



SEVENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

MONDAY 05 AUGUST 2024

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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
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Dr. the Hon. Renganaden Padayachy	Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development
Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard	Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
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Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance
Hon. Kavydass Ramano	Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Maneesh Gobin	Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional

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Hon. Sudheer Maudhoo	Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
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Hon. Ms Naveena Ramyad	Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives

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MAURITIUS

Seventh National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 25 of 2024

Sitting of Monday 05 August 2024

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. 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 following Bills (In Original):

- (i) The National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill (No. XIII of 2024);
- (ii) The State Lands (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XIV of 2024); and
- (iii) The Pas Géométriques (Amendment) Bill (No. XV of 2024)

(b) The Civil Aviation (Amendment) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 125 of 2024)

B. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

The Central Water Authority (Dry Season) (Amendment No. 6) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 124 of 2024)

C. Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection

The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2024. (Government Notice No. 126 of 2024)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION**GLOBAL EQUESTRIAN LTD – HORSE RACING ACTIVITIES – INVESTMENT
CERTIFICATE**

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. A. Boolell) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development whether, in regard to horse racing and related activities of the Global Equestrian Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the –

- (a) Economic Development Board as to –
 - (i) if an investment certificate has been granted by the Board to the Company therefor and, if so, indicate the conditions attached thereto, and
 - (ii) the other licences granted thereto in relation to trading activities, if any, carried out by the Company, and
- (b) Mauritius Revenue Authority the amount of tax forgone, if any, and paid annually by the Company to date.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Seeruttun): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am going to reply to this question on behalf of the substantive Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development who is currently on a mission abroad.

In the Budget Speech 2021/2022 presented by my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, it was announced that, in a bid to streamline the sixteen investment schemes, three categories of certificates would be issued by the Economic Development Board (EDB), namely –

- (a) the Investment Certificate;
- (b) the Export Development Certificate, and
- (c) the Premium Investor Certificate.

Accordingly, the Economic Development Act was amended through the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2021.

The Investment Certificate provides for specific incentives for projects under qualified sectors, namely eight years income tax exemption, VAT exemption, duty exemption, among others.

It also contains a series of conditions to which the promoter must adhere to, failing which the Investment Certificate may be suspended or revoked under Section 14C of the Economic Development Board Act.

An Export Development Certificate is issued to export-oriented enterprises to benefit from the following incentives –

- (a) Freight Rebate Scheme;
- (b) Trade Promotion & Marketing Scheme;
- (c) Subsidy on the cost of Credit Guarantee Insurance Scheme, and
- (d) Preferential Port & Handling Charges.

A Premium Investor Certificate is issued to any project having a minimum investment of Rs500 million in emerging sectors, pioneering industries and first movers or innovative technologies. Moreover, irrespective of the investment value, this Scheme also applies to projects engaged in the manufacture of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and materials for renewable energy technologies.

As at date, the EDB has issued –

- (a) 40 Investment Certificates in various sectors, namely agro processing, aqua culture, digital technology and innovation, education, food processing, health care biotechnology and life sciences, hi-tech manufacturing, industrial fishing, and nursing and residential care;
- (b) 230 Export Development Certificates, and

- (c) 6 Premium Investor Certificates.

With respect to part (a)(i) of the question, I am informed by the EDB that an application was received for an Investment Certificate from Global Equestrian Limited on 16 May 2022. According to the business plan submitted by the company to the EDB, investment in the project over 3 years is estimated at Rs270 million and aimed at conducting the following activities at Petit Gamin, Le Goulet, Balaclava –

- (a) Animal breeding;
- (b) Training;
- (c) Veterinary Services, and
- (d) Re-exports of animals.

Consequently, after a due diligence, Global Equestrian Limited was issued with an Investment Certificate under section 14B of the Economic Development Board Act on 30 May 2022 conferring the promoter with the following incentives –

- (a) an eight-year income tax holiday on income derived from Lifesciences from the year of incorporation of the company;
- (b) exemption from payment of registration duty and land transfer tax, and
- (c) VAT exemption on construction materials for the purpose of the above-mentioned activities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the Certificate comprises a covering letter which includes general and specific conditions. With regard to general conditions, the company shall –

- (a) at all times comply with applicable laws, rules, regulations and guidelines;
- (b) ensure that it holds valid licences, approvals or permits as may be required under the laws of Mauritius;

- (c) forthwith, inform the EDB of any matter which would affect its eligibility to hold this Certificate, including, but not limited to, if –
- it no longer satisfies the eligible criteria;
 - it does not hold, or ceases to hold, any required licence, approval, permit, etc.
 - it is in breach of any legislative requirements, and
- (d) the EDB reserves the right to impose such other terms and conditions as it may deem necessary.

As regards specific conditions of the Certificate, it provides that –

- (a) the land acquired should be used to construct a building primarily to carry out the activities of Lifesciences for the exemption from registration duty and land transfer tax;
- (b) any construction material and equipment qualifying and benefiting from VAT exemption shall be used exclusively for the construction of breeding and training facilities, and
- (c) the project promoter should submit a detailed construction plan to the EDB and the MRA clearly indicating the quantity and/or volume of each item and their intended use of each material.

