



SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 16 MAY 2023

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(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity
Hon. Louis Steven Obeegadoo	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management
Hon. Alan Ganoo, GCSK	Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy	Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, GCSK	Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity
Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs

	and Cooperatives
Hon. Kavydass Ramano	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance
Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Maneesh Gobin	Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint	Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation
Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma Hurreeram	Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development
Hon. Darsanand Balgobin	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal	Minister of Health and Wellness
Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping

Hon. Mrs Kalpana Devi Koonjoo-Shah

Minister of Gender Equality and Family
Welfare

Hon. Avinash Teeluck

Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage

Hon. Teeruthraj Hurdoyal

Minister of Public Service, Administrative
and Institutional Reforms

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Speaker	Hon. Sooroojdev Phokeer, GCSK, GOSK
Deputy Speaker	Hon. Mohammud Zahid Nazurally
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Sanjit Kumar Nuckcheddy
Acting Clerk of the National Assembly	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
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Clerk Assistant	Gopall, Mr Navin
Clerk Assistant	Seetul, Ms Darshinee
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Serjeant-at-Arms	Bundhoo, Mr Anirood

MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 07 of 2023

Sitting of Tuesday 16 May 2023

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

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table.

A. Prime Minister's Office
Ministry of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications
Ministry for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Status of the Artist Bill (No. VII of 2023).
(In Original)
- (b) The Civil Aviation (Hadj 2023 Pilgrims) (Exemption) Order 2023.
(Government Notice No. 60 of 2023)

B. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development

- (a) Virement Warrant – Quarter 3 (January – March 2023): Nos. 26 to 47 and 49 to 54.
(In Original)
- (b) Virement (Contingencies) Warrant – Quarter 3 (January – March 2023):
Nos. 11 to 18. (In Original)
- (c) Virement Certificate – Quarter 3 (January – March 2023): Vote/Sub-Head
(Certificates Nos.): 1-1(1-2), 1-2(4), 1-5(2-6), 1-6(5-8), 1-8(1-2), 1-9(1), 1-10(1),
1-15(3), 2-1(2-3, 5-7), 2-106(1-2), 2-107(2-3), 2-108(1), 2-2(1), 2-3(2-3), 2-5(3-10),
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5-1(2-5), 5-2(1), 5-3(1-5), 5-4(1-4), 6-1(2-4), 6-2(1-2), 6-3(2-4), 7-1(4,8), 7-2(2-3),
7-3(2-5), 7-4(2), 7-5(1-2), 7-6(3-5), 8-1(9, 11-13), 9-2(2-3), 10-101(5-11),
10-102(1-2), 10-104(4), 11-1(1-2), 11-2(6-7), 12-1(4-6), 13-1(3-6, 8), 13-2(2, 4-5),
13-3(1), 13-4(3), 14-1(8-11), 15-1(1-8), 15-2(3-4), 16-1(6-10), 16-103(5-8, 10),
17-1(3-4), 17-2(2-4), 18-1(7-13, 16, 18-19), 19-1(8-9), 19-2(7,10), 20-1(2-4),
22-1(2-3), 23-1(7-10), and 24-1(7).
- (d) The Financial Statements and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial
Statements of the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund for the year ended 30 June 2022.

C. Ministry of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity

The National Pensions (Collection of Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations 2023.
(Government Notice No. 62 of 2023)

D. Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

The Environment Protection (Control of Single Use Plastic Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 64 of 2023)

E. Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance

The Audited Financial Statements and Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Recovered Assets Fund for the year ended 30 June 2022.

**F. Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training
Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection**

- (a) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 12) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 57 of 2023)
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 13) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 58 of 2023)
- (c) The Consumer Protection (Pharmaceutical Products) (Maximum Mark-Up) (No. 2) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 59 of 2023)
- (d) The Consumer Protection (Importation and Sale of Second-hand Motor Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 63 of 2023)

G. Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage

- (a) The National Heritage Fund (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2023. (Government Notice No. 61 of 2023)
- (b) The Annual Report and Report of the Director of Audit of the Mauritius Council of Registered Librarians for the year ended 30 June 2022.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**RÉUNION ISLAND – MAURITIANS' ARREST - INQUIRY**

(No. B/498) Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the two Mauritians arrested by the Réunion Police in Sainte Rose on 24 April 2023 following the grounding of a speed boat at Anse des Cascades, in Réunion Island, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the identity thereof;
- (b) the charges levelled against them;
- (c) if an inquiry has been initiated by the Mauritian authorities to ascertain the ownership of the speed boat, indicating the findings thereof, and
- (d) if any request for mutual assistance by the Réunion authorities has been made to the Mauritian authorities thereon.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Monday 24 April 2023 in the morning, information was received by the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) to the effect that a speed boat was found grounded at Anse des Cascades, Sainte Rose, Réunion Island. The ADSU immediately initiated an enquiry on the speed boat based on details received from the French Authorities. On the same day in the morning, the ADSU was further informed of the arrest of three Mauritian nationals. Following receipt of this information, a formal memo for Request of Information was sent on Monday 24 April 2023, through the INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) Port Louis, to the INTERPOL NCB Paris, with a view to confirming the veracity of this information.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the Question, I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that the three Mauritian nationals who were arrested on Monday 24 April 2023 are as follows –

- a) Mr B.L., 31 years old;

- b) Mr A.P., 33 years old, and
- c) Mr J.R.M.M., 48 years old.

Furthermore, as these three persons had left Mauritius without notifying the Immigration Authorities, the Passport and Immigration Office placed them on the Controversial List as “Arrest on Arrival” for the offence of failing to report to the Immigration Officer for examination, on leaving Mauritius, in breach of Section 36 (a) of the Immigration Act 2022.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the Question, on Tuesday 25 April 2023, the INTERPOL NCB Paris confirmed the received information and pointed out, and I quote, that –

« Le Parquet est informé et ouvre une enquête pour tentative d’exportation de produits stupéfiants et recel de vol de bateau. Les trois ressortissants mauriciens sont placés en garde à vue ». Unquote.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, I have, on several occasions, mentioned lengthily the various measures taken by the ADSU to address the problem of drug trafficking onshore. Enforcement by the ADSU to combat drug trafficking extends well beyond our shores.

Under an Agreement signed between Mauritius and the French Government, there is a ‘*Groupe de Contact*’ which provides for the establishment of a network and sharing of intelligence on *inter alia* drug trafficking between the ADSU and the Office *Anti-Stupéfiants* of Réunion Island. Moreover, the EU-funded Maritime Security Programme, which extends support to counter wider maritime crime in the Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean region, in particular drug trafficking at sea, also promotes the culture of sharing and exchanging maritime information in the region.

The Police has been informed by the French Authorities that a fourth person, a French national, namely Mr M. A., has also been arrested in Réunion Island for possession of a certain quantity of cannabis. The four suspects are currently detained under Police custody in Réunion Island.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (c) of the Question, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the ADSU has also initiated an inquiry into the case to establish the ownership of the boat. As a result, four persons were interrogated. Mr V.S., 47 years old, was allowed to go after his interrogation. The other three suspects who were arrested are as follows –

- (a) Mr F.D.L. was arrested on Monday 24 April 2023, and on Tuesday 25 April 2023, he appeared before the Court and a provisional charge for ‘Conspiracy to Pervert the Course of Justice’ was levelled against him. On Tuesday 09 May 2023, after his Court appearance, he has been remanded to Police cell up to Tuesday 16 May 2023.
- (b) In regard to Mr M.A.A.R., he was arrested on Wednesday 26 April 2023 and on Thursday 27 April 2023, he appeared before the Court and a provisional charge for ‘Conspiracy to Pervert the Course of Justice’ was levelled against him. He was remanded to Police cell. On Thursday 11 May 2023, he appeared anew before the Court and his bail hearing was heard on the same day. The District Magistrate has fixed his ruling for Tuesday 16 May 2023 and the suspect was remanded to Police cell up to Tuesday 16 May 2023.
- (c) Mr S.L. was arrested on Thursday 27 April 2023. On Friday 28 April 2023, he appeared before the Court and a provisional charge for ‘Conspiracy to Pervert the Course of Justice’ was levelled against him. He was released on bail on Friday 05 May 2023 after having furnished a surety of Rs30,000 and entered into a 12ecognizance of Rs50,000. In addition, the suspect has to report daily to the nearest Police Station between 6.00 hours to 21.00 hours, to reside at a fixed address, and to provide his mobile phone number to the Police.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the enquiries with regard to the drug trafficking and the ownership of the speed boat are progressing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (d) of the Question, I am informed that, as at date, no formal request for mutual assistance as such has been received from the French authorities, though information sharing between the ADSU and the Réunion Police is ongoing. I am also informed that the Commissioner of Police has, in a letter dated Tuesday 09 May 2023, requested the Attorney General’s Office to approach the French authorities for mutual legal assistance in connection with this case. In addition, a delegation, led by the Commissioner of Police, will proceed to Réunion Island from Tuesday 16 to Thursday 18 May 2023.

Mr Nuckcheddy: Merci, M. le président. Je remercie l’honorable Premier ministre pour sa réponse. Dans sa réponse, le Premier ministre a cité trois noms des Mauriciens, et pour

éclaircir la population, est-ce que l'honorable Premier ministre peut informer cette Chambre si ces personnes ont des liens avec des parties politiques ou avec des membres des parties politiques à l'île Maurice ? Merci.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Mr B.L. is the brother of one Mrs V.L.G., and I do not know whether that person is currently the President of the PMSD. This has to be checked. Moreover, Mr M.A.A.R., who has been arrested by the ADSU following the inquiry initiated to establish the ownership of the speedboat concerned, is acquainted with one A.D., the son of the Leader of the Opposition, who owns a boat park at Grand Gaube. Mr M.A.A.R. had requested Mr A.D. to tow the speedboat after its repairs from Palmar to the latter's boat park where it was exposed pending its sale.

I wish to inform the House that Mr M.A.A.R. was operating his activity of repair and sale of boats without the appropriate permits from the authorities concerned, whereas Mr A.D. had been granted an Occupational Certificate for operating the boat park.

Mr Nuckcheddy: Thank you again, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister provide information with regard to the cases of drug trafficking detected between Réunion Island and Mauritius during the period 2005-2014 compared to 2015-2023 period? Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, unsurprisingly, there was not a single case of similar drug trafficking detected between Mauritius and Réunion Island from 2005 to 2014, and as we all know, it was the darkest period as regards the proliferation of drug peddlers who were tolerated and whose illegal activities had grown exponentially.

Comparatively, due to Government fighting drug trafficking and hunting the drug barons relentlessly since 2015, 10 cases have been detected between Mauritius and Réunion Island as at date.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

MBC CHANNELS – REVENUE ACCRUED – 2019 TO MAY 2023

(No. B/499) **Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Mauritius

Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information, since 2019 to date, as to revenue generated by each of the channel, giving details thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the Corporation has 17 TV channels on terrestrial transmission, one TV channel on satellite transmission and eight Radio channels in Mauritius and broadcasts its contents in 14 languages.

The Corporation derives revenue from television licence fees, advertising and other commercial ventures. However, television licence fees and advertising remain the main sources of income for the MBC.

It is to be noted that the payment and collection of TV licence fees are governed by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (Collection of Licence Fees) Act. In regard to domestic TV licence fee, Section 3 of the Act stipulates that every person who is liable to pay an electricity bill for domestic consumption shall pay the appropriate licence fee, unless he does not possess a television set and makes a declaration to that effect, as provided for in the Act. I must point out that domestic licensees consuming not more than a total of 396 kilowatts hours of electricity are not paying any TV licence fee since 2016. I am informed by the MBC that currently 29,848 households are exempted from payment of domestic TV licence fee, representing a shortfall of around Rs53.7 m. annually for the MBC. In regard to other domestic consumers, they have to pay a monthly TV licence fee of Rs150 for Mauritius and Rs25 for Rodrigues. In regard to Agalega, no TV licence fee is being charged.

In regard to non-domestic TV licence fee, Section 4(1) of the same Act provides that no person in charge of a Government department or classified trade shall have on the premises a television set unless he holds a licence to that effect. Moreover, Section 4(2)(b) of the Act provides that a separate licence shall be required in respect of each television set on the premises of the Government department or classified trade.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must also point out that non-exempted domestic licensees are required to pay Rs150 monthly, irrespective of the number of TV sets in their household. However, regarding private TV channels, as the House is aware, subscribers of these channels have to pay a separate monthly fee for additional services such as dual or multi-room connections.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it should also be brought out that the quantum of MBC TV licence fees has remained the same for the last 10 years. For Rodrigues, it has not changed since 1990. During the same period, the operation costs of the MBC have increased drastically.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the MBC that its advertising revenue stream comprises the following –

- (i) normal advertising;
- (ii) bundle packages and sponsorship;
- (iii) trade advertising, and
- (iv) production income.

Revenue from normal advertising is revenue collected from sales of advertising airtime in accordance with MBC rate, and it constitutes the major source of advertising revenue for the Corporation.

Bundle advertising strategy is a package that is especially tailored to cater for various audience segments to enable a wider reach in terms of market penetration. Sponsorship Advertising Strategy aims at a direct association of a specific brand/product/service with a specific TV or radio programme.

Trade advertising is an advertising strategy to acquire premium content such as musical concert, cultural show by renowned artists and other programmes, whereby MBC offers advertising airtime in exchange of media rights to broadcast such contents.

Production income is income generated, among others, from the production of video and audio clips, local contents for both TV and radio programmes and public-reportage.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to other sources of revenue of the MBC, I am informed that they include, among others, dividend from MC Vision Ltd, revenue received from Mauritius Telecom, MC Vision Ltd and Parbole Maurice. The Corporation also derives revenue from the production and live broadcast of horse races.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed by the Director-General of the MBC that the total revenue generated by the Corporation from TV licence fees, advertising and including other income during the period July 2019 to April 2023 is as follows –

- (i) for the Financial Year 2019-2020, the total revenue was Rs880,386,054;

- (ii) for the Financial Year 2020-2021, the total revenue was Rs901,910,060;
- (iii) for the Financial Year 2021-2022, it was Rs879,713,724, and
- (iv) for the period July 2022 to April 2023, the total sum collected was Rs764,321,637.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Director-General of the MBC has underlined that the domestic TV licence fees are paid per Central Electricity Board account holder and non-domestic TV licence fees are paid per TV set. Hence, both domestic and non-domestic TV licence fees are not paid per channel. Thus, it would not be possible to provide information on revenue obtained from TV licence fees by each channel. However, in so far as advertising revenue is concerned, the MBC is in a position to provide information on advertising revenue per channel.

I am, therefore, tabling information provided to me by the Director-General of the MBC which relates to the advertising revenue collected by the Corporation for each Financial Year during the period July 2019 to April 2023.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is pertinent for me to remind the House that the objects of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation are, *inter alia*, to provide broadcasting services of information, education, culture and entertainment in the different languages, which cater for the aspirations, needs and tastes of the population, as well as promote, *inter alia*, a Mauritian consciousness and identity. In fact, the Corporation is broadcasting in the following languages –

- (i) English;
- (ii) French;
- (iii) Creole;
- (iv) Hindi;
- (v) Urdu;
- (vi) Tamil;
- (vii) Telegu;
- (viii) Marathi;
- (ix) Gujrati;
- (x) Bhojpuri;
- (xi) Mandarin;
- (xii) Hakka;

- (xiii) Arabic, and
- (xiv) Sanskrit.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the mandate of the MBC incorporates an important social and cultural dimension. The Corporation is, therefore, service-oriented and does not operate on a purely commercial basis.

Mr Bodha: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his reply. May I ask him whether there are some channels which, in fact, do not bring any revenue of advertising?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, indeed, there are a few channels that do not bring any revenue in terms of advertising while others do bring revenue. But the one that brings the most revenue would be MBC 1 with Rs98,546,848 for the period July 2022 to April 2023.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether it is not because of the fall in revenue and low viewership that some channels have been rebranded at one point in time and then the situation came back to what it was formerly?

The Prime Minister: As regards rebranding of channel, I need notice of a specific question because I do not have the details on how it was carried out and also on the reasons therefor.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

DR. N. R. - COFFERS SEIZED - ITEMS OF ILLEGAL NATURE

(No. B/500) **Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the coffers seized at the Residence of Dr. N. R., GCSK, FRCP, former Prime Minister, in 2015, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the items of illegal nature other than bank note, if any, secured therefrom and, if so, give details thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, following information obtained to the effect that a huge sum of money was concealed in two premises of Dr. N. R. situated at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street, Port Louis, and at Riverwalk, Floréal, respectively, Police carried out simultaneous searches in both premises during the night of Friday 06 February 2015 to Saturday 07 February 2015, by virtue of search

warrants issued by the District Magistrate of Port-Louis and by the District Magistrate of Curepipe Courts, respectively.

During the course of the searches, money, both in local and foreign currencies, estimated at that time to amount to about Rs230 m., were secured from his premises and safes. The money secured comprised, among others, about three million US Dollars, five hundred and eighty six thousand Euros, fifty eight thousand Pounds, other currencies and one hundred and two million Mauritian Rupees. The Mauritian notes secured included 6 bundles, with a bank seal each containing 1,000 notes of one thousand Mauritian rupees, and the US Dollars included 17 shrink wrapped bundles, each containing 1,000 notes of new one hundred US Dollars.

Regarding the 6 bundles of one thousand Mauritian Rupees, the enquiry has revealed that it is a current practice for that bank to deliver such bundles to its exempt customers who are identified and known to the bank, but in that case Dr. N. R. was not an exempt client of the said bank. Furthermore, the Bank of Mauritius has informed that such bundles are usually issued to Commercial Banks. However, the Central Bank did not hold any record as to which Commercial Banks those bundles were remitted. The donors of the Mauritian bank notes have also, up to now, remained unknown.

In regard to the 17 bundles of new one hundred US Dollar notes, information obtained from financial institutions in Mauritius has revealed that those bundles were not destined to them. Applications for Mutual Legal Assistance have been sought to determine the destination of the Foreign Currencies. Enquiry is proceeding.

Additionally, Police also secured bank cards, privilege cards and other miscellaneous items such as documents, passports and licences. In regard to the bank cards and privilege cards, the details thereof have been provided to the Integrity Reporting Service Agency for in-depth investigation. The latter has subsequently referred the matter to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) for enquiry. I am informed that the enquiry at the level of the ICAC is also proceeding.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that during the search, the following items were secured from a black suitcase of make "Samsonite" within the premises

—

- (i) 11 boxes of Mega Men Health Testosterone;
- (ii) 4 boxes of Test X 180 Alpha;
- (iii) 1 box of Somnapure;
- (iv) 2 small boxes of Spa Therapy;
- (v) 2 boxes of 50 ml Clarins Paris Perfume for men;
- (vi) 1 box from Tiffany & Co containing magnifying lenses, and
- (vii) 1 small box of US Africa Business Forum.

Following the searches, Dr. N. R. was arrested on Saturday 07 February 2015 and provisionally charged before the Bail and Remand Court for the offence of Money Laundering in breach of Sections 3(1)(b) and 8(1) of the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2002. He was released on parole on the same day and had to attend Upper Plaines Wilhems District Court on Monday 09 February 2015 to do the needful in relation to the surety and recognisance.

After completion of the enquiry, the case file was referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions which, on Friday 20 October 2017, advised prosecution against Dr. N. R. before the Intermediate Court charging him with wilfully and unlawfully accepting payment in cash in excess of an amount of Rs500,000 in breach of Sections 5, 7 and 8 of the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act (FIAMLA).

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions had, on the same date, advised that the matter be referred to the Integrity Reporting Service Agency under Section 9(2) of the Good Governance and Integrity Reporting Act and to the Mauritius Revenue Authority for possible revenue and other offences which might have been committed by Dr. N. R. The matter had accordingly been referred to these institutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have also been apprised that, regarding the 11 boxes of Mega Men Health Testosterone, 4 boxes of Test X 180 Alpha and 1 box of Somnapure, the then Ministry of Health and Quality of Life had in a correspondence to the Commissioner of Police informed that the said products are not commercialized in Mauritius and it had not issued any authorisation for its sale in Mauritius. Moreover, no authorisation had been given by the said Ministry for their importation.

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Prime Minister state whether, an inquiry has been initiated since he just mentioned that no authorisation was sought for the importation of the pills?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that an inquiry has, in fact, been initiated into the matter and following its completion, it will be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Please bear with me if ever I could not recall the exact *appellation* of those pills. The Prime Minister just mentioned in his reply; 11 boxes of Mega Men and something like that, 4 boxes of Test X - I don't recall the figures - and one box of Somnapure. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, if ever he has got the information, how many pills those boxes contain and also to what usage and effects these pills are for?

The Prime Minister: M. le président, je suis informé que les 11 boîtes de Mega Men Health Testosterone contiennent 330 plaquettes de 8 comprimés chacune, soit un totale de 2,640 comprimés. Chaque boîte de 8 pilules est destinée à être consommé une fois par jour en une prise. Les comprimés de Mega Men Health Testosterone contiennent du Testofen, étudié cliniquement pour optimiser les niveaux de testostérone afin d'améliorer la santé et la performance sexuelle. Ce produit est également utilisé pour soutenir la fonction de la prostate, lutter contre le vieillissement cellulaire et améliorer la dilatation des vaisseaux sanguins.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order !

The Prime Minister: Les quatre boîtes de Test X 180 Alpha contiennent 480 comprimés. Les comprimés de Test X 180 Alpha contiennent de la L-citrulline et du Testofen et sont utilisés
...

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: Cheap!

An hon. Member: *So partner sa piti!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order !

An hon. Member: *Li pou servi sa ar twa la. Atann !*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: ... pour atteindre le summum de la force physique. Un flux sanguin plus fort, ...

An hon. Member: *La honte pou MMM !*

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: ... une augmentation insensée de l'endurance et du potentiel sexuel. La boîte de Somnapure contient 30 comprimés et ce produit est utilisé pour favoriser la relaxation et un sommeil profond et aide à calmer l'esprit. Comme quoi, M. le président, après une hyper activité sexuelle rendue possible par des produits dopantes, la bête a recours à un puissant somnifère pour récupérer. Je dirai même un Casanova le plus endurcit n'aurait pu imaginer un tel cocktail.

An hon. Member: *La honte !*

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Casanova.*

Ms J. Bérenger: *Al fer sa dan rekreasion.*

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

An hon. Member: *To pe defann Ramgoolam zordi.*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

An hon. Member: *Ki nivo tonn tonbe!*

An hon. Member: *Fode ena klas sa!*

Ms J. Bérenger: *Indigne d'un Premier ministre.*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger, apologise and withdraw these words.

An hon. Member: *Apologise!*

Mr Speaker: Apologise to the House and withdraw the words.

An hon. Member: *To inn fer lalians ar li!*

Mr Speaker: You withdraw the words!

Behave yourself!

Ms J. Bérenger: I withdraw!

Mr Assivaden: I have one question, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: The time is over!

Mr Assivaden: Une petite question, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: One sided!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, you don't question the ruling, the decision of the Chair. Apologise!

Mr Mohamed: For what?

Mr Speaker: Apologise!

Mr Mohamed: For what?

Mr Speaker: For this wrong doing!

Mr Mohamed: What wrong doing?

Mr Speaker: Apologise to the House!

Mr Mohamed: For what?

Mr Speaker: For this wrong doing!

Mr Mohamed: For what wrong doing?

Mr Speaker: For contesting my ruling, my decision.

Mr Mohamed: I am not contesting.

Mr Speaker: You are contesting!

Mr Mohamed: I am not contesting.

Mr Speaker: Apologise!

Mr Mohamed: For what?

Mr Speaker: Or withdraw from the Chamber! Withdraw from the Chamber!

(Interruptions)

Mr Assivaden: M. le président, une question ! M. le président, une question ! M. le président, une question !

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I am on my feet.

An hon. Member: Oh, no! Really?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden, you listen to me and to my ruling!

Mr Armance: You don't have to shout.

Mr Speaker: You are not inventing Parliament. Time is over! You have been a seasoned politician, you have been in Parliament for a long time, the population is listening to your bad manners. Time is over! Let me read the withdrawn questions.

(Interruptions)

Mr Osman Mahomed: For the value!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed, apologise to the House! Apologise to the House!

Mr Osman Mahomed: For what, please?

Mr Speaker: You have been talking after me, after my ruling!

Mr Osman Mahomed: No, I have been...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You have to withdraw!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I have been raising...

Mr Speaker: Either you apologise or you withdraw from the House!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I have been raising my hand.

Mr Speaker: I have nothing to listen to!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Okay, okay, I apologise!

Mr Speaker: You apologised? This is better! This is a politician! This is a parliamentarian! This is parliamentary democracy! When you make mistakes, you have to apologise! The population is listening to you!

Questions: B/501, B/502, B/503, B/504, B/506, B/508, B/511, B/513 have been withdrawn.

Next question!

COST OF LIVING – PACKAGE – FORTHCOMING BUDGET

(No. B/514) Dr. A. Boolell (First Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the cost of living, he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of a package therefor in the forthcoming Budget to alleviate the hardship of the population.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je remercie l'honorable membre pour sa question qui emboîte le pas de la philosophie et de l'action de ce gouvernement placé sous la direction de notre Premier ministre, l'honorable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, car ce n'est ni la crise de la Covid-19, ni les répercussions de la guerre en Ukraine sur les prix qui en ont fait un gouvernement du peuple. Pour cause, notre ADN est centrée sur l'humain et la protection des plus vulnérables. Depuis 2017 à coups de mesures historiques, des avancées sociales majeures ont été accordées aux Mauriciens.

M. le président, avant de répondre sur ce que nous allons continuer de faire pour protéger le pouvoir d'achat de la population, permettez-moi de rappeler ce que nous avons déjà fait. C'est cela le sens de l'histoire, de notre histoire.

L'introduction en 2017 du *negative income tax* pour les Mauriciens percevant des revenus mensuels inférieurs à R 9000 a été le point de départ de cette lutte pour améliorer les conditions

de vie des Mauriciens. S'en est suivi en 2018 de la mise en place d'un salaire minimum. Je tiens à cet égard souligner que ce dernier a été augmenté chaque année d'un montant supérieur au taux d'inflation.

En 2019, les pensions de base ont été revues à la hausse afin de permettre à nos aînés de vivre dans des conditions décentes. Je me permets de rappeler que la revalorisation progressive et continue des pensions a été rendue possible depuis la mise en place de la Contribution Sociale Généralisée.

M. le président, cette philosophie en action, les Mauriciens l'ont plébiscité une nouvelle fois dans les urnes en novembre 2019. Depuis 2020 et cela malgré les violentes secousses économiques que nous avons vécues en raison de la pandémie, ce gouvernement s'est toujours tenu au côté de la population et en particulier des plus vulnérables. En tant que gouvernement bienveillant, nous avons pris un grand nombre de mesures pour améliorer les conditions de subsistance de la population et protéger son pouvoir d'achat.

Face à la plus grave crise de notre histoire, nous avons avec pro-activité mise en place le *Wage Assistance Scheme*, le *Self-employed Assistant Scheme*, et le *one-off grant* aux travailleurs indépendants afin de préserver l'emploi et le niveau de vie des travailleurs pendant la Covid-19. 542 250 travailleurs en ont bénéficié pour un montant total de plus de R 27 milliards.

En sus, et malgré la hausse des prix internationaux, les prix de détail du gaz et de la farine à Maurice a été maintenu et la hausse du prix du gaz a été contenue grâce à l'augmentation décidée par ce gouvernement de revoir le montant à la hausse des subventions accordées pour ces produits. En outre, en 2022, le gouvernement a accordé une subvention variant entre 5 et 10 % sur les factures d'électricité à plus de 370 000 ménages.

Du côté fiscal, nous avons introduit plus de progressivité avec un taux réduit d'impôt sur le revenu de 10 % pour quelques 75 000 contribuables, dont le revenu annuel n'excède pas R 700 000. Nous avons aussi accordé des déductions et des allègements accrus de l'impôt sur le revenu.

En parallèle, je tiens à rappeler que le gouvernement a mis en œuvre la révision des salaires recommandés par le *Pay Research Bureau* avec effet au 01 janvier 2021. Grâce à l'ensemble des mesures pour les plus vulnérables, les plus faibles, la classe moyenne, le

coefficient de GINI qui mesure les inégalités de revenus a fortement chuté, alors qu'il avait fortement augmenté en 2006 et 2014 passant de 0,388 à 0,42 indiquant une flambée des inégalités. Pour rappel, cette période est aussi marquée par des taux d'inflation très élevés – 2006 : 8,9% ; 2007 : 8,8 % et 2008 : presque 10 %.

Selon la banque mondiale, ce coefficient des inégalités a diminué drastiquement à 0,34 en 2021 démontrant l'efficacité des politiques de lutte contre les inégalités. Nous ne nous arrêterons pas en si bon chemin. Puisqu'il est attendu que les mesures prises depuis et que je vais maintenant aborder vont continuer à faire baisser le coefficient de GINI permettant le nivellement vers le haut du niveau de vie à Maurice.

M. le président, en effet depuis le début de la guerre en Ukraine, ce gouvernement a su dégager les marges de manœuvre nécessaire pour venir avec un nouvel arsenal de mesures visant à minimiser l'impact de la hausse des prix à l'international et préserver le pouvoir d'achat des Mauriciens. Dans le budget 2022-2023, nous avons introduit le *CSG income allowance* de R 1000 par mois qui est versé à quelques 338 000 employés et travailleurs indépendants gagnant un revenu brut mensuel allant jusqu'à R 50 000, soit presque les deux tiers des employés à Maurice. Nous avons augmenté le taux de pension mensuelle de R 1000 pour quelques 300 000 bénéficiaires de la pension de retraite de base, de la pension de veuve, de la pension d'invalidité et de la pension d'orphelin. Nous versons un *CSG retirement benefit* de R 1000 par mois à quelques 169 000 retraités âgés de 65 ans et plus.

Nous avons introduit un *CSG invalidity pension* mensuel de R 2500 pour les personnes dont le taux d'invalidité est compris entre 40 et 59 %. Nous avons mis en place la prime à l'emploi d'un montant maximum de R 15 000 par mois pour la première année d'emploi de 10 000 jeunes entre 18 et 35 ans, et femmes jusqu'à 50 ans. Nous avons fait provision de l'emploi pour quelques 2000 travailleurs par Mauri Facilities. Nous avons introduit une nouvelle tranche d'impôt plus faible sur les revenus pour ceux qui gagnent entre 700 000 et 975 000 par an. Ces travailleurs payent depuis l'impôt sur le revenu au taux de 12,5 % au lieu de 15 % à partir de l'année de revenu 2022-2023.

Nous avons aussi étendu le *Home Ownership Scheme* et le *Home Loan Payment Scheme* permettant le remboursement de 5 % de la valeur de la propriété acheter ou du montant du prêt. Nous avons de plus augmenté le montant de l'aide sociale et des allocations dans le cadre du

SRM de 20 % pour 18 000 ménages. Nous avons également fourni des fonds nécessaires à la STC pour fournir des produits essentiels tels que le lait, huile comestible et les légumineuses à un prix subventionné. Et nous avons supprimé la taxe municipale au profit de 110 000 ménages. En outre, le gouvernement a placé 12 produits essentiels sous le régime de la majoration maximale à partir du 01 juillet 2022.

M. le président, en sus des mesures que je viens de mentionner, ce gouvernement a accordé une compensation salariale de R 1000 par mois à tous les employés à partir de janvier 2023. Ainsi, en incluant l'allocation de revenus du CSG de R 1000, le revenu garanti pour un travailleur à temps pleins a été porté à R 13 075 par mois à partir de janvier 2023.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne le prochain budget et au regard de notre engagement historique plein et entier auprès de la population, soyez assurés que nous analysons la situation dans le détail et annoncerons les mesures appropriées dans le discours du budget. Nul doute que le gouvernement et notre Premier ministre continueront à soutenir les familles mauriciennes pour préserver leur pouvoir d'achat, en particulier celles qui font partie des groupes vulnérables. Merci.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is unfortunate that neither GINI Coefficient Factor nor the package announced by the Minister, unfortunately, do not feed the empty stomachs of the nation.

