



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 01 DECEMBER 2009

MAURITIUS

Fourth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 35 of 2009

Sitting of Tuesday 01 December 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)

PAPER LAID

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

Prime Minister's Office –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of The Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Bill (No. XXIII of 2009).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SOLAR WATER HEATER LOAN SCHEME

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Ag. Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to Solar Water Heaters, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Maurice Ile Durable Fund, information as to the number thereof having been effectively installed under the 2008 Solar Water Heater Loan Scheme operated by the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd. indicating –
 - (i) how many are operational;
 - (ii) if cases of fraud have been referred to the Police or the Independent Commission Against Corruption;
- (b) state who will operate the Rs250m Scheme announced in the 2010 Budget, indicating –
 - (i) the fraud control mechanism that will be set up;
 - (ii) why the subsidy has been halved, and
 - (c) state the recycling process thereof being envisaged.

The Ag Prime Minister (Dr. R. Beebejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Solar Water Heater Scheme was introduced in July 2008 following the Budget 2008/2009 and enactment of the MID Fund regulations which provided for “the provision of outright grants of Rs10,000 for every solar water heater purchased by 31 December 2009, through the solar water heater loan scheme operated by the Development Bank of Mauritius”.

The loan provided by the DBM is up to a ceiling of Rs15,000 at 9% annual interest rate, refundable in seven years. In September 2008, the Maurice Ile Durable Fund Committee extended the scheme to orphanages, shelters and non-profit residential charitable organisations. Mr Speaker, Sir, the criteria for the grant and loan were established by the Development Bank of Mauritius. For the purpose of the payment of the grant, the Development Bank of Mauritius registered the suppliers. To satisfy the registration of

suppliers the supplier should *inter alia* -

- (i) be a registered company in Mauritius, a direct importer and not a retailer, agent of an existing registered supplier;
- (ii) produce the relevant development permits from authorities concerned for carrying out its business;
- (iii) produce the company's license and trade license on a yearly basis;
- (iv) produce an accredited certificate issued by the Mauritius Standards Bureau and/or acceptable certification issued by a recognised body;
- (v) submit to the bank a monthly return of solar water heaters delivered as per specified format;
- (vi) submit to the DBM, documentary evidence pertaining to any change in shareholding, shareholding pattern and directors, and
- (vii) notify the bank of any change in its business/registered address.

With the introduction of the grant scheme for solar water heaters, the number of suppliers increased progressively from 6 registered in July 2005 to 45 in 2009.

Eligibility of Households for Grant

To benefit for the grant, an applicant has to submit an application form either directly to the DBM or to the registered supplier with a set of identification documents, such as ID, birth and marriage certificates, the quotation for the solar water heater and utility bills. An applicant who had already benefited from a grant or loan from the DBM for a solar water heater is not eligible under the scheme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in January 2009 there was revision of these applications process. We recognise that, initially the existing scheme did not provide adequate safeguards against unscrupulous suppliers, resulting in the drastic increase in the number of suppliers and the importation of low quality solar water heaters.

We have taken steps in consultation with the Mauritius Standards Bureau, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment and the Ministry for Consumer Protection and Citizen's Charter to remedy these weaknesses namely -

- (i) until January 2009, DBM was issuing the grant in the name of the supplier through the applicant after the approval of the application by the DBM. It was

- the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the solar water heater was installed;
- (ii) since January 2009, the process for payment of the grant has been improved. Payment is now being made only after the applicant submits a coupon certifying that the solar water heater has been installed to his satisfaction. Upon receipt of the coupon, DBM makes the payment directly to the supplier, and
 - (iii) in addition, after consultations with the Mauritius Standards Bureau, suppliers were required to submit a Certificate of Conformity , from an accredited body from the country of origin.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that though a loan scheme for solar water heaters has been operational since 1991, there has been no prescribed standards for solar water heaters.

In order to address this issue, my Ministry with the assistance of UNDP appointed a consultant (Consolair), who carried out an assessment of the solar water heater scheme and made recommendations on the standards to be prescribed. I wish to inform the House that the Mauritius Standards Bureau will prescribe standards by December 2009. Concurrently, we are also considering the possibility of providing the necessary testing facilities. The Consultant will be in Mauritius from 13 to 15 December to assist the Mauritius Standards Bureau in finalising the standards and also advise on the introduction of the new solar water heater scheme announced in the of Budget 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in July 2008, an initial provision of Rs250 m. was made under the Maurice Ile Durable Fund for grants of Rs10,000 to 25,000 households. However, by April 2009, DBM had already received 29,000 applicants and by 19 May 2009, the number of applicants rapidly increased to 49,000. The 20,000 excess applications which were submitted to DBM in May 2009 - I repeat, the 20,000 excess applications which were submitted to DBM in May 2009 - will be given priority in the next year scheme provided that they satisfy the new criteria and guidelines.

Number of Solar Water Heaters Operational

With reference to part (a) of the question, I am advised by the DBM that as at 27 November 2009, 12,711 solar water heaters have been installed under the scheme and are operational.

Case of Fraud detected

No case of fraud has been referred to the Police or the Independent Commission against Corruption.

However, two internal audit exercises have been undertaken by the Internal Audit Section of my Ministry in January and July 2009 to ascertain the genuineness of the names and addresses of the applicants, whether the solar water heaters were, in fact, installed and whether the applicants were satisfied with the equipment. The first audit exercise carried out on a sample of 100 households revealed that almost all the households were satisfied except for two beneficiaries, who complained about rusting and overflowing. The cases were referred to DBM which ensured that remedial action was taken. The second audit exercise on a sample of 58 beneficiaries found that almost all the beneficiaries were satisfied except for three applicants. Two equipments had been delivered, but not installed and one had yet to be delivered. The cases were reported to the DBM and the supplier took corrective actions. A further visit was carried out to ensure that the supplier had actually taken the necessary remedial action.

Mr Speaker Sir, there is one case in Supreme Court, the Alternative Power Solutions Ltd. The registration of one supplier has been suspended by the DBM as from January 2009 for failure to comply with some criteria and the refusal to comply with the process of submitting coupons certified by households. The applications submitted by this supplier have been withheld. The supplier has referred the matter to the Supreme Court and the matter is *sub judice*.

Control Mechanism – New Scheme

As regards part (b) of the question, the new scheme for which an amount of Rs 250 m. has been provided in the budget 2010, the DBM will be responsible for disbursement of the grants, but with certain changes.

The registration of suppliers will be revisited. Registration will henceforth be carried out by my Ministry instead of the DBM on the basis of strict criteria, of standards, for example, standards to be prescribed as well as the technical capability, credit worthiness, after sales service, past records and experience in the solar water heater business etc of the company among other criteria. We are reinforcing this, Mr. Speaker Sir.

My Ministry in consultation with the DBM, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry for Consumer Protection and the Mauritius Standards Bureau is presently working on the guidelines which will be made public early next year.

My Ministry will establish the necessary control mechanism to avoid fraud, such as regular inspections of suppliers and beneficiaries premises, payment of grant after inspection to certify that the solar water heater has been installed and is functioning, enforcement of the standards at importation, among others. The details of the control mechanisms are being worked out in collaboration with the Ministry of Consumer Protection and the Mauritius Revenue Authority. Any case of fraudulent practice will be reported to the police.

Mr Speaker Sir, as regards the new grant scheme, the subsidy has been halved to Rs5,000 in order to extend the coverage of the scheme to a wider number of households, that is, 50,000 additional households. This is in line with the policy of Government to encourage the use of solar energy and to make it accessible to a maximum number of households.

Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for emphasising and drawing attention on an important aspect of disposal of used solar water heaters after their lifetime, which is on average ten years or more.

In the same way that the Maurice Ile Durable Fund is presently looking into the disposal of CFL lamps in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit, and the Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands it will also look into the disposal of used solar water heaters and consider possibilities of recycling. I am informed that if made up of glass and metal it should not be too difficult to have a scheme for recycling in Mauritius. Having said that, my Ministry is proposing to seek advice from Reunion Island and request for technical assistance from *Agence Française de Développement* under the *convention de financement* which was signed recently.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Ag. Prime Minister has confirmed that, as the scheme was being set up, the number of recognised suppliers jumped from six - in fact, my information is five, but never mind - to 45. Obviously, alarm bells should have started ringing at the DBM or at the Ministry. Can we have an explanation about that and how long did it take for someone to wake up somewhere?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the scheme having been introduced, as the DBM went along, we did realise that there was a problem. I was not happy from the

beginning that the water scheme was supplier driven, and I put a stop to it very quickly soon after.

Mr Bérenger: Nevertheless, the Ag. Prime Minister put a stop very quickly after 45 suppliers were registered, and I heard the Ag. Prime Minister saying that only direct importers were registered. Was that the case? Were all the 45 of them direct importers and, if not, who was taken to task?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is surprising how quickly the scheme attracted importers. Amazing! I must say we are a *nation d'innovateurs*.

Mr Bérenger: *Loterie!* We spent, according to what the hon. Minister of Finance said in the Budget Speech, Rs290 m. in 2008 on that scheme set up in 2008. That means that some 29,000 solar heaters should have been installed, and if I heard the hon. Ag. Prime Minister rightly - he said 12,000 and something - 12,000 only had been installed. Can we know the explanation behind this discrepancy? Instead of 29,000, we are left with 12,000 solar heaters installed and operational.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think this was a right thing to do. Once we realised things were not as they should have been, we put a stop to it, and this is the reason why we have disbursed only 12,000 and something and a certain number of approved solar water heaters installed. As to the rest of the 29,000, none will be delivered and paid for until it has been certified by my Ministry. We are intending to employ some young people to go and visit and certify and come back. For the 17,000 that are left, I can guarantee the House that it would be done properly.

Let me put things in perspective, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I have said, it has been a small sample. I am the first to recognise it – 100 on the first time, 58 on the second time. The first time, there were two which were not functioning very well, already rusted, which is a sign of poor quality, the water overflowing, wrong installation again but, in the second case, out of the 58, 14 were from one supplier and of the 14, three were not satisfactory. If he had not quickly responded, we would have gone to the police or to ICAC for that. As I said, we slowed it down on purpose because we realised at the Ministry that we ought to revise the whole scheme to have stricter criteria, and there are two that should be important: quality and price. I hope that with the ongoing scheme from January, we will be able to better satisfy the population.

Mr Bérenger: The Ag. Prime Minister is telling us now, Mr Speaker, Sir, that money has been paid in only 12,000 cases, whereas the hon. Minister of Finance, in his Budget Speech, was categorical and said Rs290 m. have been paid out. Can I know which is which?

The Ag. Prime Minister: From my angle, Mr Speaker, Sir, I registered that it has been provided for; whether it is spent, I did not hear that. But, I repeat again, the sum provided – Rs290 m. – as from now on will be spent according to strict criteria and control.

Mr Bérenger: There have been reports of a lot of fraud having taken place – collusion between some people of the Development Bank of Mauritius and some suppliers; collusion between buyers and suppliers, and it has now been confirmed that it was a bonanza for some. The so-called suppliers jumped from six to 45. There has clearly been a lot of fraud in there. Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister quantify, according to him, according to his inquiries, out of the millions given to the DBM to be spent on solar heaters, how much have been victims of fraud? How much of public money has been lost?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, out of the 158 households that have been inquired into, there is only one case where the supplier had pocketed the money, but had not installed the equipment and his explanation is that he was going to do it any time, imminent. That is why we changed the scheme from supplier to client and, now, better than that, from client to control by the Ministry. So, I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition. This is one case of suspected malpractice - I am not saying fraud; it's a strong word - out of the 158.

Mr Bérenger: The DBM is guilty in that affair and it is the same DBM that, supposedly, carried out what the hon. Ag. Prime Minister himself acknowledged to have been a very limited survey. We are talking about 12,000, supposedly, solar heaters having been installed, and the survey covers a few hundreds. Do we know, out of those 12,000 solar heaters that have been paid for, that are supposed to have been installed, how many have evaporated and how many are operational today?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, a sample is a sample. So, I cannot compare. But what we did also I must say is, having targeted a few suppliers that we thought were suspects, the sample was directed more towards those on whom we had doubt.

Having said that, I will say to the House that, by the middle of next year - I cannot put a precise date - we will look at all the water heaters that have been installed. We have a scheme. We have a project of employing a hundred young people from different Ministries;

we will have some of them working on the solar water heater scheme to see that what Government has contributed has been well spent.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Ag. Prime Minister himself has referred to suspected suppliers. Obviously, there has been a rip-off; obviously, it has been a bonanza for some people. Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister tell me why no case has been referred to the police or to ICAC? There has been collusion clearly as to why no case has been referred to the police or to ICAC, involving collusion between some at the DBM and the suppliers or between suppliers and so-called buyers.

The Ag. Prime Minister: As I said, the only suspicious case has been the one which was already paid for but not installed, and the supplier said he was going to do it imminently; and he did it. So, out of the 158, we have no cause to be seriously concerned but, as I said, we look at the whole thing. As from now on, we look at those who had been approved, but not installed and those yet to be approved and installed.

Mr Bérenger: We have looked at that financial mess. As far as production is concerned, has an inquiry been carried out by the CEB on the amount of electricity supplied through this scheme? What has been its impact on demand at the CEB's end and, particularly, has there been any impact on peak demand at the CEB?

The Ag. Prime Minister: It is a bit too early to talk about its impact. Ever since the introduction of solar water heaters, there have been questions of how useful they can be, who are the social classes that use them, how many people use them really and at what time they use them and so on and so forth, and the short answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, is no. The number is too limited yet for us to have definitely an answer on it.

Mr Bodha: In view of the fact that the objective is to increase the number of people who can have access to solar heater system. When we see the hassle, the administrative burden, will Government consider increasing the Rs5,000? Because Rs5,000 definitely is not an incentive, and we are not going to achieve the objective that they are meant for.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I take note of what is being said. Let's start, and if we find that the incentive is not strong enough, we will act accordingly.

Mr Lesjongard: The Ag. Prime Minister has talked of the MSP as an accredited body. Can we get an indication about which are the other accredited bodies in Mauritius?

The Ag. Prime Minister: We have been dealing with the MSP only so far, but we will look at all the possibilities as we go along.

Mr Spéville: Considering the price for installing a unit solar system in Rodrigues, that is, a water tank at Rs10,000, an automatic electric pump at Rs7,000 plus Rs5,000 for installation of pipe fittings and mixer, does the Government consider increasing the funds so that low and middle class people in Rodrigues can get access to it?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I'll look at the suggestion. I'll talk to my friends in Rodrigues and see how we can help.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the attention of the hon. Ag. Prime Minister been brought to the fact that, *depuis quelque temps, des charlatans font le tour des cités ouvrières et distribuent des formulaires de la DBM, non seulement pour les inciter à remplir le formulaire pour un chauffe-eau solaire mais pour soutirer de l'argent à des gens pauvres*? Has the attention of the Ag. Prime Minister been drawn to it? Is it not time to inform the general public, to draw the attention of the public to the new criteria and what are the procedures?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Certainly, but if we are talking of the same supplier, he is the one who is taking us to Court.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, to come back on this question of the sum which the hon. Minister of Finance had approved, that is, a sum of Rs290 m. has been approved for 29,000 solar heaters, what is the exact amount that has been disbursed?

The Ag. Prime Minister: 12,711 multiplied by Rs10,000.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether there are any incentives being given to local producers for the setting up of such units for production of solar heater in Mauritius?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, that is a very good question. We have looked into it, and we also had interest from Reunion island to come and set up here but, apparently, the cost is high and they are unwilling to come. But we will encourage local suppliers. What we hope is that if we get to this target of 50,000 households asking for solar water heaters, the cost will go down and more manufacturers will be interested. This is maybe one of the fallouts of the Rs5,000 and the extension of the scheme.

Mr Gunness: Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he is prepared to issue a communiqué, so that out of the 12,711 people who have installed solar water heaters, in case

they have any complaints, to address to his Ministry, and to put a desk so that they can lodge their complaints?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is yes. But, surprisingly, we have done it in the past. Anyone who is not satisfied with the set-up of the scheme should come, but they have not come and from what I have heard in the House, we are talking more of connivance between different parties and those who are conniving will not come, but we will look at the other issues.

Mr Barbier: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether, with regard to the 12,000 cases where funds have already been disbursed, he will consider the possibility to investigate to see whether there have been no discrepancies so far?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I address this issue by saying that once we appoint these young people to go round, they will work backward as well as forward.

Mr Bérenger: I have two final questions. The hon. Ag. Prime Minister has said two things. One, that priority will be given to those who are already registered with the Development Bank of Mauritius, although it won't be the DBM that will operate it now, and second, he also said that there will be new eligibility criteria. Can I know which is which? What will be those new eligibility criteria?

The Ag. Prime Minister: In the last part of my question, I said that we will publish new eligibility criteria, and the outstanding ones from the 29,000 will have to satisfy the new criteria. But the criteria will be published.

Mr Bérenger: Finally, the hon. Minister of Finance describes the mess we are looking at as having been an outstanding success. *Il prend des libertés avec les mots aussi, pas seulement les chiffres, M. le président.* There has been a rip-off by some, and we don't know yet how many millions of rupees have evaporated - a lot, according to me. There has been a rip-off, not to call a hold-up, by some. Does not Government, the Ag. Prime Minister think that it is not too late to have a double enquiry? One by the Director of Audit on the financial mess, what took place at the DBM and so on, and the second one by the police, going for those who have colluded to commit fraud in relation to public money?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would not say fraud; I would say possibility of fraud, possibility of rip-off. It is not quite the same as rip-off but, as I have said, we are going to enquire into all those that have been supplied and for those that are

going to be supplied. If we find some disquieting information, we will proceed and go ahead with what the hon. Leader of Opposition has said.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions B/1245 and B/1246 have been withdrawn. Hon. Lauthan!

EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICE - VEHICLES

(No. B/1243) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the Emergency Response Service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of

- (a) vehicles presently deployed for patrols, indicating the number thereof attached in the Port Louis North and Port Louis South Divisions, respectively and
- (b) in service in each vehicle during patrols.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the main purpose of the Emergency Response Service is to provide a first line emergency response service and 24-hour vigilance on the roads. Its personnel is also called upon to provide additional support to police station personnel when attending to requests from members of the public, in road accident cases, policing of events and performing stop and search operations.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Emergency Response Service has a fleet of 27 vehicles to cover the whole island. Two ERS vehicles are attached to Port Louis North Division and they operate each from Fanfaron Police Station and Plaine Verte Police Station. Another two vehicles service the Port Louis South Division from Pailles Police Station and the Line Barracks, respectively.

As for part (b) of the question, I am informed that an average of eight police officers are attached to each vehicle. They work on a three 8-hour shift system. Thus, during patrols, the number of Police Officers in a vehicle varies from two to three during each shift depending upon availability of staff, taking into consideration their weekly leaves.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, replying to the PQ as far as back 10 April 2007, the Prime Minister said that, at that time, there were 25 vehicles and the Government would purchase 40 additional vehicles to be attached to the ERS which, as we know, is the most solicited service of the Police Force. Now, the Ag. Prime Minister is saying that that the fleet

is still at 27. Can I request the Ag. Prime Minister to take the necessary measures to expedite matters?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I'll look into the matter.

Mr Dulloo: I have one supplementary question, Sir. May I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether he will look into the provision of this service for the area of Pereybère, Grand' Baie, Pointe-aux-Cannoniers and Mon Choisy? Because I am informed that, for this very well frequented area, especially over the weekend, there is only one vehicle being provided.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure that, apart from the ERS, there are other services as well. But, yes, I will transmit this request to the Commissioner of Police.

POLICE STATIONS - STAFF, EQUIPMENT & TRANSPORT

(No. B/1244) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether in regard to the Police Stations, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the facilities available at each of them, including -

- (a) staffing
- (b) equipment, and
- (c) transport.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 70 Police Stations in Mauritius and 6 in Rodrigues. I am sure that the hon. Member will appreciate that the information requested is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Incidentally, I had some difficulty myself looking at what facilities the hon. Member is looking after. If he could probably communicate to us, because facilities include from toilets to equipment, staffing and so on. I have got a bulky file here, and it is yet to be completed.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, to give the Ag. Prime Minister an idea about staffing, I will take only four stations. For Plaine Verte, which has an authorised number of staff of 72, there are actually 43; for Trou Fanfaron, the authorised number of staff is 94 and there are 60 - a shortage of 34 staff; Abercrombie which is a class 'A' station, out of 94, there are

presently only 57 and, for Roche Bois, out of 55, there are 39 - a shortage of 16. The Ag. Prime Minister will realise there is a large discrepancy from the authorised number and the actual number of police officers in these stations. I have mentioned only four.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know what comment to make. I am impressed by how much information the hon. Member has, but I will have it checked and, as I said, we will get a reply not only for Port Louis or any particular area, but for the whole lot which the hon. Member has requested for.

Mr Lauthan: I want to come on the issue of equipment. I raised an issue, to which the hon. Ag. Prime Minister agreed. There was a valuable suggestion that, when there are fatal accidents and corpses on the streets, these vehicles be provided with bed sheets so that, at least, we can cover these dead bodies, because it gives rise to anger from the crowd. If this, at least, could be done in the immediate future.

HEAVY VEHICLES - ACCIDENTS

(No. B/1245) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to accidents caused by heavy vehicles/in which heavy vehicles were involved, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, since June 2008 to date, in which -

- (a) death has resulted and/or
- (b) injuries sustained.

(Withdrawn)

POLICE CELLS – DETAINEES – EVASION

(No. B/1246) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the detainees who have escaped from the police cells, since May 2009 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, indicating

- (a) how many have been captured and
- (b) the measures taken to prevent evasion therefrom.

(Withdrawn)

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO - MARINE PARK PROJECT

(No. B/1247) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he is aware of the proposed project of the British Government to set up a marine park at the Chagos Archipelago and, if so, will he state the stand of the Mauritian Government in relation thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions B/1247 and B/1256 together as they relate to the same subject.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the British Government launched on 10 November 2009 a public consultation on the proposal of the Chagos Environment Network for the creation of a Marine Protected Area in the Chagos Archipelago. The creation of such a Marine Protected Area was proposed in March 2009 by the Chagos Environment Network which comprises the Chagos Conservation Trust and leading conservation organisations. This Marine Protected Area is intended to be one of the world's largest marine protected areas and to double the global coverage of the world's oceans benefiting from full protection.

For the purposes of the public consultation, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office has produced a Consultation Document.

The document proposes three options for a possible framework for a Marine Protected Area, namely -

- (a) declaration of a full no-take marine reserve for the whole of the territorial waters and Environmental Preservation and Protection Zone/Fisheries Conservation and Management Zone;
- (b) declaration of a no-take marine reserve for the whole of the territorial waters and Environmental Preservation and Protection Zone/Fisheries Conservation and Management Zone with exceptions for certain forms of pelagic fishery (e.g. tuna) in certain zones at certain times of the year, or
- (c) declaration of a no-take marine reserve for the vulnerable reef systems only.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following the proposal of the Chagos Environment Network for the creation of a Marine Protected Area in the Chagos Archipelago, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade issued a *Note Verbale* on 05 March 2009 to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, restating that under Mauritian and international law, the Chagos Archipelago is under the sovereignty of Mauritius and that the

creation of any Marine Park in the Chagos Archipelago would require the consent of Mauritius.

A letter of protest, along the same lines as the *Note Verbale*, was also addressed to the Chagos Environment Network.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, a second round of talks on the Chagos Archipelago between Mauritius and the UK was held in Port Louis on 21 July 2009. At that meeting, the British delegation had proposed that consideration be given to preserving the marine biodiversity in the waters surrounding the Chagos Archipelago by the establishment of a marine protected area in the region.

The Mauritius delegation welcomed, in principle, the proposal for environmental protection, and agreed that a team of officials and marine scientists from both sides would meet to examine the implications of the concept with a view to informing the next round of talks, which is scheduled to be held early next year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since there is an on-going bilateral Mauritius-UK mechanism for talks and consultations on issues relating to the Chagos Archipelago and a third round of talks is envisaged early next year, Government believes that it is inappropriate for the British to embark on consultation globally on the proposed Marine Protected Area outside this bilateral framework.

Government also considers that the establishment of a Marine Protected Area in the Chagos Archipelago should not be incompatible with the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago. As the House is aware, Mauritius does not recognize the so-called British Indian Ocean Territory and has always affirmed its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago. A Marine Protected Area project in the Chagos Archipelago should address the issues of resettlement, access to the fisheries resources, and the economic development of the islands in a manner, which would not prejudice the effective exercise by Mauritius of its sovereignty over the Archipelago. A total ban on fisheries exploitation and omission of those issues from any Marine Protected Area project would not be compatible with the resolution of the sovereignty issue and progress in the ongoing talks.

Government is also of the view that the existing framework for talks on the Chagos Archipelago and the related environmental issues should not be overtaken by the process of consultation launched by the British Government on the proposed Marine Protected Area.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the views of Government have been conveyed to the British Government by way of a *Note Verbale* issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 23 November 2009.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also need to point out that the issue of the proposed creation of a Marine Protected Area in the Chagos Archipelago region was raised both by the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, with their respective British counterparts, in the margins of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Trinidad and Tobago, last week.

Mr Bodha: I thank the Ag. Prime Minister for his answer. May I ask him whether he is aware that the British Government has started a series of consultations with the Illois community and a facilitator is supposed to travel to Port Louis between 21 January and 09 February 2010 to consider the opinion of the Illois Community on this issue?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, having pointed out that the Prime Minister discussed *en marge de* the meeting held in Trinidad and Tobago, I think that we should wait for the Prime Minister to come back, so that he can give us full information of the results of these discussions.

Mr Bodha: May I refer, Mr Speaker, Sir, to a letter sent by hon. Milliband, Foreign Secretary to the Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Chagos Island of the UK Parliament? In that letter, he refers to this consultation. May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he is also aware that, in his answer, Mr Jeremy Corbin, Chairperson of the APG Chagos, has said that nothing should be done before the Court case, which is pending at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg? He also said that, in fact, this project should be shelved?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I agree with what is being said, and we will go along. As I said, the issues are complex and three-sided, and I think that we should wait for the Prime Minister to make a statement or to answer to questions in the House.

Mr Bérenger: The Ag. Prime Minister has made reference to a consultation document circulated by the UK side. There have been reports that Mauritius suggested amendments thereto. Is that the case? If yes, how come we can suggest amendments to a consultation document that we should be challenging?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of this development, but I will certainly transmit it. I don't think this, as you pointed out, appropriate.

Mr Bérenger: The Ag. Prime Minister has made reference to that consultation document which is available; two different *notes verbales* and to the meeting from both sides on the Chagos - UK and Mauritius - which took place on 21 July 2009. Can we have those documents placed in the Library, that is, a copy of the consultation document, which is in the public domain, and a copy of the two *notes verbales* as well as the minutes of proceedings of that meeting of 21 July 2009?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The joint communiqué is public as such, and we will lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly. But I will consult my colleague, and I see no difficulty.

Mr Varma: Could the Ag. Prime Minister inform the House whether there has been any response to the *notes verbales* dated 23 November of this year? Has there been any response to those *notes verbales*?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware that there has been a response so far.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Ag. Prime Minister stated that a team of officials and marine scientists from both sides met. Is it possible to get a copy of their examination report in view of the forthcoming of the Consultation Coordinator who is supposed to be here next year?

The Ag. Prime Minister: My Speaker, Sir, I will make sure that anything that can be communicated is done.

LARCENY WITH VIOLENCE – REPORTED CASES – REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/1248) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to larceny with violence, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, since June 2005 to date, indicating the recent remedial measures taken to avert the commission thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that for the period June 2005 to 25 November 2009, the number of cases of larceny with violence reported to the police are as follows -

Year 2006:	1,204
Year 2007:	1,627
Year 2008:	1,432
Year 2009 (as at 25 November 2009):	894

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that operations are being carried out at three levels namely Force level, Divisional level and Station level to curb down larcenies.

At the Force Level, the personnel of the Special Mobile Force (SMF), and Special Support Unit (SSU) perform mobile patrols accompanied by a Police Officer in uniform and one officer from Central Investigation Division (CID). The CID and the SSU Training Wing personnel also conduct motorcycles patrols and joint operations are carried out by the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) and CID for the arrest of suspects.

At the Divisional level, the Divisional Commanders plan and execute their own operations using the resources available at their level such as the Divisional Support Unit (DSU), Emergency Response Service (ERS), *Police du Tourisme*, Traffic Branch, Divisional CID and ADSU. These are -

- (a) manning of vehicle check points during the day and also at night at specific hours at strategic places within their divisions with a view to detecting offences through checks of motor vehicles and suspects, and
- (b) arrest of suspects involved in criminal cases under investigation.

At the Police Station level, Stations-in-Charge arrange to provide visible Police presence through foot patrol on beats, near banks, hotels, jeweler's shops, restaurants, bus stands, commercial areas and streets. They also, through the Police Public Partnership Policing, enlist the collaboration of the public at large in the prevention and detection of offences in their respective station area.

In addition, the Police Crime Prevention Unit carry out awareness campaigns through various workshops and forums on crime prevention. Since the year 2008 to 25 November 2009, the Crime Prevention Unit has carried out 1,369 campaigns targeting 127,735 participants and has distributed 91,500 brochures and booklets to sensitise the public on crime prevention.

The police are now making use of new technology to address crime issues such as use of ‘portrait robot’ and the Close Circuit Television (CCTV) System. The CCTV system is already operational at Flic en Flac since 22 April 2009 and will be extended to the major arteries and agglomerations of the City of Port Louis and the tourist resort of Grand’ Baie next year.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the Ag. Prime Minister agree that most of the cases are perpetrated in aggravating circumstances and we have more and more a culture of larceny with violence? May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister what is done to address this issue?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I would agree that there has been a sort of gang culture, tormenting, harassing and terrorising people. In the answer, I have described the action to address this issue. I will take note and take necessary action.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he can give us some insight on how the CCTV system is operating in Flic en Flac, whether the number of reported cases has fallen?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am informed that the results have been very satisfactory. I think that the question has been replied already about cases of larceny with violence, snatching people’s purses on the street, which have gone down considerably. I am informed that, in Quatre Bornes, it is being installed at the moment and, by next year, we should be seeing it in Port Louis as well. So, in short, they are proving to be effective.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister, whether he is aware of the feeling of insecurity which is prevailing among the population as per the crime digest report published by the CSO? Will he agree that the measures that are being taken by the Police Force are not giving the required results?

Mr Speaker: This question relates to a specific matter of larceny with violence. If the hon. Member’s question fits in larceny with violence, I will allow it. If it is a general question, I will not allow it.

Mr Varma: The Ag. Prime Minister has made mention of a number of reported cases. Can he inform the House how many of these cases have resulted in convictions?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have not got the information, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I will provide it if the hon. Member is interested. I take the trouble of pointing out again that the

number of reported cases has gone down, not considerably, but they have not gone up certainly; from 1,600 to 1,400 and, so far, it is below 900.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Ag. Prime Minister has mentioned for the last five years these figures of 6,059 cases of larceny with violence. Can I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister how will he reconcile these dramatic figures with the slogan of the Ministry of Tourism "*Mauritius C'est un plaisir*"?

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: In view of the fact that recent history and past experience have shown us that it is during the month of December that pickpockets are more active and there are open hold-ups and so on, will the Ag. Prime Minister liaise with the police authorities to strengthen the measures of control during that coming month of December?

The Ag. Prime Minister: As far as I know, it is done on a routine basis at times when there are crowds and festivities. It will be done this year, and improved as far as possible.

Mr Varma: The hon. Ag. Prime Minister made mention of reported cases of larceny with violence. Could he inform the House how many of these reported cases have triggered parallel inquiries of false and malicious denunciations in writing?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I cannot answer that.

Mr Speaker: How can he know?

Mr Ganoo: Has the hon. Ag. Prime Minister got the number of larceny of mobile phones...

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have not got it in the classification of larceny with violence, but I will look into it if the hon. Member is interested. It is becoming a worldwide problem.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister inform the House what is the percentage of larceny with violence against women for the period mentioned?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member should come with a specific question.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I do not have it in the statistics.

AMOUNT OF MONEY - GOVERNMENT PUBLICITY

(No. B/1249) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to Government publicity, he will state the amount of money paid to all dailies and weeklies, since April 2009 to date.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are nearly reaching the end of the mandate of this Government and the hon. Prime Minister promised us, six or eight times, that he was going to change the policy. Can I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister what is the policy of Government as far as publicity is concerned and what about those newspapers which are not in the good books of Government and which are deprived...

Mr Speaker: Whether the policy has been changed? That is the question?

(Interruptions)

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to point out what has been said before. I remind the House that, in reply to PQ Nos. B/186, B/190, the House was informed that Government has been served with *a mise en demeure* by *La Sentinel* on 03 April 2009, and the Court will be called upon to decide on the legalities of Government allocation of paid publicity to newspaper. It was inappropriate for Government or the Prime Minister to reply.

Mr Speaker: The matter is *sub judice*.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the Ag. Prime Minister how it is that only '*Le Matinal*' is getting the lion's share, most of the share of Government publicity? Can we know the reason why it is so?

The Ag. Prime Minister: As I said, I have not got the figures. The figures are being compiled.

Mr Speaker: The Ag. Prime Minister is compiling the figures. Next question! Let us wait for the figures to come.

Mr Bhagwan: On this issue, can I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether it is not a breach of equal opportunity?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The law has not been proclaimed. Next question, hon. Gunness!

MR A. S – DEATH AT PEREYBÈRE - INQUIRY

(No. B/1250) Mr A. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the death of one Mr A. S., by drowning, which occurred at Pereybère, on Monday 02 November 2009 at about 8.00 a.m., on the occasion of the Ganga Asnan festival, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 02 November 2009, at 8 15 hours, officers of the National Coast Guard who were on patrol in an inflatable craft, rescued a man in difficulty inside the Pereybère lagoon, but outside the demarcated swimming zone. The victim was unconscious and brought ashore. He was given first aid by the NCG personnel. At 8 50 hours, a SAMU ambulance arrived on the spot, and the victim was examined by a doctor, who certified his death. The body was referred to the police for autopsy. The cause of death was certified as being due to “Asphyxia following Drowning”. On the same day, samples of urine and blood were handed over to the Forensic Science Laboratory for examination. The police have initiated an enquiry. Several statements have already been recorded. The case is still under investigation.

Mr Gunness: I can say that I was an eye witness in this case. The information provided to the Ag. Prime Minister that the Coast Guard rescued the man is completely false. In fact, it is a journalist of one of our publications here, after five minutes that the person was in deep trouble in the water, who rescued him. We must remember that it was on the day of the Ganga Asnan festival, when the Coast Guard was supposed to be there right from early morning. Therefore, can I know from the Ag. Prime Minister why they were not there at that time?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not the information that I have been provided with. I am provided with information that, from 7 o'clock in the morning, there were officers of the police, officers of the Coast Guard patrol and other security services, as well as volunteers from different units present.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, I hope that the Ag. Prime Minister will believe that I was an eye witness in that particular case. If the Ag. Prime Minister takes my word, even the regular Police Force came earlier than the National Coast Guard. Therefore, can I ask the

Ag. Prime Minister to have, at least, a proper inquiry being carried out in that particular case? The life of this man could have been saved, has it been that the Coast Guard was there on time, has it been that the SAMU - because we see that SAMU also has taken 30 minutes – was there. In the Ag. Prime Minister's reply, he said that they gave the first aid. No! There was a foreign doctor on the beach, and two Mauritian doctors came, but, unfortunately, without proper equipment. Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister to, at least, have a thorough inquiry in that case?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I take note of what has been said, and I will communicate it to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure that the Ag. Prime Minister is not aware that there are lots of complaints against the Coast Guard of Grand' Baie from many people. The complaints have even been conveyed to the Ministry of Tourism concerning these particular Coast Guard officers. They are well equipped, but there is a total lack of discipline.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll pass on the remark and take appropriate action.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers. The Table has been informed that Questions B/1257, B/1258, B/1259, B/1260, B/1261 and B/1267 have been withdrawn. Hon. Naidu!

CHILDREN - SEXUAL ABUSE VICTIMS - DEPOSITION IN COURT

(No. B/1257) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the deposition in Court of children who have been victims of sexual abuse, he will state if Government proposes to review the procedures thereof.

(Withdrawn)

BLUE BAY MARINE PARK - ILLEGAL FISHING & SPEAR FISHING ACTIVITIES

(No. B/1258) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether he is aware that illegal fishing and spear fishing activities are being carried out in the Blue Bay Marine Park and, if so, will he state the actions taken, if any.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL TRANSPORT CORPORATION - NEW HEADQUARTERS

(No. B/1259) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of the new Headquarters of the National Transport Corporation at Ebène, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to

—

- (a) the cost thereof, indicating the amount of money paid as at to date;
- (b) when construction works are expected to be completed, and
- (c) if the Corporation proposes to move its offices thereat, and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

TOURISM AUTHORITY STAFF – CREDIT CARDS

(No. B/1260) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the credit cards put at the disposal of the Chairperson, the Director General and the staff of the Tourism Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, the number thereof, indicating in each case -

- (a) since when;
- (b) the purposes thereof, and
- (c) a breakdown of the expenses incurred.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS EMBASSY, PARIS - AMBASSADOR

(No. B/1261) Mr P. Jhugroo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Ambassador posted at the Mauritius Embassy in Paris, he will state the name of the incumbent, indicating -

- (a) his terms and conditions of appointment;
- (b) the number of overseas missions undertaken by him, since his appointment to date, indicating in each case, the

- (i) countries visited, and
- (ii) amount of money spent in terms of air tickets and *per diem* allowances, and
- (c) a breakdown of his medical expenses, since his appointment to date.

(Withdrawn)

BEAU BOIS VILLAGE HALL

(No. B/1262) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the deplorable state of the Village hall of Beau Bois and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Dr. David: I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that the Beau Bois Village Hall is in good condition. I am informed that the whole building was painted anew, and two new aluminium window frames have been fixed last year.

Mr Naidu: I don't know when the works were done, but last time I was there - that was just two weeks ago - it was in a deplorable state. I would like to know when those works were carried out.

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already replied that it is in good condition. I don't know when he went there last. Maybe, he has been parachuted there.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. Hon. David! I will not...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. David! Hon. David! Order! Hon. David, you provoked it. You are a Minister of the Government, and you must know how to answer questions. In your answers, you cannot provoke the Opposition or anybody else in this House.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: This is the rule. There are provisions in Erskine May. Order, I said!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, I said! Next question!

BEAU BOIS - FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. B/1263) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he is aware of the deplorable state of the football ground found in Beau Bois and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Mr Rittoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the site of the football ground in Beau Bois belongs to the Mon Desert Alma Ltd and has been leased on a perpetual basis to the Moka/Flacq District Council. I am further informed that the football pitch is in a good condition, and that the fencing as well as the periphery of the pitch require upgrading. I have already requested my colleague, the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands, to look into the matter.

BEAU BOIS – RIAN WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEM

(No. B/1264) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether he is aware of the problems being caused by the absence of a rain water drainage system at Beau Bois and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am aware of the problem of flooding at Beau Bois. Hon. Dayal has apprised me of the difficulties of the inhabitants at adjournment time on 31 March 2009 and, subsequent to the request of hon. Dayal, the consultant of the National Development Unit carried out a survey, and the drain project at Beau Bois will be awarded soon.

SSR BOTANIC GARDEN - ‘SAMADHI’ & ANCILLARY BUILDINGS - UPGRADING AND LANDSCAPING

(No. B/1265) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanic Garden, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanic Garden Trust Fund, information as to if any project is being envisaged, particularly in the underground area of the samadhi of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and, if so, give details thereof, indicating if –

- (a) all the relevant clearances have been sought and obtained from the competent authorities, and

- (b) the prior approval of the Board of the National Heritage Fund has been obtained.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall, with your permission, reply to Parliamentary Questions No. B/1265 and B/1283 together, as both relate to projects at the SSR Botanic Garden. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a project which is currently at preliminary stage for the upgrading and landscaping of the grounds surrounding the ‘Samadhi’ and ancillary buildings at the SSR Botanic Garden.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the objective of this project is to provide a monument to reflect the life and achievements of the Father of the Nation, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, and to pay tribute to this great son of the soil for his immense sacrifice and contribution to the independence of our country. It should be recalled that his achievements include free education, free health services, social security, universal pension, right to vote at 18, and quasi everything to do with the Welfare State, which has recently been recognised by UNESCO. This project will be but a minimum recognition of the remarkable achievement of such a great personality. This project was first conceptualised in 1997, but was put on hold during the period 2000-2005 by those who want to deny history. It has been revived in September 2005, Mr Speaker, Sir. This project, which is now entitled *‘Espace culturel et artistique autour du Château Mon Plaisir’* will also make optimum use of the *Château Mon Plaisir*, which is currently underutilised, to give a tourism perspective to it. The project consists of -

- (i) the construction of an underground structure (around the Samadhi) to house an exhibition hall, a multipurpose hall, offices and toilets;
- (ii) the upgrading of the landscape around the Samadhi;
- (iii) the upgrading and conversion of an old building into a food Court, and
- (iv) the construction of a souvenir shop, stores/offices and public toilets to be annexed to the food Court.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that clearances from the following authorities have been obtained –

- (i) National Heritage Fund;
- (ii) Ministry of Housing and Lands;
- (iii) Ministry of Health and Quality of Life (Sanitary Section);

- (iv) Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources;
- (v) Ministry of Environment and NDU;
- (vi) Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Building Plans Committee);
- (vii) Fire Services Department, and
- (viii) Police Department.

The clearance of Wastewater Management Authority is being awaited.

Regarding part (b) of the question, as I have just mentioned, the approval of the National Heritage Fund has been obtained on 10 November 2009 and every development undertaken will be done in consonance with the environment and surrounding conditions without disturbing the nature of the place, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I am advised that, apart from this project, there is no other infrastructural works which are being presently carried out at the SSR Botanic Gardens.

Mr Ganoo: I don't think anybody will have any objection to the setting-up of such a project in homage, to pay tribute to SSR, but the question is whether any commercial outlets will also be erected in the Botanical Gardens.

Mr Faugoo: Not commercial outlets as such, Mr Speaker, Sir, but only a foodcourt, because there are lots of tourists who are visiting the garden on a daily basis. So, there will be a foodcourt to provide for services, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Guimbeau: I would like to table a picture of a proposed project, which I received from the Prime Minister's Office. I would like to know if it is appropriate to have such a building in a classified botanical garden, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is a picture of the proposed project which I received from the PMO itself. I would like to table this.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this project is being monitored. It has been conceptualised by one of the most renowned Indian Architects, and everything done is being done according to the nature of the place as it is.