As regards part (a)(ii) of the question, I am informed that EDB has not issued any licence to Global Equestrian Ltd. EDB has only issued an Investment Certificate to the company which confers specific incentives with regard to the activities applied for.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that, in accordance with relevant sections of the Customs Act, Income Tax Act, the Mauritius Revenue Authority Act and the Value Added Tax (VAT) Act regarding confidentiality, no information on tax affairs of a particular tax payer may be disclosed. As such, information relating to tax foregone and paid by Global Equestrian Ltd cannot be disclosed.

I am further informed by the MRA that any VAT registered person will be able to recoup VAT paid on capital goods as well as recurrent goods irrespective of whether the person has an Investment Certificate or not. In line with the VAT neutrality principle, businesses do not suffer the VAT cost but rather, it is the final consumer who bears the VAT charge. In the case of capital goods, a VAT registered company will be able to claim repayment of VAT claimed under Section 24 of the VAT Act. On the other hand, for recurrent goods, the company will be able to offset the input tax against its output tax whilst submitting its VAT returns to the MRA.

In the case of Global Equestrian Ltd, following the issue of the Investment Certificate, the company will not have to claim VAT repayment on capital goods as it is exempted from payment of VAT upfront at time of purchase of construction materials.

As such, this exemption does not represent any cost to Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw attention that any economic operator must comply with the rules and regulations of our country. The relevant authorities in Mauritius shall take appropriate actions for any non-compliance to the conditions attached to certificates and incentives.

With all the measures taken by this responsible Government with regard to business facilitation, we have seen record levels of foreign direct investments to the tune of Rs37 billion and the investment rate has increased to 23.5% of GDP for the year 2023.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. I have listened to the reply given by the minister. Now, am I to understand that animal breeding, veterinary services, and re-export, I think for re-export of horses, are these activities prescribed by law in the enabling legislation?

Mr Seeruttun: In the what?

Dr. Boolell: In this enabling legislation.

Mr Seeruttun: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, if I go by the Investment Certificate, for any applicant to apply and to be eligible to have that Investment Certificate, they have to satisfy those conditions, that is, providing breeding, training and quarantine services for them to be able to qualify under that Scheme that has been provided for at the level of the EDB. I am informed that there is nothing in law, but there are guidelines issued by the EDB for that particular Scheme.

Dr. Boolell: I thank the hon. Minister. He rightly mentioned 'guidelines', but we are here talking of activities. He is right from what he has stated. We understand that these activities are not prescribed by law in the enabling legislation. That is what you said. We cannot rely on guidelines.

Mr Seeruttun: That is what I have been...

Dr. Boolell: The guidelines are not part and parcel of the legislation.

Mr Seeruttun: That is what I have been informed. For any project to benefit from that Investment Certificate, there are certain activities that they have to perform, and those activities are as per the guidelines issued by the EDB.

Dr. Boolell: Now, you know that this...

Mr Speaker: Please, through the Chair!

Dr. Boolell: Sure!

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair!

Dr. Boolell: We know that this company, GEL, acts in opacity. Now, in view of the complete opacity behind the financing of all these hundreds of millions, possible billions of rupees, will the Minister recommend the relevant authorities to conduct an inquiry into the source of funds of Mr J.M.L.S' company?

Mr Seeruttun: Well, I am not too clear of what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is referring to when he is talking about opacity. What I can tell the House is that, before the said company was issued that Investment Certificate, a due diligence exercise was carried out and based on that, the Certificate was issued to the Global Equestrian company.

Dr. Boolell: Others mentioned PTP, which we highlighted in one of the PNQs which I put to the hon. Minister of Finance. Now, is the Minister aware that Global Equestrian Ltd leases horses to members of the public running the races at Champ de Mars?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, if we refer to the question put to me, it is with regard to licences, if any, issued by the EDB and the Investment Certificate. As far as the EDB is concerned, it does not issue licence with regard to leasing or to horse racing at the level of Champ de Mars. So, the EDB is only awarding a certificate and for that, they have to carry out some activities to be eligible for certain advantages that exist within that Scheme.

Dr. Boolell: Except, hon. Minister, this is not an advantage; this is a breach! Is the Minister aware that Global Equestrian Ltd is in breach of the conditions attached to the Investment Certificate? Is he aware of this?

Mr Seeruttun: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, again, I do not see where there are breaches. If there are any, I think it would be good that he gives some examples of where there have been breaches. I have been informed by the EDB that when it issued that Certificate, there are certain conditions that they have to satisfy. So far, up to now, they have not been made aware of any breaches. As of now, I can say that the conditions are being followed. So far, if there were any breaches that were made by that company, probably, the EDB would have taken actions as spelt out under the conditions set.

Dr. Boolell: Is the Minister aware that the breaches are so obvious that the relevant institution or bodies are not taking any action? Now, can I ask him what permit does Global Equestrian Ltd possess to be able to carry such activities? Is it regulated by the Financial Services Commission?