Now, I put the question. With the galloping inflation of 27%, depreciation of the rupee of 30% over the last three years, high interest rates for repayment of loans, a sizable number of the population is not earning enough to put food on the table to feed the family. Will he give guarantee to the population that in the next budget, there will be a package of incentives which will meet the undue hardship faced by the population, notwithstanding the financial support of Rs1,000 which is yet to be extended to the needy families? At least, the nation expects him to explain without fear or prejudice and to tell them what is the new package that he intends to come with at the next budget.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, j'ai terminé par cela. J'ai dit que nous sommes en train de travailler au ministère des Finances avec la collaboration de tous les ministères et de tous mes collègues et sous la supervision de notre Premier ministre, nous sommes en train de préparer le

prochain budget. Soyez rassuré, l'honorable membre, que nous, de ce côté de la Chambre, nous allons venir avec un budget pour le peuple et avec le peuple encore une fois.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

EID-UL-ADHA FESTIVAL – QURBANI – CATTLE PRICE

(No. B/515) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the forthcoming Eid-UI-Adha festival, he will state if the price of cattle for Qurbani has been fixed and, if so, indicate the price thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS & EXTENDED PROGRAMME STUDENTS – HEALTH ISSUES

(No. B/516) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the primary school pupils and students of the Extended Programme having health issues, she will state the number thereof, since January 2019 to date, being taken care of by the health authorities in each case, indicating the names of the schools and colleges concerned therewith.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, right at the outset, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has as its core business, the provision of an inclusive and quality education.

It is also aware of the significance of looking after the health, social and emotional wellbeing of all learners. The emphasis is on all learners and not exclusively on students of the EP in the Secondary Education sector.

We are aware that health and education are two corner-stones of our education policy to achieve the holistic and integral development of learners and this mutuality already ensures that steps are taken for health and wellbeing of our students to be embedded in our schooling system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that school health services are offered by the Ministry of Health and Wellness in all primary schools, secondary schools under the School Health Programme. The Primary School Health Programme includes immunisation and screening of pupils for any anomalies or deficiencies in weight, vision and health. The Secondary School Health Programme consists of a screening programme for students of secondary of grades 7, 9 and 12.

Moreover, other screening exercises are carried out by my Ministry in collaboration with other philanthropic bodies such the Lion's Club, the Optical Association of Mauritius, and the Dental Association amongst others.

In addition, the Special Education Needs Authority for special education needs pupils has a multi-disciplinary team consisting of educational psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and they screen learners for the most appropriate support based on their needs.

Based on data received from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, I wish to inform the House that out of 39,172 students of grade 7 screened from 2019 to 2023 for underweight, overweight, obesity, pre-diabetes, diabetes and high blood pressure conditions, 21,877 students were referred for medical follow-up. Similarly, out of 30,251 students of grade 9 screened from 2019 to 2023, 17,358 students were referred for medical follow-up. These figures exclude the years 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With regard to primary school pupils, I am informed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness that there are six school teams who regularly visit our primary schools and out of all the pupils screened from 2019 to 2023 in the primary schools, 14,150 have been referred for dental services, 2,717 pupils for vision problems and 2,816 pupils were referred to nutritionists and other specialists.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling a list of students of the Extended Programme who have been referred for medical treatment. There were around 80 of them from the EP section that have been referred for treatment at the Ministry of Health.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Merci. Est-ce que la ministre pourrait nous donner cette information *school-wise* ? Par groupe d'école?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This is what we are tabling. I will not be in a position to give for the whole 27,000 students or what, but what I am going to do, because you mentioned Extended Programme, I am going to give you the list of schools with the number of students that have been screened and referred to the Ministry of Health.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: La ministre pourrait-elle nous dire à quelle fréquence ces enfants sont suivis ? Par exemple, il y a des enfants qui souffrent de malnutrition, de myopie, surdité, obésité, etc. comme vous dites. Est-ce que ce sera possible pour vous de nous dire à quelle fréquence ces enfants sont suivis ?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that once we identify these students, we refer the cases to the Ministry of Health and it is the Ministry of Health that carries out the follow-up. The students are asked to go to the hospitals and they are followed by the Ministry of Health.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 2 – ROAD RESURFACING

(No. B/517) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the roads in Vallée Pitot /Eugene laurent street and its surroundings in Constituency No. 2, he will, for the benefit of the House obtain information as to

–

- (a) when the resurfacing thereof were last carried out, and
- (b) if consideration will be given for the resurfacing thereof and, if so, when.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal City Council of Port Louis that the resurfacing of the following eight roads in Constituency No. 2 have already been completed since December 2022 –

- (i) la Rue Suffren from Citadel to Champ de Mars;
- (ii) Galdemar Road;
- (iii) Impasse Leblanc;

- (iv) Lawry Cole Street;
- (v) Maxime de Sornay;
- (vi) Moon Street;
- (vii) Pollen Street, and
- (viii) Rue Sauzier, Vallée Pitot.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the resurfacing of the following seven roads will be undertaken in Constituency No. 2 as from June 2023 and for which award of contracts is in progress, namely –

- (i) Impasse Pouce;
- (ii) Gabriel Montenot;
- (iii) Impasse Crimea;
- (iv) Swan Street;
- (v) Impasse Eugene Laurent;
- (vi) Impasse Jules Mallac, and
- (vii) Impasse Gaston Martin.

I am further informed that the following three roads will be constructed in Constituency No. 2 as from June 2023 and for which bid evaluation is in progress now, namely –

- (i) Edgar Laurent Street;
- (ii) Rue du Pouce, and
- (iii) Tranquebar.

Thank you.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have done a survey myself with my colleagues in the constituency regarding the number of potholes and roads that are in a very poor condition, which I can submit to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister later.

Mr Speaker: No! No!

Hon. Dr. Aumeer! Each time you do this big mistake. It is now three years that you have been a parliamentarian. It is not a question of learning; it is a question of performing with supplementary questions. If you have one, you put it or else we move on to the next!

Dr. Aumeer: I do have two supplementary questions which are very relevant.

Mr Speaker: You are allowed only two!

Dr. Aumeer: I know, thank you. The funding of road maintenance is from taxpayers' money...

Mr Speaker: No, this is not the issue!

Dr. Aumeer: Will the hon. Minister ...

Mr Speaker: I will disallow your question!

An hon. Member: You do not have to shout!

Mr Speaker: I will disallow your question if you insist on this way of putting questions! Now, you put your question!

Dr. Aumeer: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister ensure that all future repairs and resurfacing by potential contractors and local authorities do work in harmony with the Central Water Authority. Since many a time, after resurfacing and repairs...

Mr Speaker: Again! Again! Again!

Dr. Aumeer: ... there are issues.

Mr Speaker: Again! Again! Again!

An hon. Member: *Al apran!*

Mr Speaker: Put your question directly! You know how to put a question. Don't turn this Parliament into a cinema! Put your question!

Dr. Aumeer: I think it was turned into a cinema just a few minutes ago!

An hon. Member: *Ah bon!*

Mr Speaker: I disallow your question! Move on to the next question!

Mr Dhunoo: B/518.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Dr. Husnoo!

Next question is for you! B/518!

Dr. Husnoo: Sorry.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Apran poz kestion!*

Dr. Aumeer: I am not going to learn from you!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No! No crosstalking!

An hon. Member: *Taler to bizin pran konprime!*

Mr Speaker: No crosstalking!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *To fou?*

Mr Speaker: No crosstalking!

(Interruptions)

No crosstalking!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

(Interruptions)

You are nobody in this House!

(Interruptions)

Present your apologies!

(Interruptions)

You apologise! Hon. Dr. Gungapersad, present your apologies!

Mr Speaker: Present your apologies!

Dr. Aumeer: I apologise.

Mr Speaker: You apologise! Hon. Dr. Gungapersad, present your apologies!

Dr. Gungapersad: What did I do?

Mr Speaker: You talked; you didn't have the floor! You are in Parliament! I should give you the floor to talk! You talk like this; you are not a mad man. You are not a mad man. Apologise!

Dr. Gungapersad: I apologise but I did not talk, Sir.

Mr Speaker: That's better. Good! Only mad people talk whenever they want.

An hon. Member: Stop shouting at least yourself.

Cool down, it is Parliament.

Mr Speaker: Cool down! Cool down and respect Parliament!

Mr Armance: Stop shouting!

Mr Speaker: Respect Parliament!

Mr Armance: Stop shouting!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You don't have any right!

An hon. Member: *Met li deor! Met li deor!*

Mr Speaker: You don't have any right; you don't have the floor!

An hon. Member: *Pa met zis diezel!*

Mr Speaker: You don't have the floor. Either you apologise or you walk away!

Mr Armance: I rather walk away!

Mr Speaker: You walk away!

(Interruptions)

You are looking for an opportunity. The population will judge. You are looking for an opportunity to abandon the House.

An hon. Member: *Ale! Ale!*

Mr Speaker: You don't have the floor. You shout to say anything you want.

Mr Armance: You are shouting, not me!

Mr Speaker: You say anything you want.

Mr Armance: You are shouting.

Mr Speaker: You don't have the right! The population is seeing how you abandon the House.

Mr Armance: *Get to...*

Mr Speaker: You are paid to work in the House.

Mr Armance: You cannot shout!

An hon. Member: Pran to....

Mr Assirvaden: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order.

Mr Speaker: If you have a point of order!

Mr Assirvaden: J'ai un...

Mr Speaker: Think well!

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, j'ai entendu le député Dhunoo dire des jurons à l'encontre du député Gungapersad.

An hon. Member: *Ah bon?*

Mr Assirvaden: J'espère que vous allez agir de la même façon à l'encontre du député Dhunoo qui a dit des jurons à l'encontre du député Gungapersad.

Mr Speaker: Okay. I listened to this point of order. I will check and if this is the case, then the same rule will apply but if this is not the case, you will have to apologise because...

(Interruptions)

Wait! Wait! If this is not the case, you are going to apologise for having introduced a fraudulent point of order.

Next question!

DUBREUIL-MELROSE LINK ROAD – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/518) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the construction of the Dubreuil-Melrose Link Road, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Moka, information as to where matters stand.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the District Council of Moka that the construction of the Dubreuil-Melrose Link Road will start from Melrose Village up to Dubreuil Village and which would be connected at River Vacoas Bridge.

I am further informed that several meetings and working sessions have been held with the relevant stakeholders. However, ALTEO Ltd. was not agreeable to the initial proposed alignment and it had made an alternate proposal to which the District Council of Moka has agreed.

The new alignment will be along an existing track road and join a stretch of land that has already been reserved for the construction of the East-West Corridor Road to be implemented by the Road Development Authority and will also pass through a state land and agricultural land.

The new proposed alignment has been finalised and a request has been sent to the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning for the vesting of the identified stretch of land into my Ministry to enable the District Council of Moka to implement the project.

Due to change in the scope of works, the project cost which was initially Rs82 m. is now estimated to be Rs161 m.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden! Hon. Patrick Assirvaden, don't move from your place! You have been doing that so many times! You are in Parliament; be civilised in Parliament!

An hon. Member: *Malelve! Deranz deranz dimounn!*

Mr Speaker: Supplementary!

Mr Dhunoo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House about the duration for the implementation of the project once the preliminary works will be done?

Dr. Husnoo: Most important thing, once we get the land, the duration will be about 8 months.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/515, B/519, B/521, B/541, B/542, B/564, B/568, B/572, and B/574 have been withdrawn.

Next question!

NATIONAL GENDER POLICY 2022-2030 – RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

(No. B/519) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the National Gender Policy 2022-2030, she will state the recommendations contained therein and the implementation plan thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MOGAS & GASOIL PRICE STRUCTURE

(No. B/520) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the price structure of Mogas and Gasoil, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation the amount of –

- (a) Value Added Tax and Excise Duty transferred to the consolidated fund;
- (b) funds transferred to the Price Stabilisation Account, and
- (c) other contributions charged on the consumers since 01 July 2022 to date.

Mr Callichurn: Mr Speaker, Sir, the price structure of Mogas and Gasoil is defined under the Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products) Regulations 2011. It is the statutory responsibility of the State Trading Corporation, as the sole importer of Mogas and Gasoil, to collect the different contributions levied in the price structure of Mogas and Gasoil.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that since 01 July 2022 to date –

- (a) with respect to Value Added Tax, a total of about Rs3.2 billion have been collected, of which –
- (i) Rs1.9 billion have been collected from the sale of Mogas,
and
 - (ii) Rs1.3 billion have been collected from the sale of Gasoil.
- (b) with respect to Excise Duty, a total of about Rs3.5 billion have been collected, of which –
- (i) Rs2.6 billion have been collected from the sale of Mogas, and
 - (ii) Rs979 m. from the sale of Gasoil.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that from 01 July 2022 till date, Rs877.9 m. collected from the sales of Mogas, have been transferred to the Price Stabilisation Account.

As regard to part (c) of the question, I am tabling the amount collected from the other contributions in the price structure charged from consumers from 01 July 2022 to date.

Mr Ramful: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, in January 2015, the contribution on 1 litre of petroleum product was about Rs27 and now it stands at Rs39, an increase in percentage of about 40%. Now, will the Minister consider proposing to Cabinet to review the price structure and review some of those contributions that have phased-out, for example, the MID Fund. You have phased-out the MID. Why is it that we are still putting levy for MID levy? Also, for example, the storage facilities, the Mer Rouge Oil Storage has already been completed. Why is the population still contributing for storage of petroleum products? The Rs3 that was initially designed for COVID vaccines and COVID Fund...

Mr Speaker: Put your question already!

Mr Ramful: ... so why is the Minister...

Mr Speaker: Allow the Minister to reply.

Mr Ramful: Is the Minister going to reconsider those contributions?

Mr Callichurn: Mr Speaker, Sir, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Member, these are decisions for the Government to take but let me inform the House, I apprised that following a meeting chaired by the hon. Prime Minister, that is, in January 2023, it was agreed that the Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products) Regulations 2011 would be reviewed as it has been subject to numerous amendments over the years. It was also agreed that the functioning of the Petroleum Pricing Committee would also be reviewed. In this context, a technical committee has been set up comprising of members from my Ministry, the State Trading Corporation, the Attorney General's Office, and the Ministry of Finance. Discussions are ongoing and further inputs on proposals are being awaited from the STC.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

FINANCIAL YEARS 2021-22 & 2022-23 – SOCIAL REGISTER – HOUSING PROJECTS

(No. B/521) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the social housing for families on the Social Register of Mauritius, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Empowerment Foundation, information as to the total number of housing projects initiated for financial years 2021-22 and 2022-23 to date, indicating the number of houses –

- (a) delivered accordingly, indicating their respective costs and regions, and
- (b) under construction, indicating the –
 - (i) starting date, and
 - (ii) respective costs and regions thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CAMP FOUQUEREAUX, SOLFERINO, HIGHLANDS & PHOENIX – WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/522) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water supply in the regions of Camp Fouquereaux, Solferino, Highlands, and Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

- (a) the reasons for the erratic distribution thereof, indicating the measures envisaged to remedy same, and
- (b) expected timeframe for the provision thereof on a 24/7 basis thereat.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Central Water Authority that the regions of Camp Fouquereaux, Solferino, Highlands and Phoenix form part of Mare aux Vacoas (Upper) water supply zone. These regions are supplied with water from La Marie Water Treatment Plant, which has a capacity to treat up to 130,000m³ of water per day.

The total number of subscribers in the Mare aux Vacoas (Upper) water supply zone, stands at 78,085 as at 30 April 2023. I am informed that the Water Supply Zone (MAV Upper) has witnessed an increase in subscribers due to the development of new *morcellements* and commercial development over the past years, hence, causing pressure on the existing water supply network.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a number of water improvement projects have been implemented by the Central Water Authority since 2019 to increase water supplied to MAV Upper, namely –

- (1) commissioning of one borehole at La Marie in 2019, supplying 6,900 m³ per day;
- (2) the commissioning of another borehole at Valentina in 2022 supplying 5,500 m³ of water per day, and
- (3) the replacement of 1 km of defective pipe along Shri Shamboonath Road, Camp Fouquereaux.

The complaints registered on the hotline of the Central Water Authority with regard to provision of water in the regions of Camp Fouquereaux, Highlands, Solferino and Phoenix have also decreased since last year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as at date, I am informed that the lower parts of the regions of Camp Fouquereaux and Highlands benefit from a daily water supply of 24 hours, while the regions of Solferino, Camp Fouquereaux (Upper Part) and Phoenix benefit from 12 hours daily.

The major constraints faced in the Mare aux Vacoas (Upper) water supply zone region relate to the inadequate treatment capacity of the La Marie Water Treatment Plant, the old and

defective network and the increasing demand for water due to developments in several regions such as Curepipe, Vacoas, Saint Pierre and Côte d'Or.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Central Water Authority has initiated action through a consultancy exercise to increase the treatment capacity of the La Marie Water Treatment plant up to 160,000 m³ per day through the upgrading of its rapid gravity filtration. Moreover, the Roadmap 2021 to 2024 for improving water supply services has proposed the laying of a new pipeline from Mare Longue impounding reservoir to La Marie Water Treatment Plant to increase raw water intake for treatment.

In addition, I am informed that the CWA has planned a number of pipe replacement projects for the region for the period of 2023 and 2024. For the Mare aux Vacoas Upper water supply zone, about 66 kms of old and defective pipes have been identified for replacement. These include some 6.7 kms of old and defective pipes in the regions of Camp Fouquereaux, Highlands, Phoenix and Solferino.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is expected that the implementation of the above projects will cater for the increased demand and also improve water supply in the regions of Camp Fouquereaux, Highlands, Phoenix and Solferino. I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Assirvaden: La région de Camp Fouquereaux, Solferino, Highlands et Phoenix - je peux le confirmer à la Chambre - reçoit une distribution d'eau pas plus de trois heures par jour. Peut-on savoir du ministre depuis 2014 à ce jour, combien de kilomètres de tuyaux la CWA a échangé et renouvelé dans ces régions ou globalement si c'est possible dans la circonscription numéro 15 ou dans ces régions spécifiques?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the supplementary question asked does not relate to the main question that has been asked by the hon. Member. I do not agree with what he has stated, that is, the regions that he has mentioned have only three hours of water supply per day. From the information that has been provided to me by the Central Water Authority is that the lower parts of the regions of Camp Fouquereaux and Highlands benefit from a daily water supply of 24 hours while the regions of Solferino, Camp Fouquereaux and Phoenix benefit of twelve hours of supply. This is where we need to improve and we are doing the needful to improve the hours of supply in those regions, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Assirvaden: Ma question à l’item (b) parle de la distribution d’eau *on a 24/7 basis*. 24/7 distribution d’eau a été une promesse électorale du MSM depuis déjà neuf ans, M. le ministre ! Peut-on savoir quand - la question est claire - cette promesse électorale, qui est devenue aujourd’hui une fausse promesse électorale, sera une réalité pour les gens de Camp Fouquereaux, Solferino, Highlands et Phoenix ? Quand cette promesse sera une réalité après neuf ans?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, once we upgrade the La Marie Treatment Plant, we will be able to provide more hours of supply of water to those regions that have mentioned and that will be, Mr Speaker, Sir, in a year’s time.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

PAILLES-GUIBIES SEWERAGE PROJECT – PHASE 2

(No. B/523) **Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Pailles-Guibies Sewerage Project – Phase 2, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to the –

- (a) price escalation thereof, if any, since the contract was awarded on 31 July 2019;
- (b) percentage work progress thereof as at date, and
- (c) schedule for the completion of the remaining works.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I had informed the House at our Sitting of 29 March 2022 in reply to PQ B/35 that the Pailles-Guibies Sewerage Project-Phase 2 was awarded to Sinohydro Corporation Limited by the Wastewater Management Authority on 31 July 2019 following the approval of the Central Procurement Board. The project included the construction of a reticulation network, house connections, replacement of CWA pipes and road reinstatement works, among others.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, as previously stated in my reply to PQ B/35, the contract makes provision for adjustment for changes in cost based on changes in Construction Price Index, fuel and labour. I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that the cost price adjustment has been applied as from March 2021 and the total

amount disbursed as at date is Rs37,511,901.84 (including of VAT). Till date, increase in cost as per the contract has been contained within the contract value.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that the original completion date of the project was revised to 21 July 2023 due to extension of time granted for inclement weather and COVID-19.

As per the updated work schedule, the progress of works as at end of April 2023 was 37.1%. I am informed that the surveys of the trunk sewers and street sewers have been completed. 90% of survey of house connections has been done and is ongoing. 16.8 km out of 48 km of sewer pipes have been laid and 75% of CWA pipes replaced.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been considerable delay of this project and as I had indicated previously, I have expressed serious concern on the matter to the management and board of the Wastewater Management Authority and requested that the contract be closely monitored. I am informed that the delays encountered on this project have been mainly due to closure of borders first in China and then in Mauritius in 2019, and for most of 2020, as well as the difficulty faced by the contractor to import foreign labour, equipment and machinery among others.

The Wastewater Management Authority has informed that in the course of supervision of the contract, several strong letters and warnings have been issued to the contractor to draw his attention and caution him with regard to slow progress of works, outstanding works as per his programme of work, slow rate of road reinstatement and contractual conditions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as for part (c) of the question, the Wastewater Management Authority plans to complete the remaining works in phases and under different contracts, while ensuring that beneficial use is made of the assets constructed.

The revised programme and other contractual issues are being currently finalised by the Wastewater Management Authority.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr David: M. le président, ce projet de tout-à-l'égout à Pailles, Guibies, dure depuis bientôt sept ans avec une phase II qui je dois le dire est devenue le chantier de l'horreur pour les habitants de Pailles avec de la poussière, du bruit et un état des routes déplorables qui a occasionné plusieurs accidents de la route. J'ai rencontré plusieurs victimes personnellement.

Puis-je demander au ministre si l'entreprise Sinohydro a mandaté un *Health and Safety Officer* pour s'occuper des doléances et des plaintes des habitants et des usagers de la route, et si oui, combien de dossiers ont été traités sur ces questions de santé et de sécurité ?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, the hon. Member puts a supplementary question which is not related to the main question. I cannot supply the information right now. I can, at a later stage, Mr Speaker, Sir, give the information to the hon. Member.

Mr Speaker: Last question !

Mr David: Je reviens avec une question qui a un lien directe avec le contrat dont on parle. J'ai cru comprendre donc - si j'ai bien entendu le chiffre qu'a donné le ministre - qu'à la fin d'avril 2023, le mois dernier, l'état d'avancement de ce projet qui dure donc depuis trois ans et demi n'est que de 37,1%. Puis-je demander au ministre s'il y a actuellement des litiges contractuels entre la WMA et Sinohydro et si ces litiges risquent d'entraîner l'annulation unilatérale de ce contrat par le contracteur comme ça a été le cas pour le projet de tout-à-l'égout à Grand Baie ?

Mr Lesjongard : Mr Speaker, Sir, I confirm that the progress as at April 2023 is at 37.1% and behind schedule and all matters pertaining to this contract, Mr Speaker, Sir, is being dealt at the level of the board of the Wastewater Management Authority.

Mr Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQs B/524, B/543, B/545, B/547, B/554, B/557, B/565, B/570 and B/577 have been withdrawn. Next question!

“PRIME À L'EMPLOI” SCHEME - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/524) Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the “*Prime à L'Emploi*” Scheme, he will state the number of young persons and women, respectively, having benefitted thereunder since the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

STREET CHILDREN – ESTIMATED NUMBER

(No. B/525) **Mrs K. Foo Kune-Bacha (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to street children, she will state the –

- (a) current estimated number thereof, indicating the number –
 - (i) of boys and girls;
 - (ii) out of school, and
 - (iii) using drugs;
- (b) number of staff members of her Ministry attending thereto, and
- (c) measures envisaged to address this situation.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, to contextualise my reply, allow me to attempt to quote UNICEF regarding the term ‘street children’. Mr Speaker, Sir, the term ‘street children’ has different interpretation worldwide and I am informed that the UNICEF has attempted to categorise ‘street children’ as follows –

“Street-living children are those under the age of 18 years old who spend most of their time on the streets. These are children who cut ties with their families and live alone on the streets”.

In Mauritius, there is no legal definition of ‘street children’, Mr Speaker, Sir. Consequently, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am, therefore, informed that, so far, no case of street children has been reported at the level of my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that there are 60 Family Welfare and Protection Officers, 17 Enforcement Officers and 16 Psychologists on the establishment of my Ministry to cater for children and families in distress.

As regard part (c) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, measures to address adverse conditions faced by street children, if reported, are as follows but not limited to –

- (i) Provision of Psycho-Social support to the victims;
- (ii) Identification of the parents and provision of rehabilitative services;

- (iii) Referral of parents to the Ministry of Social Integration and Social Security for financial support, as deem appropriate;
- (iv) Referral to the National Social Inclusion Fund (NSIF), for additional logistics support and arrangement for alternative placement of children, whether be it in family or in a residential care institution, where parents or next of kin are not available, and there is also the
- (v) Networking with SAFIRE to ensure that children faring in street conditions are provided with all the support as appropriate.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: En 2015, dans son rapport, le Comité des droits de l'enfant des Nations Unies avait exprimé son inquiétude par rapport aux milliers d'enfants en situation de rue dont l'existence même n'était pas suffisamment reconnue. Ce comité avait recommandé de mettre sur pied une stratégie ...

Mr Speaker: No! Hon. Member, you are not making a debate about whatever committee. This is a supplementary question. Put your supplementary question! Nobody else has the floor!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Ce comité avait recommandé - je cite juste la recommandation de ce comité - de mettre sur pied une stratégie pour adresser le problème et dans son dernier rapport, cette année-ci ...

Mr Speaker: No, no, again! Put the question!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Ce comité a fait exactement les mêmes ...

Mr Speaker: No! I am going to disallow. I give you a last chance! I give you a last chance! Either you can put a question or you can't put a question.

(Interruptions)

Nobody has the floor!

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: *I am asking the question now.* Est-ce-que l'honorable ministre peut désormais donner la garantie puisque ce comité dans son dernier rapport en 2023 a fait les mêmes recommandations huit années plus tard qu'elle va mettre sur pied une table ronde avec les ONG et toutes les parties prenantes afin de finaliser une stratégie comme recommandé par le Comité des droits de l'enfant des Nations Unies ?

Mr Speaker: This is a better question!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I appreciate the supplementary question from the hon. Member from the other side but once again, allow me to reaffirm and inform the House that the term ‘street children’ itself is very ambiguous and is subject to several interpretations, Mr Speaker, Sir.

To begin with a strategic plan is of course to bring a legal definition to the term ‘street children’. To try to put it in a context, street children in Mauritius could be referred to what so many of us including myself has done as children in our childhood which is during the school holidays, spent the entire day on the streets and then when it starts getting dark, go back home. So, to answer the question of the hon. Member of the Opposition, the very definition of ‘street children’ has to be established, first and foremost. And yes, should the need be, it will be in the right direction and going towards implementing the recommendation of the UNCRC which we are doing anyway.

Mrs Foo Kune-Bacha: Est-ce-que l’honorable ministre peut donc nous dire quand elle a l’intention d’emmener ce *legal definition* qu’elle a mentionné parce que c’est un grave problème, des milliers d’enfants sont en situation de rue ?

Mr Speaker: Very good question!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Very simple and short answer: soon!

Mr Speaker: Next question! Hon. Hurreeram, I think you are going to reply to this question.

METRO LINE - FLORÉAL TO VACOAS – BARRIERS INSTALLATION

(No. B/526) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the metro line along Swami Sivananda Avenue from Floréal to Vacoas, he will state if consideration will be given for the installation of barriers thereat for the safety and security of the public with a view to preventing them from crossing the railway track thereof.

The Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development (Mr M. Hurreeram): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to Parliamentary Question B/526.

Before the launch and operationalisation of each phase of the Metro Express Project, several audits were conducted. An independent safety audit was also carried out by the Singapore Mass Rapid Transit which is a world class company in terms of railway operation and safety.

The platform area of each station has been designed and implemented in accordance with international standards and best practices. The station platform is marked with a yellow line behind which all passengers should wait while the train is approaching the station. This is the common practice in similar systems around the world such as in France, England and Australia.

I am informed that at critical locations with high pedestrian density, barriers, handrails and fences are installed at each segment of the metro express alignment including the metro express alignment along Swami Sivananda Avenue from Floréal to Vacoas. Traffic lights have also been placed at major pedestrians crossings on the metro alignment.

Additionally, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit carried out a road safety audit at each segment of the metro express alignment including the metro alignment along Swami Sivananda from Floréal to Vacoas.

The Contractor complied to the directives and all prescribed measures pertaining to the metro corridor have been duly implemented with installation of barriers where recommended.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further advised that the Metro Express Ltd., on the stretch along Swami Sivananda Avenue from Floréal to Vacoas, the following security measures have been implemented –

1) Urban Fencing:

- (a) from Floréal towards Sadally for the whole stretch;
- (b) from Grannum Road towards Sadally junction for a length of 100 meters, and
- (c) from Saint Paul Road towards Stevenson Road for a length of 270 meters.

2) Handrails:

- (a) from Sadally junction towards Sadally Station for a length of 100 meters, and
- (b) from Wilson Road towards Brown Sequard Avenue for a length of 800 meters.

The Metro Express Ltd is also constantly conducting regular audit and assessment together with the relevant authorities such as the TMRSU, the police and the Ministry to coordinate actions and during which, additional potential safety improvement measures can be proposed whenever found appropriate and useful depending on the site condition and potential evolution in usage.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to instilling safe practices among the population, especially following the introduction of the Light Rail Transit System so that the public is more cautious as to their safety at the level of crossings and the railway tracks, the Ministry, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, namely, Metro Express Ltd., is still curing out intensive communication and sensitization campaigns on the precautions to be adopted at the Light Rail Vehicle level crossing.

Traditional medias, billboards and social medias such as Google Ads, YouTube and Facebook are being used extensively. The Traffic Management Road Safety Unit is currently carrying out a series of repeated campaigns on Road Safety including precautionary measures to be taken at Light Rail Vehicle level crossing. The campaigns started on 30th March 2023 and are currently being run simultaneously on a daily basis both on MBC TV and radio. A total cost of 4.7 million has been spent so far.

Mr Speaker, Sir, communication and sensitization programs are also ongoing at the level of Metro Express. The general public is continuously being informed on the metro alignment, its traffic signs, interfaced with the road, traffic regulations, safety at the intersection and the dos and don'ts on the metro platform on both traditional media and social media. Several videos have been uploaded on the Facebook page of the Metro Express Ltd., on YouTube, on digital platforms of metro stations whereby announcement on safety dos and don'ts are communicated to all commuters.

Mr Speaker, Sir, moreover, 50,000 leaflets addressing key issues such as safety and security, how to use the infrastructure of the Metro Express Ltd. among others have been

distributed to the public and other relevant stakeholders in different concerned regions, schools, parastatal bodies and Municipalities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to make an earnest appeal once again for road and rail users as well as to the public in general to exercise more caution and to strictly abide to safety signs and instructions given by the police so that their safety is not compromised. My Ministry and the Government remain committed to reducing casualties and to make our transport system safer. However, it would be achieved only with the corporation of all the stakeholders.

Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir.

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie M. le président. Le ministre pourrait-il informer la Chambre pourquoi des barrières de sécurité n'ont pas été installées sur la voie ferrée à Floréal alors qu'il y a des milliers d'habitations autour. Merci.

Mr Hurreeram: This has already been replied, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Ms Anquetil: À Floréal.

Mr Hurreeram: It has already been replied, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have given full details on the fencing, hand rails, where they are.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

Ms Anquetil: Je vous remercie M. le président. Bon je remercie le ministre, il a fait une série de propositions. Je sais qu'il remplace son collègue aujourd'hui.

Pour renforcer les mesures de sécurité sur le *Railway*, le ministère pourrait-il envisager une signalisation aux intersections numériques, électroniques et lumineuses, surtout le soir, le *signage* est petit et les gens ne voient même pas quand on vous dit *Turn right/ Turn Left*. Est-ce qu'on pourrait éventuellement envisager une signalisation numérique, électronique et lumineuse ? Merci.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for her suggestions, but you will agree all the signages, as I said earlier, are done with international standards and these are designed. It is not me or my colleague or the substantive Minister who designed that. That is a design done by engineers, by the TMRSU. They are being reviewed constantly but if my colleague thinks there is a concern, I will convey to the competent authorities. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for one and a half hours.

At 01.03 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.34 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated!

Hon. Abbas Mamode!

**ST-FRANCOIS XAVIER, PORT LOUIS – COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE –
CONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/527) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the proposed construction of the Community Health Centre at St-Francois Xavier in Port Louis, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that construction progress for the New Eastern Suburb Community Health Centre at St Francois Xavier, Port-Louis, is 75% works completed. The contract for the works has been awarded to Ganessen Constructions Ltd. and HSCC (India) Ltd. has been appointed as the Project Management Consultant. The project is expected to be completed in the coming months.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you. Can the hon. Minister inform the House why there were delays in the project?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the contractor cited an increase in market prices for construction material resulting in financial challenges. The construction award was in January 2021, and due to increase in price, there is a delay in the construction works.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you. Can the hon. Minister inform the House the total value involved in this project?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the total contract value is Rs36,237,936.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

ZEP SCHOOLS – SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

(No. B/528) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the Supplementary School Feeding Programme in Zone d'Education Prioritaire (ZEP) Schools, she will state the names of the suppliers therefor, indicating the terms and conditions of their respective contract.

The Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the School Supplementary Feeding Project is currently being implemented in 27 ZEP schools. Two types of meals are being provided under the project namely, enhanced meal and hot meals.

The enhanced meals are distributed on a daily basis to around 6,000 students in 24 ZEP schools and the hot meals are provided to some 670 students in three ZEP schools.

The procurement exercise is carried out at the level of the educational zones through a competitive bidding exercise based on specifications. I am tabling a list of suppliers for the School Supplementary Feeding Project in the ZEP schools as well as the terms and conditions of the contract.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a new bidding exercise for the provision of enhanced meals in ZEP schools has been launched. Bids are currently being evaluated and it is expected that contracts will be awarded by the end of 2023.

Dr. Gungapersad: Will the hon. Minister inform the House what mechanisms have been set up to ensure the quality of meals served to the children strictly adheres to whatever stipulated in the contracts of these food suppliers?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, as per the terms of reference, there are certain inspections that are carried out and I have noted that the heads of schools are supposed to monitor the situation and there are responsibilities attributed to the food caterers as well. I am tabling the whole set of documents, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Gungapersad: Hon. Minister, will you inform the House whether we have had non-compliant food suppliers in recent times and if yes, what actions have been taken against them?

Mr Speaker: Before you reply to this question, let me remind the hon. Member that you do not address a question directly to the Minister, you address the question to the Chair. It is through the Chair that you talk in this Parliament.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister of Education whether non-compliant suppliers of food have been noted in recent times and if yes, what measures have been taken against them?

Mr Speaker: Very good!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have noted that in a correspondence dated 10 April 2023, the Principal Public Health and Food Safety Inspector of Bambous Health Office informed that during a routine collection of food samples, the enhanced meal comprising of bread and roasted chicken with vegetables in one school revealed the presence of E. coli. The caterer also provided meals to two other ZEP schools and according to the reports obtained from the schools, there were no complains about any problem that cropped up.

However, actions were taken and the company had been requested to have health clearance certificates from Health and Sanitary Office for the resumption of distribution of enhanced meals.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

MEDIA EMPLOYEES (REMUNERATION) REGULATIONS 2023 – NON-COMPLIANCE – REPRESENTATIONS

(No. B/529) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the Media Employees (Remuneration) Regulations 2023, he will state if his Ministry is in presence of representations from journalists, if any, for the non-compliance thereof and, if so, indicate, the actions taken in relation thereto.

Mr Callichurn: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Media Employees (Remuneration) Regulations 2023 were made on 28 March 2023 to review general conditions of employment as well as the monthly remuneration of employees in the media sector and these regulations came into effect on 01 February 2023.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that since the coming into effect of the new regulation, no formal representation has been received at the level of the Ministry regarding non-compliance thereof. However, anonymous letters have been received to the effect the complaining regarding the non-compliance of the provision of the regulations.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Since the introduction of the first regulations of newspaper and periodical employees, will the Minister inform the House how many times has this specific RO been reviewed till date?

Mr Callichurn: Mr Speaker, Sir, since I have been appointed as Minister of Labour in 2014, I have met with a lot of journalists and people from the media in general and I was fully aware of the conditions under which they were called to work.

To answer specifically to the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, since the introduction of the first regulation in 1976, the previous review was done in 2001. Once again, when MSM Government was in power and the last review was done in 2023 again when a MSM-led Government came into power.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, hon. Minister. As in his answer he said no, there was no complaint, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there was some kind of appraisal that was conducted by his Ministry to ascertain whether the latest remuneration for the newspaper including the media in general is being properly applied by the employers in that specific sector and if any measure will be taken to ensure that this RO is properly applied? Thank you.

Mr Callichurn: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do meet with journalists on a regular basis and I am aware that not all media groups are complying with the new regulation. So, I have instructed my officers to carry out inspections soon to ensure that the employers in the media sector are complying with the new regulations.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

MAURITIUS INVESTMENT CORPORATION – FUNDS DEPOSITED & BALANCE

(No. B/530) Mr R. Woochit (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius Investment Corporation, he will state the total amount of funds deposited therein since the

creation thereof, indicating the quantum thereof given out to companies and balance standing as at to date.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, comme le sait cette auguste Assemblée, la *Mauritius Investment Corporation Ltd (MIC)* est une société privée à responsabilité limitée entièrement détenue par la banque de Maurice.

La *MIC* a été créée en 2020 par la banque de Maurice, conformément à son mandat avec comme premier portefeuille d'investissement des entreprises Mauriciennes de taille systémiques, viables mais fortement impactée par la pandémie.

La *MIC* a ainsi premièrement investi dans ses entités systématiquement importantes et viables une fois que la crise de la Covid serait passée. Ces investissements dans le premier portfolio de la *MIC* ont eu pour but d'assurer la stabilité du secteur bancaire Mauricien et par conséquent, la stabilité financière ainsi que structure économique et sociale de notre pays.

Grâce à ses interventions régulières sur le marché intérieur d'échanges au début de la pandémie dans le but d'assurer les conditions d'un développement économique ordonné et équilibré, la banque de Maurice a investi dans la *MIC* le produit en roupies de ses interventions, soit, R 81 milliards.

Depuis sa création jusqu'au 30 Avril 2023, la *MIC* a approuvé 59 des 174 demandes qui lui ont été soumises pour un montant total de R 54 milliards.

J'ai été informé qu'un montant total de R 49,3 milliards a été investi dans 50 entités. Le solde disponible après prise en compte des investissements approuvés est donc de R 27 milliards.

Merci.

Mr Woochit: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the hon. Minister aware that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has advised that the Central Bank should relinquish ownership of the MIC and that the financing should be provided through the budget? Can we know if in the coming budget, the needful will be done?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je vais répondre à l'honorable membre en citant le rapport de l'*United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)*. Je vais le citer. Donc, le chapitre trois, le point 35 –

“Containing inflationary pressures is vital to protect the poor and non-poor from falling into poverty. Central banks in Africa currently have a major challenge in balancing the trade-off between preventing inflation and promoting growth. Responses that emerged due to recent crises could be sustained and scaled up. For example, the Bank of Mauritius created the Mauritius Investment Corporation in June 2020 with seed capital of \$2 billion. It proved to be a decisive tool in safeguarding the financial sector and protecting livelihoods by creating a domestic investment portfolio and by providing critical financial support to large corporate organizations during difficult moments. The Corporation which has been an associate member of the International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds since September 2022, helped to maintain financial stability and mitigated the impact of downturns in key economic sectors.”

En lisant ce point du rapport de l’UNECA, ce n’est pas pour démontrer que nous avons raison par rapport au FMI mais, dans la réalité, si nous prenons les chiffres de la croissance que le FMI, lui-même, a amélioré dans le dernier rapport du *World Economic Outlook* d’avril 2023 où ils ont amélioré notre croissance économique pour 2022 par 36 %, cela veut bien dire que quelque part, à ce moment noir de notre histoire économique où nous étions au plus profond du chaos, nous avons pris une bonne décision en créant la MIC.

Donc, que le FMI nous dise dans un rapport d’essayer d’enlever la MIC en dessous de la BoM, nous, de notre côté, nous ne voyons pas l’intérêt parce que nous avons d’autres institutions qui nous disent le contraire. On est en train de travailler dessus. Jusqu’à présent, la MIC a fait son travail, a réussi à préserver des dizaines de milliers d’emplois et nous allons continuer avec cette structure en dessous la Banque de Maurice. Merci.

Mr Wochit: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether a due diligence exercise was carried out by the Board of MIC to ensure that the investment in these large companies are profitable and commercially sound, and if so, provide a breakdown on the expected return by MIC in each of these companies? If not companies, even sector-wise – agriculture, construction, manufacturing or whatever.

(Interruptions)

Mr Hurreeram: *Artizan!*

Mr Speaker: Order!

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, à l'époque, sous la présidence d'une sommité, le Professeur, Lord Desai, la question n'était pas de réaliser des profits mais, ce qui est bien c'est que dans les derniers rapports qui m'ont été remis, nous ne voyons que la rentabilité que réalise la MIC est supérieure à la rentabilité des investissements de la Banque de Maurice en dehors de Maurice. Donc, vous comprenez ce que cela veut dire, qu'on a eu des retours négatifs par rapport aux investissements de la Banque de Maurice à l'étranger mais que c'est la MIC qui a pu permettre à la Banque de Maurice de dégager un profit.

Mr Speaker: Next question! Second Member for Vacoas-Floréal!

MAURITIUS POST LTD – FINANCIAL SITUATION

(No. B/531) Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Mauritius Post Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the financial situation thereof since 2019 to date, giving details as to the debt, thereof, if any.

Mr Balgobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Mauritius Post Ltd. is a private company incorporated in March 2003, under the Companies Act 2001, following the enactment of the Post Office (Transfer of Undertaking) Act and the company is governed by its own Board of Directors.

Mr Speaker Sir, it is not the practice to disclose sensitive information with regard to government-owned companies as such a disclosure may cause prejudice to the company, especially since the Mauritius Post Ltd. has not received any grant or capital injection from Government since 2016 and it is self-financing till date.

Nevertheless, Mr Speaker, Sir, the financial situation of the Mauritius Post Ltd. is published in its annual report which is public and maybe consulted at the Registrar of Companies.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the Minister for the reply. Can he confirm that there was a loss of almost Rs200 m. according to the report of end of year 2020-2021?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that all these information are available publicly. And, as the hon. Member mentioned that it is of the public domain that in the Financial Year 2020-2021, there was indeed a loss of Rs199 m. but we know the reasons, because of the COVID-19, the lockdown in the country. The Mauritius Post fully resumed its operations as from April 2021. So, that of course, resulted in loss of the company because the company *in toto* was closed for that period.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask another question? Can the Minister confirm that as per the Baker Tilly Report, it was said that a financial uncertainty as to the ability for this Mauritius Post to continue as a growing concern, and that the Minister himself said that the future of that company is very uncertain?

Mr Balgobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of the report of Baker Tilly. I am aware of the report made by Deloitte. I do not know if the hon. Member is confused between the reports or he is mentioning a report which I do not have in my possession right now.

Mr Bodha: Can the Minister confirm...

Mr Speaker: No, you can't continue asking a Minister to confirm. You have been a Senior Minister yourself, how come? And you are still in Parliament. You are asking a Minister: 'Can you confirm; can you confirm'. Read your Standing Orders! By the way, you already put two questions. So, let's move forward. We are in a Parliamentary democracy; let's give the chance to others. Only one person is speaking. We give a chance to other Members.

SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS – CONSTRUCTION PROJECT - CONTRACTORS

(No. B/532) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the 14 contractors selected for the construction project of the 8,000 social housing units around the island by the New Social Living Development Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom information as to if consideration will be given for a due diligence exercise to be carried thereon in relation to the submission of their financial statements in compliance with their financial obligations with the Registrar of Companies, prior to effecting any advance payment to the tune of 25 percent thereto and, if not, why not.

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr K. Ramano): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the New Social Living Development Ltd. (NSLD) is in the process of verifying the information with the Registrar of Companies to ascertain whether the 14 selected contractors are in compliance with their financial obligations thereat.

I am further informed that the audited financial statements for the last five years were requested from the 14 selected contractors in the Letter of Intent (LOI) issued by NSLD to them.

I wish to refer the hon. gentleman to the reply made by my colleague, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, to Parliamentary Question B/413 on 09 May 2023 whereby he informed the House that the selected contractors would be eligible for the advance payment facility of 25% against a bank guarantee or a guarantee from an insurance company.

I am informed that, as per normal practice, prior to submission of any guarantee, all banks or insurance companies will carry a due diligence of the concerned contractors.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the NSLD has informed that, at this stage, no advance payment has been disbursed and any such disbursement will be subject to compliance with their financial obligations with the Registrar of Companies.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. I am glad to learn from the reply of the hon. Minister, that following my PQ B/413, with regard to the issue of compliance with Registrar of Companies, a thorough check is being done and I know he is not the substantive Minister, so I will not put any question further to this. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

TERRE ROUGE ROUNDABOUT – FLYOVER CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/533) Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a flyover at Terre Rouge roundabout, he will state –

- (a) the name of the contractor thereof;
- (b) scope and duration of works, and
- (c) cost thereof.

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Terre Rouge roundabout is currently operating beyond capacity, during both peak and off-peak hours, with subsequent queuing along Motorway M2 and adjacent roads. With a view to addressing this problem, a flyover is being constructed on Motorway M2 at the Terre Rouge Roundabout and the traffic movements will be re-configured with the following objectives –

- (i) to segregate the main traffic along Motorway M2 and traffic accessing the adjoining regions;
- (ii) to alleviate the traffic congestion along Motorway M2 and surrounding roads;
- (iii) to decrease travel times and reduce vehicle operating costs;
- (iv) to increase the level of service of the road to enhance both safety of vehicles and pedestrians, and
- (v) to boost economic growth.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA), that the construction of the flyover at Terre Rouge roundabout project has been awarded to General Construction Company Limited.

As regards part (b) of the question, the scope of works in respect of the project comprises the following –

- (i) design and construction of a reinforced concrete flyover on pier over Terre-Rouge Roundabout on Motorway M2 for both northbound and southbound traffic;
- (ii) design and construction of acceleration and deceleration lanes on both sides for southbound and northbound traffic;
- (iii) design and construction/upgrading of footpaths, drains and retaining structures;
- (iv) design, construction and relocation of bus laybys and bus shelters;
- (v) rerouting and protection of existing services such as CWA, CEB and WMA Network;

- (vi) provision of adequate road lighting and safety equipment throughout the whole project such as traffic lights, road markings, reflective road studs, traffic signs, informative panel, handrails, guardrails, concrete barriers, amongst others, and
- (vii) obviously landscaping.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the duration of the project is 540 calendar days; works have started in February 2023 and are expected to be completed in August 2024.

With regard to part (c) of the question, the contract has been awarded for the sum Rs427.1 m., inclusive of VAT. Thank you.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House of any measure that will be taken regarding the pedestrian bridge located right next to the construction site?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the existing pedestrian bridge will be demolished and in order to ensure safe passage of inhabitants from one side of the motorway to the other, a signalised pedestrian crossing will be installed underneath the flyover. Consultation between the RDA and the TMRSU will take place to ensure implementation of same.

Ms Tour: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Since this is a very busy junction, can the hon. Minister advice if there are any measures that will be taken to ensure the fluidity of traffic during the construction period?

Mr Hurreeram: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Member herself is saying, this is a very busy junction and a highly build up area and I take this opportunity to make an appeal to the inhabitants of the region and the road users to cooperate with the RDA and the contractor during the works. Obviously, there will be lot of diversions and it will be a difficult one, I must say. We rely on the cooperation of all the inhabitants. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

SUBRAMANIAM BHARATI MOKA EYE HOSPITAL - LASER PHOTOCOAGULAR MACHINES

(No. B/534) **Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the Subramaniam Bharati Moka Eye

Hospital, he will state if the Laser photocoagular machines found thereat have been put to their optimum use during the past two years and, if not, why not.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, laser photocoagulation is an ophthalmological treatment procedure which consists of the emission of a light beam at a single point high energy laser generating a selective burn with two possible objectives –

- (i) the removal or destruction of tissues such as tumoral lesions or neovessels, and
- (ii) the forming of scars on the retina to cause adhesion between the layers of the retina and the underlying epithelium to prevent the extension of retinal tears.

In Mauritius, the photocoagulation machines are used mainly to reduce the risk of vision loss by diabetic retinopathy. The procedure is usually not painful, and the patient may need two or more treatment sessions.

I am informed that at present, there is one laser photocoagulator machine which is operational at Subramaniam Bharati Moka Eye Hospital and there are 2 sessions of laser treatment being carried out daily at Moka Eye Hospital for around twenty-five to thirty patients. These patients are referred by the Specialists from the Outpatients Department of the same hospital.

Mr Speaker, Sir, two years back, after the second lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak in June 2021, there was a slowdown of activities in the department so that necessary health safety measures, such as social distancing and mandatory wearing of masks could be undertaken to mitigate the effect of COVID-19.

In addition, patients needing laser treatments had, at that time, to undergo PCR Test and therefore had to be admitted, and only upon receipt of a negative PCR result, they could receive the laser treatment. As such, for the period of June 2021 to August 2021, only 10 laser treatments were performed daily.

As from September 2021, the Rapid Antigen Test was used and patients no longer had to be admitted to the hospital. This enabled a gradual increase in the number of cases undertaken daily by the staff at Moka Eye Hospital to 25 to 30 cases daily presently.

The total number of cases of laser photocoagulator treatment at Moka Eye Hospital is –

- 2,916 cases in 2021;
- 4,347 cases in 2022, and
- 1,398 cases in 2023 (up to 30 April 2023).

In addition, there is no waiting list for patients needing laser treatment. There is a booked list, which means that the patients' laser treatment is scheduled on the day they are seen by the Specialist in the Outpatient Department.

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. If I got it well from the reply of the hon. Minister, can he inform the House whether there is only one photocoagulator machine actually operational in the public hospitals?

Dr. Jagutpal: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, the laser treatment is also carried out at –

- Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital;
- SSRN Hospital, Bruno Cheong Hospital;
- Victoria Hospital, and
- New Souillac Hospital.

So, there are different centres.

Mr Doolub: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. According to the Report of the Director of Audit 2021-2022, the service delivery was hampered due to frequent breakdowns of the photocoagulator machine. Can the hon. Minister inform the House if this situation has been addressed? Thank you.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, as per the information I have with me, the maintenance work during warranty period was carried out satisfactory without major breakdowns occurring during warranty period at Moka Eye Hospital or Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, technical interventions mainly at Moka Eye Hospital were dealt rapidly and resolved almost daily. The other information I have is that there was no major equipment breakdown and hence no extension during warranty period neither at Moka Eye Hospital nor at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital. There is no provision in the maintenance agreement for extension of contract in case of downtime of more than 5%. So, these are the information that I have concerning the Audit Report.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

MSAW - STRAY DOGS – ADOPTED & EUTHANISED –

JAN 21 TO MAY 23

(No. B/535) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of stray dogs caught since January 2021 to date, indicating the number thereof –

- (a) adopted, and
- (b) euthanized.

Mr Gobin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information requested. I am tabling the whole list for the years 2021, 2022 and 2023 in tabular form.

Ms J. Bérenger: J’aurais aimé pouvoir voir la liste pour pouvoir poser ma question supplémentaire.

Mr Gobin: Okay, if I may give some figures for the number of dogs caught –

- 2021: 504;
- 2022: 326, and
- this year up-to-date: 195.

Regarding adoption for year –

- 2021: 103;
- 2022: 121,
- 2023 up-to-date: 80.

For euthanized, a total of 185 have been euthanized and divided in –

- 2021: 45,
- 2022: 30, and
- this year up-to-date: 22.

I have to add, Mr Speaker, Sir, for euthanasia, there are two categories. The law provides for a category called ‘dogs caught in strategic locations,’ namely hospitals, airport, etc., as is set down in the law, and there are other categories where animals have to be euthanized for other reasons.

Ms J. Bérenger: Le ministre est-il au courant que la *Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare* avait sorti un communiqué en janvier 2021 pour annoncer l'arrêt de la capture des chiens errants, sauf dans les endroits stratégiques dont il vient de faire mention ?

Sauf que toutes ces captures ne peuvent pas avoir été faites dans les endroits stratégiques et des vidéos sont en circulation sur internet montrant la capture des chiens dans des endroits comme des morcellements à Roche Brunes, la plage à Flic en Flac, Abercrombie. Le ministre peut-il nous expliquer S'il y a eu un changement dans ces décisions qui n'ont pas été annoncées ?

Mr Gobin: *Non, non!* The policy, Mr Speaker, Sir, continues to be the catch, neuter and release instead of catch and kill. There are a number of reasons why catching has to be resorted to. If I may give examples of dangerous dogs or dogs situated in locations where catching has to be done: hospitals, airport, harbour, schools, dispensary, etc. So, catching cannot be stopped altogether. There are a number of reasons why catching has to be resorted to. It is the treatment after catching which has evolved from catch and kill to catch, neuter and release. Of course, euthanasia is also resorted to in extreme cases where there are no other options.

Ms J. Bérenger : Le communiqué est pourtant bien clair - *catching activity will seize until further notice*. Donc, *further notice has not been given* à ce que je sache mais je viens sur ma deuxième question. Le ministre peut-il nous dire s'il a reçu une lettre de l'association One Voice lui demandant de la transparence par rapport aux enquêtes initiées par son ministère et si oui, pourquoi est-ce-qu'il n'y répond pas ?

Mr Gobin: I am not aware of which specific correspondence the hon. Member is referring to. I may need to look at it because I do receive a number of correspondences and there is a total transparency in the activities of the MSAW. I would invite the hon. Member and the public in general to have a look at the website of the MSAW or its Facebook page where all the activities of MSAW, I think, are widely published but I will surely have a look at the specific correspondence and look into the matter.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

PAILLES - SMART CITY PROJECT

(No. B/536) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of a Smart City Project at Pailles, on the premises of the former Domaine Les Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation Ltd., information as to where matters stand.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, la State Investment Corporation Ltd (SIC) a conclu un accord de co-entreprise avec Yihai International Investment Management Ltd pour la mise en œuvre d'un projet de *Smart City* sous le nom de Yihai Investment Ltd. Le projet comprend les éléments suivants –

- (a) un ensemble résidentiel avec villa et immeuble d'appartement ;
- (b) un complexe de bureaux et de commerces, et
- (c) un complexe de loisirs.

Après avoir obtenu tous les permis d'approbation nécessaires en octobre 2019, le projet a démarré juste avant le début de la pandémie de la Covid-19. Par conséquent, sa mise en œuvre a été considérablement ralentie au cours des années 2020 et 2021.

Malgré la réouverture de l'économie mauricienne au cours du second semestre 2021, les mesures Covid-19 en cours en Chine ont été prolongées jusqu'au milieu de l'année 2022. La mobilité des ressources s'en est trouvée fortement entravée, le promoteur étant très dépendant des matériaux et de la main d'œuvre en provenance de Chine.

En outre, alors que le marché cible de ce projet était initialement constitué d'acheteurs Chinois, la réponse du marché Chinois a été très faible au regard des restrictions prolongées en Chine. Ainsi le promoteur a modifié l'orientation de son marché vers d'autres pays.

Tous ces éléments ont entraînés un retard supplémentaire dans la mise en œuvre du projet. A cet égard et depuis le dernier semestre 2022, une nouvelle équipe composée principalement de chef de projet, d'entrepreneurs et de consultants locaux a été nommée par le promoteur afin d'accélérer la mise en œuvre du projet.

M. le président, j'ai été informé qu'à ce jour quatre villas ont été entièrement achevées et que les acheteurs potentiels ont manifesté leurs intérêts. Les travaux d'infrastructures pour les quatre villas y compris leurs voies d'accès ont été achevés. D'autres travaux sont en cours sur le

site. En outre, la partie structurelle de la construction du premier bloque de 28 appartements comprenant rez-de-chaussée et 6 étages a également été achevée. Les finitions et les travaux intérieurs sont en cours. Plus de 40% des appartements en construction ont été réservés par des acheteurs et les acomptes correspondants ont déjà été reçus. La livraison des appartements est prévue à partir du début décembre 2023.

L'avancement de la mise en œuvre du projet dans sa globalité est suivi de prêt et la SIC se réserve le droit de prendre les mesures qui s'imposent en cas de besoin. Merci.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, in a spirit of fairness and parliamentary democracy, can I have three supplementary questions, just like hon. Doolub just had. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: No, No! In the same spirit of fairness to others, so many Members in this House, and in a spirit of Parliamentary democracy, I can't allow. Bear with me.

Mr Ameer Meea: But, I'll just remind you that you just ...

Mr Speaker: Only two!

Mr Ameer Meea: You just gave hon. Doolub three supplementary.

Mr Speaker: Who?

Mr Ameer Meea: Hon. Doolub! I counted it.

Mr Speaker: *Non! Non! Non! Non! Non!*

Mr Ameer Meea: Okay.

Mr Speaker: *Non!*

An hon. Member: *To pa konn konte!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Okay, we will check it anyway.

Mr Speaker: No, no, there is no...

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, *les nouvelles ne sont pas bonnes du tout par rapport à ce projet. Ce projet a été annoncé en 2015 et les permis ont été alloués en 2018.* So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to remind the hon. Minister that the SIC had invested in this project in terms

of 97 arpents which is to the tune of today's market price Rs2 billion as equity in this joint venture.

Mr Speaker: Put the question!

Mr Ameer Meea: So, my question to the hon. Minister: does he find this normal that SIC already invested Rs2 billion and what we just heard, that there has been only four villas, four villas that has been constructed *et il y a des acheteurs potentiels?*

Mr Speaker: Okay! You may ...

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is ...

Mr Speaker: No, no. You are embarking on a debate. This is why I am here to prevent you to go in debate. Let the Minister reply!

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, comme je viens d'expliquer, c'est un projet qui a démarré en 2012 et même pas en 2015. C'est en 2012 ! L'intérêt a été identifié en 2012 et après on a eu la concrétisation du projet en 2019. Malheureusement, on a eu le Covid et je ne vais pas revenir là-dessus. On sait tous ce qu'on a vécu durant la Covid. Et comme le promoteur, je l'ai dit est un promoteur Chinois, la Chine a été affectée jusqu'en milieu de 2022 par la Covid, la frontière était fermée. Donc il y avait beaucoup de retard dans ce projet et concernant l'estimation, je n'ai pas ce chiffre. Je n'ai pas le chiffre de 2 milliards, je vais vérifier et je reviendrai à l'Assemblée avec les chiffres. De mon côté, j'ai un chiffre de R 573 millions concernant l'investissement de la SIC mais je vais vérifier et revenir vers l'honorable membre.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, Montebello Smart City which is found in a radius of less than one kilometer to Yihai Smart City and Montebello Smart City is up and running. When we go on the motorway, we can find it. So, will the hon. Minister agree with me that it will be very difficult if not impossible to have two smart cities one next to the other and we can see that it is not picking up...

Mr Speaker: Let the Minister reply!

Mr Ameer Meea: ... there are no buyers rushing to buy it.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, je me permets d'avoir une opinion différente. Comme je l'ai dit, nous avons vécu cette crise ; la pandémie a bloqué beaucoup de projets. Donc, le projet

Yihai qui a démarré en 2019 est maintenant en cours de finalisation et nous avons les intérêts. Je le dis bien, il y a des intérêts pour ce projet. Nous de notre côté, nous suivons la situation en particulier la SIC est en train de voir où ça en est, quels sont les retours sur investissement par rapport à ce projet. Mais c'est sûr que Montebello a été un succès et nous, on est en train de notre côté aussi de regarder. S'il y a un problème, bien sûr, je reviendrai à l'Assemblée avec les éléments.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

**BUDGET SPEECH 2022-23 – ROCHE TERRE FOOTBALL GROUND –
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/537) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a football ground in Roche Terre as announced in the Budget Speech 2022-2023, he will state where matters stand.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart that for the project construction of a football ground at Roche Terre, a plot of land to the extent of 10,000 m² has been identified and a request for acquisition of the land has been made to the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning.

The project will consist of the following components –

- (i) Construction of a football ground;
- (ii) Fencing and landscaping works;
- (iii) Construction of the cloakroom;
- (iv) Lighting of football ground;
- (v) Construction of tiers, and
- (vi) Fencing works and it is estimated to cost Rs35 m.

The project is presently under preparation stage. Design and procurement procedures will start as soon as the land is vested into the Council.

Dr. Gungapersad: Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister perhaps he has mentioned it, i missed it; will the football ground also consist of changing rooms and toilet block?

Dr. Husnoo: I just mentioned; there is the construction of cloakroom as well.

Dr. Gungapersad: Mr Speaker, Sir, second question. May I ask the hon. Minister, tentatively, when can we expect this project to be completed?

Dr. Husnoo: As I mentioned Mr Speaker, Sir, it does not depend on me. I am just waiting for the land. When I get the land, if we got the money, we are going to start the project and I can reassure the Member that this project is being closely followed by hon. Ramdhany as well. He asked me about the project almost every month. That's the answer I've given him.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Table is advised that PQs B/539, B/548, B/550, B/553, B/558, B/567 and B/569 have been withdrawn.

Next Question!

OVERSEAS MISSIONS – MUNICIPAL CITY COUNCIL PORTLOUIS – COSTS INCURRED

(No. B/538) Mr E. Juman (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the official overseas missions undertaken by the Lord Mayor and the Chief Executive of the Municipal City Council of Port-Louis since January 2021 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom a list thereof, indicating in each case the total cost thereof giving details as to the *per diem* and other costs incurred.

The Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am placing the information requested by the hon. Member in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Juman: Hon. Minister, can you inform the House about the outcome of...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Juman, bear with me. I said earlier that questions are not addressed directly to Ministers. So, you should address your question through the Chair. It's not difficult. Practice it!

An hon. Member: He was not here.

Mr Speaker: He was not here. I am sorry. I am sorry in your place. But do the right thing.

Mr Juman: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House the outcome of each of these missions?

Mr Speaker: Very good.

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Lord Mayor went on overseas mission. He had 8 trips overseas and for 6 of them, he was accompanied by the Chief Executive of the Municipal Council.

As far as I can remember here, the Lord Mayor is a member of the Executive Committee of the AIMF, that is, the *Association Internationale des Maires Francophone* and he attended the meeting there 4 times and it is very important to remember - if you don't attend the meeting, you run the risk of losing the seat on the Executive Committee and it did happen in the past that Mauritius lost its seat because of the absence. That's one.

Secondly, the city of Port Louis has been listed at the UNESCO Creative Cities in November 2021. So he had to attend it.

Thirdly, in December 2022, the city of Port Louis has been elected to preside over the AVCOI - *Association des Villes et Collectivités de l'Océan Indien* that he had to attend.

In 2022, the City Council of Port Louis made an application to AIMF for the funding of the voltaic project of the Municipal Council of Port Louis. They made the application at the meeting held in Abidjan and eventually in Tunisie and here, I am very happy to mention that a grant of 250,000 euros, that is, about Rs12 m. was approved at the meeting in Paris in April 2023 for that particular project in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker: You have another supplementary?

Mr Juman: Yes. Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the Municipal Theatre that the Lord Mayor requested through the IMF to get fund to finalise the project?

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Member knows very well, this project, the first renovation, the first phase was funded to the tune of 300,000 euros. That was some time ago and that was the latest.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

CEB (GREEN ENERGY) CO. LTD. – BOARD COMPOSITION – REMUNERATION

(No. B/539) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the CEB (Green Energy) Co. Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the present composition of the board thereof, indicating the monthly remuneration payable to members of the board thereof.

(Withdrawn)

LABRASSERIE CUREPIPE - FOOTBALL GROUND – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/540) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a football ground at Labrasserie in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to where matters stand.

The Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I'm informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that it does not have a project for the construction of a football ground at La Brasserie. Instead, the Council has approved the construction of a synthetic mini-soccer pitch at La Brasserie and same would be implemented under the Indian Grant Assistance. The bid for the project has been launched on 05 May 2023 and the closing date was 15 May 2023, that is, yesterday.

The duration of the project is going to be about 105 days after successful award of the contract and mobilisation of the contractor on site.

Mr Dhunoo: Can you? Can we know the tentative date.

Mr Speaker: Can you?

Mr Dhunoo: Chair..

Mr Speaker: Mr Speaker, Sir!

Mr Dhunoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the Minister when the bid will be uploaded for this project?

Dr. Husnoo: I just mentioned. The bid for the project has been launched already on 05 May 2023 and the closing date was yesterday. I already mentioned.

MACONDÉ ROAD - CLOSURE – MEASURES

(No.B/541) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of National Infrastructure and Community Development whether, in regard to the closure of the road at Macondé, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to the –

- (a) nature of the works to be undertaken thereat, indicating the –
 - (i) estimated cost thereof,
 - (ii) expected duration thereof, and
- (b) measures taken to ensure the safe transit of the inhabitants thereat.

(Withdrawn)

LA VALETE, BAMBOUS – COMMUNITY CENTER & SYNTHETIC FOOTBALL GROUND –CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/542) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to the construction of a community center and a synthetic football ground at the Integrated Village of La Valette in Bambous, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

KOLEKTIF RIVIERE NWAR – ASSISTANCE & BOARD COMPOSITION

(No. B/543) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity whether, in regard to the Non-Governmental Organisation *Kolektif Riviere NWAR* (KRN), she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Social Inclusion Foundation, information as to –

- (a) if the said NGO is registered therewith and, if so, indicate the assistance granted thereto since 2016 to date;
- (b) composition of the board thereof, and
- (c) the main sponsors thereof.

(Withdrawn)

Mr Speaker: Next question! First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes!

