



**SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**FRIDAY 21 JULY 2023**

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## THE CABINET

**(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 Husnood	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-Daareewoo, 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

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Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hon. Sanjit Kumar Nuckcheddy
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**MAURITIUS**

**Seventh National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 24 of 2023**

**Sitting of Friday 21 July 2023**

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 4.00 p.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. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development**

The Financial Statements and Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Resilience Fund for the years ended:

- (i) 30 June 2019;
- (ii) 30 June 2020; and
- (iii) 30 June 2021.

**B. Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation**

The Annual Report 2022 of the Data Protection Office.

## ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

### ELECTORAL SYSTEM - REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval)** (*by Private Notice*) 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 reform for the registration of electors and electoral processes, he will state if consideration will be given –

- (a) to amend the Representation of the People Act for the –
  - (i) continuous registration of electors;
  - (ii) counting of votes to be effected on the polling day, and
  - (iii) use of indelible ink to prevent multiple voting; or
- (b) in the alternative, for the appointment of a Select Committee consisting of Members of the Assembly under Standing Order 70 to report on the above within a short time frame.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the reform of our electoral system has been appearing prominently in the electoral manifestoes of the main political parties and party alliances and also in the Government programmes of successive Governments for the last 20 years or so.

As a matter of fact, since the year 2001, several reports on electoral reform by experts and knowledgeable persons have been commissioned and published including –

- (i) the report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform and Electoral Reform commonly known as the SACHS Report released in 2002;
- (ii) the Collendavelloo Report on Proportional Representation in February 2004;
- (iii) the Yeung Shing report on Funding Of Political Parties in 2004;
- (iv) the Carcassonne Report in December 2011;
- (v) the Sithanen Report in January 2012;
- (vi) the Consultation Paper on Modernising the Electoral System in March 2014, and
- (vii) the Electoral Reform Proposals of the Mauritius Labour Party and the Mouvement Millitant Mauricien released in September 2014.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will also recall that apart from certain recommendations of the SACHS Report, none of the recommendations contained in the



other reports were implemented. In fact, no serious attempts were made by successive Governments for the implementation of those recommendations. They all only paid lip service to electoral reform and all those reports were conveniently relegated on the backburner with the result that the promised electoral reform remained a dead letter due to political differences, hidden agendas, lack of political wisdom and willpower as well as the disproportionate ambition of some leaders.

It is only when the new Government came into power in 2014 that electoral reform received the attention and seriousness that it really deserved. To recall, soon after acceding to power, the new Government pledged to reform our electoral system and announced reform measures in its 2015-2019 Programme which included, *inter alia*, the introduction of a dose of proportional representation in our electoral system and especially measures to guarantee better women representation in the National Assembly.

Accordingly, a Ministerial Committee under the Chair of hon. Xavier Duval, then Deputy Prime Minister, was set up in January 2016 to examine the different aspects of our electoral system and make recommendations for its reform. Following the departure of hon. Xavier Duval from the Government, the Ministerial Committee was reconstituted in February 2017 under the Chair of late Sir Anerood Jugnauth, then Minister Mentor, to pursue and complete the unfinished assignment left by the outgoing Chairperson.

Following the recommendations made by the Ministerial Committee, the Constitution (Amendment) Bill and the Political Financing Bill were introduced into the National Assembly in May 2018 and June 2019, respectively. However, both Bills were not supported by the then Opposition and they therefore, failed to secure the required majority to be passed by the National Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of deep regret that these two Bills embodying profound, unprecedented and long overdue electoral reform initiatives had not been supported by the then Opposition. They chose to be on the wrong side of history. Had those Bills been voted, they would have marked a huge step ahead in the consolidation of our democracy and they would also have corrected the gross underrepresentation of women in our National Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) (i) of the Private Notice Question, as the House is aware, the registration of electors in Mauritius is governed by the provisions of section 44 of the Constitution and section 9 of the Representation of the People Act which also provides the detailed procedure by which the electors' list is compiled. The compilation of the electoral register is indeed a crucial exercise as the register constitutes a vital element in ensuring the integrity of our voting system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, given that the law provides that no person has the right to vote unless his name appears in the Register of Electors, the Office of the Electoral Commissioner carries out, under the supervision of the Electoral Supervisory Commission, a registration exercise every year for the compilation of a Register of Electors for each constituency. The register comes into force on 16 August of that year and remains in force until the next register compiled comes into force, that is, the register remains in force until 15 August of the following year pursuant to sections 4(1) and (3) of the Representation of the People Act.

Section 4(2) of the RPA further provides that a person who has not yet attained the age of 18 in a year but who would be 18 by 15 August in that year would also be registered and, therefore, eligible to vote. However, the name of a person who has attained the age of 18 after 15 August in that year will only be entered in the Register of Electors which would be compiled following the next registration exercise, that is, the following year.

Consequently, in the event an election is held after 15 August in a year and before 16 August of the following year, that is, before the coming into force of the next electoral register, such a person would not be able to vote although he would have attained the age of 18 and is resident and domiciled in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we all know and it is a fact that the Office of the Electoral Commissioner deploys considerable resources to ensure that the largest number of eligible electors is captured during the exercise. I am not going to elaborate here on all the actions taken by the Office of the Electoral Commissioner to create awareness and sensitise eligible electors to register themselves during the yearly registration exercise. Suffice it for me to say that the last canvass exercise conducted in 2022 for the registration of electors in Mauritius captured 97.3% of the total number of persons who were eligible to be registered as electors.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is no established benchmark on the completeness of electoral registers. The range of completeness around the world varies a lot. For example, for Great Britain, in 2018, it was 85%. The ideal situation, of course, would be to capture all eligible electors but this is unlikely to be the case in any country. I am also informed by the Office of the Electoral Commissioner that every registration exercise is carried out in two phases –

- (i) the house-to-house enquiry at the beginning of the year, and
- (ii) a registration exercise in registration centres in the month of May.

Despite all the efforts put in by the Office of the Electoral Commissioner, it is practically impossible to reach all qualified persons to have their names included in the register of electors. Consequently, some electors in the different constituencies may find that their names do not appear in the Register of Electors. I would like to mention here that it is also the civic duty of all eligible persons to get themselves registered to be able to exercise their right to vote.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will recall that for the 2019 National Assembly Elections, the Opposition raised a great hue and cry over this issue, even going to the extent of casting aspersions on the integrity and reputation of the Electoral Supervisory Commission and the Electoral Commissioner whose competence and professionalism in electoral matters have always been recognised both locally and internationally. The Opposition instigated controversy and protests in the country alleging that some people had been deliberately disenfranchised and deprived of their voting rights because of their political affiliation. The issue was even mentioned as a ground for invalidating the elections in the election petitions filed before the Supreme Court. However, except for two which are still pending, all the petitions have either been set aside by the Supreme Court or withdrawn by the petitioners themselves.

Mr Speaker, Sir, be that as it may, we on this side of the House, certainly do not want any of our eligible citizens to be deprived of his fundamental constitutional right to vote at an election. It is a fact that our registration process which was largely inspired from the UK model has remained unchanged since its introduction in 1958 and some provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1958 may need to be revisited. Besides, some inherent challenges in the current registration process in Mauritius were highlighted by the SACHS Commission in its 2002 report on electoral reform.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the way the registers of electors are compiled varies enormously worldwide. Many jurisdictions pick and choose best practices from elsewhere when they need to improve their system. However, as far as we are concerned, we cannot blindly replicate another country's system. A system that has been successfully adopted in one country does not mean that it will necessarily work well in another country. In such matters, there is really no such thing as a 'one size fits all'. A critical element which has to be taken into consideration is the local context and we certainly need to move with care and caution on such fundamental aspects of our electoral process. In this context, the advisability of introducing online registration, a continuous registration process and a maximum use of available technology will be examined.