Mr Seeruttun: The question again, Mr Speaker, Sir, is with regard to what are the licences or certificates issued by the EDB. Now he is going well beyond what the EDB has the power to issue in terms of certificates or licences. If he is referring to other licences that could have been issued by other authorities, he should have referred to it in his question or come with a substantive question in relation to other licences being issued by other authorities.

Dr. Boolell: It is a question of your judgement. Now, are the Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting of Financial Terrorism guidelines in regard to the leasing of race horses being respected by that company?

Mr Seeruttun: Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the Leader of the Opposition should have well spelt out his question, give all the...

Dr. Boolell: The question is already...

Mr Seeruttun: If he wants to...

Mr Speaker: Please, one person replies!

Mr Seeruttun: He is looking for information; he should have put it in his main question so that I have all the information to be able to share with him in this House. He comes up with a set of questions restricted to the EDB. Now, he is asking me about questions with regard to FSC or other authorities. How am I supposed to be able to provide him with those answers now when he himself should have known that that would not be possible!

Dr. Boolell: You see, the hon. Minister is not replying. These are specific questions relating to the company per se, and it has to obtain the licence from the FSC. And I will come back to this again.

At the Global Equestrian Ltd Company, licenced by the FSC, there would have been a necessity to have a business risk assessment. We know that this is a high-risk client and both the FSC and Bank of Mauritius would have had to monitor closely with reference to anti-money laundering and combatting of financing of terrorism.

Mr Seeruttun: What is the question, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Dr. Boolell: The question is that you are not replying!

(Interruptions)

You are running away from the specific questions that I am putting!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, wait, wait!

Mr Seeruttun: Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, if you put your question...

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Seeruttun: ... a clear question, you get a clear answer! He is going around with other, I mean...

Dr. Boolell: You are not replying; ask your officers to help you if you cannot reply to the question!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, do not argue with him! Just put your questions!

Dr. Boolell: Yes! Now, with the owner of Global Equestrian Ltd being also a bookmaker at the Champ de Mars and controlling the offshore betting all around the island through the *SMS Pariaz* and the likes, where is the integrity of horseracing in Mauritius, aided and abetted by this Government?

Mr Seeruttun: Well...

Dr. Boolell: Tell me you cannot reply to this also!

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Global Equestrian Ltd, as far as I am informed, does not hold any other licences other than to run an equestrian centre. So, I am not aware of that company holding a gambling licence. I do not know where he gets that kind of information. Maybe he has been *induit en erreur*.

Dr. Boolell: Irrelevant! Let me come again to another point. Is the Minister aware that more than 250 horses have been imported at zero VAT rated and that the Government has not perceived a single cent? This is the company which is involved in illicit activities, and I cannot understand why is it that up to now no action has been taken to reverse the situation!

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, again, the Leader of the Opposition is misleading the House by stating that horses have been imported and VAT has not been paid. I can confirm to the House that for all the horses that were imported, VAT has been claimed and VAT to the tune of Rs2.9 m. has been paid.

In 2022, there were 36 horses that were imported and VAT to the tune of Rs837,407 was paid. Again, in 2023, there were 78 horses imported. Again, VAT was paid to the tune Rs1,996,363 and up to now, in 2024, five horses were imported, of which, Rs149,023 were paid as VAT. So, coming and saying that VAT has not been paid is totally false.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you very much. The hon. Minister said earlier on, in answer to the question from the Leader of the Opposition, that a due diligence exercise was carried out as far as the company is concerned. Could he tell us when was this due diligence exercise carried out and, if he could also add to this information we require, by whom the due diligence was carried out? Is it by software or internal people, and what was the report, precisely with regard to the ultimate beneficial owner and the source of funds? And could he consider tabling the report?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, at the time when the EDB received that application for the Investment Certificate in May 2022, they carried out that due diligence exercise and based on that, the Certificate was issued. So, at the level of the EDB, they have the mechanism in place to carry out the due diligence exercise. That is how it was carried out.

Mr Mohamed: Table it! Table it!

Mr Speaker: Can you please wait?

Mr Seeruttun: Well, I do not have the report with me, but I am informed that this is done through three software systems that they have in place which check for any adverse reports on the Directors, shareholders and the company. So, it is a common exercise which is applied to every applicant at the level of the EDB. This has been the case for this particular application as well.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Dr. Boolell: Does the Minister find it proper that the owner of the Global Equestrian Ltd is the employer of grooms at the Champs de Mars, and of at least 10 jockeys, of several trainers; is the sole horse racing organiser and at the same time is the owner of more than 250 horses which are leased to run races at Champs de Mars? If this is not monopoly, then what is it?

Mr Seeruttun: Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is coming with vague questions, wide...

Dr. Boolell: These are vague questions? They are specific questions to begin with.

Mr Seeruttun: It is not specific.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition! Wait! Wait! Let me, please!

Mr Seeruttun: Am I supposed to...

Mr Speaker: Wait! Wait! Order! Order! Let me intervene! Look, this did not arise through the main body of the answer, and supplementary questions are supposed to elucidate matters that have been canvassed. I have allowed you, but, now, please come back to relevance!