ADANI GROUP – ALLEGATIONS – INQUIRY REPORT

(No. B/544) Dr. A. Boolell (First Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance whether, in regard to the alleged use of Mauritius based entities as conduits for money laundering and share price manipulation for the Adani Group, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as if the Commission is in presence of a Report of an inquiry conducted by the Securities and Exchange Board of India thereon and, if so, give details thereof.

The Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr D. Balgobin): Mr Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply made to PQ B/423 by my colleague at the sitting of 09 May 2023 whereby he clarified that Mauritius is not a conduit for money laundering since all global business companies licensed by the Financial Services Commission have to meet substance requirements on an ongoing basis as for the provisions of the law.

In regard to the current question, I am informed by the FSC that open source information indicate the following –

- a) The Supreme Court of India has, on 02 March 2023, directed the Securities and Exchange Board of India – SEBI, to complete the investigation into the Adani Group and submit a

status report within a period of two months. The purpose of the said investigation is to determine *inter alia* whether there has been failure on the part of Adani Group to disclose related party transactions, any manipulations of stock prices and violation of public shareholding rules in light of the allegations raised in the Hindenburg Report, and

- b) On 29 April 2023, SEBI has fought a 6-months extension to complete its probe into the Hindenburg allegations. The Supreme Court of India will hear the plea of SEBI on 12 May 2023.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the FSC that no reports of inquiry conducted by the SEBI into the Adani Group has been shared with the Commission.

Dr. Boolell: No supplementary question.

***KREOL MORISIEN* CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION –
REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

(No. B/545) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the forthcoming *Kreol Morisien* Cambridge School Certificate Examination, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examination Syndicate, information as if school Rectors have been apprised of the procedure for the registration of candidates therefor.

(Withdrawn)

ROCHES NOIRES - SMART CITY PROJECT

(No. B/547) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Attorney General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether he will state if consideration will be given for the designation of the area earmarked for a Smart City project at Roches Noires as a National Park/Special Natural Reserve in view of Mauritius being signatory to the Conventions for the protection of biodiversity, wildlife, flora and fauna and wetlands and if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

MARE D'ALBERT – HOUSING UNITS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/548) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the construction of 83 housing units at Mare d'Albert, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Co. Ltd., information as to –

- (a) the terms and conditions of the initial contract thereof, and
- (b) if there is any litigation with the initial contractor and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

Mr Speaker: Next question!

Ms J. Bérenger: PQ B/547.

Mr Speaker: Dr. Aumeer is here?

Dr. Aumeer: Yes.

Mr Speaker: You are too silent today. Put your question!

Dr. Aumeer: PQ B/549!

Mr Speaker: I am going by the instructions of the Chair. So, it is Dr. Aumeer! So many people have withdrawn their questions, some do not even know.

Dr. Aumeer: PQ B/549!

Mr Speaker: So, should I go by the turn of Dr. Aumeer? Okay, Dr. Aumeer!

DR. C. G. – SENIOR ADVISER – CONTRACT

(No. B/549) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to Dr. C. G., Senior Advisor attached to his Ministry, he will state if –

- (a) the contract thereof is still being renewed on an annual basis, indicating the field of expertise in respect of which the services thereof have been retained, and
- (b) he is in presence of any adverse report thereon.

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to part (a) of the question, Dr. (Mrs) C. G., *Docteur en Médecine et Lauréat de la Faculté, Université ou U.F.R, Paris VII*, former Head of Clinic at the Necker Hospital – *Enfants Malades à Paris*, former Head of the Clinical Immunology Department at the CHU, Reunion University Hospital, former President of the Reunion Health Conference and of the Reunion Care Organisation Commission, and former Vice-President of the National Health Conference of France, was initially employed as Senior Adviser on public health matters on a contract basis for a period of one year with effect from 19 April 2020. Her contract of employment has subsequently been renewed on an annual basis with effect from 19 April 2021. The present contract of employment will expire on 18 April 2024.

Dr. (Mrs) C. G., Senior Adviser on public health matters at my Ministry is performing the following duties –

- (a) Advising the Ministry on the strategy to strengthen the preparedness plan and response to the COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.
- (b) Proposing an action plan for an effective response to COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.
- (c) Advising on an appropriate post-curfew strategy and action plan.
- (d) Advising on the review/revamping of our public health programmes, health care planning and surveillance systems.
- (e) Advising and providing technical assistance in epidemiology and monitoring & evaluation activities generally.
- (f) Assessing the adequacy of the existing procedures and policies regarding control of infectious diseases in hospitals and other Health Care Institutions, Homes for the Elderly, Shelters, Reforms Institutions, Prisons, Educational Institutions and other public places vulnerable to spread of diseases.
- (g) Advising on the appropriate training needs of health care workers on communicable diseases control.
- (h) Advising on, and assisting in, conducting public health sensitisation campaigns.

- (i) Effecting daily visits to all public health institutions in Mauritius so as to ensure that each and every activity undertaken by all health personnel and other officers thereat is carried out in accordance with established protocols and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), as the case may be, and to take corrective measures, including training and necessary guidance, in the event of any shortcoming and non-compliance.
- (j) Submitting daily report on findings and recommendations.
- (k) Assisting in –
 - (i) coordination of Public Health Emergencies and response programmes;
 - (ii) elaboration of strategic/action plans/protocols for the health sector, and
 - (iii) development of training programmes in collaboration with medical and educational institutions.
- (l) Performing such other cognate duties as may be assigned by me.

Mr Speaker Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed there is no adverse report thereon.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. As the hon. Minister mentioned, one of her duties consists of conducting daily public health visits at our public health institutions. Has the hon. Minister not been made aware of her interference in clinical, and I repeat, in clinical practice of anesthesia and other associated specialties despite the fact that she is not registered at the Medical Council?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member should forward me the complaint officially – it should not be on hearsay – and I will look into the matter based on the Scheme of duties of the Adviser.

Dr. Aumeer: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House: is there no such rare bird in Mauritius that has such abilities and knowledge and intellectual capacity in medicine associated procedures to perform her duties?

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, no, there is no such rare bird in Mauritius. I have already given you...

Dr. Aumeer: There is Dr. Nuckchady!

Mr Speaker: No! How can that be? You put question! Oh, hon. Member, you are in Parliament. Let me remind you!

Dr. Jagutpal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I should not give the introduction of the person concerned; Dr. Nuckchady is employed in the Ministry of Health as a Specialist doing the scheme of the Specialist duties. As I said before, the Adviser is doing the duties as prescribed.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR TOBACCO CONTROL 2022-2026

(No. B/550) Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the National Action Plan for Tobacco Control 2022-2026, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

Mr Speaker: Next question! Come on, you should follow your turn!

Mr Wochit: PQ B/551!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance!

INFLATION RATE TREND

(No. B/551) Mr R. Wochit (Third Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to inflation, he will state the current rate thereof, indicating if same has been undergoing an upward trend over the last few years and, if so, give details thereof and the reasons therefor.

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, comme la Chambre le sait, depuis 2021 une augmentation constante des prix a été observée dans la plupart des pays du monde. Selon le FMI, le taux d'inflation mondiale est passé de 3,2 % en 2020 à 4,7 % en 2021. Il a ensuite augmenté pour 8,7 % en 2022, ce qui est le taux le plus élevé enregistré au cours des 26 dernières années.

En tant qu'économie ouverte, Maurice n'a pas été épargné par la montée de l'inflation. Selon les derniers chiffres publiés par *Statistic Mauritius*, le taux d'inflation à Maurice pour les 12 mois se terminant en avril 2023 est de 10,9 %. Pour l'année 2021, le taux d'inflation était de 4 % et pour 2022, il était de 10,8 %.

M. le président, ce taux d'inflation élevé s'explique principalement par les facteurs externes. Ces facteurs sont les suivants, tout d'abord –

- (i) les confinements et blocages liés à la Covid-19 en particulier en Chine et en Asie qui ont perturbé la production mondiale et les chaînes d'approvisionnement. Cette situation a provoqué d'importante pénurie car l'offre n'a pas suffi à répondre à l'augmentation significative de la demande des consommateurs à la suite des réouvertures des économies ;
- (ii) Le coût du fret a été multiplié par plus de cinq en raison d'une pénurie de navires de transport dans les ports où ils étaient nécessaires. Cela a entraîné une hausse des coûts de transport ou de nombreux produits manufacturés qui a été répercuté sur les consommateurs,
- (iii) Le conflit en Ukraine qui a exercé une pression supplémentaire sur les prix du pétrole et des denrées alimentaires en raison de contraintes au niveau de l'offre et la destruction de nombreuses infrastructures physiques.

Je dois cependant souligner que nous avons observé une tendance à la baisse de l'inflation au cours des deux derniers mois. Le taux d'inflation à Maurice est ainsi passé de 11,3 % en février 2023 à 11,1 % en mars et à 10,9 % en avril. À l'avenir, nous nous attendons à ce que le taux d'inflation continue à baisser. Merci, M. le président.

Mr Wochit: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House why the Government has not reduced the duties on several commodities in order to bring down the inflation rate, especially on the rising fuel price for the last six months so as to help and support small and medium size business owners who are adversely affected by the rise in inflation?

Dr. Padayachy: M. le président, comme je l'ai cité précédemment lors de la PQ, nous avons mis en œuvre une série de mesures depuis 2017 pour soutenir le pouvoir d'achat. Dans le dernier budget, nous sommes venus avec de nombreuses mesures pour soutenir les plus vulnérables et la classe moyenne.

Je ne vais pas revenir avec toutes ces mesures. Je crois que l'honorable membre nous a entendu sur ces mesures. Je voudrai simplement préciser, de ce côté, il est vrai, nous avons de l'inflation mais nous travaillons pour venir en aide à la population. Nous travaillons, nous

préparons des mesures et nous sommes en train de faire des arbitrages pour que ces mesures aient un impact direct sur le pouvoir d'achat des plus vulnérables en particulier mais aussi de la classe moyenne.

Mr Woochit: Thank you. Whether the Government has formulated any strategy price-wise to check and contain inflation rate in the next upcoming budget?

Dr. Padayachy: Pour le prochain budget, nous travaillons pour encore une fois préserver le pouvoir d'achat des mauriciens mais concernant la politique monétaire et la politique des taux d'échange, nous avons indiqué à la banque de Maurice ; nous avons demandé qu'il y ait beaucoup plus de control. Mais comme vous le savez, Maurice est un pays ouvert, la politique des taux d'échange est une politique flexible et nous ne pouvons pas trop le contrôler mais vous allez bien remarquer que depuis quelques mois, il y a une baisse au niveau de la valeur du dollar, ce qui veut dire que nous sommes en train d'avoir une légère appréciation de la roupie.

Pour revenir concernant le taux d'inflation, il y a aussi la politique monétaire avec la hausse du taux directeur qui est en train d'avoir un impact sur le taux d'inflation mais nous devons aussi voir ce qui se passe à l'extérieur. Nous constatons qu'au niveau mondial, le taux d'inflation demeure élevé, ce qui a une répercussion sur le taux d'inflation à Maurice.

Mr Speaker: The Table has been advised that following PQs B/552, B/555 and B/571 have been withdrawn.

Time over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A. Husnoo) seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS*First Reading*

On motion made and seconded, the Status of the Artist Bill (No. VII of 2023) was read a first time.

*Second Reading***THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL****(NO. VI OF 2023)**

Order for Second Reading read.

3.39 p.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2023) be read a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to introduce to the House, a bill that is slated be a precursor to Mauritius having its National Examinations Board for the secondary education sub-sector.

This Bill purports to amending the Education Act 1957 so as to set up a National Examinations Board for the organisation and conduct of examinations in designated subjects at secondary education level.

The Bill will also confer, upon the University of Mauritius, the power to award certificates of the National Examinations Board upon the latter's recommendations.

The National Examinations Board will, in collaboration with the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, conduct examinations in designated subjects listed in the Second Schedule of the Education Act.

The University of Mauritius will be the awarding body for a certification pitched at level 3 on the National Qualifications Framework. Thus, it will be at par with the School Certificate, the O-level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we must recognise that today, it has become fundamental for our education system to offer a diversity of subjects that are aligned with our contextual needs,

subjects that empower our youth with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to become responsible citizens of tomorrow.

We must agree that, the setting up of the National Examinations Board for the secondary sub-sector has become a requisite and is a strategic move that signals a new era on the Mauritian educational landscape.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to now, briefly lead the House through the Bill.

The Bill proposes an amendment to the Education Act 1957 by inserting after section 5, a new section 5D. Accordingly, the new section 5D referred to as the ‘National Examinations Board for the secondary education sub-sector’ spells out clearly the functions of the Board. These *inter alia* cover –

- (a) organising and conducting examinations in respect of such subjects for the secondary education sub-sector as the Ministry may determine;
- (b) developing rules and regulations for such national examinations and assessments;
- (c) developing assessment frameworks and assessment syllabuses in the subjects listed in the Second Schedule;
- (d) conducting research on assessments for the secondary level;
- (e) partnering with relevant institutions, local and international, as may be necessary for the conduct of examinations, and also
- (f) establishing linkages with international bodies to undertake, *inter alia*, benchmarking of national qualifications.

This, Mr Speaker, Sir, would be a highly effective means for the National Examinations Board to establish a nexus with recognising examination bodies overseas whose expertise would be an asset in our quality assurance strategy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the governance issue is also highlighted with the membership of the Board at Clause 3. A Chairperson will be appointed by the Prime Minister. Other members of the Board will be persons with expertise in administrative, financial and technical aspects impacting the conduct of examinations. In accordance with Clause 4 of the Bill, these members will hold office for a period of three years and will be eligible for re-appointment.

At this point, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me inform the House that an amendment to the Bill has already been circulated and that I will during the Committee Stage, move for the following amendment to Clause 4 subsection (4), whereby the words “subsection (3)(a) and (j)” would be deleted and replaced by the words “subsection (3)(j)”. The Minister responsible for the subject of Education will appoint 3 members having wide experience in the field of education and in exam-related issues.

At Clause 5 of the Bill, it is provided that the Secretary to the Board who will also be the custodian of all documentation related to the Board be a Public Officer. He will be assisted by a team comprising other public officers. That is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Examinations Board has been empowered at Clause 6 to enlist the services of such public officers and employees of other relevant institutions to assist in the proper discharge of its functions.

Other sections are those commonly and conventionally figuring in such Bills. These include the insertion of a new definition for the term “Senior Chief Executive” that will also be applicable to the main Act, in which to date, only the “Permanent Secretary” is defined.

It is also worth highlighting that, as examinations are traditionally viewed from the lens of confidentiality and, especially, trust, Clause 12 has been specifically inserted. This provides for members and officers of the Board to take an oath of secrecy with provision made for a fine not exceeding Rs200,000 and an imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years to any person flouting this sacrosanct principle.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me at this stage to guide the House on the role that the University of Mauritius will be called upon to play with the coming into operation of this Bill. The University of Mauritius is a reputed institution with the required experience and expertise as an awarding body.

The conferment of the new role under this Amendment to the Education Act will require consequential amendments to the University of Mauritius Act to include at –

- a) Section 2, the definition for the “National Examinations Board”;
- b) Section 4, a new object for the University to be an awarding body for the Secondary Education sub-sector in respect of the subjects listed in the Second Schedule to the Education Act, and

- c) Section 21, a new sub-clause to empower the Senate of the University to make Regulations in respect of the award of the above mentioned certificates.

The Senate of the University of Mauritius will thus have the additional responsibility of setting the rules for the examinations and validating the papers and the examination results through rigorous quality assurance exercises.

The Second Schedule refers to *Kreol Morisien* as being the first designated subject to be assessed under aegis of the National Examinations Board.

We will all agree, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a language is a fitting tool to build up the knowledge of learners, develop their intelligence and their ability to think critically. At the same time, the formal learning of one language always positively impacts on the acquisition of other languages as well. This is certainly true for all languages taught in our schools.

That being said, Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to briefly present a historical timeline regarding *Kreol Morisien* that has been designated as the first subject in the Schedule.

Members of the National Assembly will recall that *Kreol Morisien* was introduced as an optional subject in all primary schools, as from January 2012, in Grade 1 at par with other optional subjects.

The educational reforms led by my Ministry in 2016 brought in its wake the development of a New Curriculum Framework that took on board *Kreol Morisien* as an examinable subject. A first formal assessment of *Kreol Morisien* was conducted in October 2017. 2,480 pupils of Grade 6 entered for *Kreol Morisien* at the first PSAC Assessment. The performance after the first sitting stood at 79.6 %. Since 2017, *Kreol Morisien* is being treated at par with other optional subjects with respect to admission in Secondary Schools.

In view of the interest expressed by students, *Kreol Morisien* came to be offered in some 20 State Secondary Schools and 17 Private Secondary Schools in Grade 7 as from 2018. In April 2021, the first cohort of around 1,200 students reached Grade 9 and sat for *Kreol Morisien* at the first National Certificate of Education (NCE) assessment. The performance stood at 96.6%. In the Academic Year 2020-2021, a total of 19,890 pupils of primary schools studied *Kreol Morisien* while the figures for Grades 7, 8 and 9 in Secondary Schools stood at 5,935.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to inform the House that as far back as in 2018, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) engaged in discussions with Cambridge International Examinations (CAIE) for *Kreol Morisien* to be offered at School Certificate level in the CAIE system. Several reasons were put forward by CAIE to explain why they would not be able to offer *Kreol Morisien* at School Certificate level.

The CAIE informed that they only offer the inclusion of a qualification syllabus when they themselves are involved in the development of the curriculum. Further, they claimed to have no expertise in *Kreol Morisien* and that the corpus of literature available in *Kreol Morisien*, according to them, was minimal. Finally, CAIE was sceptical regarding the sustainability and the cost-effectiveness of *Kreol Morisien* as a subject at Cambridge School Certificate level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the face of the refusal of CAIE to offer *Kreol Morisien* as an examinable subject at SC level and in view of the legitimate expectations of students having studied *Kreol Morisien* for 9 years to pursue their studies beyond Grade 9, a Ministerial Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of the hon. Prime Minister to look into the ways and means of unfurling *Kreol Morisien* at the upper secondary education level as an examinable subject.

I must here applaud the work done by the Ministerial Committee under the Chair of the hon. Prime Minister, which came up with a number of recommendations –

- 1) The first one being to offer *Kreol Morisien* as an optional subject at Grade 10 Level as from May 2021;
- 2) The second one related to the setting up of the National Examinations Board, and
- 3) The third one concerned the offer of *Kreol Morisien* as an examinable subject at the end of Grade 11 leading to a National School Certificate in *Kreol Morisien* awarded by the University of Mauritius. This certificate, Mr Speaker, Sir, will be pitched at Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework that is, it will be at par with School Certificate, the O-Level. A credit obtained in KM will also be reckoned for the purpose of promotion to Grade 12.

This year, there are 209 Grade 11 students who have opted for *Kreol Morisien* while in Grade 10 we have 785 students studying *Kreol Morisien*. The number is likely to be on the rising curve in the years to come.

I would like to stress here that the Cambridge School Certificate and the National School Certificate in *Kreol Morisien* issued in the same examination series will be deemed to have been taken at one and the same sitting.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the fulfilment of its obligations, the National Examination Board will enlist the active collaboration of established institutions namely, the University of Mauritius, the Mauritius Institute of Education and the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate. And, Mr Speaker, Sir, we expect that work will be carried on smoothly by these institutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I said it earlier, the setting up of the National Examinations Board for the Secondary Education sub-sector is a landmark and a strategic move that signals a new era in our educational sector.

My Ministry is strongly concerned about ensuring that standards are kept high and that the credibility of the National Examination Board is never questioned. Indeed, all institutions concerned by this initiative, namely the University of Mauritius, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate and the Mauritius Institute of Education are all well-established institutions that are of high repute in our educational system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are going to get it right. I now commend the Bill to the House, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A Husnoo) seconded.

(3.57 p.m.)

Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Merci. La ministre a essayé d'apporter un peu d'éclairage sur l'organisation des examens du *Kreol Morisien* au niveau de la Grade 11 car jusqu'ici, c'est la confusion totale. Or, des zones d'ombres persistent et suscitent pas mal d'interrogations ; je m'explique.

L'objet du projet d'amendement de *l'Education Bill* est justement la création d'un *National Examination Board* pour l'organisation des examens pour les étudiants en Grade 11 et la remise

de diplômes dans cette matière par l'université de Maurice. Jusqu'à présent, le *Kreol Morisien* est le seul *designated subject* en vertu du projet de loi dont la seule matière affectée dans le court terme. Voyons d'abord le contexte : en 2021, il y a eu un fort plaidoyer en faveur du KM en 10^e année comme *examinable subject* pour le *Cambridge School Certificate* éventuellement.

Pendant longtemps, les réactionnaires ont voulu faire croire qu'en introduisant cette langue, on allait faire une faveur à une communauté spécifique ; hors tel n'est pas le cas. Le KM est la première langue parlée et comprise par la majorité des Mauriciens. C'est donc sur une base de droits humains que le KM se doit de trouver sa place qui lui revient dans nos institutions scolaires. Face à la pression populaire, le gouvernement a ainsi prit la décision le 13 mai 2021 en conseil des ministres d'offrir KM au niveau du *School Certificate*. Finalement, le KM a fait son chemin jusqu'en Grade 11.

C'était un grand progrès pour la république de Maurice en termes de droits linguistiques et culturels. Toutefois, la ministre de l'Éducation a avancé plusieurs raisons pour dire que *Cambridge* n'a pas accepté d'offrir KM au niveau du *School Certificate*. Ces raisons sont restées très douteuses et suspectes pour les différents partenaires du secteur éducatif et les militants des droits humains.

En attendant, les éducateurs du KM sont laissés à eux-mêmes. Ils n'ont aucun soutien des autorités et créent eux-mêmes leurs propres programmes et continuent à faire leurs classes. Contrairement aux autres matières, à ce jour, les étudiants n'ont pas de *specimen paper* pour se préparer aux examens. Pas de *mock exams* à hier, et le comble, c'est qu'il n'y a aucune communication officielle faite aux établissements scolaires sur l'entrée à l'examen pour le *Cambridge School Certificate* sur la manière de procéder pour l'inscription des candidats au KM, alors que les inscriptions aux examens ont effectuées pour d'autres matières.

La question qui demeure dans le milieu est : qui va préparer ce *specimen paper* ? Le *MES*, the *University of Mauritius* ou le nouveau *NEB* ? Nous allons revenir à ce fameux *National Examination Board (NEB)* un peu plus tard. C'est l'incompréhension totale pour les étudiants et les enseignants et un manque de respect de la part du ministère. Il y a un sentiment de discrimination et d'injustice. Le Mauricien du 03 mai cite une institutrice qui traduit les appréhensions et les inquiétudes de ses élèves, je cite –

« Mes élèves me demandent comment sera le papier d'examen? Quand on va pouvoir pratiquer? Mais je n'en ai aucune idée. Ils ne comprennent pas pourquoi leurs camarades qui ont choisi les autres langues peuvent déjà pratiquer des questionnaires et ainsi se préparer aux examens ? Ils se sentent lésés et sont conscients qu'ils ne prendront pas les examens dans les mêmes conditions. C'est *unfair*. »

A hier matin, M. le président, des profs qui enseignent en Grade 11 ne sont pas au courant de ce qui se passe. Les autorités avaient deux ans pour se préparer, mais rien n'a été fait. Il n'y a que le *textbook*. Maintenant, aujourd'hui, c'est le branle-bas de combat et la cacophonie totale. Plusieurs questions restent à poser –

- a) Comment sera le questionnaire?
- b) Combien de papiers sont prévus?
- c) Quel est le modèle qui va être utilisé?
- d) Quand est-ce que les *mock exams* vont être soumis? Ils sont censés être soumis ce mois-ci.
- e) Quand va-t-on faire le *training* pour la correction des épreuves ?
- f) Des questions également sur le KM en HSC car les étudiants devront bientôt faire le choix des matières. Le KM sera-t-il offert au niveau principal ou subsidiaire?
- g) A-t-on commencé à travailler sur le *syllabus* et les manuels afin que tout soit prêt à la rentrée 2024 ?
- h) Le gouvernement prendra-t-il la disposition d'offrir le KM comme sujet de bourse avec la liste de combinaisons de sujets?
- i) Est-ce que le KM est offert dans les académies ? Si non, pourquoi ?
- j) Le certificat de Cambridge mentionnera-t-il le *Kreol Morisien*? Ou est-ce qu'il y aura un certificat séparé pour le *Kreol Morisien*? Est-ce qu'il y aura deux certificats? Un certificat délivré par *Cambridge* et un autre par l'université de Maurice ?
- k) Est-ce que le résultat du KM sera inclut dans le certificat de *Cambridge* ou est-ce qu'il y aura un certificat séparé ?

C'est la confusion totale !

Le Dr. Jimmy Harmon, directeur adjoint et responsable du SeDEC, a rédigé un papier sur les amendements à l'*Education Act*. Il se pose des questions sur l'élaboration du *National Higher School Certificate*. Je cite –

« De nombreuses questions subsistent concernant la tenue du premier examen du *National School Certificate* et la suite qui lui sera donnée, » écrit-il.

Il se demande ainsi qu'elles ont été les dispositions prises pour offrir le KM en Grade 12 à la prochaine rentrée scolaire et se demande si le gouvernement donnera la possibilité au KM d'être un *scholarship subject* comme c'est le cas pour d'autres langues à Maurice.

Ce projet de loi concerne uniquement le *Kreol Morisien*. Pourquoi un projet d'amendement à la loi alors que pour le français, par exemple, qui ne relève pas non plus de *Cambridge*, il n'y a pas eu d'amendement alors que le contexte est le même pour les deux sujets, les deux matières ? Venons-en maintenant à la création du *National Examination Board*. Sous ce projet de loi, le *NEB* aura la responsabilité d'organiser les examens, de préparer les questionnaires et d'organiser la correction entre autres, mais avec quel personnel et quelle expertise et surtout quand? Le temps presse, M. le président. Commentant la création du *NEB*, le Dr. Harmon s'interroge, je cite –

« Pourquoi mettre sur pied un *National Examination Board* alors que la *MES* organise des examens depuis des années? »

C'est vrai. Pourquoi ne pas confier ces examens au *MES* qui a déjà le personnel, les compétences et l'expertise? Qui siégera sur le *board*? Le projet de loi stipule que le *board* sera présidé par une personne nommée par le Premier ministre. Pourquoi le Premier ministre? Il y aura également le *Supervising Officer* et deux autres représentants du même ministère. Quels sont les qualifications du *Chairperson*? Qu'est-ce qui fait croire que ce ne sera pas encore un agent politique, un copain, une copine, et en plus, ils auront la responsabilité de la préparation des papiers d'examens? Pourquoi est-ce que c'est le ministre qui va décider du montant des allocations des membres? Est-ce que le *PRB* n'a pas déjà fixé les allocations pour les membres du *board*? Quid du *MES* étant donné que le *National Examination Board* assumera les fonctions déjà effectuées par *MES* et autres institutions existantes ? En effet, la loi régissant le *MES* spécifie clairement ses fonctions à la section 4 –

“*The objects of the Syndicate shall be to –*

- (a) *organise and conduct such examinations as may be directed by the Minister (...)*
- (c) *award certificates; and*
- (d) *co-operate with other examination bodies.”*

Le *MES* est le seul organisme à gérer les examens nationaux et internationaux. Désormais, il y aura deux organismes ! Donc, il y a duplication. Pourquoi deux institutions avec les mêmes objectifs ? Est-ce qu’il y a là un agenda caché ? Est-ce que l’agenda serait de tout contrôler et de ne rien laisser à Cambridge ? Aujourd’hui, on commence avec le *Kreol Morisien* ; demain ce sera au tour d’autres matières. Il n’y a aucune raison pour un organisme parallèle au *MES*. Pourquoi ne pas créer une unité spéciale au sein du *MES* pour l’organisation du KM ? On éviterait ainsi de gaspiller l’argent des contribuables.

En même temps le *MES* devrait faire preuve de plus de rigueur. On se souvient de ce cas d’un employé du *MES* pris en flagrant délit avec des papiers d’examen pour les épreuves du *PSAC* qui aurait eu lieu quelques jours après et dont l’enfant, paraît-il, devait prendre part aux examens. C’est un scandale qui a fait grand bruit au sein du *MES*. Qu’est-t-il arrivé par la suite ? Nul ne le sait. Il y a eu des fuites des papiers d’examens. Certes, cela ne veut pas dire que l’on ne peut pas faire confiance à tous les mauriciens et les mettre tous dans le même panier. Il y a des patriotes capables et intègres mais c’est ce gouvernement et les institutions sous son contrôle qui n’inspirent pas confiance.

Je conclus en disant ceci : c’est un véritable manque de respect non seulement envers les étudiants et les enseignants mais surtout vis-à-vis du KM, langue de tous les mauriciens. Cela en dit long sur l’état d’esprit de ce gouvernement. On comprend mieux maintenant ces tergiversations autour de l’introduction du KM au Parlement et cela démontre encore une fois l’incompétence au sommet. Gérer un examen aussi important avec une telle nonchalance est sans précédent. C’est l’inquiétude, le stress, l’angoisse et l’incertitude pour les étudiants en grade 11 optant pour le KM comme matière. A hier, encore une fois, toujours pas de code pour l’enregistrement au niveau du *School Certificate*. Il aurait fallu négocier avec Cambridge pour la préparation des examens. Malgré le fait que Cambridge ait commis quelques erreurs, les mauriciens font encore confiance, font plus confiance en cette institution. Si nous ne sommes pas

satisfaits avec Cambridge, il nous faut commencer à penser à d'autres options. À un certain moment, il était question de l'*International Baccalaureate*. Pourquoi ne pas y réfléchir sérieusement ? En attendant, il faut confier la responsabilité de toute la question du KM au *MES* en collaboration avec Cambridge.

J'en ai terminé.

4.11 p.m.

Dr. Mrs D. Chukowry (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to bring my humble contribution on the Education (Amendment) Bill.

Mr, Speaker, Sir, pour répondre à l'honorable Arianne Navarre-Marie, je voudrais dire que le *Kreol Morisien is not a partisan issue, it is an issue that affects all of us regardless of our political affiliations*. Le *Kreol Morisien* ne touche pas une communauté mais toute la nation mauricienne ! Le *Kreol Morisien* est ce que nous avons tous en commun.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: C'est ce que j'ai dit !

(Interruptions)

Dr. Mrs Chukowry: Alors arrêtez avec votre politique de bas étage !

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! What is happening here?

Dr. Mrs Chukowry: I wish ...

Mr Speaker: I have given the floor to one person only!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Je n'ai jamais dit ça, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Somebody will rebut. This is not debate in Parliament. You can't stop an orator. Somebody else will rebut. You continue!

Dr. Mrs Chukowry: Thank you.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: She is not telling the truth.

Dr. Mrs Chukowry: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to express my full ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: She is not telling the truth.

An hon. Member: *Met li deor!*

Mr Speaker: You ...

An hon. Member: *Met li deor!*

Mr Speaker: You have ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Dire n'importe quoi !

Mr Speaker: Hon. Navarre-Marie, you have to listen to me. You don't have the right to talk, to make other speeches in Parliament once you have finished with your debate. You participated in debate and now debate is finished for you. Let the hon. Member ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Elle ne peut pas dire n'importe quoi.

An hon. Member: Same for you!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Navarre-Marie, don't go beyond my ruling. You know what is waiting for you. The population is listening to you.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: To you as well!

Mr Speaker: You can't become an orator and now you debate when another orator is talking. You can't do that!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Don't shout at me!

Mr Speaker: This is not the issue! This is me!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: This is the issue!

Mr Speaker: This is ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: You don't shout at me!

Mr Speaker: I am asking you to withdraw from the Chamber. You are going too far! Please, withdraw!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: You keep shouting!

Mr Speaker: Withdraw from the Chamber!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: You keep shouting like a dog!

Mr Speaker: Withdraw from the Chamber! The population is listening to you!

An hon. Member: To you as well!

Mr Speaker: You want to invent Parliament!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *Kapav tret ene madam koumsa ?*

Mr Speaker: You finished your speech; let the orator speak.

An hon. Member: *Pa pe get madam la!*

An hon. Member: *Kan madam, ki arive?*

An hon. Member: *Pena respe!*

An hon. Member: *Dir li respe Speaker?*

Mr Speaker: This is Parliament! One by one!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: You are bullying women parliamentarian!

Mr Speaker: No! You are preventing another woman! One woman presented the policy; another woman is speaking and this is what you are doing!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: She is not telling the truth!

Mr Speaker: You are bringing down the dignity of women!

An hon. Member: *Laont lor li, laont!*

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I think I heard the hon. Member, Mrs Arianne Navarre-Marie, say that you are shouting like a dog. I would like you to clarify this, please.

Mr Speaker: Oh!

If you said that...

(Interruptions)

If you...

(Interruptions)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: What did I say? What did I say? What did I say?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: One by one! Hon. Member you don't have the floor. I am talking to you. If you said that, please withdraw that and you withdraw from the Chamber.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: What did I say?

Mr Speaker: I will check on that ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, check it.

Mr Speaker: But for now you withdraw from the Chamber.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *Pena respe ! Koz menti!*

An hon. Member: *Deor!*

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *Mo atan twa deor la !*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! That was a sense of humour. Stop with that! What you are saying, I take it as a sense of humour, but don't go beyond that. That was a sense of humour. Okay, now you continue!

Dr. Mrs Chukowry: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to express my full and unreserved support for the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2023) as this piece of legislation has the potential to transform the education system in Mauritius and provide a better future for our children.

The focus of the Bill is the setting of the National Examinations Board and confers powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector on the recommendations of the Board.

Kreol Morisien features as one of the subjects. *Kreol Morisien* is being given further recognition through the process and testifies strongly its importance within the pedagogical and curricular premises of our domestic education policy. This is a crucial step towards improving the quality of education in Mauritius and ensuring that our students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the global economy.

The establishment of a centralised National Examinations Board will provide a standardised system of assessment and evaluation that will create a fair and consistent education system for all students. The Board will develop and administer national-level exams, regardless of the school they attend. This system will ensure that all students are subjected to the same standard of assessment and evaluation, which will ensure that the quality of education is consistent throughout the country.

Additionally, the proposed Board will play a vital role in providing recognition of qualifications. With a centralised system of assessment and evaluation, it will be easier to assess the qualifications of students and compare them against a standardised benchmark. This will be especially beneficial for students who may have completed their secondary education in remote or less privileged areas. The standardised system will ensure that their qualifications are recognised at the same level as students from other regions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I firmly believe that the establishment of a National Examinations Board can bring significant benefits to the education system. One of the most significant advantages of such a board is that it can help reduce the workload on teachers, thereby enhancing the quality of education and improving the overall efficiency of the system.

Currently, teachers are burdened with the responsibility of preparing and grading exams, which can be a time-consuming process. This workload often takes away from the valuable time teachers could be spending in the classroom, engaging with their students and imparting knowledge. The establishment of a National Examinations Board will significantly reduce the burden on teachers as they will no longer have to spend time creating and grading exams.

With a centralised board responsible for assessment and evaluation, teachers can focus more on delivering high-quality education. This will lead to a more efficient and effective education system as teachers can concentrate on teaching instead of administrative tasks. The

result will improve learning outcomes for students as they will benefit from the undivided attention of their teachers who will have more time and resources to invest in their learning.

Furthermore, the establishment of a National Examinations Board will create a more consistent and equitable system of assessment and evaluation. Standardised exams, developed and administered by the Board, will ensure that all students are subjected to the same standard of assessment, regardless of their school or location. This will create a level playing field for all students and ensure that their achievements are recognised at the same level. This, in turn, will improve the overall quality of education in the country.

Conclusively, the establishment of a National Examinations Board will bring significant benefits to the education system. By reducing the workload on teachers and creating a more consistent and equitable system of assessment and evaluation, we can create a more efficient and effective education system that provides high-quality education to all students. It is my hope that we can work together to establish this institution and create a brighter future for our youth.

Furthermore, conferring powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector on the recommendations of the Board is a crucial step towards recognising the achievements of our students. Mr Speaker, Sir, currently, there is no standardised system of certification in the secondary education sub-sector, which can lead to inconsistencies in the recognition of qualifications. With the University of Mauritius conferring certificates, all students will have access to a recognized and respected qualification that can open doors to higher education and employment opportunities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the education system in Mauritius is undoubtedly the backbone of our country. Education is the cornerstone of any progressive society and it is through education that individuals can become responsible, productive members of society. The importance of education in driving economic and social development cannot be overstated. It is the key to unlocking the potential of our country and our people.

In this context, the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2023) is a vital piece of legislation that seeks to further enhance the quality and relevance of our education system. The Bill aims to establish a National Examinations Board and confer powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector on the recommendations of

the Board. This is a significant step in the right direction to ensure that our educational system remains competitive and relevant in the 21st century.

The importance of education in driving economic growth and development is well-established. According to the World Bank, every additional year of education can increase an individual's earnings by 10%. In addition, a study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) found that education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty, improve health outcomes and promote social inclusion.

Furthermore, education is essential for the development of critical thinking skills which are crucial in the current knowledge-based economy. Critical thinking skills enable individuals to analyze complex issues, evaluate evidence, and make informed decisions. These skills are essential in today's world, where technology and innovation are constantly changing the way we work and live.

The Education (Amendment) Bill is a crucial step towards ensuring that our education system remains relevant and competitive in the 21st century. The establishment of a National Examinations Board will provide a standardised system of assessment and evaluation for students in the secondary education sector. This will help to ensure the quality of education and the recognition of qualifications. With a centralised board, all students will have an equal opportunity to succeed and be recognized for their achievements.

Moreover, conferring powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector on the recommendations of the Board will help to standardise the certification process. This will ensure that all students have access to a recognised and respected qualification that can open doors to higher education and employment opportunities. This can lead to increased social mobility and better life chances for our citizens.

The establishment of the National Examination Board will provide a uniform and standardised approach to the examination process, ensuring that all students are evaluated on a level playing field.

Standardised assessments are essential for the effective evaluation of educational system and they have demonstrated to be reliable and valid measures of student achievement. Standardised assessments help to ensure that students are being evaluated on the same attributes

and skills regardless of where they attend school. This, Mr Speaker, Sir, promotes fairness and equal opportunities as well as accurate rate assessment of students' performance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Examinations Board will be responsible for setting examination standards and guidelines for all secondary school students in Mauritius. This will help to ensure that all students receive a high quality education and that their achievements are recognised on a national level. The Board will also help to identify areas where improvements can be made, such as curriculum development or teachers training.

Furthermore, the National Examinations Board will provide a central point for collation and analysis of examination data which will enable educators and policymakers to make informed decisions about the education system. This data can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the system as well as trends and patterns in students' achievement. This information can help to guide policy decisions and to ensure that resources are being used effectively to improve the education system.

The conferral of powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education subsector on the recommendation of the National Examinations Board is a significant step forward for the education system in Mauritius. This reform will bring many benefits to the education system in the country as a whole.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this reform will strengthen the credibility and recognition of certification awarded in the secondary education subsector. Currently, the quality of education and the value of certificate can vary between schools. By having a standardised approach to examinations and certification, this will ensure that all students receive a high-quality education and that their achievements are recognised and valued.

This reform will additionally open up new opportunities for students to pursue higher education and career opportunities both locally and internationally. The certificates awarded by the University of Mauritius will be recognised by universities and employers around the world, providing greater opportunities for our students to further their education and careers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our Government is deeply committed to ensuring that our education system is accountable and able to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The establishment of a National Examinations Board is an essential step towards achieving this goal. The Board will

bring greater accountability to the education system, ensuring that all schools are held to the same high standards.

Mr Speaker, Sir, currently, there are significant disparities in the quality of education provided by different schools, which can lead to disparities in student achievement.

Furthermore, the National Examinations Board will create a more transparent and accountable education system. The Board will be responsible for developing and administering national-level exams, which will provide a standardised benchmark for assessing student achievement. This will make it easier to assess the quality of education provided by different schools and hold them accountable for their performance. Schools that consistently perform poorly on these exams will be identified and provided with additional resources and support to help them improve.

By creating a more accountable education system, the National Examinations Board will help to raise the overall quality of education in the country. The Board will ensure that all students are well-prepared for the challenges of the 21st century, equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's rapidly changing world.

In conclusion, the establishment of a National Examinations Board is an essential reform that will bring greater accountability to the education system. By ensuring that all schools are held to the same high standards, and that students are evaluated on a level playing field, we can create a more transparent, equitable, and effective education system.

Furthermore, this reform will also benefit the economy of Mauritius. By providing a high-quality education to our students, we will be producing a skilled workforce that is able to compete in the global marketplace. This will attract investment and create new job opportunities leading to economic growth and prosperity for the country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot stress enough the importance of investing in our education system. The Education (Amendment) Bill is a crucial piece of legislation that will have a significant impact on the future of Mauritius and its citizens. The establishment of a National Examinations Board and the conferral of powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector are steps in the right direction towards building a better future for our country.

Education has been and always will be a cornerstone of a prosperous and civilised society. As Aristotle once said, –

“Education is the best provision for old age.”

With this Bill, we are investing in the future of our children and our country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, education is not just about imparting knowledge, it is also about instilling values such as critical thinking, empathy and social responsibility. By investing in our children's education, we are investing in the future leaders of our nation.

To end, I wish to congratulate hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for bringing to the House the Education (Amendment) Bill. Let us not miss this opportunity to invest in our children and their future. Let us support the Education (Amendment) Bill and work together to build a brighter future for Mauritius.

Thank you for your attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Tour!

(4.35 p.m.)

Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): M. le président, malgré tout le pessimisme de l'intervenante qui m'a précédée, l'honorable Arianne Navarre-Marie, je préfère voir le côté positif de cet amendement et ce qu'il va représenter pour notre langue maternelle.

Et justement, il était temps, M. le président, de concrétiser un nouveau pas dans la reconnaissance de notre belle langue créole. Je dirais même qu'il était grand temps de renforcer sa présence dans notre système éducatif afin de donner toutes les chances de succès à nos enfants. La réussite scolaire, tous les pédagogues du monde le savent, passe par l'utilisation de la langue maternelle dans l'éducation.

Voici, donc, encore une mesure historique que notre gouvernement souhaite amener et que cette auguste Assemblée s'appête à voter. Je vais parler ici, M. le président, de l'*Education (Amendment) Bill 2023* qui va introduire le *Kreol Morisien* comme matière d'examen dans le

secondaire. Pour ma part, j'ai particulièrement à cœur de défendre ce projet d'amendement qui va renforcer notre mauricianisme, à commencer par les compétences éducatives de nos enfants.

Le *Kreol Morisien*, notre belle langue maternelle est parlée dans pratiquement toutes les maisons de Maurice. Aussi, nous devons consacrer tous nos efforts, M. le président, à lui donner la place qu'elle mérite dans l'éducation de nos enfants qui sont les acteurs du monde de demain.

Cet amendement, M. le président, prévoit justement d'introduire un nouveau *Schedule* à l'*Education Act*, petit en apparence, certes, mais immense dans ses implications et il sera, je le pressens déjà, une locomotive pour beaucoup d'autres mesures allant dans le même sens.

En effet, cet ajustement de l'*Education (Amendment) Bill 2023* viendra à lui tout seul 'mauricianiser' notre système d'éducation et en particulier, notre système d'évaluation et ce sera fait d'une pierre deux coups. D'abord, par la création d'un Comité national d'examens qui va délivrer les diplômes localement, ce qui est déjà une grande première dans l'histoire de l'éducation à Maurice. Et en plus, c'est une nouvelle matière d'examens qui va être également créée, j'ai nommé donc, M. le président, le *Kreol Morisien*.

Voilà donc un amendement majeur et décisif qui comportera plusieurs implications en amont et en aval. En effet, l'introduction des examens pour la matière *Kreol Morisien* sera un maillon important du système éducatif qui permettra une continuité de la scolarité. En amont de la mesure, nous devons nous rappeler que c'est en 2012, il y a dix ans, que le *Kreol Morisien* faisait son entrée à l'école primaire comme matière optionnelle et dès la rentrée de 2012, un peu plus de 3000 parents avaient déjà choisis l'option *Kreol Morisien* pour les enfants en première année. Puis, le *Kreol Morisien* a été introduit comme matière au secondaire avec les cours de fondations.

Notre amendement d'aujourd'hui, M. le président, s'inscrit donc dans une perspective historique. Après l'introduction du *Kreol Morisien* comme matière enseignée dans le primaire et dans le secondaire, c'est une suite logique et naturelle que d'en faire une véritable matière d'examen. Cela va encourager d'avantage de parents et d'élèves à prendre le *Kreol Morisien* comme option puisque cette option permettra désormais d'obtenir des points aux examens.

Et vous remarquerez, M. le président, qu'il ne s'agit pas pour ce gouvernement de tirer la couverture à lui. Il n'est nullement question pour nous de nier la contribution du précédent

gouvernement qui a introduit le *Kreol Morisien* à l'école. Nous ne sommes pas là non plus pour écraser ce que les autres ont fait de bien avant nous.

Cette nouvelle mesure d'introduire le *Kreol Morisien* comme matière d'examen démontre la volonté du gouvernement pour faire passer en premier l'intérêt de la population et le bien-être de ses citoyens. Le gouvernement va toujours privilégier la continuité des affaires de l'État, pas comme certains antipatriotes que je ne vais pas nommer mais que nous connaissons bien et qui ne cessent de dénigrer et de détruire rien que pour le plaisir.

Je vous disais donc, M. le président, que la langue créole fait désormais partie intégrante du cursus scolaire aux élèves depuis dix ans. L'heure était venue de consolider cette avancée en l'inscrivant aux examens au niveau secondaire. C'est un pas de géant que ce gouvernement s'engage ainsi à faire et sa portée sera gigantesque pour la 'mauricianisation' de notre système éducatif.

Il est indéniable, M. le président, que l'introduction du *Kreol Morisien* aux examens est une grande avancée pour lui donner le statut de langue qui lui revient de plein droit. Faire du *Kreol Morisien* une matière d'examen, c'est le hisser au niveau de langue d'enseignement au même titre que toutes les autres langues telles que l'Anglais, le Mandarin, l'Arabe ou l'Hindi. C'est aussi valoriser la position du *Kreol Morisien* parmi les différentes langues utilisées à Maurice.

Nous parlons tous plusieurs langues, toutefois, le *Kreol Morisien*, c'est la seule qui est vraiment comprise par tous. C'est notre langue maternelle, c'est notre expression naturelle et c'est celle qui nous permet de verbaliser nos pensées, nos émotions, nos connaissances comme aucune autre langue ne peut le faire.

On retiendra également que l'enseignement de la langue maternelle comme matière validée par un examen permet à l'élève de mieux valoriser les connaissances implicites ou informelles acquises dans son environnement de tous les jours. L'élève qui possède des compétences en *Kreol Morisien* pourra maintenant les faire valoir dans son parcours scolaire et ainsi maximiser ses chances de réussite aux examens.

En d'autres termes, cet amendement va créer une opportunité supplémentaire de passer avec succès les examens pour tous les enfants qui choisissent cette option, car nos élèves, M. le

président, sont intelligents et notre *Kreol Morisien* est une source précieuse qui est encore à peine exploitée de savoir cognitif qu'il convient de valoriser dans leur patrimoine éducatif.

Cet amendement, M. le président, va donner au *Kreol Morisien* la chance d'avoir sa place sur un certificat, d'être inscrit en bonne et due forme sur un certificat. Nous le savons tous ce que cela représente de nos jours d'avoir un diplôme. Nous pouvons déjà visualiser ici la fierté que ce sera pour les élèves ou pour leurs parents lorsqu'ils obtiendront un diplôme en *Kreol Morisien* avec distinction. Oui, ce sera une fierté pour tous les élèves, parents, professeurs et même pour la nation Mauricienne. Une très belle façon, M. le président, d'honorer notre langue maternelle !

En aval de la mesure, il faut également considérer que le *Kreol Morisien* comme matière d'examen pourra encourager d'avantage de vocations. Ce sera non seulement une porte grande ouverte vers le développement des études créoles mais cela va contribuer également à créer de nouveaux postes d'enseignement.

Quelle belle reconnaissance au passage, M. le président, pour tous les militants de la langue créole ! Cet amendement introduisant l'option *Kreol Morisien* comme matière d'examen est une façon pour le gouvernement de reconnaître leurs efforts. Avec cet ajustement, nous pouvons mesurer le chemin parcouru en grande partie grâce à eux. Quel plus bel exemple pour montrer que notre gouvernement travaille toujours main dans la main avec la société civile, les citoyens et les intellectuels qui œuvrent pour le bien commun !

En tant que député de la circonscription No. 4, je souhaite moi aussi saluer leur engagement et leur dévouement, tous ces militants de la langue créole, je veux leur adresser mes chaleureuses félicitations et tout mon support pour cette cause qui est mon engagement de chaque jour, que ce soit auprès de mes mandants et de leurs enfants, que ce soit dans cet hémicycle ou sur le terrain international lorsque je suis emmenée à représenter Maurice à l'étranger.

M. le président, notre belle langue maternelle a dû affronter bien des obstacles sur le chemin de la reconnaissance jusqu'à présent. Bon nombre de '*créolo-sceptiques*' se demandent jusqu'à maintenant à quoi peut bien servir l'enseignement du *Kreol Morisien* à l'école. Nous comprenons leurs doutes et leurs réticences, surtout avec la chape de plomb des préjugés qui ont pesé de tout leur poids sur le destin de notre langue maternelle pendant longtemps.

Rappelez-vous que dans un passé pas si lointain, M. le président, on ne disait même pas ‘langue créole’, on disait ‘patois’. La question du *Kreol Morisien* à l’école a fait couler beaucoup d’encre et occasionner des débats houleux. Certains pensent même qu’elle a été la pomme de la discorde.

Je répondrais donc, M. le président, qu’il est temps d’enterrer la hache de guerre autour de la langue créole. Il nous faut changer d’approche sur la question et nous avons déjà changé d’approche sur la question. Avec cet amendement qui donne une vraie liberté aux parents, nous sommes dans la réconciliation de tous les points de vue car le *Kreol Morisien* en tant que matière optionnelle d’examen est aussi une façon de respecter pleinement la décision de tous ceux qui veulent la choisir comme option.

Quant à tous ceux qui ont choisi l’option *Kreol Morisien* pour leur enfant, ils auront la possibilité de continuer sur cette lancée et, comme nous l’avons dit tout à l’heure, de couronner ce choix par un diplôme en bonne et due forme.

Et vous remarquerez au passage, M. le président, la démarche progressive qui est adoptée par ce gouvernement ; une démarche progressive et progressiste. Aller pas à pas, mesurer le chemin parcouru avant de prendre d’autres décisions qui ont une importance pour l’avenir de notre jeune nation tout en s’appuyant sur les avis éclairés de nos pédagogues, de nos intellectuels et de nos militants, loin de toute considération démagogique ou partisane. C’est une marque de sagesse qui fait la spécificité de ce gouvernement et qu’il convient de saluer ici.

Enfin, cet amendement est une étape, je dirais même plus un *milestone* qui nous permet de regarder avec confiance et optimisme vers l’avenir. Il sera important et utile de mesurer les effets dans le temps de cette nouvelle mesure afin de continuer à renforcer le statut de notre *Kreol Morisien* et de son inclusion dans l’espace public. Et vous pouvez compter sur moi en tant que députée pour continuer à militer fidèlement pour cette cause. En ce qui me concerne, ma porte sera toujours ouverte, en tant que députée de la Circonscription No. 4, pour tous ceux et celles qui veulent s’exprimer sur la question, pour tous ceux et celles qui veulent construire la nation mauricienne de demain dans la fraternité, dans la discussion sincère et dans l’action collective.

M. le président, j’ai récemment participé à un atelier de travail en Afrique du Sud et j’ai remarqué et cela m’a frappé d’ailleurs de constater que les différents pays de la SADC chantaient

leur hymne national en langue maternelle. Qu'il nous soit permis de rêver ou de souhaiter ici, M. le président, d'un hymne national, chanté en *Kreol Morisien* dans les fonctions officielles par nos élèves et par tous les mauriciens. C'est une matière de réflexion que j'aurais aimé suggérer humblement car je pense que notre hymne national entonné dans notre langue maternelle, on pourra pleinement ressentir et exprimer sa signification dans toute sa profondeur.

Et comme on dit, M. le président, *a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step*. Pourquoi ne pas envisager qu'un jour les débats de cette auguste Assemblée se fassent en créole ? Et d'ailleurs, il y a eu pas mal de requêtes dans ce sens. Bien sûr, il ne convient pas de brûler les étapes. On sait que tout cela demande beaucoup de travail et de préparations et le gouvernement est bien conscient qu'avant d'en arriver là, il y a un bon nombre d'étapes à franchir et cela passe par un système éducatif. C'est donc ce pas en avant que nous franchissons aujourd'hui avec cet amendement.

Pour finir, M. le président, je souhaite beaucoup de bonheur et de succès à tous les élèves, à tous les parents et tous les enseignants qui choisiront le *Kreol Morisien* comme option au secondaire une fois cet amendement décisif validé par cette auguste Assemblée car, je ne doute pas, M. le président, que tous les honorables membres ici présents, sachant mettre de côté leurs considérations politiques, seront convaincus du bien-fondé et de l'importance de cette mesure historique.

Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for 30 minutes.

At 4.51 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.49 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated! Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. A. Boolell (First Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): Mr Speaker, Sir, I gladly accept the invitation extended to all of us. Let me be the first to accept the invitation extended to us by hon. Ms Tour to have a frank and candid discussion. She spoke with candour and I am sure she will appreciate that we can have a frank and candid discussion on issues which can be sensitive, but which need to be highlighted.

The issues which we need to take up which are relevant to the Bill are –

1. the role of the MIE and MES with the setting up of the National Examination Board which unfortunately duplicates and overlaps;
2. the Technology Education Stream, which I am sure subjects in relation to the stream will eventually be in the Schedule, and
3. the merits of vernacular, *Kreol Morisien*, as a mother tongue based by the world programme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the debate would have been historical and the amendment to this Bill would have been historical if we were to exceptionally debate this issue in creole. We have heard so much about the landmark and historical dimension of the Bill and it is a historical moment, but there are some important questions which need to be asked. After all, we are going to solicit clarity and certainty.

Let me first of all remind our friends what they have said. Everybody has talked of level playing field, a parity of esteem. I will ask a basic question as to the definition of the secondary education subsector, of course. Does the subsector stop with *Kreol Morisien* or does it certainly invite others to stake a claim, because this is Mauritius; the buck does not stop. The Bill certainly has its merits, and its merits far, far outweigh any of the demerits. But you cannot stop Mauritius being what it is, a world in miniature, and everybody will say that he or she has a claim to state.

Now, let me also put another question. If a student takes the optional subject *Kreol Morisien* at HSC, will he be able to compete for the laureate exams? I am yet to hear from the Minister, although in her Second Reading, the hon. Minister did not elaborate, and important questions have been asked by hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie. One may argue that she reacts with her guts, but she spoke eloquently and did highlight issues which are very relevant.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I take it for granted that in relation of what I have said, that there is going to be level playing field and parity of esteem. This will not simply be an optional subject, but it will be a subject which will at par and will enable the student to level up. I hope and I am sure there is good reason for levelling up. Before I come to specific matters in relation to the role of the MIE and MES, the Technology Education Stream and merits of vernacular, I have taken note of what the hon. Minister has stated that this subject is now examinable at the upper secondary educational level, following recommendation made by experts and the number of students taking creole language is likely to be on the rise.

But this Bill is with uncertainty and this uncertainty needs to be cleared because we have to make sure that there is clarity as we cannot introduce a sensitive piece of legislation, an amendment being brought to the education where there is cloud hovering.

Now this Bill, as I say, is a Bill with uncertainty over the customised system of education and the question that I put is: is it deliberate to bamboozle the nation? You cannot stop our friends from MIE and MES to ask basic and relevant questions. Many feel that the MIE and the MES are under siege because of encroachment and their mission, vision and mandate are shaken and disturbed. Their role cannot be simply one full of sound, and mind you, fury will be unleashed. Staffs have expressed deep-seated concerns and moral has started to sigh.

MIE is the training arm of education and develops national curriculum, which is validated by expert of relevant bodies. It has a head of curriculum. Now, the Minister has to spell it out and say loud and clear that the National Examination Board, which is the awarding body and operates under the aegis of the University of Mauritius. Some may argue that the buck should have stopped there. However, the object is to amend the Education Act to provide for the setting up of a National Examination Board for the secondary education subsector.

If I refer to the object of the board, the function of the board shall be to organise and conduct examination in respect of such subjects for the secondary education sub-sector as the Minister may determine. That is why I say Creole language which we all are in favour, which today is an examinable subject, is not the only subject which will be in the Second Schedule. And the Minister has to spell it out very clearly, because as I said, you cannot stop people claiming their state and Mauritius being what it is - a multiracial, multi-linguistic country, people will ask for the pound of flesh and we cannot remain insensitive or indifferent. So, that is why I say, despite the certificate of urgency, this Bill should have been well disseminated. There should have been wide discussion at the bar of public opinion. As I said, people working in relevant institutions like the MIE and the MES, feel that the rights and obligations, which they have, are not being fully taken on board.

So, that is why I put the question: why the duplication when the responsibility could have been entrusted to a reliable, tested, trusted body like the MES which benchmark with the best? Be it *Alliance Française* or the entrance exams to be admitted in overseas universities in US and elsewhere or sitting for scholarship awards, MES is the entrusted party and partner of choice and

it has established links with reputed examination syndicates. It has delivered on commitments and honour its obligation vis à vis examination bodies and it has never erred and has always erred on the side of caution and like Caesar's wife above suspicion. In fact, Cambridge has erred and I remind the House that Cambridge has erred in relation to HSC exams over time zone.

So, the amendment, Mr Speaker, Sir, to the Education Act to make *Kreol Morisien*, an examinable subject with award of certificate at Secondary Education level, I agree, we have no qualms over that. It is a level of process but why should the conduct of exams not entrusted to the MES? I mean we all have heard of the merits of this Bill, yes, there are a few merits when I look at Section 5D (2). It makes provision for assessment frameworks and assessment syllabus in *Kreol Morisien*, languages listed in the Second Schedule but there was a blatant omission. It is only now that this is being corrected and there have been fair points raised by hon. Marianne Navarre as a syllabus...

An hon. Member: Navarre-Marie.

Dr. Boolell: Navarre-Marie.

Mr Toussaint : *Li pou enkoler.*

Dr. Boolell: No, no, she will not. Mrs Arianne Marie-Navarre, okay?

An hon. Member: Navarre-Marie...

Dr. Boolell: Mrs Navarre-Marie. Alright she is a friend, you know. Don't you worry about that!

(Interruptions)

No, she will not.

So, about the syllabus, unfortunately, it is without a tail or head and the students who are going to be assessed, feel at a loss. I am glad that this shortcoming or anomaly is being addressed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Cabinet approved the set up of the technology education stream on 03 June 2022. The Minister has yet to inform the House if amendment to education regulations will follow shortly to include examination of the technology education stream by the National Examinations Board with the University of Mauritius as the awarding body. And the object of

the technology education stream is to cater for employable skills, hence on like design and technology. It is an applied system and it is a good thing but we have to be informed as to whether it is an alternative pathway, which we are told it is, to O-level Cambridge offered to Grade 10 students or what we call Form IV, and after two years, Grade 10 and Grade 11 students of this stream will continue the learning pathways in the Institute of Technical Education and Technology and they will complete two more years there. So, they end up with an equivalent G13 or HSC certificate and of course they will go to Polytechnics and then to a university. These have been spelt out. I have stated earlier, and it was a Cabinet decision. Fair enough! There is no problem but I will come back.

Is MES being deliberately undermined to make room for the National Examinations Board? Not only have we heard complaints from Staff of the MIE and the MES, but there has been hue and cry from parents that standards are falling and they are very worried. So, the Minister has to spell these out. I can understand that in her Second Reading, probably she did not have time to do so but I hope when she will make her concluding remarks, all these issues will be raised.

Now, if the objects of the National Examinations Board were an awarding body under the aegis of the University of Mauritius, but perception and reality would be one and the same. Section 6 (b) and (c) say it all. As I have said, I acknowledge that the Bill makes great strides to forge nationally identity and give a sense of belonging but the uncertainty over the exams body has to be overcome.

Vernacular language, I agree, is the springboard for quality education; it is empowerment and equity. Notwithstanding an examinable mother tongue, there is no premium education if cognitive and psychomotor development is not hand in glove. The Deputy Prime Minister is not here but he would recall that as former Minister of Education, UNESCO gave substantial resources to consolidate the process of making *Kreol Morisien* the springboard of enhancement. The Nation has to acknowledge of the tremendous contribution made by academics like Prof. Hookoomsing, Mr Dev Virahsawmy, Prof. Tirvassen, Dr. Carpooran and Dr. Harmon and many likeminded to promote the Creole language.

The making is never an ending process but the odds of prejudice are still stacked. This Bill, of course, helps to overcome subject that there is proper implementation of bilingual

program to reach out to traditionally left behind by submersion schooling using a single foreign language. Had the Minister understood much earlier the importance and relevance of vernacular as the powerhouse of education, there would have been no genocide or outrageous failure of primary and secondary education. It would have been spared of uncalled criticism by World Bank which, of course, has reduced this regime to a ... without a figure. Of course, the only factor which remains constant is change. I am not saying that one big swallow makes spring; I agree that for the child to blossom, the system has to be an all-encompassing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Seychelles has begun to query the effectiveness of teaching in mother tongue-based language. There has been an on-going debate in relation to its merits but its merits far outweigh any demerit and success cannot be gauged on the promotion of vernacular alone. It is multifactorial but the weightage of mother tongue as a catalyser to ignite the faculty of early cognitive processes cannot be taken lightly. The environment has to be conducive for the child to make the most of opportunities knock.

I will refer to a policy paper by UNESCO to promote the use of native language in schooling for quality education. In short, what the paper says, it emphasises the significance of mother tongue-based bilingual programme for educational quality. Language is a key factor in communication and understanding, and using the learner's first language to teach, beginning reading and writing skills along with academic contents, offers significant pedagogical advantages.

The paper also discusses the form of introduction of mother tongue-based bilingual program and key lessons learned from such programs.

Of course, successful implementation and management of these programs require involving all stakeholders' significant investment and selection of appropriate bilingual models. The paper argues that mother tongue-based schooling has positive implications for education in terms of increasing access and improving quality, especially in developing countries.

Therefore, the paper recommends gradual transitional and developmental maintenance models that maximize the development of learners' first language which can lead to improvement in second language learning. Mr Speaker, Sir, as I stated earlier, this Bill should have been well ventilated. There should have been discussions at the Bar of public opinion to

highlight the merits of creole language as the stepping stone for equity for enhancement, for empowerment and for employability.

Mr Speaker, Sir, who is not for the enhancement of the population and it starts with the mother tongue which will ignite the cognitive process; subject of course, that there is proper psychomotor development. But, common things are common Mr Speaker, Sir whether we like it or not. I am not saying that silence is golden.

Inasmuch as we welcome and we welcome with an open heart our mother tongue which today, has become an examinable subject but we have to make sure that we are faithful in relation to what is spelt out and to be relevant to parity of esteem and level playing field but make no mistake! Tomorrow others will stake their claim but, the law is the law and we have to be obedient to the law. At the same time, we have to convey strong signals that in our zeal to build a nation, we have to widen the circle of opportunities.

We welcome this Bill with a note of caution but, as I say, there was no need for duplication of resources. Let MES do what it knows, what it's good at doing and let MIE look at our level of preparedness in relation to skill and reskilling of teachers and preparation of curriculum.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said what needs to be said and I hope Government will err on the principles or on the side of caution. Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Koonjoo-Shah!

(6.10 p.m.)

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Mrs K. Koonjoo-Shah):
Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Allow me to start by saying that this House is currently, as agreed by the person who spoke before me, debating a Bill which is extremely important to our entire nation, and of course, I will congratulate my colleague, hon. Vice Prime Minister, Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, for bringing this important amendment to the House.

Jumping straight into the crux of the matter, going by what hon. Dr. Boolell just stated before ending his intervention, the amendment Mr Speaker, Sir, is doing precisely that, we are widening the circle of the opportunity. We are, through this amendment, bringing the much

beloved *Kreol Morisien* and putting up the structures adequate for them to be examined and having a body, the most appropriate body, to be awarding the certifications.

Mr Speaker, Sir, late Nelson Mandela stated that –

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to the same person in his language, that goes to his heart.”

Unfortunately Mr Speaker, Sir, there are around 573 known extinct languages. These languages are no longer spoken nor studied.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill in itself is a robust safeguard to ensuring that our much loved *Kreol Morisien* does not experience such a fate because when we speak about the disappearance or the extinction of a language, we are also reckoning and we are also acknowledging that it goes without saying that it’s an entire encyclopaedia of cultural heritage that will be burned down if we ever let that happen to our mother tongue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to fully grasp the significance of the Bill being debated, we should try and go back to the 2020-2024 Governmental Program whereby this Government has pledged to value its population as its major asset through empowerment, improved social inclusion and equality of opportunity. The Government's agenda places a priority on eradication of absolute poverty and the minimum wage being one that has significantly been increased to that effect. However, Mr Speaker, Sir, our fight against poverty will only succeed through equal opportunities for our citizens in the education system and I’m sure the nation will entirely agree that education, Mr Speaker, Sir, remains unquestionably the most powerful tool in our war against poverty.

While I was going through the Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, what came to mind was the number of measures taken by this Government to promote our Mauritian language – our mother tongue, our very which is our very *Kreol Morisien*.

Mauritius has a diverse and a very intricate linguistic ecology and it’s important that every Mauritian has a sound command of the *Kreol Morisien*. I wish to remind the hon. Mrs Arianne Navarre-Marie who, unfortunately, is no longer here. I would like to remind her that *Kreol Morisien pas dans un passé trop lointain*, used to be only a dialect and this Government, the Prime Minister in his vision, have started onto this historical journey and I find it sad that

instead of commending and constructively contributing to this amendment, all that was put forth by that hon. Member was *cacophonie totale, pa satisfese, nanye pa bon* as usual. So it's a bit disheartening, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the population will recall that there has been the inclusion of *Sega Tipik, Geet Gawai*, and *Sega Tambour* of Rodrigues on the UNESCO World List of Intangible Heritage, the very UNESCO that hon. Boolell was citing earlier on. We have been included on the UNESCO World List of Intangible Heritage and I believe it is now high time for international acknowledgment of the diversity of cultures related to our Republic. We are headed in the right direction. We hope; I'm sure everybody hopes alongside me that very soon, the *Sega Tambour Chagos* as well will be included on the list with a view to conserving the Chagossian culture.

While this Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, is laying those cornerstones of own identity, we are fighting for our territory. It is unfortunate that some members, some people find this amendment bill yet another opportunity to do politics, cheap politics *kot nanye mem pa bon. To fer osi to pa bon, to pa fer si pa bon.*

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, it's true that according to the World Development Indicators (WDI), Mauritius is among the nations with the highest literacy rates in Africa. The majority of those who begin primary school continue on to secondary school and a sizeable fraction also enrolls in higher education. Gender parity has been attained at the elementary and secondary levels while women are even more well-represented at the post-secondary levels, according – I'm not saying that just out of thin air – to the World Development Indicators (2020) Report and I know we are have some members on the other side who are so fond of citing reports. So, please do take notes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, coming back to the Bill, the National Examinations Board will be responsible for the organisation and conduct of examinations in designating subjects at the secondary level.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, this model is well established and already in use in the United Kingdom. Exam boards have existed for as long as there have been qualifications offered by schools. Universities naturally formed the first exam boards because they had the requisite experience and expertise for awarding qualifications such as degrees.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in our case, the University of Mauritius will be awarding those certificates. We all know that the said university is the oldest and largest university in the country in terms of student enrolment and curriculum being offered. With more than fifty-five years of independence, we are now aptly able to benchmark with internationally recognised methods of teaching and assessment, and therefore, the University of Mauritius is indisputably the best institution to award the certificates in line with internationally accepted best practices.

Mr Speaker, Sir, *Kreol Morisien* is our oral heritage and is referred to as our mother tongue as well. Its promotion in the form of tales, songs, legends, and proverbs preserve our common cultural memory and our history. Across them, shared traditional knowledge, concepts, beliefs and values are passed down across generations thus bridging gaps in time and space. Our mother tongue, Mr Speaker, Sir, establishes a crucial component of our identities and maintains social continuity. It gives us a sense of our place and our roots in a world that is changing way too quickly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the range of Speaking Unions in Mauritius is revelation itself of the amazing diversity of our inhabitants. We have managed to focus on education and the preservation of traditional cultural heritage, particularly through the language skills. Mr Speaker, Sir, in Mauritius these very language skills are there to empower our younger minds to use the *Kreol Morisien* language in the right context, – and I think that, Mr Speaker, Sir, is of seminal importance when I say right context – within our very unique ethno-cultural society. Because in a way, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill will help towards exerting some kind of caution during the use or misuse at times of our adjectives, our sayings from this very colourful *Kreol Morisien*. For example, we will recall that one should use caution when utilising terms like ‘*zako*’ or ‘*manz bondie, kaka diab*’ – it has to be contextualised. So, hopefully, this will help in that direction.

(Interruptions)

Bizin fer rapel!

Mr Speaker, Sir, because of its diversity, Mauritius has very strong ties to the three major continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. One outstanding feature that puts Mauritius in a strong position to precisely serve as a true gateway to Africa for businesses is our ability to converse effectively in a variety of languages.

Mr Speaker, Sir, like I said earlier on, our Mauritian creole has evolved from being a mere unrecognised dialect, which remains only on what is spoken, it has evolved from that to a “language” – and here I am hoping, in fact, I am confident that Bhojpuri will follow suit in the foreseeable future.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, *Kreol Morisien* has evolved from this dialect to a language which in addition to being spoken is now also translated into writing in a very well-defined and structured way which can be assessed academically with the right accreditation from – and I repeat – an internationally recognised tertiary institution. *M. le président, nous avons maintenant une académie de la langue créole, nous avons notre propre orthographe, une grammaire propre à notre langue maternelle, les normes, et un dictionnaire de la langue maternelle de notre pays,* and I say this with a lot of pride.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the *Kreol Morisien* has come a long way since its emergence during the era of slavery and the stigmatisation that was associated with its use to today the acceptance of a harmonised form and its inclusion in elementary and secondary school curriculum. We do not, Mr Speaker, Sir, want to have any of our younger minds left behind, we want to empower all learners to fully take part in society. This is the philosophy of inclusiveness that has always guided this Government and our Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as parliamentarians, my colleagues will agree with me, that we are often questioned by the media or our fellow citizens as to when *Kreol Morisien* will be introduced in the National Assembly. We have to be very honest with ourselves here, Mr Speaker, Sir; this cannot and is not going to happen overnight. Actually, there was a PMQT to that effect from hon. Uteem in November 2021, whereby, and I quote, the Prime Minister answered –

“(...)we have covered a lot of ground, but there is still a long way to go. Works which have started need to be continued so as to ensure a successful introduction of *Kreol Morisien* into the National Assembly.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have quoted this just to portray that the Government and the Prime Minister mean business on this side of the House. Actions have always followed the talk unlike, and again I remember the Members on the other side who are kind of champions at futile talking, you know *koze, koz koze, aktielman pe re koz koze*. So, we do not just *koz koze*, we put our money where our mouth is, Mr Speaker, Sir.

To conclude, it is a known fact that when a language disappears, like I said earlier on, it takes an entire cultural and intellectual heritage down with it and is the disappearance of a unique *patrimoine*. We are doing everything not to have the *Kreol Morisien* suffer the same fate. Mr Speaker, Sir, the amendment to the Education Bill is not a mere one; it has not been plucked by the Vice-Prime Minister out of thin air. This Government, with the farsighted leadership of our hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, is guaranteeing our youngest citizens their right to education in their mother tongue.

We are aware that there are still some grounds to cover, some milestones to achieve, but this is another milestone nonetheless with a major bearing on nation building. We are setting the foundation stone of our rainbow nation, projecting onto the global map a beckon of inclusiveness, peace, harmony and unity. This is what this Government is devoting to.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill goes beyond just a language and the National Examinations Board and the certification; this Bill relates to the very organic construct of our Mauritian nation. It is a Bill that glues our social fabric with harmony and cohesion and it is a critical leap forward in consolidating us as *enn sel lepep, enn sel nasion*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, *viv nou Kreol Morisien ek viv la Repiblik de Moris!* I thank you all for your attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramchurrun!

(6.25 p.m.)

Mr P. Ramchurrun (Third Member for Savanne & Black River): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to address this august Assembly on the Education (Amendment) Bill.

From the outset, let me congratulate the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for coming forward with this Bill. Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun has proven again that she is the right person at the right place to take this bold decision, and will be relentless in implementing the right policies to uphold our Mauritian education sector.

Personally, I very much welcome the setting up of the National Examinations Board (NEB) which will enable Mauritius to be once again a pioneer in the field of examinations

management in Africa. Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, unlike some hon. Members from the Opposition, our side of the House is determined not to spread disinformation within the minds of our population. The hon. Minister of Education has been very clear to dissipate any doubts of overlapping with the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate. Due to the nature of our country's history, we have collaborated with Cambridge International for more than 100 years and this partnership has proven its worth throughout generations of students who are now successful professionals across all fields both locally and internationally and even in both sides of this august Assembly. However, given the only constant is change, we cannot be self-defeating by not enabling our educational system from having more flexibility in terms of examinations management and awarding of qualifications.

The setting up of the National Examinations Board (NEB) will undoubtedly be more cost-effective compared to our partnership with the CIE which has been on an increasing trend over the last few years. Our caring government has also never left any stones unturned to alleviate the burden of Cambridge examinations on our hardworking parents by expanding as has never been done before, the subsidies on exams fees, for example. However, the question we ask ourselves is whether it is a sustainable model and whether an alternative should not be considered. Hence, the setting up of the NEB will be a welcomed evolutionary step in our educational reforms journey, where we as a country, will be able to award secondary qualifications locally through our leading tertiary institution, that is, the University of Mauritius. Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Examinations Board (NEB) will also be a definite edge for the UOM as it will launch the institution on another level playing field in the domain of qualifications awarding. In fact, the UOM has demonstrated very high standards with high quality professionals and it will now have the chance to further consolidate its internal frameworks and quality standards.

The NEB will also have a major opportunity to work with regional and international organisations to further the cause of examinations management. For instance, there is significant potential in the field of moving towards digital assessments through modernisation and digitalisation. It can also partner with other institutions to promote the best standards with respect to examinations data given the need to be as transparent and accountable as possible. For instance, it can partner with the OECD and the programme for international student assessment,

which are currently developing assessments to be used across the world, for example, in collaborative problem solving and creative thinking.

Mr Speaker Sir, examinations offer a common idea of what students know and are capable of. They create a level playing field where everyone is evaluated independently on the same subject at the same time. Examinations and the preparation that precedes them are known to be motivating and promote learning. Examinations also give students a reliable, objective assessment of their learning and development, which can help them decide where to go on in the future. They are the most objective measurement and thus, coursework and non-exam assessments are only used in situations where it is impossible to test knowledge, abilities, and comprehension in a reliable way through an examination. It is thus crucial that credentials line up with our larger educational goal. Up to the age of 16, young people must have access to a comprehensive and balanced academic program. In order to familiarise students with the fundamental information they need to be informed citizens and to guarantee that as many children as possible may lay claim to a rich intellectual legacy, I think that students should be exposed to the best that has been thought and uttered. We have thus taken action to guarantee that students have the chance to pursue excellent vocational and technical education. All students, regardless of background, are equipped to achieve their goals with that comprehensive education.

Mr Speaker Sir, young people from all backgrounds, who are engaged and understand that the goal of their education is to realise their goals, will succeed with the right focus and dedication. But they require time to study the subjects they are interested in, whether academic or vocational. As we reach the second quarter of the 21st century and as young people deal with all the issues of this complicated world, we need to start working on a system that works for them. We absolutely believe that this Bill will result in the upgrading and democratisation of our educational system and we are dedicated to continued and significant role of examinations.

Moreover, Mr Speaker Sir, the MSM has, whenever it is in power, spearheaded the need for our country's education policies to be a holistic one. This has allowed Mauritians to shine both locally and internationally as our local human resources have been widely recognised in many sectors and across the world.

Let me remind the House, that the education of our citizens is and will always remain a priority of this government and of the hon. Prime Minister. Mr Speaker, Sir, the words of late Sir Anerood Jugnauth from 1985 still resonate loudly after 38 years. I quote –

“Education as we see, it is not simply a question of passing on values and knowledge to the younger generations; it should aim at producing fully conscious citizens and future productive workers; it should aim at transforming attitudes among youths so as to pave the way for the development of our nation. We must therefore make serious efforts to make our education respond adequately to the future changes that are overtaking our society and adapt itself to change.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, the MSM has since 1983 been the driver of educational reforms to achieve excellence and accessibility of our education system for over 40 years. We are the first ones to acknowledge the need for change and improvements, but the MSM culture is not to dwell indefinitely on issues by depriving the population from the benefits of our policies. Mr Speaker Sir, unlike the Labour Party and the MMM, we do not thrive on the ‘*pa kapav*’ or ‘*naryen pa bon*’; as mentioned by hon. Mrs Koonjoo-Shah earlier “*fer si pa bon, pa fer si pa bon*”. I thank the hon. Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for her foresight and diligence in bringing forward this Bill and her unfettered efforts in pursuing the vision of the MSM, late SAJ and the hon. Prime Minister for our country’s education.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, a quality education may transform lives and provide possibilities to more fulfilling work and lifelong study. It encourages healthy lifestyle choices and civic engagement. Good teaching motivates students, and it is essential that any assessment reform gives instructors their authority back so they can do what they were taught to do, which is to transmit a love of their subject to the next generation instead of teaching them for the test. Thousands of young people in our nation, including many from disadvantaged areas and homes, will continue to be let down if we do not make this major change today, and our government will never let them down.

Hence, it is primordial that the setting up of the NEB is supported by both sides of the House to ensure that our future generations have a brighter educational future.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Bodha!

(6.37 p.m.)

Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floréal): Merci, M. le président, de me donner la parole.

La vice-Première ministre et ministre de l'Éducation est venue avec un projet de loi extrêmement important. Je pense que c'est une nouvelle frontière pour tous les militants, pour tous ceux qui se sont battus pour la langue ou la culture créole depuis longtemps. Mais le projet de loi soulève aussi énormément de questions et je pense que ces questions ont déjà été soulevées par quelques membres de ce côté de la Chambre et je vais les souligner.

Ce qui est intéressant c'est que le *Kreol Morisien* est enseigné en créole. Au fait, c'est le seul sujet enseigné en créole. Quand nous regardons un peu le fait que l'éducation primaire est gratuite depuis 1957, l'éducation secondaire depuis 1976, c'est une date extrêmement importante aujourd'hui parce que nous sommes en train de voir l'examination possible de ceux qui ont 17 ans et qui veulent avoir un certificat, une notation en langue *Kreol* au niveau de la *SC*, ce qu'on appelle le *O-Level*.

En attendant, il y a beaucoup qui a été fait sur le plan de la langue et de la culture créole. Il y a la musique. Il y a les textes. Il y a la littérature abondante. Il y a les pièces de théâtre, par exemple, je parle de tout ce que Dev Virahsawmy a fait, '*Li*', '*Zozef ek so palto larkansiel*'. Il y a eu aussi des traductions de Shakespeare, par exemple, la traduction d'Othello.

Et de-là, aujourd'hui, des questions se posent. Au-delà de la *SC*, allons-nous passer à la *HSC* et allons-nous passer après à des diplômes sur le plan universitaire ? Il y a déjà des recherches qui ont été faites. Il y a des questions qui se posent. Quel sera le rôle de Cambridge demain en ce qui concerne la langue *Kreol*? Par exemple, en ce qui concerne les bourses pour les lauréats, est-ce que demain - la question a été soulevée - si un étudiant prend le *Kreol* comme sujet principal, comment est-ce-que cette notation va se faire ?

Deuxièmement, j'aurais aimé que Madame la ministre nous évoque aussi la question sur le *SC aggregate*. Par exemple, les élèves sont très contents de dire que : 'Moi, j'ai eu un *aggregate* de 10 ou j'ai eu un *aggregate* de 6.' Demain qu'est-ce que l'élève va dire ? 'Est-ce que j'ai eu un *aggregate* de 6 avec Cambridge ou 2 et 3 avec le *National School Certificate*, ici,

qui est le *National School Certificate* en *Kreol Morisien* qui serait annoté par l'Université de Maurice ?' Donc, ce sont des questions extrêmement importantes et extrêmement sensibles.

Au fait, j'ai fait quelques recherches pour voir un peu où est-ce que le créole est enseigné et si le créole permet d'avoir un diplôme. En France, au fait, le créole est exclu du baccalauréat français jusqu'ici. Le créole est exclu du baccalauréat français sauf en Martinique où effectivement, il y a un lycée où le créole est enseigné en classe de seconde, c'est-à-dire, *SC* et en première, c'est-à-dire, *Lower VI*, et en terminale qui serait le *Upper VI*. Maintenant, ce qui est important, c'est fait uniquement par une dérogation. Et, ici aussi, nous sommes en train de poser la question sur la dérogation.

Alors la question a été posée : pourquoi pas Cambridge ? Madame la ministre nous a donné un certain nombre de raisons que Cambridge évoque en disant que, premièrement, il y a le problème de l'expertise ; le problème de corpus littéraire ; le développement du cursus. Il y a la question économique aussi, est-ce qu'il y a suffisamment d'élèves qui prendront part à un examen du *Kreol* au niveau de la *SC* ou au niveau de la *HSC* ? Alors, je pose la question à Madame la ministre : est-ce que si demain tous ceux qui prennent part aux examens de la *SC* et *HSC* - cela fait quand même beaucoup, à peu près, peut-être 20,000-25,000 élèves - prenaient le *Kreol* en tant que sujet principal pour la *SC* ou sujet subsidiaire pour la *HSC* ou encore sujet au niveau de la *SC*, est-ce que Cambridge changerait d'attitude ? Parce que je pense que Cambridge a quand même énormément d'expertises et énormément de ressources pour pouvoir créer les moyens d'amener un examen dans un sujet. Alors, Madame la ministre a expliqué pourquoi on n'est pas avec Cambridge.

La deuxième question : si on n'est pas avec Cambridge, pourquoi ne pas le faire avec la *MES* ? La solution qu'elle propose, c'est la mise en place d'une nouvelle institution. Les gens se posent la question mais pourquoi la nouvelle institution? Moi je crois que quand il s'agit d'examen, il est beaucoup question d'intégrité, pas seulement d'intégrité, mais aussi de niveau d'expertises, de niveau du sujet enseigné, le niveau de l'examen et pour beaucoup d'entre nous à Maurice et ailleurs, le Cambridge reste une référence de taille. Alors ma première question est : est-ce que demain s'il y a plus d'enfants qui prennent le *Kreol* en *SC* et *HSC*, est-ce qu'on pourrait travailler éventuellement avec Cambridge ? La deuxième question c'est : est-ce qu'il faut vraiment mettre en place une nouvelle institution ? Et là, on a dit que le président de

l'institution sera quelqu'un qui sera choisi par le Premier ministre. Ma question est : *do we have the right person in the right place, somebody who we can say that it is out of meritocracy, integrity and excellence that he has been chosen?*

Je prends une remarque qu'a été faite par le vice-chancelier de l'Université de Maurice, *which is going to be the awarding body*. Il dit –

« On n'est pas supposé donner des *awards* pour des examens au secondaire mais davantage pour le cycle tertiaire. C'est Cambridge qui s'occupe de ces épreuves. Il n'y avait pas cette compétence à Maurice. Même le MES ne peut pas. Comme Cambridge n'a pas l'expertise du KM, c'est pourquoi l'UOM vient aider. »

Moi, je crois qu'il faut peut-être mettre en place un système qui ferait que l'examen soit fait de telle sorte que le certificat ait toute la valeur, tout le 'carat' qu'on souhaiterait avoir. Parce que c'est vrai que nous sommes en train de franchir une étape extrêmement importante, c'est donné à la langue créole ses lettres de noblesse, les élèves vont l'étudier. Et plus tard si on passe au niveau de la *HSC*, les élèves vont étudier tous les textes en *Kreol*. Et il faut le dire que si on prend le texte de ces 50 dernières années, il y a beaucoup de choses qui sont d'une richesse extraordinaire que ce soit au niveau de la musique, au niveau de la culture ou au niveau de la littérature.

Alors, nous sommes en train aujourd'hui de passer à une étape extrêmement importante, et la question c'est la question d'examen. Alors comment faire pour que ces examens se fassent dans les meilleures conditions ? Ce sont des questions qui ont été posées par nos amis de ce côté de la Chambre. Comment faire pour que les examens se fassent dans les meilleures conditions ? Comment faire pour que le cursus soit établi dans les meilleures conditions ? Comment faire pour qu'il y ait tous les autres modalités ? On a parlé des *mock exams*, des *test papers*, *specimen test papers*. J'espère qu'on va mettre en place tout ce système pour que l'écolier se sente à l'aise et qu'il puisse vraiment *perform* comme on le dit dans les meilleures conditions, et d'autant plus qu'il s'agit d'une langue affective parce que le *Kreol* appartient à nous tous.

M. le président, j'ai regardé l'épreuve de *Kreol Morisien* de 2021-2022 pour le *National Certificate of Education* mais je dois dire que ce n'est pas facile. Je dois dire sincèrement que ce n'est pas facile. Madame la ministre pourrait nous dire quel a été le taux de réussite au niveau de

cet examen. Il semblerait qu'il y a eu quand même un taux intéressant. Je dois dire que ce n'est pas facile. Le Dr. Boolell a évoqué la question de la langue maternelle.

Notre langue d'instruction reste l'anglais parce que nous apprenons tous les sujets en anglais. La question a été posée par beaucoup de pédagogues : est-ce qu'on ne devrait pas passer à la langue maternelle ? C'est-à-dire enseigner les premières années en créole, notamment comment savoir écrire, lire et compter ; les trois éléments de base.

Alors pour venir à la langue maternelle, je me pose la question : comment les examens seront faits ? En Guadeloupe, par exemple, il y a des examens à l'oral et puis il y a les examens en écrit et il y a aussi la possibilité qu'il ait un contrôle continu. Quand je pense à cette question de la langue maternelle, cela donnerait une situation extrêmement intéressante, par exemple, au lieu d'apprendre l'anglais en anglais, on apprend l'anglais à partir du créole, c'est-à-dire on a les phrases en anglais et on traduit en créole. À ce moment, on n'aura pas la traduction savoureuse qu'on a souvent – la traduction qui fait rire quand on traduit littéralement, mais on peut traduire le créole en anglais, c'est-à-dire dans le vrai anglais.

Alors, quand on voit, par exemple, au niveau de *Cambridge*, quand on étudie une langue, on a la version et le thème, c'est-à-dire si on étudie le français, à un moment donné, on a un texte en français qu'on nous demande de traduire en anglais, et puis il y a un texte en anglais qu'on nous demande de traduire en français. Toutes ces questions je les pose à Madame la ministre : comment ces examens seront faits pour que les élèves puissent comme, je l'ai dit, passer ses examens dans les meilleures conditions. Moi, je pense qu'il n'y avait pas lieu de créer une nouvelle institution. L'université de Maurice pourrait être bien sûre *the awarding body because you really need an awarding body*.

La meilleure solution aurait été qu'on puisse avoir un examen avec le concours de *Cambridge* parce qu'à ce moment, cela donnerait un saut international sans diminuer le carat de l'université de Maurice, et deuxièmement, pour ce que j'ai appelé *the aggregate result*, cela aurait été comptabilisé dans les résultats de la SC ou de la HSC, les résultats qu'on a de manière classique.

Je pense qu'il n'y a pas lieu de créer une institution nouvelle, on pourrait demander pour le moment à l'université de l'île Maurice d'être *the awarding body*, mais si demain il y a énormément - et c'est le cas, on voit cela en Martinique et en Guadeloupe – il y a de plus en plus

d'étudiants qui prennent le créole même au niveau de la terminale et il y a des Brevets Techniques Spécialisés (BTS) en créole ; le brevet est enseigné dans les DOM-TOM. Alors, moi, je crois que le créole pourrait devenir vraiment un ciment – le Dr. Boolell a parlé de la langue maternelle, mais le *medium* d'enseignement pour un meilleur apprentissage des autres langues, des mathématiques, des sciences et de tous.

Je crois que nous sommes en train de poser un jalon extrêmement important dans l'histoire de l'éducation aujourd'hui, c'est vrai. La question pour moi, c'est est-ce qu'on est en train de le faire dans les meilleures conditions parce que d'après des commentaires que j'ai vus, les spécialistes, des experts disent qu'il n'y a pas eu beaucoup de consultations, il n'y a pas eu beaucoup de dialogues, on n'a pas travaillé ensemble pendant longtemps. Je crois que le moment est venu pour qu'il y ait une vraie plate-forme, une vraie discussion pour que la langue créole puisse être enseigné, mais aussi puisse permettre à nos enfants d'accéder à de nouvelles connaissances, à la technologie nouvelle et de manière affective ; aimer la langue, sa littérature, sa musique, sa culture, mais en même temps l'avoir sur un diplôme qui aurait un carat international. J'ai terminé, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dhunoo!

(6.51 p.m.)

Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. First of all, I would like to thank hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, G.C.S.K., the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for bringing this very important piece of legislation to the House and this amendment. When she was making her introduction about the Bill, she explained why and what was the importance of bringing this Bill to the House.

When we look at it in 1957, Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Bill was brought to the House, the Bill was to promote education and was presented by the Minister at that time, Mr Seeneevassen, and it was to promote in the colony and I quote from the Hansard –

“Colony and to consolidate and amend the law relating to education, to the supervision and control of schools that teaching therein and for the purpose connected therewith.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, *avec l'introduction de cet amendement, on va introduire le premier sujet, le Kreol Morisien. Le Dr. Boolell a parlé de notre langage maternel, l'honorable Bodha l'a dit, mais pour vous dire aussi que even UNESCO believes that every person has the right to learn in their own language and it is an important means to improve our learning, learning outcomes and our social emotional development.*

However, as per the report that hon. Dr. Boolell was mentioning, he didn't say that "globally, 40% of the population does not have access to an education, a language they speak or understand. Cultural and linguistic diversity also play a key role in sustainable societies and help build peace, tolerance and respect for the difference." I am quoting from the report. I think that the amendment that you are bringing to this House is very important for the whole population.

My colleague hon. Ms Joanne Tour mentioned vastly on the importance of the *Kreol Morisien*, how we are being perceived and how this is going to change the learning between our students and our children for the future of tomorrow. I think this is also a very important piece of legislation where colleagues from the university, friends, my professor, Dr. Carpooran has been doing very well in designing the *Kreol Morisien* dictionary where we started in 2012 and to what we have built through the Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth and hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, how much we have advanced in trying to give the dignity to our *Kreol Morisien* language.

Today, we can say that we are going in the right direction. I think we should look at it as an option: doing *Kreol Morisien*, it could be like you are doing English, French, you are choosing an option like Arts. We should take it as a language that has its importance.

Hon. Bodha was mentioning his fear about this new establishment of the National Examination Board. He said that it should have gone through Cambridge. I think if Cambridge could have understood creole better than Mauritian, my question would have been, if they had, we would have gone through Cambridge.

Mais, M. le président, qui comprend le créole, notre langage maternel mieux que nous ? C'est pour cela que nous avons nos institutions ici ! Nous avons l'université de Maurice dont j'en suis fière d'être un des alumni de l'université de Maurice où j'étais formé. Et ce n'est pas que le créole mauricien que l'université de Maurice est en train de award des certificats.

J'ai aussi eu l'opportunité d'apprendre l'espagnol et l'allemand à l'université de Maurice à travers des lecturers de l'université. Pour vous dire que nous avons de la compétence, l'honorable Bodha, nous avons de la compétence à l'université de Maurice. Il faut aussi donner le crédit qu'il faut à nos institutions parce que demain nous voulons que l'université de Maurice soit parmi les 10 premiers dans le monde où les gens veulent venir étudier à l'île Maurice. Maurice, comme elle est située, est comme une plate-forme où on peut devenir un Educational Hub pour le continent africain et aussi de l'Asie.

C'est ce que nous voulons prouver ici, M. le président, parce qu'avec cet amendement qu'il y aura, nous aurons l'opportunité d'apporter le *Kreol Morisien* à un niveau internationale aussi. Si nous voyons les autres langages comme l'afrikaans et le swahili qui sont étudiés dans différents... Si on prend l'afrikaans, c'est environ 17,000 ; en Afrique du Sud et en Namibie, ils parlent l'afrikaans. On a environ 20 millions de personnes qui parlent ce langage qui est de l'époque coloniale quand les hollandais étaient en Afrique au Sud et au Namibie.

M. le président, nous commençons avec le *Kreol Morisien* mais dans la République, nous avons aussi le *Kreol Rodrige*. Peut-être qu'on ne le pense pas mais il y a des différences. Allez à Rodrigues, vous allez voir si vous parlez à nos collègues de Rodrigues, nos honorables membres qui sont là vont dire que ça c'est un commencement.

L'Université de Maurice aura le rôle important. Je voulais venir sur ces deux amendements du *Bill* à la Section 4, *New Section 5D inserted in principal Act*. Moi je pense qu'il est important que nous avons le *MIE*, la *MES*, tous ont leurs rôles spécifiques. Le Vice-chancelier comme l'honorable Bodha a dit, mais oui, ils sont là pour le tertiaire et non pas pour le secondaire. On doit trouver la meilleure structure pour qu'on puisse aller dans la direction et avoir des *awarding bodies* comme le Cambridge. C'est là que le rôle de l'Université de Maurice rentre en jeu.

M. le président, nous voyons amplement que cet amendement va révolutionner le pays et ça va apporter - on va dire - un phénomène extraordinaire d'avoir la certification et demain on aura un sujet qu'on pourrait apprendre et avoir un certificat ou même un *credit* dans ce sujet-là.

M. le président, l'honorable Bodha a demandé aussi dans le *National Examinations Board* si c'est le ministre qui va nommer, le Premier ministre qui va choisir qui va être à la tête

mais quand on avait introduit le *Bill* en 1957, c'était la première fois, M. le président, que *there was introduction of the Ministerial system. Let me quote from Hansard –*

“I should regard that the Director of Education and the Education ...”

It is quoted from Mr Seeneevassen when he introduced the Bill.

“... that the Director of Education and Education Authority for the Government school and all education authorities ought to be responsible to the Minister only”.

Ce n'est pas une nouvelle introduction que nous apportons, M le président. C'était déjà là et c'était à l'époque quand le premier *Ministerial Bill*, c'était ce *Bill*-là, coïncidence pour vous dire, mais on fait ce qu'il le faut pour aller dans la bonne direction et pour promouvoir notre langue maternelle, c'est très important.

M. le président, je suis sûr et certain qu'avec le Premier ministre et Madame Dookun-Luchoomun, avec l'équipe de l'Université de Maurice, la MIE et aussi le MES, nous allons produire... C'est mentionné, l'honorable Bodha, qu'il y aura des sous-comités qui vont être faits pour voir les papiers des examens. *We have to start somewhere* parce que pour l'instant M. le président, nous avons *a clean slate with regard to SC and people have been asking: I want to do Kreol Morisien as a language and when can I do it?*

If it will be a reality, it will be now. This Government under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, is bringing this Bill to the House. We are going to do it and we walk the talk like it has been mentioned by hon. Mrs Koonjoo-Shah.

M. le président, je vous dis, moi je suis pour le *Bill* et je souhaite bon courage à l'équipe parce que c'est un gros travail à faire. Il y a le côté technique aussi qu'on va voir. Je pense que nous avons tous les professionnels que nous avons à l'île Maurice qui peuvent contribuer dans l'aboutissement de ce projet de loi et de la concrétisation de nos examens au *School Certificate* et *Higher School Certificate*. C'est bon que nous avons la MIE, la MES et l'Université de Maurice parce que nous devons penser pour l'avenir et avoir des diplômes et aussi des *certificates*, pourquoi pas des degrés dans la langue *Kreol Morisien*. Ce sera une réalité ! Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Diolle !

7.03 p.m.

Mrs T. Diolle (Fourth Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): M. le président, le *Education (Amendment) Bill* introduit dans la Chambre par l'honorable Vice-premier ministre et ministre de l'Education, Madame Dookun-Luchoomun a une portée historique. Elle apporte dans un pays multilingue une reconnaissance tangible et réelle à une de nos langues ancestrales qui au fil du temps est devenue notre langue maternelle.

M. le président, permettez-moi de faire un bref historique de l'introduction de la langue créole dans notre système éducatif. Le *Kreol Morisien* a été souvent qualifié de langue inférieure par ses détracteurs jusqu'à son introduction dans les écoles primaires en 2012. Elle fait son entrée dans le *curriculum* de ces écoles primaires dans la catégorie qualifiée de langue ancestrale. Chacune de ces langues ancestrales est fortement marquée par sa dimension identitaire selon Eriksen et Stein, deux chercheurs qui ont beaucoup étudié le tissu social mauricien.

Des exemples de ces langues ancestrales sont le Hindi, l'Urdu, le Marathi, le Telegu, le Tamil, l'Arabe et le Mandarin. Elles sont enseignées à titre de promotion et de préservation des valeurs culturelles des groupes ethniques auxquels elles sont associées. Ces langues sont enseignées depuis la colonisation Britannique. Le *Kreol Morisien* fait son entrée au même titre que ces langues dans le cursus scolaire à la suite des efforts d'affirmation de l'identité créole qui a pris naissance à la suite des émeutes de 1999. Ces émeutes ont suscité l'émergence d'une affirmation identitaire de l'ethnie créole qui représente autour de 30% de la population selon le dernier recensement sur les ethnies qui date des années 80.

Le *National Economic and Social Council* fut créé à cette époque pour canaliser cette revendication forte de l'affirmation de l'identité créole qui émanait des rues et pour agir comme plateforme de stabilité sociale. Selon Dr. Harmon, chercheur qui a fait sa thèse de doctorant sur la langue *Kreol Morisien* de 2005 à 2010, il y a eu une convergence entre d'une part la revendication pour l'enseignement du *Kreol Morisien* sur une base purement pédagogique et de l'autre d'un mouvement identitaire qui faisait siennes la revendication de cette langue comme langue de sa reconstruction identitaire.

M. le président, je veux vous démontrer que le *Kreol Morisien* est une langue qui dépasse la fonction de promotion et de préservation des valeurs culturelle d'un seul groupe. M. le président, le *Kreol Morisien* a été adopté comme la langue maternelle d'une majorité de

Mauriciens, c'est-à-dire, la langue parlée à la maison avec la famille, les amies, et entre collègues.

J'ai fait une demande à *Statistics Mauritius* afin qu'il partage les chiffres des recensements des 30 dernières années en vue de la préparation de ce discours. A noter que le recensement se fait chaque dix ans. Ce que nous pouvons observer c'est qu'en 2000, 70% de la population considérait le *Kreol Morisien* comme sa langue maternelle. En 2011, 86.5% de la population considère le *Kreol Morisien* comme sa langue maternelle.

En 2022, 78,9% considère toujours la langue Créole comme sa langue maternelle. Ces chiffres démontrent que les mauriciens ont adopté naturellement la langue créole mauricien comme langue maternelle.

Le *Kreol Morisien* est la langue parlée par toutes les ethniques et c'est *de facto*, la langue nationale. En ce qui concerne les salles de classe, le *Kreol Morisien* est souvent utilisé comme support afin de renforcer la compréhension des concepts par les enfants qui n'ont pas la facilité de parler et écrire couramment l'anglais ou le français.

Il faut noter que selon le dernier recensement, 0,5% de la population mauricienne considère l'anglais comme sa langue maternelle et 2,8% de la population mauricienne considère le français comme sa langue maternelle.

M. le président, quand nous abordons le sujet de la langue créole mauricien, nous parlons aussi de la démocratisation de l'accès à l'éducation et cela dépasse le débat identitaire sectaire. Nous parlons du mauricianism.

Le créole mauricien est la langue qui véhicule nos attitudes et notre compréhension de notre vie collective sociale et politique. La langue est un pilier de la construction d'un état fort et d'une population unie. Les chiffres de ce même recensement que j'ai cités plus haut, démontrent qu'une grande majorité de mauriciens sont des créolophones unilingues. Ce qui implique qu'ils parlent le créole uniquement. On peut donc imaginer que cette situation perdure dans les maisons et entre les parents et les enfants et de ce fait, il y a une grande majorité de nos enfants, de la République de Maurice, qui sont aussi des créolophones unilingues.

M. le président, j'affirme que la démocratisation de l'accès à l'éducation est passée par la langue créole au primaire. Je justifie cela par le fait que les pédagogues et l'UNESCO affirment que les premières années du primaire doivent se faire dans la langue maternelle de l'élève.

Une grande majorité de nos enfants sont des créolophones unilingues comme le démontre les chiffres des recensements de ces trois dernières décennies. Ce qui peut expliquer l'échec des enfants au cycle du primaire qui est entre 20 et 30% chaque année. Je m'explique. Ces enfants, en échec scolaire dès leur plus jeune âge, sont en majorité des créolophones unilingues qui n'ont pas la chance ou la même opportunité d'être exposés à l'anglais suffisamment pour pouvoir maîtriser l'anglais comme langue d'apprentissage. Ils ne peuvent pas soit capter les instructions des différentes matières qui sont enseignées en anglais ou s'ils ont compris grâce au support de l'enseignement en créole mauricien, ils ne peuvent pas exprimer cette compréhension à l'écrit ou en situation d'examens.

Il est donc impératif que l'éducation nationale tienne compte de ce fait. Forte heureusement, notre Ministre de l'Education qui est elle-même une pédagogue d'expérience, est consciente que le créole mauricien dépasse le débat identitaire et introduit aujourd'hui dans cette Chambre, cet amendement au *Education Act* afin de mettre sur pied le *National Examinations Board*.

M. le président, je salue le travail accompli par l'honorable Madame Dookun-Luchoomun et ses officiers qui ont travaillé sur une formule plus qu'acceptable pour une langue qui voit sa reconnaissance dans le milieu scolaire qu'en 2012.

Un peu plus de 10 ans après son introduction dans le cursus scolaire, cette langue se verra compter dans le *School Certificate* du cycle secondaire et comptera aussi dans les cinq *credits* qui donneront l'accès à certains postes dans le milieu gouvernemental mais aussi, à la promotion de l'enfant aux classes supérieures.

Cela sera possible avec la mise sur pied du *National Examinations Board*. Ce projet de loi ouvre aussi la voie pour l'introduction d'autres matières qui ne sont pas encore dans la *Mainstream* mais qui peuvent permettre à des milliers d'enfants qui sont en *Extended Stream* par exemple, à progresser cognitivement afin de faire partie prenante de la société mauricienne et de son développement.

Le fameux BTS en créole, dont l'honorable Bodha nous a parlé sera possible grâce au *National Examinations Board* puisque cette institution a pour objectif de faire des recherches.

Ce projet de loi et la mise sur pied du *National Examinations Board* sont une lueur d'espoir pour les enfants créolophones unilingues de notre République qui ne peuvent pas s'adapter à l'anglais comme langue d'apprentissage. Ils auront dorénavant un *National Examinations Board* qui permettra des examens dans une autre langue que celle de l'anglais.

C'est pour cela que je félicite l'honorable Dookun-Luchoomun et le gouvernement pour l'introduction de cette loi.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Next orator would be MP Lobine.

7.12 p.m.

Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that this Bill has been sufficiently canvassed by hon. Members from both sides of this House and I would not repeat what has been canvassed already but however, I would command the passion and the points raised by all Members who have intervened on this Bill with regard to the *regard* that we need to have on *le Kreol Morisien* and it goes beyond political boundaries and as a nation and as a patriot, I believe that this is a right step in the right direction to give to *le Kreol Morisien* its *lettre de noblesse* and rightly so, Mr Speaker, Sir, the philosophy and intention of this Bill in setting up a National Examinations Board for the organisation and conduct of examinations in designated subjects and in this particular case as per the schedule - *le Kreol Morisien* is a laudable initiative.

But! There is always a 'but' Mr Speaker, Sir. Hon. Boolell has raised several salient points; hon. Navarre-Marie has done so as well. I am still very doubtful whether it is the right way to proceed, that is, coming with an amendment of the Education Act instead of an amendment to the Mauritius Examination Syndicate Act 1984 because it would serve the same purpose.

The MES has, through time, got the experience, the infrastructure and the personnel to help in that junction. However, the law does not allow the MES to go the extra mile and through

the amendment of what is being proposed, if same could have been proposed to the MES Act, it would have served the same purpose because if you look at Section (4) of the MES Act 1984, Mr Speaker, Sir, it says as follows –

“Objects of the Syndicate shall be –

(a) to organise and conduct such examinations as may be directed by the Minister;”

and in the amendment being proposed, it is almost the same philosophy, the same intention, which is laudable, good intention and also it is the way forward because we know the problem that we get with Cambridge with regard to subject as *Kreol Morisien* and maybe in the near future, other subjects; technical matters that we might have it here itself but whether, it was not a better way to go ahead instead of amending the Education Act.

So, maybe the hon. Vice Prime Minister might enlighten us further on this matter and also with regard to the awarding body being the University of Mauritius, I strongly believe that this is a very good thing because this will give a sense of pride to get a certificate from an awarding body like the University of Mauritius for a subject that as many people before me have stated, needs to be given its *valeur*.

So, in that respect, Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that salient points raised by hon. Dr. Boolell, hon. Navarre-Marie and hon. Bodha should be looked into with regard to what will be the future of the *Kreol Morisien*. After going through this National Examinations Board, what is the next step; whether it will be counted with regard to be awarded a scholarship in Art Side at HSC level for example or whether, it will also be allowed to be taken to other Universities? We are in a global world now – whether this *Kreol Morisien* will go beyond our boundaries?

So, if we could get more information or if, in the near future, after the passing of this Bill, of course, if those information could be disseminated or if we could organise an *assise* with various stakeholders as to the future, as from now, the *creole mauricien* language is going beyond the boundaries of Mauritius because we can, for example, promote our language outside.

We can invite other cultures to speak, to learn *creole mauricien*, it could be a pillar of the economy to attract people to learn *creole mauricien*. If you go to Germany, there are experts in Indology, they are learning Sanskrit in Germany, which is becoming a very popular language over there. So, maybe in the weeks to come or in the months to come, the hon. Vice-Prime

Minister could, with a team of experts, disseminate more with regard to what they intend to do with regard to *Kreol Morisien* going beyond this Examination Board.

So, I would end with a note of appreciation to all Members for their passion for our national language and I hope a better and a great future to our mother language, *creole mauricien*. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

7.18 p.m.

Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is with greatest humility that I lend my voice tonight in support of this amendment and I would express my appreciation towards the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun.

I would like to join my voice together with the hon. Member who spoke right before me, hon. Lobine, in appreciating the good job that has been done and the passion with which the debate started in this House.

I think, personally, that it is legitimate for us to have some concerns, to have some questions and some doubts as well. I am sure during the summing up of the debate the hon. Vice-Prime Minister will definitely clear those doubts. But let's not jump the gun. I have been listening passionately to the speech of hon. Bodha, who unfortunately is not in the House, and he has referred to Cambridge University as *référence de taille*. He is the one who a few years back said that we need to have a 'paradigm shift.' I personally believe that this is a paradigm shift that is occurring tonight once we vote for this Bill.

He also mentioned Martinique and Guadeloupe, but let me remind this hon. Member that we are in Mauritius and we should be proud of who we are. We have our different cultures living together, talking different languages whether it is Creole, whether it is Bhojpuri, whether it is English or French. He also mentioned about creole being a medium of study, but let me remind him that we are already using creole as a support language to teach both in primary and secondary school as well.

I think, Mr Speaker, Sir, that it is befitting that this amendment and debate is taking place in this year where Mauritius is commemorating its 55th independence. This amendment paves the way towards setting an example and inspiring other nations, whether it is Martinique or Guadeloupe, which were previously under the British colonisation. Mauritius, after 55 years of independence, is positioning itself within the global debate. In 2010, I quote, UNESCO mentioned that –

“Africa is the only continent where the majority of children start schooling using a foreign language.”

This clearly stated the disadvantage of African students.

When we go on international forums, very often we get asked: what is your mother tongue? What is your national language? Very often, we say it is English and it sounds quite bizarre. Hon. Dhunoo mentioned in his speech, when you go to South Africa, when you ask about them, they say it is Afrikaans. So, I think this is the right opportunity for us to pave the way for Mauritius to fit itself in the global village as we call it.

Since 1968, we broke the shackles from the monarchy. So, I think, it is important that the next time someone asks us: what is your national language; we can say with pride that it is creole. Our native language, which most Mauritians use, has found its way in the years 2010 and around 2015, the Mauritian creole found its place in Mauritian classrooms. I have been reading a lot about what has been said and hon. Mrs Tania Diolle mentioned about some figures as well. I would like here to quote a document submitted to the faculty of Department of Linguistic in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a degree in Bachelor of Arts for Yale University in April 2015 –

“Creole in Mauritian Schools: Mother Tongue Language Education and Public Opinion by Alisson Miller.”

There is a chapter at page 10 where it mentions that –

“Mauritians use a variety of languages in their daily lives, including French, English, Kreol Morisien, and several other ancestral languages. Creole is the language spoken at home by 86.5% of Mauritians, while only 4.1% of Mauritians speak French at home and 0.5% speak English at home.”

In the same study, Allison Miller mentions about the solution: “creole Instruction as a Solution in Language Planning.” She mentions that –

“In the case of CPE failure, lack of English language proficiency and diminished comprehension of other subjects are to blame, both of which could be remedied through the use of creole as a language of instruction.”

So, I think we are all unanimously agreeing that using creole could be a medium to teach our students and to correct where we have been adopting, I say it, English as a medium to teach our children, but creole could be used to really redress the situation. The teaching of Kreol Morisien in our schools has been made possible through support of different people around Mauritius who have worked a lot. They have worked in elaborating the *orthographe*, the grammar and a dictionary as well and there are three documents to which we very often refer to in helping the Kreol Morisien to get into schools, that is, *l'Orthographe Kreol Morisien*, *Gramer Kreol Morisien*, *Diksjoner Morisien*.

Since 2017, the teaching of the Mauritian Kreol has been presented as an optional subject across Grade 1 to 6 further to University of Mauritius also offers a degree programme covering Kreol studies.

In view of making the language being used for official purposes, it has to be spoken and written and also recorded, while respecting as mentioned like we do for other languages whether it is English or French, that is, respecting the *orthographe*, the grammar, the vocabulary in line when we publish or when we talk as well. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is imperative that at all levels, we adopt a standardised written system and acquire a proper communicative as well as a social linguistic cognitive competencies.

The teaching and learning process and training should be pursued and facilitated. Over time, people will definitely develop the mastery of the language. I was researching about – you know when we talk about language, we talk about creole, we talk about creating a new body for examination, I was definitely sure that the question of creole being brought to this House as a spoken language would be on the table. This has been raised by hon. Mrs Arianne Navarre-Marie.

In his answer to the PQ, the hon. Prime Minister did mention that for us to be able to bring creole here into the Parliament, we need to have all the logistics ready. We as parliamentarians, we individuals sitting as hon. Members, we personally do not even master how to write proper creole, we do not even master how to talk proper creole. I am sure each and everyone has these grey envelopes where you have to check on the Hansard whether you spoken something right or wrong.

So, bringing Creole to the Parliament will definitely happen but it will happen after we have those qualified students going through the examinations, promoting the language, building up. So, I am sure that if it is not this generation then it is going to be the next generation that would be here talking Creole, write in proper Creole.

This is the Mauritius that we are walking towards, that is another milestone that we are working towards and the object of the Bill is clearly setting the changes that we want to bring through this amendment. Mr Speaker, Sir, the main object of the Bill is as mentioned... I am sure the hon. Member Arianne Navarre-Marie did not even read the Bill properly because it is very clear and it is simple English which is to the point; you do not even have to translate any word there, so, it is clear. The object states –

“(a) the setting up of a National Examinations Board for the organisation and conduct of examinations in designated subjects at secondary education level;”

That is, the role of the National Examinations Board would be to organise and conduct examinations.

“(b) the conferment, upon the University of Mauritius, of the power to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector, on the recommendation of the National Examinations Board.”

This debate, Mr Speaker, Sir, is significant because of the sheer breadth and depth of the amendments being brought to this House.

The Government’s direction as encapsulated by hon. Minister of Education continues in the same vein as to the vision of the Prime Minister, an education which is accessible to each and every one.

A significant part of the Bill has already been discussed and canvassed by Members of both sides. So, I shall dwell my intervention upon section 5D to the Education (Amendment) Bill, that is, the setting up of a National Examinations Board for the secondary education which has as functions again organising and conducting examinations in respect of subjects for the secondary education. In this situation, it is Creole language.

The NEB will have as task to develop rules and regulations for national examinations and assessments. I think it answers all the whys that were put forward by hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie. It will have the burden to develop assessment frameworks and assessment syllabuses in the subjects listed like *Kreol Morisien*. I want to lay emphasis on this part. It has the role; it has the duty, the burden to develop assessment frameworks and assessment syllabuses. That is, the Board will be constituted now and they will work together, they will try to find how to assess and how to really set the frameworks but hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie came forward asking why is it not done; why do we not have past papers? We are debating right now. We are asking them to vote for a Bill. So, I think we need to look forward and not look at the back. This is where I would humbly request her to read the Bill and then to understand the motive of this amendment being brought to the House.

The National Examinations Board will have the role to set and moderate examination papers in the specific language, here it is Creole. Section 5D 2(e) clearly mentions that the NEB will have to organise the marking and moderation of examination scripts as well. The Board will have the responsibility to prepare exams reports on the candidates' level of performance in the subjects examined, conduct research on assessments for the secondary level. So, let me just take a step back to what is being done as this is one of the most important and significant steps in reforming the education sector as rightly mentioned by hon. Lobine. This amendment will help in engaging the population into an accessibility for education.

Furthermore, what is more important, that is, the Board; there is an examination, my colleague hon. Dhunoo mentioned it. We are Mauritians, we speak Creole, we are proud of our mother tongue, we are proud of our language. So, I think it is fair enough for us bring forward some professionals in this sector who understand Creole, who know how to write, the vocabulary, the *orthographe* to stand out and to be the one who will work for this institution and who will bring forward the change instead of going back again to Cambridge, because I

mentioned it in my introduction, we are an independent island, we are celebrating 55 years of independence. So, I think it is the opportune time for Mauritius to stand out and to stand on its own for its language, for its people as well to help us forge for a nation which finds itself whether it is in education, employment, gender equality. This is what we are working towards with this Government.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will request Members on the Opposite side to focus on possibilities that these amendments are bringing forward and this is what we call a ‘paradigm shift’. And again, I would reiterate what I started with like 55 years of independence, we cannot and we should no longer believe that we have the monopoly of ideas and politicise all the debates, that is, whatever we are bringing to this House should have a political agenda, should have a political colour. Instead I would appeal to Members on the other side – some Members not all of them – that this amendment is for the sake of our children, our nation and of course, I would appeal to their sense of patriotism so that we can vote this Bill unanimously and bring this for the future generations. I am done, Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your attention. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. François!

(7.33 p.m.)

Mr J. F. François (First Member for Rodrigues): Thank you. Mr Speaker, Sir, I will take a short call on the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2023) presented by the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, Minister of Education and others.

Mr Speaker, Sir, whenever we are talking about education at secondary level, allow me to acknowledge and thank all our teachers and support staffs in our Republic who have been doing great jobs for us and our children over the many years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are debating the Education (Amendment) Bill with main object to amend the Education Act to provide for –

- “(a) the setting up of a National Examinations Board for the organisation and conduct of examinations in designated subjects at secondary education level; and
- (b) the conferment upon the University of Mauritius, of the power to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector on the recommendations of the National Examinations Board.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the best educations in the world is the Finnish education system which provides equal opportunities for access to all and to raise the general level and quality of education for an individual education, personalised learning paths and an all-education focused on problem solving skills and life skills instead of mindless regurgitations of facts. The Finnish education system fascinates me. I think it should allow us here to think that there should be a greater choice and flexibility in our curriculum at secondary level where our Republic would surely have to move to a new examination assessment model in this new era of our education sector and the success of our nation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the proposed National Examinations Board will surely address issues of subjects that are mostly Mauritius-bound like *Kreol Morisien*, probably later on, Asian languages or Bhojpuri as mentioned by hon. Mrs Koonjoo-Shah and *Kreol Rodrige* amongst others. If at present, the only designated subject is *Kreol Morisien*, I find it absolutely imperative for Rodrigues to lay emphasis on the subject *Kreol Rodrige*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to base most of my short contribution on this Bill mainly with regard to the representation of Rodrigues in relation to one probable designated subject, the *Kreol Rodrige*. I hereby acknowledge the brilliant work of Professor Carpooran, Miss Yani Maury, a Rodriguan lecturer from the University of Mauritius and others, who cemented their testimony that *Kreol Rodrige* is different from that of *Kreol Morisien* despite the fact that we are talking of *kreol la repiblik* today. This is substantiated by the phonetic, lexicography and vocabulary of our *Kreol Rodrige* and its historical context from a sociolinguistic perspective which I won't venture into now. We have got the responsibility to preserve and value this Rodriguan linguistic and cultural heritage, our mother tongue, *Kreol Rodrige*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the gist of my intervention today is about how Rodrigues will be represented and recognised through this Education (Amendment) Bill. It is a fact that there are so many questions and criticisms that are being flagged out by scholars, key stakeholders in the field of education, be it locally or at national level here, in the Press or on social media in relation to what they said, duplication or dichotomy of Mauritius Examinations Syndicate and National Examinations Board thereof.

The hon. Vice-Prime Minister enlightened the House earlier that Cambridge does not have the required expertise as well as literatures to sustain the examination process in that regard.

As raised from many quarters with regard to the designated subject *Kreol Morisien*, it is true that there are many shortcomings like syllabus requirements, as sufficiently canvassed by some orators. But I am glad to hear that the examination for *Kreol Morisien* will be considered at one and same sitting at the Cambridge School Certificate.

However, there are high expectations that throughout the functions of the Board, as per Clause 5D, sub-clause 2, as compared to the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, there will be a way to have a more holistic look at assessment, especially assessments that are exam-oriented. I do hope that the National Examinations Board will act in a systematic way through a broad cooperation with all stakeholders for an improved educational system in our Republic.

Mr Speaker, Sir, here, I seize this opportunity to thank, amongst others, the Central Government in particular, the hon. Minister of Education, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, to allow teaching of *Kreol Rodrige* in primary schools in Rodrigues since January 2020, from Grade 1 to Grade 4. This is anchoring our language and the Rodriguan Creole culture in our local school curriculum in Rodrigues and in our Rodriguan society overall. And I have to say that hon. Serge Clair, former Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues, was very adamant on the fact that our children in Rodrigues should be able to learn our own language, our mother tongue in our local schools.

We are thankful that the Central Government under the aegis of the hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Jugnauth, also responsible for Rodrigues, understood and accepted that same becomes a reality in Rodrigues. And here, Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to refer to Hansard. In PQ B/840, on 08 November 2011, I put a question to the then hon. Minister of Education - I think it was hon. Dr. Bunwaree – asking him whether, in regard to the introduction of the *Kreol Morisien* in schools, in Rodrigues, (c) if Government will consider reviewing this decision, in view of the specificity and cultural differences in Rodrigues. Well, it can be referred to in the Hansard.

I hereby also put on record the valuable work carried out by the Creole Speaking Union and the *Akademi Kreol Rodrige*, a consultative and scientific institution created on 11 February 2019, formerly chaired by Miss Marie Florence François.

Furthermore, on 21 September 2019, the Scientific Council of the *Akademi Kreol Rodrige* presented a *regleman e konvansyon pou lekritir kreol Rodrige*. As rightly pointed out by

hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy, we need to know how to write and talk proper creole. This document defines the specificity and authenticity of *Kreol Rodrige* within the Republic of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that suggestions from members of Rodrigues on the *Akademi Kreol Repiblik* was then decisive and they did make a lot of difference. My question now is – will the National Examinations Board consider the work done by Professor Arnaud Carpooran from University of Mauritius and the Rodriguan scholars to avoid any discrimination against potential secondary students in Rodrigues, be it at School Certificate or Higher School Certificate level?

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also value the great work of the former Regional Government under the leadership of the former Chief Commissioner, Serge Clair and Commissioner of Arts and Culture, Mrs Rose de Lima Edouard-Ravina for the revolutionary cultural project, a *diksioner kreol Rodrige* and the representation of Rodrigues on the *Akademi Kreol Repiblik Moris*.

As mentioned earlier, *Kreol Morisien*, as a designated subject is facing, I will say, a few challenges as reported and as canvassed in the House from various pressure groups. This is where I do hope that the functions of the Board, as specified in the new clause 5D of the Bill, will remedy same. I will not go into the details.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will propose that at the level of Grade 11, subjects like History and Agriculture be redesigned as per the Mauritian and the Rodriguan context, under the aegis of the National Examinations Board. Likewise, here, I plead more specifically that the subject ‘History of Rodrigues’ - I say it again, ‘History of Rodrigues’ and subjects like Fisheries and Blue Economy, Travel and Tourism, specifically for Rodrigues, find their way in the syllabus at secondary level, which will also support our unique ‘Rodriguanism model’. Yes, Fisheries or Blue Economy, Travel and Tourism, in line with our economic pillars for the future ecological and sustainable development of Rodrigues.

However, there is need to consolidate our Rodriguan literatures, be it with respect to our creole language, our identity and our culture as a legacy of our ancestors since slavery period. *Et ici, je voudrais citer encore une fois Mlle. Florence François qui disait, je cite –*

« *Rodrig li nou fierte. Anou les lekritir kreol Rodrige rann nou ankor pli fier e al ankor pli lwin.* »

I will also propose that through the National Examinations Board, other new subjects can be introduced, like Civic and Culture Education. Other specific technical and skill-based subjects and the corresponding syllabus and assessment can be mounted and designed accordingly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to conclude, this Education (Amendment) Bill should bring a new trust among all concerned stakeholders for a successful implementation of this milestone project in this new education era for our Republic, as is the case in Finland where one of the key factors for the success of its educational system is trust at all levels and the power of knowledge.

Mr Speaker, Sir, that would be my brief intervention on this Education (Amendment) Bill, which I welcome and I do congratulate the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for one hour.

At 7.46 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.12 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated! Should I call you honourable?

(09.12 p.m.)

Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or): It depends upon you. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: You did not stand up. Please, go ahead!

Dr. Gungapersad: To please you! Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Far from me is the idea of throwing the baby out with the bath water. Far from me! Here is a Bill which concerns our kids, here is a Bill which has to be voted, the sooner the better because the kids are awaiting perhaps this National Examination Board in order to be in a position to pay for the SC examination. I understand that without this, they will not be able to proceed with the payment of their SC examination.

I believe we can agree to disagree, but we do not need to be disagreeable. We can agree to disagree. I want to contribute something to this Bill, but let me appreciate something said by hon. Ms Tour. She said something very interesting, amidst the toxicity of this debate, there are good

things which have happened. Hon. Ms Tour said something nice and I would like to place it on record –

« *Nous ne sommes pas là pour écraser tous le bon travail qu'a fait les autres avant nous.* »

I think this is very interesting whatever hon. Ms Tour said in her intervention and she deserves to be commended for that.

Let me move to the Minister of Education also, she has shed some light and afterwards I will be asking a few questions, but I think I will align myself on whatever she said earlier as the mover of the Bill. She considered the National Examination Board (NEB) as one of the key fundamental aspects to offer diversity of subjects to our kids. Yes, it is high time we do that hon. Minister, and I agree with you. This is for the good of our kids.

NEB for the secondary subsector is indeed, as you said, a strategic move in the educational landscape. I agree with you and it should be like that for the general welfare of our kids. The National Examination Board is considered as a breakthrough in national education circles. This paves the way for other developments by making it possible to offer qualifications other than those offered by Cambridge assessments, international education called CAIE. It will help to *mauritianise* our assessment system. This initiative will also make it possible to offer students a wider range of subjects, especially since several questionnaires such as Asian languages are also corrected in Mauritius.

Allow me at the outset, as hon. Ms Tour said, to pay tribute to other people who have contributed at different juncture in the history of Mauritius to bring *Kreol Morisien* where it is today.

Allow me to pay tribute to all those men and women who have worked relentlessly and contributed enormously in the promotion of *Kreol Morisien*. When I talk of *Kreol Morisien*, we need to look at it from the larger prospective. I refer to all those artists, writers, poets, linguists, researchers *et j'en passe*. I refer to those who have helped in the evolution of this beautiful language right from the times of slavery to present day.

Let us hope together that the National Examinations Board will give a much awaited boost to the *Kreol Morisien*. As I said, we can agree to disagree but we don't need to be disagreeable. Our contribution on this side of the House, is not to cast aversion on the Bill but

like people who reflect, who think, we have some questions which we have been asking and my four honourable friends on this side of the House have brought forward a few questions and it is important as I said. It is not always nice to throw the baby along with the bath water. There may be something good we are saying for the welfare of our kids because we also, we care for those kids.

It was legitimate that my friends ask this question: why we needed a National Examinations Board when we have the MES? And the hon. Minister tried to explain because we didn't know it earlier. She explained and I hope in her summing up, perhaps, she will give further clarification. We also, we were worried how come we are going to take the SC examinations, for all the other subjects it would be Cambridge, whereas for one subject it would have been *Kreol Morisien* and I think the Minister tried to explain. Definitely, we may not agree in the way it is done but as I said there is urgency today. This Bill has to be voted so that the kids who are waiting to pay for the SC examinations can do so. And we have to do that, the sooner the better.

Now, when we read “designated subjects at secondary level”, we have to bear in mind, secondary level stretches from Grade 7 to Grade 13, HSC, and already in between we have that NCE Examination and in NCE we have *Kreol Morisien*. Will this Board be henceforth responsible to conduct the exam? This is a question. It is good that our university, the University of Mauritius where I did not study like hon. Dhunoo but it is our university. We should be proud of our university. It has produced valiant men and women of this country who are at the head of different departments. But when we read that little word why a sub-sector being created perhaps if we had canvassed it earlier, we would have understood. I don't know for the other subjects which later perhaps the Minister will bring through a regulation, the technical stream. It is good and my good friend, the hon. Member from Rodrigues came with very pertinent suggestions about other subjects which could be included in a mauritianised way. It is interesting sometimes to listen to discordant narratives because we always live with takeaway of perhaps, good practices. Perhaps, we grow better when sometimes there are clashes of ideas. Unfortunately, at the beginning, it started instead of clash of ideas, clash of persons.

In this August Assembly, we need to reflect what we are showing to the population outside because we are supposed to be, as you several times said, Mr Speaker, Sir, the “temple of

democracy”, because we need - this is democracy - the freedom to say things as long as we respect the rules of the House. That is why some of my friends who spoke earlier on this side, asked this question: what is the expertise of the University of Mauritius in developing assessment frameworks, syllabuses for secondary sector? It is not that we are criticising the University of Mauritius. No, it is a legitimate question. I have been talking with lecturers of University of Mauritius. I am not going to mention names in order not to embarrass anyone.

When we are talking about parity of esteem, some of us, we did compete for laureateship, Mr Speaker, Sir. We did compete when we were students and it was a matter of pride to be a laureate or to be ranked after the laureate; to get a scholarship. I don't want the student who has *Kreol Morisien* in his certificate to be stigmatised. I don't want that because we love that language. We should empower that student and that is why we ask this question: what will happen after SC? It is a legitimate question. Will that student competing outside, for example, taking English Main, French Main and *Kreol Morisien* Main, will it be Main or will it be Subsidiary? A legitimate question; we are not undermining the University of Mauritius, we asking a question. Now, it could be marked in Mauritius; will the mark be conveyed to Cambridge because you know to be a laureate or to be ranked, a few marks that make the difference? We don't know what will happen. It is legitimate we ask these questions.

Now, there are other things. Whether it would be allowed at Principal level, whether it would have the literature component. When we talk of languages, be it Hindi, Urdu, English, French, all these languages we have a language component and we have a literature component and *Kreol Morisien* is very rich in terms of literature. Very rich! Perhaps, *ça va valoriser nos auteurs, nos poètes ainsi de suite*. This is what we are asking. We are not throwing the baby along the bath water. No! We are asking legitimate questions because this Bill which ultimately will become the National Examinations Board, is going to concern our kids in the years to come. Will adults who have already left school get this opportunity to take that subject? And I hope, yes they should. *On doit les donner cette possibilité-là s'ils ont les qualités, les aptitudes à le faire*. The exam paper - we want to know how the exam paper will be. Will it be the model of English language -comprehension, essay writing, an oral component or will it be the French type where there is translation?

Hon. Members of the other side, we are asking legitimate and pedagogical questions. There is no controversy there and as I said this should be a non-controversial bill because it concerns our kids. We have made a lot of progress in this field of *Kreol Morisien* but if I say now, as at today at this time, we have an acute shortage of teachers for *Kreol Morisien*. Am I being wrong?

If I tell you as at today, the first batch of B.Ed and listen well! It is not *Kreol Morisien*; for B.Ed it is *Kreol Repiblik Morisien*. The first batch was supposed to complete by the end of 2023. They were supposed to complete this year. Do you know the reality? Do you know what has happened? Unfortunately all students who joined that course for B.Ed for *Kreol Repiblik Morisien*, they have left the course. *C'est à dire à la fin, là, pour décembre, on n'aura pas ces personnes avec B.Ed. Il faut chercher les raisons pourquoi we have this situation. Comment faire pour attirer d'avantage des gens pour qu'ils continuent avec leurs études dans ce domaine-là ?*

Next, we have been asking a few questions as to why Cambridge did not agree to allow Mauritians - without the creation of that National Examinations Board and the hon. Minister explained. She had meetings with them. Unfortunately, it did not work. Let us hope. We do not know in the future what may happen but at least, she said she tried.

Now, this is also true. I have been talking during the day, today, so that my information is not old-dated. Many teachers teaching *Kreol Morisien*, they are not aware that tonight we are discussing a Bill which concerns them. They are teachers.

Now, one important aspect, this may not be within the ambit of this Minister of Education because this is beyond. What implications for employment, Madam? Will the Public Service Commission and semi- governmental bodies have to review their recruitment criteria? Shouldn't schemes of service be revisited to include *Kreol Morisien*?

Mr Speaker, Sir, mention is made of designated subjects at secondary education level and at the end of Section (7) of the Bill, only one subject is mentioned, that is, *Kreol Morisien*. It would have been perhaps fairer since we are debating to have a few other subjects because I know in the pipeline we have the technical stream subjects which I think is a good idea. *C'est une bonne avancée dans le domaine éducatif. Pourquoi pas? Il faut donner la chance aux enfants, surtout ceux qui ont des problèmes avec un système hyper compétitif. Oui, il faut et ça va être une bonne avancée.*

Next, this Education Act is being amended to set up these examination boards. As I said, it is good but we have to see positive things as well. For example, this NEB is perhaps the first step towards making Mauritius less dependent on foreign bodies for examinations in the secondary sector. If we have to improve it, we improve it as we walk the talk.

It goes a long way in recognizing local competencies. Yes! It goes a long way and we have a lot of competent people at the University of Mauritius, at MIE and elsewhere. Perhaps, University of Mauritius will get an opportunity to partner with Cambridge and other institutions.

Many subjects which are not examinable today or which are not examinable by CAIE, perhaps will be offered to Mauritian students. If this is the idea, why shouldn't we endorse it? Yes! We agree. But, as I said, unfortunately outside, many people are not aware about what the intention is. This is something good which could have been canvassed and doubts cleared so that we could have embraced it with open arms. As I said earlier, far from me, is the idea of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

When we refer to UNESCO; UNESCO said something very interesting. UNESCO promotes mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual approaches and education; an important factor for inclusion and quality in education. Research shows that this has a positive impact on learning and teaching outcomes.

I think I'm talking from memory. I think Catholic colleges did a good job; they used *Kreol Morisien* to teach the students having learning difficulties to master, to grasp certain complex ideas.

One thing that I think perhaps most teachers use is code switching and when we do code switching, we move from one language to another. We may code switch within a sentence or we may code switch within a paragraph. We have to see how, while doing one thing, we do not distort the other because learning a language is quite complex and we have to see how *Kreol Morisien* is going to help. It is good that at the University of Mauritius, we have a joint degree – BA French and Creole and we should not forget Rodrigues – the specificity and how the kids in Rodrigues, when they take that paper, are in no way penalised because they have their accent of talking, they have perhaps their way of writing. We need to harmonise that because they are the kids of the Republic and that is why I am more at ease with *Kreol Repiblik Morisien*. I am more

at ease with that appellation. Perhaps, this is my way of looking at it. So, without being longer, I think this is a Bill which should have been non-controversial.

Unfortunately, some Members on the other side took a very toxic approach because we are talking about something for the welfare of our kids and *Kreol Morisien* is the mother tongue of many of us and I think it is opening the way for many other subjects, languages, areas so that our kids ultimately benefit from that.

So, to the hon. Minister, our queries are not negative criticisms. They are concerns and if they can be addressed, it would be for the welfare of our kids. I wish the National Examinations Board all the best.

Thank you everyone.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Toussaint!

(9.35 p.m.)

The Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation (Mr S. Toussaint): M. le président, dans quelques mois, 209 jeunes vont entrer dans l'histoire de notre jeune République en participant pour la première fois, au niveau *O'level – SC* comme on a l'habitude de dire, à l'examen du *Kreol Morisien* et ceci devient possible quand nous allons tous, dans quelques instants, je suis sûr tous, voter pour ce projet de loi et je sens dans les discours malgré les *queries*, les questions, qu'il y a consensus autour de ce projet de loi emmené à la Chambre ici par la Vice-première ministre, l'honorable Madame Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun que je félicite ainsi que tout son personnel et aussi toutes les personnes qui ont contribué à rendre ce projet possible.

Donc, le projet de loi vient créer le *National Examinations Board* qui aura, comme plusieurs membres l'on dit, la responsabilité de faire les examens du *Kreol Morisien* et ensuite de donner un certificat sous l'égide de l'université de Maurice.

Petit rappel pour l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad, il était important de voter cette loi, oui, pour que les examens puissent se faire, mais pas nécessairement pour que les jeunes puissent payer leurs frais d'examen. Il faut rappeler que les frais de la *SC* et de la *HSC* sont encourus par l'État, et que c'est notre gouvernement...

(Interruptions)

Non, je sens qu'il est passionné dans ce qu'il a dit ! Donc, il a peut-être zappé ce bout-là. *Non, non, pa lot la la ! C'est zappé ; la télécommande, la télé tout cela.*

Donc, c'est notre gouvernement qui a remis les subsides sur les frais d'examens de la SC et de la HSC ; des subsides que je dois rappeler qui ont été enlevés dans le passé par le Parti travailliste. *Like we used to say, we need to set the records right.*

Les questions sont légitimes et l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad a aussi dit qu'il fallait communiquer beaucoup plus et que les enseignants qui enseignent le *Kreol Morisien* ne sont pas au courant que nous allons débattre de ce projet de loi aujourd'hui. Je suis tombé sur un article – c'est un peu rare que je lis certains journaux – mais pour les besoins de mon discours, j'ai demandé à mon Attaché de presse de me trouver le maximum d'articles dessus. Je cite, M. le président, du Défi, Mardi 25 avril 2023 ; aujourd'hui, on est le 16, presque un mois déjà de cela –

« L'Education (Amendement) Bill au Parlement. »

Trois semaines de cela, je cite –

« Le Kreol Morisien première matière au *National Examinations Board*. »

Je conseillerais à tous les honorables membres et peut-être à certains enseignants qui, d'après l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad, ne sont pas au courant, d'aller retrouver une copie de cet article qui est très bien fait, c'est très scientifique. Ce n'est pas un article d'opinion, c'est très bien fait où tout est expliqué dedans. Le *Bill* est dedans, tout est expliqué ; il fallait juste le lire et cela aurait été très simple à comprendre.

Je cite aussi un morceau de cet article –

« Le professeur Arnaud Carpooran, – qui jadis avait été mon professeur au collège de Saint Joseph et que je respecte énormément – douanier de la faculté des sciences sociales et humaines de l'université de Maurice, se réjouit de cette avancée majeure en particulier pour la langue maternelle. Selon lui, nul n'aurait pu imaginer à l'époque où le *Kreol Morisien* a été proposé comme matière, qu'il atteindrait un tel niveau aujourd'hui.»

Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, pour atteindre ce niveau, c'est grâce à nous, à tout le monde, parce que nous allons voter ce projet de loi. Donc, nous devons être fiers, et je le redis, tout le monde ; gouvernement comme l'opposition, nous devrions être fiers de ce que nous

apportons dans notre pays aujourd'hui. Grâce à nous, nous allons rendre le rêve de 209 jeunes étudiants possible.

Les débats ont tourné autour du *National Examinations Board*, pourquoi se *board* ? Pourquoi pas le *MES* ? Pourquoi pas *Cambridge* ? L'honorable Bodha, malheureusement il a disparu, a parlé en long et en large de '*Cambridge, Cambridge, Cambridge, Cambridge.*' Probablement, il n'a pas compris ! Madame la vice-Première ministre a expliqué en long et en large les discussions que nous avons eues avec *Cambridge* et que pour différentes raisons, *Cambridge* ne peut pas faire ces examens. Parmi, je retiens une des raisons qui est la quantité de littérature disponible en créole mauricien.

L'honorable Bodha a parlé de notre cinquantaine d'années d'indépendance où il y a plusieurs textes en créole, etc., oui, certainement. Nous avons beaucoup de chansons, nous avons beaucoup de poésies, nous avons beaucoup de poètes, d'écrivains Mauriciens, de journalistes. Nous-même probablement quand on était à l'école parfois on a dû écrire des poèmes, des petits mots doux en créole, mais ce n'est certainement pas le créole mauricien comme cela doit être enseigné d'après les normes qui existent. C'est cela qui fait qu'il y a très peu de littérature en créole mauricien d'après les normes et c'est cela que *Cambridge* vient expliquer. Ceux qui sont dans le domaine, les littéraires qui sont dans ce domaine sont encouragés à s'aligner sur la bonne façon d'écrire le créole mauricien pour produire le plus d'œuvres littéraires possibles pour plus tard. Dans un deuxième temps, ces jeunes iront en *HSC* et après ils auront assez de matière.

L'honorable Navarre-Marie, malheureusement – je ne sais pas si c'est moi qui a mal compris – a parlé de *Cambridge* et pourquoi *Cambridge* offre le français. Si on parle que de la littérature en français et de la littérature francophone, et bien, il existe des milliers et des milliers d'auteurs en littérature française, littérature francophone, littérature africaine en français. Cela va, M. le président, de Molière à Racine, de Camus à Sartre, de nos compatriotes en Afrique. Il existe des tonnes et des tonnes de littérature en français. Donc, ce n'est pas comparable, je trouve.

M. le président, nous devrions aussi rester centrés sur nos 209 jeunes qui vont prendre cet examen. Il ne faut pas oublier que *the students must be at the centre of everything*. C'est pour ces jeunes que toute l'équipe de Madame la vice-Première ministre fait ce travail, et je dois dire à ces jeunes que nous sommes très fiers d'eux. Vous êtes audacieux ! Depuis que le sujet avait été

introduit au primaire en 2012, *zonn manz ar li* ! Mine de rien, on s'est laissé un peu emporté dans tous les sens avec plusieurs questions légitimes, oui, mais il ne faut pas oublier qu'il y a quand même 209 jeunes qui ont tenu la route depuis 2012 !

Quand ils ont fait leur entrée au primaire, ils ont passé par tous les étapes qu'il fallait, le PSAC, leur entrée au collège, les examens de la NCE. Aujourd'hui, ces 209 jeunes audacieux, téméraires se sont dits : écoutez, nous, on aime notre langue *Kreol Morisien* et on va aller pour les examens dedans. Et je leur dis bravo ! Je dis à ces jeunes félicitations ! Et je félicite leurs parents aussi qui les ont probablement encouragés dans ce sens. Je dis à ces jeunes que vous êtes visionnaires parce que vous voyez loin dans ce qui va arriver probablement plus tard dans cette matière.

Il ne faut pas aussi oublier les enseignants qui font de leur mieux. Il fallait déjà changer la mentalité depuis 2012 et osez venir de l'avant pour dire aux personnes : 'Où travailles-tu ?' 'Moi, je suis enseignant.' 'Ah, de quel sujet ?' 'Le *Kreol Morisien*.' 'Huh ?'

Donc, bravo aux enseignants qui ont choisi et qui ont accepté de prendre cette aventure de devenir des enseignants du *Kreol Morisien*. Bravo ! Et on est fier de vous et vous faites un travail formidable.

M. le président, le *National Examinations Board*, d'autres avant moi en ont parlé, ouvre la voie à d'autres matières plus tard qui ne sont pas évidemment offertes par Cambridge. Nos amis de Rodrigues, le leader de l'OPR en a parlé et c'est excellent ce qu'il a proposé et je trouve qu'il y a *room* pour d'autres types de matières typiquement de la république de Maurice que Cambridge ou autre ne pourrait jamais comprendre.

Fait important, c'est que même si ces jeunes auront leur examen traditionnel de Cambridge Anglais, Français, Physique, bla-bla-bla, etc., ils auront aussi leur examen de *Kreol Morisien* par le *National Examinations Board*. *The results will be considered as one and same sitting*. Cela avait été expliqué dans l'introduction clairement par la Vice-première ministre et d'autres questions aussi posées par les membres de l'Opposition ont déjà été dites et je suis sûr qu'éventuellement dans son *summing-up*, madame la ministre va réexpliquer pour que tout soit clair.

M. le président, avec la possibilité de prendre comme examen le *Kreol Morisien* aujourd'hui à travers ce projet de loi, je dois aussi rendre hommage à un grand défenseur de la langue créole qui depuis plusieurs années a fait entrer le *Kreol Morisien* dans le salon des Mauriciens depuis les années 60 et 70. Ce n'était pas évident parce qu'à l'époque, c'était mal vu de parler le créole. Dans certaines institutions, on était forcé de s'exprimer dans d'autres langues et cette personne à travers ses œuvres artistiques, a fait entrer le créole dans beaucoup de salons et il a su briser les barrières qu'il y avait par rapport au *Kreol Morisien*. Je rends hommage ce soir à feu Serge Lebrasse, M. le président. Et il avait si bien dit « *mo fier mo enn ti kreol* » dans une de ses chansons et de même pour moi.

M. le président, donc, je ne vais pas être plus long. Donc, tout a été dit, c'était un débat extraordinaire. Pour moi personnellement, c'est une grande fierté. J'aurais peut-être aimé être un enseignant en *Kreol Morisien* à ce moment-là. Et comme je dis, quand je pense qu'à une certaine époque de notre histoire, on nous empêchait de nous exprimer en notre langue maternelle, aujourd'hui je suis très fier et je frissonne à l'idée de voir que 209 de nos jeunes auront sur leur certificat écrit « *Kreol Morisien* ».

Vive nos jeunes ! Vive la république de Maurice ! Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister!

(9.50 p.m.)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me at the very outset to express my appreciation for the comments, views and arguments that have been expressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House.

We may not all be on the same wavelength, we may not all be reading from the same page but the fact remains that this is what debates are all about. It is quite legitimate for different views to be expressed. In fact, I welcome that because this gives me an opportunity to set the record straight and clarify some features and apprehensions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is unfortunate that hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie raised issues that I had already explained and canvassed during the Second Reading. She stated that there was a lot of confusion but sadly, the confusion seems to be more in her own mind.

An hon. Member: Yes!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Elementary courtesy, Mr Speaker, Sir, demands that once one has intervened, one is duty bound to stay back and listen to others but she instead made it a point to interrupt hon. Dr. Mrs Dorine Chukowry and compelled the Speaker to ask her to withdraw from the House. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very sad. On a day when history is being made and *Kreol Morisien* is being given its *lettre de noblesse*, she chose not to be party to it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, although the hon. Member is now out of the House, I will still clear her confusion and respond to some of the questions raised by her. She stated that there was a lot of confusion, that there is no programme of study and she was giving the impression that nothing is ready. Let me remind the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that *Kreol Morisien* is being taught in grade 10 as from June 2021 in our secondary schools. The MIE has since then developed the curriculum, the textbooks and everything has been done. She then complained about specimen papers not having been sent to schools and in the same breath, telling me it is only today. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me inform the House that the MES has an action plan and it was decided that it would be on 16 May that the specimen papers would be dispatched to schools and she was very much aware of it because she told me “only today”.

Now, we have a plan and what surprises me, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. lady is in fact an educator and being an educator, she should be aware that the teaching of a subject does not depend on specimen papers. It depends on the curriculum and the curriculum and the books are available and since long. Mr Speaker, Sir. *Je crois que c'est de la mauvaise foi.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, she then casted doubts on what was said in this House, stating that *les raisons avancées pour que Cambridge ne puisse faire les examens à un School Certificate level were obscures et suspectes.* Mr Speaker, Sir, *elle est allée trop loin en insinuant que les raisons que nous avançons sont obscures. Et je pense que je ne vais plus continuer à discuter et donner des clarifications à une personne qui sachant bel et bien que les papiers étaient entrés à l'école aujourd'hui a continué à faire de la démagogie sur un sujet aussi important que celui que nous discutons aujourd'hui dans cette Assemblée.*

I am not going to go on the several reasons canvassed by CAIE, Mr Speaker, Sir. As far back as in May 2021, I had made a statement in this House and I had mentioned the reasons why we had to come up with the National Examinations Board.

Mr Speaker, Sir, lots of people have been talking about - and I do understand that there are apprehensions, there are queries - who is setting up the paper, and how is it being done? Mr Speaker, Sir, if they had carefully listened to what I have said during the Second Reading, I had mentioned that the National Examinations Board was working in collaboration with the MES, the MIE and the University of Mauritius. The MIE being the institution developing the curriculum and responsible for the training of the teachers; the MES conducts exams; the National Examinations Board was working with the MES and the awarding body remains the University of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the curriculum was developed as far back as in October last. It was approved by the senate of the University of Mauritius in October last. I think we have to understand that when we come up with such programmes and such projects, we cannot rush. We have got to work systematically and we have to make sure that we do not go wrong. This is what we have been doing, Mr Speaker, Sir. Who prepares question papers? We all know that there are set experts for that.

Now, the hon. Dr. Gungapersad was talking about the specimen paper, what type of paper would it be?

The specimen assessment materials have already been circulated. The examination comprises three papers – a written paper, a reading comprehension and translation. They have been prepared by the MES and relevant follow-up activities like marking, grading of examination paper and the processing of results have been timelined.

Mr Speaker, Sir, talking about the registration of the students for the exam, we all know that right now, the MES is carrying out the registration of students for the Cambridge School Certificate. In fact, according to the timeline, by the end of May this year, all schools will have to send their list of candidates and the registration will start as from June this year. Everything has been planned, Mr Speaker, Sir. No confusion at all.

What is also important is that we work *étape par étape*. I have heard hon. Dr. Boolell stating: ‘what next?’ And it is true. We are all expecting that there will be an increase in number of students taking up KM at School Certificate level. We are going to work *étape par étape*. If you have noted, Mr Speaker, Sir, we had, as far back as in 2017, come up with the first PSAC Examination with *Kreol Morisien* offered then. Then, we came with the NCE where *Kreol Morisien* was offered. We have been working and we came up with this examination specifically because Cambridge stated that they were not in a position to offer the subject at the Cambridge School Certificate level. We had to come up with this Examination Board so as for us to offer the subject because we thought that it was a legitimate expectation for students having studied it.

We know that the MIE is already working on the curriculum. We know that the training of teachers is an ongoing process. I heard hon. Dr. Gungapersad stating that some students had left at the University of Mauritius, their course in Creole, French and Creole Studies but I wish to state that there are a large number of teachers who are in fact being trained and there are several courses being held at the MIE. From the information that I have gathered, we have 7 B. Ed Teachers who have passed out this year, 6 persons having done PGCE. By mid-2024, we will be having another 8 students passing out with their B. Ed from the MIE, and we know that there is an intake this year, of 11 teachers doing their PGCE in *Kreol Morisien*.

I also have here some information regarding teachers being trained. There are 184 trainees in the primary sector and we have a number of trainees for teachers being trained for the secondary level as well. So, obviously, we will have to keep on training teachers for that. This is important, but we also need to bear in mind that things happen step-by-step. We have come up now with this National School Certificate in *Kreol Morisien*. We will obviously come later on with *Kreol Morisien* being offered at subsidiary level through the National Examinations Board and step-by-step, we will proceed. The question which arose was –would it be possible for students to be offered a scholarship? Once we come to the bridge, we will cross it. We will need to negotiate with Cambridge, to see whether they can accommodate the marks that we will send to them by the time we offer the subject as an advanced level, a subject at principle level. All this will come in due time.

Right now, what we are saying is that if a student sits for the Cambridge School Certificate and wishes to take up *Kreol Morisien* at the National School Certificate level, he will

get two certificates, definitely. But, we are going to consider it as having been taken at the same sitting so that, if ever the student gets a credit in *Kreol Morisien*, this will be reckoned with for the promotion to Grade 12. Furthermore, we have also started working with the authorities concerned to consider *Kreol Morisien* at the National School Certificate level and the other subjects at School Certificate level to be taken at one and same sitting. Therefore it will be considered as a fifth credit anyway. So, this is what we have already done.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a lot more to do. We are all aware and we all know that we need to go further. Now we have to give ourselves time. We have to build up our experience. We have to make sure that when we come up with a product, it is of a standard. We have all been talking about quality. We have all been talking about the standard that we want to achieve. So we need to work seriously and tread cautiously. There is no need to rush, Mr Speaker, Sir. We know what we are doing; we know where we are going.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I do understand that many people are asking why the NEB and not the MES. I have to make it very clear. The MES has got a mandate. The MES is running all the examinations and external examinations: the Cambridge examinations, the local examinations, professional examinations. It has its own mandate. We are all proud today to say that we have a National Examinations Board affiliated with the University of Mauritius which is starting with KM but, we also know that this is just the first step.

Hon. Dr. Gungapersad queried as to whether anyone else apart from school students could take KM. Obviously, they will be able to sit for the National School Certificate in KM, just like any other private candidate can sit for any other examination at the level of the Cambridge School Certificate.

When we came up with the National Examinations Board and I have stated it in my intervention, KM is the first designated subject. I did not want to jump the gun. Hon. Dr. Boolell stated that we have already accepted, at the level of Government, to come up with a technology stream but we are not yet at it. We are working towards it. Once the documents are ready, I will come to Parliament and make a statement on that issue and that is simply why I did not mention it right now because it is not only the technological stream.

Our students take History of Mauritius at School Certificate level. It is a curriculum prepared by Cambridge. I think it is high time for us, here in Mauritius, to develop our own

curriculum for History of Mauritius and the MIE is already working on that; we have a team working on that. So, obviously, there will be other subjects that will be offered by the National Examinations Board and there is a process, a movement and we have to make sure that we move slowly and steadily.

Cambridge has been a partner for a long time and we all understand that it is important to maintain it. We are not going to sever our links with Cambridge. We are working, we are evolving, we are developing our own examinations board but we never stated that we will exclude any other board. We believe in diversity; we believe in the offer of diversity. I have mentioned earlier that it is important for us to give a diversity of opportunities to our students to ensure that they develop the skills and the competencies that are required in this modern world and we are working towards it.

On ne fait pas beaucoup de *tamtam*, M. le président, mais nous faisons notre travail sérieusement. Et l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad l'a si bien dit, *this is not a partisan Bill. It is a Bill that should make us all very proud because as Mauritians, we are showing to the world that we can and that we will do it right and we will never go wrong.*

As it is, we have done a lot, Mr Speaker, Sir. Other Members in the House; hon. Ms Tour, hon. Dr. Mrs Chukowry, hon. Dr. Gungapersad, all the others, have all mentioned that we have made a lot of progress. There is still more to be done.

At the Ministry of Education, I must say we have got a team that is working very seriously. I must today thank all the educators, the teachers, who from the very first day, agreed to get themselves trained, to work and to ensure that *Kreol Morisien* could be taught in our schools. Today, I think, we need to thank them for that. *Sans eux, rien ne serait possible!* Everything that we have done, Mr Speaker, Sir, has been done with a team spirit. The MIE, the MES, the University of Mauritius and now the National Examination Board, the educators, *le corps des enseignants*, they have all worked towards making this dream of ours a reality.

M. le président, hon. François stated that there will be a possibility one day of having the National Examination Board offering *Kreol Rodriguais* Why not? But again, *c'est un cheminement. Il nous faut arriver là. On a commencé l'enseignement du Kreol Rodriguais à Rodrigues, mais ça viendra par étape. Il faut faire amont de patience. Nous l'avons fait avec Kreol Morisien, nous le feront avec le Kreol Rodriguais aussi. Ça viendra, mais il nous faut tous*

réaliser que ce que nous faisons aujourd'hui, c'est pour le pays, c'est pour les jeunes et c'est pour nous tous. Nous utilisons tous cette langue, c'est le créole mauricien, elle nous appartient à tous.

M. le président, j'ai écouté tout à l'heure l'intervention de l'honorable Toussaint qui disait que nous avons vraiment de la littérature créole mauricien. Peut-être, c'est vrai, les écrits ne sont pas d'après le KM que nous enseignons aujourd'hui à l'école, mais je rappellerai aux membres de cet auguste Assemblée qu'à un moment donné, l'anglais n'était pas considéré comme étant une langue de statut. Les gens apprenaient le grec et le latin, et l'anglais de Chaucer n'est pas l'anglais de Shakespeare, et n'est pas l'anglais utilisé aujourd'hui. Pourtant, la langue anglaise est utilisée à travers le monde et peut-être est la langue la plus utilisée dans le monde.

Alors pour moi, M. le président, nous avons franchi une étape, une étape extrêmement importante, une étape qui premièrement nous permet de bouger à un autre niveau parce que nous avons notre propre Examination Board, mais en même temps, en parlant du Kreol Morisien, c'est une étape déterminante. Nous avons reconnu son importance. Aujourd'hui, nous reconnaissons qu'un certificat en KM est équivalent à un certificat dans n'importe quel autre sujet. Les deux certificats, le Cambridge School Certificate et le National School Certificate in KM, to us is equivalent. We are making sure that the level of the papers, the standard of the paper is really high.

I wish to inform the House that the paper, the curriculum has passed through a process that is very stringent. Le curriculum développé par la MIE, les papiers développés, élaborés par le MES ont tous été validés par l'université de Maurice, by its senate. Alors là, je dirais moi que nous avons fait ce que nous pensons être important, ce qu'il fallait être fait, et nous pensons que nous avons fait un grand pas en avant.

M. le président, je suis heureuse de voir que there has been general consensus on this Bill and that in spite of the fact that there were certain divergent views, discorded voices, the main thing remains that all the Members of the House who intervened have expressed the view that it is important and that we are all very happy that the National Examination Board will be set up.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is one thing important that I would like to stress upon before I stop my intervention. We have in the Bill the possibility for the National Examination Board to link

up with other foreign institutions and this will allow bench marking. As I have stated earlier, this will be an asset for us to ensure the quality of our product.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would now once again thank all Members of the House who have contributed to this Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. VI of 2023)

Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4 (New section 5D inserted in principal Act)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in clause 4 -

“In clause 4, in the proposed new section 5D, in subsection (4), by deleting the words “subsection (3)(a) and (j)” and replacing them by the words “subsection (3)(j).””

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 5 to 7 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and the enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2023) was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday, 23 May 2023 at 11.30 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A Husnoo) seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned! No adjournment matter, so, let us call it a day!

At 10.17 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 23 May 2023 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**SEXUAL ASSAULTS ON WOMEN – REPORTED CASES**

(No. B/501) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to sexual assaults on women, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof over the past five years, indicating the number thereof –

- (a) prosecuted, and
- (b) in which convictions have been secured.

(Withdrawn)

DR. N. R. – FORMER PRIME MINISTER –OVERSEAS MISSIONS –2005 TO 2014

(No. B/502) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to official overseas missions undertaken by Dr. N. R., GCSK, FRCP, former Prime Minister, since 2005 to 2014, he will state the number thereof, indicating in each case the –

- (a) countries visited;
- (b) composition of the delegation, and
- (c) costs incurred, giving details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

ELECTORAL PETITIONS – 2020 TO MAY 2023– COUNSEL FEES

(No. B/503) Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to electoral petitions entered before the Supreme Court since 2020 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Electoral Supervisory Commission, information as to the amount of fees paid to Counsel in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

DIRECTOR OF AUDIT – APPOINTMENT CRITERIA – REVIEW

(No. B/504) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Director of Audit, he will state the mode of appointment and eligibility criteria considered for the appointment thereof, indicating if same were reviewed for the appointment of the former and incumbent to the post thereof and, if so, the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

LA TOUR KOENIG – COPPER INGOTS SEIZURE

(No. B/506) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External

Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the 20 tons or more of copper ingots seized on a scrap yard at La Tour Koenig on Monday 10 April 2023, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the name of the company allegedly involved therein, and
- (b) if the sources thereof have been identified.

(Withdrawn)

MV WAKASHIO – COURT OF INVESTIGATION REPORT – RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/508) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Report of the Court of Investigation set up to look into the grounding of the MV Wakashio, he will –

- (a) state –
 - (i) the findings of the Inter-Ministerial Committee set up to examine the recommendations contained therein, and
 - (ii) where matters stand as to the implementation of the recommendations contained therein, and
- (b) table copy thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

ITLOS JUDGEMENT – ACTIONS

(No. B/511) Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the Judgement delivered by the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea on 28 April 2023, establishing a binding international maritime boundary between Mauritius and Maldives in the region of the Chagos Archipelago, he will state the actions Government proposes to initiate as a result thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – AIRWAY COFFEE LTD – LEASE

(No. B/513) Mr R. Doolub (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, Outer Islands and Territorial Integrity whether, in regard to the commercial area at the Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam International Airport leased to Airway Coffee Ltd., by the Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., in 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Ltd., information as to the –

- (a) duration thereof;
- (b) surface area and sites leased, and
- (c) rent payable per square meter therefor.

(Withdrawn)

FOREIGN WORKERS' PERMITS – STAY OVER 10 YEARS

(No. B/552) Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the foreign workers, he will state the number thereof who have been in the country for more than ten years, indicating the –

- (a) sectors concerned, and
- (b) number thereof whose permits have not been renewed and are still in the country.

(Withdrawn)

**AGRICULTURAL LAND MECHANISATION SCHEME – SMALL PLANTERS
– APPLICATIONS RECEIVED**

(No. B/553) Mr D. Ramful (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Agricultural Land Mechanisation Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of applications received for the mechanisation of land belonging to the small planters since January 2022 to date, indicating the number of –

- (a) applications approved, and
- (b) land already mechanised.

(Withdrawn)

**CONSTITUENCY NO. 9, FLACQ & BON ACCUEIL – DRAIN WORKS –2014
TO 2023**

(No. B/554) Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management whether, in regard to Constituency No. 9, Flacq & Bon Accueil, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the District Council of Flacq, information as to the number of drain works carried out thereat since 2014 to 2019 and 2020 to date.

(Withdrawn)

NOTRE DAME RELAY SHELTER – BABY C. P. – ADMISSION PROTOCOL

(No. B/555) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Notre Dame Relay Shelter, she will state since when Baby C. P. is admitted thereat, indicating if the admission protocol has been respected and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

ROCHE BOIS – COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/557) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the construction of the Community Health Centre at Roche Bois, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

CÔTE D'OR – METRO EXPRESS LINE EXTENSION – FEASIBILITY STUDY

(No. B/558) Mr Osman Mahomed (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the extension of the Metro Express line to Côte d'Or, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Metro Express

Ltd., information as to if a feasibility study has been conducted thereinto and, if so, table copy thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

AUTIST PATIENTS – REPORTED NUMBER

(No. B/564) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to patients suffering from autism, he will state the reported number thereof as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

NEW SOLFERINO HOSPITAL – PET SCAN FACILITIES – CANCER TREATMENT – LAUNCHED TENDER

(No. B/565) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to cancer patients, he will state if PET scan facilities are available and operational at the New Solferino Hospital for the treatment thereof and if not, indicate if tenders have been launched for the acquisition thereof and further indicating the –

- (a) name of the selected bidder, and
- (b) cost of the equipment.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL COMPUTER BOARD - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CULTURE

(No. B/567) Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the promotion of the Information Technology culture in the Republic of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Computer Board, information as to the incentives taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

TAXI OPERATORS WELFARE FUND – BOARD COMPOSITION

(No. B/568) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Taxi Operators Welfare Fund, he will state –

- (a) the date of its coming into operation, and
- (b) the composition of the board thereof indicating the name of the Chairperson, further indicating the salary and other benefits drawn.

(Withdrawn)

**CEB STAFF PENSION FUND & MANUAL WORKERS PENSION FUND –
QUANTUM**

(No. B/569) Mr P. Assirvaden (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard, to the Central Electricity Board staff pension fund and the Central Electricity Board manual workers pension fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the respective quantum of deficit thereof as at 31 December 2022, if any.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS FILM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD.

(No. B/570) Ms J. Bérenger (First Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage whether, in regard to film shooting with whales in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Film Development Corporation Ltd., information as to –

- (a) the number of authorisation granted therefor for the years 2021, 2022 and 2023 to date, indicating the –
 - (i) names of the companies/organizations, and
 - (ii) actions taken to ensure the compliance of the conditions attached thereto, and
- (b) if any non-compliance of the conditions thereof has been reported and, if so, the actions taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

**NOTRE DAME RELAY SHELTER – NATIONAL CHILDREN’S COUNCIL
MONITORING & EVALUATION REPORT**

(No. B/571) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Notre Dame Relay Shelter, she will state, if any monitoring and evaluation report has been submitted by the National Children’s Council to her Ministry in respect thereof during the last six months and, if so, give the details thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC HOSPITALS – CARDIO-VASCULAR DISEASES

(No. B/572) Mrs S. Mayotte (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Wellness whether, in regard to the public hospitals, he will state the number of –

- (a) patients presently being treated for Cardio-vascular diseases, and
- (b) heart surgeries carried out thereat over the past five years.

(Withdrawn)

HIGH LEVEL SPORTS UNIT – KICK-BOXER W.R. – SCHOLARSHIP

(No. B/574) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to kick-boxer W.R., he will state if the High Level Sports Unit of his Ministry has proceeded to a decrease in the sum allocated as scholarship thereto, resulting in the non-participation thereof in the World Cup in Turkey and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

SPORTS ACTIVITIES – ACTIVE COMPETITION –NUMBER OF DEATH

(No. B/577) Dr. F. Aumeer (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation whether, in regard to sports activities, he will state the number of deaths that have occurred over the last 4 years during active competition thereof, indicating the actions taken to prevent the recurrence of such fatal incidents.

(Withdrawn)