However, we are also alive to the fact that these proposals would require major organisational and technological changes. In view thereof and having regard to the wide ranging implications, Government will as usual adopt a consultative participatory and holistic approach before proposing any amendment to any specific provisions of the Representation of the People Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, that is, counting of votes on the polling day itself after close of poll for National Assembly elections, first of all, I would like to point out that this proposal never appeared in any political manifesto or any Government programme although the SACHS Commission had proposed same day counting way back in 2002. And, it should be mentioned that on this issue as well, the Opposition *en mauvais perdant*, tried to instil doubts in the minds of the people about supposed manipulation and rigging in the 2019 General Election in spite of the favourable comments and observations made by all the Regional and International Elections Observer Missions; but we all know that there was absolutely no evidence to substantiate these accusations. Having said this, I do agree that same day counting would indeed eliminate many hassles for all concerned, the main one being the elimination of all the logistics comprising security measures, transport arrangements and deployment of a large number of Police officers associated with the transfer of the ballot boxes from polling stations to counting centres after close of poll.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me remind the House that it is this Government that brought necessary amendments to the Law to enable the implementation for the first time of same day counting for the Village Council Elections held in November 2020 and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Elections held in February 2022. However, I am advised that there are a number of issues which will have to be addressed while considering same day counting for National Assembly Elections. Careful thought would have to be given to the required logistics with regard to National Assembly Elections, taking into account the large number of voting and counting rooms which I am informed will be around 2,400 for the next National Assembly Elections compared to 1,365 for the Village Council Elections 2020 and 89 for the 2022 Rodrigues Regional Assembly Elections.

Other very important issues which will also have to be addressed include the following –

- (i) which category of election staff will be authorised to decide on the ballot papers to be rejected;
- (ii) presence of candidates and election agents in all counting rooms during the scrutiny of ballot papers;

- (iii) whether hours of poll will have to be revisited, and
- (iv) how to ensure transparency in the compilation of results.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) (iii) of the question, I am advised that as the Law stands presently, electors are required to present a proof of identity before being issued with a ballot paper. Moreover, it should also be pointed out that polling agents of political parties are present in the voting rooms at all times during the voting process. There are therefore already adequate safeguards to prevent impersonation and multiple voting. Besides, I am informed that since the introduction of proof of identity, the number of cases of impersonation and double voting has reduced considerably and is almost negligible. For example, for the 2019 General Election, there was not a single case of impersonation. On the other hand, the use of indelible ink may give rise to constitutional issues and can also be challenging due to cultural, religious and health concerns. The proposal would therefore have to be examined carefully.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, as the House is aware this Government remains committed to bring the long awaited electoral reform as enunciated in the Government Programme 2020-2024. In this context, a Ministerial Committee has already been set up under my Chair to make recommendations on electoral reform and on the financing of political parties. The Committee has already embarked on its assignment and is currently working on a new Political Financing Bill which is one of the main aspects of the Electoral Reform Agenda of the Government. The proposals for continuous registration of electors and same day counting and use of indelible ink will be examined by the Ministerial Committee in that same context. Therefore, the need to set up a Parliamentary Select Committee does not arise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government will, in due course and after necessary consultation with all relevant stakeholders, come forward with new Bills on political financing and electoral reform. We can only hope that the Opposition will, this time, walk the talk and support the electoral reform proposals which are long overdue because in the end, it is not the talk but the walk that really matters for the country and for the people.

Thank you.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question is that if the Government is serious about this Bill being implemented and being passed in the House, although it does not require constitutional amendments, it does require consensus across the parties and this is made quite clear by the Electoral Commissioner himself. This is the reason why we are asking for a Select Committee of all the parties in Parliament so that if we are serious with

going forward with this quickly, we can do so. This is the reason why we are asking for a Select Committee of all the parties in Parliament so that if we are serious, we will be going forward with this quickly. We can do so. What is the objection of having a Select Committee of House?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have mentioned in my reply, there have been so many reports that have looked carefully at many aspects with regard to electoral reform. Also, the hon. Leader of the Opposition will recall when he was part of my Government in 2016, I believe...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** His Government. Not your Government; his Government!

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, in our Government then. You were chairing a committee; it was a Ministerial Committee to look at different aspects of electoral reform. I believe, if you are now saying that we should have a Select Committee, probably then, you should have said at that time that we needed a Select Committee instead of a Ministerial Committee.

So, the fact that you, yourself, chaired the Ministerial Committee already answers your question that if we want the process to move fast, and in the light of so many reports that have already been made for all of us – as I stated before, I believe all of us have become experts in electoral reforms –, there is no need to have a Select Committee again and to go on and on, on this issue.

I can say this is our undertaking that what we have mentioned in our programme, we are already working on the electoral reform and on financing of political parties. As I have said, we will look at all those issues, not only those that you have mentioned hon. Leader of the Opposition. There are other issues that concern electoral processes and election that will be looked into. There is going to be wide consultations also with, of course, all parties, not only in Parliament, but outside Parliament. Obviously, then, we will eventually come with any recommendation. If, of course, there is the necessity, which I believe – because I am speaking in my own name now because I need to have consultations at the level of Government –, we will come with whatever amendments we believe are necessary.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the time is nearly over. I hope you will give us some additional time.

The Prime Minister is mixing; at least, we should not mix electoral reform and reform of electoral processes. My question is purely on reform of electoral processes. I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether he will not want to avoid the mistake he

made when he tried to pass legislations some time ago, where it was an omnibus Bill, where some of the items were found by the Opposition to be objectionable and even dangerous. This is why, in respect for democracy and the right of every political party to have a say, we are saying that it is not the right procedure for you to adopt in a Ministerial Committee and it should go, again I am saying, to a Select Committee.

**The Prime Minister:** No, I do not agree, Mr Speaker, Sir, because electoral processes is also part of electoral reform. You cannot look at this subject in a piecemeal manner. You have to look at it in a holistic manner. There are so many aspects of our law that we believe need to be revisited and updated. As I said, the law dates back from the Representation of the People Act 1958, I believe. I have stated in my answer that there are certain things, of course, that we need to review, and I believe that there are certain things we will agree upon. So, we have to look at all those aspects, not in silos, but altogether, and then, we will decide what kind of proposal we are eventually going to make to the National Assembly.

So, you cannot dissociate the electoral processes and the electoral reform; it is one and the same thing although there are certain things that will not require a qualified majority and there are certain things that can be amended; there are also certain things that can be amended by way of regulations. We will obviously address all these, in what manner, in what way, in what form, what is the required majority that is needed, and, of course, we will come before the House.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have chosen the three items because all three of them enjoy the strong support of the Electoral Commissioner. In fact, he put it in writing, for the first two at least, that he has always been in favour of these changes, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that the number of electors registered today compared to 2019 has shown an increase of 53,000 people. What it shows is that for 2022 at least, there has been a real effort, but it also shows that there were some serious, serious discrepancies in 2019 because in three years, 53,000 additional electors have been added to the electoral register. This indicates the urgency of reform of the registration process. 53,000 people additionally!

**The Prime Minister:** But the hon. Leader of the Opposition should qualify what he says when he states that the Electoral Commission has agreed on all the three issues that he has mentioned. I am not saying no, but you should give the full picture. The response I have here with regard to allowing electors to check whether their names are currently...

**Mr X. L. Duval:** No, this is another one.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, but this is part of it.

**Mr Speaker:** Wait! Wait!

**The Prime Minister:** You say registration. But how do you do it? You register and you do not check? This is also part of it. You register and then you do not know whether your name appears on the list of the register? Anyway, I do not want to take the time of the House. You know it, I mean all Members of the Opposition, because it is all in your name that this has been presented. There are certain aspects of the process that the Electoral Commission has said we have to address because there are some logistics issues. For example, for the counting, the Electoral Commission also mentions that there is need to look at the organisation of the counting on the same day.

But for counting, Mr Speaker, Sir, *l'opposition doit au moins accepter que c'est ce gouvernement qui a implémenté le counting on the same day pour les élections villageoises; le counting on the same day pour le Rodrigues Regional Assembly election.* Of course, I have stated, we are going to look into it. I personally agree that if we can do it, it is going to be easier and it is going to avoid a lot of things that we know that happen on the very next day. But bear in mind, for example, I just think of one issue, you will have counting in all the polling stations of one constituency.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** *Non, non, non.*

**The Prime Minister:** *Non?* How do you do that then? If you do not have counting...

**Mr Speaker:** Let the Prime Minister reply.

**The Prime Minister:** He can put another supplementary question. But if we have counting, it means that all the boxes where the votes have been cast will remain in the same room.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** No, no, no.

**The Prime Minister:** How would you do that? Then, we as candidates, we are going to be three candidates in a constituency. I do not know how many polling stations you will have. Will we be able to move from one polling station to the other and the other to check what is being done? Because in the case of having one centre for counting, it allows us, as candidates, to be able to be present, to monitor and to see to it. And in spite of doing that; in spite of all these precautions, all these security measures, this Opposition has been making all sorts of vile allegations.



Now, can you imagine when you will have all these different counting centres in one constituency and when a candidate will not be able to be present everywhere? I am just putting that as an issue that has to be addressed. I am not saying that because of that, I am against. No! I personally said I think it has got a lot of benefits, but it has to be addressed so that there is no perception or any doubt in the minds, of course, of candidates, political parties and the population that certain things can be ongoing. So, as I said, again in the reply that has been made by the Electoral Commission, there are certain things that have been pointed out and that we need to address.