Yes, have you finished your reply?

Mr Seeruttun: Well, I just said that he is coming with a question which is widely outside the ambit of this PNQ.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition, next question!

Dr. Boolell: Let me now come to employees of that company. Now, it is clear that for the purpose of bringing foreign workers to Mauritius, on an Occupational Permit, one of the conditions is that there should be scarcity of such skills in Mauritius. Is he aware that in this particular case, with regard to grooms, there is no scarcity of skills, and if so, can he give an explanation to this?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am aware that there have been Occupational Permits issued to that company for them to be allowed to bring skilled workers. So, based on their specific activities that they have to carry out, they had to have recourse to foreign workers to do that activity.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Boolell: As per my information, the income of the company comes mainly from revenue received from leases, and I will come back to this because this is where the revenue comes. I doubt that this is enough for the expenses of the company. Can the Minister confirm whether the source of funds of this company has been investigated and before providing them

with special licences from EDB and Gambling Regulatory Authority, whether they are a solvent company?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, like I said, again, before conferring that certificate to the Global Equestrian Ltd company, the EDB carried out a due diligence exercise. So, looking at the source of funds, I have no doubt they have been looked at, and it is only after that, they were satisfied that they are clean funds. That is how the certificate was issued. Otherwise, if there was any doubt on that, I do not think EDB would have given any Investment Certificate to that company.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, from the reply given by the hon. Minister, it stands to reason that this Government is aiding and abetting those who are involved in illegal activities.

(Interruptions)

Is the Minister aware that the Gujadhur Stable, which holds a historic and emotional value for the population, closed down because the integrity of horseracing is threatened as a result of this conflict of interest at all levels? Is he aware of this?

Mr Seeruttun: Week in, week out, Mr Speaker, Sir, I hear the same kind of phrase: “aiding and abetting”. So, is that the only thing that he knows? I do not know. But what I can tell the House is that this Government, ever since the *Rapport Parry* came out, we have been trying to regulate the whole racing activity in this country. We all know what were the recommendations in that report, and everything is being done to ensure that all the stakeholders’ rights in that particular industry are being safeguarded. So, that is what we are trying to do, and I hope that they do understand that this is an industry that needed to be reviewed completely, and that is what we have been doing.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Boolell: One of the Directors of this company has a monopoly on off-course betting, with a turnover of approximately Rs1 billion. This company, the People’s Turf, is the sole horseracing organiser and is currently running Champs de Mars illegally, and is the employer of an overwhelming majority of grooms at Champs de Mars.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Boolell! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, there are two things.

Put your question, first of all, then...

Dr. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir can I, through you...

Mr Speaker: Let me tell you. I was talking. Put your question, and secondly, refrain from commenting on the conduct or the character of persons other than in their public or official capacity. This is what the Standing Orders say. So, please, put your question...

Dr. Boolell: My question was on the character of somebody who is not paying his dues to Government but was given a lot of...

Mr Speaker: Yes, yes. Do not argue with me, you will see in the Standing Orders...

Dr. Boolell: I am not arguing, I saying.

Mr Speaker: Let me finish! You will see that you are not supposed to do that, except in their official or public capacity. So, please, put your question differently and I will allow it!

Dr. Boolell: Can I ask the Minister, why is it that up to now, neither the EDB nor the Competition Commission or the Financial Crimes Commission...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Please!

Dr. Boolell: ... has acted in a way to take this company to task? Why is it that up to now, none of these organisations has acted to do what is called upon them to do?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker ...

Mr Speaker: Yes. Look, I have already given my ruling earlier; it should be on subject...

Mr Seeruttun: I go by your ruling, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think...

Mr Speaker: ...and you will decide if you will answer.

Mr Seeruttun: He is completely out of subject, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: And in any case, this is the last question. Time is over! So?

Mr Seeruttun: I go by your ruling, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

(Interruptions)

But time is over, hon. Dr. Boolell! What can I do?

Dr. Boolell: I told you I have a last question.

An hon. Member: But time over! Time over!

An hon. Member: *Perdi letan pou naryen.*

(Interruptions)

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Prime Minister: 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 Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER

(4.33 p.m.)

FREE PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION POLICY – IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have two statements. With your permission, I would wish to make a Statement on the implementation status of the Free Pre-Primary Education Policy.

The significance of pre-primary education has today gained enormous traction. Indeed, its role in shaping the future of our children cannot be underestimated. Pre-primary education has thus proved to be critical in ensuring children's readiness for primary schooling, especially since it bolsters their cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development. As well, it lays the foundation of a child's lifelong learning and development journey.

Our Government is committed to the provision of an inclusive, equitable and quality early childhood education for all. It is in line with this commitment that the hon. Prime Minister announced that pre-primary education would be free for children aged 3 to 5 years as from January 2024. This measure ensures that every child has the opportunity to have a solid start in his educational journey.

The House would be aware that, prior to 2024, only pre-primary units attached to Government primary schools and preschools operating under the aegis of Municipal Councils were offering free pre-primary schooling. This accounted for about 20 per cent of the learners in that age group. However, the vast majority of children were enrolled in private fee-paying pre-primary schools.

A Grant-in-Aid Scheme has been devised for private fee-paying schools and the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCEA) is responsible for the implementation thereof.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to briefly elaborate on the features of the Free Grant-in-Aid Scheme.

It covers the components of operational costs and staff costs. The operational costs are in respect of expenditure incurred on utilities, school requisites, educational materials, pedagogical resources as well as rent of premises. Upfront payments for operational expenses are made on a quarterly basis to the bank account of each school.

As for staff costs, it is worth pointing out that salaries are paid to all employees directly to their personal bank accounts.

The scheme covers the following personnel –

- 425 Managers;
- 6 Assistant Managers;
- 933 Teachers;
- 249 Assistant Teachers, and
- 465 Attendants.

A private pre-primary school is required to have in post a Manager, a Teacher and an Assistant Teacher for every 15 children.

The G.I.A Scheme also requires the Manager of the pre-school to be the holder of a diploma in Early Childhood Management. A moratorium period has been provided for this to be a reality for all Managers, with this obligation coming in force as from year 2029. To help expedite matters, the Ministry has initiated action with the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), the University of Technology (UTM) and Polytechnics Mauritius Limited (PML) for the mounting of the said diploma programme. Courses are expected to start in January 2025.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the current state of play in the pre-primary sector shows that there are 26,251 children enrolled in 795 pre-primary schools in the island of Mauritius. There are presently 661 schools providing free pre-primary education to 19,147 pupils. This brings the percentage of free pre-primary schools to 83% and the percentage of children benefitting from free pre-primary education to 73%. A total of 19,147 pupils.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is fully alive to the necessity of ensuring sustainable funding for the sound implementation of the Free Pre-Primary Education Policy. Initially, a provision of Rs350 m. was made for the implementation of the scheme for a six-month period in the 2023-2024 Budget. For this Financial Year 2024-2025, Rs750 m. has been provided for the schools. As from this year, provision has been made for the compensation for the use of school premises as announced in the 2024-2025 Budget Speech.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the scheme has been introduced so as to bring greater equity in the system, thereby alleviating the financial burden faced by parents having children in this sub-sector. Also, a harmonisation of salaries between qualified educators of the public and private schools have been made effective, ensuring greater parity of esteem.

It is also worth noting that a new thrust has now been given to the sector by providing resources for the operations at the level of the pre-primary schools. This allows enhanced quality learning experiences for the children.

It is paramount to maintain high standards of education across the system and Government has shown its willingness to go the extra mile to sustain the quality of the pre-primary school experience of our young learners.

Thank you.

SCHOOLS (SECONDARY) - TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION STREAM

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will also make a statement on the introduction of Technology Education stream at secondary school level.

Since January 2024, my Ministry has introduced the Technology Education as a new learning pathway offered to Grades 10 and 11 students. The introduction of Technology Education is a strategic move that aligns with the 21st century global movement towards a competency-based curriculum. The curriculum is designed to impart skills and competencies that are in high demand today particularly in the fields of Science and Technology.

The curriculum for Technology Education in Mauritius has been crafted with the expertise of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) and international experts from the University of

Alberta and a Consultant from UK recruited by the British Council. This collaboration, which brings together the best of local and global knowledge, has resulted in a unique curriculum framework and teaching-learning syllabus tailored to the country's educational and training needs.

The curriculum includes core subjects such as English, French, Applied Mathematics, Applied Life Sciences or Applied Physical Sciences and Skills for Success (including ICT, Arts, and Entrepreneurship). Additionally, students can choose from elective clusters in disciplines like Engineering Technology, Computer Technology and Innovation and Health and Hospitality. The curriculum emphasises interdisciplinary learning, integrating academic and technology education to develop transferable skills and prepare students for further education and employment opportunities.

Technology Education in Mauritius is designed to provide students with comprehensive skills, blending theoretical knowledge with hands-on learning. This approach prepares students for the rapidly evolving technological landscape and fosters critical thinking, creativity and adaptability skills. More important, it equips students with practical skills directly applicable in the real world.

The Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, with the guidance from international experts, has developed the assessment and evaluation protocol for students in Technology Education. The evaluation will combine portfolio submissions with written examinations over the two-year course. This approach aims to assess students' understanding and holistic application of their learning. The portfolio allows students to demonstrate their practical skills, creativity and problem-solving abilities through various projects and assignments. Written examinations will test their theoretical knowledge and critical thinking skills, comprehensively evaluating their progress.

The institutional readiness comprises enlarging the attributions of the National Examinations Board (NEB) for the secondary education subsector. The NEB is responsible for organising and conducting examinations, developing robust rules and regulations for national assessments and the setting and moderating of examination papers to maintain high standards.

Successful candidates will be awarded the National School Certificate by the University of Mauritius, which is the designated awarding institution. This certificate is recognised at Level 3 on the National Qualifications Framework of Mauritius Qualification Authority and is at par with the Cambridge School Certificate.