**PROF. BASDEO BISSONDOYAL TRUST FUND & MALCOLM DE CHAZAL
TRUST FUND – BOARD**

(No. B/1266) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the proposed

appointment of the Board of the Professor Basdeo Bissoondoyal Trust Fund and of the Malcom de Chazal Trust Fund, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, Government will soon be coming with a policy decision on how best to commemorate the memories of important local personalities.

In reply to PQ No. B/599, I informed the House that my Ministry was working on a repertory of all renowned Mauritians who have marked the arts and cultural space in Mauritius with a view to finding ways and means to perpetuate their memories, philosophy and works for future generations and the idea was to come up with a proper framework for that purpose.

I am glad to inform the House that, after consulting different stakeholders, my Ministry has received proposals for some 50 important personalities who have marked our history in an indelible way.

My Ministry is now working on a new framework to perpetuate the memories of our illustrious *fils du sol* or *fille du sol* and, in the meantime, we are considering the reconstitution of the Boards of both institutions, i.e. the Prof. Basdeo Bissoondoyal Trust Fund and the Malcolm de Chazal Trust Fund.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he will wait for the completion of this list of 50 personalities to constitute the Boards of these two Trusts?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have said, in the meantime, we are considering the constitution of both institutions. I think that by the end of December it would have been done.

Mrs Labelle: Last time, the answer was that they were considering the constitution of the Board. So, that's why I am asking whether it is something to be done right now, because this was the same answer some months before.

Mr Speaker: The Minister has said by December it will be done.

MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES – PROPOSED REFORM PLAN

(No. B/1267) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the proposed reform plan of his Ministry to be implemented as from January 2010, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

CWA – GENERAL WORKERS -TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR

(No. B/1268) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the General Workers working at the Central Water Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to if they are acting as Treatment Plant Operators at the La Marie Treatment Plant and, if so, the reasons therefor.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no post of Treatment Plant Operator as this post has become evanescent, as recommended by the PRB Report of 2003.

I am informed that four General Workers are posted at La Marie Treatment Plant and perform duties of assisting the Technical Assistants and Assistant Inspectors.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he is aware that, in fact, these General Workers - but now it is being called by another name - don't have the necessary training? I think this is a work which needs some technicalities and these workers do not have the proper training to do such work. As this is the case, can I ask him whether any corrective measures are being implemented for these workers?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of the nature of their work. I am told that they are assisting Technical Assistants. But, certainly, if there is a complaint, I will look into it and see that they are properly trained or remunerated accordingly.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether he is aware of the number of Technical Assistants doing the job right now?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have not got that information.

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL EQUIPMENT - BREAKDOWN

(No. B/1269) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the air traffic control equipment found at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he is aware of any breakdown thereof which is causing disruption of the air traffic to and from Mauritius and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Department of Civil Aviation, information as to the remedial measures that have been taken.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director of Civil Aviation that there has been no breakdown in the communication, navigation and surveillance system at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport. The other part of the question, therefore, does not arise.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I then ask the vice-Prime Minister whether some flights were rerouted to Reunion Island because of this air traffic control problem?

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, absolutely, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have replaced the instrument landing system, and it took about a month from mid-October to mid-November. During that time, there were two days when the weather was very bad and a number of airplanes were rerouted to Reunion and then came back later.

FOOD SECURITY FUND – MONEY DISBURSED

(No. B/1270) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the different schemes set up under the Food Scarcity Fund, he will, in each case, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to –

- (a) the amount of money disbursed as at to date;
- (b) the number of beneficiaries thereof, and
- (c) if any evaluation has been made, since the setting up thereof and, if so, table copy of the report.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am rather surprised to note that the question is on Food Scarcity Fund, which does not exist. I presume that the hon. Member is referring to the Food Security Fund.

Indeed, Mr Speaker Sir, a Food Security Fund to the tune of Rs1 billion was provided for in the Budget 2008/2009 to address the food security issue in the wake of the global food crunch. The Fund is meant to finance the different projects and schemes to be implemented over a three-year period in order to increase food production.

Mr Speaker Sir, the disbursement of the funds could only be made after the formulation and implementation of a Strategic Plan. The Plan was elaborated through wide consultations with stakeholders both in the public sector and private sector, including representatives of the small farmers, breeders and fishermen. It was approved by Government

in December 2008 and launched in January 2009. In parallel to the elaboration of the Plan, the financial procedures for disbursement had also to be finalised.

Seventeen measures and projects have been implemented since the launching of the Food Security Fund Strategic Plan. Disbursement of funds has been effected very carefully and cautiously as the Strategic Plan is in its initial phase of implementation. In fact, all projects and schemes involving utilisation of funds under the Food Security Fund have been cleared with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment. With the projects and schemes implemented so far, a sum of Rs37 m. has been used and an amount of Rs60 m. has been committed to be spent on ongoing projects before the end of this year.

Regarding part (b) of the question, some 1100 planters and breeders have so far benefited from the different schemes. This figure, however, excludes some 800 fruit growers who are benefiting from the grant scheme for the purchase of nets to protect their fruits against bats. Also a Household Food Security Campaign to sensitise each household to grow a food or fruit-producing tree is in progress and so far 10,000 households have received freely a planting material. Through this campaign, we want to mobilise the whole population on food security and to enable them to contribute in this endeavour. Our target is to reach some 280,000 households, Mr Speaker, Sir. Such an approach is new and highly symbolical.

Mr Speaker, Sir, after a teething phase, implementation of the strategic plan has now gathered momentum. A sum of Rs 500 m. is expected to be spent in 2010 when some 19 schemes will be implemented.

With regard to the third part of the question, the Strategic Plan does provide for a mechanism to undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of all projects and schemes implemented under the Food Security Fund. While monitoring is being effected, it is too early, at this stage, to make an evaluation of the schemes implemented so far.

Mr Speaker, Sir, should the hon. Member wish to have more details on the projects and schemes under the Food Security Fund, I would request him to refer to the speech I made yesterday in the context of the debates on the Budget where I gave all the details on the plan, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to say that it has been a printing mistake. I know very well that it is the Food Security Fund. Can I know from the hon. Minister what are the components of these strategic plans that he has mentioned in his reply?

Mr Faugoo: As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are lots of projects and schemes which, in fact, empower small planters, fishers and also the breeders. As I said yesterday in my speech, we have come with lots of projects, which aim at boosting up the agricultural sector, especially the foodcrop sector. If I may give two examples, the Potato Seeds Purchase Scheme and the Onion Seeds Purchase Scheme. We have, in fact, increased the production of potatoes just in one year by more or less 20%, Mr Speaker, Sir. There are lots of schemes. As I said, we have launched 16 schemes this year, and there are 19 which have been approved and which we are going to launch as from next year.

LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND – AMOUNT DISBURSED

(No. B/1271) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Local Infrastructure Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to the amount of money disbursed therefrom, as at to date, indicating the -

- (a) allocation to each local administration, and
- (b) respective projects that have been funded.

The Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question. The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled.

100 MW POWER PLANT PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/1272) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the new 100 MW Power Plant Project, he will state if Government has launched the implementation process therefor and, if so, give details thereof.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to both questions B/1272 and B/1302 together.

In my reply to the Private Notice Question on 30 May 2009, I informed the House that the Technical Committee on Nurturing Resilience recommended that a request for proposal be invited for the setting-up of a power plant of a total capacity of 100 MW on an open technology with a view to mitigating the risk of power shortages in the coming years

and to consolidate the current capacity expansion plan, should there be a delay in the implementation of power generation projects underway or scheduled beyond 2011.

Subsequently, a Request for Expression of Interest was launched, inviting eligible private developers to indicate their interest in setting up a new power plant on a Build Operate and Own Scheme, based on any technology, of a total capacity of 100 MW in units not exceeding 50 MW. Twenty-five submissions were received from both local and international firms. The technologies proposed varied from fossil-fuel fired power plants to the use of renewable energy sources.

No preference could, however, be made on the technology that would be most appropriate for the country as several factors have to be considered to ensure security and reliability of supply at affordable prices.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment approached the International Finance Consultant (IFC) to act as Transaction Advisor for the project. However, IFC advised that a pre-feasibility study be carried out in the first instance. Accordingly, a fast track approach was adopted to procure the services of a power expert.

The expert started his assignment in October 2009 and his final pre-feasibility report is expected by the end of December this year.

Based on the recommendations of the expert on the technology to be adopted as well as its affordability, the procurement process for the setting-up of 100 MW plant will be launched.

At 12.55 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.00 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/1273 has been withdrawn. We have to move to the hon. Third Member Montagne Blanche & GRSE.

CUREPIPE – CLOAK ROOM, KIOSK & BOWLING ALLEY – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/1273) Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a cloak room, a kiosk and a bowling alley in the region of Robinson, Curepipe, he will state if works have started and, if so, where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

TERRE ROUGE – SUGAR CANE PLANTERS – LAND RETRIEVED

(No. B/1277) Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the sugar cane planters of Terre Rouge, whose land were retrieved as a result of the ex-Tianli project, he will state if they have now been allocated their plot of land as promised and, if not, why not.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to the 106 ex-sugar cane planters of Terre Rouge Land Settlement, Government has taken the commitment to -

- (i) regularise the situation of 20 planters who have constructed houses on part of the land leased to them, and
- (ii) allocate a plot of land of 10P each to the remaining 86 planters for residential purpose.

I am advised by the Ministry of Housing and Lands that -

- (i) the 20 beneficiaries are being invited to sign the lease agreement, and
- (ii) as regards to the plot of 10P of land to be leased to each of the 86 planters, consultations have started with stakeholders for the identification of suitable sites.

Mr Gunness: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it seems that the agreement was handed over in 2007. We are now in 2009. Can I know from the Minister in which region the sites have been identified for these 86 beneficiaries?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this matter is being handled by the Ministry of Housing and Lands and not by my Ministry. If a substantive question is addressed to the relevant Ministry, I am sure the hon. Member will get the required information.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, please!

In the absence of the hon. Minister, I suggest that we move to the next question.

In the absence, this time, of the hon. Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix, we will move to the next one.

Mr Guimbeau: No. B/1282, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Again, it is quite unfortunate. One tries to understand, but sometimes I believe much can be too much. We can only go to the next question of the hon. Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue.

CARAVANE DE L'ENTREPRENEURIAT

(No.B/1285) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the *Caravane de l'Entrepreneuriat*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Small Enterprises Handicraft Development Authority, information as to the number of *caravanes* organized, since July 2005 to date indicating the –

- (a) enterprises registered with the Authority;
- (b) registered enterprises which have been certified as potential entrepreneurs;
- (c) enterprises which have started to operate business, and
- (d) number of jobs created.

Mr Gowressoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, since July 2005, SEHDA has organised 22 *Caravane de l'Entrepreneuriat* in Mauritius and Rodrigues. 2009 potential entrepreneurs have registered with SEHDA as a direct result of the Caravane programme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to parts (c) and (d) of the question, the monitoring exercise carried out by SEHDA does not make any distinction between potential entrepreneurs registered during the Caravanes or other sensitisation campaigns, and those registered directly with SEHDA. However, the hon. Member may wish to note that, since July 2005, 12,190 enterprises have registered with SEHDA, and this figure includes those enterprises who have re-registered on the merger of SMIDO and NHPA. As at today, 5,791 enterprises are in operation, and the number of jobs created amount to 14,066.

Mr Lesjongard: B/1286, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Once again, unfortunately - this is becoming shocking - we have to move to the next question.

PUBLIC OFFICERS – LAW DEGREE

(No. B/1287) **Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms whether he is aware that public officers having obtained a law degree and completed their pupillage have been compelled to resign to enable them to be called to the Bar, thus losing their years of service and, if so, will he state if Government proposes to review its policy thereon.

Dr. Hookoom: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a public officer is not compelled as such to resign after his pupillage. A public officer can, on completion of his pupillage, resume duty in the post which he occupied at the time leave was granted to effect pupillage. He can also opt either for resignation or apply subject to eligibility for retirement from the service, before being called to be Bar.

There is indeed a longstanding practice within the Judiciary in Mauritius to require that a person tenders his resignation from employment before being admitted to be called to the Bar.

This practice is founded on the Code of Ethics, which provides that –

“The many duties to which a Barrister is subject require his absolute independence, free from all other influence, especially such as may arise from his personal interests or external pressure; such independence as is necessary to create trust in the process of justice as impartiality of the judge. A barrister shall, therefore, avoid any impairment of his independence and be careful not to compromise his professional standards in order to please his client, the Court or third parties.”

There have been cases of public officers who have tendered their resignation, were called to the Bar and afterwards selected to join the Attorney General’s Office/Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Those officers who joined within two years have retained their years of service.

As regards reviewing the existing ‘policy’, this is a matter which would concern the Judiciary, since the Judiciary is the main authority when it comes to setting the standards for the legal profession and for members, as well as aspiring members of the bar.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the Minister inform the House whether he is aware of any cases that have been referred to his Ministry for approval by the Ministry of Justice? One officer working at the Ministry of Justice has already passed his examinations and is now performing his pupillage at the Ministry. The State Law Office has already

approved and recommended, but the Permanent Secretary of his Ministry has rejected the request of the same officer. Is the Minister aware of that?

Dr. Hookoom: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of the case, but I will look into the matter.

The Deputy Speaker: I suggest that we go back to the hon. Second Member for Rodrigues, hon. Spéville, at page 10.

MRS M. A. M – SEX WORKER - DEATH

(No. B/1278) Mr J. R. Speville (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to one Ms M. A. M., who was killed, on or about 06 November 2009, she will state if -

- (a) she has met/proposes to meet her children/members of her family, indicating if any help/support has been provided thereto, and
- (b) having regard to the circumstances surrounding the case and the conditions of the sex workers, Government proposes to -
 - (i) reintroduce the services of social street workers and
 - (ii) introduce a financial support scheme to help them.

Mrs Seebun: First of all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to apologise for this lateness. I was taken up in a function with hon. Jeetah.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the tragic death of Mrs M. A. M on 08 November 2008 has shaken the whole population. She passed away, leaving behind two sons and four daughters.

Out of these six children, the youngest daughter, aged 04, is under the care and responsibility of her maternal grandmother; one son and one daughter, aged 08 and 10 respectively, have been placed at SOS Children's Village, since August 2006; one daughter, aged 15, lives with her biological father at Cassis; another daughter now aged 13 years has been adopted by a Swiss couple, since December 1996, and the eldest son, aged 23, is married and living on his own.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that I personally met the youngest daughter and the eldest son of late Mrs M. A M, together with the maternal grandmother and aunt, to give them the reassurance that my

Ministry would provide the children with the necessary support and assistance that they require. In fact, arrangements have been made with the Ministry of Social Security to provide them with social aid.

I have also spoken to Mr A. Darga of the National Empowerment Fund, so that arrangements be made to provide the eldest son of late Mrs M. A. M with a low cost housing unit. I am informed that the necessary has already been done and, yesterday, the son had signed a contract for a low cost housing unit at Bambous.

In the meantime, the officers of the Child Development Unit of my Ministry are closely following up the situation to ensure that the children of Mrs M. A. M are in good hands.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, a project to cater for abandoned children was set up under the initiative of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions in April 2002. It was funded and implemented by the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups, and financially supported by UNESCO. 15 Street Educators were recruited on a contract basis, and were provided with training for the development of special skills and knowledge warranted to deal with street children.

The project was implemented up to December 2005, when the contract of Street Educators expired. UNESCO had also stopped financing the project. The Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups subsequently extended the contract of the Educators for a further period of six months, and provided the required funds. Thereafter, the project was discontinued.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I firmly believe that there is a dire need for a proper monitoring and follow-up of street children in Mauritius, so that they do not become easy prey of social ills. I am, therefore, considering the possibility of assisting NGOs dealing with street children. In fact, I will ensure that this happens.

I also wish to inform the House that I have already spoken to the President of Safire, a NGO dealing with street children, to submit a project proposal for consideration under the Special Collaborative Programme of my Ministry. I have also contacted members of *Collectif Citoyen* to enlist their support for empowering sex workers, and a meeting is scheduled for the coming week.

I sincerely believe that no one in the world aspires to become a sex worker; however, circumstances compel them to take that path, which is full of risks and hazards. It is, therefore, our duty to get them out of it. I make an appeal to everyone present in the House and NGOs to help us in this humane venture.

Mrs Perrier: M. le président, la ministre vient de demander notre aide pour aider à sortir les prostituées, qui sont aussi souvent des drogués, hors de l'enfer. Une des observations qui a été faite vendredi dernier lors de la manifestation, a été le problème de *financial support*. Est-ce que la ministre peut envisager de trouver des fonds sous le *Women and Children in Distress Fund*, pour aider les prostituées à sortir de l'enfer?

Mrs Seebun : Bien sûr, et c'est pour cela que j'ai demandé à Marie Michelle Etienne et à Madame Pouba Essoo de me contacter la semaine prochaine.

Mr Spéville: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just made a plea so that all of us are behind her to get the country out of this mess. Earlier, she said that, after the project was stopped, the street workers were taken on charge during six months only. Can I ask the hon. Minister what help she is asking from us when there is the Ministry of Social Security? Why is it that, after so long – 2005, and we are now in 2009 – and after the case of Marie Ange, that she comes to the House to ask us for a helping hand in the project?

Mrs Seebun: I was fully aware in December 2006 that, after the expiry of the project, street children would face difficulties. I had a meeting during that period, and I convened the President, Mr Hedley, and all the 15 educators to join us. My Ministry was willing to pay Rs6,000 per month to each educator, so that the work continues. They did not stop doing their work. They could get funds from other sources. But why I insisted that time? I literally begged them to work with us. Why did I do that? Because I felt that, if we are funding, then there will be proper monitoring and evaluation of the work being done, like how children are made to go back to school, and that was my intent. Unfortunately, Safire did not respond. I didn't give hope. Continuously, through other NGOs, we have ensured that we get the children back to school, through the staff of the CDU.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House whether she has got a rough figure about the number of sex workers?

Mrs Seebun: We don't have a rough figure as such. I want to inform the House that whatever the number, we are willing to empower each one of them, so that their life is no more at risk and they are not made to do the kind of job they don't want to do.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that her Ministry was willing to pay Rs6,000...

Mrs Seebun: As an allowance.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she is aware of the salary these persons were drawing prior to the offer of Rs6,000?

Mrs Seebun: I understand that Rs6,000 is a meagre amount, but I also wish to inform the House that, besides the Rs6,000 allowance - which we were going to pay as a fixed income - we allow them to continue to tap sources. We are helping them, so that they can get additional funds from international agencies.

Mr Lauthan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will talk about the salary/allowance. Originally, we made provision to give them Rs9,000, plus Rs1,000 as pocket money - just a sort of bait to these children - to attract these children to establish the necessary trust. Even Rs9,000 was on the low side, because of the nature of this work - working 24 hours a day - and one of them found himself with a cutter under his throat by a street child. According to me, we must not rely on foreign funds, be it UNESCO or others. If we do have them, it is welcome. But now that we have the CSR, how difficult would it be to have one or two big firms to support such a programme? We have volunteered to give a hand. I propose my help; even for the pilot project, I am ready to give my help. Let us raise ourselves above party politics on this special issue.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already spoken to two important members of *Collectif Citoyen* to come to us, so that we can give them funds from the Special Collaborative Programme. I think, the Government is right in coming up with the CSR Programme. We are going to ensure that, through the CSR Programme, all the educators get the necessary help.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in spite of the fact that the hon. Minister cannot tell the House about the number of sex workers who are actually operating in the country, it is clear that this is a growing phenomenon which concerns all of us. Without any doubt, the number of sex workers has been increasing. Those who go through the towns, including Rose Hill, can witness that. Quatre Bornes apparently tops the list today. It is better than Rose Hill in terms of topping the list.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order! Ministers, please!

Mr Ganoo: This is a growing phenomenon which should concern us all. I don't want to make politics about it, but in spite of the promise made by one hon. Member - who is sitting on the other side as a Minister today - who said that he was going to clear Rose Hill of these prostitutes when he comes to power, of course, this has failed. This is another story. But can't the hon. Minister set up a team of university cadres, dedicated social workers and committed ONG to conduct an enquiry on this phenomenon and come up with a study and tell us the reason and the solutions, and how we can rid the country of this problem?

Mrs Seebun: This is my very intent, hon. Member.

Mrs Perrier: Madame la ministre vient de dire qu'elle savait, quand le gouvernement prenait la décision d'arrêter le service de ces *street social workers*, que cela allait être dramatique pour les enfants. Peut-elle nous dire ce qu'elle a fait, elle, pour empêcher que cette décision soit prise au sein du Cabinet ?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister is not allowed to discuss about Cabinet matters here. Secondly, hon. Member, I would like you to bear in mind that this question is specific to one particular matter. I've given quite some latitude on questions about the re-introduction of social street workers, but I am not prepared to go too far.

Mrs Perrier: Je parle des *social street workers* qui font partie de la question, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: I have given my ruling, hon. Member.

Mrs Perrier: M. le président, je voudrais demander à Madame la ministre - puisqu'elle était au courant de l'effet négatif que cela allait avoir sur les enfants des rues - qui a pris cette décision au gouvernement et qu'a-t-elle fait pour empêcher que cette décision soit prise ?

Mrs Seebun: I have just replied. The hon. Member must have listened carefully that it is the project which has expired. Should I repeat what I said earlier? I can repeat.

The Deputy Speaker: No, don't! Please!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Seebun: I was fully aware, and I did the needful. I am still doing the follow-up through the CDU. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some Members talk as though there were no street children before July 2005.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No! You are not given the floor. Yes, Mr Spéville!

Mr Spéville: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listened carefully to the hon. Minister, but I am not talking particularly about street children, I am talking about the real problem, that is, the sex workers, the street children and all of them. I am talking about a real solution for all these poor people. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether she had thought about putting in place a specialised training for these street workers? Because hon. Lauthan has just said that the Rs6,000 are peanuts? These people will need really specialised training from specialised consultant coming from Mauritius or abroad, and these people should need to get real value for money for the job they'll be doing.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have already put in place the mentoring programme, where we are training 30 people. But, in addition to this, I take good note of the hon. Member's very good suggestion; we are going to actually do that.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it would seem that the Minister is looking at these issues of sex workers and street workers in a piecemeal way, whereas these issues should be looked in a holistic way. Will the hon. Minister see to it that all stakeholders are taken on board to carry out a study and propose measures to deal with these issues?

Mrs Seebun: If I were taking it from a piecemeal point of view, I would never have, in advance, put in place a mentoring programme. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am aware that we need the collaboration of all stakeholders to work together with the private sector and the public sector, so as to take women out of the poverty trap. All of us also agree that poverty is the root cause of prostitution, and we are dealing with this problem right from the root.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister how many such social street workers were concerned at the time the project was stopped?

Mrs Seebun: Fifteen street educators, and I took on board all the 15 when I decided...

(Interruptions)

not to cut the allowance.

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she has identified those persons who want to get out of this trap, and if there is any project at the Ministry for the rehabilitation of such sex workers? May we know whether she has an alternative project to allow those who want to get out of the system to start working and to rehabilitate them in society?

Mrs Seebun: Since 2005, we have put in place the economic empowerment of women, and I have voiced aloud...

(*Interruptions*)

Please! The hon. Member should listen! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is very easy to criticise, but she has to listen carefully about the concrete actions we have put in place to empower women.

Mrs Martin: Among those sex workers who have not decided to relinquish their activities, I am sure there are some who are identified by the Ministry who have children as well. Very often, what happens is that it is a vicious circle, where the mother is engaged into this activity and, as the child grows up as well, she tends to go into the same activity. What is being done at the level of her Ministry to ensure that, at least, at the level of those children, something is being done so that they do not go onto that path?

Mrs Seebun: Through our committee, with a tight development programme, the staff of the CDU is working vigorously to ensure that in cases where women indulge as sex workers, what is happening to their children. The hon. Member is aware that we are taking on board all children, and we are ensuring that they are attending school. Government has put in place programmes, so that poor children who cannot attend school get transport facilities, get food and schooling.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question for the hon. Second Member for Rodrigues.

Mr Spéville: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether she is aware that *la Suède* is well ahead in the combat against prostitution since December 2004. I have a document, but my question relates to Marie Ange Milazar. Some time back, Mrs Seebun talked about *la violence, la maltraitance* - whatever the article. She is saying that this lady became a prostitute, a poor sad woman, because of her mother in law.

Mrs Seebun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't mind answering to this question. As Minister of Women's rights, so many women come to me and this interference of in-laws in the life of a couple is one of the criteria that makes marriage break and, as a Minister, it is my responsibility to spell it out aloud that the in-laws should always give the blessings, assist, advise, but not be a cause.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mrs Seebun: This very morning, a woman who is working as watchwoman - I want to bring this example in the House - living at Ecroignard, phoned me, all in tears, because her mother in law is making her life difficult. You can go and get that evidence. This woman is actually working as watchwoman in our Women Centre at Flacq. I say that one of the factors that lead to divorce is too much of interference. One forceful factor that leads to marriage breaking down is in-laws interfering excessively in the life of married couples.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY - MAURICE ILE DURABLE LEVY

(No. B/1282) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Maurice Ile Durable levy, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the amount thereof collected on Liquefied Petroleum Gas, petroleum products and coal, indicating the amount paid into the Maurice Ile Durable Fund, as at to date

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that, as to date, it has collected an amount of Rs333 m. as levy on Liquefied Petroleum Gas, petroleum products and coal.

In June 2008, a total amount of Rs1 billion was transferred by Government to the MID Fund in anticipation of the receipts to be collected with the introduction the MID Fund Levy.

Furthermore, as the House is aware, the MID Fund has been set up to support projects aimed at protecting the environment through recycling, encouraging more efficient use of

energy and increasing the share of renewable energy while reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

The MID Levy is also meant to be used to part finance the various grants to be provided by the Fund. In this respect, under the Solar Water Heater Scheme, out of an approved amount of Rs290 m., Rs127 m. have already been disbursed as grant to applicants under the Scheme. Furthermore, as I announced in the 2010 Budget, a second programme is being launched, where Government will give a subsidy of Rs5,000 per unit, which will serve 50,000 additional households, at a cost of Rs250 m. Additionally, Rs20 m. have been given to CEB in respect of the campaign for the sale of CFL lamps at reduced prices, and Rs75 m. have been allocated for three wind turbines in Rodrigues, which are expected to be commissioned in March 2010. A provision of Rs 15 m. has also been made to replace 50,000 street lighting points with more energy efficient lamps.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister gave a total figure of Rs330 m. Can we have a breakdown on LPG, petroleum products and coal?

Dr. Sithanen: I think it is Rs223 m. for petroleum products, including LPG, and Rs110 m. for coal.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

SIR SEEWOOSAGUR RAMGOOLAM BOTANIC GARDEN TRUST FUND – INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS

(No. B/1283) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanic Garden, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanic Garden Trust Fund, information as to if there is any project for infrastructural works to be carried out thereat and, if so, give details thereof.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/1265)

SALE BY LEVY SOLIDARITY FUND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/1284) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Sale By Levy Solidarity Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to the number of families who have benefitted therefrom, since April 2009 to date, indicating –

- (a) their names, and
- (b) the quantum thereof.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen):

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, an initial exercise was carried out from September 2007 to January 2009. Out of the 140 applications received for financial assistance, 37 beneficiaries were identified. Disbursements were made only after the beneficiaries had identified a house, and the deed of sale finalised in the case of purchase of a house or just before the case was heard in Court in the case of stopping the sale of a house.

In respect of this first exercise, as at 30 March 2009, payment of a total amount of Rs6.07 m. was made in respect of 16 out of the 37 cases.

From April 2009 to date, payments amounting to Rs3.67 m. have been made for nine additional cases, namely –

- four families have been provided with financial assistance amounting to Rs1.85 m. for the purchase/construction of a new house;
- Rs1.82 m. were disbursed to enable three families to recuperate their houses, and
- two beneficiaries aged 80 and above are benefiting from a monthly rent allowance of Rs1,250.

Thus, a total of 25 out of the first 37 cases have been dealt with, for which a total amount of Rs9.74 m. has been disbursed.

Insofar as the remaining 12 cases are concerned, the situation is as follows -

- five are still negotiating the repurchase of their house;
- five are looking for a new house to purchase, and
- there are two cases that are pending due to one ongoing Court case contesting the sale by levy, and the second one is in respect of an outstanding balance with a leasing company that has to be cleared.

Furthermore, as the House is also aware, a second call for fresh applications was launched in February 2009, for which deadline was extended from 31 March 2009 to 31 May 2009. The purpose of this second exercise, Mr Speaker, Sir, was to give an opportunity to

those victims who were unable, due to various reasons, to meet the earlier deadlines to apply for assistance under the Fund.

In respect of this second exercise, a total of 281 applications have been received and examined. Twelve families have been found to be eligible for assistance under the Fund. The contribution from the Fund in respect of these cases is being finalised.

It is estimated that a maximum amount of Rs6 m. would be disbursed in respect of these 12 potential beneficiaries.

Insofar as parts (a) and (b) of the question are concerned, and as I had previously stated in my replies to PQ No. B/384 and to the PNQ on 28 April 2009 on the same subject, in order to preserve their confidentiality and not to stigmatise the families who have had to endure a lot of hardship and suffering in their lives, it would not be appropriate to disclose the names of the beneficiaries, the quantum of the benefits, nor the names of those who were found ineligible for financial assistance under the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund.

FRANCOPHONIE GAMES – AIR TICKETS & PER DIEM ALLOWANCES

(No. B/1286) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Francophonie Games, he will state the –

- (a) composition of the delegation thereof, and
- (b) amount of money spent in terms of air tickets and *per diem* allowances.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I apologise for my lateness.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I led the 36th Member delegation of the *Sixième Jeux de la Francophonie* held in Beirut from 27 September 2009 to 06 October 2009.

The delegation comprises myself, Head of “Delegation, five officials, six coaches, and 24 athletes.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the expenses were as follows –

Air tickets: Rs1,111,212.

Per Diem Allowance: Rs320,647.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister whether his Adviser on Information Matters was part of the delegation and, if yes, on whose invitation he attended the games?

Mr Ritoo: My *attaché de presse* was part of the delegation, and he was with me to be able to give information to the press and people in Mauritius regarding competitions in Beirut.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister who had paid the air tickets and what amount was disbursed as *per diem*?

Mr Ritoo: I have already answered the question. The air ticket was Rs1,111,212 for the delegation and Rs320,647 for the *per diem* allowance. If the hon. Member wants further detail, I can lay it on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister about the details spent regarding the Adviser on Information Matters?

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister just stated that he has given the figures as a whole and if the hon. Member wants them in detail, he will have them circulated. Next question, please!

CHILD LABOUR - INSPECTIONS

(No. B/1288) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to child labour, he will state if his Ministry is conducting regular inspections in relation thereto in the small enterprises, commercial centres, market places and licensed hawkers and, if so, indicate the number of cases that have been detected, if any, and the actions taken.

Mr Chaumièrè: Mr Speaker, Sir, inspections are invariably carried out in all workplaces, and the inspections carried out by officers of my Ministry are also meant to detect child employment. In addition, whenever my Ministry receives information on cases of child employment, prompt action is taken.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, could the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is any specific field in which these children work?

Mr Chaumièrè: I do not have this information with me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. As regards the cases which I have just informed the House about, I will table them so that the hon. Members can take note of them.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the Minister state in which age group do these children belong?

Mr Chaumi  re: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know what is the meaning of child in the law. It is a person under 16.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that the Minister has well understood my question. The question is: what is the age group? I know that minors mean children below the age of 18. What is the age group of these children?

Mr Chaumi  re: Once again, I am telling the hon. Member that we have a definition in the law which says that child means a person who is under 16, and 16-18 is a young person. For the purpose of prosecution, I am not going to go into details. A child is a child under 16. That's all.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister said that 14 children have been caught working illegally. What is the age group of these children? It is not zero year or one year old. What is the age group?

Mr Chaumi  re: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no child has been arrested but, of course, those who have employed these children have been prosecuted. I do not have the details about the age group, but what I am saying is that the law says that when someone is employing a child and the child is under 16...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister has said it already, and I think it's enough.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: May I know from the Minister whether there is a special squad to deal with child labour?

Mr Chaumi  re: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are working in collaboration with the *Brigade des Mineurs* and whenever there is a case, we go and inspect the place with a view to exercising a better control on child employment. We work with the *Brigade des Mineurs*, which is an emanation of the police authorities, and whenever the *Brigade des Mineurs* detects any case of child employment, it immediately informs our Ministry, and prompt action is taken.

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Minister say whether he is contemplating to increase the manpower of that section of his Ministry with regard to carrying out more inspections generally?

Mr Chaumi  re: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Martin: The Minister is, no doubt, aware that there is not so new phenomenon that is occurring with regard especially to children who, during the holidays, work for a

month or so to obtain some pocket money. This is mainly happening with children who come from families who cannot give them the pocket money they need in order to be able to spend on gifts and other things for the end of the year. Are there some special measures that the Minister intends to take in order to take into consideration this phenomenon as well, that is, that children need to have some pocket money and they are working only for a month or a few weeks in order to obtain that sort of money?

Mr Chaumière: I just want to enlighten the House and the hon. Member about child labour. The law says that no person shall employ a child for work, but as regards young persons, that is, 16-18, they may take employment somewhere. However, there are prohibitions also regarding young persons in activities which involve, for example, working in the construction industry, with heavy metals including lead and mercury, forestry section, exposure to any form of asbestos, benzene and other harmful organic solvents. For example, there is no question about young persons working in filling stations.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister stated that a child is between 0 and 16. He will concur with me that this is contradictory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines a child below the age of 18. Will he take necessary steps in order to amend our laws, so that they be in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

Mr Chaumière: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in December 2006, the Labour Act had to be amended to raise the minimum age for admission to employment from 15 to 16, following observations made in 2005 by the ILO Committee of Experts on the application of Conventions and recommendations to the effect that the Education Act was amended in December 2004 to extend compulsory schooling to 16 years of age without amending the minimum age for employment which has remained 15 years. There was an obligation to raise the minimum age for employment to 16 years, as according to Convention No. 138 on minimum age ratified by Mauritius. The minimum age for admission should not be less than the age of admission of compulsory education. The ILO Committee of experts has expressed its satisfaction on measures taken by the Government of Mauritius to comply with Convention No. 138.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister strongly stated that, for him, a child is up to 16. Must I take it that he is taking appropriate measures, so that children of 15 are not working during their vacation? Because we are all aware that more and more

children are working during vacation, particularly those as young as 13 to 16. From what the Minister has stated, I am just asking whether he has taken some particular measures and, maybe, he will apprise the House of same.

Mr Chaumière: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have stated in the House that people who have been caught employing children have been prosecuted. But, if the hon. Member has got specific cases, I'll be glad to be made aware.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the hon. Minister inform the House what happens to a child who is working in his family business?

Mr Chaumière: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the law is very clear. No child can take employment, even in the family business.

Mrs Perrier: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he is agreeable to conduct a survey or a little inquiry - because there are only 14 children involved - as to the need of these children and why they are seeking employment? Maybe, their family needs assistance. Is the Minister ready to start an inquiry about that?

Mr Chaumière: An inquiry as to whether the family needs assistance?

Mrs Perrier: Yes.

Mr Chaumière: In that case, I think that the question must be addressed to the proper Ministry.

AIR MAURITIUS – MK 170 TO RODRIGUES – CANCELLATION

(No. B/1289) Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the Air Mauritius flights, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd., information as to if, on 21 October 2009, an ATR flight from Mauritius to Rodrigues was cancelled due to heavy rainfall and dire weather conditions and, if so, indicate the time at which the decision to transfer the passengers to the hotel was taken.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by Air Mauritius Ltd that, on 21 October 2009, three flights were scheduled to operate to Rodrigues, namely flight MK 120 at 07.28 a.m, flight MK 130 at 11.45 a.m and flight MK 170 at 4.05 p.m.

However, owing to adverse weather conditions prevailing on that day, the flight MK 170 could not depart from Mauritius as scheduled and the decision to cancel that specific flight was taken at 9.46 p.m.

I am also informed that, as per the standing arrangements and so as not to cause any inconvenience, Air Mauritius Ltd decided to transfer the stranded passengers to Le Tamassa Hotel at Bel Ombre.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have further been reassured by Air Mauritius Ltd that the necessary assistance, including transfer to and from the airport, dinner, light refreshments, as well as telephone facilities were extended to all the passengers concerned.

Mr Spéville: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister will agree with me that, on that flight of 16.05, whose passengers were transferred to Tamassa Hotel, there were lots of foreigners, tourists. I am not going to state what were their comments. The Minister said that the flight was already cancelled early in the morning. From my information, the crisis committee meeting to cancel the flight was held at 17.30, and they were transferred at about midnight to Tamassa Hotel. So, it's quite a long time. People were on transit, travelling from Mauritius to Rodrigues. I think the committee should be brought to task.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will look into this. But, I have been given information that the flight was cancelled at quarter to ten. If it is not accurate, I will look into it, and I will also see what arrangements were or were not made.

Mr Spéville: In fact, I was on the flight. It was such a mess. I told the flight manager that we were already 9 o'clock, and he said that the meeting was held at 17.30 and a decision taken only four to five hours later. For me, it's nonsense.

Mr X. L. Duval: I will personally look into it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions B/1295 and B/1297 have been withdrawn. Next question, please!

AIR MAURITIUS – ATR 72 - REROUTING

(No. B/1290) Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications whether, in regard to the Air Mauritius flights, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Air Mauritius Ltd., information as to the number of times the ATR 72 plane had been rerouted to Reunion Island, since 01 August 2009 to date, indicating the reasons thereof.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by Air Mauritius Ltd that, since 01 August 2009 to date, the ATR 72 aircraft inbound from Rodrigues has been rerouted to Reunion Island on three occasions, namely on 21 October, 24 October and 17 November 2009, because of bad weather conditions.

I am also informed that, in all the three cases, the necessary arrangements were made by the company to ensure the least inconvenience was caused to the passengers during the transit in Reunion Island.

Mr Spéville: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from my information, the plane coming from Rodrigues could not land at SSR airport. The Instrument Landing System was not working properly, and that's why the ATR 72 was rerouted to Reunion Island. Can I ask the hon. Minister what would have happened if, in Reunion, there were the same climatic conditions and the plane redirected towards Rodrigues? Would it be not fair to install a VOR system or an ILS in Rodrigues, instead of our Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI), composing of four electric lamps, on the airfield?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned this morning, it was not a case of any equipment breaking down. It was a case of equipment being replaced over a one-month period. That was the problem. It's not only the ATR that has been rerouted; 27 aircrafts in all were rerouted to Reunion Island during that period because, at the same time, we had very bad weather, as you may know. The point that the hon. Member is raising is very technical, and I'll pass it on to my colleagues at the DCA.

Mrs Perrier: M. le président, le ministre peut-il nous dire combien a coûté à Air Mauritius cette petite déroute ? J'étais moi-même sur l'avion qui a été dévié sur la Réunion le 18 novembre. C'est ce qui m'a empêchée d'être présente pour le *Budget Speech*. J'ai été déviée à six heures du matin, et j'ai dû attendre jusqu'à midi et demi avec 350 personnes. Nous avons attendu deux heures et demie dans l'avion, puis deux heures et demie dans le *transit lounge* à la Réunion, qu'un avion de Maurice vienne avec un nouvel équipage, puisque l'équipage avait déjà effectué le nombre d'heures réglementaires pour la sécurité. Peut-on savoir, du 1^{er} octobre jusqu'au 21 novembre, combien a coûté à Air Mauritius ce problème de radar ?

Mr X. L. Duval: I don't know what the Member is suggesting, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I don't know whether she is suggesting we should not have replaced the equipment at

all! In this case, it would not have cost Air Mauritius anything! Obviously, this is not the point. What happened is that we had to change the equipment, which was 25 years old. It had to be changed; there is no question about it. Obviously, to change, they chose a period where they thought the weather would not be so bad. But, everybody knows that, this year, the weather has been horrendous. It was not predictable. They did it at the least possible time. Of course, there was cost to Air Mauritius, to other airlines that were rerouted. But, that's inevitable. I am sorry about the hon. Member's breakfast, but what can I do!

Mrs Perrier: M. le président, je suis choquée par la réponse. J'avais eu l'information des autorités, qui était acceptable. Mais, là, le ministre vient nous dire que l'appareil a été retiré après 25 ans de service et qu'il fallait le remplacer. N'était-il pas plus judicieux de mettre d'abord un nouvel appareil, et ensuite d'enlever l'ancien, pour qu'il n'y ait pas ces problèmes ?

Mr X. L. Duval: This is not possible, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because there has to be place, etc. But, next elections, maybe, the hon. Member can do better!

ILE AUX BÉNITIERS – AGRICULTURAL LAND - CONVERSION

(No. B/1291) **Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to the *Ile aux Bénitiers*, he will state if the lessee thereof has applied for a conversion of his agricultural lease into an industrial one.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to both Parliamentary Questions No. B/1291 and No. B/1292 together as they are related.

Since 1990, Soolaman Nubheebucus Company Limited holds a lease over *Ile aux Bénitiers* for coconut plantation and for any other agricultural production. The said lease was cancelled in 2003 by the then Government. In September 2005, the lease was reinstated in favour of the company on the understanding that it would submit a hotel development project on *Ile aux Bénitiers*.

In 2008, the company submitted the relevant project write up. After consultation with all stakeholders, Government has approved in July 2009 that *Ile aux Bénitiers*, of an extent of 155arpents, be allocated in favour of Soolaman Nubheebucus Company Limited for hotel development project. The letter of reservation was issued on 18 August 2009.

As regards Parliamentary Question No. B/1292, another plot of State land of an approximate extent of 2 *arpents* and 90 perches forming part of *Pas Géométriques Grande Case Noyale* has also been reserved in favour of Soolaman Nubheebucus Company Limited to serve as a land base for the hotel project on *Ile aux Bénitiers*.

Mrs Perrier: Est-ce-que le ministre peut nous dire si la portion de terrain qui a été allouée à Coteau Raffin sur le *mainland* est bien le même terrain qui avait été identifié pour le *low-cost housing* avant 2005?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot give a reliable answer to that; I have to check and inform the hon. Member.

Mrs Perrier: Je voudrais que le ministre répète, car je n'ai peut-être pas très bien entendu. Je voudrais savoir si la conversion du terrain agricole en un *industrial lease* a été agréée?

Dr. Kasenally: As I said, I have no information about what happened before 2005, I will have to check with the documents available so as to be able to give precise information.

Mrs Perrier: Le ministre est-il au courant au moins qu'il y a un projet d'hôtel qui a été déposé auprès de la BOI, et que sans un *industrial lease* ce projet ne peut aller de l'avant?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not know what project she is talking about. Is it about the one on land based or the one on the island?

Mrs Perrier: Dans sa réponse, le ministre lui-même vient de dire que les deux sont liés et que le *mainland* va servir de réception pour le projet d'hôtel sur l'île aux Bénitiers. Donc, s'il n'y a pas eu encore de reconversion entre le *lease* agricole et l'*industrial lease*, le projet ne peut avoir lieu. Je veux savoir s'il y a eu cette conversion.

Dr. Kasenally: Of course, when we say that the company submitted the relevant project - if you would hear carefully - no letter of intent or reservation is given unless the land has been converted from an agricultural to an industrial lease.

Mr Guimbeau: If the land has been converted from agricultural to industrial lease, can we know the annual rental of the industrial land of *l'Ile aux Bénitiers*?

Dr. Kasenally: The rental has not been fixed yet until the project is approved and all its clearances are given. There is a third step after all the conditions are met, then they work it out as to how much they are going to charge.

Mrs Perrier: Le ministre dit qu'il n'y a pas encore eu de *letter of intent*. Est-il au courant qu'il y a eu un *EIA report* qui a été déposé au ministère de l'environnement?

Dr. Kasenally: Non, je n'ai pas dit qu'il n'y avait pas eu de *letter of intent*. J'ai dit qu'il y a eu un *letter of reservation*. Subséquemment, on donne le *letter of intent*. Il y a aussi un *EIA application*.

COTEAU RAFFIN/LA GAULETTE - S. N. Co. Ltd – STATE LAND –

(No. B/1292) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if the company S. N. Co. Ltd. has been granted a plot of State land in the region of Coteau Raffin/La Gaulette and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) date on which it was granted, and
- (b) extent of the plot of land.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/1291)

ANSE LA RAIÉ - PRESIDENT'S BUNGALOW – LAND LEASE

(No. B/1293) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the President's bungalow located on the *Pas Géométriques*, at Anse La Raie, he will state –

- (a) the extent of land thereof, and
- (b) if the lease has been transferred and, if so, indicate the
 - (i) name and address of the new lessee;
 - (ii) reasons for the transfer;
 - (iii) rental value thereof, and
 - (iv) terms and conditions of the new lease.

Dr. Kasenally: Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, the extent of land is 3 *arpents* and 3 perches (12,789m²).

In regard to part (b) of the question, the President's bungalow is situated over part of *Pas Géométriques*, Union Ribet, which is still under the control of my Ministry. No lease has been granted thereon, and no such transfer has been effected.

**DEVELOPMENT BANK OF MAURITIUS LTD. - Mr H. P. –
SUSPENSION**

(No. B/1294) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank, information as to if one of its employee, Mr H. P., has been suspended from duty and, if so, the reasons therefor.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd. that an employee, as being referred to, has, some ten days back, been suspended on full pay on grounds of misconduct and mishandling of confidential bank information.

As it is generally the practice in such cases, to provide a fair hearing and to protect the right of the parties, the Bank would set up a Disciplinary Committee to be chaired by an independent person.

I understand that the employee has been advised that he may choose to be assisted at the hearing of the Disciplinary Committee by his Trade Union representative, an officer of the Ministry of Labour & Industrial Relations and/or his Legal Adviser.

As to what would be the next action, the Bank would stand guided by the findings and recommendations of the Disciplinary Committee.

Mr Varma: Is the vice-Prime Minister aware that the employee concerned was requested to give a report as regards certain cases at the DBM and had to carry out an audit on certain matters at the DBM?

Dr. Sithanen: I am not aware of the details of the case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Varma: Is the vice-Prime Minister aware that the wife of the employee has also been transferred? She was working at the Port Louis branch, but she has been transferred to Flacq following the suspension of the employee.

Dr. Sithanen: I am not aware, but I will find out and let the hon. Member know.

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House how this independent committee is going to be set up and if he has the information about who are going to adjudicate on this case?

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as is the case in many State-owned enterprises and parastatal bodies, they have a procedure and a process on how they will appoint these independent panels. I presume they will follow the procedure.

Mr Varma: Is the vice-Prime Minister aware that, following the comments made by the employee as regards the management of the DBM, he was suspended?

Dr. Sithanen: I am not aware. I have requested for the information, and I have been told that it was on the ground of misconduct and mishandling of confidential bank information. But I can seek additional information.

MAHEBOURG/PLAINE MAGNIEN – PROJECTS

(No. B/1295) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, he will state the projects undertaken by his Ministry, since July 2005 to date, indicating, the costs thereof.

(Withdrawn)

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL – CHAIRPERSON

(No. B/1296) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Chairperson of the Human Resources Development Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the –

- (a) name of the incumbent, and
- (b) terms and conditions of his contract of appointment.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply made to PQ No. B/356, which was set on 15 May 2007 on a similar question. All the information sought is found in there. Mr Deepak Tulsidas is the Chairperson of the Council on a part time basis. He has been reappointed for a period of two years, as from May 2008, in consultation with the Mauritius Employers' Federation, in accordance with section 7 of the Human Resources Development Act 2003. He is provided with a mobile phone, and he is drawing a monthly fee of Rs15,000. But, in reality, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he draws only Rs12,500 after tax deduction. We know it is very important for us to pay our taxes; if not, we may be chased by the Mauritius Revenue Authority. I hope the hon. Member knows what I am saying.

I wish to inform the House of my entire satisfaction, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of the work done by the HRDC. In fact, the previous Chairperson was drawing double the sum, i.e. Rs30,000 monthly.

I am circulating a list of achievements of the HRDC under the Chairmanship of Mr Deepak Tulsidas, which is an outstanding one. (**Appendix**)

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as per the terms and conditions of his contract, would the hon. Minister inform the House whether he can engage in active politics?

Dr. Bunwaree: I do not know whether he is engaging in active politics, but I am sure that he has not been knocking at the doors of Ministers to get other contracts.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like you to come to the point.

(Interruptions)

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, this is not the way...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order! Please, be seated both, I am on my feet! This is an august Assembly. I would like...

(Interruptions)

Please remain seated! Please be seated when I am on my feet!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, you have been asked a straightforward question, please give a straightforward answer without erring outside the bounds of what has been asked for. And I would ask both of you to please help to foster the decorum of this House. Thank you.

(Interruptions)

I am not asking for a question, I am simply asking for a reply which is correct and remains within the bounds of decorum in this House. Whatever problems that may exist are not to be sorted out here, and I expect both of you to abide by my ruling. Thank you very much.

Dr. Bunwaree: I am not aware of any political activity of Mr Deepak Tulsidas.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Dr. Bunwaree: But I know that he is very active in the whole of Mauritius, trying to do his work.

Mr Varma: Is the hon. Minister aware that the said Mr Deepak Tulsidas is campaigning for him in his constituency, and he even presented him as a future Labour party candidate in Constituency No. 12?

The Deputy Speaker: Are you aware or not, hon. Minister?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't reply to questions I don't understand.

(Interruptions)

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, one more question. Is the hon. Minister aware that the said Deepak Tulsidas has been proposing ladies working on contract to go out with him at the HRDC, and when they refuse to go out with him he does not renew their contract?

The Deputy Speaker: I overrule this question. I will not allow this question. Next question, please!

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND HUMAN RESOURCES - MR Y. R. - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/1297) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether he will state if one Mr Y. R. is employed as Adviser at his Ministry on a contractual basis and, if so, indicate his

—

- (a) terms and conditions of appointment;
- (b) qualifications;
- (c) area of speciality for which his services have been retained, and
- (d) occupational experience.

(Withdrawn)

TAMARIN BRIDGE - SURVEY

(No. B/1298) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Tamarin Bridge, he will state if he has received any complaint relating to its age and state, and, if so, indicate if his Ministry has recently carried out any examination and survey thereof, the outcome thereof and the remedial measures Government proposes to take.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd. was appointed in September 2008 to carry out investigations of three bridges, including Tamarin Bridge. The consultant completed the study in June 2009, and submitted the final detailed engineering report for each of the bridges together with the Bill of Quantities, list of prices, tender drawings and cost estimates.

The estimated cost for the rehabilitation works is Rs18.8 m. The works have been planned for the Financial Year 2010. Bidding documents are under preparation, and works may start early next 2010.

Mr Ganoo: I thank the hon. Minister for the answer.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross talking in this House, please!

Mr Ganoo: May we know what defects have been revealed by the inquiry with regard to Tamarin Bridge? Is it a very serious problem?

Mr Bachoo: The problem is very serious, and that is the reason why I have put it in the priority list. And, definitely, once the tender exercise will be over, we will proceed with the rehabilitation of the bridge.

YVES CANTIN HOSPITAL – ELECTRICITY SUPPLY - INTERRUPTION

(No. B/1299) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he is aware of the difficulties and prejudices caused to the staff and the patients of the Yves Cantin Hospital, at Black River, in cases of interruption of electricity supply, and if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker Sir, the Yves Cantin Hospital operates on a 24-hour basis, but there are no inpatients.

I am informed that whenever there is a temporary power interruption, a manual generator is utilised. However, this equipment broke down some time back, and rechargeable lamps were used as backup facilities.

Mr Speaker Sir, the latest information is that a petrol driven standby generator (capacity 2.8 KVA) is now available. So far, no problems have occurred in the delivery of services to patients during power interruptions.

Furthermore, action has already been initiated for the purchase of a new sophisticated standby generator of 110 KVA.

Mr Ganoo: I don't blame the hon. Minister, but I don't know whether he has been provided with the right information. Is the hon. Minister denying the fact that, on the last occasion, when there was a power cut which took place a few weeks ago at Yves Cantin Hospital, the hospital was deprived of electricity supply for nearly one hour?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have all the details of the prejudices caused. But, I can assure the hon. Member that we have made sure that, first, we have a standby generator – a smaller one – and we have started procedure to bring in a larger one, which will be able to cope with any difficulties. I am given also to understand that there have been about eight power cuts over the period of a year. I do appreciate the difficulties that one could face, but we have taken remedial actions.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister is taking the steps.

Mr Ganoo: Therefore, the hon. Minister is confirming the fact that, in spite of the request of the ESD, which is a department of the Ministry of Utilities, no standby generator was ever placed in this hospital?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not want to go as far back as when the problem started. In fact, I am informed that the problem has been there since 2004. But what is important is that we have taken action and we have a standby generator and, hopefully, once the procedures are over, we will get the proper equipment so that patients do not face those difficulties.

RING ROAD PROJECT – INHABITANTS - RELOCATION

(No. B/1300) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the implementation of the Ring Road Project, in Port Louis, he will state if some inhabitants will have to be relocated and, if so, indicate if –

- (a) locations have been indentified therefor;
- (b) a study has been carried out to assess the social impact of such forced migration, and
- (c) the families concerned will be compensated and, if so, the nature thereof.

The Minister of Housing & Lands (Dr. S. Kasenally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to that question.

Some 91 inhabitants, of which 85 are squatters, are likely to be affected by the construction of the proposed Ring Road.

Regarding part (a) of the question, the exercise has already been initiated for the identification of suitable plots of land where the inhabitants could be relocated. In the process, issues such as availability of basic infrastructure, including water and electricity supplies have to be addressed – of course, without forgetting wastewater.

As regards part (b), I am informed that the relocation of these families would need to be carried out after completion of the 1st Phase of the project. It is the intention of Government to look into all the implications, including the social impact on the inhabitants with respect to the future relocation exercise. Information on the inhabitants concerned regarding their landownership status, the nature of their occupation and the type of building constructed are being updated.

It is to be noted that only six of the inhabitants have valid leasehold rights on the land they are occupying, while the others are squatters and are occupying the land in an illegal manner. They will, therefore, be requested to vacate the land. Nevertheless, as a caring Government, we shall see to it that this exercise is carried out in a very decent and humane manner.

Mrs Perrier: There are many squatters. May we know as from when they are squatting the land there?

Dr. Kasenally: Whenever somebody squats, he never gives you the precise time that he is squatting, but this has been going on over a period of years. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is difficult for my Ministry to give the precise time, but this has been over a period of a number of years.

Mrs Perrier: Is the Ministry ready to carry out an enquiry or a survey to see whether these people will be eligible for a State land because they are squatting? Because, there must be a reason behind this squatting.

Dr. Kasenally: Of course, this is exactly what we are doing. We are doing an exercise. If the hon. Member had listened to me carefully, she would have noted what I have said. I said that we are looking into all the aspects of the squatting. I think you would all

agree with me that it is a humanitarian problem, and we will have to see how best we can fix them somewhere.

Mrs Perrier: I understood the hon. Minister well. Did he confirm that the squatters will be relocated as well?

Dr. Kasenally: I spend a fair bit of my time regularising squatters. And, in fact, even in the hon. Member's constituency, we have a lot of squatters and we are trying to help.

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF MAURITIUS LTD. (DBM) - LOANS - INTEREST RATES

(No. B/1301) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the loans granted by the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank, information as to the interest rates being charged to the small planters, the breeders, the small and medium enterprises and the fishermen, respectively.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment (Dr. R. Sithanen): Mr Speaker, Sir, the loan facilities that the Development Bank of Mauritius provides fall into two categories.

The first category consists of loan schemes that are Government sponsored and subsidised through the Budget, under which financial support to beneficiaries are granted on concessionary terms and at below market rates.

The second category consists of normal DBM loan Schemes, which are granted at near market rates.

The first category, which is a special subsidised Loan scheme, targets -

- (i) small planters (including sugar cane and vegetable planters, fruit and flower growers, producers of agricultural seedlings and other planters);
- (ii) small livestock breeders (including cow & cattle breeders, pig breeders, goat & sheep breeders, poultry breeders etc);
- (iii) small fishermen, and
- (iv) small and medium enterprises.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the special financing offered by the Bank to the small planters, fishermen and small and medium enterprises provide in addition to low interest rates, other facilities such as moratorium, non-requirement of collateral and longer repayment periods.

There are many such financing schemes operated by the Bank for the different groups of planters, breeders and entrepreneurs and SMEs.

A listing detailing the different schemes including rates of interest is being tabled.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I impress upon the hon. Minister to see to it that the DBM carries probably a better favourable interest rate for these vulnerable stakeholders? Because actually they find themselves in a very difficult situation.

Dr. Sithanen: I agree with the hon. Member. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the cases of small planters and breeders who have difficulties, we have a combination of grant and low interest rates loans and, at the same time, we give them a moratorium. I am sure that the hon. Member would also appreciate that the DBM borrows money from the Pension Fund. Obviously, if they borrow at x, they have to be cautious at the rate of which they lend to the borrowers. I am sure that the hon. Member will also appreciate that in the Budget before this one, we did introduce a scheme to write off some of the debts of the small breeders and small entrepreneurs.

CEB - POWER PLANT PROJECT

(No. B/1302) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the new 100 Megawatts Power Plant Project, as announced in the 2010 Budget Speech, he will state -

- (a) if any operator has been selected and, if so, indicate the mode of selection thereof;
- (b) the affordable environmentally friendly technology which is being proposed, and
- (c) when the implementation thereof is expected to start.

(Vide Reply to PQ No. B/1272)

MAURITIUS TELECOM – SHARES - SALE

(No. B/1303) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the proposed sale of shares to the value of Rs 1.5 billion of the Mauritius Telecom, as announced in the 2010 Budget Speech, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Telecom, information as to:

- (a) the shares that will be sold, indicating the selling price thereof;
- (b) the number of shares each present shareholder is expected to be selling;
- (c) if the employees thereof are already shareholders, and
- (d) the expected change in Government shareholding after the proposed sale.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the 2007/2008 Budget Speech, I announced that, in the context of the democratisation of the economy, Mauritius Telecom shares would be listed on the Port Louis Stock Exchange. A minimum of 10 to 15% of shares will have to be offered for sale at the Initial Public Offer (IPO) that is planned to be launched in 2010.

Insofar as parts (a) and (b) of the question are concerned, I wish to point out that the exact percentage of shares to be sold has not yet been decided. However, it has been agreed that Government and the State Bank of Mauritius, which is also a shareholder of MT, will be disposing the shares in the context of the IPO. In this context, discussions would be held with the Financial Adviser who has been appointed by MT, to assist in the listing of the company.

At this stage, the selling price of the shares has not yet been determined. The Financial Adviser is working on the valuation of MT and would come up with a pricing report after a market sounding. A decision would then be taken on the selling price of the shares. The figure of Rs1.5 billion mentioned in the Budget Speech is just an estimate.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I would like to inform the House that, since the implementation in 2007 of the Employee Share Participation Scheme, employees and pensioners of MT have become shareholders in MT.

Regarding part (d), Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the Shareholders Agreement signed with France Telecom, as long as Government and the National Pensions Fund together hold at least 30 percent of the share capital of MT, Government will keep control of MT and nominate the Chairperson and the Chief Executive Officer. In this scenario, Government can dispose up to 9% of its shares, while retaining control of MT.

Mr Jugnauth: Would the hon. vice-Prime Minister clarify? Because I heard previous statements that Government would be selling 15% of its shareholding, that is, public sector shareholding. What is the situation? Because I just heard the hon. Minister say that Government has not decided on the actual amount.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the agreement signed with France Telecom is constructed in such a way that if Government and National Pension Fund together own 30%, we retain control, which means that we can appoint the Chairman and the CEO. We have had discussions with France Telecom, and we would like to ensure that, while we democratise *l'actionnariat de Mauritius Telecom*, we also keep control of Mauritius Telecom. It is a question of how we list shares of Mauritius Telecom on the Stock Exchange while retaining 30% ownership in public sector.

Mr Jugnauth: Going to the Stock Exchange, has Government considered also impressing upon France Telecom to sell, at least, part of its shareholding?

Dr. Sithanen: The way the agreement was signed by them does not allow it. In fact, France Telecom wants to buy more. I do not want to go into a debate on how this was done, but it is very clear that the way the agreement was signed by the former Government does not force France Telecom to participate in the listing. This is not provided for.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether he can confirm that the proceeds will help to fund the Budget deficit, which will remain at 4.5%?

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they made two decisions when they signed the contract with France Telecom. The first one is that they were going to list, which they did not do. Second, they would make employees of Mauritius Telecom shareholders, which they did not do. It is this Government and its policy of democratisation of the economy that has given shareholding to the employees and pensioners of Mauritius Telecom. I am sure that the hon. Member knows how we are going to finance the deficit. The proceeds from this sale do not count into the budget deficit, but it is financing item. But this was a decision announced two years ago in the context of democratisation of the economy, so that the people of Mauritius participate *dans l'actionnariat de Mauritius Telecom sans qu'on perde le contrôle de Mauritius Telecom*.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not want to enter into a political argument because it is the same hon. vice-Prime Minister who was then - probably I should

remind him - in the Opposition at that time, and he was criticising the Labour Government for having spent money ahead of the sale. Can the hon. vice-Prime Minister assure this country that, as he had said, in fact, Government will not be in a minority position after the sale of the shares?

Dr. Sithanen: If they had negotiated much better, probably we would not have had that situation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Next question then please!

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

QUARTIER MILITAIRE – DRAIN PROJECT

(No. B/1304) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed works to be carried out in the flood prone area, at the “*Ancien la Gare*”, at Quartier Militaire, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, the consultant of the National Development Unit submitted its proposal for a drain project in Quartier Militaire in September 2009. The proposals are being examined, and way leave issues are being addressed simultaneously.

Subject to all way leave issues being resolved, it is expected that the works order for the project at Quartier Militaire would be issued some time in March 2010.

SAVANNE & BLACK RIVER - TRUST FUND FOR THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS - AMOUNT DISBURSED

(No. B/1305) Mrs D. Perrier (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to Constituency No. 14, Savanne & Black River, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Trust Fund for Vulnerable Groups, information as to -

- (a) the amount of money disbursed for projects in the year 2009, indicating the names of the project and the sums disbursed, and

- (b) if the Trust Fund has made any donation to any socio-cultural organisation or religious body and, if so, indicate the amount thereof and the names of the beneficiaries.

Dr. Sithanen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the main objective of the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups is to alleviate poverty through the funding of projects/schemes, with the active participation of the NGOs and CBOs, in order to improve the standard of living of needy and vulnerable families and thus ensure their smooth integration in mainstream society.

With regard to Poverty Alleviation Programme, the Trust Fund has been providing grants for funding implementation of community based projects, covering namely -

- (i) construction of CIS housing units;
- (ii) provision of school materials to needy children;
- (iii) remedial education, as well as provision of reading materials and related equipment for needy children in deprived areas, and
- (iv) provision of equipment, furniture and related facilities to vulnerable families in order to improve their immediate surroundings.

The Trust Fund also provides soft loan through the DBM Ltd to vulnerable families to support them in starting a micro-business, so as to increase their household income.

As I have previously informed the House, interventions by the NGOs and CBOs at grass root level cover a particular locality and, thus, may overlap constituency boundaries.

For the district of Black River and Savanne, a number of NGOs and CBOs have been collaborating and participating actively in providing immediate support to needy vulnerable families. The NGOs in these two regions include « *Organisation Catholique de Petite Rivière* », Caritas, *Forces Vives Résidence de Beau Vallon*, Childhope, Arya Sabha, *Centre d'Amitié de Bambous* and *Organisation Sociale de Camp Diable*. All of them have been submitting projects to assist the needy and vulnerable in terms of CIS housing, school materials and micro credit.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Trust Fund has, for the period January 2009 to date, approved the following projects from NGOs –

- (i) the construction of some 460 CIS housing units for the sum of Rs28.3 m.;

- (ii) provision of school materials to 1,700 needy children for the sum of Rs2.1 m.;
- (iii) provision of furniture and equipment for a home in Chemin Grenier for the sum of Rs220,823, and
- (iv) the Trust Fund has also provided soft loans to eight individuals under the Micro-Credit Scheme for a total sum of Rs300,000 in the field of farming, textile and food processing.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Trust Fund has approved in July 2009 a project for the provision of furniture and equipment from the Arya Sabha of Mauritius for the Chemin Grenier Sewa Ashram, a Home, for the benefit of orphans, abandoned adults and vulnerable persons who urgently need a shelter. The financing of the project for supply of furniture and equipment for the Home is Rs220,823.

I must inform the House that the Home, which is being constructed by the Arya Sabha of Mauritius, is estimated to cost Rs8 m. and, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may also wish to note that this project for the construction of the Home is receiving a grant of Rs3.7 m. from the Decentralised Cooperation Programme. I am further informed that the Home is planned to be operational by the end of the year, and that the Association has already placed an order for the said furniture and other items.

Mrs Perrier: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether any religious body has been promised any fund from the Trust Fund?

Dr. Sithanen: Besides the one that I have just mentioned, I don't know of any other religious body, unless we enter into a debate on what is a religious body. So, I don't know whether the hon. Member will say that Caritas or Arya Sabha are religious bodies; if we want to enter into a debate on the semantic of what constitutes a religious body or not.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister, therefore, clarify if the Trust Fund is empowered to make donations to temples, kovils, churches and shivalas? I am not referring, of course, to the institution which you just mentioned, that is, the Ashram which manages a hospice.

Dr. Sithanen: Not to my mind, even though this is Mauritius. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are some religious bodies that also run charitable institutions. So, if they comply with the guidelines of the Trust Fund and they are eligible for such assistance, why not? We are talking about one umbrella, one that looks after religion and one after charitable

institutions. I presume that this is how the furniture and equipment for the Arya Sabha have been approved by the Committee.

Mr Ganoo: I am not talking of the Ashram and about the furniture. We have no quarrel with the assistance of the Ashram, Arya Samaj and the furniture. I am talking of other religious places of worship, which are solely places of worship and run no hospice.

Dr. Sithanen: I am not aware of this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would think that this should not be the case. Obviously, I speak under correction; I'll have to check.

Mrs Perrier: Is the Minister aware that the President of the Trust Fund is campaigning as a candidate for the Labour party in the constituency, using the fund of a Trust Fund?

Dr. Sithanen: I am not aware. I am a bit surprised. There are no elections, and the hon. Member is speaking about campaigning.

MRS H. B. A. – BIP - APPLICATION

(No. B/1306) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions whether, in regard to one Mrs H. B. A., of Surinam, she will state the number of applications the latter has made to benefit from the payment of a Basic Invalidity Pension, indicating the –

- (a) disease from which she is suffering, and
- (b) reasons for which her applications therefor have been turned down.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, claimant first applied for a Basic Invalidity Pension on 07 October 2005. Her application was favourably considered, and she was granted an invalidity pension for a period of one year. On renewal of her claim, that is, one year after, in September 2006, she was medically reboarded, but in accordance with the provisions of the law, her application was turned down as her degree of incapacity was this time found to be below 60%. She submitted an appeal to the Medical Tribunal in January 2007 against the decision of the Board, and her appeal was also set aside. Thereafter, from July 2007 to August 2009, she has been submitting an application for BIP at regular intervals of 7 to 8 months, and all of them have been turned down as her percentage of disability was consistently below 60. She systematically appealed to the Medical Tribunal against the various decisions of the Medical Board, and all the appeals were invariably set aside.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that both the Medical Board and the Medical Tribunal are independent bodies. The Medical Board consists of two medical practitioners, whereas the Medical Tribunal is chaired by a Judge of the Supreme Court, who is assisted by two medical specialists in the relevant field.

With regard to the second part of the question relating to the nature of the disease, the House will agree, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, that, for ethical reasons, it would not be proper to disclose such type of information. Moreover, the hon. Member, being himself a lawyer, is perfectly aware that, under section 300 of the Criminal Code, it would be an offence to reveal the medical condition of the applicant without her consent.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had the consent of this lady before I asked this question. I asked her whether she agreed that I ask the question about the nature of the disease. I have never asked questions about one patient all the time I have been in this House, but this is a case which has really shocked me. I have personally seen, unfortunately, or I will put it in the form of a question. Is the hon. Minister aware that, in spite of what she has said, there is a medical certificate emanating from the GMO that this lady is 100% incapacitated - I will communicate it to the hon. Minister - to the extent of 100%? I have never seen the disease which was mentioned in the certificate. Is she aware of this?

Mrs Bappoo: First of all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't know what has been the discussion between the hon. Member and the lady, but I cannot take it from what the Member is saying that I need to reveal the reason about the disease and what is the specificity of the disease. This is one point.

The second point, the usual practice is that anyone coming for medical boarding needs to come with a medical certificate from the treating doctor, hospital or health centre or whatever it is. But that doctor does not have the right to recommend whether the person has 100% incapacity; otherwise, it would have been useless to have a Medical Board. The doctor just has to make the diagnosis of the disease; then, the Medical Board assesses the disability of the person, and if after all these assessments the pension is turned down, the claimant has the right to appeal, and she appeals to the Medical Tribunal, which is composed of a judge and two specialist doctors in specific diseases. We cannot question now the validity of the judgment from the Medical Tribunal.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Just a second, please! This is someone who seems to be in a hard predicament. May I suggest that the hon. Member takes it up with the Minister as opposed to having this type of repartee in the House? Thank you.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take your point, but can I just ask one last question to the hon. Minister? I don't want to pick a quarrel with the hon. Minister. She is not to be blamed. In fact, I even talked to her on this case, if she will remember. It's the only time I talked to Mrs Bappoo privately...

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganno: Because I knew she would help, but it does not matter. I raised this question of 100% incapacity because she said the ceiling, which is a condition laid down, amounts to 60% incapacity. I don't know whether Government has to review the law, but on top of the fact that one GMO certified that she was 100% incapacitated, there was also a private doctor whom she went to consult, and I perused this medical certificate. I can give the name of that doctor. He also certified that this lady is incapacitated up to the extent of 100%. So, in that case, I ask the question. If it is true that a GMO and a private doctor both certified that a patient is 100% incapacitated - I know there is a Board and a Tribunal - there must be something wrong somewhere, hon. Minister! We have to find a solution to such type of cases.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been several appeals to several medical tribunals, and I have checked it. There are different medical tribunal sittings, which were composed of different specialists. So, all these specialists at six sessions, found it to be below 60%. There is only one private doctor and one GMO who stated that it is more than 100%. I won't reveal the disease of the person here. I would invite the hon. Member to come to my office, and I would explain to him what is the disease; not on the phone, but in my office, and I will show him.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Have some decorum for the hon. Minister. Thank you, hon. Minister. Last question!

Mrs Perrier: Mr Deputy Speaker, in the light of what the Minister just said, it is nearly obvious that the problem rose on the existing 60% inabilitys. Will the Minister review this decision of 60%? Because very often we have seen that very genuine case does not get assistance because of this target of 60%.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been discussing at the level of the medical unit with the Director of the Medical Board, Dr. Basant Rai, so many times about this issue. Let me inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that Mauritius is one of the most generous countries; 60%. In other countries, it is 80% of incapacity. In other countries like Canada, Egypt, people have to contribute to the system for a number of years before they make an application, in order to obtain a basic invalidity pension. So, I don't think it is just an issue of reviewing and just increase the disability percentage.

SCABIES - RÉSIDENCE RICHELIEU

(No. B/1313) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether he is aware of cases of children infected with scabies at the Résidence Richelieu and, if so, will he state if an inquiry has been carried out into the causes thereof and the measures taken to deal with this infection.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that cases of scabies are reported all the year round throughout the island. At Résidence Richelieu, there are a few reported cases of children infected with scabies, and figures of the last three months show a gradual decrease in the number of cases. As regards the causes thereof, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ No. B/234 in April 2009, wherein I mentioned that scabies is an infestation of the skin which spreads rapidly under crowded conditions, where there is frequent skin-to-skin contact and unhygienic conditions. After a meeting with technicians of my Ministry, I personally chaired a meeting with all stakeholders in July 2009. The meeting included representatives of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, and the National Children's Council. The immediate, short and long term remedial measures to control the propagation of the infection have been looked into. The following measures, agreed by the Committee, are being implemented with a view to reducing the cases of scabies -

- (i) a Protocol for the treatment with Ivermectin has been prepared and adopted by dermatologists;
- (ii) the medicine has been procured and is being used for the oral treatment of scabies over and above the use of topical lotion; an aggressive campaign on the importance of washing hands regularly and to

keep the environment clean and tidy has been launched; a survey has been carried out in those regions affected by poverty and where there is prevalence of scabies;

- (iii) the mobile clinic of my Ministry has carried out screening in various regions;
- (iv) nationwide sensitisation programmes have been organised as follows -
 - (a) broadcast on radio and TV, programmes on scabies for the general public in addition to the slot on the “*Allo Docteur*” Programme, and
 - (b) meetings with the President of the PTAs and the *forces vives* have been held, with a view to assisting in such programmes at school level. In the region of Richelieu, such sensitisation programmes have been organised in schools, which have seen the participation of students as well as parents. Furthermore, health education programmes are being conducted on a regular basis at Petite Rivière Community Health Centre.

I personally launched the sensitisation campaign at Le Morne in July 2009, and this was followed by a 4-day screening programme. Mr Speaker, Sir, no effort is being spared to contain the disease throughout the island.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

Dr. Sithanen rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Bill (No. XXIII of 2009) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2010) BILL

(No. XXI of 2009)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second reading of the Appropriation (2010) Bill (No. XXI of 2009).

Question again proposed.

(3.48 p.m)

The Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands (Dr. J. B David): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't know whether what happened yesterday or what happened this morning was a mere coincidence or simply a cynical design, but yesterday *ce fut le bal des transfuges. Deux pour une journée, c'est un bal éreintant et ce sont deux discours indigestes.*

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Members stop polluting the House?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! I am prepared to listen, but not to hear invectives. No cross talking!

(Interruptions)

Allow me to finish, please!

Dr. David: These are facts.

The Deputy Speaker: I have stood on my feet. We have been giving latitude to all orators, and there is no reason why we should not. I have been given latitude to everyone. What I would like to make sure is that, at least, abide by the ruling of the Chair. Thank you!

Dr. David: *M. le président, ce n'est que le commencement, parce que je vais faire mal et très mal.* This is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,

As I said, yesterday, was it a coincidence, by preparing the list of orators, we had two turncoats? Then, this morning, we saw how the Opposition was, full steam, defending another turncoat. This is why I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I feel that these are signs of the time. I have been in this House for so long, and I have never seen turncoats being in the front line of battle and being defended by the Opposition. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that was

yesterday and this morning. But, in general, those who intervened to challenge the Budget were either unconvincing or had recourse to demagogy, or both. I do understand that the Opposition cannot come and praise the Budget, but they could have shown some restraint, instead of allowing themselves to be carried away by demagogy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me, at the very start, to underline the obvious. And, in this case, the obvious is that it is extremely difficult to find convincing arguments to challenge the fundamentals of this Budget. This is basic, and I can well understand the desperate attempts of those who rack their brains - I would not be wicked to say if they have any - trying to invent arguments to suit their political agenda. It is definitely clear that the Opposition has given signs that it is totally out of steam. In fact, they have tried to invent arguments. We have listened to the semblance of argumentation from the Opposition side, and we have been served with sets of ideas which are fragile, incoherent, insipid and unconvincing. There is in life a basic principle. If you cannot convince yourself, how can you convince others?

We have seen the Leader of the Opposition and the other Members trying to convince us that this Budget is bad, that it has gone out of focus and, yet, they themselves are not convinced of what they are saying. The Opposition has first tried demagogy, but they have soon realised that they were miles away from public opinion. In fact, public opinion has well understood our message and our objectives, not only this year, but in preceding years as well. I would like to refer in particular to the last financial year. Everybody has said that we went through rough times, through recession. It is as if the Opposition were living in another planet, not knowing what planet earth was going through, as if the recession for them meant absolutely nothing; for them, the platform of demagogy, the platform of cheap political gains were more than just opening their eyes wide and seeing what was happening in this world. They were so to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, outlandish, out of this world. I would not say even on the moon, because we can now go on the moon. But they were even beyond that, as if outside that galaxy, outside that universe, not knowing what was happening around.

(Interruptions)

Should we remind that the world was engulfed into an unprecedented economic recession! Even the strongest countries, United States of America, Japan, countries of Europe, just to name these countries, all these big countries which, for so long, stayed in our minds as reference of good economic governance. All of them collapsed one by one, *comme un*

château de cartes, as if it was a domino effect one after the other. Bank collapse! Can they remind of people getting their money out of the banks? Bank collapse, massive unemployment! I have seen recently on television, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a university graduate, from one of the renowned universities, having something around his neck, a board, saying: ‘graduate on loan, walking in the streets of New York, sandwich man looking for employment.’ Have they seen that, or was it not relayed on their television set?

Financial turmoil and, even, as I said, last year, people were talking of visions of apocalypse and the vice-Prime Minister and myself referred to Armageddon. People who do not read the Bible were not conversant with that vocabulary; even in the ‘Economist’ or in most respected magazines and newspapers, people were referring to Armageddon, that is, end of the world. That was the situation, almost an international topsy-turviness. Do they realise what the world was going through? In fact, the anguish of the world was so great that people could not even foresee the end of the tunnel, what tomorrow would be made of. People did not even know; they were living in anguish; that was the anguish of nations, the torment of nations. We have seen how many Governments paid the price, heavy price, because of that financial turmoil. We have seen the march of workers towards uncertainties of tomorrow. In these days of difficulties, in these days of unpredictable tomorrows, the people of Mauritius, in fact, had the fear because they watched television. But this Government did what it could, did the best it could, and the people of Mauritius stood firm and confident in the promises and the guidance of this Government.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Dr. David: Let me applaud, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Allow me to applaud, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Pourquoi l’honorable membre est en colère contre ces gens, contre ceux qui viennent du peuple ? Ce n’est pas à vous de leur demander de se conduire comme il se doit ! Il y a le Deputy Speaker pour cela. Mme Navarre-Marie est en train de pointer du doigt au peuple !

(Interruptions)

Ce que j’ai, c’est que ce n’est pas une attitude pour blâmer ceux qui sont dans la galerie publique.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now....

(*Interruptions*)

I am not giving way. Let me now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

The Deputy Speaker: Is the hon. lady raising a point of order?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My name is being mentioned. I have not blamed anyone here.

(*Interruptions*)

Dr. David: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I am on my feet. Please, be seated!

(*Interruptions*)

Please, be seated! There has been an unfortunate incident from the public gallery. I suggest that we allow the current orator to continue with his speech.

(*Interruptions*)

Please, stay seated until I sit down; both of you.

(*Interruptions*)

Dr. David: This is not a point of order. I am not giving way!

The Deputy Speaker: I am on my feet! I would like to request both hon. Members to please show some patience towards one another. I am asking both of you now to stop with anything which goes outside the purview of the debates, and I will give the floor to the hon. Minister to continue with his speech and to stay within the realm of the Budget. Thank you.

Dr. David: *J'ai annoncé la couleur au départ, M. le président. Je vais faire mal et très mal.*

(*Interruptions*)

Et voilà les réactions ! But let me, on behalf of the people, applaud the intelligence and the trust of my fellow countrymen. In the days when the world was crumbling down, Mr Speaker, Sir, we built bridges over troubled waters. This is what the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister and this Government did. We dared and we acted, as the Budget has highlighted. And while the Opposition simply criticised or caved in, *permettez-moi de dire merci mille fois à cette population qui a fait preuve de courage, de détermination et de*

confiance et qui, comme nous, a eu foi dans l'avenir, M. le président. Nous avions raison, et le peuple a eu raison de croire en nous. Comme toujours, les démagogues et les prophètes de malheur have been proved wrong.

I will come to that aspect a bit later, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Let me come back to the criticisms that we have heard since the Budget has been presented. I have just mentioned at the beginning that arguments were unconvincing. But, heaped on that, we have been served with a series of paradoxes from the Opposition. This is the proof of the uneasiness and the political bankruptcy of the Opposition. Let me refer to a few of these paradoxes which, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, defy commonsense, and even, I would say, border on ridicule. Let me just quote a few. For example, they have said that this Budget *est un budget électoraliste*. And then, they come and criticise the Budget. We cannot have both. It cannot be *un budget électoraliste* and then you come and criticise the Budget. Either this Budget is giving really too much as an electoral bait, pleasing everybody and, therefore, being *électoraliste*, or the Budget is poorly designed and, therefore, provoking the anger of the people. Which is which? Is it *électoraliste*, pleasing people or is it a poor Budget, as you say, displeasing people? They should come to terms with themselves first, and then try to convince others!

Similarly, we have heard arguments that this Budget - *ça c'est le bouquet* - is the harvest of what was sown in 2005. Let us assume, in their wildest dream, that this is correct. Then, the Opposition should have been extremely happy and be supportive of the Budget. But, it cannot be at the same time a bountiful harvest and then a poor harvest. Which is which? It cannot be at the same time an unimpressive Budget and then a Budget of which you, yourself, are proud of. This is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *je cite le Leader de l'opposition* : '*C'est une récolte de ce que nous avons semé en 2005.*' But he said : '*Cela a un goût amer.*' Either *c'est une bonne récolte, donc, un goût qui remplit l'estomac et qui flatte les papilles ou alors c'est un goût amer.* But which is which? They have been trying to build arguments and then, at the end of the day, they end up in paradoxes and contradictions. *C'est ce qu'on a entendu, M. le président.* They have always said one thing and the contrary at the same time. *Une chose et son contraire en même temps!* It is a pity they cannot help it. It's as if it is Pavlovian. And this is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Opposition must be just a bit serious and not to be the laughing stock here when Budget time comes. At Budget time, uncontrolled paradoxes emerge. Let us take another nonsensical argument mentioned during

the debate. When the hon. Leader of the Opposition ended his speech, he made a really funny statement about elections. He ended it and referred to elections. He said, and I quote –

“I would like the coming elections to be as smooth as the one we had in 2005.”

But he must have surely forgotten Ashok Jugnauth. Was that smooth? For the first time, if my memory serves me right, a Member of Parliament has been unseated for electoral bribery. And then, the hon. Leader of the Opposition - who was Prime Minister in 2005 - said: let the forthcoming elections be as smooth as the one we had in 2005. We have got to remind him, therefore, that it was not smooth. The Supreme Court and the Privy Council both condemned the electoral bribery. And is this what he calls smooth elections? When he referred to 2005, the Leader of the Opposition said that 2005 has become an obsession for us.

Once again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are led into a land of paradoxes. In fact, 2005 was a year of nightmare and defeat for them, not for us. They have gone into an electoral collapse and they will never rise again. Yesterday, I heard them referring to: we will be back, *les élections arrivent, ce sera la fin du mandat, etc. M. le président, il est permis de rêver. La prochaine fois, quand on aura une réunion sur le Budget de 2011, probablement on demandera au ministre des finances de mettre un peu de taxe sur des rêves insensés, comme ceux qu'a notre ami le transfuge.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I remember that in 2005 this Government put an end to our descent into economic hell. For them, it was a political exit, but for this Government, it was a new door. *Le bilan de l'ancien gouvernement a été cataclysmique. On dirait qu'un séisme de magnitude maximale avait dévasté le pays économiquement et socialement.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these same people who led this country into bottomless pits, *qui avaient provoqué un choc économique, financier, social, politique, viennent nous donner des leçons.* They have failed, and now they say: follow our path and we will succeed. What they have led this country into was a path of failure. Now, they come as if they were Nobel prize winners, an outstanding gold medalist, *venant nous faire des leçons d'économie* how to take this country out of the mess which they themselves created. They want to show the way, and worse, they want to show their way, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Their programme had obviously and utterly failed.

(Interruptions)

They even concocted a winning formula. Do you remember what happened to it? The winning formula failed my dear hon. Pravind Jugnauth. And you know about it! No need for

me to get into details! Remember that the winning formula was another funny paradox! We've seen the shameless arrogance. We will hear other interveners today from the other side saying: you should have done this; you haven't done that; you should have given more! But all these are just gimmicks. We will hear just now; they will come with a shopping list of success.

We know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Let's be serious! Let's be honest! They, who are now criticising, must tell us why, with them, unemployment had soared to 10% and ever growing. I want to hear that answer! And then I want them as well to understand why we brought unemployment down to 8%. Give us your version of your failure, then, we will give you our version of our success! And this is how it will go. We even dropped - if my memory serves me right - to less than 8%, to 7.2% in 2008. *Au lieu de faire de grands discours qui n'ont pas de résonance ou tout simplement pour la galerie*, they must tell us why growth was on a free fall with them and continued pursuing the downward trend, and why we kept it positive despite a dramatic world recession and that we are now recovering. They must tell us why they had penalised consumers by increasing VAT twice - *la TVA*; they did not know where to get money from, *donc ils ont graté les poches des consommateurs, une fois, deux fois; 50% d'augmentation en deux ans. Du jamais vu! C'est du pickpocket!* *Et maintenant, ils viennent nous faire croire qu'ils ont découvert une théorie économique qui va sauver l'île Maurice.* Be serious! I know that you have got to use the time allocated to you, but be serious! Don't come here with figures that you cannot explain or give us lessons when you yourself failed!

As I said, even though they increased VAT twice, they were unable to stimulate the economy and to ensure the equitable sharing of wealth. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government has given so much in terms of social support, cultural encouragement and economic empowerment. Yes, it may sound perhaps good; I mean, somewhere that we should have given x, but we have given -x.

Well, *c'est ce que vous allez dire. On ne donne pas suffisamment tout le temps, on trouvera des moyens de réclamer encore et encore.* But on principles and fundamentals, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are totally right in what we are doing. I can go on and on highlighting their weaknesses and failures, but they must admit that we've created economic miracle and revival and this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is acclaimed worldwide. We are not simply blowing our own trumpet. This is acclaimed in "Financial Times", in "The Economist", in the EIU, this is acclaimed by the Mo Ibrahim Index and we have not invented

that. Those sitting there are not Labour party agents. Mrs Clinton and others hold no brief for hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam and, yet, by reasonable understanding and assessment, they found that we are doing well, and very well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

As soon as we came to power in 2005, we started very bold reforms. We changed the gear and we reshaped our economic vision with one objective: to help those who cannot help themselves, while we've been, at the same time, very much inventive, we've developed other sectors of the economy. And this is what has created dynamism and confidence in our economy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. But as soon as we started getting out of the wild in 2005/2006, we were hit by a global financial crisis. At that point in time, *quand l'anxiété, quand l'angoisse gagnait toutes les nations*, those who were on this planet earth can remember - I was there, I remember - every morning, reading newspapers, reading international magazines, going on the web, *c'était déprimant*. But, as I always say, it is against the wind that the kite flies. *C'est contre le vent qu'on arrive à voir à quelle vitesse et à quelle hauteur le cerf-volant monte*.

Last year, the Prime Minister spoke of nice weather and of the sky which was blue, but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we had to face untold difficulties. *Aucun homme politique, digne de ce nom, n'est jamais entré en lui-même pour prendre conscience de l'ampleur de la tâche et je suis certain en premier lieu le Premier ministre et le ministre des finances. En voyant cette situation, un dirigeant politique qui a la responsabilité de plus d'un million de mauriciens et de mauriciennes, de leur avenir, a dû passer des jours et des nuits également à se poser de nombreuses questions et tenter d'avoir des réponses*.

As soon as we got out of this crisis, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we were hit again by other problems, but let me remind this House that we called for national solidarity and trust. Despite problems and thick dark clouds, despite the fact that we were really in the dark, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government never lost hope. We were guided by the hon. Prime Minister and we rolled our sleeves and faced the difficulties when others would have for so long escaped and said: *l'état d'urgence économique*, we cannot do more than that; when others would go in America and say: *on perd de l'emploi à une vitesse vertigineuse*. Remember in 1982, some left - unfortunately he is not around or fortunately, I don't know; *poêlon chaud*, when there was no global meltdown. *On mesure la responsabilité et la force morale d'un gouvernement dans des moments de difficulté, quand ce gouvernement dit : retroussons les manches et demandons au peuple la confiance qu'il faut*. Mr Deputy Speaker,

Sir, now that we have gone out of trouble, now that we can see a bit of light out of the tunnel, *mon premier remerciement va à ce peuple qui nous a fait confiance.*

Just recall in how many countries Governments have been *renversés*; in Iceland, to start with, *et dans d'autres pays* where banks were stoned and where there were *les émeutes de la faim*. We remember that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And my heart, my thoughts, my feelings, my emotions, my gratitude goes to the people.

*Nous avons montré le chemin, M. le président, et, sans ce gouvernement-ci, Mauritius would have sunk long before. The metal of our mind and heart are *inoxydable face aux épreuves de la vie*. Nous avons pris les fardeaux de plus d'un million de mauriciens and we asked them to trust us, and they trusted us, Mr Speaker, Sir.*

Last year, I remember one of the sub-titles of the Budget Speech was one of the battle cry, trumpeted by the Minister of Finance: 'Preparing for Recovery'. Can you just imagine and feel? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I read 'Preparing for Recovery', *j'avais la chair de poule*. I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir: how is it that, in the midst of torment, in the midst of so much difficulty, we are going to transmit to the people that ray of hope? And we did it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! *Au milieu des tourments financiers*, we said: Prepare for the Recovery. We had not yet seen that gleam, that ray of hope coming, but we knew it would come. *Après la nuit vient toujours l'aurore, M. le président, et nous attendons cette aurore. Après la pluie vient toujours le beau temps, et nous attendons ce beau temps*, even if it rains. *Et c'est cela la grandeur de ce gouvernement.*

You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while we were saying Prepare for Recovery, doomsday prophets made fun of us and said that '*nous sommes dans l'œil du cyclone*, expect the worst! The worst is coming!' See the language. We say: Prepare for Recovery, hope is coming, and the others are saying: No! Do not prepare for recovery, the worst is coming! Today results are there, and we are shaping the recovery. We have not only defeated these *prophètes de tous les malheurs*, but more than that! Elections will come when they will come, but more than that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we won the trust of the people and, for me, that was the climax of everything. This proves, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that our policies work. Our call for change has been heard and this Government, more than ever before, has become the voice and the hope of the nation. The Labour Party and its allies of Alliance sociale promised change, and we have delivered it. Today, despite the scepticism and despite

the defeatism of the Opposition, we have created a society which is more democratic, more compassionate and definitely more progressive.

I must refer to that. I have listened the Leader of the Opposition justifying - *avec des trémolos dans la voix, comme s'il allait pleurer* - the Illovo deal. Can you imagine that ! *Et je crois que mon ami, l'honorable Cader Sayed-Hossen, a fait un brillant exposé, démontrant et démantibulant le mécanisme de l'Illovo deal.* What bitter reminder was that of a multi-million jackpot given to a handful of families! Do not forget that! *Et c'est cela, in a nutshell, Illovo: prendre R 6 milliards de l'argent public, remettre entre les mains de cinq familles, within 24 hours! C'est plus que le Loto de Gamma. C'est pire !* And now they are saying 'nation de zougadère'! But, in 24 hours, *sur la table de...*

(Interruptions)

A minuit! I would like to remind the Opposition how, in Clarisse House, around a table, within 24 hours, five families left Clarisse House with Rs6 billion pocketed. And, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they would come and talk about corruption! I have ten examples of corruption to give just now. Are you going to suspend now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

The Deputy Speaker: No. I have in mind, depending on the amount of time the hon. Minister is going to take. If he is going to take about half an hour, I will be happy to let him finish his speech, but if he is going to take more, I would rather break for tea.

Dr. David: Better break for tea, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

At 4.27 the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.00 p.m with Mr Speaker in the Chair

Dr. David: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, one must be really of bad faith not to recognize that the forces of change are at work in Mauritius, driving this country to greater heights and in all fields consolidating progress.

Mr Speaker, Sir, last year or the year before, the Opposition ridiculously qualified the Budget at that time as voodoo economy. You will recall that expression used and, this year, they come with the same type of ridiculous arguments by stating that the figures in this Budget are false and inaccurate. This is not an intelligent argument, and this is not the type of argument that one should bring in Parliament at Budget time. I mean, on a lorry during an election campaign, these are the type of arguments that go almost unnoticed. But when the Opposition states that the figures are false and incorrect, this is just immaturity, Mr Speaker,

Sir. It shows, in fact, that they have nothing serious to offer as comments. One thing is clear. The Opposition has been simply knocked out by our resilience, by our ability to face challenges, by our ability to bounce back and by our commitment to create opportunities for everybody and, in particular, for those who would otherwise have remained in debt and poverty.

Today, I am proud, Mr Speaker, Sir, that Mauritius has become a nation of opportunities not only for a few. There was a time when we talked of economic innovation, of economic empowerment, of economic possibilities. These were only for a few people, but today, as I said, we have democratised the economy. Democratisation is at the heart of the action of this Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the economy today definitely is not the harvest of what they have sown some time back, as I said. The economy today is the fruit of bold reforms re-started in 2006. There was a time when reforms meant only filling the pockets of the rich and giving more and more to those who had already, but with this Government reforms really means getting the wealth to the common man. This is why we can loudly and proudly state, as the Budget says in a sub-title: ‘We are consolidating social progress.’ Can you imagine, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we are expecting a 5% growth next year and with this backdrop of recession, can you imagine that we have created over 40,000 jobs during these past four years when other countries were shedding, closing, when people, when workers were losing even the dignity of a house, of a roof they had mortgaged, and could not feed their family? They had to walk on the streets, to live on the streets; they lost everything. While the world was going through this trauma, we created 40,000 jobs. And only during the first semester of 2006, we have created 4,500 jobs, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the Budget announces thousands of more jobs to be created both in the civil service and elsewhere. We are, in fact, rebuilding this country after a period of panic on the unemployment issue that was striking wildly. Mr Speaker, Sir, I quote the then Government, now in Opposition and staying forever in the Opposition or disappearing forever. They themselves passed a judgment on their own Government and they said they were losing jobs *à une vitesse vertigineuse*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there will always be *des oiseaux de mauvais augure*; those who would look into the crystal ball - I don’t know what ball else - and say: “*nous sommes dans l’oeil du cyclone*, the worst is coming.” At the same time that they are saying it, Mauritius, by international standards, has ranked first among 53 African countries and, according to the 2009 Ibrahim Index of Governance, this is the place that we occupy. Who would come and

say that Mauritius has done badly? This is not a result of their doing. Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot understand, I cannot reconcile that logic. They were collapsing and they, themselves, said: *l'état d'urgence*. For once we believed them. Now, they say everything that we are now reaping is a result of their doing. This is why I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, I just cannot reconcile the paradoxes and the contradictions. Maybe, we should open another department of economics in our university or elsewhere to try finding what they are trying to say; what is the economic theory on which they are standing. And, as I said just now, Mr Speaker, Sir, people at the Ibrahim Index are not agents of the party. *Ce ne sont pas des colleurs d'affiches du Parti Travailiste* and it is worth explaining the criteria and the mechanism of that assessment. There are, just to explain, 84 social economic tests in the Ibrahim Index of Governance. The country has to pass these 84 tests, which are clustered in four segments. There is law and order, respect of human rights, economic opportunities for the citizens, what we call sustainable development and then, lastly, there is the Human Development Index in general. These are the four segments, and there are 84 tests that we have got to pass. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation is a serious reference, not the type of demagogical circus that we often see, and this Foundation has found it fit that Mauritius should occupy the first place. And instead of every patriot clapping, instead of every Mauritian being proud of that first place, we hear the doomsday prophets saying: just wait, black magic or voodoo economy, and then we will enter into a period of darkness and a period of problems.

Mr Speaker, Sir, never before or let us say for many decades, we have not seen inflation at its lowest ebb. Our reserves represent 42 weeks of import. FDI is surging - almost 5% of our GDP - and growth is back in textile, in the tourism industry. Don't we feel proud, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this country has won the prize of world leading island destination for tourism? We are first at the Mo Ibrahim Foundation; first for tourism, world leading island destination and, yet, they are saying that this country is going to the dogs, and that the worst is before us. Mr Speaker, Sir, seriousness in politics is very important; otherwise, you would just be taken as a ridiculous politician talking ridiculous arguments. We feel proud and only, Mr Speaker, Sir, anti patriots would go and weep in their closet.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are signs of recovery. I am not going to list all of them. The Stock Exchange has regained confidence. There are positive indications. Go at Riche Terre and then see how the Jin Fei is at work to create jobs! What is the battle that we have had to wage in this very Assembly, when Tianli now Jin Fei started to work, or PQs, PNQs because we are creating jobs?

Mr Speaker, Sir, in my constituency at La Tour Koenig, new industries are mushrooming. In this very area where the vice-Prime Minister, myself and, I think, hon. Bachoo went some time back, 12,000 jobs are being created by SMEs at La Tour Koenig.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are new ideas in this Budget. The Opposition said: show us something new! This Budget creates possibilities for women to work from home, and that would create hundreds and thousands of innovative niches. This initiative is being supported by the NEF and the BOI and, yet, the Opposition says that they see nothing in this Budget. Time unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, does not allow me to enumerate all innovations and groundbreakings. There are many emerging sectors. When we talk of the ICT, these are sectors which account for, at least, 6% of our GDP. I can feel that the Opposition is baffled, and they say that we are falsifying figures. When we talked of food industry, I saw the reaction of some in the Opposition. The Opposition replied that they started the seafood industry. This is absolutely untrue. They should go and read the appropriate documents, and they will see who started it. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam started the seafood industry.

Concerning the ICT – they should not beat their breasts – we should remember what Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India, said, referring to Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. You know, Mr Speaker, Sir, last time, I remember, during the Budget Speech, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance said that the pig sector has recovered after the African swine fever, and that was a sector which was decimated. We moved in a few months from 4,000 to now over 15,000 heads. Do you know what this Opposition said and, in particular, the Leader of the Opposition? He reacted and said this is a *gouvernement cochon*. I said it and, in fact, I am going to say it openly that I passed on this despicable attitude to the pig breeders, and they have taken good note of what the Leader of the Opposition had said. We are proud, Mr Speaker, Sir, to have helped that sector which was dying. Today, when the Minister of Finance says we have moved from 4,000 heads to 15,000 heads, we say ‘bravo’, and again I say: ‘pig breeders, thank you for having trusted this Government’. The Opposition is always complaining; *ce sont des grognons patentés*, always mumbling and grumbling. Au lieu de faire de grandes dissertations doctorales sur les théories économiques, au lieu de jongler maladroitement avec les chiffres, l’opposition devrait répondre à une question: *why have they failed when they could have succeeded, and why have we succeeded when we could have failed? Just answer that simple question.*

(Interruptions)

Yes, I will say it again: “why have they failed when they were in Government, when they could have succeeded, and why have we in Government succeeded when we could have failed because of so many odds?”

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister must be lucky that they failed, so he came back in Government.

Dr. David: And they continue failing. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(*Interruptions*)

They continue failing. If they answer that simple question, then the rest is but literature. What they would come and say about figures, juggling about inflation rate, about how we should have accounted or what could have been our balance sheet, all these ‘sheets’ - this reminds me of something but I won’t go into saying it now - is purely *du remplissage* and nothing else.

Mr Speaker, Sir, while the worst is behind us, the Opposition is as if echoing some unknown creatures from outside this world. They are echoing and saying: “the worst is still to come”. As if they find some sort of sadistic pleasure in nurturing fear in the minds of people. But, this method is outdated and the people outside know that we are right. Out there, they know that we are right. In fact, what we need - this is Parliament, but allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir – is not just a handful of demagogues but the people outside, and this is our force; this is our source of inspiration.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker, Sir, what did you say?

(*Interruptions*)

Yes. Part of them is here, and this is why I felt bad when some people from this side pointed fingers at them. This is why I felt very bad. This is a shame!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker, Sir, these are people...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! What is the problem? Order!

Dr. David: Can you see their reaction when they see the people outside?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister, you cannot refer to strangers in the House!

Dr. David: I beg your pardon?

Mr Speaker: They are strangers in the House. For the purpose of the Assembly...

Dr. David: Yes, that is right. *M. le président, aujourd’hui le pays est devenu un vaste chantier.* MPI, NDU, local government, municipalities, district councils and other ministries like Health, Education, MPU, Housing and Lands, Tourism, the airport, just name it! Wherever you go, *c'est un vaste chantier. Et le monde traverse par une crise!*

The hon. Prime Minister was telling the story of a person who met him after having gone through various countries where people are revolting, have been going on rampage in the streets. That person told the hon. Prime Minister: “But your country does not know crisis. Things are calm!” You know the answer? I give the answer just now. Yes, things are calm, because the people trust us; the people know that we are guiding them. *Ensemble, M. le président, toute la volonté de ce gouvernement est exprimée à travers ces mille et un projets.* Never before have the local authorities received so much financial support. Never before! The local authorities used to receive Rs5 m., and now each of them has got Rs100 m. Twenty times more!

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly has not been forgotten. Hier, notre ami a parlé de Rodrigues. Précisément, il y a eu plusieurs projets à Rodrigues. *Let me just mention them, because I know them by heart.* M. le président, à travers l'ASP, Rodrigues a eu beaucoup d'argent. On a mentionné le port, l'aéroport et l'eau hier. Je voudrais tout simplement parler du port – les travaux ont déjà commencé. Il y a des travaux de dragage qui ont commencé dans le port, et il y a le Mauritius Port Authority (MPA) qui apporte son soutien. Il y a également pour l'aéroport, la possibilité d'extension. Nous avons déjà travaillé sur les chiffres, et nous attendions précisément les projets venant du *Rodrigues Regional Assembly*. Ces projets ont effectivement été soumis le 03 septembre et, par la suite, ils ont été remis au ministère des finances. Nous disions que nous allons étendre l'aéroport. C'est dans les projets, mais il faut faire des études. Bien sûr, je suis le premier à être irrité quand il y a des études et des études, et qu'on ne débouche pas sur le concret. Mais, croyez moi, ce gouvernement-ci a réellement la volonté de voir la piste de Sir Gaëtan Duval étendue.

Le port, l'aéroport, l'eau ! Nous avons travaillé avec L'AFD qui a fait des études à Rodrigues il y a quelques mois de cela. Il a soumis son rapport en termes d'eau de réservoir, de dessalement et également en termes de *wind mills*, des éoliennes. Cela prend du temps

probablement, et je suis d'accord qu'il faudrait accélérer, mais nous sommes entrés dans une logique de progrès pour Rodrigues. Nous avons donné R 50 millions sous le *Additional Stimulus Package (ASP)* deux fois. Nous avons rénové le *Winston Churchill Bridge*. Nous vous donnons un marché ; je veux dire que le gouvernement se porte non seulement garant, mais il travaille avec le Rodrigues *Regional Assembly* pour créer un marché à Port Mathurin. Nous avons donné R 180 millions *under the Food Security Fund*, géré par mon ami et collègue le ministre Faugoo. Il y a des rues et des facilités sportives ; il y a de l'argent qui a été donné pour cela. Je n'ai pas les chiffres, mais je peux vous dire que ce sont des créneaux porteurs d'espoir. Le 14 de ce mois il y aura un plan d'ensemble et de développement à Rodrigues. Nous vous aidons également pour mettre sur pied cet organisme qui sera responsable de la fourniture d'eau. Nous allons vous aider. Nous allons mettre de l'argent pour cela. Hier, j'entendais notre ami parler du fret qui va être augmenté de 17%. Ce ne sont pas des *freight, but freight charges on loading and unloading goods*. On devait augmenter cela depuis un an déjà, mais on a demandé de le renvoyer pour le 1^{er} décembre.

Donc, je voudrais vous dire que Rodrigues est proche de mon cœur, c'est une très belle île, et je dirai à tous les Mauriciens qui veulent aller passer des vacances : voilà une île de rêve où on passe des vacances sereinement. Pour vous dire que nous avons une oreille attentive, et que nous voulons agir pour aider Rodrigues. Cela prendra le temps qu'il faut, mais je voudrais que ce temps qu'il faut soit un temps accéléré.

Mr Speaker, Sir, either yesterday or last week, l'honorable Arianne Navarre-Marie parlait de corruption - malheureusement, elle n'est pas là - dans les municipalités *and district councils*. Permettez-moi de répondre vigoureusement et avec conviction à ces arguments qui ne reposent sur absolument rien.

There was a time when money was wasted in municipal councils; *manger, boire pour des conseillers*. Please ask me a PNQ on corruption in municipalities. *Je lance un appel et un défi également. Je voudrais répondre, parce que vigoureusement* the background is very telling. When I assumed office again in 2005, the first thing I did - because I knew there was a lot of things odd and stinking around – is to ask the Audit Squad of my Ministry to open an inquiry at the Municipality of Port Louis. I have got the report, and if Members wish, through a PQ or a PNQ, I can come and table it. I asked the Audit Squad again to open an inquiry at the District Council of Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart. Mr Speaker, Sir, I even asked the MAB and ICAC to follow up the inquiry. We wrote to ICAC, and gave all papers. What they could not do before, we did it! Mr Speaker, Sir, we suspended the Chief

Executive in the north, Rivière du Rempart/Pamplemousses. After inquiry, we suspended the Chief Executive of Curepipe. These are actions that we took, because *la culture de l'impunité est étrangère au Parti Travailliste et à l'Alliance sociale*. The one who defaults has to pay. Did they do it?

The first thing they did, when somebody was under fire there, was to dissolve l'ECO, so as to prevent the inquiry going on. This Government, in terms of fighting corruption, has taken very bold measures. Don't forget that we instituted l'ECO. Don't forget that two Ministers had to answer before l'ECO. Don't forget that one Chief Executive had to go; another had to go in Curepipe. Don't forget that fingers were pointed at one councillor in Quatre Bornes. There was a *prima facie* case and, in fact, she has got to defend herself in Court. The councillors very boldly took decision to expel her from the Council. This is the Labour Party! We took bold actions! *Aujourd'hui, le MMM vient à la l'Assemblée et se passe pour des donneurs de leçons. De grands moralistes* talking about corruption! Give proof of what you did when you were in power, or what you did not do when you were in power!

Je disais tout à l'heure que j'allais donner dix exemples. Let me give one after the other -

- (1) *le démantèlement de l'ECO en quelques minutes à l'Assemblée.* When a Minister was under fire, the only thing they could do was to dismantle l'ECO.
- (2) Un maire à Beau Bassin/Rose Hill avait disparu complètement avec les chèques de la municipalité. Don't they remember Amerally? *Chèques de la municipalité Beau Bassin/Rose-Hill* cashed, and then he disappeared! They know Amerally! I mention the name!
- (3) Maybe, they have forgotten Ian Palach! *Corruption dans l'attribution des contrats* when they were there at the municipality. There was a commission of inquiry, Mr Speaker, Sir, chaired by Mr Bissessur. *Des noms ont été mentionnés; des noms des personnes siégeant à l'Assemblée ont été mentionnés dans ce rapport.* I am sure that there must be a copy of the report of the commission of inquiry in the Library of the Assembly. I have got a personal copy. Then, I'll ask the Opposition to come with Ian Palach next time there is a PNQ. Names are mentioned. Then, unfortunately or fortunately for them, came elections. *Et silence total!*

- (4) When there was construction or *rénovation de la municipalité de Curepipe, tous ces bardeaux ont disparu*. Where are these shingles? For the first time, I knew *bardeau* means shingle; you learn! Names of persons whom we know, and here, have been mentioned.
- (5) Le collier mairal de Port Louis. *Mr Speaker, Sir, c'est un collier en or massif et, permettez-moi, en quelques minutes, de raconter l'histoire. Ce collier a appartenu à Louis l'Echelle. Ce collier a été enterré avec Louis l'Echelle. Then, after some time, des personnes respectueuses appartenant à la même confrérie de Louis l'Echelle ont demandé qu'on déterre le collier et qu'on le mette à la municipalité de Port Louis comme une référence historique. They were there !* Le collier mairal a disparu. On ne sait pas où se trouve le collier.
- (6) IULA ! Il y a eu une conférence IULA à Maurice. Permettez-moi de dire à cette auguste Assemblée, *there were a few people coming from abroad - the others live in their own houses. These participants coming from abroad ont acheté six-cents rouleaux de papiers hygiéniques par jour. This is part of the report, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like people there to ask me questions about IULA, and les six-cents rouleaux de papiers hygiéniques. Je ne sais pas ce qu'ils essuient avec ! six-cents rouleaux ! Sans suite !*

(Interruptions)

Je n'ai pas terminé. *I have not finished.* Mon ami, *l'Attorney General*, me dit que ça fait 1,4 millions de kilomètres et, par jour, M. le président ! *This is part of the report...*

(Interruptions)

- (7) Un ex-ministre, sous le gouvernement précédent bien sûr, qui fait construire une maison sans permis, sans payer la taxe immobilière, sans taxe de conversion. *Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like them to ask me questions on what I am saying. Otherwise, people would say I am just inventing.*

(Interruptions)

Probably! Probably! Just ask me questions! I will be too glad to give documents, to table them for your reading first, Mr Speaker, Sir, and, then, for the reading of the House. And worse than that, parce qu'il n'a pas payé tout ça, il a fait disparaître le dossier et, heureusement, nous sommes venus. Otherwise, files would have disappeared. I see my friend

smiling there. I think he knows the case. Be courageous, ask me the questions, and come with PNQs! Then, No. 8, des terrains de l'Etat donnés de la façon la plus honteuse et, hier, l'honorable transfuge, l'honorable membre parlait....

(Interruptions)

Il faisait une liste des terrains donnés ça et là. Il y a une réflexion qui dit : quand on pointe un doigt accusateur, *be careful*, il y en a trois qui pointent vers soi. Donc, quand on a donné, transactions de terre, magouille, ensuite *the then Prime Minister came to justify that « tibout la terre »*. M. le président, des transactions louches, et très louches, dans l'affaire Illovo, où même les avis du *State Law Office* ont été ignorés. *Why? Government is supposed to stand guided by the SLO's advice*. Mais, dans ce cas, ce sont des hommes de loi en dehors de la structure normale, naturelle, et familière et traditionnelle du gouvernement. *Their doors were knocked*. Et peut-on trouver, M. le président, des cas plus ignobles qu'un candidat trouvé coupable de corruption électorale, repêché, soutenu, adulé, glorifié, à qui on promet monts et merveilles dans un rêve ! M. le président, ces honorables membres ont le courage, l'audace, le toupet de venir parler de corruption ! *It's your house that stinks; don't look elsewhere*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I know that one of their causes of dissatisfaction and anger is that we are dismantling the economic might of your capitalists friends. You generously and revoltingly gave Rs6 billion to your Illovo friends. Contrary to what you did, we are setting up a Cane Democratisation Fund to get workers as partners of development. This is a revolution which should not be ignored. We are going on a way, which is completely different from the one that you have taken.

M. le président, cette révolution est sociale et culturelle. Je n'ai pas le temps d'entrer dans tous les détails de la dimension sociale de ce budget, but let me for two minutes refer to the CSR. I know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the 2% contribution of the CSR annoys them. Do you know why? In 1996, the MMM and the Labour Party were together, but because we have levied Rs300 m. tax over two years for infrastructural facilities, les choses ont commencé à se brouiller. This is where the cracks started, and I remember, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the MMM, even at some point in time, refused to come in the House and vote for the Budget, because we have levied a Rs300 m. tax spread over two years. Now, that we are having a 2% CSR, which will bring us some Rs700 m., we can understand why they feel ill at ease and their bitterness is so visible. Now, I have read that some of the companies are being difficult. I have again seen that the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has warned them of

their responsibility in the breakfast meeting that he had following the Budget. I have read what Lindsay Rivière has written in ‘Business Magazine’ where he said : « *2% de profits en budget CSR est un minimum que les chefs d’entreprises, éclairés et dotés d’une certaine conscience sociale, ne devraient avoir aucune peine à aligner. Faut-il vraiment dans l’île Maurice de 2009 être sermonné par l’Etat sous ce rapport ?* »

Mr Speaker, Sir, we know that some in the private sector have helped. Some of them have understood that they have got social responsibilities, but for others it’s money, money, money and money. And this is what they are defending. If, at a later stage, we have to legislate so as to get the CSR under control of Government, we will have to do it. We are asking them for their contribution voluntarily - I mean, in the sense that we want them to play their role - but if they don’t want to, *ce gouvernement-ci ne va pas céder. Ils doivent comprendre qu’ il y a une dimension sociale et morale à aider.* They cannot just make money and money.

M. le président, je me souviens que le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, disait dans un des meetings publics : «*Nous allons renverser les empires* ». *And this is what we are doing. Those who believed that they had the economic control of this country should stop dreaming.* *The CSR*, les 2,000 arpents, la politique énergétique, ce sont autant de signaux que nous vous envoyons et, voilà, si jamais il y a certains qui vivent encore dans le Jurassic Park, ils doivent commencer à prendre un autre chemin.

M. le président, avant de conclure, permettez-moi de dire que, s’il fallait décrire l’attitude de ce gouvernement, les dispositions de chaque membre, que ce soit ministres, secrétaires parlementaires, *backbenchers*, nous sommes les gladiateurs de la justice sociale. C’est une image qui me vient en tête, parce que nous sommes toujours à la pointe du combat. Nous sommes les artisans d’une liberté et la dignité des mauriciens, et cela, M. le président, personne ne pourra le contredire. *Our commitment is to secure peace and progress.*

Let me end by quoting Caroline Kent (for me it is a very inspiring quotation)-

“Courage is refusing to quit even when you’re intimidated by impossibility. It’s choosing a goal, sticking with it, and finding solutions to the problems. Courage is thinking big, aiming high, and shooting far. It’s taking a dream and doing anything, risking everything, and stopping at nothing to make it a reality.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the end of the quotation. There is no alternative to winning for this Government. We shall win on behalf of this nation. Make God help us!

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.51 p.m.)

Mr G. Gunness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Mr Speaker, Sir, I will try to adopt a tone which is lower than the previous orator. But I think I must start with a few remarks, because we are in a Parliament, we know that we are not on a lorry, we know that we are not in electoral campaign; we are in a Parliament, and we must know what tone and what language to use.

In fact, what we have seen today in this Parliament, getting strangers applauding is really very sad. Unfortunately, it is like that whenever the Labour party is in Government. I am sure hon. Minister Bachoo knows about what happened in the lunchroom of Parliament.

(Interruptions)

We still remember, Mr Speaker, Sir, what happened in 1997 when we were in the Opposition and when somebody from the VIP gallery took hold the jacket of hon. Barbier. We know that. So, these are sad moments. Normally, when we bring people in Parliament to follow debates, at least, we must train them, we must tell them that when the national anthem is played, they have to stand up, they have no right to applaud in Parliament; they must know how to behave in Parliament, because they are strangers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the previous orator started his speech with the story of *transfuge*. When he was concluding, nearly at the end of his speech, he said: don't try to point finger to somebody else, three fingers will point towards yourself. In fact, this is what is happening to him. When we see them over there, must we call them *transfuge*? Is hon. Dr. Sithanen, who was in MSM, a *transfuge* today? Is hon. Mrs Bappoo a *transfuge* today? Is hon. Bachoo a *transfuge* today?

(Interruptions)

We have the right to remind the previous orator that he must see in his own house how many real and genuine Labour party Members he has. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, I had to make this point and I made it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at a point in time, he was saying that, in 2006, there was economic crisis. When there was financial and economic crisis, what was the Minister of Finance saying in his Budget? Bumper crop, early harvest! He was saying that. Today, hon. Dr. David comes and says that we, in the Opposition, when there was financial crisis, economic crisis,

we were not saying what we are saying today. The president of our Economic Commission was saying that we must invest, we must buy gold; we must put our money, our reserve in gold. It is after one and a half years when the price of gold had gone up by one and a half time that this has been done. So, today, you come and say that we were not telling you! We were saying from outside.

The same thing happened when we were talking about food security, Mr Speaker, Sir. At that time, they were saying that we were trying to scare people about food security. Eight months after, the Minister of Finance came with his Budget and announced measures about how to solve the problem of food security. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, when the previous orator was talking about economic crisis, he was wrong, he was off target completely. I think he dreams of the Leader of the Opposition. Right from the morning when he wakes up till he goes to sleep, he keeps on dreaming of the Leader of the Opposition. From the start of his speech to the end, if he has spoken one and a half hour, for one hour he has made reference to the Leader of the Opposition. So, keep on dreaming my friend! He said that the Leader of the Opposition talked about *la récolte de ce qu'on a semé*. But that is the truth, and the country knows. Who set up the ICT? Was there any building at Ebène? We had no building, no Cyber City, no space.

The same thing happened when we tried to develop our EPZ sector. If we did not provide the infrastructure and the buildings throughout the country, would we have had the textile sector? No, Mr Speaker, Sir! We started the project, the ICT sector, the Cyber City in Ebène and, today, we have the second Cyber City. Even in Rose Belle, the Cyber City would have been completed. Today, if we give you a baby like this and you cannot grow it up, what will happen? And now you come and say: 'when we started the project'. We completed the project in 2005. It was at its early stage, and we created 4,000 jobs. When the vehicle has *gagné la vitesse de croisière*, if you cannot create jobs, what will happen? So, the ICT is our baby, we set it up, and now you have to grow it.

As far as IRS is concerned, what were they not saying about it? But when the Minister of Finance presented his very first Budget, he said not to touch IRS. He knows perfectly well that IRS is a sector which will bring Foreign Direct Investment in the country. It is this IRS which brought Foreign Direct Investment in this country and which created jobs.

As regards the seafood hub, *c'est la même chose*. At times, I have the tendency to agree with Minister Bachoo. We must agree that different Governments have come and have

done their share of job. Today, when you hear hon. Dr. David, it is as if everything has been done by the Labour party. I tend to agree with Minister Bachoo when he was referring to the actual Prime Minister. The actual Prime Minister was the Leader of the Opposition at that time. Hon. Minister Bachoo was reminding him of, I quote –

“Unfortunately, he is not here and we cannot go on more than that. But in his speech he made people believe that everything that is happening in this country, everything positive was his. He used the words repeatedly: ‘*moi, moi, moi*’, at least a dozen times. I remember that on TV, he kept on repeating the words ‘*moi, moi, moi*’, as if *l’Etat, l’île Maurice c’est moi*.”

I am sure hon. Bachoo will not correct the speech. I am sure he agrees with what he said at that time, and I totally agree with what he said because when we hear the previous orator, it is as if: *c’est moi, moi, moi*, the Labour Government, everything!

Mr Speaker, Sir, the previous orator again talked about VAT and that the previous Government raised VAT by 50%. Must we remind them that it is the Labour Government in 1997 which changed the Sales Tax into VAT? First, they increased Sales Tax from 5% to 8% and then they changed Sales Tax into VAT and increased it to 10%. It is more than 100% increase. Why I say more than 100% increase is because when we start levying VAT, it means that the base is enlarged and, therefore, more people get in the tax trap. Therefore, it was more than 100%. I think we have to remind them time and again, so that they stop repeating nonsense.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I really think that, sometimes when people want to talk for one and a half hours, they must say anything. We listened to them talking about the Illovo deal issue. Where are they going to do the Highlands development today? Since two years, they are talking about Highlands. Where are they going to construct in Highlands if they don’t have the land? They have to explain. The Ebène Cyber City is on Illovo land. The planters get shares in the SIT. How many sugar planters have become owners in good areas? In Wooton and Highlands, Mr Speaker, Sir, how many people have become owners? In Rose Belle, people are buying land and becoming owners. This is what, in fact, we call real democratisation, where small people are getting land at reasonable prices. These people keep on talking about the Illovo deal.

The previous orator talked about local government. We had a new piece of legislation. This was real democratisation of local government, whereby we would have set

up nine municipalities in different regions. Moka/Flacq would have been divided into two: Moka Municipality and Flacq Municipality. We would have got nine municipalities, councillors and mayors everywhere with all the facilities and basic needs. Today, the Minister who has put this project aside and has done nothing comes to say that he is satisfied. He said: *manzé, boire!* Who does not know, Mr Speaker, Sir? I am sure, the former Lord Mayor, my good friend, hon. Reza Issack - he is not here - knows a bit. The hon. Minister was even squeezing him on petrol. He had to take the bus to come to the municipality. As for the mayor of Rose Hill, he had to find sponsors for an air ticket, because the hon. Minister had to get an upper hand on municipalities. Is this what he calls democratisation and giving power to the people? People in the municipalities elected their councillors, and the Minister tried to hijack that power.

Concerning the Rodrigues Regional Assembly - I am sure my friends from Rodrigues will refer to it - no mention was made in the Budget about the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the Budget, which was enacted in this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when the hon. Minister of Finance presented his Budget, he made a *bilan* for the past five years because, as we all know, elections will be held next year and the mandate of this Government will be over. The Minister tried to present a *bilan* of what he has done during the five years. I think it is good also to remind people that the slogan of this Government was 'Putting People First'. But they did not say: 'Putting Our People First'. Maybe, we have to remind people how, after the elections, they started *l'opération 'lève paké allé.'* Yesterday, I read in the newspaper about the former Chief Executive of the SIT. Probably, this Government, by its *politique 'lève paké allé'* has been a blessing for her. She got her Ph.D in London. Probably, they did a good thing. Professionals without any political colour were asked to *'lève paké allé'*. Why? Because they had to replace these people by their own people, that is, 'Putting Our People First', in the community centres, in the health centres, MGI, etc. They just keep on with that *opération 'lève paké allé'*, Mr Speaker, Sir, because the Minister tried to show a positive *bilan* - obviously, that is his job - of the Government. Till now, people are waiting for him to change certain decisions, which he took in his first Budget, for example, the closing down of the DWC and the police garage, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I do not think it is wise for the hon. Member to raise it again.

Mr Gunness: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am raising it now, just to show the wastage of money which this has caused to public funds. You will recall I raised a question on Mont Ida football ground two weeks ago. The Director of Audit's Report showed that, due to the closing down of the DWC, these ongoing projects - in some cases 60%, 70% of the projects were completed - were left idle for four years, and millions of public funds were lost in different projects which the DWC was undertaking throughout the country. I am trying to show that the closing down of the DWC after the election was not planned and because of that millions of rupees were lost in the different projects.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is good that we are debating the Budget. But what people were expecting in this Budget? We have said it loud and clear that, tomorrow, in Government, we will restore these allowances that the Minister has disallowed.

As regards allowance for the handicapped, we all know that when there is a handicapped in the family, parents must take all the care. There must be somebody to care, to look after the handicapped person. This allowance has been removed. The allowance if there is somebody studying abroad has been removed. You no longer have the right to deduct interests on housing loan. We have said that, once in Government, we will reintroduce these allowances, that is, allowances for handicapped persons, the interests will be deductible, the insurance policy that you take will be deductible, the fees paid for study abroad will be deductible. All this has to be reintroduced, because people mainly from the middle class are suffering with this. On the one hand, when all this was removed, people were expecting to get satisfaction, but what have we seen on the other hand? Do you know what the Minister of Finance said in the very first Budget, when he reduced the corporate tax? He said that corporate tax would be reduced from 25% to 15% on 01 July 2009. He even gave the plan, that is, the first year, it will fall from 25% to 22.5%; then, next year, to 20%; then, the following year, 17.5% and, then, 01 July 2009, 15%. Do you know what happened, Mr Speaker, Sir? And they are saying that we were protecting the capitalists! The very next year, in the next Budget, in haste, instead of that staggering fall in corporate tax, it was brought down to 15%. *Cousin, cousin!*

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to NRPT, which is a tax, as you know, how many times have we put questions on that! Let's wait for that cadastre to be ready. Let's wait for it to be ready, and then you continue going ahead. We have said that this tax is unjust; there is no basis for the tax and, tomorrow, in Government, we are going to set aside the National Residential Property Tax, because we can't tax people even on bare land. Mr Speaker, Sir,

the Minister was talking about subsidy on SC and HSC exam fees. We are in the education sector, and we know how students from poor families have difficulties, and that is why this subsidy has been given to them, so that there is no difference between all the students. There is no difference between the one sitting next to his friend; one is getting the subsidy, the other one is not getting. One is queuing up at the social security, with all types of questions being asked, all types of enquiries. That's why this 50% subsidy was given. In this Budget, instead of restoring this, the Minister comes and says that he is raising the ceiling, that is, for those eligible to the full refund of exam fees, the ceiling is being raised from Rs7,500 to Rs8,500. Can we imagine, today, a family earning Rs8,500? What does it mean? Even here, he could have done an effort. If he did not want to reintroduce that, if he did not want to back pedal on that, at least, an effort to raise the ceiling of a family income to Rs12,000 could have been done. But, here also, he did not dare to do the effort, which was necessary. When I read what he said, at a point in time, when he removed that school feeding project, and then, with pressure, he had to reintroduce it, Mr Speaker, Sir, you will not believe your ears. He said –

“Why do we accept a primary school feeding programme known for its wastage and inequity?”

He treated the school-feeding programme as wastage! Mr Speaker, Sir, this shows the frame of the mind when preparing a Budget, and this keeps on following. What I am trying to show is that there has not been a change in that trend. He could have changed that trend by showing his generosity, even by reintroducing the subsidy on the fees of SC and HSC. This is why I quoted him on that school-feeding programme. We remember that this would have already gone if this Opposition did not put questions in Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come on the public bodies. Here, there is not a single word this year on wastage; nothing has been said, when we know how some of the public bodies today are transacting their affairs. We are actually seeing that at Air Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir. We know the losses, and it is the population which is paying, because of that massive hedging loss, because of that mismanagement, because of that internal fight between the Chief Executive and the Chairman. Actually, we know what is going on; we have read in the papers; everybody who lives in Mauritius knows what is going on. There is a Managing Director on a month-to-month basis. Finally, it is Air Mauritius which will have to pay, and when Air Mauritius will have to pay, it is we, taxpayers, the public who will have to suffer.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the Bank of Mauritius, just like I said in Parliament, we have to keep the decorum. We must know what we are doing. When you see what is happening actually at the Bank of Mauritius! The Bank of Mauritius is the central bank of Mauritius. It is the bank that advises the Government on monetary policy. A central bank, in any country, has its functions, is independent, has an oversight on all the monetary transactions in the country, and is supposed to advise Government on monetary policy. What are we seeing? Instead of advising the Government on monetary policy, they are holding press conference on the street! Probably they are right! But this is not the way to do it. This is not the right signal to send to the banking community, to the international community; that our directors have gone to that level, holding press conference on the roads. Mr Speaker, Sir, you have a Governor today, on whom the Minister announced a Fact Finding Committee.

Yesterday, hon. Deepalsing was talking about Directors on the Board with conflict of interest. At times, hon. Deepalsing does as if she is not in the Government. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, if really there is conflict of interest, the Director whom she pointed yesterday has been appointed by the Minister of Finance. The Governor has been appointed by the Prime Minister, and she is in this Government. So, how can you imagine a backbencher in Government saying that, since three years, there is a Director who has a big business sitting in that Bank, knowing all the interest rates in the monetary policy, thus the businessman has an advantage!

Is the public going to have enough confidence in that institution, Mr Speaker, Sir? We are respectful of institutions. Today, there is a Fact Finding Committee on the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius. Directors are holding press conferences on the street and a backbencher is pointing finger to one of the Directors, saying that there is a conflict of interest; he sits on the monetary policy; he knows in advance decisions on interest's rates and, therefore, that particular businessman is having an unfair advantage. This is where the situation has come today concerning our institutions and public bodies.

With regard to NTC, we all know where it has come today and it is the same thing with MBC, Wastewater and CEB. I would like to draw the attention of Mr Bachoo to what he said in 2001. I think he was right, he is a religious guy; he says things which are right. I quote what he said: "The late Labour Government destroyed most of the parastatal bodies. The MBC is swallowing a debt of Rs200 m., and it is the same for the CWA, the CEB and the STC. Once it was a flourishing organisation, and it is bleeding white today. I remember from 1991 to 1995, we had a surplus at the STC, and we were contributing to the coffers of

Government, so much so that we have taken the decision to start the Cement Trading Corporation, financed entirely by the money which was generated by the STC. Today, the STC is lagging behind with Rs1.5 billion of debt. He was right when he said so, and I think today if he recognises it, he is right, because in all these parastatal bodies which he mentioned, that is, the CWA, the MBC, the CEB, the STC and NTC, there have been mismanagement, wastage of public funds, loss of millions of rupees. And the Minister did not say a single word on wastages of public funds.

Mr Speaker, Sir, apart the STC, I am sure there are other scandals. Other issues will come and in the days to come we will see. Because of hedging of petroleum products, consumers are paying Rs3 per litre as from November 2008 and, before that, it was Rs1.50 per litre from January 2008 to 31 October 2008. For nine months, consumers had to pay Rs1.50 per litre, and as from November 2008 to 2009, for the second year, consumers had to pay Rs3.00 per litre because of the wrong decision of the hedging transaction which was done by the same STC, where Rs2.9 billions have gone in hedging losses. Apart from paying Rs1.50 and Rs 3.00, we all know the price structure, how they play with those operating expenses, expenses in connection with importation of petroleum product. It has gone up by nearly 300% in connection with petroleum product with which they keep on adding. This is dangerous. The maximum price increase in 2005 was 15%, and it is 20% under this Government. It is now on a monthly basis; 7.5% with three consecutive increases, which means it can be 22% to 23%, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is the reality and, because of that hedging transaction, consumers are losing money, Mr Speaker Sir.

There were cement saga, flour saga, and we know what has been done with the flour saga, trying to kill Moulin de la Concorde. We are watching them because tenders for flour are out. Let us remind them that we are having a close watch concerning the tender of flour and rice. We know what is going on, and we will come at the right time. We lost millions and millions of rupees with the Amul milk saga. Can you imagine that, Mr Speaker, Sir! STC has become a travel agent, paying air ticket for Prathiba Shipping Corporation with which they have dealings nearly every day? Is that the role of the STC? It goes for horse riding in India, having the logo of the STC at the back? Is it why we set up the STC? It was set up to protect consumers, to break monopolies and see to it that consumers are not exploited. This was the prime objective when the STC was set up. The STC needs a double hull vessel. Fortunately, the tender has been set aside, but we all know what happened in that particular case. Last but not least, Mr Speaker, Sir, the STCM Ltd, takes money from the

STC. Rs1 m. capital, R45 m. advance. Who are the directors? It is the same Manager of the STC. He gets his salary as General Manger of the STC and gets Rs45,000 as Director of STCM Ltd. Do we call that good governance? We are talking of good governance worldwide. The same manager of the STC is at the same time the General Manager of the STCM Ltd. Is that normal? And he gets Rs45,000 in the Board? They do everything. They go abroad to buy beans; they go abroad to see furniture; to buy diamonds, etc. When you ask a question, if it is not STC, it is the STCM Ltd.

If the Road Development Company, which is being set up, takes the same direction like the STCM Ltd, this is very dangerous. The Road Development Company will deal with billions and, without any transparency, not falling under public procurement, is very, very dangerous, Mr Speaker, Sir, when we see the tendency which those parastatal bodies, those public bodies are taking. Really, at times, it makes you afraid, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the last part of my intervention will be on education. I would like to raise a few points. Mr Speaker, Sir, again here I am very afraid, because when we take the education sector, we have to deal with it in a holistic approach. We have to take the pre-primary up to the tertiary level; we have to take the prevocational, and all these in a holistic approach. The new Minister of Education - not the former one - at a point in time, publicly stated that we have to invest. If we want really to invest in the future of this country, it is at the early age, at pre-primary level that we must do everything, because it is at this age that we must cater for these children.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I was listening to the Budget Speech, I thought that the Minister would try to do something, because for years now, we know how there is a wide disparity; we know that it is a difficult sector. We know that we have thousands of private schools and public schools, that is, pre-primary schools in the compound of primary schools. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the fees, Government pays Rs200 for only one year, and we all know that these pre-primary school children attend two years - from three to five years. Government gives a subsidy of Rs200 for only one year. I was thinking that the Minister would raise that subsidy. Fair enough, he has not raised it, but I was expecting that, at least, he would announce something for two years, that is, once the kid enters into the pre-primary as from the age of three years, he starts getting that Rs200 subsidy, which we know does not represent anything to him. Mr Speaker, Sir, I think that we have to think seriously about that. I am not proposing free pre-primary, but if we think seriously in the years to come, at least, we must put our technicians, we must put our people to start working on a plan on how to

bring uniformity, the norms, the standards. Today you have pre-primary schools in garages, there are some on the first floor; some children are in the house of somebody who is running a pre-primary class, the toilet facility is for adults; the tap is for adults. There is a disparity in the school fees. Some range from Rs4,000, others Rs400. There is a disparity. Here, we must put norms. Do you remember there were norms to close secondary schools? I put questions recently about Grand Bois College, Bradley College, Byron College, which were supposed to close down, but the Minister changed the rules in the meantime because the norms are there; the standards are there when you have the right to close them. For secondary schools, we have norms to close down those schools if they do not respect the norms, but if I tell you, you will be shocked. For pre-primary schools, up to now, there are no norms which have been set, no standard set when a school can be closed down if it does not respect such and such criteria. No school has been closed down up to now. The school closes by itself when there is no school population, and this is dangerous. If we really think about the future of these children, we must seriously think about setting up norms, standards, uniformisation and thinking even about if we can provide a free pre-primary in the future, if we can work out the mechanism of providing grants just like the PSSA does for the secondary schools depending on *per capita*, facility, etc.

Mr Speaker, Sir, fortunately, the present Minister is coming with a reform, with which, obviously, we don't agree hundred per cent, but, at least, it is a shift to what we were originally. How many Governments came and wanted to finish with that rat race competition at the CPE level, which is killing to parents, which is killing to the children themselves. The former Minister - obviously the Government - at that time, just got elected, and so he had to do everything contrary to what we did, and reintroduced fiercer competition than that rat race with the national colleges, with the A+. This is the greatest blunder, which was done as soon as this Government assumed office. We must say we are proud when we see statistics. I have statistics when we eliminated the rat race, when we finished with that fierce competition, when we constructed 36 regional colleges for the HSC. We brought the competition at a later stage, when the children become more grown up at HSC level. You can see the results, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have the figures with me. You can see the children who are in regional colleges, that is, who did not go through that CPE, that rat race. We have seen SSS Sodnac. On itself, it has become a star college. These are regional colleges: Leckraj Teeluck SSS, Rajcoomar Gujadhur SSS. I am just taking MGI (Flacq), MGI (Solferino), MGI (Moka). On their own, they have become a good school with excellent percentage pass rate at SC. The

first batch of these regional colleges sat in 2006, 2007. You can see the progress which was made in the result at Cambridge level; it increased to 78.9; 78.4; HSC 78.2; 79.3. This shows that what was undone by this Government, in fact, was really a crime to these small children. Fortunately, now, the actual Minister is talking about a national exam at Form III level, which means he has a plan. He knows that this exam at the CPE level is not good. At this age, you cannot have such a fierce competition. At least, we must leave these children to grow up, give them other subjects, music, extracurricular activities, instead of just putting them under the burden of that CPE exam. As I said, fortunately, I have heard that the Minister is coming with his reform, and we wish him good. We will give all our support to the reform if it works in the good direction, and we have the tendency to say that it goes in the direction that we initiated when we were in Government, that is, when we constructed schools. Unfortunately also, this Government has not constructed any secondary school. Except for SSS Quatre Bornes, no single college has been constructed, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Minister will get all our support if he goes in that direction. Mr Speaker, Sir.

I went a bit on this Digest of Education Statistics. The Minister talked in the Budget about investing on education etc., but when you go really to figures, when you take the total Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, in fact, it goes down. In 2004: 3.8%; 2005: 3.8%; 2006, it went down to 3.6%; 2007: 3.2%; 2008: 3.2%. That is our total expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP. When you take total Government Expenditure on education as a percentage of total Government Expenditure - because the Minister used to talk about percentage, that is why I am referring to percentage and not absolute figures - then obviously, it will be, Rs5, 6 or 7 billion. It keeps on increasing. But, when you talk of percentage, the total Government Expenditure on education as a percentage of total Government Expenditure, in 2004, it was 17.3%; 2005, it goes down to 14.1%; 2006, it goes down to 13%; 2007, it again goes down to 12.6% and, for 2008, it was 12.7%. Therefore, the tendency is towards a downward trend for the investment in education, Mr Speaker, Sir.

When we see the Tertiary Sector, Mr Speaker, Sir, it's a pity! What have we not seen when the former Leader of the Opposition raised the question about TEC and the Eastern University! We all know, Mr Speaker, Sir, what happened. You were in the chair, Mr Speaker, Sir, and you know very well that it was through a PNQ that we knew everything about that particular case. Last year, the Minister said in his Budget Speech, I quote –

“All students who are qualified and willing to pursue further studies to secure access to tertiary education will get a seat”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, last week, in PQ No. B/1197, hon. Sam Lauthan asked about the number of students applying for a seat at the university and the number enrolled. In fact, 6,948 applied for a seat for 2009/2010, but Mr Speaker, Sir, only 3,956 students were enrolled, which means that, out of that figure, only half were enrolled. Last year, what did the Minister say? He said that ‘all students’ who are qualified to tertiary education would get a seat. When it comes to education, we have to tell the students the truth! We all know the financial difficulty that the University of Mauritius is facing since last year. In yesterday’s newspaper, the academics are telling you: *‘année après année, nos équipements deviennent de plus en plus vieillots, et cela ne fait pas honneur à la réputation de l’Université de Maurice’*.

Year after year, TEC is squeezing out; they don’t even have the funds to replace the equipment, and the Minister is saying ‘since last year’. He announced that State Land Development Company would construct facilities on land at Côte d’Or for lease to the University of Technology, Mauritius, and to the University of Mauritius. *L’effet d’annonce!* The University of Mauritius is not getting funds to replace equipment that are there for years! For the University of Technology, Mauritius, *c’est la même chose*. We need a university; we need a new campus. When we were in Government, we already earmarked the land, but this Government changed it. Now, it is at Côte d’Or that it is going to be constructed. So, construct it once for all, if need be!

Mr Speaker, Sir, as for the Open University, the Minister is coming with a new Bill in this House. At times, the present Minister does good things; we have to acknowledge it. We already have the Open University Bill. I will just ask my good friend, hon. Varma, to go and see the Bill which was passed. It is a plagiarism, *une photocopie*, a copy and paste of that Bill. What had to be done was only to proclaim the Act, as the Act was there. Mr Speaker, Sir, when it is to be debated, just take the time and pain to go and see. It is a copy and paste of that Act which we passed, but which had to be proclaimed.

(Interruptions)

But there is no harm my friend! Come in front of the House and proclaim it! He wants to adopt the baby, to repeal that Act, and he will now present the Bill. He is coming with the Open University.

(Interruptions)

This just shows the number of students who have not got the chance to go to the university for four and a half years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Second Chance Programme was announced. Fair enough! It is a very good intention. The Minister even replied to a question, and he said that some 220 participants have been enrolled for the training programme in Mauritius. This also, Mr Speaker, Sir, was announced in the 2008/2009 Budget, and it has started in May 2009 in eight regional training centres. But, what is more important, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the training of the people working with these children. Have they been trained properly? According to our information, these instructors have been trained by Caritas, and they have an expertise in *l'alphabétisation fonctionnelle*. When we talk of a Second Chance Programme, the MIE must devise a training programme for the teachers working with these children, but nothing has been done. They just announced the programme, admitted 220 children, and there was no proper training. *Il n'y a pas eu de formation* for the instructors who are working with these children in the Second Chance Programme.

Insofar as private tuitions are concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the whole population, including Members and Ministers, must start thinking about that. I always say that a Form V student taking eight subjects for the SC exams cannot be poor in all the eight subjects. I don't think that the student needs private tuition in all the subjects. *C'est devenu une mode*, Mr Speaker, Sir. And who are suffering because of these private tuitions? The poorer parents! For HSC exams too, a child cannot be poor in all the five subjects. Even for some subjects, they take tuitions with two teachers because of the competition. Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to regulate. There are people who are not teachers working in schools; they can be working in banks or in any other company. Do you know how tuition is being given, Mr Speaker, Sir? A class of Form V here, a class of HSC and a class of Form IV there! He goes in this class, he gives a homework; he comes here and corrects. At the end of the month, he comes with his list for payment. I am telling you that out of experience, because we work with children. They come and tell us. But here, we are probably talking about the freedom of the students. We have to regulate the number of children that are allowed in. Why you go for private tuition? Because you have 30 children in a classroom. But if they have to go in another class where there are 50, what is the purpose of private tuition? If he has to go to another class where, at the same time, the teacher is giving tuition to three different classes, where is the purpose? As a Government, we have to take the responsibility, start regulating

and putting the number of children in each class which goes for tuition - probably Form V and VI. The tendency is there, but, at least, we must try to see how we can *limite les dégâts*. So, we must start thinking about this serious problem, which is private tuition, and in which it is the poor family which suffers a lot because they'll try to push their children. They get indebted because they have to pay for the private tuitions. We have to see all this, Mr Speaker, Sir, because, up to now, the hon. Minister has not come with a proper plan regarding that particular area of private tuition.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll conclude by saying that, for the last four years, the population has been listening to the same speeches from the Government side. In fact, their speeches are a testimony that they do not know the reality of the people outside. When I was listening to hon. Dr. David, it is a testimony that he does not know the reality of the people outside, mainly the poor and middle-income group. I am sure that the people have had enough of this Government and its propaganda. People are expecting better than that, Mr Speaker, Sir. 2010 will definitely be a year where people will feel that they have a Government which has a heart. As the symbol of the very party itself, which will be in Government in 2010, is a heart, Mr Speaker, Sir, and it is a mother's heart.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(6.53 p.m.)

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport & Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me, first and foremost, to congratulate the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for the impressive Budget that he has presented to the nation on 18 November 2009.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one thing that we have learnt in our life is that if you want to achieve something in your life, you have to strive, struggle, sweat and, ultimately, you will succeed. This is our philosophy, and we are sticking to it. This Government has succeeded on all fronts. The path to success was full of problems and obstacles, and we know that if we want to reach the target, the path is very narrow. The path is narrow, narrow as the edge of a razor, but we have been able to pass through that path, and now success is at our doorstep.

Mr Speaker, Sir, bold decisions were taken and, despite all the world recessions, our economy has done very well. We have been successfully treading cautiously. We have planned and prepared for the long-term. Right policies and institutions were set up, and these were necessary to achieve prosperity for the population and for the future generations.

For the last four years, our economy has been adapting itself well to changing global environment. We have refrained from remaining passive to policy challenges and priorities. We have been responsive to emerging circumstances. We have been prepared to support transitions and transformations. We have the right man in the right place, and that's the cause of our success.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is possible because we have got a strong leadership. This is our first issue.

The most important criteria is that most people read history, many teach history, but a few create history. We have, on our side, creators of history not simply creatures of history. That is the reason.

(Interruptions)

I thank the hon. vice-Prime Minister for having been one of the creators of history; he has succeeded where big nations have failed. He has succeeded where even angels fear to tread. So, *bravo* to him, Mr Speaker, Sir!

I heard my friend, hon. Ajay Gunness, passing very sarcastic comments on those who were sitting at the back. After all, they are our people, our blood brothers and sisters, and then comparing these people with one fellow who misbehaved in Parliament at the dining table is an indecent remark. I sincerely believe that such things should not happen. Applauding in Parliament - if my mother would have been there, she would have done exactly the same thing, because all of us know how our people react. In fact, nobody behaved in any indecent manner, and because of this I feel pity for those people who were here.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I remember that he was passing remarks that the hon. Minister of Finance, Minister Bappoo and others, including me, are *transfuges*. But just have a look at his own back!

Secondly, I believe in principles, I do not believe in anything else. I always say I have to stick to my principles. There are certain guidelines. He made a comment that I am a religious man, and I hope he was not laughing at my religiousness and my spirituality. I hope so! I know where I stand, I know what I do in my life. But such types of remarks have to be avoided, because I can even go a bit indecent and pass certain comments which are not good.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the past is already dead and buried, but if you stand up and only speak of the past, your present efficiency will get punctured. That's why they *bouge fixe* and cannot even move ahead. That is the biggest problem. If all that we have today were their creations, why were they booted out in 2005? Do they have an answer? They are the '*peuple admirable*'! I am quoting the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Have we forgotten 1982? He was just talking about x, y and z being removed from their offices. What about 1982? Late Mr Bramduth Ghoora, Mr Ramdin, late Mr Hervé Duval and a host of others. The Constitution was itself changed. Not only changed, even attempt was made to change certain things in the National Anthem. Have we forgotten the past? I do not want to go back. I do not want to wallow in dirt. So, it is better that such things be avoided.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, secondly, there were remarks on certain projects undertaken by NDU. There were certain remarks, DWC had to close down. But have they gone – because they are expert in going through the Director of Audit's report - through the report of 2003/2004, about what the Director of Audit had to say on the Ministry of Local Government and NDU? Have a look at it and then you will see! So, it is very easy. Even we can hit back on equal terms, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Then, we have got NRPT. Of course, it pains. I was a Minister, yes, the Director of Audit's report is an official document, you can go and have a look at it, what has been mentioned in that, how many millions of rupees were paid to consultants and nothing was done after that. Only fees were being paid to consultants. If I were to blame, if I were responsible there, I have to be condemned. We are utilising the NRPT Fund for local infrastructure, because it is hardly 1% of the population that is paying. There is a very interesting statement by a great spiritual leader: "Just as the bee sucks the honey of the flower without destroying the flower, so should we take from the rich without destroying the rich." This is the NRPT.

(Interruptions)

This is exactly what we are doing. Questions are asked in the House regarding so many projects, and money from the NRPT is being utilised for those purposes. For example, in my constituency, we are using about Rs100 m. to construct the market place in Flacq, also in Rose Belle, Rivière des Anguilles, Abercrombie. That money is being utilised. We are

taking from those who have, and we are spending among those who don't have. This is what, in fact, we are trying to do.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a concept now, that is, the theory of proposed and opposed. They are expert in that. When they are in Opposition they propose nothing, they oppose everything. It is so simple. They are suffering from a sense of moral anaemia, spiritual cancer. Not a single proposition have they made and, particularly, there are a few friends on the other side of the House. Can they stoop so low? I don't want to use any bad words against them, except they are darkening and blackening everything. When a tourist comes to this country, wherever he goes, the only thing that he will say is that, if there is a heaven on earth, it is here and nowhere else. The impression that he has given is that the country is going to the dogs. Mr Speaker, Sir, they don't even pay a lip service to what is being done throughout the country. Double talk is becoming their trademark today. They should try to have a sense of positive attitude. I am not hitting at my friends on the other side, because we have listened carefully to them and they have made certain interesting propositions. If the attitude is negative, then life becomes restricted, success is limited, and that is the reason why they failed miserably in the by-election a few months ago. That explains the reason. They have to be positive. They should think of the best and try to expect the best in their life. I get the feeling that they feel unhappy when there is no trouble in the country. There is a Fact Finding Committee, they are heaving sigh of relief as if something will come out of it. This is very bad. The Opposition start building their hopes on the corpses of others. Unfortunately, their future will be very bleak. They feel bad when the population feels good. Nowadays, there is a feel good factor, so they feel very bad. That is our biggest problem. At times, they put off the light to see how dark it is. But, it is blind.

(Interruptions)

This is pessimism. They always look for cracks in Government. There was a slight incident, and I found them so happy as if tomorrow is the end of the world. But, this is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. They believe that the sun shines only to cast shadows. This is not the truth. They have to be practical; they have to be pragmatic in life. We had passed through hard and difficult days, we are looking for breakthrough and they are looking for breakdown. That is the difference. If I have to compare, we are looking for breakthrough, and all attempts are being made by this Government to, at least, do something for the betterment of our countrymen, and this is very important. We are strategising, they are dramatising.

(Interruptions)

We are doers; they are schemers; that makes the whole difference. Repeatedly, we are listening to whatever they are telling, and not a single hope. As a Government, we are bold, but we are not a bully. We are confident; we are not conceited. We are proud of our success, but we are not arrogant. That is what I can see, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to thank the Prime Minister also who is the trustee of the nation today, and he took the appropriate stand. Many politicians are afraid to take stand if those stands are not convenient. But he preferred convictions to convenience. He accepted responsibility and accountability that go with it, because we have taken at times certain bitter pills during the last four years. If he had not done that, we could not have made any useful progress. A true leader does exactly what is right rather than what is popular, because what is popular is not necessarily right all the time and what is right is not necessarily popular. Through this Budget, we are trying to generate cooperation, confidence and creativity. We are not creating any conflict, confusion and controversies. Mr Speaker, Sir, I can go on and on, but I have got a lot to say on my own Ministry. We have heard, even from the Leader of the Opposition, certain remarks that nothing has been done. I heard my friend hon. Gunness saying that everything is theirs, nothing is ours. This is what impression he gave. Let me give you a trailer of what is being done, what had not been done, and what will be done.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has a few departments; I have got a few responsibilities. I would like to start with the road infrastructure problems. Road transport, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the most important mode of transport for both passengers and freights. We have been investing massively in the modernisation of the existing infrastructure. Hon. Guimbeau should have been here, because I heard him saying that nothing has been done. But, I can give you a slight trailer of what we have been doing. Many questions were asked in the House, even in the past, regarding our road networks and, in every constituency, Members of Parliament, backbenchers and Ministers are concerned about the road networks and other infrastructures, and we are committed to address these problems.

From 2005 till today, Mr Speaker, Sir, - RDA and NDU combined - we have already spent about Rs3 billion on maintenance, upgrading of roads, including the infrastructure problems, the emergency rehabilitation programme. For this year only, for maintenance of roads, we have received Rs320 m. for RDA. We have taken major road works, and every Mauritian knows it. If you go in each nook and corner of the country, you will find that major road works are being undertaken. Mr Speaker, Sir, the Réduit Triangle, where we are

spending Rs250 m., is nearing completion and, once it is completed, the second phase will also be undertaken, and that will absorb a major part of the traffic coming from the eastern side of the country and which always gets congested in the morning. From Pamplemousses to Terre Rouge, we have just spent Rs100 m. in the upgrading work of the motorway. From Grewals to Caudan, we have spent Rs40 m. for the upgrading. These works have already been completed at 100%. So much of work is being done that even the Prime Minister could not get time to go and inaugurate the Macondé causeway. We have spent Rs180 m., and my good friend, hon. Ganoo - he is not here - for the past 25 years was claiming from housetops that this causeway should be repaired, and we knew that even people had died in that particular place. But luckily, the Prime Minister accepted, and the Deputy Prime Minister was then the Minister of Public Infrastructure, and that work has been concluded. We have not even had time to inaugurate that causeway, but still people are using it; they are heaving a sign of relief. Mr Speaker, Sir, Camp Thorel is one village which was always neglected since 20 to 25 years. Camp Thorel was always a rejected village, and this new road which we have just constructed - even now, we did not get time to inaugurate - is a link with all the dozens of villages of that particular region.

So, this is what we have done. It is not *bla-bla-bla*. What concrete work we have done, I am trying to present before Parliament and, through Parliament, to the public in general. Mr Speaker, Sir, a dual carriageway for the industrial development at Jin Fei at the cost of hundred million rupees. In a month's time, that work will be completed.

Another fantastic work, which has already been done and completed, is the B6 Wooton to Belle Rive Road. It is already cleared, together with lighting provisions. The road has been completed, and we are waiting for the Prime Minister's return. Definitely, in the days to come, that road will be inaugurated. We have also upgraded the bridges which are there, that is, about four or five bridges.

Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from that, we have also planned to enlarge the road from Belle Rive to Quartier Militaire. The cost is Rs700 m. Procurement procedures have already started, and tender for pre-qualification of contractor has already started.

I have raised that issue earlier. Goodlands is frequently paralysed by widespread traffic congestion, and whatever management measures were taken in the past did not give any concrete result. Now, a modern bypass is being provided and about 40% of the work has

already been completed. In six months' time, we are going to inaugurate the bypass of Goodlands. The cost of the project is Rs294 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Triolet is another upcoming township in the northern part of the country. For Triolet, the traffic congestion used to be extremely high, and the construction has started at Rs225 m. The project will be completed approximately by April or May 2010, and that is another miraculous feat which we have undertaken.

Mr Speaker, Sir, from the airport to Pamplemousses, the motorway is a dual carriageway, but from Pamplemousses to Grand' Baie, it is a single carriageway. The construction of a dual carriageway from Pamplemousses to Forbach has already started, and anyone who passes through that region knows the *vitesse* at which the work is going. If I am not mistaken, the work will be completed a few months earlier than the appropriate time. The cost is Rs227.5 m. Mr Speaker, Sir, from Forbach to Grand' Baie, land acquisition has already started. The design is nearing completion, and the RDA will go for tenders in the weeks to come for the sum of Rs350 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have not forgotten the south. To alleviate the traffic congestion in the south between New Grove and Rose Belle, a new link road is being constructed. 40% has been completed, and in two months' time it will be over. That is at the cost of Rs54 m. The top priority is to address the traffic congestion on the road that leads to the capital. Mr Speaker, Sir. We have identified several projects, and we are implementing them.

The existing motorway from Phoenix to Port Louis is being converted into a *trois par trois*, three by three dual carriageways, so as not to disrupt and penalise the traffic too much. We are implementing the project in phases. The first phase has already started; you must have seen from Grewal to Caudan and from Caudan back to Grewal; it is at Rs206 m. The work has already started. I know people are getting some problems, at night particularly, but I will see to it that we can try to pacify or we can try to bring a sense of relief. Engineers are working on that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the second phase will be from Phoenix roundabout to St. Jean. Bids have already been opened and evaluation has started. The cost is Rs140 m. In two or three weeks' time or at latest January, the work is going to start. Mr Speaker, Sir, at Caudan roundabout it is very congested, it is a real bottleneck and we want to put up a grade separated junction, and bids have been invited. It will be open towards the end of this month. The project is Rs300 m. All these are already in the pipeline.

The fourth phase is between St. Jean and Pailles. That includes Colville Deverell Bridge. It will be widened, and the cost is Rs800 m. We are working already on the tender documents. All these will be financed by the local funds, which we have already received.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are preparing another grade separated junction. People who use that road at Rond Point or Pont Fer have always encountered problems from morning till late at night. We are already preparing tender documents for a grade separated junction and it will be about Rs150 m. and, most probably, within a few weeks we are going for tender.

The widening of motorway will definitely improve fluidity of traffic, but there is still the problem of entering Port Louis. We have the problem of congestion at Labourdonnais Square and here at Place d'Armes. So, with the increasing traffic flow, the situation has to be revisited and, for that purpose, a consultant with a dedicated team of engineers are finalising the improvement and adjustment that are required just by the side of the harbour at Labourdonnais Rond Point. We have identified two other projects to address the issue of congestion. The first is the Ring Road Project. I heard a few friends, on the other side, repeatedly telling that this will never be put into practice, this is only *bla-bla-bla*. But one thing I can tell you is that, for the first part of the ring road, we have already awarded the contract for the sum of Rs1.2 billion. Contract has already been awarded. The contractor is mobilising on site, and the work may start at any time. If I am not mistaken, the *panneau* must have already been placed at that place. That is the first part at Rs1.2 billion.

Regarding the second point, Mr Speaker, Sir, the design has already been completed, but once the financing is sorted out, procedures will start and works are expected to start early next year. The cost is at Rs4 billion.

The Harbour Bridge is no longer a dream bridge. It is becoming a real bridge. The estimation is above Rs8 billion. It will be implemented as a Public Private Partnership Scheme, and the feasibility is completed. The detailed economic and technical feasibility will be completed by December and handed over to us. Once the investor is identified, the project will be implanted. There can be a slight delay on these two projects - the second phase of the Ring Road and the Harbour Bridge.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a few times comments were made on the Terre Rouge-Verdun highway. Impression was given that this project will never be realised, but I am happy to announce that bids actually are being evaluated, and we have received Rs1.8 billion by the

Agence Française de Développement. So, bids are being evaluated, and in early January we are going to start the construction work.

Another loan agreement has already been signed with BADEA for around 20 million euros, and this sum will be used for the second part of Terre Rouge-Verdun, that is, Verdun-Trianon and Trianon-Valentina. This route will serve the Highlands City. Tender documents were being prepared and the pre-qualification exercise will be undertaken shortly. During the first quarter of next year, we are going to start the construction.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the contract for Phoenix-Beaux Songes has already been awarded at Rs280 m. Work has already started, and I hope that they can go faster. That will alleviate the congestion problem of Palma, St. Jean, La Louise, Quatre Bornes. In parallel to the major project, as I have mentioned, we have got several projects, which are extremely important for safety and congestion alleviation. We have not forgotten the extreme south. The road from Pétrin to Plaine Champagne, which is used by tourists and even by our own people during weekend outings, has already been enlarged over a length of eight kilometres, at the cost of Rs50 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the road at Laventure is extremely narrow and has several dangerous bends, and this is the main link between the north and the east, and part of the road has already been widened. Additional widening work will be done after land acquisition procedures are completed. My friends were complaining about the Nallétamby Road, which carries heavy weight. The construction work has already started and in a month's time it will be completed. A bypass is being constructed for the village of Centre de Flacq at the cost of Rs40 m. In a month's time the work will be completed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my friend, hon. Bhagwan, is not here. Regarding the *Chemin de la Mort* at Coromandel, which collapsed a few years ago, and the hardship that people had to undergo - my friend, hon. Allet raised up the issue so many times with me - I am happy to announce that, most probably, work has already started by now. We are spending Rs25 m. in *Chemin de la Mort*. The narrow bridge at St. Pierre in Constituency No. 8 is being reconstructed and, probably, work must be completed within a month or two months. Land acquisition has already been completed at Avenue Tulipe; the road will be widened, and the cost is about Rs40 m. The work order has already been issued.

Mr Speaker, Sir, tenders have been invited for the bypass at Rivière du Rempart. It will link Rivière du Rempart to Poudre d'Or Hamlet. The cost is Rs100 m. The work is

going to start in a month or so. We are also undertaking the reconstruction of Ferney Bridge to the tune of Rs30 m. We are reconstructing the old bridge on Pailles Branch Road. That will be undertaken next year, because that route is being utilised at night actually as a diversion. The money involved is Rs40 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have got other big projects, for example, the East-West connector to the tune of Rs3.5 billion. That is a dual carriageway from Central Flacq to Réduit, and the World Bank is financing the consultancy work. Once the consultancy work is over, then we will go for PPP. The East Coast Trunk Road, Rs3.5 billion; the design is completed, and the African Development Bank is keen to finance the project. Most probably, towards the end of next year, we are going to start that project. There is also feasibility for the construction of a link road from Tianli industrial estate to Freeport, and that consultancy has already started. Probably, in a month time, they are going to submit the report. We are also upgrading the road from Providence to Central Flacq. Consultant has already been appointed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the extreme South Eastern part of the country, the coastal road from Ferney to Bel Air, we are going for the appointment of consultant, most probably by the beginning of next year. And then, from Quay D to Terre Rouge road, we have received Rs150 m. from World Bank in order to upgrade that part of the road, and bidding documents are being prepared. Another one from La Vigie to Nouvelle France, we are going to upgrade to the tune of Rs110 m. Bidding documents are being prepared. Mr Speaker, Sir, in a nutshell, I have given an indication of the amount of money which Government is spending in order to improve, maintain and, at the same time, create new roads. Then, to come in the House and say that we are sitting idle, we are not doing anything, is nonsensical. This is only part of what I had to say.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I move on to the second department of my Ministry, which is the building sector. It is not an exaggeration to say that, in the last four and a half years, we have undertaken over 3,000 projects, starting from the smallest to the biggest one, projects which fall under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, that is, the architectural and engineering section of my Ministry. So, hundreds of projects actually are being implemented, and these developments indicate the social and economic health of our country. These investments, Mr Speaker, Sir, are stimulating growth, enhancing competitiveness, and improving the quality of life of our people.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the building sector, since July 2005 to November of this year, as I have just mentioned, we have over 3,000 projects, but I am only going to name a few of them. I heard hon. Ajay Gunness. The impression he was giving was that all schools were completed by them. This is what he said exactly. But let me give an indication that many schools were started, but were not completed. Mr Speaker, Sir, we have completed, as at now, 23 projects for the extension of State Secondary Schools to the tune of Rs1,205,000,000. I cannot name all of them, but they are found throughout the country, starting from Colline Monneron, Solferino, Belle Rose, Camp de Masque, Moka, Vacoas, Central Flacq, Ebène, Beau Bassin, Floreal, Pamplemousses, Port Louis, Rivière des Anguilles and Goodlands. Mr Speaker, Sir, that sum has been spent on 23 projects, which have been completed totally. Then, we have nine projects, which are ongoing for the extension of other State Secondary Schools. The sum involved is Rs748 m. That is ongoing at Pamplemousses, Flacq, La Vigie, Moka, Floreal, Port Louis, Quatre Bornes, Beau Bassin and Goodlands. Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from that, two brand new SSS, one at Quatre Bornes and one at Goodlands are being constructed. So, to come up here and say that nothing has been done in the construction sector, they did everything, is far from the truth!

Mr Speaker, Sir, 11 new toilet blocks for Rs42 m. have been completed. I can't go on naming all the places and, apart from that, there are six ongoing projects for the new toilet blocks to the tune of Rs23.5 m. Then, we have upgraded 46 toilet blocks - we have even not forgotten toilet blocks - and the amount of money involved is Rs50.8 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are other four ongoing projects. Apart from that, we have 24 new classroom blocks in primary schools, which have been completed to the tune of Rs131 m. When I am speaking of classroom blocks, that comprises computer labs as well.

Three football grounds have been completed, and one at Triolet is still ongoing. Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 310 places in different schools and academic institutions where renovation, extension, electrical and furniture works, gas installation and other specialised works are being undertaken to the tune of Rs745 m. All these go to prove that we are not sitting crossed legs, Mr Speaker, Sir. All these 310 projects have already been completed. Apart from that, there are other 32 schools where extension works are being undertaken. They have not been completed, they are ongoing, and the sum involved is Rs106 m. That gives an indication to the amount of work which is being done. Not a single school in our country is left aside.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I move to the health sector, and the greatest achievement for this Government in the health sector is the construction of a new hospital at Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital in Port Louis. The sum involved is Rs1.5 billion. The work has already started, and actions were initiated by my Ministry. We are fully involved in the implementation of the projects. I would like to thank the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, because he was at the root cause. How to motivate and direct it has been the Deputy Prime Minister when he was the Minister of Public Infrastructure. So, now the work is going on. I hope that we'll not have any hurdle, and you will see that, within a year, the work will be partly completed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have completed a few health centres. There are two health centres, and one Medi Clinic, which the Deputy Prime Minister has visited a few days back in Port Louis, to the tune of Rs53.4 m. There is one Community Health Centre at Vacoas, and a third one; the design for a Medi Clinic at Triolet is already on. I hope that even that will be accomplished.

Mr Speaker, Sir, construction for a new hospital at Flacq has already started to the tune of Rs125 m., and the extension to Curepipe Area Health Centre is ongoing. Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 114 projects, which have already been completed in the health sector. I have got the list in front of me. I can't read all; I can circulate it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 31 ongoing projects in the hospital sector and, within a year, all the works will be completed. There are 39 renovation and upgrading projects again, and that concerns basically the health centres. This gives an indication that we have not forgotten the health sector, whether they be community health centres, health centres, regional as well as central hospitals. There are seven projects which are ongoing. That also deals basically with the community and area health centres.

Mr Speaker, Sir, from health, I would like to move to the police department. Seven new police stations have been completed.

They are as follows : Pointe-aux-Canonniers, Grand Bois, La Ferme, Rodrigues, Plaine Corail, Rodrigues, Bel Ombre, Camp Le Vieux police station and New Airport police station. There are other two outstanding works at Police Band Building at Vacoas and one new police station at Centre de Flacq to the tune of Rs65.4 m. Apart from that, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 157 renovation works which have already been completed; the cost is Rs190 m. That also concerns the police headquarters, rehabilitation centres and even the prison. Mr

Speaker, Sir, apart from that, we have also nine renovation works which are ongoing. That gives an indication that we have not forgotten the police department.

As far as youth and sports are concerned, there is a big problem that we had to face at the swimming pool of Mare d'Albert. It has already been completed, and the final touch is being undertaken. In fact, that is one of the projects which had caused a lot of delay, and I do hope that now the work will be completed and the inhabitants of that region can start utilising that swimming pool. Renovation and upgrading projects to the tune of above Rs20 m. have also been undertaken in the Youth and Sports Department.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as new buildings are concerned, we have spent Rs414 m., including the Customs House, which has already been completed. There are seven new buildings, which are under construction to the tune of Rs206 m. There are 166 renovation and upgrading projects which have also been completed to the tune of Rs265 m., and renovation and upgrading projects are also ongoing. These also give an indication that different departments are also being taken care of.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards projects, which are at the design and tender stage, there are 13 new secondary schools - different phases. For example, the 4th Phase of many secondary schools has not yet been completed. So, there are 13 State secondary schools where works need to be done, and we are at the design stage. We have got at the same time a few State secondary schools like Regis Chaperon, Royal College Port Louis, Sookdeo Bissondoyal and Emmanuel Anquetil. These are very prestigious institutions, and those buildings need to be refurbished and upgraded. We have already appointed a team of architects, engineers and quantity surveyors to work as consultants and to come forward with strong suggestions; funds are already available in our Budget.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are extensions to primary schools, including Moosun Government School, which has been a headache since years at Goodlands. In fact, this is one of the rare schools which is upheld by scaffolding up till now; so, even work in that school has already started. There are six health centres; 29 projects in hospitals, and we are working on. The most important project on which my Ministry has done a lot is the new prison department at Melrose that is costing us Rs1.3 billion. And the other one, *Espace Culturel & Artistique* at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Gardens and the Flacq Market. These are main projects on which we are working. At Flacq Market, the work is going to start probably in the beginning of January.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have just mentioned earlier, during the last four, five years, my Ministry has been involved in thousands of projects, starting from the simplest ones to the most complex ones. We have worked beyond our expectations. I take this opportunity to place on record my deepest appreciation and official recognition of the work that had been performed by officials of my Ministry, by engineers, architects, draughtsmen, planners and others.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a fact, we have to accept that, in the beginning, there had been a slight delay in the implementation of projects, because the Public Procurement Act was a new one and there had been certain teething problems. Procurement procedures are a bit lengthy and that is the reason why we have advised client Ministries to go for systematic procurement planning, so as to avoid paying high costs for urgent procurement works. We are purchasing new software for technical section, and we are providing training to our officers on a wide scale. Some projects have also been delayed because of land acquisition procedures. As we know, it is a very lengthy procedure, and we are trying to plan it in such a way that we can, within the shortest possible delay, deal with land acquisition issues.

Mr Speaker, Sir, projects have to be implemented efficiently. We do not want projects to end up in litigation and arbitration. Because, Mr Speaker, Sir, when there are litigations and arbitrations, that delays the implementation of projects, with significant cost overruns. So, we want projects to be implemented within Budget and in time for the benefit of our people. For client Ministries, we have requested them to appoint resident project managers on major projects, and these help in the smooth implementation of projects. For example, we have already appointed an adjudicator for the Jeetoo Hospital project, so that the contractual problems can be addressed without any problem.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I move on to the CIDB, which forms an integral part of my Ministry, because we have converted the whole of Mauritius into a construction site. The number of construction sites is going on; the number of work permits, which have been issued to expatriates, has almost trebled for the few years back, and the construction industry is becoming a pillar of our economy. We are modernising the construction sector, and that is the reason why a new CIDB Act was passed in February 2009. A new Board has been set up to develop and improve the construction industry. Mr Speaker, Sir, the CIDB is responsible for establishing norms. It exercises proper monitoring; it controls contractors and consultants. It helps small contractors, so that they can compete in a level playing field. The CIDB ensures fairness and equity to professionals and clients. A series of workshops are being organised

and, just last week, we have organised a workshop on safety and health in the construction sector. One of the functions of CIDB is to provide periodically indicative schedule or rates for construction works. A consultant is actually working on the development of the schedule of rates and, once the schedule of rates would be established, they would be updated and published. That will enable us to prepare accurate budget forecasts for infrastructure projects. The CIDB has already started registering consulting firms and contractors. This would ensure proper management of contracts. Because, so far, Mr Speaker, Sir, consultants were not registered in our country. In order to strengthen the construction sector, a new Professional Quantity Surveyors' Council Bill is being prepared, and the actual existing Architects Council and Professional Engineers' Council Acts will be amended in order to give a boost to the competitiveness and efficiency of the industry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have also noted certain shortcomings in the implementation of projects. There were projects, which were badly conceived. Now, we have taken a series of measures in order to improve implementation of projects. An Investment Project Process Manual (IPPM) has been prepared. It is a set of guidelines for investment projects and it covers all fields taking from roads, public utilities, infrastructure, etc. A Project Plan Committee has also been set up under my Ministry to provide a more coordinated approach to investment planning. The main task of PPC is to assess the infrastructural needs for various sectors. It has developed a project pipeline on the basis of information provided by public bodies and, in one year, the PPC has come up with two reports.

In the first report, which was published in April, PPC has examined 100 projects. We have recommended 14 projects worth Rs4.4 billion. A second report was issued a few months ago. We have examined 104 projects, recommended 21, and the project is worth Rs14.8 billion. We are also proposing bold measures to improve implementation of projects.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Building Regulations (accessibility to and facilities for disabled persons) came into operation in 2005. Since then, all public buildings have to be disabled friendly by providing ramps and specialised toilets. We are making a complete audit of all government buildings to ensure compliance with the above regulations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry, through the Repair and Rehabilitation Unit, will look after the maintenance of public buildings. I have already given indications, because we are investing in billions of rupees on infrastructural works. We have to ensure proper maintenance and that is the reason why we are earmarking five percent of the project value of

projects for the maintenance purpose. Mr Speaker, Sir, we cannot ignore the harsh reality of climate change that is becoming the cause of frequent calamities, like flood and landscape worldwide.

They are taking steps to consolidate and put appropriate infrastructure to cope with the problem. We are monitoring the landslide problems in the country. We are seeking technical assistance because we do not have the necessary expertise in this field, and all of us know there has been a very severe landslide at Chitrakoot, in Vallée de Prêtres, and training classes are conducted for officers and SMF, so that they can understand and read their existing extenso meters and monitor the situation, and necessary equipment. Government has provided fund; we can purchase to monitor the situation. We are getting the support of Japan International Corporation Agency.

Mr Speaker, Sir, though we are working miracles, still we are facing a stark reality, an acute shortage of manpower, the number of projects are multiplying by leaps and bounds, but we are not able to get professionals of the difference cadre. There is an acute shortage of professional, and that is the reason we have written to the Tertiary Education Commission and, now, we are pleased to announce that the University of Mauritius has degree courses for architecture and engineering. It has already started, and a number of seats have also been increased. The GSS Academy, which is a private concern, has also started courses in engineering.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are also faced with the challenges of constructing efficiency energy and eco-friendly buildings, and this has become very important because some energy efficiency concepts are being implemented in new buildings. For example, we constructed the new Customs House and energy saving glasses have been used, and the same concept will also apply to the new Jeetoo hospital. We will assist in the preparation of a green performance framework for all new public buildings. We are going to review the Building Act, and the UNDP is in the process of appointing a consultant. It will help us to look into the energy efficiency aspect of buildings. We are confident that, with these new measures, we shall be able to cope with the exigencies of the modern society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me turn now to the Land Transport and Shipping Division of my Ministry. Mr Speaker, Sir, as a caring Government, we are providing support to students attending primary, secondary and tertiary institution.

Mr Speaker, Sir, being a man of his words, the Prime Minister has introduced the free travel scheme to all our students. Old age pensioners and disabled are also provided with free travel, and it is a fact that free travel has changed the lifestyle of our people. If free travel had not been provided, the dream of many of our students to sit on school chairs would have been shattered. Even old age pensioners would have been confined within the four walls of their rooms. Today, they can move around freely. They are not dependent on anybody.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when this measure was applied in August 2005, Government was spending Rs570 m. Today, we are spending Rs772 m, and this concept has a social dimension. This has greatly helped our people, especially those who belong to the low-income group, and this responsibility befalls on the National Transport Authority. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a known fact that the public transport system, particularly the bus industry, is a highly subsidised industry throughout the world. If bus operators are going to insist for full course recovery, the course should become unaffordable for us. Fares are regulated, but we try to help by keeping at affordable level, by granting subsidy on diesel. We have a bus company recovery account, and this account absorbs fluctuation in the course of operations incurred by the bus operators and, as at now, we have spent Rs1.5 billion for operation of this fuel compensation scheme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to govern the land transport sector, the Mauritius Land Transport Authority Bill was presented, and that Act will definitely improve the transport system. It will harmonise and integrate all elements of land transport if takeover activities, which we have lengthily dealt with at the time of Second Reading, will take activities of RDA, NTA and TMRSU. It will remove the bureaucracy redtapism. It will promote efficiency, and there will be better coherence in the development of the sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the existing legal framework, NTA is monitoring and regulating public transport, pending the taking over of NTA by MLTA. The NTA has improved the legal framework to ensure better and more effective enforcement. Government is aware of loopholes that exist at the fitness centres. Everybody in our country knows. So, it has been decided now to privatise the fitness centres. Great care has been taken to ensure that right safeguards are in-built, like the state-of-art technology, equipment, as well as qualified personnel. We are moving very fast, and I expect that, within a month or two, we will start monitoring it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we will be having, at least ,five centres and, most probably , two of them will be dedicated - one in the urban region, one in the rural areas - for heavy vehicles, so that they can be separately examined.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Mauritian economy is presently experiencing a shift from preference based economic paradigm to a global competitiveness economic agenda. This calls for the need to enact appropriate transport policies and provide the critical level of transport infrastructure to support a sustainable growth path while, as the same time, ensuring the proper upkeep of existing infrastructural assets. A coordinate strategy and the appropriate medium-term programmes for the sector is essential to address the many challenges in the land transport sector.

Mr Speaker, sir, I come to the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU). We are making efforts to improve road safety. We are making efforts to curb down road accidents because, since 2005, we have done everything to improve road network, traffic fluidity and road safety. We have enhanced traffic management and road safety measures. Road accidents have to be curbed and, repeatedly, the Prime Minister has been hitting at this idea. He has also chaired a few meetings, and he expressed his concern on this question of road accidents and, in his own Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office, a special unit has been created to deal with such issues.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a slight decrease in the number of deaths in our roads compared to last year, and we are trying to curb it further down the trend of road accidents. Huge sums have been injected, as I mentioned already, in road construction, in road improvement, in reeducating people on road safety, in the application of modern and responsive traffic management measures. We have introduced speed cameras, and everyone knows that thousands of contraventions have been established, including Members on both sides of the House, though they may not tell openly, but many of them have already paid. I am also informed that a few of them have paid four or five times. Now, if that trend continues, then we have to think in terms of cancelling. The Deputy Prime Minister has himself paid such time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in collaboration with police, we are trying hard to sensitise road users; we are targeting all road users. Mr Speaker, Sir, since 2005, the TMRSU has been working on issues such as road safety education, sensitisation campaign for senior citizens, speed reducing measures, road safety audit, traffic signal equipment and the

setting up of necessary road safety, infrastructure to protect pedestrians from vehicular movements.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are also implementing a project for construction of 200 bus shelters throughout the island; 100 shelters have already been put up, and the remaining 100 will be put up during the first part of 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is another issue, which is becoming a cause of concern. Members of both sides of the House keep on pestering us to put up humps throughout the country. So far, we have 3,500 humps in a small country like ours, and if I succumb to the pressures of Members, by the end of next year, we will be having 20,000 humps in our country. We will be called a country of humps. There must be a bit of retaining, because there will be more humps than roads in our country. The question of restraint must be there, Mr Speaker, Sir, because we cannot keep on putting humps everywhere, as that creates problems for the fire services, for ambulances services and also for SAMU. At times, they are unwilling to use roads where they have got plenty of humps. If I go down memory lane, that reminds me of late 1960s, when I was taking part in Higher School Certificate. There was a book on general paper “Reading and Reasoning by Skinner” - my friend hon. Dr. David knows - and there was an interesting passage in that book which mentions ‘there is nothing wrong in an aeroplane which compels you to drop bombs on innocent citizens. There is nothing wrong in a motocar, which compels you to drive it so fast as to kill innocent pedestrians. If they turn out to be evil, it is because we who are evil. If our ideas are wrong, that fault is not in the machine, but in us.’ So I would make an appeal to everybody that, at least, there must be some type of restraint. We just cannot keep on imposing road humps throughout the country, and even the Prime Minister is agreeable to this.

So many times, the Deputy Prime Minister has also advised me not to get carried away by emotions and sentiments, keeping on putting road humps throughout the country. We have to see to it that there must be restraints, a sense of self-control on our side also. Mr Speaker, Sir, the 2010 Budget advocates the promotion of Mauritius as a green island. The land transport sector is a heavy consumer of fossil fuel, and this situation has to be reviewed. The bus modernisation programme favours the use of eco-friendly buses with less carbon. We will further reduce our dependency on fossil, and we have embarked on a project which aims at replacing all conventional traffic lights by light emitting diodes (LED). This will protect our environment and also reduce our energy bill by a few million rupees.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the shipping sector is also a very important sector of my Ministry. The former Merchant Shipping Act was an old Act of 1986. This has become obsolete and ineffective as a regulatory tool, and Mauritius is a member of IMO. We are also a party to many international Conventions. We have put up appropriate legislation, so that we can perform according to international norms. We have come up with a new Merchant Shipping Act, and this is more responsive to the emerging needs of the sector. This Act was voted a few years ago. It ensures that maritime transport adheres to international safety and security norms. It protects conditions of engagement, employment and living conditions on board of ships. It addresses the issue of protection of marine environment from the ships. Modern communication technologies have been introduced to sustain shipping activities. Being a party to International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), we have to provide maritime communication services to ships plying in our territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone. Our Ministry has also made arrangements for the provision of Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS) services, and that is costing our country Rs15 m. annually. We are providing Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) of ships services. This is an interesting tool in managing information on ships with other countries.

Mr Speaker, Sir, offshore fisheries constitute an important activity. We are implementing a High Frequency Communication Service for the benefit of fishing vessels. Such service is vital for the safety of fishing vessels, safety of crew and fishermen. We have spent Rs13 m. for the purchase of HF equipment.

We are preparing a strategy paper for shipping sector for 2008-2015, with the help of foreign expertise. This will govern the development of the sector in such a manner as to allow it to be financially sustainable and to make Mauritius a port, which can meet all the challenges of modern shipping activities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, last but not the least is the National Transport Corporation (NTC), which has been the talk of many. This will be the last item on which I am going to speak a few words. Mr Speaker, Sir, everybody...

Mr Speaker: Is the hon. Minister going to be long?

Mr Bachoo: Five to ten minutes maximum. Mr Speaker, Sir. Everyone is aware that the National Transport Corporation is facing serious financial difficulties. Mr Speaker, Sir, when there was an increase of tariff in April 2008, it was felt that the NTC would be in a financial turmoil because that was the time when we increased the tariff by 28%. But,

unfortunately, the company obtained only 18% in terms of revenue. That was the starting point of the problem of NTC. Government immediately, at that time, commissioned a study by the consultant Deloitte to carry out an assessment on the financial situation and to review the organisational structure of NTC. The report had been submitted. Many weaknesses have been identified –

1. Legal framework of NTC needs to be revisited.
2. A rise in the base price of diesel in May 2008 from Rs11.44 to Rs25. has had a significant impact on the vehicle running costs.
3. NTC operates on many non-commercial routes, which affects the financial viability.
4. Management practices at the corporation are not the best ones.
5. A lack of strategic approach results in management operating loosely.

On the basis of the findings of the Deloitte Report, an Action Plan, based on strategic option, has been put up and is being implemented. NTC is moving out of the difficult situation. But the bad days, Mr Speaker, Sir, are not over. Serious attention is being paid to actions that are being undertaken, and measures, as appropriate, will be undertaken. So far, we are monitoring the situation seriously, and I personally believe that if we are going to apply certain stringent measures, NTC can come out of that dangerous situation in which it is found. But I can say that it is none of our making, because there have been comments from the other side of the House as if Government is responsible for what is happening at the NTC.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we have gone through the different aspects of one Ministry that falls under my responsibility, it gives you an indication that we are not sitting cross-legged, and the impression that has been created by the Opposition that the country is not moving ahead, that everything was their doing is far from the truth. In fact, I have given a vivid, clear and straightforward picture of what has been done, and I sincerely believe that if we continue this way, we know quite well what will be the result out in the public; everybody follows what happens. We have got an educated electorate. We have got a cultured population, and people appreciate the work that is being done. That is the reason why, with all certainty, I can say that the only prayer that we can make to the Lord is to give us the strength never to disown the poor inhabitants of our country nor to bend our heads before insolent mights, like they did in the case of Illovo.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

At 7.57 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.00 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

Mr M. Dowarkasing (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in response to what has been said in this House before, to all those who took the floor, I would like to say only three things.

To hon. Anil Bachoo who took the floor before me, I would say that I have listened to all his speeches in this House before today, I have listened to the speeches of his predecessors also at the head of their particular Ministry, and I could eventually come out with the conclusion that the *Alliance sociale* was faced with a very big congestion in implementing their projects, which lasted at least four years, fortunately, and now it seems that the traffic seems flowing.

The second thing I would like to say to this House, to all those who took the floor before me, whatever they are going to say, whatever figures they are going to come up in this House, *M. le président, dans ce pays, il y a eu un seul miracle économique.* Whatever they are going to say, whatever figures they are going to come up in this House, *M. le président, dans ce pays, il y a eu un seul miracle économique, et ceci a été l'œuvre du MSM.*

(Interruptions)

And you also have had a success story, and this success story, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the hon. Minister of Finance has achieved and built up a society of two extremes. It is on this very fundamental issue that we do not agree, and it is on this very fundamental issue that I am going to make my speech.

M. le président, la préparation et la présentation du budget 2010 s'opèrent dans un contexte particulièrement différent. C'est la sortie d'une crise économique. M. le président ; les chocs économiques tout comme les tremblements de terre ont toujours existé, et sont inévitables. Si les tremblements de terre sont des phénomènes naturels, au fil des années, l'être humain, les ingénieurs ont tout mis au point pour minimiser les dégâts. Par contre, les chocs économiques, M. le président, découlent directement de la nature humaine, et certainement la dernière crise. De quelle crise parle t-on, si ce n'est celle du néolibéralisme outrancier !

La mondialisation, M. le président, a, de par ces principes, au fil des années, démantelé les dispositifs de sécurité financière qui était à la fois nationale et internationale. De ce fait, la mondialisation a créé un énorme bassin unique, dans lequel les ondes financières se propagent d'un bout à l'autre. Nous avons vu quelque chose qui a eu lieu en Amérique et tout le monde a été affecté, parce que nous n'avons plus ces sécurités financières.

M. le président faut-il s'en inquiéter ? Oui ! Et pourquoi ? Parce qu'un an après, il me semble qu'on n'a pas appris la leçon. Rien n'a changé, sauf peut être que l'Occident a été rattrapé par l'Orient. Mais, après une année, on constate qu'on a tout fait pour sauver le capitalisme et, aujourd'hui, l'appât du gain nourrit l'instinct du capitalisme de nouveau. Nous sommes, ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui, en route vers le nouvel ancien capitalisme. Mais ici, à l'île Maurice, la liaison économique entre les apôtres du capitalisme et le ministre des finances s'est aussi consolidée depuis 2005, pendant et, surtout, après la crise.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, never ever a Government has used so much of taxpayers' money to bail out the private sector. Government is at the centre of all collective measures to manage ourselves and, at the centre of Government, the nucleus, lies the Ministry of Finance, which has the responsibility of assuring a decent standard of living to every Mauritian citizen, but foremost to improve the social status of the downtrodden. Any caring Government would trend along these objectives but, unfortunately, here the scenario is different.

M. le président, si le monde est touché aujourd'hui par le virus H1N1, notre démarche économique à l'île Maurice est aussi atteinte d'un virus. J'ai même préparé la formule, mais je préfère ne pas la prononcer. C'est un virus mortel, M. le président. Un virus mortel pour la classe moyenne et la classe ouvrière, mais la bonne nouvelle c'est que le vaccin aussi est prêt. Pendant notre caravane à travers l'île Maurice, nous avons distribué ce vaccin, et le peuple attend pour l'appliquer au docteur.

The present Minister of Finance has worked for the interest of just about everyone, except the needy Mauritian, be it the average income earner or those at the bottom of the ladder. When it comes to the needy, the Minister of Finance has been surfing at the death patch, at the change of the tide.

The Government rejection to its role towards the needy and the poor is breeding distrust. People are feeling betrayed, and they have had enough of their lives being eroded simply, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. People are fed up with the financial management of this

country. Today, whatever the hon. Minister of Finance would say, whatever figures he would project, whether he will speak of early harvest, bumper crop, resilient economy, the bottom line is that people are worst off today in this country, so much so that they have been compelled to change their way of lives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Minister of Finance flailed around in the darkness, blindfolded by the dicta of the IMF and the World Bank, the compasses of the Ministry of Finance have gone haywire and have pointed only in one direction: the private sector. Just like his previous Budgets.

M. le président, le ministre des finances a un double langage; one when he is in power, driving the economy and, the other one, when he is in Opposition. When he is in power driving the economy, he always stands behind the big capital. Let me just quote, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from a speech, and later I will tell you who made that speech. It is good that every Member of the Labour Party goes through that speech. It is a very interesting speech that I came across. I am quoting from a speech referring to the Budget, presented by hon. Sithanen. He stated –

“He surprised me in his Budget Speech, knowing of his background, as I said, by the decision to stand firmly behind the big capital. Today, it is clear that he intends to do everything to make the rich richer and the poor poorer”.

Guess, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, who said that. It is the actual Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, who said that during the Budget debate of 1994.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today, we have created in this country a demonstrably fragile financial system that has produced an unimaginable wealth for some while, repeatedly risking a cascading breakdown of the system as a whole. The Economist, Mr Kee Cheong Li Kwong Wing *l'a si bien dit M. le président* -

« nous ne pouvons perpétuer un modèle de développement basé sur ceux qui détiennent les moyens »

To go again to that speech made by the hon. Prime Minister in 1994, he stated that there must be a balance between the social side and economic side, but today the technocratic elites in this country, by obeying to the conventional wisdom of the IMF and the World Bank, blessed by the hon. Minister of Finance, have created a great divide in the country. It is a growing divide since 2005 between the policy makers and the Mauritian people at large. It is a divide between the haves and the have-nots. It is a divide between the social and economic

culture. We have messed out our social and economic system at a time especially where the free market system is already a burden to us, Mr Speaker, Sir. We've seen how the free market system has failed, and most of the economic analysts will tell you that a market is not efficient if there is not a just and levelled playing field, and even if it does achieve economic efficiency the free market system is blind to the things that matter most.

It ignores our needs as social beings. It ignores our identity. It ignores our purpose. We can surely and should reintegrate the economic and social values by shifting the allegiances from the free market to a more democratic market. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the democratic market does not exist. It is an ideal to strive towards. It is the possibility of a grand democracy of consumption that works. Creating a democratic market requires levelling up the craggy playing level field, tackle income inequality, create genuine equal opportunities and minimise abuse of power. We have seen none of these things happening since the last four years, and this is where I agree with what the hon. Prime Minister stated again in 1994 -

'It takes more than an economist to run the country. Don't think that with economics you can run the country. I don't know; the Minister cannot take it, but he can go and take a rest. He might like to know that no economist has been Prime Minister in this world and, yet, for the very reason I am telling you, he better learns this'.

This is what hon. Dr. Ramgoolam said in 1994, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. How appropriate this speech is when we see the context in which we are today. In 1994, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister stated that the Minister of Finance is practising what we call trickle-down economics. Do you know what is this philosophy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Well, I didn't know also. I just learned it from the speech of the hon. Prime Minister. What is this trickle-down economics? Let me just read it to you. The philosophy behind trickle-down economics, in a nutshell, is that you make the rich get richer, richer and richer. Some of the wealth will trickle-down to the poor and overflow, and reach the needy. That is what trickle-down economics is all about. This is what it is all about since 2005 in this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is what exactly the hon. Minister of Finance has been doing. The Budget Speech is a juggling economic exercise, divorced from other dimensions of the body politics. I am afraid, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a saga of missed opportunities again - heartless panoply of measures just to please some groups instead of taking into consideration the whole nation in its magnitude. It enlists a new a series of unachieved goals since 2006/2007. It mirrors all the wishes and measures dictated by the IMF with the

exception of one. When it comes to the Additional Stimulus Package, this is where the hon. Minister of Finance differs from the IMF and the World Bank, because he wants to maintain that. Maybe, the ASP had been maintained because the application of Infinity was not processed yet. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I say ‘maybe’; I don’t know. When it comes to helping the poor, removal of subsidy on exam fees, school feeding project, there is no objection at all, but when it comes to removal of the ASP, then we see that, for the first time, maybe, the hon. Minister of Finance has disagreed with the dicta of the World Bank and the IMF.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget is silent about the control of public expenditure. Not a single measure has been put in place to curb down public funds wastage. Let me recall what was stated in the Presidential Address, at Chapter 59 of 29 July 2005.

‘A proper mechanism will be set up for close monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations of the Director of Audit’s Report to obtain better value for money.’

Zero!

‘Government will strengthen capacity for monitoring of major projects since inception to completion with a view to avoiding cost overruns.’

Zero, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! This Budget - not any other Budget - has not made any provisions for the wastage of public expenditure. Today, we see how projects are costing 30% to 40% more. We are throwing taxpayers’ money by the windows. I heard hon. Minister Bachoo speaking a bit earlier on the different projects. We will see, when this Wooton-Belle Rive Road will be completed, how many extra funds will have to be allocated, because this project should have been completed two months ago and, unfortunately, we see how things have been going on. I think hundreds of millions will be wasted in delay of projects!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, there was a terrible and worrying trend developing. It is no revelation to anyone that there has been, under the Sithanen years - those were the years and these are the years also - a systematic deterioration in the management of public finances. Do you know who said that? It was Mr Bheenick, the actual Governor of the Bank of Mauritius, responding, as he was presenting his first Budget. The point is that, what has been said in 1994/1996, is repeating today. This is the point.

Nothing has changed. The hon. guy has remained the same. His politics have remained the same and he is torturing the people of this country again. This is the point I want to make.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today, we have reached a situation in this country where even the high officials refuse to give the relevant information to the Director of Audit.

(Interruptions)

Yes, it is there! Let me quote -

‘For some years now, quite a number of them - and the number is growing - including high officials, are refusing to provide my officers the information, records and other documents requested for audit purposes’.

It is there in the introductory notes of the audit report.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have reached a point in this country where even high officials of Ministries are refusing to give relevant documents and information to the Director of Audit, so that he can carry out his work on public expenditure. This is where we have reached today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

This is the situation about public finances, where projects have to go through the Central Procurement Board. Imagine the private company under the STC and imagine what is going to happen if we don’t take the necessary precautions with the private company, such as the RDC!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whenever the hon. Minister of Finance goes public, there are two words that precede him. He never misses an opportunity to refer to the reforms he has carried out and the economic growth. *M. le président, il n'y a pas eu de réforme Sithanen et c'est un économiste, Monsieur Kee Cheong Lee Kwong Wing qui nous dit cela. Il n'y a pas eu de réforme Sithanen. Il va plus loin, M. le président, pour dire –*

‘Je peux vous prouver, en m'appuyant sur les fondamentaux de notre économie, qu'il n'y a pas eu de réforme. Vous avez un service civil qui n'a pas changé, avec toutes ses lourdeurs et ses dysfonctionnements. Vous avez un système opérant avec ce système de cartel et de protection. Vous avez un système politique qui favorise ce que j'appelle la marginalisation des prises de décisions. De quelle réforme parle le ministre des finances, quand la concentration des richesses de ce pays se trouve toujours entre les mains d'une poignée de personnes, et les pouvoirs de décision entre

celles de certains grands princes qui vont toujours étouffer la moindre personne qui cherche à s'affirmer ? »

These are not my words. It's the economists who are saying that. I am not an economist. When speaking of the economic crisis, we have resisted the economic crisis, mainly due to two reasons. Here again, I tend to agree with the economist, whom I quoted earlier. Mr Speaker, Sir, he stated that we have resisted the economic crisis, *parce que nous avons un secteur privé très conservateur, un système financier très fermé et très prudent. Ce sont ces deux facteurs combinés qui expliquent qu'il n'y a pas eu de spéculation financière dans le pays.* This is coming from Mr Kee Cheong Li Kwang Wing, who is an economist.

Afin de produire un réel changement, M. le président, nous devrions créer une politique d'un genre nouveau, qui va lier le peuple mauricien à son gouvernement. Again, what we have said, and as hon. Nando Bodha had put it correctly, we do not agree on the figures, the rationale and the rhetoric of this Budget. He said it. When it comes to figures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, again, I would like to quote here, Mr Bheenick, while presenting his Budget in 1996. This is what he said -

“If there is one lesson that my predecessor has taught us, it is how easy to *camouflage* a 6% deficit into a 2.9% deficit. It is a lesson of dishonesty.”

That was said in 1996 and, today, we can see that, unfortunately, we are also being prey of this financial dishonesty. The hon. Minister has not changed over the years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Another financial analyst, the son of a great Labour Minister, Mr Sanjay Jagatsingh wrote -

“Where is the robust growth promised? That did not happen. The average growth rate will be around 4.3% by the time we go to vote; that will be the worst performance in decades.”

He goes on to add –

“The numbers don't change that much even if we exclude the last 12 months of the crisis period.”

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me continue. *Pendant que le ministre des finances crie sur tous les toits que nous avons été résilients, il y a eu une performance...*

(Interruptions)

Just listen to what I am going to tell you! *Pendant ki nous pé tape l'estomac*, saying ‘we did so well’, while we were performing at a rate of 2.7 % growth, Sub-Saharan countries like Malawi had 5.7% growth. Uganda is having 6% growth in that crisis period. What is the big achievement that we have realised here? What is this big achievement when you see countries like Uganda and Malawi performing three to four times better than what we do? Is that a big achievement? No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

We sat in this House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for more than two and a half hours to listen to the Budget Speech and, according to paragraph 4, we were supposed to be listening to a speech that would reflect the ‘great ideals’ of the Government. All along his delivery, I was just trying to grasp what were going to be those ‘great ideals’. But, what came ringing in my ears, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a Budget Speech - we are moving out of a crisis period, we are supposed to be coming up with very serious things - is that the pig population has increased in this country. This is a great ideal! I learnt that 750 cardiac surgeries were conducted, as if never before there has been any cardiac surgery done in this country. When you see the figure, it seems like it is a big achievement; 750 cardiac surgeries, which means two heart patients have undergone surgical operation per day! We are producing a sick nation, and it seems that it is a great ideal and a great achievement.

I further learnt, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we had performed 6,500 eye surgeries. That is a great ideal! These are the arguments that you find in a Budget Speech, at a period when we are moving out of a crisis! We have had 2.6 million outpatients and casualty consultations. Would you believe it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Every Mauritian must have gone to the hospital at least twice in that year. And is this big achievement! We are creating a sick nation, and this is a big achievement! 11,900 women have been screened for breast cancer, but this is a *bilan concernant la santé* and it ought not to be in a Budget Speech, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. 2,300 families have benefited from NHDC units, when they did not even construct a single NHDC house! Not a single NHDC house has been constructed for the last five years.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that started during our time. Go and see...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Dowarkasing: The hon. Minister of Finance admitted it.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Order! Let us have some order, please!

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you see a Budget Speech, where a hon. Minister of Finance is...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaking: Order!

Mr Dowarkasing: ...missing completely...

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Thank you. I don't know what happened at dinner time, but, please, let us behave. No cross-talking! Let us behave, please! Allow the hon. Member to continue. Thank you.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was saying that, in a Budget, when we are moving from a crisis, the spirit and the mindset of the hon. Minister is to be noted. The hon. Minister of Finance cannot get elementary things correct, just like the George V Stadium no longer exists, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I knew that there was one George V Stadium in my constituency, but it no longer exists. They have changed the name. Such elementary things! Then, we can see the mindset! We have passed a law recently where SEHDA does not exist. You can see the mindset, when such elementary things have been missed out. How would you expect a hon. Minister of Finance to know the sufferings of the poor people outside? I simply cannot imagine it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when you go to that very particular paragraph 4 of the Budget Speech, the hon. Minister of Finance spoke about the aspiration of the people. What are those aspirations, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? People want to eat, live and be the owner of a small house. To eat well, Mr Deputy Speaker, their purchasing power must be restored. To live well, they need a conducive and secured environment, where employers cannot simply hire and fire. To be the owner of a roof, they need the support of the State because, you would admit with me that, today, no one earning up to Rs25,000 a month can buy a piece of land and construct a house. I am speaking of those earning Rs25,000 a month. But, now, how about those earning Rs10,000? They will never be able in their life to buy a house! When you see what is happening at the NHDC, *aujourd'hui c'est mette fort gagne fort*. If you don't

have Rs100,000 deposit at the NHDC, you are not sure to secure a house, and the minimum you need is of Rs50,000. Then, you will be on the list to get a house. This is the situation. The NHDC is being given State land. Many times, Government has bailed them out when they have not been able to pay the loans. But did you see the price at which they are selling these houses? When you see the area of this house and the cost of constructing such a similar house, you will find that the price of the NHDC houses is exorbitant, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are talking about aspiration. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will come to the housing issue a bit later.

To add to what I have said before, by next year in this country, every Mauritian, even those who will be newly born, will be having a public debt of around Rs166,000 on their head. That has more than doubled for the last five years. I need to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance. That is a big achievement. Many times we put questions in this House as to what has been the public debt. It has always been given in terms of percentage of GDP, but when he was in Opposition, then he quoted figures in absolute terms.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, poverty today in Mauritius is a consequence of the model of development we have cherished. The poor know what to do, but are too poor to do it. Since they cannot even meet their immediate needs, they also cannot afford to save and invest in the future. Since 2005, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have seen poverty being institutionalised and worsened to reach what the hon. Minister of Finance himself defines as extreme poverty. Let me just give some facts to sustain what I am saying, and I do not think anybody can contest those facts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I come to the first one, the Gini coefficient of inequality. This is the most commonly used measure of inequality. We move from zero to one; one is the complete inequality, and zero is the complete equality. In 2001/2002, the Gini coefficient was .371. In 2006 and 2007, the latest figures that we have, we have moved from .371 to .388. We are moving more towards the inequality side. This is a clear indication that poverty has increased in this country. Can you come and deny this? Unfortunately, these figures cannot be tampered with by the hon. Minister of Finance.

The Human Development Index published by the United Nations. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Human Development Index is an indication of the gap in the well being and the life chances. In 2004, we were rated 63 among all the countries. In 2006, we went down to 74 and, now, in the very recent report that has been published a few weeks ago, in 2009, we are 81. We have lost 18 ranks since hon. Rama Sithanen took over as Minister of

Finance. These are facts and figures showing that the poverty gap in this country has increased. Firstly, the Gini coefficient and secondly, the Human Development Index.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the indebtedness of the household in the banks has reached the figure of 60% in 2006 and 2008. 60% of the people having their account in their banks are indebted. The expense of an average household has increased by more than 50% and will reach 60% by next year. This has been clearly stated in the most recent Household Budget Survey, which was conducted in 2007. It has been shown that more than 48,000 households spent more than 50% of their earnings in food items compared to 12.3% in 2001/2002.

People are spending 48% of their earnings more on food items. Prices of commodities have gone up. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a list here. Hon. Nando Bodha gave a few examples. I am not going to go through that list; I will just give you one example. For the last five years, Basmati rice has increased by 75%. But what about *eau de table vital et crystal, qui est produit localement ? 55% d'augmentation ! De l'huile : 65%*. So, you see, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have just heard that the price of rice will increase by 50% next year. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know that the Cargo Handling Corporation is increasing its handling rates by more than 30%. Everybody, all the economists said that a 30% increase in the handling prices would have a direct impact on the commodities. The price of commodities will increase by 10%.

M. le président, le spectacle vécu un quart de siècle auparavant, refait surface aujourd’hui. Vous savez c’était quoi ce spectacle avant les années 1982 ou 1983. Des mères de famille qui partaient à la recherche *d’enn deux ti le cœur chouchou pou faire enn bouillon*. M. le président, que disait Rama Sithanen, le politicien, quand il naviguait dans l’opposition? Que disait-il ? L’honorable Dr. Bunwaree a été le premier à se mettre debout dans cette Chambre pour défendre le budget de Sithanen. M. le président, vous savez ce que Rama Sithanen, le politicien, à cette époque - je parle de 1998 - avait dit quand le ministre Bunwaree présentait son budget : ‘le ministre des finances n’est pas un expert en économie, il ne maîtrise pas la chose financière et demande à la population de lui faire confiance. Si c’était un problème cardiaque, j’aurais, les yeux fermés, fait confiance au docteur Bunwaree, mais pas pour l’économie. *Lizié ouvert mo pa pou lé faire li confiance.*’ C’est l’arrogance! Et on voit cela aujourd’hui, M. le président.

Quand il était dans l’opposition, le politicien Rama Sithanen disait qu’il y aurait un plus grand appauvrissement de ceux se trouvant au bas de l’échelle. C’était quand le ministre

Bunwaree présentait son budget. Il était dans l'opposition, et voilà ce qu'il disait : 'Le gaz ménager, l'essence, le textile, etc, et il ose dire que la classe moyenne et les *ti-dimounes* ne sont pas touchés ?' Ecoutez ceci, M. le président. C'est le politicien Rama Sithanen quand il était dans l'opposition : 'La majorité de la classe moyenne et ceux au bas de l'échelle ne surfent pas sur l'Internet, ne dînent pas au restaurant, ou ne téléphonent pas à tout soleil levant. Leur problème c'est leur quotidien, ce qu'on appelle *bread and butter issue*.'

And it is this very bread and butter issue that you are denying the people through your different budgets since 2005. When you are in the Opposition, you have a very different language.

Pour la taxe...

(*Interruptions*)

Honorable Dr. Bunwaree, écoutez !

(*Interruptions*)

Donc, je ne vais pas le dire si vous savez!

(*Interruptions*)

Les autres ne savent pas! C'est la première fois en deux ans dans l'histoire de Maurice que la *sales tax* sort de 5% pour passer à 10%. *He was criticising your Budget !* Ce qui veut dire que nous avons eu une augmentation de 100% en deux ans. Voilà ce que disait le politicien Sithanen quand il était dans l'opposition et une fois dans le fauteuil du ministre des finances, c'est un autre visage, c'est une politique totalement différente.

C'est une politique totalement différente. Ecoutez-moi ces terme éloquents, M. le président. The illusion of some right thinking people. He was speaking of the theory minimum pain, and today he is giving maximum pain to the people. He spoke about the straw that breaks the camel's back. Tuna treated as caviar; inflation and higher wage compensation; adding fuel to fire, and listen how this is beautiful and surprising: 'We have to take lessons from other centre-left Governments'. This is what Rama Sithanen, the politician, kept saying and, once there, as Minister of Finance, he does totally a different thing.

M. le président, c'est dommage pour ce pays que l'honorable Sithanen ne s'est pas inspiré de Rama Sithanen. On aurait voulu que l'honorable Dr. Sithanen s'inspire de Rama Sithanen. Aujourd'hui, le peuple aurait été mieux loti. Mais, M. le président - je vais me servir d'un terme - je crois que le ministre des finances a fait preuve d'une mémoire

extrêmement courte. Et savez-vous comment on décrit cette mémoire extrêmement courte ? C'est l'alzheimer financier chronique, M. le président.

If you go to the Presidential Address, paragraph 71 refers to the comprehensive master plan to combat poverty. Leave alone the comprehensive part of it; leave alone the master part of it. Where is the plan? We don't even have the plan to combat poverty *et maintenant qu'est-ce qu'on entend dire ? Après un observatoire d'énergie qui n'a jamais été institué, we are going to be blessed by an independent poverty observatory.* Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what will it observe? Will it observe the poor children crying as they go to bed with their stomach half-filled? Will it observe mothers who have to dilute excessively their babies' milk because of unaffordability to purchase milk? Will it observe some children that have not been able to take their SC or HSC exams because their parents cannot afford to pay their fees? Will it observe the whole family living in one single room? Will it observe that mothers have to go on the roads and work as sex workers when they cannot feed their families? After observing all that, what will the hon. Minister of Finance tell us in this House? He will come and tell us: 'I have provided for the solution. I know everything. I have provided for the solution. Switch on your plasma TV 32 inches, I have removed tax on it, and watch the symphony orchestra playing! This is going to fill your stomach; all the problems of the poor will be over.' That is the solution to poverty in this country, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I said it before that this Government has paid lip service to social housing. I have said how the NHDC is no longer serving its purpose and objectives. This Government is boasting itself on the measure taken to sell the land to the owners, to the CHA houses. Very good measure! Yes, I congratulate you! You have done it, though we know that there have been CHA houses!

(Interruptions)

Listen! You do not even listen to what I am saying, and you are making remarks from a different sitting position! But, then, you forget one thing, namely that it was Sir Anerood Jugnauth that made them owners of their buildings before. It is very dishonest not to reckon that fact; that Sir Anerood Jugnauth's Government made them owners of the buildings first. That is also an achievement, and we should not forget it. I am bringing it on the floor because we do not want it to go unnoticed. That is also an important fact, Mr Speaker, Sir. We say that we have done it; they say they have done it; it is a good thing that CHA owners

will become owners of their land. But there are a lot of difficulties, and I think we will find means and ways to overcome that also. But, then, my pledge is: what about those squatters who have been regularised, who have been given a plot of State land, for which they have to pay the lease? What about all those people who have obtained State land for the construction of a house? Why not do the same for them also? In my constituency, in Dubreuil, we have more than 300 such cases, where people have been given a lease of State land. Why don't we apply the same measures? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not know how many of us listened to the radio on Sunday. There were some cases where people came on the air to voice out how they have been dumped by NGOs operating under the Trust Fund; those NGOs to which the Trust Fund has entrusted the work of distributing iron sheets and wood. It is a big scandal, and there we need to do something, there need to be an inquiry; we must know. I brought out one case, and I indicated that to the CEO or the administrator, the one in charge of the Trust Fund. There is one case in Quartier Militaire, on the Royal Road, where somebody has been benefiting from iron sheets and wooden poles, and he is operating a business in it. Up to now, nothing has been done. Iron sheets and wooden poles are supposed to be given to poor people.

(Interruptions)

I have already reported it; this is what I am telling you. You are not listening hon. Member! You are not listening; this is what I am saying! I have reported it, at least, six months ago, and nothing has been done so far. If you go there, you will see that the building still there and they are operating a *tabagie* in it. Would you believe it!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me come to the *Maurice Ile Durable* project. The worse economic crisis has been overcome in less than one year, and now we are moving towards recovery. But, the environmental crisis we faced will take decades to overcome if we take the correct measures. *Je l'ai déjà dit dans cette Chambre et je le répète, M. le président. Nous consacrons beaucoup de temps à nous soucier de nos déficits économiques, alors que ce sont les déficits écologiques qui menacent notre avenir économique à long terme.* *Maurice Ile Durable* is a very valuable project, but *Maurice Ile Durable* is not just about the idea of becoming greener with some isolated actions. It is about whether our economy, our laws, our political parties, Government agencies, businesses, local communities are able to make better decisions about the environment, about how to protect and sustain it. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we need to think big and adapt; finding environmental targets. The hon. Minister of Environment said it. It's no longer an option. It is an obligation and, for an

obligation, we need binding environmental targets. The approach should be holistic, but not in a piecemeal manner. Mr Deputy Speaker, the only uncertainty about climate change is how big the problem is going to be for us and for the countless species we share the planet with, and this problem is not a new one.

The problem was foretold as far back as 1890s, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the Swedish chemist, Svante Arrhenius, calculated that the doubling of the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will result in a 5°C rise in temperature. Are we conscious what a 5°C rise in temperature mean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? It means a rise in the sea level between .5 to 1.5 metres. How many of our beaches will be eroded? How many of the species in the sea will disappear? There is no doubt that human activities are responsible for it.

We have had the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, which came into force painfully in 2005. It took so many years, more than eight years to come into force. Despite the fact that we had the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, the greenhouse gas has increased by more than 38%.

Today, China has become the greatest polluter. Though China has signed the Protocol, it is not obliged to reduce its emissions as a developing country. Developing countries, under the Protocol Agreement, need not reduce their green gas emission.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012, and since there is now a universal consensus, a hard-hitting approach is needed and Copenhagen meeting should be attended in that spirit.

Now, let us see some of the local initiatives. There has been some good local initiatives taken in the Budget regarding solar heaters, the bulbs; they are very good starters. But what I said before is that we need a more integral approach.

The management of the coastal zone is left to the Recomap project under the United Nations Funding. No concrete action has been taken so far to preserve our coral reefs. Beach erosion is still visible in many places. We have not yet created a sand bank to replenish our beaches.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have developed in this country a National Environment Strategy. There is a report in the drawers somewhere. A National Environment Action Plan has been elaborated at the expense of millions of rupees. It is lying in the drawers somewhere. Why don't we implement it? We have the National Environment Fund, which could be the financing source of this Action Plan. Is it because it is the previous Government

that prepared that strategy and the Action Plan that it is still in the drawers? Environment should be above party politics.

We, in the MSM, the green agenda is very high on our agenda. We believe that the Director of Environment should operate independently, not under the aegis of the Ministry.

We believe that the Forestry Department of Agro Industry now should fall under the Ministry of Environment.

It should be also mandatory for new buildings to be solar energy compliant and existing buildings be given a mandatory period to be compliant.

As I have said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, environmental issues are above party politics. It is high time that we have a standing committee of the Parliament to act as a watchdog, just like we have the Public Accounts Committee. We need a standing committee of the Parliament, because environment is a very crucial issue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the present Budget contains valuable measures to forge the green agenda ahead, but there are some disturbing provisions.

How can we be green and, at the same time, spend Rs2 billion to raise the capacity of Fort Victoria, which depends on heavy oil? I don't understand the rationale. We want to be green, but then we are spending Rs2 billion for heavy oil projects. How is the new power plant of 100 MW that will be using eco-friendly technology? What is this technology? Where will this plant be located?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have known the saga of Mare Chicose...

(Interruptions)

...and the problem it has created to environment.

(Interruptions)

No, you have never resolved the environment problems!

(Interruptions)

You not have resolved the environmental issue. I am sorry! You are resolving the displacement of the people, but not the environmental issue.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Dowarkasing: We have, in this Budget, now provided for the first dedicated facility for the storage...

(*Interruptions*)

Let me tell you that, in five years, you have not done anything yet. These people are still staying in Mare Chicose. What have you done for five years? They are still there!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was saying that we are providing for the first dedicated facility for storage or disposal of hazardous wastes. We need more details on the location. We need to know which technology is going to be used, and how it is going to be handled.

The concept of eco-village - I have said it - is also a very valuable one. But, why is it only limited to coastal villages? Eco-villages mean only coastal villages? Why can't Chamarel be an eco-village? Why can't Grande Rivière Sud Est be an eco-village? Why can't Crève Cœur be an eco-village? Why can't Pamplemousses be an eco-village? Why eco-villages should only be limited to coastal regions?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me conclude. I am sure everybody is waiting for this moment. This Budget is above all to bail out the private sector, again at the expense of the sufferings of a large proportion of the population. Bridging the social and economic issue did not take place.

There is total absence of structural reforms governing Government spending. It has been a mere juggling economic exercise than a Budget for recovery. It has strong political undertones, with repeated references to 2005 rather than the present year. *Le ministre n'est pas là ; je lui aurais suggéré : regarder dans le pare-brise est nettement plus clair que de regarder dans le rétroviseur.*

M. le président, le mot de la fin. Il est nécessaire d'installer des radars automatiques pour ramener à la raison le présent ministre des finances qui roule trop, trop vite sur l'autoroute de la finance en direction du grand patronat, écrasant sur son passage les rêves de tout un peuple.

Merci, M. le président.

(10.08 p.m.)

Mr J. Von-Mally (Fourth Member for Rodrigues): M. le président, il nous a été donné de comprendre que c'est le dernier budget de ce présent gouvernement, vu que les élections générales se profilent à l'horizon.

During the few years of this mandate, my running mate, hon. Christian Léopold, and I have been trying to make quite a few proposals to Government gearing towards a better society, better relations between Rodrigues and Mauritius and the other islands, which form part of our archipelago republic. Sometimes, some of these proposals have been taken on board. Fair enough! But, many proposals have been put aside or sometimes ignored.

M. le président, dans ces propositions, nous avons beaucoup parlé des besoins de base de Rodrigues. Je vais parler surtout de Rodrigues, parce que la plupart des orateurs ont parlé de *mainland Mauritius*. On a donné des propositions concernant les besoins de base de Rodrigues. Dans ce dernier budget, on s'attendait - j'ai bien écouté l'honorable Spéville qui a parlé dans le même sens que nous, et je le félicite - à ce que Rodrigues ait une attention particulière. D'autant plus qu'en juillet, le Premier ministre - comme l'a si bien dit l'honorable Léopold - nous avait promis qu'en décembre il essayera de faire quelque chose de spécial et donner une attention particulière à Rodrigues, *as far as big projects to be done there are concerned*. Je me rappelle du *late Cardinal Margéot who said that Rodrigues is a very special case and should be treated accordingly*.

On a besoin de quoi, M. le président ? Les besoins de base ! Quels sont-ils ? Premièrement, il y a le problème d'eau et le problème de chômage. Quand il y a un problème de chômage à Rodrigues, le problème est transféré à Maurice parce que les chômeurs viennent à Maurice. C'est normal! Si on concentre tout le développement sur *mainland Mauritius*, on concentre aussi tous les problèmes sur *mainland Mauritius*. *That's why we have always said that it is very important to make optimum use of all the islands forming part of the Republic of Mauritius, which comprise of two million square kilometres of sea*. Maurice n'est pas seulement la petite île Maurice; elle comprend un territoire de deux millions kilomètres carrés, avec des îles. Il faut qu'il y ait un développement harmonieux dans toutes les îles.

M. le président, j'ai écouté le ministre de Rodrigues parler il y a plus de deux heures de cela. Quand il a parlé de Rodrigues, il a dit: on a aidé et on est en train d'aider Rodrigues. Il y a le Maurice Ile Durable Fund et le Food Security Fund. The social component of the Budget is very good. There is no quarrel about that. Les décisions qui ont été prises pour

aider les pauvres dans bien des cas sont bonnes. Ce serait malhonnête de ma part de ne pas le reconnaître. Mais ce qu'on voulait et ce qu'on a toujours proposé, c'est qu'au moins il y ait un développement majeur à Rodrigues. On ne parle pas de méga projets comme il y a à Maurice. A Maurice, par exemple, il y a des projets qui coûtent R 11 milliards pour l'aérogare de Plaisance. Il y a des projets de plusieurs milliards pour les routes. Il y a à peu près 600 kilomètres de route qui vont être asphaltées ou réasphaltées. On parle de milliards ! Mais, à Rodrigues, on aurait pu faire un effort de commencer au moins un gros projet à l'échelle de Rodrigues. On aurait pu prévoir des fonds pour l'asphaltage d'au moins 20 km de route. Et cela, on ne l'a pas vu pendant ces cinq ans. Il faut dire les choses telles qu'elles sont.

On s'attendait à ce qu'on commence la construction de l'aéroport. J'ai dit à l'honorable Xavier Duval qu'il y a le Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam *Airport* à Maurice et le Sir Gaëtan Duval *Airport* à Rodrigues. Ces deux grands personnages étaient aimés de tous les mauriciens ; ils étaient connus dans le monde. Il ne faut pas que l'aéroport Sir Gaëtan Duval soit un tout petit aéroport comparé à l'aéroport Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. Il faut faire un effort, mais malheureusement nous n'avons rien entendu concernant son agrandissement. Tout comme Sir Gaëtan Duval a été d'un apport précieux à Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, l'aéroport Sir Gaëtan Duval aurait pu être un aéroport d'appoint pour l'aéroport Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. C'est cela qu'on appelle faire *optimum use* de notre territoire. Comme je l'ai dit en juillet, quand il y a un cyclone, les avions doivent aller à la Réunion ou à Madagascar alors qu'il y a de la place pour plusieurs aéroports dans notre territoire, et même à Agaléga. Cela pourrait être un très bon *stopover* pour les long courriers, M. le président.

Le port et l'aéroport peuvent devenir des ports et des aéroports d'appoint pour Port Louis et Plaisance. C'est bien ce que l'honorable Dr. David a dit, mais je pense qu'il faut avoir une vision beaucoup plus à long terme. Il ne faut pas regarder seulement les petits projets. Par exemple, quand il a parlé de dragage du port à Rodrigues, ce qui se fait actuellement ne concerne que le petit port de pêche de Pte Monier.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I was reading the Budget, I came across a sentence which is very interesting. Allow me to read it -

“Since 2005, close to Rs1 billion have been invested to improve the daily capacity of water supply.”

Cela concerne uniquement l'île Maurice.

M. le président, si on compare ce besoin de base qu'est l'eau, à Maurice on a l'eau courante tous les jours, alors qu'à Rodrigues tel n'est pas le cas. Ce n'est pas possible pour nous à Rodrigues, en 2009, d'avoir des endroits où le robinet coule une fois par semaine ou une fois par mois. Depuis que nous sommes arrivés au pouvoir à Rodrigues, on essaie, par tous les moyens, de nettoyer les petits barrages. Il y a une centaine de petits barrages et de points d'eau à Rodrigues. On a nettoyé une quinzaine. On a emmené l'honorable Dr. Sithanen ainsi que le Président de la République visiter le barrage de Cascade Pigeon qui est en amont de Port Mathurin. Ce barrage qui est d'une capacité d'à peu près 40,000 mètres cubes vient d'être remis en état, et va aider grandement Port Mathurin. Mais, M. le président, pourquoi ne pas donner à Rodrigues R 200 m. pour résoudre le problème d'eau une fois pour toutes ? Est-ce trop demandé ? On ne dit pas qu'il faut résoudre tous les problèmes d'un seul coup, mais au moins on prend un problème épineux et on le résout. Je ne crois pas qu'on est gourmand quand on demande cela, car c'est une commodité de base. Il y en a qui pousse le ridicule jusqu'à dire : vous avec un budget de R 1.3 milliards, vous pouvez choisir vos priorités ! Mais de ces R 1.3 milliards, il y a un milliard pour payer les fonctionnaires et R 300 m. seulement pour tous les développements de Rodrigues, le développement routier, pour nettoyer les réservoirs, etc.

C'est comme si on nous demandait de confectionner un costume avec du tissus pouvant seulement servir à confectionner un short. On nous dit : Vous avez votre Assemblée Régionale, vous pouvez prendre de l'argent pour cela

(Interruptions)

Zis short trois-quart capave gagné ek sa ; même pas trois-quarts, 'mayo lapatte'. M. le président il faut se rendre à l'évidence ; il ne faut pas qu'on oublie Rodrigues de cette façon-là. Le tourisme est un des piliers de notre économie. On a essayé de diminuer le prix du billet d'avion, et c'est bien. Mais on avait demandé à ce qu'on réduise le billet d'avion pour les autres mauriciens et les rodriguais qui voyagent de Maurice à Rodrigues, et rien n'a été fait dans ce sens. On eu seulement 50% de satisfaction. Pour résoudre le problème du tourisme à Rodrigues de façon définitive et en visant le long terme, il faut construire cet aéroport - on ne peut pas passer par quatre chemins. Il faut agrandir cet aéroport - la piste d'atterrissage de trois kilomètres. On a dit qu'on est en train de faire des études mais, M. le président, cela fait des années depuis que j'entends que des études ont été faites. Il a des experts d'Aéroports de Paris qui sont venus, mais je pense qu'il faut aller vite et ne pas trainer les pieds.

Tous les ministres et membres qui sont allés à Rodrigues sont, je suis sûr, unanimes à le reconnaître. Au moment de l'atterrissement de l'ATR 72, on ne peut pas dire qu'on se sente en sécurité - si vous êtes cardiaque je vous plains. Quelqu'un qui est cardiaque, quand il atterrit à Rodrigues, risque de faire une crise cardiaque. C'est très dangereux. Dès que l'avion touche le sol, le pilote doit freiner à mort ; nous, les députés de Rodrigues, le faisons régulièrement.

(*Interruptions*)

Peut-être qu'on veut nous faire avoir une crise cardiaque, je ne sais pas ! Heureusement qu'on a le cœur assez solide jusqu'à présent, M. le président. Madame la ministre, l'honorable Mme Seebun le sait sûrement, elle qui vient souvent à Rodrigues. M. le président on s'attendait à ce qu'on ait les fonds nécessaires pour le développement de l'aéroport, mais malheureusement on est resté sur notre faim. Pourtant, quand on parle du tourisme, Rodrigues pourrait aider Maurice dans ce domaine - le *Green Tourism*. D'ailleurs, on développe Rodrigues dans ce sens. Ici, on dit que Maurice c'est un plaisir ; à Rodrigues, on dit : « *Rodrigues is the stress-free Island* ». Venez à Rodrigues et laissez votre stress derrière vous. A Rodrigues, on veut développer un *Green Island*. Donc, les touristes qui viennent à Maurice pourront aller faire un saut à Rodrigues pour voir autre chose, et prendre le temps de vivre. A Rodrigues, on prend le temps de vivre ; c'est un des rares pays au monde où on peut le faire. M. le président, si on vend Rodrigues comme cela, il y aura beaucoup de touristes qui viendront. Parce que si on vit pour ne pas vivre, cela ne vaut pas le coup. On court après quoi ? Le pouvoir, l'argent ? Il faut prendre un peu de temps pour vivre, et Rodrigues est la destination tout indiquée pour prendre vraiment le temps de vivre.

M. le président, Rodrigues et Maurice sont deux îles complémentaires. On a des choses à apprendre les uns des autres. On a une culture différente. Dans le passé, on a trop pensé à nos différences au lieu de penser à notre complémentarité. Il y a deux façons de voir les choses. Si on essaye de voir quelle est la complémentarité, comment on peut s'entraider dans le domaine du tourisme, de l'aviation, du port, de l'agriculture, etc., on pourrait faire des merveilles. Il ne faut pas se concentrer seulement sur le petit bout de terre qu'est Maurice. On a parlé de la coupe du monde, on a parlé aussi du domaine sportif. On a parlé des stades qu'on est en train de refaire à Maurice, mais s'il y a un domaine où Rodrigues pourrait aider davantage, c'est le sport. Une des régions de la république où il y a le plus fort potentiel dans le domaine sportif, c'est bien Rodrigues. Mais, savez-vous, M. le président, qu'à Rodrigues, il n'y a qu'un seul gymnase ? Il n'y a pas de stade homologué à Rodrigues. J'en ai parlé au

ministre de la jeunesse et des sports ; je lui ai dit de faire de sorte d'envoyer des techniciens à Rodrigues pour qu'au moins on ait un stade homologué à Rodrigues. Je me rappelle quand l'équipe mauricienne a dû aller jouer contre le Congo à la Réunion. C'était une honte nationale ! Si Rodrigues, à cette époque, avait un stade homologué, le match aurait pu être joué là-bas - et au sein de la république. J'espère qu'on a appris la leçon. Pourquoi ne pas homologuer un terrain, surtout avec la coupe du monde qui arrive ? Il y a des équipes qui pourraient aller faire un saut à Rodrigues. De grandes équipes viendront à Maurice dans le cadre de la coupe du monde. *Some players can say: 'Let us go to the easternmost tip of Africa'. You have come to South Africa, and some people may wish to come to the eastern tip of Africa. And where is this easternmost tip of Africa, Mr Speaker, Sir? That is Rodrigues !* Pourquoi ne pas faire cela ? Combien cela coûterait d'homologuer au moins un terrain à Rodrigues ? J'espère que ce n'est pas trop demander. Il n'est pas trop tard ; on peut encore le faire.

En termes d'infrastructure, M. le président, on a parlé des routes de plusieurs milliards à Maurice, de la réhabilitation de 600 kilomètres de route à Maurice. Je crois qu'il n'est pas trop tard. Je m'attendais à ce que le ministre de Rodrigues dise qu'avec la NDU, Rodrigues allait avoir droit à ne serait-ce vingt kilomètres de route. Comme il n'y a pas de PPS qui s'occupe de Rodrigues, le fonds de la NDU n'est pas mis à notre disposition. Pourtant, M. le président, plus de cinquante pourcent des routes ne sont pas asphaltées à Rodrigues. J'ai entendu le ministre Bachoo dire que la route Terre Rouge-Verdun à Maurice, au coût de 1.8 milliards de roupies, va être construite. Cela m'a fait penser à la route Terre Rouge-Citronnelle de moins de deux kilomètres à Rodrigues, qui n'a jamais vu une couche de bitume, qui n'a jamais été asphaltée. A Terre Rouge, on est en train de construire un collège ; le ministre Bunwaree est venu pour la pose de la première pierre. Mais pourquoi ne pas asphalte ces deux kilomètres de route ? Même la route de Baladirou n'a jamais été asphaltée.

Il y a plusieurs routes à Rodrigues. La NDU a de l'argent, et il y a des PPS qui s'en occupent. A Rodrigues, il n'y a pas de PPS. Donc est-ce que Rodrigues n'a pas droit à cet argent-là ? J'espère que le nécessaire sera fait afin qu'à Rodrigues aussi on puisse asphalte quelques routes et surtout connecter ces routes qui ne l'ont pas été. A Mourouk jusqu'à Montagne Chéri, il y a un kilomètre et demi. Le chemin de Gravier à Mourouk n'a jamais été asphalté. Et le pire, M. le président, quand on parle de *Green Mauritius*, je crois que c'est une très bonne initiative, mais si je comprends bien, on parle ici de *Green Archipelago*, *Green Mauritius*, mais pas *Green Island of Mauritius*.

(Interruptions)

On a aussi parlé de réserve marine, et c'est bien. On nous a donné de l'argent pour cela. On remercie le ministre des finances, mais dans le sud de l'île, M. le président, on a la route du littoral. La route a été faite avec les moyens de bord. Il n'y a pas de mur de rétention et, à chaque grosse pluie, il y a des millions de tonnes d'eau et de boue qui dévalent la pente et vont vers la mer. Donc, cela va gâcher le travail qui se fait dans le lagon. Quand on parle de *Green Mauritius*, on parle aussi de la protection du lagon. Je dois remercier le ministre des finances qui a donné la compensation que nous avons proposée aux pêcheurs. Cela part du même principe de protéger le lagon rodriguais. Mais, allons plus loin. Donnez les fonds nécessaires pour qu'on puisse construire ces murs de rétention et réduire l'érosion.

M. le président, mon collègue, l'honorable Christian Léopold, avait parlé de *optical cable*, du câble LION, du câble SAFE. A Rodrigues, il y a de nombreux jeunes qui apprennent l'informatique, qui suivent des cours d'informatique à l'IVTB et ailleurs. Mais les débouchés à Rodrigues il n'y en a pas ; ils doivent venir ici, et l'accès à l'internet à Rodrigues est lent. Le ministre Dulull nous a promis que le câble SegaNet passera par Rodrigues l'année prochaine. M. le président, quand vous étiez ministre, vous l'aviez promis. J'espère que vous pourrez aider dans ce sens-là. Il ne faut pas que Rodrigues soit laissée de côté. Quand il y a les câbles optiques qui passent par Maurice, Seychelles, Comores, Madagascar, Rodrigues est oubliée. *Are we in the same Republic? We must make the people feel that they form part of this Republic. They must not be left aside, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.*

M. le président, concernant les artistes, je crois que le gouvernement a fait un grand effort. J'espère que les artistes de Rodrigues pourront bénéficier de tout cela. Pour conclure - je sais qu'il est tard ; j'ai toujours cette 'chance' de parler à une heure tardive - je dirai qu'après quatorze ans passés au sein de ce parlement, après avoir écouté de nombreux ministres des finances présenter le budget, peut-être que je peux me permettre un petit conseil à ce gouvernement et au prochain qui viendra après les élections.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, it is no time to disorder in this House.

Mr Von-Mally: Ne donnons pas au peuple rodriguais l'impression qu'il est en train de récolter les miettes qui tombent quand Maurice mange du pain. Il ne faut jamais donner cette impression ; sinon, j'ai peur pour l'avenir. On a toujours essayé de montrer le chemin vers de bonnes relations, le chemin qui mènera notre république vers une destinée où tout le

monde pourra dire : ‘je suis fier d’être mauricien’. Il ne faut pas seulement le dire, il faut le faire sentir. Et si on ne le fait pas, je ne veux pas être tenu pour responsable. Je ne veux pas que demain on dise que je savais qu’il fallait faire telle chose et que je ne l’ai pas dit. Je l’ai dit. C’est le dernier budget, et j’espère que cela ne tombe pas dans l’oreille d’un sourd.

Merci, M. le président.

(10.36 p.m.)

Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): M. le président puisque nous sommes entre nous, je vais commencer mon discours. D’emblée, M. le président, j’ai une constatation à faire. De l’aveu même du ministre des finances, le 18 novembre dernier quand il a lu le budget, il est venu admettre que les piliers qui ont permis à l’économie de l’île Maurice de faire face à la crise s’appellent le IRS, le ICT, le *seafood sector*. C’est un budget confession. Je vais juste reprendre ses paroles où il dit -

‘(...)new pillars are emerging. These include the ICT and seafood sectors, the IRS/real estate and energy industries(...’)

On se rappelle tous comment ces piliers avaient été traités d’éléphant blanc pendant la campagne électorale de 2005. C’est une constatation claire et limpide aujourd’hui - *loud and clear* - que ces mêmes éléphants blancs are bringing *résultat lor résultat*. Pour le reste, M. le président, ce budget, le deuxième de cette année, a été *a string of long term promises just like the previous one - plans over 15 years period, roads to be built and so on and so forth*.

M. le président, après chaque *Budget Speech*, je me fais un devoir de sortir ce petit livre. *It is the Government Programme 2005-2010*. Et je me dis toujours que les budgets doivent être des outils pour mener à bien le programme gouvernemental. Unfortunately, the promises in this book are very far from what reality is today. Je me rends compte que très peu de personnes *on the other side of the House take time to read this booklet. They have read it on 29 July 2005. I wonder whether they have read it again*, parce qu’à lire ce document, on a l’impression de lire un tissu de mensonges. M. le président, I am going to pick those parts qui me tiennent à cœur. I am going to give you an example. Let us go to page 16 of the Government Programme, où on parle de la *congestion routière*. On page 16, there was an urgency tag given to the traffic congestion, and since people do not read the book, I will read it again –

“Urgent consideration will be given to the problem of traffic congestion”

Urgent ! *Nous savons tous ce que signifie le mot ‘urgent’.* “*Government will give urgent attention to proposals concerning alternate modes of transport*”. Rien pendant quatre ans ! Nous sommes arrivés à la veille des élections, *and nothing was done concerning traffic congestion*. Et, subitement dans le budget de juin 2009, on parle d’un *string of projects* : *Harbour Bridge, Ring Road. These are loads of promises again*, au coût de milliards de roupies pour résoudre le problème de trafic !

Dans le deuxième budget de cette année, celui qui a été lu le 18 novembre, on rajoute une couche à la page 15, paragraphe 97 : *rehabilitation of Flacq by-pass, the upgrading of Wooton-Belle Rive road, rehabilitation of the Mare d’Albert, the access road to Jin Fei zone, etc.* Cela continue à la page suivante où il y a *the bi-directional lanes in December this year ; St Jean to Pont Colville, bi-directional lanes in February 2010. Pont Colville to Pailles: the broadening of Pont Colville Bridge in April 2010.* Tout cela dans les mois ou les semaines qui viennent. *Caudan roundabout* en janvier 2010, *Belle Rive-Quartier Militaire* en avril 2010. *For four and a half or almost five years, nothing has been done and, in a few months, ‘tou pou faire’, everything is going to be done.*

(Interruptions)

We will wait and see. I will give the four months. We learn as well from this Budget that suddenly, out of the blue - it is like *picking a rabbit out of a hat, c'est de la magie* - after almost five years, a Bus Rapid Transit System has been chosen as the mass transport mode to the tune of Rs5 billion. *Etude* in early 2010, *construction à partir de 2011* and that will be ready by 2013, *probablement pour accueillir le sommet du Commonwealth!*

It is so simple and so sudden. *C'est de la magie! On a attendu toutes ces années*, and then suddenly everything will be resolved on the eve of the elections. I want to see the studies that have been made concerning mass transportation in this country. *Je veux voir les différentes études*, I want them to be tabled here. The people have to know why has a decision been taken without Parliament being taken on board. *Dans tout cela, M. le président, j'ai un sérieux doute. Il y a évidemment confusion entre l'intérêt national de résoudre le problème du transport et l'intérêt de quelques uns pour construire des routes. Comprene que pourra !*

M. le président, every morning I am one of the thousands who gets stuck in the traffic congestion - figures have been thrown about how much this is costing to the country, *et je*

peux vous dire que it is certainly in terms of billions. *Je vais vous raconter une petite histoire, car j'aime toujours raconter des petites histoires, et vous allez constater que c'est vrai.*

(Interruptions)

C'est l'heure d'une histoire pour ne pas vous endormir. Je ne sais pas si le ministre du transport est conscient de cela. Vous savez qu'entre Réduit et Montagne Ory, il y a un gros bouchon de trafic le matin et souvent - *it happens every 10 to 15 days* - il y a une collision *on the right lane just after Pont Colville*. C'est un constat et un fait, et les experts de l'honorable Bachoo lui diront que je dis la vérité. *It always happens at the same place*. Des fois, c'est entre deux voitures, mais des fois c'est un petit carambolage de plus de deux voitures. *It happens regularly, and if he goes and looks at the statistics - I am sure that he will do that tomorrow* - il va se rendre compte que je dis la vérité. Cette petite collision fait que tous les mauriciens qui empruntent cette voie tous les matins rentrent au bureau avec des heures de retard. *Why is that?*

(Interruptions)

Why is that? I will leave to hon. Bachoo to give you the answer, as I am sure that he knows. It is not a story, but a fact. Hon. Bachoo knows what I am talking about.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is so much about traffic congestion, *et on espère que dans les mois à venir, avant les élections*, the problem will be resolved.

Un autre aspect du budget. Un mot que j'ai retrouvé, as it appears eight times in this Budget - and I don't think that I have seen that word even in the previous Budgets - is the word 'lottery' - *la loterie*. Mauritius, as everybody knows, *devient de plus en plus une nation...*

(Interruptions)

I will tell you, please be patient; this is just to keep you awake. This nation *est devenue une nation de zougadères*. *Plusieurs voix se sont élevées* in this House, *et je me souviens en particulier d'une question de l'honorable Dayal sur la prolifération des maisons de jeux*. *A l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de l'hémicycle*, everybody is talking about *les méfaits des jeux*. It appears that Government is not understanding this.

M. le président, faites une expérience. Vous savez qu'à travers Maurice il y a des Tote houses, where every Saturday crowds go to play. Just stand in front of these houses - don't go

in there to play, as it is a bad habit - watch people going in and out. You will realise who are the people who go in there to gamble, *qui sont ces gens qui y vont pour jouer et quelle est leur couche sociale. C'est facile à déterminer, et on n'a pas besoin d'être des experts.* So, what is happening? Those promoters are selling hope to the poor in this country *et en retour* the lottery proceeds are being collected by Government *pour alimenter les caisses de l'Etat.* What is happening, *en effet*, is that *les plus démunis sont taxés.*

La taxe sur la loterie est, en fait, une taxe sur les pauvres. M. le président, je ne vous parle pas du nombre d'enfants qui fréquentent ces endroits-là. La loi est claire. *Below 18 years, one is not supposed to be gambling.* Mais regardez le nombre d'enfants, *under aged, who go into those* maisons de jeux et de toutes les activités collatérales associées au jeu. Les habitants de Quatre Bornes et de Vacoas, M. le président en savent quelque chose. J'ai une recommandation à faire. Je pense que *all sides of the House and even those outside the House will agree with me.* Je pense qu'on peut avoir facilement l'unanimité, comme pour l'alcool et la cigarette. Je demande qu'on abolisse tout ce qui est *advertising on gambling.* Ce matin, j'ai vu qu'il y a un nouveau jeu qui est arrivé cette semaine-ci - les cartes à gratter. Petit à petit, *pac pac is coming back again; we have to get rid of those things.*

M. le président, il y a autre chose qui me tient à cœur, *and which has not been raised by anyone yet.* Ce sont les accidents de travail. On a eu le cas récemment de Jean Marc Lamarque décédé sous les échafaudages à Ebène. Il y a eu le cas de Reza Rajabally à la Jumma Mosque qui est décédé sous un amas de pierres. Un peu plus loin dernière nous, il y a eu le cas de Steve Goura. Certains se souviendront de ce jeune homme de 19 ans, un espoir du *kick boxing*, qui a perdu sa vie dans un ascenseur dans une usine à Pointe-aux-Sables. Il y a trop de morts, *one too many* dans les accidents de travail. J'ai revu dans son intégralité *the Occupational Health and Safety Act* de 2005. Je constate, malheureusement, que mon ami, le ministre Chaumièr n'est pas là; je suis certain qu'il sera d'accord avec moi que les sanctions par rapport à tout cela ne sont pas suffisamment sévères, et que le ministère ne fait pas suffisamment de visites surprises, de visites inopinées sur les lieux de travail pour voir dans quelles conditions les employeurs soumettent les employées. Il y a pas mal de chantiers de construction sur l'île actuellement, et c'est le plus gros employeur. Parmi les trois cas que j'ai cités, deux cas sont directement liés à la construction.

Il y aura des accidents et il y aura encore des morts, malheureusement, si nous ne faisons pas attention. J'ai remarqué que bon nombre d'employeurs ne fournissent pas à leurs employés les équipements de base pour leur protection. J'ai vu l'autre jour dans ma région

où le *sewerage* est en train de battre son plein, une personne avec un marteau piqueur qui portait des savates éponges. Je ne suis pas resté pour voir ce qui s'est passé mais, ce jour-là, il s'en est sorti, *but I am not sure whether he will be lucky next time.*

My friend, hon. Gunness, has canvassed this point earlier, namely about *nos institutions*. Today, our minds go to the Bank of Mauritius and there is only one word to qualify what has happened recently concerning that Bank. Shame! *Une banque qui doit être austère, qui doit commander le respect. Et que voyons-nous ?* Board meetings on the doorsteps of the Bank. I think this is unique in the whole world. *Subitement, des voix du côté de la majorité du gouvernement s'élèvent pour venir dire que le Board qui était sur les perrons* is illegitimate, *qu'il y a des problèmes d'éthique.* Mr so and so, *pour ne pas le nommer, ne peut pas être sur ce Board, parce qu'il est dans le business and will learn secrets about the dollar rate and so on and so forth.* *Mais qu'est-ce qu'on a fait pendant quatre ans alors que ce Board siégeait ? Subitement, à la veille des élections, ce n'est plus bon. Alors, je pose la question : sur tous ces Boards où on a mis tous les petits copains, où se trouve l'éthique ?* C'est la dérive, M. le président. Fin de règne ! Des signaux précurseurs !

Let me say a word about Constituency No. 20. *Je vais commencer par le numéro 20, parce que mon ami, l'honorable Maurice Allet, est resté pour m'écouter, et je le remercie.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order Please!

(Interruptions)

Order Please! I am on my feet. Please hon. Members, I would like to listen to hon. Naidu.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let's stop that! Hon. David! I am on my feet, please. I expect each and everyone to keep quiet. When I am on my feet, everyone keeps quiet. I will give my ruling. I would like hon. Naidu to continue with his speech. Thank you.

Mr Naidu: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, on both sides of the House. Hon. Naidu, please continue with your speech.

Mr Naidu: Lors de mes interventions sur le *Budget Speech* depuis que ce gouvernement est arrivé au pouvoir, je l'ai répété et je le redis aujourd'hui que, depuis juillet 2005, la pendule du développement s'est arrêtée dans la circonscription numéro 20. L'honorable Allet est venu, est parti, est revenu, et il est reparti. Peut-être qu'il reviendra ! On ne sait jamais...

(*Interruptions*)

My colleagues are not happy about it. Let's hope now that he is on that side of the House, he will have an eye on the needs of the constituency. *A ce propos, je me posais la question : qui est le PPS responsable de la circonscription numéro 20 ?*

(*Interruptions*)

Mo pou rapporte toi là !

(*Interruptions*)

I will tell him...

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Naidu: I promise that I will tell the end of that story. *J'espère que la présence de l'honorable Allet...*

(*Interruptions*)

Pou correct ? Nou ava guetté ! Now a word – *puisque certains veulent que je parle de la circonscription numéro 8.*

(*Interruptions*)

I have to admit that hon. Dayal has done quite a good job in Constituency No. 8. Let's call a cat a cat. Il y a un 'mais' ! Unfortunately, I think he has been putting all his eggs in one basket. I think he should share that cake more equitably within the constituency. He knows what I am talking about. Il y a *quelques régions qui sont* still starving. I heard the word 'Beau Bois'. I want to say a word about the village hall in Beau Bois.

M. le président, ce que je vais dire est très important. Earlier, during the day, I asked a question about the condition of the village hall in Beau Bois. In his reply, the Minister of Local Government had this to say: "I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that the Beau Bois Village Hall is in good condition". You know the rest of the story - for those who were here. *Donc, j'ai fait ma petite enquête. Tout de suite, je suis parti voir*

le village hall. J'ai pris des photos. J'en ai une en ma possession. What does 'good condition' mean? It is written Beau Bois Village Hall. The water tank is upside down. The TV antenna looks like a toothbrush. *Il y a une rampe où une personne est tombée une fois et s'est cassée le pied.* I would like every Member of the House to have a look at it, *et de dire à la Chambre, honnêtement*, whether this is a village hall in 'good condition'. *Si vous n'êtes pas convaincus, vous n'avez qu'à aller voir.* I am going to table this picture. *La Chambre a été induite en erreur.*

(*Interruptions*)

Laissez-moi continuer! You will have an opportunity to make a speech later.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Chief Whip, please! You are not being given way. You are not being given the floor.

Mr Naidu: No! Hon. Dayal, honestly, I will give you the photograph, and I'll ask you to go there. Let me add, I am sure...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Naidu, please address the Chair. Thank you.

Mr Naidu: This is one of the cases where I mentioned earlier that *le gâteau est mal partagé dans la circonscription numéro 8. Le petit village de Beau Bois, le parent pauvre de la circonscription.* Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I have made that point clear.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now conclude. I am happy that this side of the House is applauding. For this Government - since I was talking about gambling earlier - *les jeux sont faits. Rien ne va plus!* The term is over, the people have not forgotten the many promises that have been made to win elections - I'll just read a few; *les dix mesures radicales.*

(*Interruptions*)

As I said earlier, that they have forgotten this. *Cela vient de la circonscription numéro 19. Cela a été distribué par l'honorable Rama Valayden.* I have got it from him. *Je prends un ou deux exemples. Voilà ce que cela nous dit -*

'Abolition des impôts sur les revenus pour les salariés touchant moins de R 25,000.'

(*Interruptions*)

Allez faire le calcul, et dites moi combien de personnes paient encore la taxe ! Zot pé rêver ! Arrête rêver ! The truth is out there !

‘Adoption of the Equal Opportunity Act’ pour faire respecter l’égalité!

(Interruptions)

That’s a good one.

‘Réduction du nombre de conseillers du gouvernement ; réduction du gaspillage dans les services publics ; introduire une autoroute à trois voies ; l’entrée nord et sud de Port Louis : construire un tunnel.’

On attend encore pour voir le bout du tunnel. This is what was promised. *J’ai un papier avec moi, cela aussi a été distribué en juillet 2006. C’est écrit –*

‘Joyeux anniversaire de l’Alliance sociale.’

Il y a une photo du ministre des finances, et on parle du bilan –

‘Changement : ‘R 135 de compensation ; retire subside lor diriz, la farine.’.

C’est écrit en créole. Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

‘Rasse di pain zenfan lékol, tax lor lumpsum, tax lor terrain et lacaz malrés, tax lor l’intérêt dans la banque.’.

All this still exists, and the people will not forget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is time to go back to the polls.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is getting late. I wanted to say a few words about *le secteur de l’éducation*, but I am sure that my friend, hon. Yatin Varma, will have a lot to say about that sector.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(11.08 p.m.)

Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the Budget 2010 highlights the achievements of the Social Alliance Government, led by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, and sets the stage for a modern green Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I come to the gist of my intervention, I would like to reply briefly to hon. Members on the other side of the House. First of all, hon. Dowarkasing spoke about only one economic miracle, which was created by the MSM. Mr Deputy

Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member should realise that, at the time the MSM was in Government in 1983, it was in alliance with the Labour Party, and it actually won the 1983 general elections with the support of the Mauritius Labour Party.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam was still alive at that time. He campaigned for that alliance. Sir Gaëtan Duval was still alive, and they campaigned together. Whatever progress, whatever development was done during that period, was done in alliance with the Mauritius Labour Party, in alliance with the PMSD.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Dowarkasing, time and again, had that obsession to criticise the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. I don't know what he has against the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. He should realise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Budget 2010 and the previous Budgets are all Budgets of the Social Alliance Government. We are all part and parcel of that. We should bear the responsibility, and we are doing so. The hon. Member, on the other side of the House, should realise that. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all criticisms directed towards one person in the Government does not mean that he is criticising only that person and cajoling the others. This is not true, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! He has said that we have used public funds to bail out the private sector. Again, this is not true! The Additional Stimulus Package has been given to companies in difficulty on loan, and they are supposed to give back that money when the time comes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he has said that no NHDC houses have been constructed. I don't know in which world he is living. In my own constituency, in Ville Noire, so many houses have been built recently. So many houses have been built in Beau Vallon, Rivière des Anguilles, New Grove, and Bambous.

As far as poverty is concerned, the hon. gentleman on the other side of the House, the Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands, said that this Labour-led Government has not done anything for poverty. Do we have to take lessons from him, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? The Mauritius Labour Party, which has laid the foundation of this country, the Mauritius Labour Party, which has set up the Welfare State, the very Mauritius Labour Party, which has given free education, has given free health service, has set up the pension scheme in this country! Should we take lessons from the hon. Member on the other side of the House? I beg to differ, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

He said that African countries are better than Mauritius. Reference was made to Malawi and Uganda. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the Human Development Report of 2009, the HDI value for Mauritius is 0.804, life expectancy at birth: 72.1, adult literacy rate: 87.4, combined gross enrolment ratio: 76.9, and GDP per capita: 11,296 for Mauritius.

Regarding Malawi, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, HDI value is 0.493, life expectancy at birth: 52.4, adult literacy rate: 71.8, combined gross enrolment ratio: 61.9, GDP per capita: 761.

Regarding Uganda, HDI value is 0.514, life expectancy at birth: 51.9, adult literacy rate: 73.6, combined gross enrolment ratio: 62.3, GDP per capita: 1,059.

What a farce, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Misleading the House!

Now, a few remarks on what hon. Von-Mally has said. He has said that Rs1.2 billion is allocated per year for Rodrigues. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, earlier this year, we had the opportunity to visit Rodrigues with the Public Accounts Committee. What did we see, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? We visited a theatre where the leg spacing, a normal adult cannot even sit. In the same building, where there was supposed to be a video projector, there was not even a wall to be able to play the film on that wall. It was all windows everywhere.

Secondly, we visited a reservoir, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. No provisions had been made to fill in the reservoir with water. Only the reservoir had been built. With regard to the Director of Audit's Report on the swimming pool in Rodrigues, who can forget that? Yes, we agree that all the islands surrounding mainland Mauritius should be made part and parcel, but this does not mean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we should squander money. This is blatant, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. All the members of the Public Accounts Committee who visited Rodrigues took cognizance of what is happening there.

Briefly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me reply to hon. Naidu about the three pillars, IRS, ICT and seafood hub. I think hon. Dr. Burty David earlier on replied to that, namely the remarks made by the Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, about the ICT sector, and that the seafood hub was set up by our first Prime Minister, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. He was the first one to set up a Ministry for Fisheries, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member made mention about the Government Programme 2005-2010 and the number of projects that he, in his opinion, had not been materialised.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also read this Government Programme very often. A number of measures have been taken by this Government, such as –

- (i) installation of CCTV;
- (ii) recruitment of police officers;
- (iii) the Equal Opportunities Act;
- (iv) the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal;
- (v) amendment of the Prevention of Corruption Act;
- (vi) the Empowerment Programme;
- (vii) the construction of the Jeetoo Hospital, and
- (viii) the introduction of the DNA Bill, among others.

All these have been materialised, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. He said that the truth is out there. Not true! He campaigned in No. 8. The truth was there, and the electorate gave its verdict, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, early this year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming to the gist of my intervention, the past years have been marked by clearing the economic mess left by the previous Government and coping with rising oil prices, soaring food prices, 36% cut in the price of sugar, dismantling of the Multi-Fibre Agreement and the worse economic recession in several years. In these times of turmoil, enlightened leadership was needed, and this was provided by the Prime Minister, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and the Government as a whole.

(Interruptions)

The US Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and former US presidential candidate, Mrs Hillary Clinton, recently stated –

“Mauritius has taken steps in recent years to attract investment by enacting reforms that protect investors and promote business. The people of Mauritius have been the primary beneficiaries of these reforms”

(Interruptions)

This is precisely what Hillary Clinton had to say on the reforms brought about by this Government.

I stand in this august Assembly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, due to the trust and confidence placed in me by the constituents of Plaigne Magnien and Mahebourg.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 2000-2005 was marked by the lethargy of the MSM/MMM Government in the constituency. 2005-2009 has seen the materialisation of several projects, but I should concede, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that much more could have been achieved.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this very Assembly, more than two and a half years back, I made an appeal for unity in the constituency during my intervention on the Budget. But, unfortunately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my appeal turned to deaf ears. On the one hand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was the support of the Prime Minister, of my good friend, hon. Richard Duval, PPS for the constituency, and many Ministers, but, on the other hand, there was back-stabbing and inner bickering in the constituency.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, we are having the debates on the Budget Speech. I will have to insist that you stay within the realm of the Budget. Whatever back-stabbing is not an issue for here. I would like you to stay within the realm of the Budget. This is my ruling, and I will be very strict about it.

Mr Varma: I abide by your ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I was only saying that...

The Deputy Speaker: I don't want to know.

Mr Varma:...with more unity, much more development could have been done in the constituency. This is my point. I have made my point. My next sentence would have been: I'll stop to that, and I sincerely hope that the matter is sorted out in the appropriate forum.

Nevertheless, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will take the time of the House to elaborate a number of projects which have been materialised in the constituency. I will start with the village of Mare Tabac. There has been the rehabilitation of the health centre, the improvement of infrastructure of the school, surfacing of a number of roads and construction of drains.

Mare d'Albert, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has seen development in many sectors. We have completed the swimming pool project and, more importantly, the road linking Mare d'Albert to Gros Bois would be a reality in the coming months. I will like here like to thank sincerely hon. Anil Bachoo. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can still recall the day when I went to his office and made a sincere appeal to him that there are two roads that need surfacing in the constituency. The first one being the Mare d'Albert-Gros Bois link road, and the second one being the road linking the villages of Carreau Esnouf and Desplaces. And, through his

intervention, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the projects is being materialised and, I am sure, with his support, the second one also will be materialised.

The Multi-Purpose Complex of Mare d'Albert, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has been approved by the Grand Port/Savanne District Council, and will be a reality in the months to come. I am grateful and thankful to hon. Lormus Bundhoo for the number of projects which have been materialised in the constituency. And, more recently, the project of a health track has been approved in Trois Boutiques, and the people of that locality are ever grateful to him, his Ministry, and the Government as a whole for that project.

I will make a sincere appeal, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to the hon. Minister of Agriculture concerning two sugar estate camps in the constituency. The first one being in Union Vale, and the second one being in Mon Trésor Mon Désert. He has been very helpful throughout, and I am sure, with his good offices, these two sugar estate camps will be eliminated within the shortest possible delay.

There are few more projects that need to be implemented, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in Trois Boutiques. There is a need for a new village hall, a football ground in Plein Bois, and the problems being faced by the watercress growers of Carreau Esnouf need to be solved.

Concerning Mon Trésor Mon Désert, if the IRS project goes ahead in Le Bouchon, this will change the whole area and will create jobs in the locality. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the previous Government promised to construct a social hall in Le Bouchon but, unfortunately, nothing was done. This Government has purchased land for the construction of the social hall in Le Bouchon. Even small projects like construction of a bus shelter in a village like Desplaces was not done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Fortunately, with this Government, this has been done. Concerning the opening of a health centre in Camp Carol, this also was not done.

Concerning a number of projects in Plaine Magnien, land has been purchased for the construction of a market, land has been purchased for the extension of the Muslim cemetery, traffic lights have been installed between lower and upper Plaine Magnien, through the able intervention of the Deputy Prime Minister and, more importantly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the project of the second phase of the airport will be a reality in the months to come. There is also the project of the airport city, which has been raised in this august Assembly on a number of occasions, and I do hope that this project becomes a reality and that the Government supports it throughout, so that this can help development in the constituency.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot forget the villages of Beau Vallon and Mahebourg. Concerning Beau Vallon, again, through the able intervention of competent authorities, a number of projects have been achieved. There was the construction of the garden on the main road of Beau Vallon; construction of the new social hall at Cité La Chaux, and the surfacing of roads at Camp Baille. In Mahebourg, the tourist village will be a reality in the near future, and the Social Welfare Hall has been completed. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we can't forget that the previous Government closed the Mahebourg Hospital. We took the commitment to reopen it. We did precisely that on achieving power. The Harry Latour football ground was closed for a number of years, and this very Government reopened it once assuming office.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, soon we will have a new village hall in Petit Bel Air. Drains have been constructed in Ville Noire, and I do hope that, in the very near future, we will have the renovation of the sub hall at Ville Noire, and the flooding problem is solved in Grand Bel Air.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the field of agriculture, this Government has taken up the challenge to convert the sugar industry into a cane industry, and has successfully done so. We knew that, with the challenges and the price cut in the price of sugar, we had to reinvent the sugar industry, and Omnicane, which is found in the South, is precisely the type of factory for the future, as far as the cane industry is concerned. This has been made possible, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, due to the able intervention of the hon. Prime Minister, after the historic deal was struck with the MSPA. He gave an indication of what sort of reform he wanted to have in the sugar sector.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a landmark decision has been taken in this Budget, namely the setting up of the Cane Democratisation Fund. A Cane Democratisation Fund is in line with the vision of this Government for democratisation of the economy. Precisely, this was a pledge that we took when campaigning at the 2005 general elections: that we democratise the economy; we democratise each and every sector of the economy. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are not the type that will give a lot to the people who already have, but we have to share whatever revenue, resources that exist in the country.

In the last Budget, the Government set up a Food Security Fund. I have here in mind, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the small planters, the small sugarcane planters, and the small vegetable planters who faced a lot of difficulties. The high price of fertilisers on the one hand,

the second is the high cost of labour, and the third is that they cannot afford mechanisation. A planter who has got one, two or three acres of land faces a lot of difficulties and, with the setting of this Fund, we are in a position to say that these small planters should benefit from all these facilities to be able to survive. The Food Security Fund again should cater for animal breeders, for the persons who rear cows as regards milk production. We are not speaking about those who do it on a large scale; we are talking about the small cow breeders in my constituency as well as around the island, where there are a few. But these people should be empowered. They have to be given all the facilities to be able to give the milk production that is needed, so that we become self sufficient in this aspect, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Food Security Fund again will undoubtedly give support to the fish breeders. As you know, the tourist industry consumes a lot of fish, prawns and other seafood, and this precisely should be the programme of the Food Security Fund, and I am sure that, with the able person who is at the head of the Ministry of Agriculture, this will be the case.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the production of flowers like roses and anthurium for export, again I will make a humble appeal, as far as these planters are concerned, as far as the honey bee keepers are concerned, to the hon. Minister, to be able to extend all possible support to those people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning the young farmers club - I can still recall a few months back I put a question in Parliament - we should inculcate that farming culture in our youngsters. At school, we should have the programme. Long time back, when I was in school, we had gardens, which we used to look after; we used to have animals at the backyard. I will make a humble appeal for competent authorities to see to it that these clubs are set up in many of the colleges, schools throughout the island.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is one thing I really feel strongly about is the prevention of cruelty against animals. Time and again, I have raised the question in Parliament. I am totally against the exportation of monkeys for the purpose of vivisection. We all know that it has not been happening since we have assumed office. It has been happening since a number of years, but I make a humble appeal to the Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it sees to it that this practice stops as soon as possible.

The second point about prevention of cruelty against animals is deer hunting with hounds. Again, in the United Kingdom, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has been banned, because the cruelty that is caused to the deers when they are being hunted by the hounds is

terrible; the trauma that they face. Again, I make a humble appeal, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that Government sees to it that deer hunting with hounds is banned.

Concerning the control of stray dogs, we should have an integrated programme, as we want to attract two million tourists in Mauritius, we want to have a clean country, and it is not possible, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that a person, a tourist for that purpose, comes to Mauritius and should fear that, when he walks on the street, he can get bitten by a stray dog.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the environment has attracted much of attention in this Budget, as it is mentioned on the cover of the Budget Speech - *Sustaining Green Mauritius*, and I know my good friend, hon. Lormus Bundhoo, is the right person in the right place. Rs240 m. has been voted for the embellishment, cleaning and upliftment of riverbanks. For riverbanks, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is mentioned clearly at page 33. But what about the rivers? I'll make a humble appeal to the Minister. The laws are here to control the industrial and domestic wastes that get dumped in the rivers, but there should be an integrated programme to clean all the rivers in Mauritius. Long time back, we used to have fish in all our rivers, we used to have aquatic plants in all the rivers. Now, it is scarce. So, why not have a programme, whereby we introduce fish like 'berry rouge' in the rivers, we put aquatic plants in the rivers, so that it regains the cachet it had long time back?

At page 32, mention is made of tree planting campaign. There was a programme, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which was started by the previous Government - 'Plant A Million Trees Programme'. It was a very good programme. We should go in that direction. We should make Mauritius greener.

Concerning Ébène development, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is my humble opinion that it has become a concrete jungle. There are no trees around there. We should have a programme that each and every building that comes up in Ébène should have an integrated programme, so that it is surrounded by trees and the place is not like it is now; it is like a concrete jungle, not in line with *Maurice Île Durable*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, time and again, I have raised the issue in Parliament - I even raised the issue at adjournment time - namely control of smoke emissions. Smoke emissions from motor vehicles, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is not correct; it is inconceivable. We are speaking about a greener Mauritius, we are speaking about *Maurice Ile Durable*, but vehicles emit smoke on the motorways everyday, and it is not in line with the vision of a modern country that we have. I do hope that the necessary equipment is repaired as soon as possible

because I was told, following a question put in Parliament, that the apparatus that measures the smoke emissions was defective. I do hope that this is repaired as soon as possible, so that we are able to control smoke emission better.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a few weeks back, I raised the issue of burning of sugarcane prior to the harvest. This also causes a lot of pollution, and I'll make a humble request to the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Agriculture, so that there is a report on the impact caused by the burning of sugarcane prior to the harvest on the environment, and also corrective measures should be taken.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Budget speaks of knowledge hub at page 24. Mention is made of Apollo Bramwell Nursing School, Birla Institute of Technology, *École de Médecine* Louis Pasteur, Vatel and JSS Academy. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have seen what has happened recently regarding the exams of the Council of Legal Education. You also are very much aware how these courses are run. The persons who are in charge of the Council of Legal Education are trying their best, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but we should move with time. It is high time that we have a proper faculty, either at the University of Mauritius or it is an independent body. But there should be a proper institute, a proper faculty for dispensing courses that lead to the Bar Vocational Course. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have followed the course as well, and we know how it is run. It is run early morning, the students stay in Port Louis for the whole day and then they have courses in the afternoon at three or four o'clock. The courses are dispensed either by practising barristers or magistrates or judges. If it happens that the barristers, judges or magistrates have other commitments, the courses get postponed; therefore, the students have stayed in Port Louis for a whole day to do nothing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, furthermore, it is a pity that a course leading to a professional qualification is run in a single class, with no amenities. It is not even a specialised class to run this type of courses. They have no manuals, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. They don't even have a syllabus. They don't even have past exam papers to refer to, to prepare their forthcoming examinations, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is not in line with what we have in mind to create a knowledge hub in Mauritius. I'll make an appeal to Government, so that this is done within the shortest possible delay, and that a faculty either at the University of Mauritius or a specialised institute is set up for dispensing the Bar of Vocational Course in Mauritius.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the SSR Medical College does not do honour to the name of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam in the way courses are dispensed. My good friend, hon. Dr. Hawoldar, has raised the matter on a number of occasions. He was right, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and he is still right in what he thinks and whatever information that he has on that SSR Medical College. It is only business, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We have seen recently that students had paid their fees to follow the course, and now it is being imposed on them to pay additional sums of money to get their qualification. This is not proper, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We should have either a proper faculty of medicine at the University of Mauritius or have an institute that is worthy of the name of a medical college.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while intervening on the Budget earlier this year, hon. Nita Deepalsing, hon. Bodha and I raised the problem of private tuition. Hon. Gunness also raised it. It was earlier this year. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I again reiterate what I stated. True it is to say that we have free education in this country. We have got free transport to go to college. We have got free transport to go to university, but Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has become a fashion in this country now. Every single student takes private tuition for every single subject. But this defeats the very essence of free education. This defeats, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the very essence of giving free transport to go to school, to college or to university. We should find a solution to that problem. It is a very big problem. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, students in standards III, IV take private tuition, and if one student does not take private tuition from the teacher, he is singled out. There should be a solution to that problem. It cannot be that, in each and every subject, a child has to take private tuition. You take private tuition in a subject in which you are weak. It should be the practice. It cannot be that the students spend all their precious time, the most important time of their life where they should develop, they should have extracurricular activities, they should participate in activities like plays, public speaking and everything, in private tuition. There should be a solution to that problem, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There should be also the improvement of the teacher to student ratio. This should be an ongoing process, so that there can be better supervision of students.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the field of law and order, much has been achieved. We have come a long way; the prisons were in a mess, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. As a practising barrister, I have had the opportunity on several occasions to visit my clients in prisons, and the prisoners could have access to the barristers or to persons coming to visit their relatives in the new wing of Beau Bassin prison. It was such in a mess, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with

HIV, cases of sodomy, drugs. The prison was infested, and now we can see that there is much order in the prisons.

There has been the installation of the CCTV cameras in Flic en Flac, and that will be extended to Quatre Bornes, Port Louis and Grand' Baie.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been recruitment of many police officers. They can be seen clearly on the streets everywhere now, and at different police stations doing their job.

One milestone, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the introduction in this House of the DNA Bill, that is, in a very near future, we will have forensic investigation for criminal matters. This was not the case previously. This will add to the credibility and weight of evidence that is produced in Court.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my very first intervention in Parliament was with regard to the setting up of an independent body to deal with the complaints on the police. As things stand now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the police that investigate on the police. The CIB office in Rose Hill has got some police officers posted therep and someone who has got a complaint against the police goes to complain with the police against the police. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I make a humble appeal to the Minister of Finance, to the Attorney General so that this institution is set up as soon as possible.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the Judges' Rules are concerned, I have spoken with hon. Valayden on numerous occasions on that, and I do hope that, in the very near future, we have got a legislation like the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) in the United Kingdom, which clearly elaborates the rights of suspects, and it is not like the Judges' rules. The Judges' rules, as you are well aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, do not have force of law they are left there only for reference.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we go in all the police stations around the island, one cannot see exactly where the rights of suspects are indicated. I remember I put a question a few years back to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister and, on the next day, all police stations printed out on the computer the rights of suspects and just put it on the wall. But with time, we can no longer find them. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I make a humble appeal to Government that, at least, the rights of suspects are clearly indicated at all police stations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been speaking since quite some time now about the Media Commission. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in England, we have the Press Complaints Commission, and I do not see any reason why we should not have a Media Commission in

Mauritius. True it is that we have got the media laws, the defamation laws, but these laws in the Civil Code date back to centuries, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We have had the able contribution of Geoffrey Robertson who has written a book on media law. He is one of the authorities and he has come to Mauritius and produced a report. I believe the draft of the legislation also is ready. Why not introduce that piece of legislation in the National Assembly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and provisions made in this Budget so that we set up a Media Commission?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the Judiciary is concerned, it is worth noting that the Government is going ahead with the E-Judiciary Project, and four additional judges will be appointed. I would like to congratulate the Chief Justice for the number of reforms that are being undertaken in the Judiciary.

A Commercial Court, a Court for Road Traffic Accidents and a Family Court have been set up. The number of courtrooms at the New Court House has been increased. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a Family Court has been set up, but we should set up a Family Court with a supporting staff. The Family Court cannot exist by itself with two judges of the Supreme Court, and they just try cases. We should have a supporting team. We should have psychologists attached to these Courts, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The location of those Courts should be where it is conducive for children to have access. It is good that we have set up the Family Court but, with time, we should see how we can relocate it in better premises, with a supporting staff.

As far as the Mackay Report is concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, mention is made of the Court of Appeal. It is high time that we set up a Court of Appeal, because the judges who sit now at the Supreme Court cannot be made to sit on appeal as well. They are brother judges after all. They sit together in certain cases, and then they have to sit on appeal against a judgement of their brother judge after that. This is not proper, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I believe the Court of Appeal should be set up as soon as possible.

A few years back, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, digital recording was introduced in our Courts. Unfortunately, this has not been extended to all Courts around the island. We can still find magistrates writing all the proceedings in Court. The magistrate has to hear witnesses who normally depone in Creole; he has to translate what they say in English and write it down, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When the magistrate has finished doing that, he or she has to write the judgement. In a modern country, this cannot be accepted, Mr Deputy

Speaker, Sir. We have got the infrastructure, we have set up the infrastructure in all the different Courts but, unfortunately, due to non-usage, many of them have been broken as well. The hon. Attorney General has been at the Bar for a number of years and he knows what I am talking about.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, three Courts have to be renovated and extended: the Bambous Court, the Mapou Court and the Souillac District Court. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is inconceivable that, at the Mapou Court, they have got two magistrates and a single Court with a magistrate who sits, and the witnesses, the police officers and members of the public have to wait outside in the yard. This is not possible, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! There is one courtroom, one magistrate; the other magistrate is in the chambers of the magistrate, the public is outside, and witnesses are called from the yard.

The Bambous and Souillac Courts, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, have outlived their time, and it is high time to renovate and extend these Courts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a concluding note - I know it is very late...

(Interruptions)

The Labour Party has over the years been at the root of the foundation of the island, and now, with its partners in the Social Alliance, it is at the basis of its modernisation. The Airport Project will soon be a reality. The Jin Fei Project is underway. The Highlands Project will be a reality in the future. The number of infrastructural works being undertaken by the Government and the number of roads that are being constructed are a clear indication of the country we want to construct, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

We promised in 2005. The electorate placed their trust in us; we have delivered on those promises. The Labour Party Alliance will win again, and Dr. Navin Ramgoolam will be Prime Minister again after the general elections. Long live the Labour Party! Long live Mauritius!

Thank You, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the debates.

Mr Mohamed rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I bet to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Thursday 03 December 2009 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Gokhool rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTER RAISED ON ADJOURNMENT

PIERRE & MARIE CURIE UNIVERSITY, FRANCE - MEDICAL STUDENTS

Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): M. le président, merci de m'accorder la parole.

(Interruptions)

Très rapidement, je veux être la voix de quelques étudiants en médecine en France, particulièrement les étudiants qui sont actuellement à l'Université de Pierre et Marie Curie.

M. le président, les étudiants qui ont fait leur première année en médecine à Maurice se trouvent en difficulté, parce qu'après la quatrième année ils n'ont pas le droit de faire leur internat en France. Ils sont obligés de retourner à Maurice et, là, quand ils retournent, ils font face à pas mal de difficultés. Il se chuchote même maintenant qu'il n'y a plus d'arrangement entre Louis Pasteur - on a mentionné l'Institut Louis Pasteur dans le budget - et l'Université de Pierre et Marie Curie. On a fait un accord avec Lille, et les étudiants ne savent plus où ils en sont. Ceux qui sont encore à l'Université Pierre et Marie Curie ne savent pas s'ils vont pouvoir faire leur internat ici lorsqu'ils retourneront. Ils ne savent même pas qui va être l'*awarding body* de leur diplôme de médecine. C'est un problème très inquiétant, et pour eux et pour leurs parents, et c'est pour cette raison, M. le président, que je demanderai au ministre concerné de voir où on en est avec l'arrangement. Y a-t-il accord entre l'Institut Louis Pasteur et l'Université de Pierre et Marie Curie ? Ces étudiants ont le droit de savoir où ils en sont pour leur diplôme. Je fais donc un appel au ministre afin que ces étudiants puissent continuer leurs études en toute sérénité et qu'ils retournent mettre leurs compétences au service de notre pays.

Merci, M. le président.

(00:00 a.m.)

The Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Je suis très au courant de ce problème M. le président. Effectivement, il y a un problème, parce que ces enfants sont partis pour une durée d'études assez longue et, en cours de route, il a y eu des problèmes. On est en train d'étudier ce problème.

Effectivement l'Université de Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris, a causé des problèmes aux étudiants. L'organisateur de ces études à Maurice a essayé de trouver une solution et, finalement, il est tombé sur l'Université de Lille. Nous sommes en train de voir le bienfondé de part et d'autre, mais je tiendrai la Chambre au courant de la situation. Je suis tout à fait conscient de l'avenir de ces enfants.

Merci, M. le président.

At 00.02 a.m, the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Thursday 03 December 2009 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

RODRIGUES - TRAINEE POLICE OFFICERS - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/1251) Mr J. R. Spéville (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the recruitment of trainee police officers, both in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues, for the year 2009, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that enlistment in the Mauritius Police Force falls under the purview of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission and is governed by section 13 of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission Regulations 1997. Accordingly, the Commissioner of Police has requested the Disciplined Forces Service Commission to start procedures for the recruitment of 550 Trainee Police Constables. Also in any recruitment exercise, the Disciplined Forces Service Commission is informed that a certain percentage of candidates are to be recruited from Rodrigues.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the recruitment exercise will be completed shortly.

WOMEN - VIOLENCE AGAINST - MEASURES

(No. B/1252) **Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to cases of violence against women, including sexual offences, he will state if Government will consider the advisability of –

- (a) introducing measures to ensure that the criminal justice system, including rules of evidence and procedure, encourages women to testify in Court proceedings regarding violence against them, and
- (b) making provision for tougher punishment of the perpetrators of all forms of violence against women.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that rules of evidence and procedure already exist as concerns the deposition of victims of violence. Accordingly, sections 161A and 161B of the Courts Act respectively provide for proceedings to be held *in camera* in certain situations specially, *inter alia*, to safeguard the welfare and protect the privacy of the victims. I understand that in sexual offences cases, proceedings are almost invariably held *in camera* when the victim deposes.

As far as the use of live video or live television link is concerned, it already exists in relation to bail applications in the Bail Court. A system akin to this will have to be put in other Courts, but this is subject to approval in writing by the Chief Justice, as provided for in section 161A of the Courts Act.

In addition, section 9 of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act 1997 provides that the hearing of any proceedings under the Act to be held *in camera*.

As for part (b) of the question, the Judicial Provisions Act was passed in December 2008 in order to stiffen the penalties in relation to different types of cases of violence against women, including sexual offences, except for the offences of sodomy and sexual harassment.

Furthermore, as Members are aware, a new Sexual Offences Bill is presently being considered by a Select Committee of the House.

In line with the Government Programme 2005-2010 which highlights the need to strengthen the enforcement mechanism of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, further amendments have also been brought to the Act through the Protection from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2007. This law has new provisions for an ‘Ancillary order for

alimony' and harsher penalties for failing to comply with any 'interim order', 'protection order', 'occupation order', 'tenancy order' or 'ancillary order' by -

- increasing the fine to a sum not exceeding Rs25,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years for a first conviction, and
- to a fine not exceeding Rs50,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years for a second or subsequent conviction.

Furthermore, in exceptional cases and having regard to the circumstances, including nature of the offence and the character, mental and psychological conditions of the offender, the Court may order him to attend counseling sessions organised by the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare.

The Protection from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2007 will come into force on a date to be fixed by proclamation. I am informed by the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare that the main stakeholders including the police, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, Court Officers and Probation Officers have already been sensitised on the new legal framework. Rules in line with these new provisions for standardised and flexible handling of cases of domestic violence at Courts are presently under consideration by the Rules Committee of the Supreme Court.

This Government is concerned with the different forms of violence against women and will take all necessary measures to address this problem in a holistic way. The Mauritius Research Council is currently undertaking a national study on Domestic violence at the request of the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare. However, I have requested that Ministry to carry out a further study, particularly with regard to the issue of sexual violence against women. The findings of these studies will enable Government to further reinforce existing policies and legal framework governing this issue.

CITY CENTRE - CRIMINAL OFFENCES - MEASURES

(No. B/1253) Mr S. Soodhun (Fifth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to criminal offences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof committed within the city centre, since January 2009 to date, indicating if measures will be taken to reinforce security thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the city centre comprises the area bounded by the Caudan Waterfront, Port Louis Waterfront, Immigration Square, Seeneevassen Street, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street, Dr Edgar Laurent Street, Labourdonnais Street and Mgr Leen Street. For the period January 2009 to 25 November 2009, the number of criminal cases reported in the city centre is 1836.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the area is serviced by five police stations and two police posts to ensure a visible police presence at strategic locations, as it has high economic activities and a high concentration of people. An operational plan is applied by the police to keep criminal activities under check. Regular patrols are carried out and joint operations are mounted as and when necessary. Furthermore, the police stations have been allocated with additional vehicles to ensure a better and more effective monitoring.

In addition, for the end of year period, the police have put in place a plan, which consists of the reinforcement of front line services by using police personnel employed in administrative sections. The aim is to provide an effective and efficient policing. Targeted actions, such as preventive foot and mobile patrols, vehicle checks, snap roadblocks and intensive speed checks will be reinforced. The support of the Special Mobile Force and the National Coast Guard will be enlisted during that period to increase mobile patrols and vehicles checks.

The measures taken by the police to better protect citizens and to reinforce security in the city centre have resulted in a downward trend in criminal offences from 4,209 cases in 2001 to 3,504 cases in 2008. It is expected that with the installation of CCTV cameras in Port Louis, criminal activities will continue in this downward trend.

MR H. B. – ASSAULT – EDITH CAVELL STREET

(No. B/1254) Mr S. Naidu (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if any statement was given to the Police to the effect that Mr H. B. has been victim of an assault perpetrated by the Public Relations Officer of the State Trading Corporation, on 17 November 2009, at the Edith Cavell Street, Port Louis and, if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 17 November 2009, Mr H.B. reported that he was threatened verbally by a person while he was standing in front of Fon Sing Building at Edith Cavell Street, Port Louis.

Following the declaration of Mr H.B., a Police enquiry was initiated. One Mr P.C, a Public Relations Officer of State Trading Corporation was interviewed and in his statement to the police, he denied having threatened the complainant. However, he admitted having uttered some adverse words against Mr. H.B without any intention to assault him.

The police administered a warning to Mr P.C to refrain from causing any further trouble to Mr H.B and also from approaching the latter. Mr P.C agreed to do so and was allowed to go after the enquiry.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - COMPOSITION

(No. B/1255) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether, in regard to the Human Rights Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to the present composition thereof.

Reply: The Protection of Human Rights Act provides that the National Human Rights Commission shall consist of a Chairperson and three other Members. The term of office of two of the Members has expired, while the third Member has tendered his resignation following his appointment as Chairperson of the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal. Therefore, for the time being, only the Chairperson of the Commission is in office.

Consultations are currently being held at the level of the Prime Minister's Office with the Office of the Solicitor-General and the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission on structural changes to be brought to the National Human Rights Commission with a view to strengthening the efficiency of the Commission. In fact, it is proposed to overhaul the organisational structure of the Commission with the setting up of four distinct divisions within the Commission as follows -

- (i) an Equal Opportunities Division - as the House is aware, the newly enacted Equal Opportunities Act provides that the Equal Opportunities Commission shall be a division of the National Human Rights Commission and shall be headed by the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission ;

- (ii) a Human Rights Division - which will deal with complaints against breaches of fundamental human rights entrenched in Chapter 2 of our Constitution;
- (iii) a Police Complaints Division - which will take over both the work of the Complaints Investigation Bureau of the Police Department and that part of the work of the National Human Rights Commission which deals with complaints against the Police, and
- (iv) a National Preventive Division - which is being created in fulfilment of our obligation arising from the signing and ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The new Division will have the responsibility of visiting any Prison, Police Station or other place of detention to study the living conditions of inmates and the treatment afforded to them.

These proposals will necessitate new legislations as well as amendments to the Protection of Human Rights Act, which are presently being worked out by the Prime Minister's Office and the Office of the Solicitor-General.

The National Human Rights Commission and its different Divisions will be constituted as soon as this whole reorganisation exercise is completed.

I wish to emphasise the fact that the Commission has not become totally dysfunctional because of the vacancies in its membership. In fact, I am informed that the Commission has received 232 complaints from 01 January to 20 November 2009, and the Commission's staff, under the supervision of the Chairperson, has been investigating all the complaints received by gathering evidence, interviewing complainants, recording their complaints, calling for documents from the Police, the Prisons Authorities, Ministries, other Government departments and parastatal bodies, seeking the views of responsible officers on relevant matters, summarising cases and preparing briefs. Where possible, complaints have been disposed of, remedies to problems have been found or complaints redirected to other institutions, for example, to the Ombudsman where the complaints are concerned with maladministration. Many of the complaints received have been disposed of. Preliminary investigations have also been completed in two cases of death in police custody. Where necessary, places of detention have been visited following incidents or to ensure compliance with standards. The Commission has also been conducting awareness campaign with various

section of the population including women, students, Trade Unions, police and public officers and NGOs.

DIEGO GARCIA – MARINE PROTECTED AREA PROJECT

(No. B/1256) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs whether he will state if he has taken cognizance of a document in regard to a project of making of Diégo Garcia a marine protected area and, if so, indicate the stand of Government in relation thereto.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/1247)

LE DAUGUET, SIGNAL MOUNTAIN, ROLAND ARNAUD & CAMP THOREL HEALTH TRACKS - UPLIFTING

(No. B/1274) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit Whether he is aware of the deplorable state of the Le Dauguet, the Signal Mountain, the Roland Arnaud, Rose Hill and the Camp Thorel health tracks and if so, will he state if Government proposes to undertake immediate uplifting works thereat.

Reply: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply made to PQ B/572 on 16 June 2009. I can assure the House that all these sites are maintained regularly by the authorities concerned.

Upgrading works have been carried out at Le Dauguet and Signal Mountain. As recently as in September this year, works for a sum of Rs450,000 have been approved and are ongoing at these two sites.

The promenade Roland Arnaud was set up jointly in the early seventies by the then Ministry of Local Government and Municipality of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill and is maintained by the latter. Following requests from the latter, my Ministry has undertaken uplifting works for an amount of Rs160,000 in 2006 and 2007 on an *ad hoc* basis.

With regard to Camp Thorel health track, inaugurated in November 2007, a survey is presently being carried out to identify any upgrading works. Furthermore, I would like to inform the House that Camp Thorel health track is maintained jointly by the Forestry Services and my Ministry.

ISLETS NATIONAL PARKS & DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

(No. B/1275) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro Industry, Food Production and Security whether, in regard to our islets, he will state -

- (a) where matters stand concerning the setting up of a national park;
- (b) the number thereof which have been leased to individuals or companies for leisure and hotel development projects, indicating the terms and conditions thereof, and
- (c) if immediate actions will be taken for the cleaning thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Ministry of Agro Industry that, so far, eight islets have been proclaimed as "Islets National Park" under the provisions of the Wild Life and National Park Act.

As regard part (b) of the question, the information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Regarding part (c) of the question, I am further informed by the Ministry of Agro Industry that all the islets are regularly being cleaned, some by the Forestry Services while cleaning services have been contracted out for other islets except those which have been leased.

EBENE CYBERCITY – LAND - GRANT

(No. B/1276) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the Ebène Cybercity, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd., information as to the number of plots of land which have been granted but on which construction works have not yet started, giving details as to -

- (a) the extent of the plots of land;
- (b) the dates on which the lands were granted;
- (c) the deposits paid, and
- (d) if all the activities for which approval has been given are in accordance with the Master Plan, as approved by the Board and by Government.

Reply: With regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, I shall arrange for the information, which has been compiled, to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly

As regards part (d) of the question, I am informed that the intended activities of the lessees are in accordance with the Master Plan approved by the Board and the Government.

HSC EXAMINATIONS – ACCOUNTING SUBJECT – ERROR

(No. B/1279) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the errors found in the Paper 4 of the Accounts subject for the Cambridge Higher School Certificate examinations, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Cambridge and the Mauritius Examinations Syndicates, information as to the measures taken to ensure that the students who took part therein, be not penalised.

Reply: My Ministry has been informed by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) that there was an error in Question No. 2 of the HSC Accounting Paper 4, which was examined on Wednesday 11 November 2009. The Net Cash Flow in the “November” column should have, in fact, been \$6500 instead of \$64500.

After having ascertained the error, the MES reported the matter to the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), and CIE confirmed the error. In order to ensure that the different courses of action taken by the candidates are detected and dealt with fairness, the CIE has instituted a study of the scripts by a team of senior examiners to identify the impact and the scale of the problem and the students affected. It will take all necessary actions to ensure that the examination results are fair and no student is disadvantaged due to the error.

On the basis of the above information obtained from CIE, the MES issued a press communiqué on 17 November 2009 to inform all students and parties concerned that no candidate will be unduly penalised by the CIE as a result of the error in the paper. I am tabling a copy of the press communiqué issued by MES on 17 November 2009 to that effect.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS – TOILETS – UPGRADING WORKS

(No. B/1280) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the primary schools, he will state the number thereof where the toilets have been upgraded, since 2008 to date.

Reply: Since 2008 to date, upgrading works in toilets have been carried out in 39 primary schools.

Moreover, I would like to inform that for the same period, new toilet blocks have been constructed in 13 primary schools.

A total sum of Rs82 m. has been spent for these works.

I am accordingly tabling the lists of these schools.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 3 – TREES - TRIMMING

(No. B/1307) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether he is aware that, in Constituency No. 3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, trees have grown up to the level of the street lanterns on several roads, thereby depriving visibility thereat at night and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if consideration will be given for -

- (a) their trimming, and
- (b) the setting up of a unit within the Council to record complaints and take appropriate actions.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipality of Port Louis that general surveys are conducted by its officers at regular intervals to identify problems of overgrown trees near street lanterns, which impact on visibility at night and to take appropriate action.

I am informed that some cases of overgrown trees have been noted in Constituency No. 3 and a trimming exercise is programmed early next week to remedy the situation.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am advised that there is no need to set up a unit to record complaints, as a Complaints Unit is already operational at the level of each local authority.

TRAFFIC CENTRES - LIGHTING SYSTEM

(No. B/1308) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to each of the Traffic Centres, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal and District Councils, information as to if consideration will be given for the reviewing of their lighting system and installation of additional lanterns where required, in order to prevent accidents thereat at night.

Reply: I am informed that all the traffic centres under the jurisdiction of the local authorities are adequately lighted, and there is no need for installation of additional lanterns.

PROVIDENCE - FOOTBALL GROUND - FLOODLIGHTS

(No. B/1309) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues & Outer Islands whether, in regard to the football ground at Providence, he will state if consideration will be given for the advisability of providing floodlights thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that various priority projects to the tune of Rs2 m. had recently been undertaken in Providence, namely construction of a new cloakroom, shelters, tier of seats and enclosure wall at the football ground and upgrading of the village hall, etc. However, the project for the provision of lighting facilities at the football ground at Providence estimated to the cost Rs2.5 m. will be considered eventually.

PROVIDENCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - CREMATION GROUND-

(No. B/1310) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the cremation ground at Providence, Quartier Militaire, he will state if consideration will be given for the advisability of carrying out upgrading and fencing works thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District council that procurement procedures have already been initiated for construction of a pyre and shelter at the cremation ground at Providence. Works are expected to start by the third week of December 2009 and will be completed by the end of April 2010.

As far as the tarring of the yard and construction of an enclosure wall is concerned, I am informed that same will be considered eventually.

PROVIDENCE, QUARTIER MILITAIRE - DRAIN WORKS & PAVEMENTS

(No. B/1311) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Environment and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the drain works and installation of pavements on the portion of land from the football ground of Providence to the inhabited zone of the locality, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: Footpaths and drains have already been provided along the main road (A7) at Providence near the football groundside. On the opposite side, there is practically no road reserve and it is impossible to construct footpaths without prior land acquisition.

A Consultant will shortly be appointed for the study of the A7 road from Providence to Flacq over a distance of 17km. The project will consist of a complete new design to reduce congestion and improve road safety measures. Proper footpaths and other safety measures will be incorporated along all residential areas.

The study will be completed in six months. Subsequently, land acquisition procedures will be initiated before implementation of the works.

MAHATMA GANDHI SSS, MOKA - FOOTBALL PLAYGROUND

(No. B/1312) Mr S. Dayal (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the football playground at the Mahatma Gandhi State Secondary School, Moka, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to inform the hon. Member that the football playground forms part of Phase IV of the construction project at MGSS Moka and that works are scheduled to start in 2010.

In reply to PQ B/48 in 2008, the hon. Member was then informed that works related to the playfields would be undertaken during financial year 2009/2010. However, some delay has been encountered with regard to Phase III of the project due to the coming into operation of the new Procurement Act, and the need to go by new bidding procedures. I wish to also mention that the implementation of Phase IV of the project can only start after completion of the previous phase.

Let me reassure the hon. Member that all measures will be taken to ensure that works related to the football ground are completed in 2010.

I wish to avail of this opportunity to inform the House that in secondary school construction projects, the provision of football playground is normally taken care of in the last phase, as the first phases are devoted to the construction of classrooms, science blocks and other specialist rooms, administrative and toilet blocks.

PONT SAINT LOUIS, PAILLES - SEWERAGE NETWORK

(No. B/1314) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the region of Pont Saint Louis, at Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if there is any project for the implementation of a sewerage network thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that the region of Pont St Louis in Pailles will be connected to the sewerage network to be constructed under the Pailles Guibies Sewerage Project.

The detailed designs for the project are currently being reviewed by the Consultant GIBB (Mauritius), and will be completed by March 2010. The tendering process will follow, and works are expected to start by November 2010. The project will be implemented over a period of two years.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL & INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION GRANTS - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/1315) Mr J. C Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the international travel and the international collaboration grants, he will state the –

- (a) artists who have benefited therefrom, and
- (b) amount of money they received, indicating for which project and the outcome thereof.

Reply: The scheme was set up to enable performing artists to gain international exposure that includes training, collaboration with artists of international repute and to market their works. The components of the grant are as follows -

- an international travel grant of up to 50,000;
- an international collaboration grant of up to 150,000
- a marketing development grant of up to 100,000.

and artists are eligible for not more than two grants at a time.

As at today, eight artists have benefited from the international development grant, and I am circulating the details.

However, I wish to mention two beneficiaries, namely -

- (i) Bongarçon Stephen Rolph, who participated in the third edition of the international platform of contemporary dance in November 2009, Maputo. The outcome has been international exposure in a cultural event including 26 countries and participated in creative dance workshops. In fact, the outcome can also be expressed in gold, as Bongarçon Stephen Rolph lead a group of dancers to the *6ème Jeux de la Francophonie* and brought back gold medals and has put Mauritius on the world cultural map.
- (ii) Aubeeluck Nalini, who participated in October 2009 in London in a workshop and fusion performances with foreign artists in connection with the preparatory activities in connection with Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games 2010. I am glad to inform the House that such participation if found acceptable by the organisation may eventually lead to the selection of Nalini's group to perform for the Opening Ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games to be held in London.

The House may wish to note that the grant amount is disbursed in three instalments as follows -

1st instalment of 50% upon approval of project;

2nd instalment of 30% upon completion of project, and

3rd instalment of 20% upon submission of a report on completion of project.

Disbursement is made to suppliers of services and not directly to the artist as far as possible.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT –BENEFICIARIES

(No. A/7) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the “Support Foreign Professional Travel” Programme, he will state the –

- (a) names of the artists who have benefited therefrom, and
- (b) details of the benefits.

Reply: As at today, eight artists have benefited from the International Development Grant as follows -

- (i) Bongarçon Stephen Rolph who participated in the third edition of the international platform of contemporary dance in November 2009, Maputo.

The outcome has been international exposure in a cultural event including 26 countries and participated in creative dance workshops. In fact, the outcome can also be expressed in gold as Bongarçon Stephen Rolph lead a group to the *6ème Jeux de la Francophonie* and brought back gold medals and has put Mauritius on the world cultural map. Bongarçon benefited from an International Travel Grant of Rs33,000 and an International Collaboration Grant of Rs19,000.

- (ii) Aubeeluck Nalini who participated in October 2009 in London in a workshop and fusion performances with foreign artists in connection with the preparatory activity in connection with Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games 2010. I am glad to inform the House that such participation if found acceptable by the organisation may eventually lead to the selection of Nalini's group to perform for the Opening Ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games to be held in London. Nalini Aubeeluck benefited from an International Collaboration Grant of Rs150,000 and an International Development Grant of Rs100,000.
- (iii) Françoise Thierry Didier is participating in training in Dramatics at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique, Paris. This institution is one of the highest in France. Françoise Thierry Didier has benefited from an International Travel Grant of Rs20,600 and an International Collaboration Grant of Rs150,000. The outcome is improving dramatic skills and international exposure for the artist. Back home, we may request him to share with others on his return.
- (iv) Victoire Donovan Rolph is attending training at Ecole Atelier Rudra Bejart, Lausanne, Switzerland, in Modern Dance. This Institution is also one of the best in Switzerland. Victoire Donovan Rolph is the first Mauritian to get admission there. He has benefited from an International Travel Grant Rs35,000 and an International Collaboration Grant Rs150,000. The outcome is the skills improvement and international exposure, which he will be able to share with others on his return.
- (v) Honore Stephano (known as Menwar). This is a Group Participation in the Moshito Music Conference and Exhibition 2009, a show case Concert to

promote music at Music Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2009. He has benefited from an International Collaboration Grant Rs 100,000. The outcome is the International exposure for the artist, and moreover Menwar is the Mauritian *Porte Drapeau* of our traditional music.

- (vi) Vadamootoo Nathalia is presently attending a workshop on script writing “*Les Ecritures du Réel*” pour Documentaire et Magazine, at Ecole Nationale Supérieure Louis Lumière, France. Ms Vadamootoo Nathalia has benefited from an International Travel Grant of Rs40,000 and an International Collaboration Grant of Rs150,000. You will agree with me that this initiative will help boost up our Cinematographic Industry.
- (vii) Aniff Hosanee has been invited to participate in the 8th Bridge Asia Contemporary Art Exhibition in October 2009 at the China Printing Museum, Honqzhou, China and Chinese Wood Printing. Aniff Hosanee is a reknown artist with several years of experience. He is benefiting from an International Collaboration Grant of Rs99,800. The participation of Mr Hosanee in Chinese woodcraft and printing will benefit the local artist community, as this style can be developed in Mauritius. His knowledge can be shared among local artists.
- (viii) Brabant Lina Veronique Stephanie participated in the I-Trotra 2009 – Contemporary Dance Festival in October 2009 in Madagascar and has benefited from an International Travel Grant of Rs39,400. The participation of Ms Brabant will help to promote and upgrade the level of contemporary dance in Mauritius. Moreover, the artist was given the chance to perform along other artists of international repute at the festival from more than ten countries.

Appendix**PQ No. B/1296****HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL - CHAIRPERSON****Training and Re-skilling of the SME Cadres and Floor Level Workers**

The programme started in August 2008 and is expected to reach completion by March 2010.

The following have been achieved –

- 21 trained trainers in TNA by an external expert;
- 23 trained trainers in generic design of training programmes by an external consultant;
- 25 Business consultants trained in priority support services (1) Human Resource Planning & Development, (2) Strategic Planning, (3) Financial Analysis and Planning and (4) Marketing Strategies and Diagnosis.

Ornamental Fish Breeding Project

A total of 63 beneficiaries have been trained at Albion and SEHDA.

Training in ICT-Call Centre Operations

Training was conducted for 2,500 persons who have obtained employment in call centres.

Computerisation of Online Levy Grant System

There are approximately 15,000 employers presently contributing to the training levy. With a view to facilitating these employers to submit their grant applications online, HRDC has worked out a project for the computerisation of the levy grant scheme. Presently, some 45,000 employers have been trained as at 30 June 2008, and the target is 30,000 for the six months ending 31 December 2009.

National Sensitisation Campaign – to change work attitude in the context of a 24/7 economy

This campaign, which started in January 2009, is scheduled over 14 months. The last three-day event held in Port Louis has helped to sensitise over 200,000 Mauritians as well as tourists on the need for a 24/7 economic model.

Moreover, the *24/7 Caravane Scolaire*, which visited over 71 secondary schools around Mauritius, has also helped to sensitise some 75,000 pupils about the concept of a 24/7 economic model.

The 11 Family Nite Shows held in different regions of Mauritius have also been instrumental in sensitising the Mauritian public. Another two-ay event was held in Beau Bassin/Rose Hillm and a third one is scheduled from 18 to 20 December 2009 in Grand' Baie. This third event is specifically targeting tourists who will be visiting Mauritius during the end of year festivities.

Training for Carers

HRDC in collaboration with the MIH has worked out a training programme, targeting 50 participants scheduled to start on Monday 30 November 2009 in respect of a National Certificate in Health and Social Care (Care of the Elderly). It is expected that some 300 unemployed would be trained with the assistance of the MIH.

Work placement for Lower VI students of secondary & vocational schools

The project was initiated in 2007, and till date, 2,500 students have successfully completed their placement. 700 additional students will be placed by end of December 2009.

Online Educator's Licence Course

This project was launched in May 2009 with a first batch of 300 Educators from Private Secondary Schools across the island. 279 educators started their sessions and had their assessments in the month of October.

It is expected that some 1,200 trainees will benefit from the training.

Technology transfer of Wood based handicraft Industry-Laser Cutting Design

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed on 16 November 2009 between HRDC and Pekan Buluh SDN BHD of Malaysia regarding the holding of this training programme, which is considered as a "*Première*" in Mauritius, and which will give a boost to the handicraft sector. It is also expected that this project will create employment

opportunities in this sector. In due course, the products will be exported at a regional/international level.

Initially, the course will be run at the IVTB by the Malaysian experts for a “Train the Trainer Course” for some 25 trainees, and is expected to start in January 2009.

It is expected that once the “Train the Trainer Course” would have been completed, the training will be extended to other trainees for a cascading effect.

Joint AREU/HRDC Project-Professionalising and Improving Employability Training

HRDC has entrusted AREU to conduct training for Professionalising and Improving Employability in the Farming Community, which aimed at rendering potential and existing workers more employable and inculcating professional and entrepreneurial skills to farmers through comprehensive training. So far, some 700 workers have been trained.

Setting up of a Training Centre at Carreau Esnouf-Union Vale

Another main project funded by HRDC and which is in line with Government objective to eradicate poverty, is the setting up of a Training Centre at Carreau Esnouf, Union Vale, which is regarded as a deprived region in the southern part of the island.

The objective of opening this centre in Carreau Esnouf is to provide opportunities to empower young people for their integration in the world of work through the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Access to training opportunities is generally recognised to be an effective way of addressing exclusion and poverty problems, especially among those who would not benefit fully from public education services.

It should be noted that the building, which will accommodate the training centre, is an abandoned building, which is presently being renovated to provide a conducive environment for potential trainees.

In the first instance, basic courses such as hairdressing, beauty care, electrical installation works, plumbing and pipefitting, bicycle and motorcycle mechanics, arts and crafts amongst others will be run.