Now, for the third one with regard to the indelible ink, this is not my information that it has been agreed by the Electoral Commission. Not at all! Anyway, it was not raised in the document that you had communicated to the Electoral Commission. I have gone through it, of course, and I thank you for giving me an advance copy also. I have gone through it; I have not seen it. I have checked with the Electoral Commission; that is not the situation. They have not accepted. Maybe it is good that we are going to look into it further, but it is not yet accepted by the Commission.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the letter that I sent to the hon. Prime Minister, I did say that the indelible ink was agreed, not in the text but at a subsequent meeting. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will check the UK model because I have never suggested that the vote should be counted *in situ* in the classroom, because that opens a lot of problems about which village, which area voted for which party, etc., and creates possible discrimination. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister to look at the UK model where, in fact, you still have transportation to the counting centre and the voting is in the counting centre for that particular constituency. So, you have a mixture of same day voting but in the counting centre and not in each polling station. That is why there is the difference. And I, for one, am not at all in favour of the counting *in situ* in each classroom because obviously then the votes would be much more apparent, who voted for what, which community voted for whom, etc. That would not be a good thing.

**The Prime Minister:** I am looking into that also; what are the best practices elsewhere. Of course, this also will require logistic arrangements, security and so on because we are going to move – as we do move in the night – boxes from one polling station to one place. Now, again, this will have to be done. And don't forget that by the time counting will start and by the time counting will be over, those officers who have started to work in the early morning, will they still be there and how long are they going to work? All this has to be looked into again. When I say this, I am not saying this because I

say these are things that cannot be done. They can be done, but we have to address all this. Let us hope that we can make it.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Can I ask the Prime Minister when? Are they going to be in the legislation next week? I understand the elections are not far away. So, in fact, I saw that the margins...

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, the urgency is this.

*(Interruptions)*

Obviously, we hear it might be in a few months. The urgency is that the number of vote difference between third and fourth candidates has been very low in a number of constituencies; as low as 25. So, the registration of voters and the accuracy of the voting and the fact that we are counting on the same day, all these take a lot of importance here in Mauritius, because the differences are often so small. So, this is why I am asking the hon. Prime Minister - I regret very much that he is not agreeable to a Select Committee, but at least when is he going to bring some changes, not to Electoral Reform, which is a complicated thing but to simple electoral processes that I maintain the Electoral Commissioner is in favour of?

**The Prime Minister:** First of all, let me reassure the hon. Member that General Elections will not be next week. It cannot anyway. According to law, you will have to give at least... the minimum is one month's notice.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** The law next week; not the elections.

**The Prime Minister:** Oh, not the election? I understood the election and I thought that you were thinking of the Privy Council case. No, not next week! I have said that there is a Ministerial Committee. We are working. Now, I again do not agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we look at this aspect of registration of electors separately from all the other issues, and then we will look in terms of counting on the same day if ever we are able to implement this separately.

All these have to be looked at in a way that the Committee - because there is a Committee that is going to look at this in-depth and also have consultations. And, of course, we will need to have consultations with the Electoral Commission and with the Electoral Supervisory Commission as well. Then, if you ask me whether it is going to be before next General Elections, I can say 'yes', safely 'yes', because we have time. We will have time. But let us at least come to a draft and then we will have consultations. You will

be consulted obviously and I hope we can then come to a consensus. I don't know if we can come to a consensus on all issues; so much the better, but that will not prevent you from saying: 'look, we agree on this and this, but we don't agree on the other issues also.' Then, we will know how to move forward.

**Mr X. L. Duval:** Some time ago, the representative, the Head of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance came to Mauritius and met the Opposition as well. And he offered the help and advice of this very influential Institution in getting our electoral procedures right. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is agreeable to engaging or exchanging with the Institute so that we may get expert advice on how to get all these things done very quickly? Because all these paths have been crossed before around the world.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, let me inform the House that, in fact, I had met the Secretary-General of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance on 25 May 2023 in the company of the Regional Director for Africa and West Asia, the Head of the Mozambique Country Office and the Chief of Staff to the Secretary-General. We discussed on the issues of financing of political parties and on the issue of electoral reform. In fact, I had asked them for their advice also. We have communicated a copy of the previous Bill that was tabled in the House for both the Political Financing Bill of 2019 and the Constitution (Amendment) Bill of 2019. Again, we are open; we will see what their views on those issues are, but I don't know, and I am not passing any judgment on the will of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. But since now I see that he has a new Leader because you are in an alliance with a new Leader, I don't know whether your new Leader is of the same conviction as you are, because let me just remind you what he has said with regard to electoral reforms –

*« Evoquant sa rencontre avec Paul Bérenger, Alan Ganoo, ... »*

He would recall.

*«... Rashid Beebeejaun and Rama Sithanen, Navin Ramgoolam a affirmé avoir dit qu'il faut que les gens se rendent à l'évidence parski pa ekrir kouyon lor mo fron. »*

**Mr Balgobin:** *Ala beze.*

**The Prime Minister:**

*« Quel Premier ministre dans le monde qui a remporté trois élections avec un système électoral voudrait le changer ? Quel Premier ministre voudrait introduire un système où sa majorité serait moindre ? »*

So, I think this is what he stated. Of course, now that he has lost the General Elections, he is in the Opposition and making all sorts of allegations, And, in fact, I find this really outrageous, Mr Speaker, Sir; that at least he would have had the courage of having entered an election petition himself - I mean the former Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. And then, instead of going and substantiating all what he has averred in the petition before a court of law, he chose to run away and to withdraw the petition. This, in fact, reflects on the sincerity of such a Leader that you have now!

**Mr Speaker:** Time over!

### **MATTER OF PRIVILEGE**

#### **HON. DR. AUMEER – OBJECTIONABLE WORDS – SITTING OF 04 JULY 2023**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to raise a Matter of Privilege following words uttered by Dr. the hon. Aumeer which amounted to casting aspersion upon the character and conduct of Dr. the hon. Minister of Health and Wellness on 04 July 2023.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on 11 July 2023, you ruled that the words were objectionable and invited Dr. Aumeer to withdraw them and to tender his apologies. Not only did Dr. Aumeer refuse to withdraw the objectionable words and tender apologies to the House but stated that he maintains what he said. He was ordered to withdraw from the House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we do not dispute the fact that hon. Members may be carried by emotions during passionate debates, but, whatever be the circumstances, the language used should in no case be unparliamentary, offensive and objectionable.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the words uttered by the hon. Member constitute a most offensive and injurious imputation upon the character and integrity of the hon. Minister. Moreover, Dr. Aumeer, in so doing, did commit a breach of Standing Order 40(5) which provides, amongst others, that -

“the conduct of a hon. Member of the Assembly shall not be raised except upon a substantive motion moved for that purpose”.

As it stands now, it must be taken that the imputation was wholly without foundation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, such an affirmation standing, as it must, unexplained, might well be regarded as a permanent imputation on the character of the hon. Minister.

In these circumstances, I am adopting this rather unusual procedure and requesting the House through your good self to expunge the impugned words from the Hansard and the video footage.

I thank you.

*Question put and agreed to.*

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTION**

### **ELECTRIC VEHICLES IN MAURITIUS**

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the following Motion of the hon. Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue):*

*« This Assembly resolves that Government should continue its efforts to encourage the use of electric vehicles in Mauritius. »*

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ms Ramyad!

(4.51 p.m.)

**Ms N. Ramyad (Third Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle):** Mr Speaker, Sir, tonight the Private Members' Motion states that this Assembly resolves that the Government should continue its efforts to encourage the use of electric vehicles in Mauritius. I once again, after my intervention on the same Private Motion on Friday 09 December 2022, would like to bring my voice to such an important debate. I reiterate my thanks and congratulations to the mover of the motion, hon. Ms Joanne Sabrina Tour, who has forced us to think, rethink and debate on the use, importance and real-time integration of electric vehicles in our local landscapes.

At the very onset of my speech the last time I intervened, I laid down and exposé about the importance of the means to move and how this has evolved from the 18<sup>th</sup> century from large sailing ships to Model T Henry Ford's assembly and today we are talking about internal combustion engine vehicles, electric vehicles (EVs), BEV (Battery Electric Vehicles), PHEV (Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicles), etc.

The second part of my speech of that day, related to the challenges for nature to support this growth, the climatic and environmental benefits and impacts of electric vehicles on the climatic system, on the environmental system. After having extensively shown with scientific evidence how the replacement of internal combustion engine cars by

electric cars may be more beneficial to climate, I also gave a full overview about batteries, their recharge and content and how to dispose of or recycle in the long run, with a minimal social, economic and environmental impact. I then left the scientific part to contextualise the need of electric vehicles shift in Mauritius. The challenges faced by and ahead of SIDS countries to finally elaborate extensively on the many measures this Government have brought in, policies, decisions and their implementations.

I will now carry forward my debate today with the Mauritian context mainly and how the Government believes and acts towards the integration of electric vehicle in our local movement landscape. To start with, let us have an overview of the global electric vehicle development. Globally, the uptake of electric vehicle is being supported because it offers an attractive opportunity for reduction of carbon dioxide, improvement of local air quality, reduction of dependency on imported fossil fuels and creation of new economic opportunity.

In 2018, the global electric fleet exceeded 5.1 million vehicles and the number of electric cars sold, almost doubled. The battery prices have dropped significantly and almost all car manufacturers have a growing number of EV models, electric vehicles models, lined up. The higher energy efficiency and lower running costs compared to internal combustion engines indicate that EVs will take a growing position in global car sales. The charging of an EV is generally done where the car is parked. So, charges are installed at home and at the workplace with occasional top ups of fast charging stations.

The electric vehicle battery has a minimum lifespan of eight years according to most vehicle warranties. After use in the vehicle, the battery can be used for another long period as stationary storage to support the energy transition. Another option is to revitalise or recycle the battery.

The current barriers for EV adoption are purchase price, number of available models, driving range and availability of charging stations. These are variances in the local drivers to support EV and there is great variance in the local situation which makes it essential to customise EV programmes per country. The lessons which have been learnt in other countries over the last years have been utilised to design a smart package for Mauritius.

Apart from EV transition, green transportation involves the reduction of individual car ownership and promotion of public transport. The public transport also offers effective opportunity to transition towards electrification. This is why I will now refer to the findings and proposals of the 10-year electric car road map commissioned by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities.

As stated in my previous speech, where I elaborated on the nine measures already taken by the Government, the Ministry has top up with various measures to stimulate the transition towards electric mobility. With a view to accelerating the adoption of EVs in Mauritius, an Electric Vehicle Implementation and Monitoring Committee was set up under the Chair of the Ministry to steer and monitor the implementation of recommendations made in the road map. Four sub committees were set up under the EV Implementation and Monitoring Committee to look into implementation of specific recommendations relating to –

- (i) facilitating the setting-up of the charging network;
- (ii) financial incentives and green loans;
- (iii) national battery plan, and
- (iv) awareness and training.

Mr Speaker, Sir, various tax incentives and schemes have been announced in successive budgets such as –

- (i) elimination of excise duty for the purchase of electric and hybrid vehicles;
- (ii) abolition of customs and excise duties on charges, PV generators; PV batteries; PV invertors, and PV panels for electric vehicles, and
- (iii) Negative Excise Duty Scheme of up to Rs200,000 for the importation of an electric vehicle.
- (iv) Furthermore, companies which have incurred expenditure on a fast track charger for an electric car are granted a double deduction of such expenditure.

Let me here refer to the extract of 2022-2023 Budget Speech which provides concrete and practical incentives to such measures. As part of transforming Mauritius into a sustainable and inclusive economy, several decisions have been announced by Finance Minister, Renganaden Padayachy, in his 2022-2023 Budget Speech on Tuesday 07 June. For starters, all hybrid and electric vehicles will be sold duty-free from 01 July this year. This is in line with the Government's attempt in creating greener and better Mauritius for future generations.

Also, in an attempt to further boost the automotive market, he announced that Negative Excise Duty Scheme of 10% up to a maximum of Rs200,000 will apply to individuals buying electric vehicles. In parallel, the Excise Duty Scheme on motor

vehicles of 40% rebate for a motor car of up to 100CC and 30% rebate on other vehicles will be extended to 30 June 2023.

In addition, no duty will be imposed on cars spare parts and automobilia imported for exhibition in a motor museum. The main thrust of the Government's strategy is to attain a carbon neutrality level at the earliest through a three-pronged action –

- (i) reduction or dependence on import of petroleum products;
- (ii) decarbonising the land transport system, and
- (iii) acceleration of electric vehicle transition.

Hence, 200 electric buses, or so, will be acquired to renew half of the National Transport Corporation fleet. As of the next financial year, the Bus Modernisation Scheme will apply only to electric buses.

Another measure that needs to be pointed out is the IFCM will provide concessionary leasing at 3.5% per annum to companies renewing their company fleet to electric vehicles only, while the DBM will provide 0.5% loan of up to Rs3 m. to taxis and van operators over a period of seven years for the purchase of electric vehicles.

As regards the Metro Express, – only to see how we will reach 60% homegrown renewable energy – it will be fully operational on the Port Louis corridor and between Rose Hill and Reduit before the end of 2022. That happened. It will implement photovoltaic farms in its Riche Lieu depot at Barkly and Ebène Recreational Park to cater for its own electric needs.

So, as a whole, it is expected that these 2022-2023 budget measures will speed up the transition to a more secure and cleaner homegrown energy supply with the projected target of reaching 60% energy from renewable sources by 2030. This will bolster the country's determination towards a greener, cleaner and more climate resilient environment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the CEB, on its side, has, in a bid to promote immobility, launched Renewable Schemes for domestic consumers, households and corporate entities. A time of use tariff has been introduced as from 01 July 2021 to encourage charging of EVs during off-peak hours at a more favourable tariff.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Sub-Committee on Awareness and Training has devised a communication strategy, facilitated training and support specialised areas to promote electric vehicles. It is led by Business Mauritius. The Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities has been collaborating closely with Business Mauritius on this count. Thus, at the



level of Business Mauritius, guidelines have been developed to shift towards electric vehicles.

Moreover, under the SUNREF and *Agence française de développement* group, Green Finance Label, a study has recently been completed on adopting EV's for the private sector. Further, Business Mauritius has undertaken a three year study with HSBC, *Université des Mascareignes* and University of Perpignan on investigating the performance of green charging for electric vehicles in Mauritius using PV cells. Forthcoming actions by Business Mauritius will include training of public officials from the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service, Police Department amongst others, regarding the safe use of electric vehicles.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at the level of the Ministry, the Energy Efficiency Management Office has been conducting awareness campaigns for the public through radio, TV talks and posters on energy efficiency and energy conservation in the land transport sector to promote immobility. This has been an ongoing activity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, all these have caused a significant increase in the number of electric vehicles over the past years. The number of EVs on our roads has increased from 110 to 1,320 between 2019 to date, hence, a 1,102% growth over a period of less than five years. According to global forecast, the EV market is expected to grow even further in the following years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the last part of my speech on this important Motion stating that Government should continue its efforts to encourage the use of electric vehicles in Mauritius, I have to refer to the 10-Year Electric Vehicle Integration Roadmap for Mauritius stated at the onset of my speech on 09 December 2022. This Roadmap established the vision, the how, the why, the who and the when as well as the dos and don'ts in our quest to reach a full-fledged fleet of electric vehicles in Mauritius.

I will only establish a summarised scenario but the 65 pages report which is available on the website of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, its table of content itself shows how extensively the study has been carried out and how to achieve our objective in real time ranges. The chapters englobe the status and global developments of electric vehicles in Mauritius, of electric vehicle market as a whole, the local context, the barriers for EV adoption, a vision for sustainable island nation, EV uptake scenarios with lots of assumptions and most importantly, an enabling environment and action plan.

The reason behind such a Roadmap is that the Transport Sector is amongst the main energy consuming sectors in Mauritius contributing to about 77.8% of the final

energy consumed in 2017, adding up to 26% of the total greenhouse gas emissions in Mauritius in 2016. Mauritius is, therefore, driven to transition towards alternative greener means of transportation contributing to the commitments made by the Government of Mauritius at the COP21 Summit in Paris in 2015.

Some key statistics of Mauritius show the importance of integrating electric vehicles in our local context. For an area of 2,007 km<sup>2</sup> and population of 1.3 million people, our total primary energy requirement is 1,603 thousand tons of oil equivalent (ktoe) in 2017, grown at an annual rate of 5% over the last decade. 79%, that is 2,496 GW from non-renewable resources and 21% from renewable sources. 57% of the electricity generation and power is from Independent Power Producers and 43% from the Central Electricity Board. In 2019 the peak demand was 467 MW in summer. The energy consumption from land transport is 37%. The carbon dioxide emissions from energy consumption of which from land transport is 25.3%. The total number of registered vehicle is 562,202 as at March 2019 of which 312,000 are cars compared to 351,406 vehicles in 2008. That is an increase by up to 63% and the car sales frequency amounts to an average of 11,000 new cars sold per year and 9,000 reconditioned cars imported per year. The study has shown that for a small country like Mauritius, electric vehicle technology is well suited as the energy driving ranges are short.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now conclude by stating the obvious. Electric vehicles represent the future of movement throughout the world. Mauritius has to stand up to the challenges ahead to a small country with high aspirations and high needs. We will reach our 2030 targets as this Government has always shown that once it decides and commits, he delivers, acts and progresses against all odds, *tam-tam* and gossips. It converts threats in opportunities and weaknesses in strength.

I thank you for your attention.

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

*At 5.16 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 6.07 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.*

**Mr Speaker:** Please be seated!

## MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

### HON. DR. BOOLELL – PRESS CONFERENCE –ALLEGATIONS

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have an announcement. I have to inform the House that the hon. Dhunoo has in writing, today, given me notice of a privilege complaint arising out of an interview which Dr. the hon. Boolell gave earlier today in the media.

In the said interview, Dr. the hon. Boolell has made a series of allegations which are offensive and reflect on the conduct and character of the Speaker.

The hon. Member is of the view that the content of the said interview may amount to a contempt of the Assembly under section 6(1) (s) of the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act for uttering and publishing a statement and containing accusation of partiality in the discharge of his duty as Speaker.

Hon. Members, I have perused the said transcript of the interview and I take the view that an offence may have been committed under section 6(1) (s) of the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, which reads as follows –

“6. Contempt of the Assembly

(1) Subject to subsection (2), each of the following acts, matters and things constitutes the offence of contempt of the Assembly”

Subsection (s) reads as follows –

“uttering or publishing any statement reflecting on the conduct or character of, or containing or amounting to an accusation of partiality in the discharge of his duty by the Speaker, Deputy Speaker or Chairperson of any committee.”

I consider that an offence may have been committed under the aforesaid section of the law.

**Mr Dhunoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the light of your ruling, I move that the matter be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for appropriate action pursuant to Standing Order 74(4) of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly.

I am also filing a copy of the transcript of the Press conference.

**Ms Tour seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### OFFICIAL RESIDENCE – ACQUISITION - UNFOUNDED REMARKS

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have another announcement to make following unfounded remarks made in the media regarding the acquisition of an official residence for

the Speaker in the course of which it has been alleged that my office is being used as a courtier.

Hon. Members, as the House is aware, the Speaker has always been eligible for an official residence. It is in this context that the National Assembly has, since quite some time, engaged into discussions in accordance within the administrative and legal requirements regarding the acquisition of an apartment from the National Property Fund Ltd, a wholly owned Government Company.

It must be emphasised that we are still at the stage of preliminary discussions and no firm commitment has been made from either party.

In any event, the advice of the State Law Office will be sought and obtained prior to the conclusion of any deal.

I have to reassure the House that these ongoing discussions are taking place between Government officers of the relevant Ministries. I wish to inform the House that no Real Estate Agent has been solicited to participate in the discussions and no commission is envisaged.

Thank you.

Hon. David!

(6.10 p.m.)

**Mr F. David (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West):** M. le président, sur les 18 orateurs inscrits à ces débats, j'en suis le neuvième. Une façon de dire que nous sommes à mi-parcours de cette motion privée présentée devant la Chambre par l'honorable Tour il y a un an et demi de cela ; c'était précisément le 17 décembre 2021.

Pour des raisons de pédagogie pour le grand public qui nous écoute ce soir et avec votre permission, M. le président, j'aimerais rappeler que nos *Standing Orders* prévoient en effet qu'un membre de notre Assemblée puisse venir de l'avant avec une motion qui soit soumise à débat lors d'une seule séance par tranche de sessions et il est généralement de notre tradition parlementaire de réserver cette *Private Members' Motion* pour la dernière séance avant les congés parlementaires. Il y avait en fait 17 motions envoyées et c'est à l'issue d'un tirage au sort, comme le prévoient nos *Standing Orders*, que la motion de l'honorable Tour sur les véhicules électriques a été tirée en premier et cette motion continuera fort probablement à être débattue jusqu'à la dissolution de la présente Assemblée. Cette motion pourra être soit votée, soit rejetée ou encore amendée et si elle est votée, cette motion deviendra une résolution.

Je disais dans mon avant-propos, M. le président, que cette motion privée selon laquelle le gouvernement devrait continuer ses efforts pour encourager l'utilisation des véhicules électriques a été présentée le 17 décembre 2021 soit précisément, une semaine avant la fête de Noël et je n'ai pu m'empêcher d'avoir à l'époque, sur ce sujet évidemment sérieux, évidemment complexe et évidemment utile, un premier réflexe, M. le président, d'une note un peu plus légère si vous me la permettez. Et je me suis dit qu'à bien réfléchir, nous devrions prendre l'exemple et prendre comme référence le véhicule du Père Noël qui a priori est un véhicule propre et écologique, car il n'utilise ni moteur thermique, ni moteur électrique à base d'énergies fossiles. Si le traîneau du Père Noël est tracté par des rennes, nos véhicules à nous ont des moteurs à chevaux dont la puissance est d'ailleurs mesurée en *horsepower*. Et nos véhicules carburent à combustion d'énergie carbonée avec pour conséquence qu'à l'échelle de notre pays, le secteur du transport est le deuxième plus gros émetteur de gaz à effet de serre à hauteur de 1353 kilotonnes d'équivalent CO<sub>2</sub> en 2021, selon *Statistics Mauritius*, parce que j'ai vérifié pas plus tard qu'aujourd'hui, les chiffres de 2022 ne sont toujours pas disponibles. Et cette quantité de CO<sub>2</sub> émis par le secteur du transport représente 31 % de nos émissions totales.

Il est donc en toute logique essentielle de transformer le secteur du transport en améliorant la performance environnementale de nos véhicules, ce qui d'ailleurs correspond à l'un des 6 engagements pris par le Premier ministre lors du *World Leaders Summit* de la COP26 à Glasgow en novembre 2021, à savoir encourager l'utilisation des véhicules électriques sur notre territoire. Alors, je dois dire que le suivi de ce dossier entre la COP26 en Écosse et la COP27 en Égypte un an plus tard, est resté un peu nébuleux, car d'une part, le Premier ministre n'était pas présent à Sharm El-Sheikh et d'autre part, le ministre de l'Environnement n'a fait aucune mention des véhicules électriques dans son *Statement* du 25 novembre 2022 devant la Chambre suite à la participation de la délégation mauricienne à la COP27, mais j'ose espérer que les choses seront différentes lors de la COP28 qui se tiendra cette année à Dubaï du 30 novembre au 12 décembre. Et une question qui m'a traversé l'esprit, M. le président, est la suivante : est-ce que c'est ce présent gouvernement ou alors le prochain qui portera la voix de Maurice à la COP28?

M. le président, avant même la présentation de cette motion privée, le sujet des véhicules électriques avait fait l'objet de deux questions parlementaires en 2021, toutes deux soulevées par mon collègue, l'honorable Dr. Aumeer, malheureusement suspendu pour la séance d'aujourd'hui et qui est toujours, je dois dire, bien documenté sur plusieurs sujets au-delà de son portefeuille de la santé.

Et l'une des choses qui m'avait interpellé lors de sa question parlementaire B/1170 du 23 novembre 2021, c'est que suite à une question supplémentaire posée par l'honorable Bodha sur la date indicative du *phasing out* des véhicules diesels et essence, le ministre de l'Environnement s'était réfugié derrière le comité interministériel présidé par le ministre des Finances sur l'utilisation des véhicules électriques dans le secteur public alors que la *Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency* (MARENA) affichait déjà à cette époque sur son site Internet à la rubrique *Sustainable Transport*, le *strategic goal 4A* qui se lit comme suit –

*“Policy to phase out fossil fuel-based vehicles by 2040”*

Je note que cet objectif 2040 n'est mentionné nulle part ailleurs, ni même dans le rapport du cabinet néerlandais EV Consult de janvier 2020, commandé par le ministère de l'Énergie et des Utilités publiques et qui se veut être la feuille de route sur 10 ans pour le déploiement des voitures électriques à Maurice. Alors, je ne remets évidemment pas en question le travail effectué par ce cabinet internationalement reconnu dans le domaine ni celui de son collaborateur mauricien, la société Ecosis, mais mon point est de souligner le manque de cohérence entre les différents acteurs publics et surtout l'absence d'une approche holistique par le régime du jour en ce qui concerne la question de la durabilité en opposition au concept politiciennement enterré, je dois dire, de la vision Maurice île Durable du gouvernement travailliste qui voulait faire de notre île un modèle international de développement durable, notamment au sein des petits Etats insulaires en voie de développement avec un ancrage clé sur la mobilité durable, comme l'a clairement démontré mon collègue l'honorable Mahomed, ancien *Executive Chairman* du MID, lui aussi suspendu de la séance d'aujourd'hui lors de son intervention sur cette même motion le 17 décembre 2021.

M. le président, je le disais dans mon introduction, la question des véhicules électriques est un sujet complexe, car il est à la fois technologique, énergétique, écologique, économique, politique et directement lié à l'urgence climatique, et sans chercher à faire un exposé théorique sur la question, je tiens à me focaliser sur un volet qui me semble essentiel ; c'est le volet énergétique, car la voiture électrique sans gestion intelligente du réseau électrique est un danger public et la voiture électrique sans énergie renouvelable est une aberration climatique.

D'ailleurs le rapport EV Consult le met en évidence à la page 4, en résumé de son *Well-To-Wheel Analysis 2020* qui démontre qu'une voiture électrique rechargée à partir du *grid* CEB émet 5% de plus de CO<sub>2</sub> qu'une voiture conventionnelle simplement parce que dans notre production d'électricité aujourd'hui et selon *Statistics Mauritius*, la part des énergies renouvelables dans notre production d'électricité n'était que de 19% en 2022,

parmi lesquelles le photovoltaïque ne représente que 5%. Autrement dit, dans le contexte énergétique mauricien actuel, versé directement de l'essence dans sa voiture est à ce jour moins polluant que de recharger une voiture électrique à partir du réseau *CEB*, parce que ce réseau est alimenté à partir des centrales à charbon ou à l'huile lourde.

Cela paraît aberrant, M. le président. Alors évidemment je garde à l'esprit les deux objectifs annoncés dans le budget 2021-2022, à savoir –

- augmenter la part des énergies renouvelables à hauteur de 60% dans notre bouquet énergétique, et
- éliminer totalement le charbon d'ici le 2030.

Mais je peine encore à croire que cette réelle transition énergétique soit et devienne une réalité lorsque je constate que nous n'arrivons toujours pas à atteindre 25% d'énergies renouvelables depuis huit ans avec ce présent régime, que nous avons une agence nationale sur les énergies renouvelables qui fait des rapports que personne ne semble prendre en compte et que le *CEB* ne déborde pas d'énergie lorsqu'il s'agit de rendre ces *schemes* énergétiques réellement attractifs, mais pire encore, M. le président, le *CEB* vient parfois agir en contradiction avec ce qu'annonce le gouvernement et précisément, la voiture électrique est un exemple parfait.

Je remonte à deux ans de cela – le 11 juin 2021, le ministre des Finances présente le Budget National 2021-2022 et au paragraphe 107 de son discours, il annonce, et je cite –

« 107. Afin de promouvoir davantage la demande de véhicules électriques, les propriétaires seront autorisés à installer un système photovoltaïque ne dépassant pas 10 KW pour recharger leurs véhicules et exporter tout surplus vers le réseau. »

Autrement dit, pour que tout le monde comprenne ce que le ministre avait alors annoncé, un propriétaire de véhicule électrique pourra s'équiper en panneaux photovoltaïques à son domicile, consommer son électricité produite à partir de son équipement solaire pour recharger sa voiture et après revendre tout kilowattheure photovoltaïque non-utilisé au *CEB* en l'injectant sur le *grid* national. C'est le principe de ce qui est connu techniquement comme le *net metering*.

Alors, c'est un peu technique, mais selon le *net metering*, c'est un principe selon lequel l'énergie produite par le système solaire est d'abord utilisée à domicile pour l'autoconsommation et s'il reste un surplus d'énergie, alors ce surplus est transféré au réseau du *CEB* en échange d'une compensation financière sur la base d'un tarif par kilowattheure injecté au *grid* du *CEB*. Alors, cette facturation nécessite l'installation d'un compteur bidirectionnel, car l'importation et l'exportation de l'énergie sont prises en

compte pour calculer au final la consommation nette d'électricité. Et ce principe permet donc aux producteurs d'électricité verte qui deviennent en réalité des prosommateurs. Alors, 'prosommateurs' est un mot qui provient de la contraction entre 'producteurs' et 'consommateurs'. Ces prosommateurs peuvent alors auto-consommer tout en réduisant leur facture d'électricité complémentaire. Alors ça c'est le principe du *net metering* sans le nommer précisément qui avait été annoncé par le ministre des Finances dans son discours présenté en juin 2021. Et que se passe-t-il ? Cinq mois après, dans une note d'information émise le 5 novembre 2021 et qui s'intitule *CEB Solar PV Scheme for Charging of Electric Vehicles*, le CEB a eu l'audace d'écrire que ce *scheme*, et je cite –

*“...is an initiative launched pursuant to the measure enunciated at Paragraph 107 of the Government Budget Speech 2021-2022.”*

Et annonce le contraire dans le même document, à savoir que l'opération se fera sous le principe du *gross metering*, et cette fois-ci le CEB écrit ce terme du *gross metering*. Alors, selon ce principe, la totalité de l'énergie que vous produisez avec votre système photovoltaïque est exportée au *grid* du CEB sur la base d'un tarif qui est imposé par le CEB et dans le document du CEB, ils décrivent clairement ce tarif à R 3.73 du kilowattheure et qu'en parallèle, le consommateur continuera à acheter toute son électricité au tarif domestique en vigueur. Alors, bien que ce soit un petit peu technique, M. le président, je voulais démontrer par cela que –

- premièrement, cette note explicative du CEB est venue dire exactement le principe inverse, contrairement annoncé cinq mois plus tôt par le ministre dans son discours sur le Budget 2021-2022, et
- deuxièmement, nous avons tous pris connaissance de la hausse des prix de l'électricité selon la nouvelle grille tarifaire du CEB, entrée en vigueur depuis le 1er février 2023, qui je dois le dire a été un véritable coup de massue pour la classe moyenne qui consomme plus de 300 kWh par mois.

Et selon cette nouvelle grille, M. le président, celles et ceux qui consomment entre 300 et 500 kWh par mois payent désormais R 10,46 le kWh électrique au lieu de R 8,77 selon l'ancienne grille. Autrement dit, c'est une hausse du prix de l'électricité de presque 20 %.

Alors, au-delà des difficultés financières que cette hausse du prix de l'énergie représente pour les foyers mauriciens, quand on ramène cette hausse de prix à notre sujet du jour, on comprend qu'avec le *scheme* de recharge photovoltaïque des véhicules électriques tel que défini par le CEB, si vous êtes un propriétaire d'une voiture électrique et que vous souhaitez la recharger à partir d'énergie solaire, vous devrez investir quelques



centaines de milliers de roupies pour une installation photovoltaïque sur le toit de votre maison, revendre toute votre électricité verte au *CEB* à R 3,73 le kWh et continuer à acheter toute l'électricité nécessaire à un tarif domestique de R 10,46 le kWh. Autrement dit, vous allez faire un investissement non négligeable et au lieu d'avoir un retour sur investissement raisonnable, vous allez acheter votre énergie trois fois plus chère que vous ne la revendez.

Dites-moi, M. le président, qui cela va réellement intéresser ? En fait, un premier élément de réponse à cette question avait été donnée par le ministre de l'Energie lui-même alors qu'il participait à un atelier de travail en décembre 2022 sur le thème '*Accelerating the Transformation Shift to a Low-Carbon Economy*' où il avait indiqué que seulement 29 propriétaires de voitures électriques avaient, à cette époque, signé leur *connection agreement* avec le *CEB* et cela c'était avant même la hausse de 2023 du prix d'électricité, et il ne s'agissait que de la signature de l'accord de raccordement et pas encore de l'installation de l'équipement.

Alors, j'aurais bien aimé savoir, parce que j'ai cherché et je n'ai trouvé l'information nulle part, combien de mégawatts photovoltaïques ont été à ce jour installés sur les 10 MW prévus par le *CEB Solar PV Scheme for Charging of Electric Vehicles*. Alors, selon les projections du *Renewable Energy Roadmap 2030 for the Electricity Sector*, je précise pour celles et ceux qui nous écoutent qu'il y a en fait deux *roadmaps* au même Horizon 2030, un *roadmap* pour les véhicules électriques et un *roadmap* toujours à l'échelle 2030 sur les énergies renouvelables. Et ce deuxième *roadmap* effectivement reprend la capacité installée des 10 MW pour la recharge de véhicules électriques à Maurice prévu à l'Horizon 2027 et selon ce document, en 2023 il y avait une projection de 1,3 MW qui était prévue selon cette feuille de route pour la recharge des véhicules électriques. La question donc que je repose : sur ces 1,3 MW d'énergies solaires, combien ont été réellement installées à fin juin 2023 ?

Et toujours sur cette même question de recharge des véhicules électriques, car c'est le cœur même de la mobilité de cette nouvelle société que nous souhaitons construire, j'ai envie de dire que nous faisons fausse route sur un autre aspect qui est la définition même du véhicule électrique et du traitement qu'on lui accorde. Je clarifie mon propos, M. le président, en vous disant qu'aujourd'hui la famille des véhicules électriques comprend principalement deux sous-familles –

- (i) Nous avons d'un côté les véhicules 100 % électriques qui fonctionnent uniquement à partir d'un moteur électrique qui lui-même est alimenté par une batterie qui doit être chargée à l'arrêt en branchant votre voiture à la

prise murale ou à la borne de recharge, c'est ce qu'on appelle les *BEV* - l'honorable Ramyad en a parlé - les *Battery Electric Vehicles*.

- (ii) D'un autre côté, la deuxième grande sous-famille, ce sont les véhicules électriques hybrides rechargeables. Alors, ces véhicules hybrides rechargeables, parce que vous avez aussi les hybrides non rechargeables, sont propulsés par un moteur thermique et un moteur électrique et ce moteur électrique lui est alimenté par une batterie rechargeable également que vous rechargez en branchant votre véhicule à une borne de recharge, et c'est ce que l'on appelle les *PHEV*, les *Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicles*.

Et ce n'est pas moi qui englobe ces deux sous-familles au sein d'une même famille, mais c'est le *Electric Car Roadmap* du cabinet néerlandais EV Consult dont j'ai parlé plus tôt, car à la page 11 de ce rapport lorsqu'il définit les abréviations, le *roadmap* précise que *EV*, *Electric Vehicle*, inclus *both BEV and PHEV*. C'est écrit noir sur blanc dans le rapport officiel. Or, que voyons-nous, M. le président ? Alors que ce *roadmap* concerne notre pays, que le rapport décrit comme la *Rainbow Nation*, nos propres institutions traitent différemment les véhicules électriques et les véhicules hybrides rechargeables.

En effet, le *CEB* a mis en place un *time-of-use electricity Tariff 150C*. Alors, ce tarif est entré en vigueur, je l'ai vérifié depuis, le 1<sup>er</sup> novembre 2021. L'honorable Ramyad a justement mentionné la date de juillet 2021 qui figurait dans une réponse du ministre de l'Énergie dans une question parlementaire, mais en vérifiant les documents officiels du *CEB*, j'ai constaté que ce tarif n'est entré en vigueur qu'au 1<sup>er</sup> novembre 2021 et ce tarif 150C permet aux consommateurs domestiques qui ont installé une borne de recharge à leur domicile de bénéficier d'un tarif d'électricité préférentielle la nuit, donc hors période de pointe, uniquement pour recharger leur véhicule électrique.

Alors, plus précisément pour vous donner les détails de ce tarif 150C, le consommateur qui bénéficie de ce tarif, après étude et validation de son dossier par le *CEB*, paye R 5,40 du kWh le matin de 4h à 17h59, R 10 du kWh en soirée de 18h à 21h et un tarif réduit de R 4 le kWh de 21h01 à 3h59 le lendemain matin. Alors, aujourd'hui il existe des *smart chargers* programmables qui se déclenchent à des horaires prédéfinis grâce à des applications mobiles qu'il est facile d'installer sur son téléphone portable.

Donc, cette mesure, et je dois le dire, est une très bonne mesure pour éviter la saturation et le délestage du réseau du *CEB*, et c'est le danger public auquel je me réfèrais plus tôt. Mais l'aberration, M. le président, provient du fait que selon mes informations, ce tarif 150C ne s'applique qu'aux *BEV* et non pas aux *PHEV*, alors que ce modèle de voitures électriques hybrides rechargeables est le modèle le plus répandu dans notre pays

et pour une raison très simple, c'est que l'hybride rechargeable est beaucoup plus accessible financièrement que la voiture 100 % électrique. Les derniers chiffres publiés par la *National Land Transport Authority*, vendredi dernier, c'était le 14 juillet 2023, démontrent qu'à ce jour notre parc automobile comprend 1,419 véhicules 100 % électriques contre 27,537 véhicules hybrides. Alors là, je dois préciser que sur les 27,537 véhicules hybrides, la *NLTA*, et ce sera une amélioration à apporter dans la façon dont il donne leurs chiffres, sur ces 27,537 véhicules hybrides, la *NLTA* ne distingue pas la répartition entre les véhicules hybrides rechargeables et les véhicules hybrides non rechargeables. Mais même en ne prenant que 10 % de ce chiffre pour l'appliquer aux véhicules hybrides rechargeables, cela représenterait une quantité de *PHEV* qui est le double des *BEV* actuellement sur nos routes mauriciennes. Et le *roadmap* 2030 des véhicules électriques confirme la tendance de la supériorité numérique des hybrides rechargeables contre les 100 % électriques.

À la page 8 du rapport, ils donnent les projections suivantes –

- (i) en 2025 : 5,500 *PHEV* contre 2,900 *BEV*, et
- (ii) en 2030, c'est l'horizon du rapport. La projection prévoit 15,000 *PHEV* contre 11, 000 *BEV*.

La raison pour laquelle je fais ce comparatif, M. le président, c'est pour vous dire qu'il me paraît donc logique que pour atteindre ces objectifs, il faut, dès aujourd'hui et impérativement que le *CEB Solar PV Scheme for Charging of Electric Vehicles* ainsi que le *time of use electricity tariff 150C* soient applicables non plus seulement aux voitures 100 % électriques mais également aux voitures hybrides rechargeables. Et pour aller encore plus loin, il faudrait même cumuler ces deux mécanismes pour que le dispositif soit rentable pour les conducteurs.

Et en parallèle, pourquoi ne pas également prendre l'exemple sur l'Inde où le *Ministry of Power* a révisé ces *Electricity Rights of Consumer Rules 2020* pour rendre obligatoire le *net metering* pour des puissances photovoltaïques allant jusqu'à 10 kW et permettre le *gross metering* uniquement pour des puissances supérieures à 10 kW, là aussi pour rendre plus attractive l'utilisation de l'énergie solaire pour produire chez soi, consommer d'abord pour soi et uniquement après, revendre le surplus au CEB.

M. le président, je n'aborderai pas ici aujourd'hui les autres sujets liés au nécessaire développement des véhicules électriques dans notre pays, à savoir les incitations financières à l'achat, la diversification des modèles de véhicules, la mise à disposition des prêts verts, la démocratisation des bornes de recharge, la gestion des

batteries, la mise en circulation des pièces détachées, la sensibilisation des conducteurs ou encore la formation des concessionnaires et des garagistes de quartier, mais d'autres orateurs, je n'en doute pas, le feront certainement après moi.

M. le président, et je termine bientôt, ne plus avoir de véhicules thermiques qui roulent à l'énergie fossile d'ici 2040, c'est un objectif très ambitieux surtout à l'allure à laquelle nous avançons sur ce sujet, mais notre pays, que voulez-vous, a besoin de grandes ambitions pour faire face à nos immenses défis écologiques, énergétiques et climatiques. Et je vais vous faire un aveu, M. le président. 2040 sera précisément l'année où j'aurai 60 ans. Alors, je ne sais pas si en 2040 je serai encore politicien mais je resterai certainement en 2040 un citoyen engagé pour mon pays et j'espère vivre suffisamment longtemps pour pouvoir un jour visiter un musée dans les rues de la capitale ou dans les rues d'un village où l'on pourra y voir exposer nos actuelles pompes à essence ou à diesel qui seront entre-temps devenues des objets de mémoire d'un autre temps.

J'en ai terminé, M. le président.

**Mr Speaker:** In 2040, I'll be the Speaker!

**An hon. Member:** In a new House!

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dhunoo!

(6.40 p.m.)

**Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let me first of all congratulate my hon. colleague, Ms Joanne Sabrina Tour, for bringing this Private Member's Motion to the House and I came to bring some of my contribution with regard to pursuing our effort in using electric vehicle but before that, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell hon. David not to worry; when we have Pravind Jugnauth as Prime Minister and when we have this Government which has been elected democratically by the people of this country with a programme that we are following, we will achieve what we have put in our programme. And like you have said, in the World Summit in November 2021, let me quote the hon. Prime Minister, he said that –

“For small countries like Mauritius, global warming and rising sea level represent an existential challenge which will cause tremendous damage and lead to massive displacement of people especially from low-lying islands.

We, therefore, commit to take action that will contribute towards the following –

1. Reducing gas emissions by 40 per cent by 2030;
2. Achieving 60 per cent of green energy in our energy mix by 2030;

3. Phasing out coal in electricity generation before 2030;
4. Promoting a circular economy involving 70 per cent of waste from landfills by 2030;
5. Encouraging the use of electric vehicles, and
6. Promoting smart agriculture and island wide tree planting programmes”.

From all the six mentioned statements and engagement by our Prime Minister, our Government is pursuing the vision that our Prime Minister has with regard to energy but coming to say that two of your hon. Members are suspended, it should be said that they have been suspended because they are not following the Standing Orders of the House. And they have to respect the Standing Orders. Even if I do not respect the Standing Orders, the Speaker will ask me to withdraw from the House; even if I do a gross misconduct, I also will be suspended from the House. I can also be named. The rules apply for everyone.

So, when you said it in your speech, it seemed that they were unjustly suspended from the House. And we have seen, as young parliamentarians, how some hon. Members have been behaving in this House – we have to respect the decorum of the House.

**An hon. Member:** *Koz lor motion la!*

**Mr Speaker:** No, leave him. He is rebutting a bit of what he said! I could have asked him to withdraw but I didn't do that when he said: '*malheureusement* or something like that. This is an insinuation towards the authority of the Chair. The Chair has already decided!

He is right, the hon. Member is right! Very right which means that the Chair has already ruled and like as if, you are not accepting the ruling of the Chair.

So, continue hon. Member!

**Mr Dhunoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, you are right too because as per our Standing Orders, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is mentioned that we cannot comment on your ruling. If they do not know their Standing Orders, I would request you to ask the Clerk to give them another copy so that they can read it or if we can ask the Clerk to have a session about the rules of the Standing Orders and to have a session to know about the Standing Orders of the Assembly – which is what I am doing. So, if they do not agree to it, it is their opinion but for me as an honourable Member of this House, I am guided by the Standing Orders of this House and that is why today, I am rebutting the Member on the *propos* that he has mentioned earlier.

He also mentioned about *Maurice Île Durable*. I am sorry to say that that has only been a paper and there have been many workshops only but nothing concrete. It is not me who is saying that, even Prof. De Rosnay because it was launched in fanfare in 2008 but I would ask the House and Members of the Opposition: what concrete action has been done through *Maurice Île Durable*? You can even ask your hon. colleague, Osman Mahomed, who as you have said, has been Director of *Maurice Ile Durable* and has been chairing, so he can give you more details.

Mr Speaker, Sir, today the Private Members' Motion that has been brought to the House by my hon. colleague is of utmost importance because when we are talking about electric vehicle, decarbonisation and climate change also, for Mauritius as a Small Island Developing State, we are the least polluter. If we account it, it's around 0.0001%. We are the least polluter but we are the most affected and one of the ways to protect our country from climate change is the use of electric vehicles.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would first give a brief a bit on some statistics on electric car sales and I will come on the policy matters where we, as Members of this Assembly, can make some changes for the betterment of our country and for the future of our children like hon. David has said. By 2040 when he will be 60 years old, I hope that we will have a museum like he has said for our petrol pump. I think as a Small Island Developing State with all the energy that we can get through the sun, wind, the sea as we are surrounded by it, we can move in this direction.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it's important to know how the market is evolving and when we talk about electric car sales, we can say that worldwide, it has broken a new record with the momentum expected to continue through 2023 this year as the electric car market is seeing exponential growth and sales have exceeded Rs10 m. in 2022. A total of 14% of all new cars sold were electric in 2022, up from around 9% in 2021 and less than 5% in 2020.

Out of the three markets that dominate the global sales, China is the front-runner once again, accounting for around 60% of global electric car sales. More than half of the electric cars on the road worldwide are now in China and the country has already exceeded its 2025 target for new energy vehicle sales. But in Europe which is the second largest market, electric car sales increased by over 15% in 2022, meaning that more than one in every five cars sold was electric. Electric cars in the United States, the third-largest market increased to 55% in 2022 reaching a sales share of 8%. Electric car sales are expected to continue strongly through 2023. Over 2.3 million electric cars were sold in the first quarter. About 25% more than in the same period last year and now we currently expect to

see that 14 million in sales by the end of 2023 representing a 35% year-on-year increase with new purchase accelerating in the second half of this year.

As a result, Mr Speaker, Sir, electric cars could account for 18% of total car sales across the full calendar year in America and as a result, we have, for national policies, an incentive. This can also help to boost the sales around the world and even in Mauritius whereby the Ministry of Finance has given so many incentives on hybrid cars in the past removing tax on the electric cars and everything. Now we can say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I agree with hon. David with regard to the 150 C tariff for the electricity bill. We have to move in the same direction with regard to hybrid cars because it is more accessible and it has become accessible, hon. David because the Government has a vision and the hon. Minister of Finance along with the hon. Prime Minister have removed tax on these vehicles.

So, that's why today we have nearly 28,000 hybrid cars on the road and it's becoming more accessible, not only hybrid cars, most of the cars are being accessible to many people now. Our population does not have only one, but more than one to two cars. We know that like in Europe some people are also thinking about having *les voitures de citadin parce que* with the transport system being transited here in Mauritius, changes that have been arriving all around Mauritius with the arrival of Metro and other public transport system. These are encouraging people to see the way how they can move and about electrical mobility as well because people are becoming more conscious about climate and they want to contribute in a way or another.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if we see also what has been done and we still have many policies that we can change for the future with regard to the objectives that we have put to achieve and the engagement that we have taken to formalise by the Paris Agreement in relation to the decrease for the global mean temperature which has increased by 2.5%. As a Small Island Developing State, it is important that our country contribute in these directions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we talk about policies, we see what is being done around the world, the national policies and incentives that are being given in many countries like in India, Thailand, Indonesia. These are also attracting many of the car users to move towards electric vehicles. But what is more important here in Mauritius also is like the previous orators like hon. Ivan Collendavelloo has said, even hon. David mentioned it, we will need to see with regard to our charging stations. We can't be using the CEB electricity to charge our vehicles but we will need to have chargers with regard to solar panels and PV panels which will contribute towards betterment for our climate and also less pollution.

We can also say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that in Mauritius we can also think differently and we have the potential to develop this industry well and we can even rethink about our batteries because many of the previous orators have mentioned about the price of the batteries which cost one third of the cost of the cars, around Rs400,000 but we have another technology that is being developed – salt batteries. In Mauritius we are surrounded by sea, we have the potential to look into salt batteries.

There are other countries which are using the swap batteries technology, where the batteries are already charged and people just need to swap and use it. This is a concept that we can look at in the future, which will not only help as an incentive for electric cars but it will also attract investors to come to Mauritius to develop this industry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to develop an electric car vehicle, there are so many small components that can developed and manufactured, light industry and light engineering can be used, and this can be done in Mauritius. Like we know, there are many countries which are doing assembling of electric vehicles. We can see how they are moving fast in India and even in China but, here, we will need to see some of our landmarks in the electric vehicle policies and we will need to look at different outlooks and see what the market trends are. We see in India what they have done with their tuk-tuk, most of them now have PV panels on the roof of the vehicle. If Members of the House were at Tribeca Mall on Saturday, they would have experienced one tuk-tuk with a PV panel on it which was being driven in the mall to show a bit how it works and one could have experienced it here in Mauritius.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Member, I will have to stop at 7.00 p.m. The business of the House will be interrupted at 7.00 p.m. You have only one minute!

**Mr Dhunoo:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the Motion that has been put by my hon. colleague, it is important that we look at it in a direction that we, as Members of Parliament and to look at the future...

**Mr Speaker:** It is 7 o'clock! I'm sorry for that.

**Mr Dhunoo:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 17 October 2023 at 11.30 a.m.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun) seconded.**



*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** The House stands adjourned! Adjournment matter? So, hon. Members, I wish you all a happy vacation.

*At 7.00 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 17 October 2023 at 11.30 a.m.*