The launch of Technology Education has been planned in a phased manner, beginning with an initial budget of Rs17 m. for the Financial Year 2023/2024. This initial phase involves six schools comprising State and private secondary institutions with an inaugural intake of 86 students, namely, at Islamic Cultural College, New Eton College, Camp de Masque State Secondary School, Emmanuel Anquetil State Secondary School, Loreto Mahebourg College and Swami Sivananda SSS.

The Ministry has ensured the harmonisation of Technology Education uptake in these schools where students from Technology Education and the regular Cambridge O Level streams share resources while focusing on different pedagogical approaches to achieve similar academic goals. 91 educators are involved in the teaching of Technology Education, all of whom have undergone training before joining the program. Their continuous training is being ensured by the Mauritius Institute of Education and the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate with the collaboration of foreign experts.

The Competency-based curricula were developed in collaboration with the consultant from the UK recruited by the British Council.

The Ministry has further engaged with the British Council in a three-year strategic partnership. The collaboration will focus on broadening subject areas and building institutional capacity. Key initiatives include fostering sustained engagement with the industry, ensuring relevance of the curriculum, skills and competencies required. The collaboration will leverage UK expertise to align Mauritius' educational standards with international benchmarks. This holistic approach will ensure that Mauritius' education offerings are globally competitive and responsive to the needs of the 21st century workforce.

For this financial year, Rs23 m. have been allocated to further develop Technology Education. With a view to enhancing inclusiveness and equity, the Ministry will offer the Technology pathway in four additional schools in the next cohort for academic year 2025. Each

educational zone will have at least one school to accommodate students of both genders opting for the Technology Education Stream.

After completing their studies in Technology Education, students have several pathways to pursue their education and careers. They can continue their secondary education in Grades 12 and 13 in their respective schools taking the Higher School Certificate examinations or enrol in one of the centres of the Institute of Technical Education and Technology (ITET) or Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd to earn diplomas and advanced diplomas or pursue higher education at universities. These options enable students to enter the workforce in sectors like ICT, healthcare, robotics, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), ensuring diverse and flexible opportunities for their future.

The comprehensive pathways available after completing Technology Education ensure that students are well-prepared to pursue further education or join in high-demand sectors, thus contributing to the nation's technological and economic advancement.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the following Bills were read a first time –

- (a) *The National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill (No. XIII of 2024).*
- (b) *The State Lands (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XIV of 2024).*
- (c) *The Pas Géométriques (Amendment) Bill (No. XV of 2024).*

Second Reading

THE NATIONAL FLAG, ARMS OF MAURITIUS, NATIONAL ANTHEM AND OTHER NATIONAL SYMBOLS OF MAURITIUS (AMENDMENT) BILL (No. XIII OF 2024)

Order for Second Reading read.

(4.46 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill (No. XIII of 2024) be read a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me refer the House to the intervention that I made during the Second Reading of the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius Bill (No. I of 2022) in this august Assembly on 26 April 2022 wherein I elaborated on the need for such a piece of legislation so as to encompass in a single Act, all the symbols of Mauritius which were, at that time, scattered in different legislation.

I also emphasised that the consolidation of the laws and having one umbrella legislation for our national symbols creates in the collective consciousness an unmistakeable linkage between these symbols and our identity, both on the national and international fronts.

It is in the same spirit, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I present to the House today the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill (No. XIII of 2024) which aims at further consolidating and preserving our historical practices at the level of the public service.

In fact, the main object of this Bill is to provide, as is presently the case, that monochrome, greyscale and the line art version of the Arms of Mauritius and the seal of Mauritius may, with such modifications and adaptations as may be necessary, be used for official correspondence of the Government and on such other item of the Government, including the uniform of any Government department as may be approved.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to set the context in which these amendments are being proposed to the legislation.

The National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius Act of 2022 was proclaimed and became effective on 01 June 2022. It has the main objectives of consolidating and updating the laws with regard to the national symbols of

Mauritius, to provide better protection and use of our national symbols and to provide for matters related thereto.

Section 4 of the Act provides that the Arms of Mauritius shall be one of the national symbols of Mauritius. The armorial ensigns and supporters of Mauritius as well as their descriptions are specified in Part I of the First Schedule to the Act, while Part II provides for the colours and colour codes of the Arms. The section also provides that the Arms of Mauritius shall be used solely on every official correspondence and activities of the Government, or as may be permitted by law.

This, Mr Speaker, Sir, implies that the coat of arms to be used in Government's official documents has to be strictly the one prescribed in the First Schedule of the Act, with the colours Red, Blue, Green, Gold and Silver in accordance with the codes specified in the Schedule.

Moreover, section 7 of the Act provides that the Seal of Mauritius shall be a seal of the Government bearing the Arms of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government is not exempted from the provisions of the Act and has to comply fully therewith as Section 3 provides that the Act binds the State.

Mr Speaker, Sir, notwithstanding the enactment of the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius Act, in June 2022, the Government Printing Department continued to receive, as has been the practice, printing works containing the Arms of Mauritius in either monochrome, greyscale or line art version, which are not catered for in the Act. For clarification, Monochrome refers to a colour scheme built out of only one colour, greyscale refers to grey shades from white to black, and line art refers to an illustration focusing solely on lines to demonstrate the form and depth, but does not include shading. The Government Printing Department has also highlighted that the monochrome, greyscale and line art versions are in high demand by Ministries and Government departments and it has been the practice so far to also use these versions of the Arms on Government documents, mainly in black, gold and silver, though requests have been received for other colours as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for decades now, Government documents bear the Coat of Arms in these different forms, such as Civil Status Documents - the Birth, Marriage, Death Certificates, our Passport, our Bank Notes, Driving Licence, Customs Certificates, Forms used by Ministries and

departments, Government Vouchers, Store Forms, Government Letterheads, Penalty Notices, Invitation Cards for official functions, File Covers used by Ministries and departments, just to name but a few.

The absence of the monochrome, greyscale and line art versions of the Arms in the present legislation therefore represents a major constraint given that existing and future Government documents issued with either a monochrome, greyscale or line art version of the Arms would not be in line with the Arms prescribed in the Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it has also been brought to the attention of my Office that the First Schedule to the Act is quite restrictive. It poses operational constraints given that with the provision for coloured version of the Arms in the legislation, some works are not possible, such as colour application and hot foil stamping on leather or faux leather. Moreover, the time taken and costs of printing works in colour are higher than for the other formats. Furthermore, on some backgrounds, the outcome of printing the Arms in colour may not come out as required.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on another note, we have certain departments which are using modified or adapted versions of the Arms of Mauritius. For years now, Government departments, particularly the Disciplined Forces, namely the Mauritius Police Force, the Mauritius Prison Service, and the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service have each utilised an adapted version of the Coat of Arms as emblem on their uniforms. In fact, the Arms are being adapted so as to display distinctive characteristics of the department. However, the law, as it currently stands, does not per se provide for these uses and modified versions of the Arms.

Mr Speaker, Sir, having situated the context and elaborated on the rationale for the amendments, let me now explain to the House the amendments being proposed through the Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to address the issues being encountered as I just enunciated, it is proposed to amend sections 4 and 7 of the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius Act 2022 through this Bill.

Presently, section 4 of the Act provides, in subsection (3), that the Arms of Mauritius shall be used solely on every official correspondence and activities of the Government, or as may be

permitted by law. This section is being repealed and replaced by a new clause (3) providing that

—

- a) the Arms of Mauritius shall be used solely on every official correspondence of the Government;
- b) the Arms of Mauritius may be used in connection with any activity of the Government and on such item of the Government, including the uniform of any Government department, as the Prime Minister may approve, and
- c) notwithstanding this Act, monochrome, greyscale and line art version of the Arms of Mauritius may, with the approval of the Prime Minister, be used for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b) with such modifications and adaptations as may be necessary.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with these new provisions, the monochrome, greyscale and line art version of the Arms of Mauritius may be used with the approval of the Prime Minister, thus addressing the constraints of the present legislation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, through this Bill, provision is also being made to cater for the modified and adapted versions of the Arms used by departments like the Mauritius Police Force, the Mauritius Prison Service and the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service. It is imperative to formally acknowledge and provide for these versions of the Coat of Arms thereby reflecting the specificities of these departments and so as to maintain the long-standing practice.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish highlight that such adaptations of national symbols already exist in other countries. For instance, Australia has three versions of the Arms for various purposes: the colour version, the conventional Arms, and the stylised Arms. The conventional and stylised versions of the Arms are to be reproduced in single colour only, not full colour, but may be rendered in colours other than black on white. Similarly, India utilises two versions of its emblem: one detailed and one simplified, catering to various applications and purposes. Other countries, though having their respective emblems in colour, do not have restrictive provisions on the use of only the colour version. Each country can make its own policy on the usage and format of the Arms.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as amendments are being brought relating to the Arms of Mauritius, likewise section 7 of the Act regarding the Seal of Mauritius which bears the Arms of Mauritius is, accordingly, being amended. Thus, for consistency's sake, this section is being amended following amendments relating to the Coat of Arms.

Section 7(2) of the Act provides that the Seal of Mauritius shall be used solely on every official correspondence and activities of the Government, or as may be permitted by law. The section is being amended to provide that –

- a) the Seal of Mauritius shall be used solely on every official correspondence of the Government;
- b) the Seal of Mauritius may be used in connection with any activity of the Government and on such item of the Government as the Prime Minister may approve, and
- c) notwithstanding this Act, monochrome, greyscale and line art version of the Seal of Mauritius may, with the approval of the Prime Minister, be used for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b), with such modifications and adaptations as may be necessary.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to add that colour versions typically involve higher production costs as the processes require colour separation, inks, and higher-quality printing equipment. On the other hand, allowing the monochrome, greyscale and line art version of the Arms of Mauritius would be beneficial in terms of costs and clarity without compromising on quality and standard. Monochrome, greyscale and line art versions are significantly less costly as they require only one or two ink colours, simplifying the printing process and lowering material costs.

Moreover, these versions ensure that the Coat of Arms remains visible and distinct regardless of the background or material on which it is printed or displayed, which is not always the case with colour printing which does not adapt well on some materials. They are likewise useful for various government materials, including letterheads, file covers, and uniform insignia, where a consistent and recognisable symbol is essential.

Mr Speaker, Sir, by catering for these versions in the law, we shall maintain traditional and historical uses of the Coat of Arms in contexts where colour might not have been historically used or where historical documents utilised these versions. While adapting to new technology, we should maintain our ties with the past. Thus, we are bringing these amendments that take into account the evolving situation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, once enacted, the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius (Amendment) Act 2024 will be deemed to have come into operation on 01 June 2022, date the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius Act 2022 was proclaimed. In this way, the continued use of all the versions of the Arms of Mauritius will be covered, as well as the use of the adapted Arms by Government departments in their uniforms and other items.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with these words, I commend the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill (No. XIII of 2024) to the House.

Thank you.

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Nuckcheddy!

(5.05 p.m.)

Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Before I come to the purpose of this amendment, allow me to talk a bit about the importance, the purpose, and what the national flag, arms, national anthem, and other national symbols symbolise for a country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a topic that holds profound significance for our identity, unity, and values as a nation; it highlights the importance of establishing and adhering to laws governing the use of our national flag, arms, and anthem. These symbols are not merely pieces of fabric, emblems, or melodies; they represent our history, our struggles, our achievements, and our hopes for the future. Ensuring that these symbols are used respectfully and appropriately is crucial for fostering national pride and unity.

First and foremost, our national flag, arms, and anthem embody our national identity. They are symbols that reflect our values, culture, and heritage. The flag waves brightly, reminding us of the sacrifices made by those who came before us and the ideals we strive to uphold as a society. The Arms represent our sovereignty and the strength of our Nation, while the Anthem resonates with the spirit of patriotism that unites us.

When citizens see their national flag displayed properly or hear their anthem performed with reverence, it reinforces a shared sense of belonging and pride. Conversely, misuse of these symbols can lead to disrespect, diminishing their significance and negatively impacting national identity. The subsection (3) is called to be repealed and replaced by 3(a) with a new provision that provides that the Arms of Mauritius shall be used solely on every official correspondence of the Government.

The proposed subsection (b) provides that it may be used in connection with any activity of the Government and on such item of the Government, including the uniform of any Government department, as the Prime Minister may approve. The proposed subsection (c) now shows an extent of practicality as it allows that monochrome, greyscale, and line art versions of the Arms of Mauritius may, with the approval of the Prime Minister, be used for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b) with such modifications and adaptations as may be necessary.

Similar amendments are proposed to section 7, which concerns the seal of our country, and by establishing these clear guidelines, Mr Speaker, Sir, for how these symbols should be treated, it will promote an environment where respect of our nation and its ideals will be paramount. National flags, arms, and anthems serve as focal points that unite us as a people. They transcend regional, ethnic, and social differences, reminding us that we are all part of something greater than ourselves, the country we call home. Having laws governing their use helps to promote this sense of unity and cohesion across various segments of society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in an era marked by division and discord, the Government's commitment to harnessing unity among its citizens has never been more vital. This collective dedication to unity builds a foundation for peace and stability, ensuring that together, we can address challenges and pursue progress for the greater good for all. While on the other hand, we see some political parties doing everything to tarnish the image of this country. It is truly disheartening to see individuals who, in their blatant disregard of our unity, choose to tarnish the

very fabric of our nation's identity and integrity. Their actions not only undermine the principles upon which our democracy is built but also disrespect the sacrifices made by countless individuals who fought to uphold those foundational values. Let us remember that true patriotism lies in respecting and upholding the Constitution, fostering unity, and working constructively for the betterment of our beloved country rather than tearing it down with reckless words and actions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, again I brought a book with me. It is a political biography of the late Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed, and it will be interesting to note what is said on page 209 about our national flag. Our National Flag, Mr Speaker, Sir, the population should know it is not something that just fell like that. In that book, it is said that it was Abdool Razack Mohamed of CAM who, in Cabinet, came up with the brilliant idea to have a *quadricolore* as our national flag. The population must understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, why *quadricolore*. Why not a *tricolore*? Why not five colours? I invite those people to read these books, and they will get the answers.

And you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, when we were going to celebrate our independence, when we were going to raise our national flag for the first time on the 12 March 1968, it is interesting to know that by January the national flag was still not finalised. It had not reached a consensus between the parliamentarians of that time, and in his book, Sir Satcam Boolell Untold Stories wrote that the preparation for the independence celebrations was late. We were already towards the end of January; it was a timely discovery as we were all groping in our choice of the flag.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at that time we must remember that just after the general elections of 1967, the country was torn in two. There were tensions; there was the tragic incident of Trois Boutiques, and it was a time that all Mauritians had to come together to find a consensus, and it is in that way that our national flag came with the four colours, the *quadricolore*, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, it is something that we must cherish. It is something very special and very unique for a country.

In conclusion, the importance of having laws governing the use of our national flag, arms, and anthem cannot be overstated, Mr Speaker, