guidelines. There are different NGOs who carry out different specific activities like there are some NGOs dealing with children's issue and other NGOs dealing with poverty. We are going to come up with specific projects for specific NGOs to be carried out.

Programme Code 524: Family Welfare and Protection from Domestic Violence (Rs36,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

At 7.50 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.00 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources - Programme 421: Policy and Management for Education and Human Resources was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 407, at *Programme Code 421*, I have two questions under *Output O2: Ministry is responsive to enquiries and requests for action*. I am very happy that, at last, we see results. As MPs, we have a lot of problems when we are called upon to solve the queries of our *mandants*. We do not know where to go, who are the persons responsible for such and such zone. Can I appeal to the hon. Minister to, at least, have a sort of pamphlet prepared and circulated to Members of the House with respect to secondary and primary sectors so that we may know who are the responsible persons for the different zones to attend to the queries from parents and students?

At page 407, with regard to *Output O5: Government measures announced in budget*, we see a 75% of progress. We would like to have a circulated list of all these projects and their respective status.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Chairperson, the answer to the first question is very simple. In fact, we have zones, and there is a zone director in each office. We are going to circulate the list to the hon. Members of this House.

As for the second question, these are the targets that have been put there. I must remind hon. Members that the targets are there for us to respect. And if we meet the targets, then *nous passons nos examens vis-à-vis du ministère des finances. Nous serons à ce moment-là qualifiés pour avoir plus de fonds.*

(Interruptions)

The hon. Minister of Finance has mentioned a lot of projects. Of course, there will be others as well. The target of 75% of these projects must have been reached.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: At page 417, *Programme Code 421, item 26323203, Capital Grant - Human Resource Knowledge and Arts Development Fund*, may I ask from the hon. Minister why no funds have been allocated for the end of year 2009 and for the coming two years, in spite of the fact that there are many projects which depend on that particular fund?

Dr. Bunwaree: A sum of Rs50 m. is earmarked for the Knowledge and Arts Development Fund. A sum of R1 billion was put at the disposal of this committee which manages this fund. The Budget has made provisions on how this money is going to be used. In fact, there is R600 m. for the University and R600 m. for other things.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the same item, mention is made in the Budget Speech for scholarships to students for tertiary education. May I know how this project will be funded?

Dr. Bunwaree: The same way it has been funded, because we have the committee which looks into all these aspects. In fact, we have answered PQs on this issue.. Maybe, this is the opportunity given to me to make the hon. Members understand. There are two things, one is scholarship and the other is guarantee for loans. With regard to guarantee for loans, we have given only eight, because we have had very few applications. I think I've mentioned in this House that we are going to see to it how we can give media coverage to it so as to make it better known. Maybe, people are not well aware and they have not been able to respond positively to that.

Scholarships are given according to the criteria that has been laid out and the hon. Minister of Finance has mentioned, in the Budget Speech, that the threshold is going to be raised from Rs7,500 to Rs10,000 which will make it more open to other people.

Mr Gunness: At page 407, *Output 08: Upgrade the skills of young people under the Second Chance Programme*, may we know the number of young people trained in basic numeracy and language skills and life training skills? It was announced in last year's Budget, but I see that for 2008/2009 none has been trained. Now, the target is 220. Can I know why for 2008/2009 nobody benefited from this Second Chance Programme?

At page 417, under item 26323077 *Capital Grant - Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre*, I see that a sum of Rs8,5 m. is earmarked for 2008/2009. Under the same item at sub item (a) *for acquisition of exhibits and equipment* and under sub item (b) *for construction of Planetarium* respectively, can I know whether these projects have been completed by now, if not, when it will be completed?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Chairperson, I am given to understand that delivery courses have started on 04 May 2009 and are due to be completed by 20 December 2009. The programme consists of 50 hours of life skill management: 125 hours of

basic literacy and numeracy and 125 hours of advanced literacy and numeracy. I must also inform the House that it is planned to train 500 additional trainees in year 2010 and 500 in year 2011.

Insofar as capital grant is concerned, I am informed that it has been transferred to the Ministry of Industry, Science and Research.

Mr Varma: At page 416, I have two questions under *Programme Code 421*, under *item 21111100, Overtime*. The estimates for 2008/2009 was Rs5,630,000 and it is projected that it will go up to Rs7 m. in 2010, at a time when the Ministry of Finance has said that we should cut on overtime. Would the hon. Minister enlighten the House over that?

The second question is about cleaning services and security. Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is a contract which has been awarded to a particular company and, if so, the name of the company or companies?

Dr. Bunwaree: Insofar as overtime is concerned, Mr Chairperson, it is for the payment of regular overtime to school caretakers in connection, in fact, with extra cleaning during weekends and occasional overtime to staff of the maintenance unit, establishment, finance and stores. Additional provision is due to increase in connection with PRB 2008.

For the tendering exercise, I am informed that a fresh tender for the provision of security services was launched on 01 September 2008. The closing date was on 08 October 2008. However, on 02 December 2008, the Central Procurement Board recommended to float tender anew as all the bids do not satisfy the mandatory requirements of the tender. A second tender was launched on 19 January 2009. The closing date was 25 February 2009 and, subsequently, extended to 11 March 2009. Approval of the Central Procurement Board is being awaited. Clarifications are presently being sought by the CTB from the selected bidder.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 407, *Output 08 – Upgrade the skills of young people under the Second Chance Programme*, may I ask the hon. Minister whether we have only one type of programme? I presume that we have different levels of students with only one type of programme.

Secondly, at page 417, under item 26323203 – *Capital Grant – Human Resource Knowledge and Arts Development Fund*, I think this is a very important measure announced in the previous budget. May we know whether there is a committee which has been set up under this Fund, the composition of the Board and also the expenses incurred under this item?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Chairperson, let me start by the second question. The Fund with the provision of Rs1 billion is managed by a committee under the chairmanship of the Supervising Officer of the Ministry. The Fund is supposed to support measures which will facilitate universal access to education and training at all levels, to IT for the development of all art forms, education in arts and culture and the promotion of cultural industries. Some of the objectives of the Fund are the physical infrastructure for post-secondary education such as buildings, equipment, Students Loan Scheme, as I have mentioned a few minutes earlier, full scholarship for students at the post-secondary institutions in Mauritius with household income not exceeding Rs10,000. During the financial year 2008/2009 an amount of Rs50 m. was provided in the budget to finance physical infrastructure, acquisition of vehicles, furniture, equipment and civil works. No provision has been made for July to December and onwards. As for the coming fiscal years, capital for tertiary education institutions will be met from the fund.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I will come back with the Second Chance Programme which the Minister has said has been launched in May. Can I know from the Minister which institution has devised the programme first and where is the programme being carried out?

Dr. Bunwaree: I think I need to get some more information for the hon. Member, but I have said that 220 participants has been enrolled on that Second Chance Programme throughout 8 regional training centres in Mauritius. They are being held at the IVTB centres. I will circulate the information concerning the enrolment of 220 participants.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I go back to page 417, item 26323203 – *Capital Grant – Human Resource Knowledge and Arts Development Fund*. The hon. Minister has just mentioned that there was Rs1 billion and a certain number of projects are being funded by this sum. If we go back to the budget, Mr Chairperson, we know that Rs600 m. has been taken for the setting up of the university and Rs600 m. taken for the SJR Fund. May I know from the hon. Minister what are the projects that will be funded this year and in the coming years and with which fund?

Dr. Bunwaree: Some of the projects that have been funded this year will continue. Then, of course, Rs600 m. will go for the university campus, and then the committee will decide. I have just mentioned the various fields in which these projects can come from. The committee will either approve or not approve.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I just wanted to know from where we will get the fund because there is no allocation made for the coming years.

Dr. Bunwaree: The Rs1 billion will be used. In fact, we have used part of money through interests yielded by this Rs1 billion.

Mrs Labelle: Under the same item, according to regulation made, the Fund was to submit a report and a strategic plan every quarter. May I know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry has received the progress report and the strategic plan as per the regulations made?

Dr. Bunwaree: In fact, the progress report is submitted to me. As and when the committee meets, I get a report of what is taking place. In fact, it is easier now because the division of Arts and Culture, which was previously a Ministry on its own, is now a division of the Ministry. It is easier for us to monitor what is happening. We have a detailed report of whatever is being done by this Fund.

Concerning the strategic plan by the Fund, it has been received and approved.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, from the regulation I have in front of me, it is stated that the Committee submits a progress report on the implementation of the project to the Minister at the end of every quarter. Can I know from the hon. Minister if this is being done?

Dr. Bunwaree: With the very serious people working in that committee, under the chairmanship of the supervising officer of the Ministry, the report is being submitted to me. As I have just mentioned, each time there is a meeting, I have a detailed report of what is happening. Of course, at the end of every quarter we have a report.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 417, under item 26323041, *capital grant – Mauritius Qualifications Authority*, I see that the capital grant has increased from Rs1 m. to Rs3 m. for six months and then Rs6 m. for two subsequent years. Can I know from the Minister whether there is any specific project at the MQA?

Dr. Bunwaree: There are quite a lot of projects at the MQA. In fact, the MQA, as we know, is responsible for developing and maintaining the information system. Government and other stakeholders are given updated information on the labour force of the MQA, but as far as the project that the hon. Member is mentioning, I think I need notice of this. I will look into it and let the hon. Member know.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 421 (Rs148,894,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 422 – Pre-Primary Education was called.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, on page 418, *Programme Code 422*, under item 26323071 – *Capital Grant – Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*, can I know from the hon. Minister whether any new pre-primary centre has been set up in the primary school compound over the present financial year and whether there is any plan for the coming financial year?

Dr. Bunwaree: In fact, we have a very ambitious programme for the pre-primary sector. The hon. Member must have heard me many times saying that we have *une grande faiblesse dans le système*. About more than 17% of children of pre-primary school age were not attending school. I am giving figures for 2007. As I have mentioned in my speech in this House, it has been reduced to about 8% for those who are not attending. The progress is spectacular within the course of the past few months. We have an ambitious programme. We are trying to find a way for the other 8% to attend pre-primary school. *C'est une façon pour nous de combler le retard parce qu'on ne peut pas accepter qu'à l'âge de 5 ans 8% des enfants - il y avait 17% d'enfants l'année dernière - were not attending pre-primary school.* Donc, on fait un effort extraordinaire là-dessus. D'après mes informations, Mohanlall Mohit Pre-primary School est pour cette année et Rivière des Anguilles, Barkly et Palma seront pour l'année 2009. Mais on va essayer de voir le maximum qu'on peut faire afin de donner le maximum de possibilités pour que les enfants puissent aller à l'école pré-primaire.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, page 403, *Programme 422 - Pre-Primary Education - Reduce disparities in access to pre-primary education across Education Zones, and All pre-primary schools offer minimum quality education as*

verified by the Ministry, may I ask the hon. Minister the workforce for the inspectorate of pre-primary education sector, the number of persons who effect the visits to these pre-primary schools, the number of pre-primary schools which have been helped to upgrade the quality of education being offered, be it training of staff and infrastructure?

Dr. Bunwaree: M. le président, il y a 38 *supervisors* qui s'occupent de ce secteur. Mais je dois dire que je porte une attention extrêmement particulière à cela. On est en train de faire beaucoup de choses dans le pré-primaire. Mais, seulement, il faut quand même attendre quelques mois pour voir les résultats. Sur le plan de la formation, on est en train d'utiliser l'informatique à travers lequel les enfants apprennent beaucoup plus vite et mieux, afin qu'on ait de meilleurs résultats que dans le passé.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, may I ask the hon. Minister whether IT facility has been provided to private pre-primary schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: I do not think it has been provided to private schools. But I must say that, wherever there are private pre-primary schools where there are children with special needs, I am seeing to it. Maybe, it has not been provided yet, but I have given my word that, in these cases, I will do my best to help them to be able to get the means the hon. Member mentioned.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the hon. Minister been made aware that, within Government primary schools, there are pre-primary sections within the same complex. Now that there is a plan for upgrading and having modern equipment, can the Minister, at least, ask for a survey? They are basic items like furniture, the *jardins d'enfants* which are in a bad state. Can I ask the Minister, at least, to give instructions to his officers to conduct a survey and have the basic items replaced?

Dr. Bunwaree: The survey, if I am not mistaken, is already on. I, myself, have asked to have a survey not only for pre-primary but for primary schools as well. Of course, this is being done.

Mr Gunness: With regard to this grant that was given to children of four years old, can I know from the Minister what is the amount per child and whether there is any plan to bring it to three years? These children get in pre-primary as from three years.

Since we are calling it Early Childhood Care and Education Authority, I see that there is a sort of duplication between day care and pre-primary. Very often, there are day care centres upstairs and pre-primary schools downstairs, and this becomes a bit difficult. I would like to know whether there is any plan to bring it under one authority, instead of being in two different Ministries.

Dr. Bunwaree: This is a question of policy. I think we have to look into it from another angle. In fact, what is important is that for the day care, many children need special attention. Insofar as the grant is concerned, I think it is Rs200 per child above four years. As to whether it is going to be extended to those of three years, let's wait and see. I am personally trying to see in what way we can allow children of three years and above to be able to attend pre-primary school. It is a question of finance; we have budgetary constraints, but we are looking into it.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 422: Pre-Primary Education (Rs74,847,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 423: Primary Education was called.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, page 419, item 2822 -: *Capital Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*, and item 28221001 - *Other Capital Transfers- Contribution for Renovation of Private Primary Schools*, may I ask the hon.

Minister of the number schools that have been renovated and which schools they were?

Dr. Bunwaree: From the notes I have here, Government contributes two-thirds of the cost of renovation; upgrading of primary schools run by the Roman Catholic Education Authority and the Hindu Education Authority. Provisions are allocated to these institutions in the ratio 12:1.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, page 418, item *22120025 - Fees to Oriental Language Teachers*, could the hon. Minister inform the House the number of teachers who are benefiting from the fees?

My second question, under the same programme, is at page 420, item *31112402 - Upgrading of Schools*. I would like to know from the Minister whether the upgrading of Emmanuel Anquetil Government School has been completed. With regard to *(o) - Extension of Schools*, there was a sum which was voted for the last financial year. I would like to know from the Minister of the number of schools which have been extended, and their names.

Dr. Bunwaree: For oriental languages, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi and Mandarin, the number of schools is 783; the number of teachers is 1,912; the number of pupils is 52,474, and classes are held either during weekdays, from Monday to Friday in the evening, or Saturdays, Sundays half a day.

As for the Emmanuel Anquetil Government School, on 20 February 2009 works have been completed

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I come back to the fees to oriental language teachers. I see that a sum of Rs19 m. has been earmarked. Can I know from the Minister what the pupil-teacher ratio is? Because there is a ratio, and I understand that the ratio is applied uniformly for all oriental languages. If you take Mandarin or Marathi, it is not the same as Hindi, for example. Can I know whether that

pupil-teacher ratio is uniform for all oriental languages, and what is that ratio for one teacher?

My second question pertains to construction and extension of schools. On page 419, item *31112002 – Construction and Extension of Schools (a) Pont Lardier GS*, a sum Rs1 m. has been earmarked. I know that, when it was voted last year, the land itself was not yet identified. Now, there is no budgetary provision up to 2011. Can we know what is the progress concerning Pont Lardier Government School and what has been done with the Rs1 m.?

On page 420, item *31112402 - Upgrading of Schools (p) upgrading of toilets*, a sum of Rs45 m. was earmarked in 2008/09; now, I see only Rs3.1 m., Rs11.5 m. and Rs13.7 m. Are we to understand that all the toilets around the island in primary schools are in good condition now? Because the budget has dropped from Rs45 m. to Rs3 m.

Dr. Bunwaree: May I start with the toilet first, Mr Chairperson. I am not satisfied myself - and I have said it loud - with the state of the toilets in the schools. All the officials of my Ministry who are involved in this business know that we want this to change as quickly as possible. I have given directives that all toilets in all schools must be revisited, and that wherever they have to be rebuilt or upgraded, it should be done. In fact, I have gone further and have given directives that, as from now on, wherever toilets are built in any school, be it primary, pre-primary or secondary, availability be given for handicapped children to be able to use the toilets. So, the toilets being built now will be other types of toilet, making room for these children. Of course, I can't answer how many toilets in how many schools are not in satisfactory order, but I must say that the trend is going in the right direction. I will see to it that, in the months to come, by latest 2010, the end of next year, all schools of this country will have very good toilets, in good conditions. I know that, in some cases, there are some difficulties, like drainage

and so on. I, myself, am not satisfied. I am frustrated in fact. But, in some cases, we will have to wait because of infrastructural problems in the school themselves.

With regard to the pupil-ratio for oriental language teachers, the ratio is 1:25. But I concur with the hon. Member that, in some cases, it is not possible. We have said that it will be revisited and see whether we are going to maintain a ratio or even not having any ratio at all in some cases.

In Pont Lardier, there is a specific problem. It was initially proposed to construct a pre-primary school at Pont Lardier Government School. However, there has been a decline in the overall school enrolment at primary school level due to demographic trend. In 2005, we had a total of 118,737 children in Government and private primary schools in 2005. In 2009, from 118,737, it has gone to 113,205. These are the official figures. This has to be taken into consideration. It is a very important factor. We cannot construct a school for only 20 or 30 pupils. The Ministry has reviewed its policy regarding the construction of new schools, and it is in the context of this new policy that, for the time being, that school is not constructed yet.

Mr Varma: Page 420, item *31112402 – Upgrading of Schools - (o) Extension of Schools*, a sum of Rs17 m. was voted. Could the hon. Minister inform the House about the number of schools which have been extended and their names?

Dr. Bunwaree: We have a list of them. I think the best thing for me will be to circulate that list.

Mr Jhugroo: Page 418, item *21111002 - Travelling and Transport*. Can I know from the hon. Minister what travelling arrangements have been made for teachers working in Agalega?

My second question is with regard upgrading of schools. I would like to know where matters stand with regard to Valléet des Prêtres Government School.

Dr. Bunwaree: This is what I am circulating. I will circulate the whole list of the work that has already been completed, what is ongoing and the expected dates when they are going to be completed.

As for the transport problem in Agalega, I do not know whether I have to go there to see what is the transport problem. The hon. Member can tell me what is the problem, and then I will look into the matter.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, page 419, item 31112002 - *Construction and Extension of Schools*, and page 420, item 31112402 – *Upgrading of Schools*. I would like the Minister to explain why, as far as construction and extension of schools is concerned, the amount allocated is Rs5 m.? When we go to page 420, we have upgrading of schools to the tune of Rs142 m. How come that, at (o), again there is an amount of Rs17 m. for extension of school? Will the Minister explain which extension we are talking about? Because we have got two item numbers, and this extension of school at (o) does not seem to be congruent.

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Chairperson, page 419, item 31112002 - *Construction and Extension of Schools* - (e) *Jean Lebrun GS (PhII)*, as the Minister knows, phase I has just been completed; and the phase II and III of school is not in good condition. I see that no money has been earmarked for the coming financial year for the construction of phase II and phase III. I would appreciate if the Minister could look into it and expedite matters, because the situation is not good there.

Dr. Bunwaree: I have already replied to Parliamentary Questions on that issue, Mr Chairperson. It is under another envelope, and I am informed that for one classroom block in pre-primary, payment has already been done. I do not think it replies to the hon. Member's question exactly, but I am informed that funds are available. I promise that there will be only one phase, which will comprise the whole construction work of the school. There won't be two or three phases; there will be only one, and we made provision for works to start.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, page 404, *Programme 423 – Reduce inequality between high and low achieving primary schools through the implementation of the ZEP strategy*, would the hon. Minister be so kind as to enlighten the House about the number of schools and the amount spent? Where are the budgetary provisions for this year, that is, for the coming six months? I would also like to be informed about the pass rates. Is this list of ZEP Schools *une liste bloquée*? Why does not the Ministry consider the possibility of including new schools, which are low performing, in the programmes of the ZEP schools? For example, Le Morne Government School is one of the schools which is not included in this list.

Dr. Bunwaree: The number of schools is about 27 for the ZEP schools. I am talking from memory. What I can do is to circulate, at the next sitting, the results school after school. We have commented in this House on the overall results and the results of the individual schools. I can there also assure the hon. Member and the House that I am giving a very special attention to the question of ZEP schools. In fact, I am personally monitoring the situation. We have set up a monitoring committee, which is meeting once every month. The council, which was meeting once a year, is now meeting once every four months. In fact, much is being done.

As for the specific questions that have been raised, the hon. Member will find it from the CPE results, which I will circulate, for each of the 28 ZEP schools. I do not know whether the hon. Member has any specific question on that.

Mr Ganoo: Where are the budgetary provisions for the ZEP schools in this Budget?

Dr. Bunwaree: Budgetary provisions for financial year 2008-2009 is there, but for this year, for the *zone d'éducation prioritaire*, it amounts to Rs16,050,000.

Mr Varma: On page 419, item 3112002 - *Construction and Extension of Schools- (h) Others*, there is a sum of Rs75 m. which is being voted for these six

months. Could the hon. Minister inform the House which schools are being constructed or extended? If he does not have the information with him now, he can circulate it.

Dr. Bunwaree: I have a list of many schools, and I am going to circulate that also. There are about 20.

Mr Gunness: On page 419, Item 28221001 - *Other Capital Transfers - Contribution for Renovation of Private Primary Schools*, a sum of Rs4 m. was earmarked for 2008-2009, and then Rs2 m. have been earmarked for these six months. Can we know for which private primary schools it has been contributed?

Mr Bhagwan: Concerning the ZEP project, I have already informed the Minister of the situation at Barkly. I know a lot has been done but, according to my experience, there is no follow-up and constant monitoring at the level of the high officers of the Ministry of Education. I am not directly putting the blame on one particular person, but these ZEP schools are situated in specific hot and depressed areas, and they feel that they are rejected. Last time, we had a meeting and even the representatives of the Ministry - I do not know for whatever reason - were not present. The MPs were present, the parents and teachers as well as the priest of the region were present. There are certain specific areas which are considered as hot spots. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he can pay particular attention to this. If he himself visits these schools, it will help a lot.

Dr. Bunwaree: On this point, the hon. Member had the opportunity to talk to me. I am looking into the matter. I will go there as soon as possible. The questions that have been asked about the private primary schools, the information is Saint Esprit R.C.A. and Saint Antoine R.C.A.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 420, Item 31122802 - *Acquisition of IT Equipment*. May I ask the hon. Minister the average number of computers in primary schools and also the number of primary schools which do not

have a computer lab up to now? Because the situation is that, when we have a strong PTA, they build the computer lab. Very often, it is in the urban areas, whereas in the rural areas where we do not have rich persons in the PTA, these children are just left with three or four computers in a corner.

Mr Dayal: My Chairperson, page 422, Item 31112002 - *Construction and Extension of Schools*, can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is provision for a playground, including a football ground, at the MGSS Moka? I raised this question on several occasions.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: For the IT equipment, I must say, Mr Chairperson, that there also it is one of the sectors of education which interests me very closely. In fact, we are doing much in that direction. If I am not mistaken, all the primary schools have got a computer lab and, in each computer lab, there are 15 PCs. Now, we have added five and, therefore, all of them have got 20 PCs in the computer lab. This is a very good thing, and we are also seeing to it that the classrooms of these computer labs are equipped with air-conditioning as well.

The Chairperson: I know that very well. I put the first five in each of those primary schools. Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Page 419, Item 28212004 - *Other Current Transfers - Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project*, we are glad that funds are being provided for this school feeding project till 2011. My question is: what are the items that are being provided to these children, whether the contract for distribution of these items are being given to one person or more, and whether there is any quality control on the items being given to school children?

Dr. Bunwaree: As soon as I get the details, I will give them to the hon. Member. As for the quality control, the hon. Member can rest assured. It is the Ministry of Health which guides the Ministry of Education in that direction so as to

give the best quality to the children. In fact, tenders are launched with these specifications.

With regard to supply of loaves to pupils of primary schools, it is Rs13.5 m. The ZEP schools are considered a bit differently as there are specific items attached. I must say that we get the help of private sectors in the running of these schools as well.

As for the Food Supplementary Programme in ZEP schools, this is costing us some Rs8.5 m. I see here only supply of loaves, but I know that in ZEP schools juice also is being distributed.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Chairperson, I'll come back to the issue of IT project at primary schools. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the IT teachers have become permanent staff on the establishment list? Because, at a time, I know they were on contract?

Mr Lauthan: Mr Chairperson, at page 408, *Programme Code 423, Output 05: Extending extra and co-curricular activities*, earlier on, I raised the issue of violence in our schools. Hon. Ms. Deepalsing made a valuable suggestion in 2007, about a programme in Canada, the Roots of Empathy. I took the pains to go through the programme - I wonder how many of our colleagues did so. It is a valuable programme which could help a lot in terms of preventing violence, because it is based on empathy and compassion, amongst others. Could the hon. Minister have a look at that programme, please?

Dr. Bunwaree: We have taken note of it. In fact, we have already started in a different way, but we are taking this suggestion also on board so that, as from January next year, we can see what can be integrated in the school curriculum.

Mr Gunness: The hon. Minister said that teachers are still on contract with regard to IT. Can we, at least, know whether each school has got an IT teacher and how it works?

Dr. Bunwaree: I think all schools have got an IT teacher. I am informed that a new grade has been created by the PRB. They are still on contract, but a new grade has been created.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 423: Primary Education (Rs1,506,868,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 424: Secondary Education was called.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I have got two questions. At page 421, *Programme Code 424*, item 28211039 – PTA (*State and Private Secondary Schools*), may I ask the hon. Minister what is the amount which goes to State Secondary Schools?

At page 435, under *Salary Code 06 59 71 - Pedagogical Inspectors*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of pedagogical inspections carried out in the four categories of schools, namely State secondary schools, private confessional schools, private schools and MEDCO colleges respectively?

Dr. Bunwaree: The hon. Member knows full well that four or five of the inspectors of private secondary schools have been removed to the Ministry. This is one of the main weaknesses of the Ministry and I am not at all satisfied with this. In fact, this is why we are enrolling about a dozen or more coordinators to help for the time being, until such time that we set up the quality assurance in schools. If this is not done, of course, *nous pouvons oublier l'éducation à Maurice. L'honorable membre peut compter sur moi là-dessus.*

Concerning the sum earmarked for private secondary schools, I am informed that the basic grant is Rs5,000 per school. It is a fixed grant and it is intended for meeting the cost of minor repairs.

Insofar as matching grants are concerned, it is a sum equivalent to the amount of funds raised by the PTA during the preceding year, subject to a ceiling

of Rs20,000 for Form V schools and Rs30,000 for Form VI schools respectively. The purpose is to meet minor repairs and small projects aimed at the improvement of the schools.

With regard to *ad hoc* grant, it is up to Rs100,000 during any financial year. The purpose is to finance specific projects for which PTAs are proposed to finance half the cost.

Insofar as private secondary schools are concerned, the matching grant is a sum equivalent to the amount raised by the PTA during the preceding financial year, subject to a ceiling of Rs20,000 for Form V schools and Rs30,000 for Form VI schools respectively. This grant is meant for the purchase of computers, audio visual equipments, photocopying machines and books, and for such other projects as may be approved.

Mr Gunness: At page 421, *Programme Code 424*, item 26313073, *Current Grant - Private Secondary Schools Authority*, can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any change in the schools' calendar for private secondary schools this year? If yes, what will be the schools' calendar? Because we are voting a Budget, we must know if there is a change in the school calendar or not. We would like to know also whether the funds would be sufficient or not.

At page 421, concerning *Capital Grant*, I see this appears under different programmes. Under item 26323034 *Capital Grant – Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES)*, I see that a sum of Rs600,000 is earmarked. May we know what this sum represents under secondary education?

My third question relates to page 422, item 31112002 – *Construction and Extension of Schools*, with regard to (e) *Floreal SSS (Classroom and Toilet Blocks)*. I am sure the Minister himself must have got a lot of representations from people in the region, because he resides not far from there. He must also be aware of the conditions in which the contractors are working. I will ask the Minister to, at

least, convey the message to the contractors, because the residents nearby are facing serious problems with the contractors, with the lorries going here and there and the state of the road with *la boue partout*.

Dr. Bunwaree: I am aware of the problems facing Floreal and we are looking into the matter.

Insofar as, item 26323034, *Capital Grant – MES* is concerned, the sum earmarked is meant for the purchase of photocopying machines, office furniture, tables and chairs. etc.

Coming to item 31112002 – *Construction and Extension of Schools*, with regard to (e) Floreal SSS (*Classroom and Toilet Blocks*), the start date is supposed to be 25 March. The works are ongoing. As for the completion date, it is 28 June 2010. The contract sum is Rs120 m. The name of the contractor is Chan Sang. Concerning the school calendar, the hon. Member is well aware that teachers, especially in secondary schools, have signed an Option Form after the PRB Report, and they have to work according to the conditions spelt out therein. But, there is an issue to be looked into.

To be able to help teachers so that other sectors of the Civil Service do not find any grievances insofar as the teachers' working conditions are concerned, we have decided that, when the school time was brought back from 3.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m., those 30 minutes that were lost everyday had to be recuperated. And we had agreed, with most of the unions, that the recovery will take place over a number of days during the year and that the second and third terms have been extended by one week.

One union has decided to contest that in Court, we will see what it gives.

Mr Varma: Mr Chair, I have four questions. At page 421 under *item 22090 - Security*, we see that a sum of around Rs6 m. is earmarked and there is a

projected increase of Rs20 m. for 2010. May we have some details about that item?

At page 422, *item 31112402 - Upgrading of Schools, (g) E. Anquetil SSS*, could the hon. Minister inform the House when the upgrading of the schools will be completed? Because I see that sums have been earmarked to be spent in the forthcoming years as well?

At page 422, *item 31112402 - Upgrading of Schools*, with regard to *(h) Others*, where Rs21 m. were voted last year and Rs14,800,000 for the forthcoming six months, I would like to have details about the schools which have been upgraded already. My fourth question, Mr Chairperson, is about the acquisition of IT equipment.

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Varma: At page 422, under *item 311122802 Acquisition of IT Equipment*, the Estimates for 2008/2009 was Rs29 m. and it has been brought down to Rs5 m. for the coming six months, and then Rs8 m. in 2010. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the schools are sufficiently well equipped for this decrease in the Budget?

Dr. Bunwaree: Insofar as security is concerned, I am informed that the contract cost has gone up over the three years. Concerning the Emmanuel Anquetil School, there will be six additional classrooms. We are waiting for the appointment of a consultant. The procedure has started but we have to wait, because it had been retendered due to the low response in the first instance.

The third question is on IT equipment. I can assure the hon. Member and the House in general that this is something which is very close to me. We are seeing to it that, in all schools, the equipment are in good order, that computer labs are in good running conditions and work to the satisfaction of one and all. In fact, we are going further. We will see to it that laptops are distributed to schools. I

won't say one laptop per child at this stage, but we are moving into that direction, Mr Chairperson. Concerning the sum of Rs14 m. that has been earmarked for the coming six months and to what use it will be, I will inform the House later.

Mrs Labelle: At page 422, under *item 311122802 Acquisition of IT Equipment*, Mr Chair, I see that there is only Rs5 m. voted for July to December 2009. I cannot prevent myself from making a comparison between what is being allocated for secondary and primary sectors. If in both sectors we have computers in all schools, can we have additional information for such a disparity? For primary we have Rs22 m. I have just been told that every school has a sufficient number of computers, but when I look at the secondary sector there is only a provision of Rs5 m. in 2009 and Rs8 m. in 2010.

I have a second question, if you will allow me, Mr Chair. At page 422, under *item 31112002 - Construction and Extension of Schools*, with regard to (l) *Hollyrood SSS (Ph IV)*, I raised the question of Hollyrood SSS some time back in the House and I know that the situation is very difficult at this school. May I know when this work will start, the time scheduled and whether particular attention is being given to the schoolyard and so on? Because, Mr Chairperson, these children have been facing much difficulty during the past months.

Dr. Bunwaree: Concerning Hollyrood SSS, bid documents are awaited from the MPI; this is the status. The cost estimated for Hollyrood SSS is Rs82 m. This sum is to cater for a workshop, administrative block, toilet block, computer/library block and site works. I think the hon. Member can rest assured that we are on the right direction.

Questions have been asked on IT equipment by one or two hon. Members. I must say that for year 2008/2009, available fund was utilised for purchase of ICT equipment for science labs: 189 laptops, 289 projectors and 67 data-loggers. For the year 2009, a sum of Rs5 m. is earmarked to provide the following: servers:

Rs1.4 m., purchase of PCs: Rs3.6 m. In addition to 38 SSSs, seven more State Secondary Schools will be having a second computer lab and each will be supplied with 20 PCs. There is one lab in each school and we are moving to a second lab. We already have a number of schools that already have a second lab, but we will see to it that all the others do get a second lab as quickly as possible with printers, scanners and servers for with the Rs5 m earmarked in this Budget.

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, I have simply one question. It is at page 422, under *item 31112002 - Construction and Extension of Schools*, with regard to (a) *MGSS Moka*. I raised this question on many occasions. I should like to know from the hon. Minister whether the construction of a playfield/playground, including football ground, is included in the fund allocated for the MGSS Moka. Because students from MGSS Moka take 15 minutes to go to MGI National and 15 minutes to come back; another 10 minutes for changing, amounting to 40 minutes out of a 80-minute period. So, no proper PE classes can be conducted. I should like to know from the Minister of Education, hon. Dr. Bunwaree, if this provision is made in the Budget?

Dr. Bunwaree: The answer is yes.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 421, under *item 22060 Maintenance of Building*, I would like to know whether any provision has been made for the upgrading of the swimming pool of the QEC at Rose Hill. My second question is: where do matters stand with regard to the construction of a secondary school in Agaléga?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Dr. Bunwaree: In answer to the first question, I do not know whether the hon. Member follows me everywhere I go, because I have given directions to the responsible persons in charge in my Ministry to see to it that *on ouvre à nouveau la piscine du QEC*.

En fait, j'ai annoncé que dans les semaines à venir, on aura un grand programme de sport à l'école. Aujourd'hui même, mes collègues et moi, les ministres de la santé et de la jeunesse et des sports, nous nous sommes rendus à France Boyer de la Giroday SSS - qui se trouve dans ma circonscription - pour une fonction concernant le sport féminin. Je dois dire aussi qu'on est en train de faire un travail formidable en ce qui concerne le *physical education in schools in general*. Je suis médecin et, de surcroît, spécialiste du cœur, je connais un peu l'avantage de la natation pour les élèves et je suis en train de faire tout ce qui est en mon pouvoir pour veiller à ce que les élèves des écoles puissent utiliser les piscines qui se trouvent dans l'enceinte du pays. Comme il y a une piscine, par exemple, à Mare d'Albert, qui est sous utilisée, on a donné les directives et maintenant les élèves de toutes les écoles du sud vont fréquenter Mare d'Albert mais je vais faire la même chose, pas parce que c'est dans ma circonscription, mais pour le reste du pays. Pour répondre à mon collègue, l'honorable membre, je lui dis oui, on va essayer de refaire fonctionner la piscine qui se trouve au Queen Elizabeth College qui fut d'antan une grande chose pour le pays.

Deuxièmement, M. le président, en ce qui concerne les *extensions works*, mon collègue, le ministre de l'infrastructure l'avait mentionné. Il y avait tellement à dire qu'il s'est arrêté en cours de route. Je vais faire circuler la liste de toutes les constructions qui sont en train d'être faites dans toutes les écoles et collèges du pays.

Mr Lauthan: Under all the items output, at page 409, I want to ask the hon. Minister, in the wake of the impact of the world recession and the world of work, we know that there are jobs which are evanescent, others saturated. There may be other avenues opened up. What is being done or will be done to advise the students quite early enough before they join the university?

Dr. Bunwaree: Je dois dire à l'honorable membre que je suis en train de restructurer le *Career Guidance Department* de mon ministère et le travail sera fait à ce niveau.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, at page 422, under item 31112002 *Construction and Extension of Schools*, I'll just ask the hon. Minister, for MGSS Solferino (Ph III) and for Vacoas SSS (Ph III), which works are going to be carried out and whether this would include labs or playgrounds.

Dr. Bunwaree: I have said that I am going to circulate a list. In fact, part of the list of all constructions and extensions has already been circulated. There is no need to put questions because I am going to circulate all which is being done at the level of my Ministry.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources - Programme Code 424: Secondary Education (Rs2,688,356,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources - Programme 425: Technical and Vocational Education was called.

Mrs Labelle: At page 423, *Programme 425: Technical and Vocational Education*, under item 26313027 *Current Grant -Industrial and Vocational Training Board*, I see that we have Rs140,000,000 for July to December 2009, but there is a provision of Rs270,200,000 for the following year and, at the same time, when I look at page 404, I read '*Extend vocational training to tertiary level*'. I have some difficulty to understand why are we expecting more from the IVTB and I see that there is a decrease in the Budget. So, is there a change in the programme? What is happening here? Because there are many courses that we want IVTB to run, but, at the same time, I see that we are forecasting for a lesser budget for the coming years.

Dr. Bunwaree: I'll ask the hon. Member to be patient because on Friday most probably, I will give all the explanations when the Bill is coming. The IVTB and the Technical School Trust Fund will be merged and I'll give all the details.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 423, under item *31112402 Upgrading of Schools - Conversion of ex-BAT building into a high level training centre*, there was a sum of Rs30 m. which was voted for the last financial year and we are going to vote a sum of Rs10 m. for six months and then for 2010 and 2011, there are projected sums which will be spent. Could the hon. Minister inform the House when will this building be converted into a high level training centre?

Dr. Bunwaree: It has already been done. Of course, works are continuing at the same time. It is open already. I think I have given the information in one of the Parliamentary Questions put to me about the number of courses that are already run there. In reply to a Parliamentary Question from hon. Lauthan, I said it is not meant for Port-Louis only. Most of the requests have been taken on board. It is, however, a centre for the whole of the island. The works are continuing. Capital budget is Rs30 m.; refurbishment – Rs20 m.; electrical works – Rs1,8 m.; training equipment – Rs5,8 m.; IT Equipment – Rs1,6 m. and the 4 x 4 vehicle at Rs8 m. We come to the figure of Rs30 m. And now, for the R10 m. that has been asked: capital budget – Rs10 m.; refurbishment – Rs8,5 m.; IT Equipment – Rs0,8 m; furniture – Rs0,7.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chair, on the same item, *31112402 Upgrading of Schools - Conversion of ex-BAT building into a high level training centre*, are we talking of the same building where the Government Valuer evaluated for Rs150 m. and we paid Rs160 m.? Is it the same building?

Dr. Bunwaree: The answer is yes.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources - Programme 425: Technical and Vocational Education – (Rs232,037,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources - Programme 426: Tertiary Education Sector was called.

Mr Varma: At page 424, under item 28 Other Expense - 28212008 *Other Current Transfers - Scholarships to Foreign Students* and under item 28212010 *Other Current Transfers - State of Mauritius Post-graduate Scholarships*, the hon. Minister should be aware that there are many of the recipients of scholarships who do not come back to the country. Is any measure being taken to that end to see to it that they do come back to the country?

Dr. Bunwaree: In fact, we are in the whole process of reviewing. In fact, the strategic plan that has been released to the public whereby we have already collected much information, many proposals and counter proposals are being looked into and we are going to come forward with a new vision for scholarships in general.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: At page 410, Chair, under *Output O3: Contribute to the transformation of Mauritius into a Regional Knowledge Hub and Exporter of Educational Services*, I find for 2009, the target is 90%. May I ask the hon. Minister what are the funds available for this particular project?

Mr Gunness: Since we are on tertiary education, *Programme Code 426, for the construction of the new Campus*, it is Rs600 m., can I ask the hon. Minister under which item it is found?

Dr. Bunwaree: This is from the Knowledge Fund. We have already mentioned it. I talked lengthily on that just now, Mr Chairperson. Rs600 m. will be taken for the Campus. Concerning the measures taken to promote *Mauritius into a Regional Knowledge Hub and Exporter of Educational Services*, the regulatory

framework for establishment of private and secondary education institutions being streamlined, exemption from land conversion tax; exemption from value added tax. Is it what the hon. Member wanted to know? There is also assistance from BOI in project write-up and strengthening the quality assurance procedures.

Is this what the hon. Member wants to know? We have assistance from BOI in project write-up, strengthening the quality assurance procedures, residence for foreign students, GTR ratio has increased from 15% in 2000...

(Interruptions)

I have mentioned that in my speech. But I do not know what exactly the hon. Member wants to know.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the amount allocated to the University of Mauritius, the University of Technology and the new campus being set. I would like to know from the Minister, the estimates of these various projects.

Dr. Bunwaree: The hon. Member went to the non-financial part to put the question. This is why I wanted to know. In fact, it is very clear that we want to reach these targets. Concerning the sum that is being allocated to the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology Mauritius, they must have appeared under other items. For the sum of Rs600 m., I have already given the explanation many times. The grant for the Tertiary Education Commission and the University of Mauritius is Rs115 m. and for the University of Technology Mauritius it is Rs2.6 m. They are paying the fees, so, they have got an income of Rs96 m. and the budget is Rs98.6 m.

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 423, concerning the Tertiary Education sector, I understand we do not have a Director now. Can I know from the hon. Minister if an interview has been carried out, what is his policy and when are we going to get the Director for TEC?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Chairperson, I think the interview for the Director of the TEC has already been carried out. The Board is looking into this aspect and then when they will finalise. They will let us know.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 424, *Sub-Programme 42704*, under item 26313088 – *Current Grant – Tertiary Education Commission (MCA)*, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to ask the hon. Minister whether he can enlighten us upon the status of the distance learning centre or the Open University that the MCA was to take up. I think it was supposed to be a sort of conversion from MCA to a type of university. Can we know what the status about this project is?

Dr. Bunwaree: What is going to happen is that we are going to move in the direction of the Open University. We will come to this House with the Bill which is almost ready. It is being vetted at the State Law Office and once this Open University is going to be set up, then the function of the MCA will have to be reviewed. Part of its function is going to be taken up by the Open University, and it will continue, of course, for the other part of the functions that it assumes.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Chairperson, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he has got a time frame for this project?

Dr. Bunwaree: For the Open University, I think, before the end of the year, it will become a reality.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 412, *Sub-Programme Code 42703, Performance Indicator P1: Number of organisations paying to obtain Productivity Improvement Tools*, there are eight for 2008/09. Can the hon. Minister give us the names of the organisations which are paying to obtain productivity improvement tools? He can circulate it, of course.

Dr. Bunwaree: I think I will better place the names in the Library of the National Assembly.

(Interruptions)

It is in the programme itself.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Tertiary Education Sector - Programme Code 426 (Rs485,574,100) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Programme Code 427 – Special Education Programmes was called.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendments in Sub-Programme Code 42704, 01, in P1 –

“Under column Performance 2009 Targets,

To insert “1,500”

And

To delete “3,000”

Sub-Programme 42704, in 01, in P2 –

“Under column Performance 2009 Targets,

To insert “250”

And

To delete “500”

Sub-Programme 42703, in 02, in P1 -

“Under column Performance Indicators (Service Standards),

To insert “P1: Number of employees trained under the training levy scheme”

And

To delete “P1: Percentage of workers trained under the Mix of Work and Training Scheme either having preserved their job or found another job after being laid off”

Sub-Programme 42703, in 02, in P1 –

“Under columns Performance 2008-09 Baseline, 2009 Targets and 2010

Targets To insert “55,000”, “30,000” and “65,000”

And

To delete “-”, “60%” and “75%”, respectively

Amendments agreed to.

Sub-Programme Codes 42703 and 42704, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 425, Programme Code 427 – *Special Education Programmes*, may I ask the hon. Minister – maybe it is a general question regarding this programme – whether he has a policy for integration or inclusion programme regarding special education needs, and if there is any provision, in how many schools? Moreover, concerning the special needs regarding physical, mental or psychological impairment, do we have a difference between these two impairments and the measures which are being taken to accommodate the different types of impairments in our schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: This is a very touchy issue. I think I have mentioned in this House that we need foreign expertise to help us to be able to do some good works. I think that all Members in this House agree that these children need very special attention. In fact, we are trying to integrate as much as possible, but, in some specific cases, very special needs will be needed. I have mentioned a few projects in this line when I was talking on the Budget Speech. To be frank, I must tell the hon. Member that I am personally waiting for some inputs and expertise from abroad to be able to frame something very important and I may inform the House as and when.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Special Education Programmes - Programme Code 427 (Rs40,042,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources –Policy Management for Culture Division Programme Code 621 (Rs3,627,000) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources – Promotion of Arts and Culture - Programme Code 622 was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I have two questions. The first one is at page 427, under item 22900018 – *Hiring of Services for Events*. Can the hon. Minister give the details for the services which have been hired?

Secondly, at page 428, under item 31113005 – *Erection of Monuments*, the sum of Rs3 m. was voted for the year 2008/09. Can the hon. Minister give details of the monuments which have been erected for the financial year?

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, my question relates to page 401, *Culture – “The study on Cultural Industry, which will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Mauritian cultural sector and design appropriate policies to professionalise and make it viable, is being finalized.* I have heard, during the Budget Speech, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister announce several measures in order to help artists, and I suppose it falls under the cultural industry.

Dr. Bunwaree: Knowledge Fund.

Mrs Martin: Can I know how much has been awarded in order to help those artists?

Dr. Bunwaree: We are going to fund it under the Knowledge Fund. In fact, this is one of the various sectors where the Fund is going to intervene. It all depends on the number of artists that will apply because, as I said, there is a Committee working. This is very close to the heart of the Vice-Prime Minister and to mine as well. We are going to do the best we can insofar as this is concerned.

Concerning the monument issue, it is not Le Morne where we have constructed another one; that must have been from another fund. This one is for the erection of Sir Satcam Boolell statue at *Place D'Armes*.

With regard to Cultural Industry, if I can inform the hon. Member, UNESCO is funding a project on a study on the Cultural Industry in Mauritius. This project which is being implemented by the University of Mauritius will highlight the status of our cultural industry and make recommendations for its improvement.

Concerning the new measures announced in the Budget for assisting artists, the criteria are being worked out but, of course, the Committee will look into them.

Mr Bhagwan: I have two questions, Mr Chairperson. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he can, at least, make a follow-up on this question of *piratages*.

The Chairperson: This sounds like policy to me, hon. Bhagwan.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I am not talking about the policy of *piratage*. I want to know whether the hon. Minister is giving personal attention to many things and we trust him. At least on this issue, the artists can trust him. This is a real problem, because we are talking about financial assets and artists are losing much money.

Secondly, there is this question of *l'Espace des Artistes*. We have heard about the decision of the Ministry of Youth and Sports not to put at the disposal of artists the different stadia. I heard that there is a Committee under the Chairmanship of the Minister which is looking into that particular issue. They artists are not given the stadia for the organisations of their cultural activities. I would like to know from the Minister where this Ministerial Committee has reached and whether there is any forecast for the coming months.

Dr. Bunwaree : En ce qui concerne *l'Espace des Artistes*, M. le président, je pense que l'honorable membre sera d'accord avec nous, le point a été pris au niveau de cette Assemblée. Étant donné que le *World Cup* aura lieu l'année

prochaine - et cela va donner une dimension extraordinaire au pays en ce qui concerne le sport - deux stades ont été mis à la disposition des footballeurs pour leur permettre de s'entraîner. Ceci étant dit, et puisque c'est comme ça, on ne peut pas permettre à ces deux stades d'être utilisés pour les grandes fonctions. On est tout à fait conscient qu'il faut qu'il y ait un endroit au moins, ressemblant à un stade, avec des facilités, toilettes et autres, pour que les artistes puissent continuer à exercer. Il y a un comité qui a été mis sur pied et il y a déjà eu deux réunions dans le courant de la semaine. On est pris par le programme budgétaire à l'Assemblée Nationale, mais aussitôt que le cela sera terminé je vais personnellement prendre la chose en main. Je pense qu'il nous faut trouver un endroit suffisamment grand dans le pays, avec les infrastructures nécessaires, qu'on pourra mettre à la disposition des artistes mais aussi les hautes personnalités, comme Swami Ramdev. En fait, il voulait venir à Maurice, mais il n'y a pas un endroit suffisamment grand. Vous allez être surpris par le mouvement de masse que ça va amener. Donc, il est important pour nous d'avoir un endroit où on peut accepter ce mouvement de masse. Les artistes sont là pour pourvoir permettre cela. Donc, vous pouvez compter sur nous, M. le président. On est en train de faire le nécessaire. On va trouver une solution le plus rapidement possible. Je demande aux artistes de patienter encore quelques jours.

Mrs Martin: With regard to page 401, concerning *The study on Cultural Industry*, I can see that the study is being finalised. Can we have an idea with regard to the date of completion, at least, so that we can know when the measures are going to be implemented?

Dr. Bunwaree: I can't give a date off hand, but I can say that we are going as quickly as possible, because I want this to become a reality.

Hon. Bhagwan asked another question on *piratage*. I'll be fair to him. I can tell him that we are working. In fact, we are almost ready, but we are waiting for

the amendments to the Copyright Act to make it more in line with the latest developments in the ICT sector. This is what has made us lose some time. *Il faut prendre en considération l'aspect de l'internet aussi. Ceci est en voie de finalisation et aussi il y des appareils qu'il faut faire venir pour pouvoir faire le travail. Je pense que dans les semaines à venir cela va se réaliser.*

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 427, item 22120002: *Fees to Chairman and Members of Boards and Committees*, could the hon. Minister inform the House which are the Boards concerned and the number?

My second question concerns the current grant given to the Speaking Unions. I would like to know whether it is envisaged that this will be increased in the future.

Mr Chairperson, I think there has been an oversight. I put a question at page 427, *Programme Code 622*, item 22900018 - *Hiring of Services for Events*. Could the Minister again inform the House about the services which have been hired for events?

Dr. Bunwaree: First of all, with regard to fees earmarked for Chairmen and Members of Boards and Committees, it is for the Board of Film Censor, the Drama Committees for ten languages of the National Drama Festival, instructors giving training *aux Centres de Formation Artistique* at Payotte, Plaine des Papayes and Pointe Canon, project coordinators, part time project manager from MPI; providing technical support to cultural division for monitoring and supervising the implementation of buildings and projects - this is from the *item 22120 – Fees*.

This is also for the hiring of services for events. It's a *cachet* to local artists for performing in the different programmes of the Ministry locally.

Concerning items which are covered by hiring of services and events, it is for the subsistence allowance to Mauritian artists when performing abroad and *per diem* to foreign artists for performing in Mauritius.

A question was asked about whether we are envisaging to increase the grants. With the budgetary constraints, we are not envisaging to increase the grants for the time being. In any case, Cabinet has already taken a decision that we are going to open the Speaking Unions to other languages, including Creole and Bhojpuri.

Mrs Labelle: At page 405, *Programme Code 622, Promote a reading culture amongst the Mauritian population at large*, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any particular action which is being taken for the promotion of the Creole language as a tool or support for reading? I am sure the hon. Minister is aware of the first Creole dictionary that has been published recently. *Je crois comprendre que c'est le premier dictionnaire langue Creole au monde*. Is there any particular action to support such initiative and thus promote the reading culture through the Mauritian Creole language?

Mr Ganoo: At page 430, *item 28217003: Refund of Revenue arising from the Inscription of Le Morne Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List*, I see that a sum of Rs29 m. has been budgeted for that item. Can the hon. Minister explain to us what the amount stands for?

Dr. Bunwaree: First of all, there was a question on the Creole language. I just mentioned that the legislation is almost ready and that we are going to come very quickly with the Creole Speaking Union. Once we set up this Creole Speaking Union, many things will follow and, of course, the dictionary also.

There are some other dictionaries as well, but I know the dictionary the hon. lady is speaking of and we believe that this work should be encouraged and we are going to give all the encouragement needed for this and for the creol language in general.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources - Programme Code

622: Promotion of Arts and Culture (Rs73,828,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources - Programme Code

623: Preservation and Promotion of National Heritage was called.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, I have made my point. I am sure the hon. Minister has got my point.

Dr. Bunwaree: The refund of Rs29 m. is meant to reimburse MTP for tax paid in respect of land being considered in land exchange deal.

Mr Ganoo: Is this sum a result of an agreement reached with the MTP or is it the sum which has been imposed by Government and the Authority?

Dr. Bunwaree: There was a Committee that looked into all this and I believe that it is after the deliberations of the Committee that this has been agreed. It should be an agreement.

Mrs Martin: My question relates to page 402, *Programme 623 – Custody of records and documents acquired and access to archived documents by the Public rendered easy*. My question to the Minister would be: what is actually being done to render this access easy especially when we know that the basic problem is lack of space? The documents archived are very difficult to be accessed and it was a question of constructing an adequate space in order to store all those documents so that they would be accessible to the public. Where are we with regard to that and whether any fund has been allocated for this project this year because I cannot see it?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: At page 430 under item 28221003 *Matching Grant Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Historical and Cultural Heritage Sites and Structures*, may I ask from the hon. Minister whether any site in particular has been earmarked and which rehabilitation will be carried out?

Dr.Bunwaree: Insofar as the archives is concerned, in fact, a decision has been taken to set up a new building and the decision which has been taken is that we are going to have the National Archives and the National Library in the same site. Land has already been earmarked for the construction of these two. Now, the procedures are on. I cannot tell you when exactly, but I know the state in which the archives is, I know the difficulty that exists there and we are going to see to it as quickly as possible if we can move these archives because I believe really in doing something for this rehabilitation of historical and cultural sites. The question was raised by Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun. I must tell her that the Matching Grant Scheme for the rehabilitation of historical and cultural heritage sites came into operation in July 2007. Three projects have already been financed under the Scheme: the renovation of Cathédrale St-Louis for a total sum of Rs14 m., renovation of Plaza for the sum of Rs18 m., renovation of theatre de Port Louis for Rs50 m. and forthcoming projects. Four projects have been prioritised for consideration under this Scheme during the coming financial year, namely the restoration of the Old Central Prison building to be converted into an Arts Gallery, the Martello Tower at Point-Aux-Sables, Old Windmill at Petit-Raffray and the fortifications at Ile de La Passe. These projects will be funded under the Human Resources Knowledge and Arts Development Fund.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources - Programme Code 623: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage (Rs68,533,300) was, on question put, agreed to.

Attorney General's Office - Programme Code 561: Policy Management for Justice was called.

Mr Varma: At page 441, under item *Major achievements for 2008/09 - Eight papers and reports were produced by the Law Reform Commission. These include: Report on Legislative Proposals for a New Legal and Regulatory*

Framework for NGO's; report on Disclosure in Criminal Proceedings, report about Law on Divorce, and discussion Paper on Forensic use of DNA. I will be grateful if the hon. Attorney-General could table a copy of these reports as they have not been circulated to Members of Parliament.

Mr Valayden: Of course, I will table all the papers; they are also available on line.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: My first question relates to page 441 *Eight papers and reports were produced by the Law Reform Commission.* Only five have been listed. Can we have some information as regards the non-mentioned reports and/or papers?

Mr Valayden: One of the papers that have not been mentioned here is the paper concerning the opening of a provision which has already been laid and discussed here in the House. The second concerns delimitation of action against the Government and the third one, if I am not mistaken, concerns divorce which was prepared and also the other one which concerns bail.

Mr Varma: Again at the same page 441, under item *Main constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*, it is mentioned that additional professional staffs will be recruited. Could the hon. Attorney-General inform the House whether they will be Barristers, Attorneys and when they would be recruited?

Mr Valayden: We all know that the DDP is now autonomous and now my office man will be a skimping office man. We are bound to take new staffs: solititors, Barristers, people who will help us and do research and, therefore, have to operate with the Judicial and Legal Service Commission.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Attorney-General tell us when will the DNA Law be ready?

Mr Valayden: In fact, the DNA Law is quasi ready. It is a question of going to the Cabinet and then coming to the House. The Prime Minister said it in his speech; it is a question of weeks not to say days.

Attorney-General's Office - Programme Code 561 – Policy and Management for Justice (Rs14,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Attorney-General's Office - Programme Code 562 – Legal Advisory and Representation was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chair, at page 446 under item *22120011 Fees icw Privy Council Cases*, I find that for 2008/09 the sum is Rs18,500,000. Could the hon. Attorney-General give the details?

Mr Valayden: Mr Chairperson, I can, of course, circulate all the details, but what are these details? First of all, it is a question of fees to lawyers, that is, Barristers, and also Solicitors, question of transport and question of hotel. The amount of cases ranges from the case of Ashock Jugnauth to many other cases. There are lawyers that we have retained the services and the amount of money each of them has cost the State.

Attorney-General's Office - Programme Code 562: Legal Advisory and Representation (Rs45,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Attorney-General's Office – Programme Code 562: Legal Advisory and Representation (Rs 45,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Attorney-General's Office - Programme Code 563: Law Reform and Development was called.

Mr Varma: At page 444, under *Programme Code 563, Output O1: Laws reviewed and reform proposals formulated, P1: Minimum number of papers and reports* where we see that for 2008-09 it is 4. Could the hon. Attorney-General give us the details about the papers and reports?

Mr Valayden: There is a series of papers which go from the Criminal Code itself to Revised Criminal Code to the Civil Code, and also to revisit the contravention. For example, in the Criminal Code which has not been visited at all, since the beginning of the 19th century and an all array of laws, which I prefer to give the direction to get the answers back. These are only the minimum, but I expect, at least, 10 papers from a revamped Law Reform Commission. We will circulate all of them.

Attorney-General's Office - Programme Code 563 – Law Reforms and Development (Rs4,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security – Programme Code 481 – Policy and Strategy for Agro Industry and Fisheries was called.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment -

“Sub-Programme 48702; O9; P2 (Page 467)

Under column 2009 Targets,

To insert “8”

And

To delete “15”

Amendment agreed to.

Dr. Sithanen: I move for the following amendment -

Sub-Programme 48702; O15 (Page 467)

Under column 2009 Targets,

To insert “27”

And

To delete “54”

Programme Code 481 ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mr Varma: On page 456, under *Programme Code 481, Output: O7, Legislations enacted.* There are three legislations, namely: *P1: Seeds Bills, P2:*

Plant breeders' rights Bill and P3: Animal Health and Protection Bill. Could the hon. Minister inform the House whether these will be circulated in advance for proper discussion?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, there are, in fact, three Bills which are being prepared and they are all at drafting stage. I have to go to the Cabinet first and then seek advice whether these Bills will be circulated in the first place.

Mr Jugnauth: At page 469, under *Programme Code 481*, item 26323202 - *Food Security Fund*, may I know how much money has already been spent from that fund?

Mr Faugoo: We have a commitment for a sum of Rs350 m. which is going to be spent for the next six months. We have also launched several schemes, one of which is the Seed Potato Scheme, the second is the Food Crop Insurance Scheme and also the Onion Seed Scheme. So far, we have spent altogether Rs68 m.

Programme Code 481- Policy and Strategy for Agro-Industry and Fisheries (Rs69,525,500), as amended, was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 482: Competitiveness of the Sugar Cane Sector was called.

Mr Varma: At page 457, *Sub-Programme 48202: the Mauritius Sugar Authority, Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation and the Farmers' Service Corporation*, could the hon. Minister inform the House where matters stand with regard to the phasing out of the Union Vale Sugar Estate, the Mon Trésor Mon Desert Sugar Estate and also the allocation of land to the ex-workers of the Riche-en-Eau Sugar Estate?

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, my question relates to page 452, *Programme Code 482: Competitiveness of the Sugarcane Sector*. The Minister is aware that it is not only derocking, clustering and regrouping which help the planters to diminish their costs, but also the fact that when the transport cost is less, they have

less problems. One of the problems that is encountered by small planters is that sometimes the roads inside the sugar cane fields are not well kept. There is one such road at Chemin Français and I have spoken to the Minister about that. Can he tell us whether any sum has been earmarked for the refection of this road and, if yes, when the works are going to start?

Mr Faugoo: I will answer to hon. Mrs Martin first. There was a project which has been approved for the way the road is going to be done again as it is in a bad state. It has been approved, but I cannot say exactly when it is going to start.

As far as the question of hon. Varma is concerned, I am told that for Union Vale we are awaiting an evaluation exercise by the NHDC with regard to the award of the contract.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: At page 457, *Sub-Programme 48201*, under *Performance Indicators P: No. of factories (out of 7) completing sugar manufacture operations within 150 days*, there are 6 out of 7. It means that there is 1 which is not completing operations within the time limit. May we know which sugar factory it is? Why and how are the planters compensated for the lost of weightage of sugar cane and for loss of sucrose content?

My second question is on *Sub-Programme 48202, Irrigation Authority, under Performance Indicator P: number of water users associations fully in charge of irrigation operations*. Can I know from the hon. Minister the number of water users associations which exist to date and what is being done to enable them to take responsibility?

Mr Faugoo: With regard to the first question, Mr Chairperson, the factory which could not comply with the 150 days is FUEL and the reason behind this was a breakdown of weighbridges for about three weeks. In fact, it was slightly more than 150 days, they had taken 157 days. As to how they were compensated, maybe I need some more information from the staff.

As far as the second question on the Irrigation Authority is concerned, I do not know exactly what the number of water users' associations is. But, what I know is that none of them has taken sort of a charge to have operations done on their own. I understand from the Irrigation Authority that the planters are being trained so that they can take charge of the operations as far as irrigation is concerned. I am told that the number of water users' associations, so far, is two.

Mrs Martin: Concerning the *Chemin Français*, I am still waiting for the answer with regard to when the project is going to start and if any sum has been earmarked? Also, what is the sum earmarked?

Mr Jugnauth: At page 471, *Sub-Programme 482202: Field Productivity, item 26323028*, I see the *Capital Grant for Irrigation Authority* is going down. May I know for what reason?

Mr Faugoo: On the question put by hon. Jugnauth on *Capital Grant to Irrigation Authority*, in fact, provision has been made for purchase of equipment for the next six months. On the question of *Chemin Français*, Mr Chairperson, provision has been made for upgrading of the road in question. It is going to be done by the Farmers Service Corporation, I believe.

The Chairperson: May be the hon. Minister may find out and circulate it to the hon. lady.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, *page 469, Programme Code 481, item 26323202 Food Security Fund Rs50 m*, could the hon. Minister inform the House how this sum has been used?

The Chairperson: Hon. Varma, I am afraid this is on Programme Code 481, which we have already voted now. We are on the Programme Code 482; you will get the answer later on.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I am still waiting for a reply as to whether the planters would be compensated because FUEL has not been able to complete the sugar

manufacture operation within 150 days. As regards to the question just asked by hon. Jugnauth regarding the *Capital Grant* of the *Irrigation Authority*, I think the Minister has not replied as yet, because I see for 2010 a sum of Rs5 m. is earmarked and for 2011 a sum of Rs5 m. Can the hon. Minister say what are the projects which have been completed in 2008/2009 and which have cost Rs31 m?

The Chairperson: We will take the question of hon. Varma in the meantime.

Mr Varma: Are we on *Programme Code 483* at page 458?

The Chairperson: We are still on *Programme Code 482*, hon. Varma.

Mr Varma: I put a question and you had told me that.

The Chairperson: The question that you have put was on *Programme Code 481*, which has already been voted. Now, we are on *Programme Code 482*.

Mr Varma: I will come back to it later.

The Chairperson: Thank you, hon. Varma. Does the hon. Minister have the reply to the question of the hon. lady?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, on the question of compensation to planters of FUEL region, I do not have any information to that effect. I am not aware as to whether such claims have been made by planters of that region. If there is any information to that regard, I would surely circulate it.

Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security – Programme Code 482: Competitiveness of the Sugar Cane Sector (Rs167,827,090) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security - Programme Code 483: Development of Non Sugar (Crop) Sector was called.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Varma.

Mr Varma: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On *page 458*, I have three questions. The first one concerns AREU – *Agricultural Research and Extension*

Unit – New varieties of crops tested. I want to know from the Minister about the varieties of crops which have been tested. The second question is about *the New technologies of crop production established*. I would like to have the details from the hon. Minister and whether we have had any foreign expertise in that respect. My third question is *07 – Monitor levels of pesticide residue on crops*, whether the help of the MSIRI is sought in this respect and whether other independent institutions help in that regards.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, on the first question put by hon. Varma, that is, new varieties of crops tested, in fact, as at April of this year, 130 new varieties of vegetable crops have been tested and evaluated. 49 varieties were found promising and were recommended to the farming community, e.g., two new onions varieties *Bella Rose* and *Funsia* having released based on the crop yield and keeping quality. Other promising varieties are maize, garlic, tomato, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, watermelon and baby vegetables. Seed productions are promising varieties of onions, squash tomato and beans are currently being undertaken by farmers under the quality declared scheme. Over and above, varietal and agronomic trials were undertaken for 45 varieties of butter beans, 40 varieties of Kasava and 11 varieties of weed.

On the question of new technologies of crop production established - I understand, hydroponic cultivation is being promoted. As at date, 221 promoters are exploiting, nearly 335 units, which are over 22 hectares of land and they are engaged in the production of tomato, sweet pepper, cucumber, melon and ornamental. A hydroponic village at Cluny, Rose Belle is getting momentum. For promoters exploiting six green houses are in operation and six new green houses are under construction.

Mr Jugnauth: At page 472 with regard to *Subsidies – APEXHOM*, I see that there is a provision till December 2009 and thereafter 2010 and onward there is no

provision. Do I take it that there will be no subsidies to promote export of agricultural products after that?

Mr Faugoo: Which item is it?

Mr Jugnauth: Item 25210006 *Subsidies – APEXHOM* under the heading of *Subsidies*.

The Chairperson: We will take another question before the hon. Minister replies.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On Page 458, item 06: *Quantity of tissue culture planting materials produced for banana and anthurium*, can I take from the Minister that we are re-launching the anthurium industry and that is why tissue culture planting materials are being produced for anthurium.

Mr Faugoo: On the question of subsidies which were put by hon. Jugnauth, *Subsidies – APEXHOM* – in fact, there has been a sum which has been voted Rs400,000 for the six months to come. I understand subsidy is being reconsidered and a new scheme will be proposed.

I could not really follow the question of hon. Hanoomanjee on anthurium.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I just made a remark on *APEXHOM*. I think it is of utmost important to continue to give subsidy to *APEXHOM* export of agricultural products. I asked the question on page 458 – on the question of *tissue culture planting materials produced for banana and anthurium*. I was asking the hon. Minister whether we are re-launching the anthurium industry and whether we are considering once more the export of anthurium.

(At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair)

I was asking the hon. Minister whether we are re-launching the anthurium industry and whether we are considering once more the export of anthurium.

Mr Faugoo: On the question of subsidies, Mr Chairperson, it is not that we are stopping altogether. As I said, we are reconsidering, and we are going to come

with a new scheme, because of the fact that it is important. So, we are going to review it in a positive manner. On the question of anthurium, as to whether we are promoting and re-launching the industry, the answer is yes.

Programme Code 483: Development of Non-Sugar (Crop) Sector (Rs258,518,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 484: Livestock Production and Development was called.

Mr Varma: On page 461, I refer to *Veterinary Services, 06 - Disease prevention through production and supply of poultry vaccines for each year and 07 - Genetic Improvement for meat and milk production.* Could the hon. Minister inform the House who supplies the poultry vaccines and how is the genetic improvement carried out?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member has put two questions.

Mr Varma: The hon. Minister can give the answer later on.

Mr Faugoo: I will circulate the answer later.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: One point of clarification, Mr Chairperson. On page 461, *07 - Genetic Improvement for meat and milk production*, I see under *Performance Indicator P:1 Cumulative percentage increase in no. of cows artificially inseminated from 2,850 in 2008-09.* I was given to understand that milk production will be left to the private sector. I can't see, therefore, the reasons for putting in money for insemination of cows. Can I have some clarification?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, we are encouraging the private sector to get in the business for livestock production.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I understand that milk production will be the business of the private sector. Why invest in milk production? There is one, I think, which has already started production.

Mr Faugoo: I do not think we are investing in livestock at the level of the Ministry. We are encouraging the private sector; it will be providing a sort of proven livestock for multiplication.

The Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security - Programme Code 484: Livestock Production and Development (Rs152,238,760) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security - Programme Code 485: Forestry Resources was called.

Mr Varma: I have got two questions. On page 461, *Forestry Service, 01: Increased planting of native trees and other plants to protect watershed around reservoirs and main river systems and to reduce erosion*, I would like to have details from the hon. Minister about the names of the native trees and other plants and from where we are getting the supply.

My second question is from page 462 *Forestry Service* again, *06: State forest land leased for deer ranching*. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the extent of the land that has been leased for deer ranching.

Mr Faugoo: I will compile and circulate both answers, Mr Chairperson.

The Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security - Programme Code 485: Forestry Resources (Rs102,026,300) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security - Programme Code 486: Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, on page 462, I refer to *Administration of National Parks and Conservation Service*. Could the hon. Minister inform the House why the Wetlands Bill is taking so much time to be introduced in the National Assembly?

My second question is from page 463, 05: *Control of construction on wetlands*. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the steps that have been taken to control the construction on wetlands.

My third question is on page 463, under item *Flora - 010: Critically endangered flowering plants and ferns conserved*. I would like to know from the Minister whether he can circulate the list of critically endangered flowering plants and ferns that need to be conserved.

Mr Faugoo: I will circulate the answers later on.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, page 454, *Programme 486: Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation - Increase Public awareness on the importance of biodiversity*. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what are the measures that are being taken by the Ministry to increase public awareness?

Mr Jugnauth: On page 477, I refer to item 26313082 - *Current Grant – SSR Botanical Garden Trust*. With regard to the SSR Botanical Garden Trust, I see that there are no funds for both current and capital grants from July to December 2009. May we know what is going to be the fate of this Trust?

Mr Faugoo: On the question of wetlands, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the plan is under preparation, and there is wide consultation which is being held with all stakeholders. On the issue of public awareness, in fact, it is being done at educational level in all the educational institutions.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, on page 464, under item *Fauna, 011: Population of endemic bird species conserved and maintained* and *012: Bat population monitored*, I would like to know where these bird species are being conserved, maintained, and the details of the endemic bird species. Of course, if the Minister does not have the details, he can circulate them later.

My second question is: how is the bat population being monitored?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, it is found at Black River Gorges and are all in captive breeding, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member has not got his reply for the question. Maybe, you could put the question again, hon. Jugnauth. I am not sure the officials have given a reply to the Minister.

Mr Jugnauth: On page 477, under item 26313082 - *Current Grant – SSR Botanical Garden Trust*, for both current and capital grants, I see there is no provision for the six months ending 2009.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, the Trust is partly self-funding now. They are charging for entrance fees, and they are raising their own revenue.

Mr Jugnauth: That is for the Trust. But, what about capital grant?

Mr Faugoo: As I am saying, as from July of this year, the running cost of the Trust Fund will be met from revenue collected by the Trust. That is why we are not making any provision.

The Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security - Programme Code 486: Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation (Rs15,086,840) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security – Programme Code 487: Fisheries Development was called.

Mr Faugoo: I move for the following amendment.

Sub-programme 48702; 09; P2 (Page 467)

Under column 2009 Targets,

To insert “8”

And

To delete “15”

Sub-programme 48702; 15; P1 (Page 467)

Under column 2009 Targets,
 To insert “27”
 And
 To delete “54”

Amendment agreed to.

Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security – Programme Code 487- Fisheries Development (104,787,510) as amended, was, on question put, agreed to.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, in fact, this is a programme which is devoted to the fishermen community of our country.

The Chairperson: On which page are you please?

Mr Ganoo: Page 451, *Strategic Note, Major Achievements for 2008/09 - In the artisanal fishery sector, significant progress was achieved in the training of 571 small operators including fishermen, fish farmers and fish mongers and putting up of 20 fish aggregating devices to attract fishing outside the lagoon.* Mr Chairperson, Programme 487, with which we are concerned, is a strategy for fisheries development, according to what I can read.

I now come the point I wish to make at page 465 - *Secure a sustainable exploitation of the lagoon and bank fisheries for domestic consumption* and at page 467, 09 - *Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) in place and operational*, we see that for 2008/2009, 2009/2010 there is 1, 1, and 2. The first question I would like to ask to the hon. Minister is whether these Fishing Aggregate Devices are sufficient and why it is only 1, 1 and 2 for this year, 2009, and 2010.

The second point I wish to make before I resume my seat is the number of fishers trained. We can see that it is only 95. *O10: In lagoon fishermen trained to fish off lagoon around FADs; P1: Number of fishers trained*, it is 95. Mr Chairperson, earlier on, Mrs Bappoo answered a precise question as to the number

of registered fishermen we have now. The figure was, I think, 2,300. So, only 95 of these fishermen have been trained to fish off lagoon around the FADs. It is clear that these 95 fishermen are the youngest ones of the category. This is a community which is fast dwindling. They reach now around 2,000, and the majority of this community is old people. This question has been raised in the House, and the Prime Minister, himself, agreed that he would perhaps consider the possibility of having one Minister for this sector. The question, which I want to ask the hon. Minister, is whether his Ministry is envisaging a scheme for all fishermen to return their licence in consideration for a lump sum to be given to them because the majority of this community are victims of their age, of tourism, of jetties being erected in the lagoons, of kite surfing, scooters, pleasure crafts, and so on. We know how, unfortunately, the fishing community is suffering at the cost of developments, especially in the tourism sector. So, is there a plan, once for all, to phase out the old fishermen in consideration of a reasonable payment of a lump sum to them?

Mr Faugoo: On the question of training, in fact, from what I understand, we have as to date 2,312 registered fishermen, and we are training an average of about 96 fishermen per year. So, it is an ongoing exercise. It is not a question of training only 95. In fact, we have trained skippers also; about 144 fishermen are being trained as skippers. So, altogether we have trained above 500. As I said it is ongoing.

Secondly, on the question of FADs as at to date, there are 21 FADs which are already operational and I do agree that we may need some more. But then, the question of 1 plus 1 for 2010, it is the number by which it is going to be increased. We are going to add more. Some of the FADs need to be replaced once it is worn out.

On the question of whether we have a plan for fishermen who want to return their licence and give up their activities, I think I had answered to a Parliamentary Question asked by hon. Ganoo. We do not have such a plan. The plan, which we have for fishermen, in fact, is to empower them. We want to give them all the help, all the tools they need to go off lagoon and carry out their activities near the FADs. This is why we are giving training. This is why FIT is coming with lots of projects, whereby we are going to buy semi industrial boats and put them at their disposal. We also cater for them under the Food Security Fund, whereby we are constructing a number of boats which will allow them to carry out their activities in a proper and professional manner.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: At page 466, *Aquaculture*, I see that the performance has been only 50% for financial year 2008/2009 of the adequate supply of fingerlings and camaron juveniles to meet the requirement of fish farmers. So, on the supply side, they have been able to give only 50%. Can we have an indication from the Minister as to the location of these fish farms both for Berri rouge and for Camaron juveniles? Secondly, can we have an indication as well of the production for year 2008?

Mr Faugoo: I will circulate the information.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Page 467, *O14: Technical evaluation of coastal development projects*, may I ask from the hon. Minister who carries out the evaluation projects?

Mr Gunness: At page 479, under item 26313018 - *Current Grant - Fishermen Welfare Fund*, can the Minister enlighten us about the main activities, facilities that the Fishermen Welfare Fund is providing actually to the fishermen community?

Mr Varma: I just want to take from what hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee has asked earlier on. Could the hon. Minister inform the House of the number of fish farmers who have benefited from the supply of Berri rouge and Camaron juveniles?

My second question is from page 467 - *Marine Conservation - O13: Permits issued to pleasure crafts/boats/vessels, line fishing, glass bottom boats and recreational operators in Blue Bay Marine Park*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House the number of permits which have been issued in that respect?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, on the question of locations of fish farms, I am told they are located in various places. I cannot give the exact locations, but I can, maybe, compile and circulate them afterwards.

Concerning the production, I understand that altogether the total production per year is 10 tonnes. As far as the evaluation of coastal projects is concerned, it is done by the officers of the Ministry of Fisheries.

As regards the question of hon. Gunness about the services provided by the Fishermen Welfare Fund, in fact, education for children of fishermen is provided. A total of 107 scholarships are awarded annually, provision for financial assistance and the fund itself carries out sensitisation campaigns on an *ad hoc* basis. The theme considers the fish handling, fish preservation, marketing techniques etc. The Welfare Fund commemorates the international day of fishermen.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, I am still waiting for a reply on the production of '*camarron*'. Secondly, at page 479, under item *26313018 – Current Grant - Fishermen Welfare Fund*, may we know whether the phasing out of all fishers will be taken care of by the Fund?

Mr Faugoo: With regard to the question of production of '*camarron*' on an annual basis, production is about 200,000 '*camarron*' juveniles per year. On the question of whether the Welfare Fund is going to take care of the fishermen, I think a study is being carried out on this issue.

Ministry of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security – Programme Code 487: Fisheries Development (Rs104,787,510) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life – Programme Code 581: Health Policy and Management was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 498, last line - *Regulation to be introduced at school canteen for control of the sale of sugary food*, can the hon. Minister inform the House when will the regulation be introduced? At page 499, my second question is about the *Collaboration with international institutions (...)* where four universities are mentioned. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether an MoU has been signed with the universities concerned.

My third question relates to *Primary Health Care*, at page 499 – *Twelve (12) Primary Health Care Centres are being upgraded (...).* I would like to know from the hon. Minister what are the 12 Primary Health Care Centres that are being upgraded.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, concerning the first question, we are nearly finished with the regulation with regard to snacks in schools. We had to have consultations with PTAs, teachers and all stakeholders and it would be coming up soon.

With regard to agreements with Tertiary Institutions, we have four universities who have expressed their wish to open medical schools. They have made their applications through TEC and, at the level of my Ministry we have offered hospitals so that they can do their clinical work.

With regard to Primary Health Care centres, I will circulate a list of the various centres.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 499, *Programme Code 581 – Reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates in accordance with Un Millenium Development Goals*, we have had different cases regarding maternal problems.

Il semble de plus en plus, M. le président, qu'au lieu que les agendas s'accordent avec les heures de l'accouchement, ce sont les heures de l'accouchement qui doivent s'accorder aux agendas des médecins, provoquant un nombre grandissant de césariennes, avec les conséquences qui s'ensuivent. Puis-je demander à l'honorable ministre s'il a eu l'occasion de voir ce dossier et les mesures préconisées pour aider les femmes au moment de l'accouchement ?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I have been made aware of the large number of caesarian that is being taken here in Mauritius. I have requested the technical side of my Ministry to look into the matter.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 508, under item 22110002, *Mission Expenses – Air tickets*, the amount earmarked climbs from Rs1 m. to Rs6.3 m. And then, under item 22110003, *Mission Expenses – Hotel Accommodations*, this time it falls from Rs8.7 m. to Rs525,000. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House on how mission expenses on air tickets rise and expenses for hotels decline from Rs8.7 m. to Rs525,000?

At the same page 508, under item 22900001 – *Uniforms*, can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any specific designer who has been selected recently to design uniforms for the maids at hospitals?

At page 509, under item 27210008 – *Assistance to Patients Inoperable in Mauritius*, an amount of Rs32 m. has been earmarked for this financial year. Previously, we were able to compare how much has been incurred. Can the hon. Minister tell us - because we know that every year this sum is not sufficient, we need much more - how much, as at to date, has been spent on patients inoperable in Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the question of designer, after discussions with the unions, Miss Lida O'Reilly has kindly offered her services. In fact, she has dressed up Miss India for a live ceremony. I will come to this question after looking into these figures.

Mr Chairperson, with regard to item 22110002, *Mission Expenses*, the actual expenditure to 2008/2009 amounts to Rs12.7 m. It is provision for payment of air tickets of foreign teams in connection with exchanges in the field of health for about 540 patients inoperable in Mauritius and sent abroad to receive treatment.

With regard to hotel accommodations, this is in connection with exchanges in the field of health for the accommodation of foreign teams again.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, at page 509, under item 27210008, *Assistance to Patients Inoperable in Mauritius*, I see that a sum of Rs32 m. is earmarked under this item. We know that every year more money is needed under this item. May we know how much has been spent up to now on patients inoperable in Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: I am informed that for year 2006, the amount disbursed was Rs57.9 m. For 2007, we had 508 patients and the amount disbursed was Rs41 m. For 2008, there were 665 patients and it amounted to Rs45.12 m.

Mr Varma: At page 502, *Programme Code 581*, under *Headquarters, Output 01: New legislation and amendment to existing legislation, and under Performance Indicator, P3: Regulations under Human Tissue (...)*, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this Act has been proclaimed and, if not, when it will be.

My second question relates to *Performance Indicator, P4: Regulations under Food Act (1998), including sale of snacks, vegetarian and halal foods made*. Will the hon. Minister give the assurance to the House that once these regulations

come into force, it will be mentioned just like in the United Kingdom, that such food items are suitable for vegetarians and are halal foods.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, the Organ and Tissue Transplant Board has been set up under the Human Tissue (Removal/Preservation/Transplant) Act. The services of a consultant has been sought to develop appropriate guidelines and protocols for the implementation of the various provisions in the legislation.

With regard to *Performance Indicator, P4: Regulation under Food Act (1998)* (...), as I mentioned earlier on, the sale of food items and drinks in educational institutions has been finalized and will be promulgated by the end of this month. Draft Regulations on Food Act (1998) are being finalized. The Regulations, *inter alia*, deal with halal and vegetarian foods and melamine standard in milk and milk products.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Mr Chairperson, I have two questions which relate to the Strategic Note at page 497. May we know whether the Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST) has been expanded to our prisons and, if yes, which ones?

I see that a new school health programme for secondary schools has been introduced in February 2007. May we know the regions which have benefited from that programme?

Dr. Jeetah: With regard to the Methadone Substitution Therapy, I understand that it is in the pipeline. I think the hon. Member might want to know that, very recently, we had a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister and we had Dr. Gaud with us; he is offering us technical assistance and we discussed scaling up of Methadone dispensation in Mauritius.

With regard to the school health programme, I know that through our mobile clinic we have a target to reach 25,000 students. I can circulate the number of

students who have been seen by our medical team. This is being done throughout the island.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, at page 509, item 31122802, *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, can the hon. Minister inform the House where the IT Equipment has been placed?

Dr. Jeetah: I do not have the supplier's name and address, but I can certainly look into it and let the hon. Member have it.

Mr Jhugroo: I wanted to know where the IT Equipment has been utilized in the Ministry of Health?

Dr. Jeetah: There have been provisions for Head Office and Central Supplies Division.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life – Programme Code 581 (Rs158,708,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 504, *Sub-Programme 58202, Output 01: Ayurvedic medicine and Performance Indicator, P3: A new Ayurvedic Clinic at Flacq Hospital* respectively. I would like to know from the hon. Minister when that will be built.

At page 505, *Sub-Programme 58302, under Delivery Units – Environmental Health Engineering Unit/Health Inspectorate, Performance Indicator, P1: No. of drinking water samples to be collected and analyzed.* From the number of samples which were taken, may we know from the hon. Minister how many were found to be infected?

At page 505, under *Performance Indicator, P2: No. of visits to public and private premises for monitoring basic sanitation*, may we know how many contraventions have been issued?

At page 505, under *Output 05: Monitoring of food premises for food safety, Performance Indicator, P1: Food samples to be taken for chemical and microbiological analysis*, for the year 2008/2009, we see that 4,000 samples have been taken. Could the hon. Minister inform the House of the outcome of the test which has been carried out?

Dr. Jeetah: Well, this is a lot of data, Mr Chairperson. Let me give the answer with regard to the number of water samples collected and analyzed. These are huge figures for July 2005 and so on, I can certainly circulate them. I do not have the information with regard to the number of contraventions, but I can certainly let the hon. Member have it.

With regard to food testing, there have been a number of positive tests, because of the melamine contamination. I can circulate that information as well.

With regard to the setting up of the Ayurvedic Clinic at Flacq, from memory I know that it is to be opened in July.

Mr Gunness: At page 510, under *item 22070002, Laundry Services*, I see that a sum of Rs17 m. is earmarked for July/December 2009. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether it is contracted out and the name of the contractor?

At page 510, under *item 22070002, Cleaning of Office Premises and item 22090, Security* respectively, can I know whether these services are contracted out and, if so, the names of the contractors? Can I have the name of the contractor if ever it is contracted out? Then, on the next page, my question is about upgrading of Flacq Hospital which is Rs18 m. For the new block which is supposed to be constructed, can I know where are the funds earmarked in the Budget, when is it scheduled to start and what stage we have reached?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I will start with the easier one, the new block which is block C, is going to start any time now.

As far as the provision for laundry services is concerned, the contract of hospital clothing was awarded to Cernol services since 05 July 2007 and that was renewable on a yearly basis for a further period of three years upon satisfactory performance.

With regard to security, I see that the contract has been offered to Special Security Guards Ltd. and to Rapid Security Services.

With regard to cleaning, six companies have been offered contract and they are Clean Plus Ltd, Hygiene Plus Ltd, Ethy Cleaning Ltd, Very Clean Contracting Services Ltd - that is for another hospital – and the last is ABC Cleaning and Maintenance Services Ltd.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 499 under *Programme 582 - Improve quality of health care delivery by upgrading the environment at hospital level*. This brings me to page 505 *Output 03 Control of rodent population in specific areas*. I am made to understand that we have a Rodent Unit attached to the Ministry of Health. May I ask the hon. Minister the number of persons who are attached to the Rodent Unit? This is my first question.

My second question, Mr Chairperson, at the same page 505 regarding *Output 06 Screening and inspection at workplace*, may I ask the hon. Minister whether Police officers are concerned under this particular programme of screening, particularly, Police officers who work on the streets? We know that these officers are exposed to the smoke emission all day long. Have they been subject to particular screening?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the first question related to rodents, my Ministry is working in collaboration with other Ministries, the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Environment to control proliferation of rats in public buildings and markets. We have from July 2008 to April 2009 effected 2,179 visits and captured 3,218 rats.

Some are captured; some have died with the substances that they used. I think, more importantly, Mr Chairperson, we have offered 345 sensitisation programmes and we have attended to complaints.

With regard to the staffing level, funds have been provided for the creation of 19 additional posts of rodent controllers and one additional post of assistance supervisor. I must also say that we have availed ourselves with the services of Henry Hardy. We have contracted out because they are experts in the field and we are closely monitoring the situation.

With regard to the other one, I see that the answer is yes.

Mrs Martin: My question is on page 499 *Sub-programme 58202 Traditional Medicine - Improve access to Traditional Medicine service*. I understand from the Minister that there is an Ayurvedic hospital which is soon to be starting its activities but when I go on page 512 item 22140006 *Ayurvedic and Other Traditional Medicine*, I see there are actually other traditional medicines that are also taken into account and for July to December 2009, there are about Rs3m. which are earmarked for this project. Can I know from the Minister what are the other traditional medicines that are advocated and accepted by his Ministry, whether Chinese traditional medicine forms part of it and what is the percentage or, at least, the sum that has been earmarked for Ayurvedic Medicine and the other traditional medicines?

I have another question which relates to page 503 *Hospitals and Specialised Units Performance Indicator P1: SAMU services coverage (%)*. Can I know from the Minister the number of SAMU vehicles available islandwide and on the number of average calls to which they respond, at least, every month?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, with regard to traditional medicine, at the moment, we only offer Ayurvedic Medicine, but there is a plan to expand and upon

discussions we will decide on which are the specialisations to consider. We have 5 vehicles which offer services of SAMU.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 511, item *31112003 Construction/Extension of Hospitals*, can the hon. Minister enlighten the House why this year there is no provision for the construction of Long Mountain Hospital as last year?

Dr. Jeetah: I think there is a team looking into that. We will make provision for the year 2010. Hon. Jhugroo has made a very strong request concerning this hospital and we are looking into it.

Mr Gunness: At page 511, first I take the item *26323095, Capital Grant - Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care*, I find a sum of Rs500,000. Can we know why there is only Rs500,000, whether no new equipment will be purchased by the Trust Fund?

Secondly, under item *31122801 Acquisition of High-Tech and other Medical Equipment*, I find that the sum of Rs151,500,000 was earmarked for this financial year. Can I know whether this amount has been spent and what equipment has been purchased, if not, what amount has been spent? For July to December 2009, I find that a sum of Rs100,000,000 is earmarked for the six months. Can we know what equipment it is intended to purchase?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I understand that with regard to item *31122801*, provision has been made for the purchase of, as we say, hi-tech equipments such as MRI, ICU ventilators, laser photo coagulator and other medical equipments such as mobile x-ray machines, diathermy machine, defibrillator, CR, laparoscopy set, auto cranes for operating theatre, ecography machines, anesthetic machines, ultra sound machines, etc. The Ministry purchases equipments for trust fund for specialized medical care.

Mr Gunness: Mr Chairperson, I also put a question. Rs151 m. were earmarked for this present financial year. How much has been spent up to now on the purchase of hi-tech equipment in this financial year?

Dr. Jeetah: I know it is a lot, but I will get the information and give it to you in a minute.

Mrs Labelle: At page 509, under *item 31121801 Acquisition of Vehicles*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is acquisition for additional transport for SAMU?

Dr. Jeetah: No, I do not recall anything for SAMU but I will let the hon. Member know in a moment. Let me reply to hon. Gunness, the amount spent was Rs140 m. for 2008-09.

The Chairperson: With due respect, the hon. Lady asked a question on page 509 on Acquisition of Vehicles, this is on Programme Code 581 which has already been voted. Sorry, hon. Minister!

Dr. Jeetah: Let me answer it. There are five ambulances, one lorry for communicable diseases, three vans with seats and one window van with seats.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 582 - Curative Services (Rs2,605,652,400) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 583 - Primary Health Care and Public Health was called.

Mr Gunness: At page 513, under item *31112005 Construction of Community Health Centres*, can the Minister tell us why the new community centre will be constructed? Under item *31112404 Upgrading of Area Health Centres*, what are the Area Health Centres earmarked for upgrading and same for item *31112405 Upgrading of Community Health Centres*, what are the Community Health Centres?

The Chairperson: Any other question? No. Yes, Minister!

Dr. Jeetah: Rs3.2 m. have been made available for the construction of Pandit Sahadeo Community Health Centre. A sum of money has been earmarked for the start of the construction of a new Community Health Centre at Club Road, Vacoas.

With regard to upgrading, provision has been made for the rehabilitation of AHCs in the five regions and this work is being carried out by our own in-house team and it would be at Triolet, Rivière du Rempart, Dr. H. Malherbes, Bramsthan, Nouvelle France, Camp Diable, Bouloux CHC, Moka CHC, Castel CHC, Quatre Bornes CHC and Flic en Flac. We are looking into improving twelve AHCs or CHCs so that we can have more people visiting these centres rather than going to the hospitals.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 583 - Primary Health Care and Public Health (Rs469,954,900) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 584 – Treatment and Prevention of the HIV and AIDS was called.

Mr Varma: At page 506, under item *AIDS Unit O2: AIDS Treatment, P3: Number of people on Methadone Substitution Therapy (cumulative)*, could the hon. Minister inform the House of the outlets where methadone is currently being obtained?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: My question relates to page 506 – *AIDS Unit, O1: AIDS prevention, education and awareness*. Does the AIDS prevention education cover the secondary schools over the island?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, we have got a programme where we are sensitising, as I mentioned earlier on. We have talked to 25,000 students this year and we have already done quite a bit in this field and we are increasing this process.

With regard to where methadone is being dispensed, we have one dispensing unit in each regional hospital, one at Brown Sequare Mental Health Care Centre,

one at Bouloux Area Health Centre and, in addition, six more sites are being operated through caravan dispensing at Rose-Hill, Vacoas, Plaine Lauzun Community Health Centre, Plaine Verte, Pailles and one at Vallée Pitot.

Mrs Labelle: At page 506, under *Programme 584 – Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS*, may I ask the hon. Minister the number of patients who are actually in prisons or the number of prisoners who are actually having treatment of HIV?

Dr. Jeetah: We have 1,191 patients who are currently under methadone substitution treatment. I take this is what the hon. Member wanted to know.

Mrs Labelle: I was talking about the HIV treatment and not methadone.

Dr. Jeetah: I beg your pardon. As at 2008, we had 538 HIV/AIDS cases of which 402 are male and 136 are female. We had some new cases in 2009 and these are the people who are being treated.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 584 – Treatment and Prevention of the HIV and AIDS (Rs35,672,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life - Programme Code 585 – Promoting Quality of Life and Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases was called.

Mr Varma: At page 506, *Output O2: NCD Education and Awareness, P1: Number of students of secondary schools screened*, could the hon. Minister inform the House the number of students out of the 25,000 who have been screened in the 2008-09 who have been found to have non-communicable diseases?

The Chairperson: Could the hon. Member repeat the question, please?

Mr Varma: On page 506, *02: NCD Education and Awareness, P1: Number of Students of secondary schools screened* in 2008/2009, out of the 25,000 who

have been screened, Mr Chairperson, could the hon. Minister inform the House, the number of students who have been found to have non-communicable diseases?

Dr. Jeetah: I think the hon. Member would have to put a substantive question to me and then I will come back. But we have all the statistics because I know that the works are ongoing. Mr Chairperson, I am informed that 604 patients are under retroviral treatment.

Mr Gunness: *Page 516, under item 22900004 Catering there is a sum of Rs2,375,000. Can the Minister give us some details about that catering?*

Dr. Jeetah: This is in connection with increase in the number of activities and sensitisation campaign to promote healthy lifestyles. As I have said, Mr Chairperson, we got a mobile clinic that is going around the country and from memory I know that we have already touched nearly 45,000 people. This is in connection to these events.

Mrs Labelle: *Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 506, the timely screening of targeted population for early detection of NCDs and their complications. Puis-je demander au ministre si cela inclut des mammographies comme mesure de détection ? Je sais qu'on fait des screenings par le toucher, mais est-ce que la mammographie est aussi inclut dans ce programme ?*

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, I know we do screening for breast cancer and screening for cervical cancer. The hon. Member might wish to know that mammography is done on referral, of course, because that is the initial step to do the screening. I think you would be interested to know that recently we have found that we had 69 cases of cervical cancer, but here I would like to make an appeal that I think ladies need to come up and get the screenings done, because they are a bit *réticentes de venir à cause de problèmes culturels, je pense.*

Mrs Labelle: *Mr Chairperson, nous avons, malheureusement, un nombre grandissant de cancer et qui coûte une somme énorme à l'Etat, en plus des autres*

conséquences pour la famille. La mammographie permet une meilleure détection du cancer. Est-ce que, avec ce programme, les femmes d'un certain âge pourront aussi bénéficier de la mammographie au lieu du toucher ? Je comprends qu'il y a aussi les implications financières.

Dr. Jeetah: I think the first thing is to get over this cultural barrier whereby women are not willing to accept that these private parts, if I may call it so, need to be tested. But, we are doing whatever we can. The hon Member might also wish to know that every day three persons died in this country out of cancer.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life – Programme Code 585: Promoting Quality of Life and Prevention/Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (Rs26,434,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 721: Policy and Management for Business, Enterprise & Cooperatives - was called

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 532 under *Main Constraints and Challengers*, item *resources are therefore being made available through the Capacity Building Programme and service to Mauritius Programme in order to recruit high caliber human resources*, can we know a bit the profile of the persons that need to be recruited and in which sectors?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have to move for an amendment

The Chairperson: No, no, you are not moving for amendments, just answer the question, hon. Minister.

Mr Varma : At page 532, under *Main Constraint and Challengers*, item *resources are therefore being made available through the Capacity Building Programme and service to Mauritius Programme in order to recruit the right caliber human resources*, could the hon. Minister inform the House the profile of persons who need to be recruited and in which sectors?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we need expert in procedures and in guidelines to decide on cases. The Competition Commission will meet and decide on recruitment.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the *Constraint and Challengers* concerning SMEs, may I know how may SMEs have already benefitted from the Additional Stimulus Package?

The Chairperson: We will take the next question in the meantime. Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, I want to come on *programme 721: Policy and Management for Business Enterprise and Cooperatives* and I want to make use of what the Standing Orders allow me to do Mr Chairperson, to move an amendment to reduce the sum of one item.....

The Chairperson: For now I am taking questions. Would the hon. Member mind coming back just after the reply, because the question has been put and no reply has been obtained yet, please.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Chairperson, Sir, for Additional Stimulus Package, modalities are still in preparation.

The Chairperson: Thank You! Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, my motion is conceived under Section 73(7): of the Standing Orders: “any Member may move an amendment to reduce by so much rupees the sum to be allotted for any Vote of Expenditure in respect of any sub-head or item therein. No motion for the reduction of any item provided by Statute can be presented”. So, I will move to reduce in programme 721, under personal emoluments, the sum which has been budgeted, Rs3.843 m. by Rs1, this ..

The Chairperson: Which page is the hon. Member at, please?

Mr Ganoo: Page 540. This is because of the rise in the price of fuel...

Mr Dayal: On a point of order under the Standing Order of 1995, for such a motion, it has to be a full-fledged motion and under the Committee of Supply, this motion cannot be entertained.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I have not even seen the page. Can I hear? Which item is that?

(Interruptions)

Am I allowed, please, to chair the proceedings? Thank You! Which item is the hon. Member referring to, please?

Mr Ganoo: Under *21110 Personal Emoluments*, I am, therefore, moving that this sum be reduced by one rupee, Mr Chairperson, because personal emoluments include the allowances of the Minister responsible for the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives. True it is, the Standing Order says that no motion for the reduction of any item provided by Statute can be presented. I am not moving that the allowances of the Minister be reduced. In fact, in the previous estimates, that could not have been done also. It was not allowed, although in the previous estimates, the personal emoluments of the Minister were to be found in one live item. So, the first item was the personal emoluments of the Minister. The Standing Orders were framed in 1995. In fact, this last line which I just read were included in our new Standing Orders to precisely prevent any Member who wishes to make such a motion for reduction not to target directly the emoluments of a Minister or any Member of the House, because the allowances are provided for by the National Assembly Allowances Act, as you know, and I have a copy of this Act with me, but I do not wish to read it. It is this Act which prescribes the allowances of the Minister, the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and so on and so forth. So, there cannot be a motion to reduce the emoluments of the Minister. But, Mr

Chairperson, there are rulings which have been given by past Speakers, two or three of them, where...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: On a point of order,

Mr Ganoo: I have not finished, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

But let me finish. I am doing my point of order.

The Chairperson: There is a point of order. May I please ask Members to allow me to hear it? Yes, the Minister can stand up!

Dr. Bunwaree: I would like to know whether there is a motion in front in this House which we are debating.

The Chairperson: Exactly!

Mr Ganoo: Of course, it is a motion!

(Interruptions)

The motion is made under Section 72(7).

The Chairperson: It is Standing Order 73(7).

Mr Ganoo: “Any Member may move an amendment to reduce by so much rupees the sum to be allotted for any Vote of Expenditure in respect of any sub-head or item therein.” And this motion needs no notice according to our Standing Orders.

The Chairperson: Can the Member please sit down now? I want to listen to the hon. Minister.

Dr. Bunwaree: Let us hear the motion first and then you will see whether it is receivable or not.

The Chairperson: Exactly!

Dr. Bunwaree: But he is making it in the motion before making it.

The Chairperson: That's it!

Mr Ganoo: My motion is to reduce by one rupee, the item personal emoluments in programme 721.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Can I ask every single Member....

(*Interruptions*)

Please! May I ask everyone to keep quiet for a minute? May I ask hon. Mrs Labelle, Hon. Babajee and hon. Dr. Bunwaree to keep quiet. This is something which can be sorted out very easily. Hon. Members, I am surprised! A motion is made. Fine! Now, that there is a point of order....

(*Interruptions*)

Dr. David: On a point of order there has been a motion, and then there has been a point of order taken. We want to know from you whether this is admissible.

The Chairperson: Now, first of all, I would.....

Mr Chaumière: According to Standing Order 29 about motions, there are a number of motions which can be proposed without notice and I do not find that this is in the Standing Order 29.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: I will suspend the sitting for 15 minutes. Thank you!

At 00.26 a.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 00.55 a.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

The Chairperson: We had a motion proposed by hon. Ganoo. I would like him to renew his motion, please!

Mr Ganoo: This House moves to reduce by one rupee from the sum of Rs4,891,000 from *Programme Code 721: the Policy and Management for Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives*. This is my motion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Chairperson: You do realise, hon. Member, that if the motion, as it appears now, is allowed, at some stage we would have to remove one rupee from someone's emoluments. You will have to be more specific for me to understand at the end of the month whose emoluments will have to be deducted for one rupee.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not moving - the *libellé de la motion* does not make mention of the emoluments of anybody in this House. I am going by ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Can I ask hon. Members to be quiet on the other side of the House, please?

Mr Ganoo: I am going by the precedent in this House. There have been two motions in the House in the past and in the wording of the motion itself no reference was ever made to the emoluments of the Minister or of any other Member concerned. So, I am going by the precedent of this House. As I explained to you, to me this is a motion to reduce only one rupee from this total sum of Programme 721 and the purpose of this motion is, of course, directed against the Minister and not for any personal reason nor for any morality reason, it is just because the price of petrol and fuel have increased yesterday by the STC. The Minister is responsible and answerable for STC. He said that consumers have to pay for the losses of the STC and this motion is a political motion. It is not personal; it has nothing to do with any morality issue. It is because, as the Opposition, we are expressing the *mécontentement de la population* outside and this is why we want that this motion be adopted by the House.

The Chairperson: If I understand the hon. Member clearly, his motion is aimed at the Minister.

Mr Ganoo: It is aimed at the policy of the Ministry.

(*Interruptions*)

Dr. Bunwaree: If the hon. Member is asking for one rupee to be cut from these emoluments, he has to say who the Exchequer will aim at to remove this one rupee.

Mr Ganoo: The sum Rs4,891,000 represents not only emoluments, but all other goods and services.

The Chairperson: That is exactly the issue!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: But Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We have to come back to the basics. Section 71 (7) says –

“Any Member may move an amendment to reduce by one rupee the sum to be allotted for any Vote of Expenditure in respect of any sub-head or item therein.”

I do not have to motivate the purpose of my motion. I am going by what the Standing Orders say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Chairperson: I am not asking the hon. Member to motivate his motion at this stage. At the moment, the hon. Member is not being asked to motivate anything. What you are being asked, hon. Ganoo, is to understand that under Erskine May, any motion which is made must be so framed as to be capable of expressing the decision of this House. If you want one rupee to be deducted from a vote item, and if you say you are aiming at the Minister, you must tell us whether the one rupee is to be deducted from his salary or not.

Mr Ganoo: It would be out of order for me to say that I am moving to reduce one rupee from the Minister’s order...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Can I? It is even more out of order if the hon. Member does not say from whose salary the hon. Member wants to decrease this one rupee.

Mr Ganoo: I am not moving that the one rupee be deducted from a salary. I repeat again, I am going of what the precedent of this House has established since ages, that a Member can move not only according to our Standing Orders, but we have two or three precedents in this House where at Committee Stage, during Budget time, a Member of the Opposition has been allowed to move an amendment to reduce by one rupee from the sum to be allotted to a Vote of Expenditure. We have precedent in this House and I am going by this precedent, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Please take your seat! Hon. Ganoo I am telling you again. Under Erskine May, and I am insisting on that with you, your motion must be so framed as to be capable of expressing the decision of this House. This Vote item concerns the emoluments of the whole Department. Either you tell us that this one rupee is to be deducted from a particular salary, a particular emolument, or else I have to tell you that it is not receivable because it does not allow this House to be capable of expressing a decision with precision. You tell us specifically that it is the Minister you are aiming at. You started saying it, but now you say it is out of order.

Mr Ganoo: The Standing Orders provide very clearly that a Member cannot move to reduce the salary of a Minister because this item is provided by Statute. The Ministers' allowances are provided for by the National Assembly Allowances Act. So, it is only by amending this law that we can amend the allowances of any Member of this House, not by a motion.

The Chairperson: That is exactly why you have to frame your motion with more precision. You know very well that if you target the Minister, you cannot be allowed to proceed with this motion. You want to target the Minister, you say you are prompted by his decision and his words but you do not want to target him in

your motion. Either you target him or you do not target and you target someone else but you have to be precise.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please allow us to chair these proceedings.

Mr Ganoo: Well I repeat again, Mr Speaker Sir, I am going by what the precedents have established.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Stop this, please!

Mr Ganoo: If you want to rule me out, I will, of course, abide by your ruling, Mr Chairperson, but I have, according to me, acted in accordance with the Standing Orders and the precedents of this House.

The Chairperson: So, you will not be precise; you will not actually say whose salary you want to reduce or from where you want to have this one rupee deducted?

Mr Ganoo: No, because I am not allowed to do that, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Then I will have to declare this motion irreceivable for the following reason. Hon. Ganoo has made this motion on the basis of a decision which was taken by the Minister. Taken as it is, it would appear that he was targeting the Minister. Now, if his intent is to reduce the salary of the Minister by one rupee, this motion is irreceivable by virtue of Standing Order 73 Rule 7 whereby “no motion for the reduction of any item provided by Statute can be presented” and indeed, the salary and emoluments of the Minister are actually prescribed by Statute. He does not want to give this precision nor any precision for that matter. Accordingly his motion is not precise enough to allow a decision to be taken which will be capable of expressing a decision of this House in accordance with Erskine May. I therefore rule this motion out. We have to proceed.

(Interruptions)

I would like to have a very civilised debate. Thank you!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chair, I, too, was awaiting for an answer to the question put by my colleague regarding the Risk Committee. Will the hon. Minister inform us whether this Risk Committee has been instituted and who is the Government expert who has been taken on board for this Risk Committee as stated earlier?

Mr Gowressoo: The Risk Committee will be constituted after June 2009. In fact, Consultant did not mention that it will take place on June 2009.

Mr Gunness: Concerning the hedging mechanism and STC, can we know whether in the structure of the price expenses...

The Chairperson: With due respect, I think this is very much policy and I would rather the hon. Member come with a substantive question afterwards.

Mr Gunness: How much the operating expenses is in the rise in the price? It is not policy; it is the structure.

The Chairperson: No, I won't allow that.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 721 Policy and Management for Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives (Rs4,891,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 603 Trade Development was called.

Mr Varma: At page 536, *Import Division - O1: Import Permits. P1: Maximum number of working days to issue second-hand vehicle and other controlled goods import permits; O2: Second-hand vehicle dealers licences and O5: Scrap Metal Dealer licence/ permit*, would the hon. Minister inform the House how many such permits have been issued in both cases - second-hand vehicle dealers licences and scrap metal dealer licence/ permits?

Mr Gowressoo: For second-hand vehicle dealers, there have been 63 permits delivered to importers. For scrap metal dealer, the information will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 603 Trade Development (Rs50,554,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment - Programme 604; Sub-programme 60401; 03; P2 (Page 537)

Under column Baseline 2008-09,

To insert “50”

And

To delete “6”

Under column 2009 Targets,

To insert “55”

And

To delete “2.4”

Under column 2010 Targets,

To insert “60”

And

To delete “5”

Programme 604; Sub-programme 60402; 01 (Page 538)

Under column Indicators,

To insert “P2: Percentage of Cooperative Societies assisted that show an increase in output/profitability/employment”

And

To delete “P2: Percentage of Cooperative Societies assisted that show an increase in turnover”

Under column 2009 Targets,

To insert “50”

And

To delete “75”

Under column 2010 Targets,

To insert “55”

And

To delete “80”

Amendment agreed to.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 604: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chair, I am referring to page 531, the last paragraph, 12 Cooperatives have been earmarked for provision with marginal and unutilized land in the region of Pailles (72 Arpents) to undertake the cultivation of fruit trees. The project aims at empowering deprived persons while ensuring supply of fruits on a large scale for eventual processing or exporting. Presently, the land has been parcelled and will be allocated. May I ask the hon. Minister if he will inform the House of the twelve cooperatives which will be allocated plots of land?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Chairperson, it is under process, it has not yet been decided.

Mr Gunness: At page 543, Chair, under item 31112430 *Construction of Maison des Eleveurs/Maison des Pêcheurs*, can I know whether this project has

been completed by now? We see also under item 31113403 *Upgrading of Roads*, can we know which roads we are talking about?

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Chairperson, the *Maison des Pêcheurs* was initially financed by the French Government; however, due to lack of equipment and necessary infrastructure, the *Maison des Pêcheurs* could not be exploited to its optimal capacity.

With a view to give a boost to the Fishermen Cooperative Sector, the Ministry is assisting the Mauritius Fishermen Cooperative Federation in the renovation works at the *Maison des Pêcheurs* at Cap Malheureux. The renovation/upgrading of the *Maison des Pecheurs* at Cap Malheureux comprises the following: infrastructural work – Rs1,1 m.; electrical works – Rs9,354.; equipment and repairs of cold room – Rs175,629. The implementation of the projects started in April 2009 and is expected to be completed by the end of this month. The project will help the Federation to better comply with sanitary norms. The Federation is expecting an increase in the volume of fresh fish transacted through the *Maison des Pêcheurs*. Presently, the level of transaction is 4,535 kilos and this is expected to increase three-fold.

As for the upgrading of roads, the project comprises the financing of minor infrastructural projects of cooperatives. Regarding the cooperative societies, cooperatives have been provided with marginal and unutilized State land in the region of Pailles (72 Arpents) to undertake the cultivation of fruit trees. The project aims at empowering deprived persons while ensuring supply of fruits on a large scale for eventual processing or exporting.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 537, *sub-programme 60401: Registry of Cooperatives O2: Arbitration cases settled*, could the hon. Minister inform the House before which forum was the arbitration carried out?

The Chairperson: I presume the Minister can circulate the reply.

Mr Gowresoo: The reply will be circulated in due course.

Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives – Programme Code 604: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives (Rs37,155,000), as amended, ordered to stand part of the Schedule.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology – Programme Code 661: Policy and Management for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was called.

Mrs Martin: *Under Programme Code 661: Policy and Management for Information and Communication Technology, I would like to ask the Minister how many projects on the ICT Strategic Plan have been initiated for the financial period 2008. Concerning the programme Policy Management for Information and Communication Technology, I would like to know from the hon. Minister how many projects on the ICT Strategic Plans have been initiated for the financial period 2008/2009, and if he can state the projects which were completed?*

Mr Dulull: Mr Chairperson, we have completed many projects during the financial year, and I'll circulate a list of all the projects, their stage of completion, and those which have already been completed during the financial year. We had 48 projects already initiated.

Mrs Martin: My question was not with regard to the project initiated, but those that have been completed.

Mr Dulull: I will circulate those at completion stage. We have initiated 48, and we will circulate those already completed.

Mr Jhugroo: Page 550, *Programme 661: Policy and Management*, with regard to transparency and accountability, what has been done in the light of the criticisms made by the Director of Audit regarding \$8 m. contract for Microsoft License?

Mr Dulull: That was an opinion expressed by the Director of Audit, but the substance of the transaction was for the promotion of the ICT sector and to bring ICT at the doorstep of the less privileged of the society.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, nevertheless there has been a criticism of behalf of the Director of Audit.

Mr Dulull: I mentioned that was an opinion expressed by the Director of Audit. That is his point of view, but we, as a Government, we have a commitment to the nation, and we cannot abide by audity rules and regulations.

Mrs Martin: Mr Chairperson, the Minister says that he cannot abide by rules and regulations and the Ministry itself has to impose rules and regulations for things to go on normally. My question relates to another subject, with regard to page 553, can I ask the Minister what is the level of achievement for each of the baseline indicators imposed for financial year 2008/2009?

Mr Dulull: The rate of achievement is definitely on the high side.

Mrs Martin: Hon. Minister, I am sorry, but from what I can read from this programme, there has been no indication whatsoever on the baseline 2008/2009, and for any other outputs that have been outlined, and there were six of them. Can the Minister be clearer about this?

Mr Dulull: There is one thing I want to bring to the attention of the hon. Member. ICT in itself has to be viewed from a global picture. These days, the ICT sector cannot be viewed only as a commercial venture. It regulates, it is shaping of our daily life. In Mauritius, there is no ICT index. We are now creating an ICT index to measure the progress of ICT in our daily life. What I want to say is that you cannot isolate each programme *per se*. You have to view it from a macro perspective.

Mrs Martin: Precisely, this is what I was asking. Since 2005, the hon. Minister of Finance has been saying that ICT is a pillar, and that we have to sustain

it. Then, in 2008/2009, we see that there is nothing for Policy Document on Green Computing in Mauritius, for PBB indicators met nothing, for five working day rule met nothing, Parastatal and Statutory Bodies under the Ministry keep to financial targets nothing, for Director of Audit issues dealt with nothing, and Extent of achievement of Government measures announced in relevant budget nothing. Then we are expected for 2009 to attain 90% and 75% of the rest. How do we do this, since we have started from nothing at all?

Mr Dulull: I must tell the hon. Member that the progress of the ICT sector cannot be summarised with figures. Despite the world economic crisis, this sector is growing at an increasing rate, from 10% to 15%. In all the sectors, we are trying to preserve job, whereas in the ICT sector we are creating jobs. And it has not happened overnight. There are many companies queuing up to involve in our BPO sector. Now we have companies coming for the Disaster Recovery Centre, for green IT; it does not happen overnight or by coincidence. We are expanding the baseline; we are making of Mauritius a computerate nation, an intelligent nation, and we are investing in this sector.

Mrs Martin: The hon. Minister is saying that, from 2005 up to 2008/2009, nothing has been done, at least, to monitor. How far have we reached with regard to different targets and indicators put here in this Budget?

Mr Dulull: The hon. Member is saying that nothing is being done. In the virtual world, if you go to the Cyber city, you will see the real. See how many companies are investing in the Cyber city. I have to tell her one thing. We have to get our ICT sector moving in line with the vision of Government to make *Maurice Ile Durable*. So, that is why we are giving more attention to the green IT sector. We are trying to broaden the base of the ICT sector and not to rely only on BPO or IT enable services.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology - Programme Code: 661 Policy and Management for ICT (Rs3,810,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology - Programme Code: 662 Scaling Up the ICT Sector (Rs153,781,000) was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, page 560, item 31132102 - *Mauritius Identity Card/Smart Card Project*, we are going to vote a sum of Rs7 m. and then it will be increased to Rs95.5 m. in 2010. Could the hon. Minister inform the House what is the position with the introduction of the new identity card?

Mr Dulull: I thank the hon. Member for this question, as it is a very pertinent one. The national identity card project is a project of national interest, because it relates to national security. We have already floated the tender, and both the technical and the financial aspects of it have been examined. We are in the process of allocating the tender and, once the tender is allocated, we will ensure that the production of the card will start. If need be, we will try, with the help of the Minister of Finance, to reallocate the money, so that the project materialises in the shortest span of time.

Mrs Martin: On the same item, I can see on page 562 that there has been no sum earmarked for the other years, that is, the 2010 plan then 2011, as well for the July to December estimates. The Minister says he wants to do it in the shortest time possible. Has he evaluated the cost of implementing this measure? If yes, how are the funds going to be obtained in the short term, so that it is done in the shortest span of time possible?

Mr Dulull: That is why we say that we have done a financial and technical evaluation of the tender. Now we are in the process of allocating the tender, and we want to make sure that we get the best value for money.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: On the same item, since the hon. Minister has mentioned that the technical evaluation is over, would he state what are the items that would appear on the smart card?

Mr Dulull: The smart card, of course, is a National Identity Card. So, besides revealing the correct identity of the person, it will have digital signature, the address and other basic data. We want to make sure that the electronic signature, the codes of (31.21), recognition will be used for public transport for those eligible for free transport, blood group, residential address and, of course, we will use it with a biometric data also.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask from the hon. Minister whether the biometric data would include the fingerprints?

Mr Dulull: Yes, if need be, we will have to amend the pieces of legislation to allow for this.

Mr Varma: On page 562, *Item No. 31132401: e-Government Projects, (g) Crime Occurrence Tracking System and (l) GPS in Government Vehicles*, we can see that there were sums that we voted last year for these projects, but there is no provision for the forthcoming six months. Could the hon. Minister kindly enlighten the House about that?

Mr Dulull: With Government projects, the budget has been transferred to the line Ministries because before if there was a project that related to the Ministry of Education, we had the budget and developed it. Now the budget is allocated to the line Ministry and we support the development of the project.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: My question relates to page 551, *Sub-Programme 66202: e-Powering the Society*, what has been the level of implementation of the ICT course for the financial year 2008-2009 and the expected level of implementation for the next six months?

Mr Dulull: I suppose the Member is talking about the IC3 course. So, the statistic is as follows - until the end of the month of May, we had nearly 19,000 people registered and we had trained around 74,000 and still the project is on. For those who have already been trained with IC3, we are contemplating to move up the ladder to introduce the other phase, the IC4.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology – Programme Code 662 – Scaling up the ICT Sector (Rs153, 781,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 701 – Policy and Management for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter was called.

Mr Varma: On page 570, *Delivery Untis, Administration. O5: Review of legal framework in relation to consumer protection*, could the hon. Minister inform the House which are the existing legislations which are going to be reviewed?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Chairperson, we are consolidating our legal frame with the advice of the State Law Office concerning this matter and this will be ready very soon.

Ministry of Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 701 – Policy and Management for Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter (Rs13,680,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 525 – Consumer Protection and Price Control was called.

Mr Varma: I will take the matter later on.

Ministry of Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 525 – Consumer Protection and Price Control (Rs11,548,500) was agreed to.

Ministry of Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 702 – Citizens Charter was called.

Mr Varma: On page 571, *Delivery Units, Citizens Charter Unit*, will the Minister inform the House whether the help of the Citizens Advice Bureau will be enlisted in that endeavour?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Can you repeat the question, please?

Mr Varma: Will the help of the Citizens Advice Bureau be enlisted in that endeavour to promote the citizens' rights?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: Yes, Chairperson.

Mrs Martin: On the same page, *Output O1: Facilitate the publication and upgrading of Customer-Citizens Charters in Ministries and other institutions and ensure compliance with its provisions, P4: Improve Service delivery in Private Sector institutions*, can the Minister enlighten the House as to how he proposes to work about delivering this service and why has he chosen to start in 2010?

Mr Tang Wah Hing: We are going for a wide consultation with all the stakeholders on this matter.

Ministry of Consumer Protection and Citizens Charter – Programme Code 702 – Citizens Charter (Rs771,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

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

Mr Varma: On page 577, *Strategic Note, Major Achievements for 2008/09, 780 inspections carried out to ensure that workplaces are safe and free from dangerous occurrences*, could the hon. Minister inform the House how many of these workplaces were found to be unsafe? The second question is about the *70 occupational accidents and dangerous occurrences investigated* and how many of them have led into prosecution?

Mr Chaumière: I will circulate the information.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – Programme Code 541 – Policy and Management for Labour and Employment (Rs9,015,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – Programme Code 542 – Labour and Employment Relations Management was called.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 581 – *Output 01 – Enforcement of the Occupational Safety and Health Legislations*. From what I am led to believe, there is a problem regarding Health and Safety Officers in several organisations be even parastatal bodies. I am led to believe that there is even a Municipal Counsel who has been fined because of lack of a Health and Safety Officer. The reason given is that we do not have enough qualified Health and Safety Officers right now. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there are some measures which he is contemplating to alleviate this situation of lack of Health and Safety Officers?

Mr Chaumière: This is quite true, Mr Chairperson, that there is a dearth of qualified Health and Safety Officers in Mauritius. But the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology Mauritius are offering courses on Health and Safety. I think a batch of Health and Safety Officers would be released quite soon.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 580, *Output 02 – Settlement of complaints made at Labour offices – P1 and P2* – mentioned is made about the rate of settlement, we do not have the number, Mr Chairperson. I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could circulate the information if he doesn't have it at hand.

Mr Chaumière: Just to say that we have achieved our target of 33% and if I get the information, I'll just pass it on to the hon. Member.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – Programme Code 542 – Labour and Employment Relations Management (Rs70,772,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – Programme Code 543 – Registration of Associations, Trade Unions and Superannuation Funds was called.

Mr Varma: Page 582 – *Registry of Associations Output 01 Performance Indicator P1: Time (weeks) taken to process an application for registration*, we have 12 registrations, Mr Chairperson. I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could inform the House whether this relates to associations, trade unions or supplementary funds and, if so - if he does not have the information, he can circulate - the names of the associations or trade unions.

Mr Chaumière: The hon. Member is quite right.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – Programme Code 543 – Registration of Associations, Trade Unions and Superannuation Funds (Rs9,048,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to –

544 - Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment – Employment Facilitation (Rs29,790,000)

401 - Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit – Environmental Policy and Management (Rs27,425,000)

Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit – Programme Code 402 – Environmental protection and Conservation was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 599 – *Policy Planning and Law Division – P3: Guidelines on Odour Control and P4: Standards for Drinking Water Quality*, I would be grateful if the guidelines could be circulated for the benefit of the House.

As far as, the standards for Drinking Water Quality is concerned, I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could inform the House, who carried out the test to determine the standards of drinking water.

My third question concerns Performance Indicator P1: *Number of potentially polluting industries where ambient air quality is being monitored regularly*, the number has been mentioned, Mr Chairperson. The number is six for the year 2008/2009. I would be grateful if the names of the industry could be mentioned and what are the steps that are being taken for them to reduce the pollution level?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to information requested for circulation, it will be circulated.

With regard to testing of water, it is being done by the National Laboratory which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment.

With regard to the test carried for drinking water, it is being done under the supervision also of the Ministry of Health.

With regard to the number of industries that have been put under the control for air pollution, if the hon. Member will bear with me, the information would be supplied in a few seconds.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 607, item 31410402 –*Rehabilitation of Beach and Beach Reprofiling*, could the hon. Minister give details in relation thereto?

Mr Bundhoo: With regard to the coastal protection of work, Mr Chairperson, some of the works have been carried out at Flic en Flac in September 2008 and others at Trou Aux Biches and Rivière Des Galets.

Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit – Programme Code 402 – Environmental protection and Conservation (Rs70,819,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit – Programme Code 403 – Uplifting and Embellishment of the Physical Environment (Rs112,868,000) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit – Programme Code 404 – Community-Based Infrastructure, Amenities and Public Empowerment was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, at page 609, under item 31112023 – *Construction of Community Centres/Social Halls*, we see that a sum was voted last year and we had a commitment that a social centre will be built at Le Bouchon. Could the hon. Minister inform the House where matters stand?

Mr Bundhoo: With regard to Le Bouchon, Mr Chairperson, I have already replied to a substantive question in the House.

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Minister circulate the places where cremation grounds are being upgraded and new ones constructed?

Mr Bundhoo: The information sought will be circulated but for the benefit of the newly elected hon. Member, can I assure him and hon. Suren Dayal that tenders and contracts have already been awarded for the Ripailles cremation ground. Therefore, both of you may go there safely.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order, please! Thank you!

The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to –

404 - Community-Based, Infrastructure Amenities and Public Empowerment (Rs196,447,000)

405 - Land Drainage (Rs104,452,000).

The Chairperson: We thank the officials of the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit.

Ministry of Civil Service & Administrative Reforms - Programme Code: 301: Civil Service Policy and Management was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, on page 618 under item *Main Constraints and challenges*, certain observations have been made. The first one: *Ministry of*

Finance and Economic Empowerment is required to provide consultancy, the second one: Ministry of Information and Communication Technology will need to enlist the services of Consultant to review this problem and the third one: Request for Consultancy Service already submitted to MOFEE. Could the hon. Minister inform the House of the developments in these matters?

Dr. Hookoom: Mr Chairperson, concerning the issues of lack of expertise in specific fields and implementation of PMS in specialised agencies, we are proposing to hire the services of a consultant to assist my Ministry in the implementation of the PMS in specialised agencies like the Judiciary and health services.

Concerning the issues of constraints and challenges, slow connectivity, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology has made provision for dedicated lines and they have also increased the bandwidth of existing lines. The Government Online Centre has upgraded all their hardwares/servers. Ministries/Departments have made provisions for a new state-of-the-art PCs for officers working on the systems. The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology is also proposing to hire the services of a consultant to audit all the softwares hosted by the GOC.

The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to –

301 - Civil Service Policy and Management (Rs9,123,800)

302 - Administrative Reform in the Civil Service (Rs6,080,450)

303 - Human Resource Development and Capacity Building (Rs9,695,200)

304 - Civil Service Administration and Human Resource Management (Rs91,218,275)

Ministry of Youth & Sports - Programme Code 681: Policy and Management for Youth and Sports (Rs3,616,140) was called and agreed to

Programme Code 682: Promotion and Development of Sports was called.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, on page 634 under *Sports Section, Output 03: Organisation of the Jeux de L'Espoir (November 2009) (Age group 14-15 years)*, could the hon. Minister inform the House where the *Jeux de L'Espoir* would be held? My second question is about the *Sports Session* only. At page 635, under *Output 04: Organisation of the National Inter College Games 2009 (June 30 – July 03 2009) (Age group 12 -20)*, can I ask the hon. Minister where they will be held and whether they will be still in the first division and second division which are held on different days?

Mr Ritoo: The *Jeux de L'Espoir* is in all the colleges, it is for the students aged 13 to 14 years and it will be all over the island. The competition will be held in November 2009. We are having a meeting with the Federation of Managers to discuss about the organisation of the games. It will be all around the island.

Programme Code 682: Promotion and Development of Sports (Rs164,634,620) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 683: Youth Services was called.

Mr Varma: On page 635 under *Youth Section, Output 02: Sensitisation of Youth in upperforms against social evils*, could the hon. inform the House where have these sensitisation campaigns been held at colleges, youth centres?

Mr Ritoo: The sensitisation campaign is being held all around the island and in all the youth centres.

Programme Code 683: Youth Services (Rs35,762,145) was, on question put, agreed to.

Centralised Operations of Government - Programme Code 951: Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.

Mr Jugnauth: I'll just ask a question of a general nature, because I see that there are estimates for 2008/2009. On the whole, we do not know how much has actually been spent even up to now. I understand that we cannot have the figures

up to the financial year, but can we have an idea about how much money is being spent?

Dr. Sithanen: We will not get the final figure for the financial year, until end of July. Regarding the amount that has been spent up to now, we will see whether we can make it available on our website.

Programme Code 951: Centrally Managed Expenses of Government (Rs940,020,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Centrally Managed Expenses of Government - Programme Code 951 (Rs940,020,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government - Programme Code 952 (Rs561,443,000) was called and agreed to.

Contingencies and Reserves Programme Code 989 (Rs975,000,000) was called and agreed to.

The Schedule was agreed to

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and agreed to

The title and the enacting clause were agreed to

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to

At this stage Mr Speaker took the Chair.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen): Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 05 June 2009 at 3.30 p.m.

Mr X. L. Duval rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 2.03 a.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 05 June 2009 at 3.30 p.m.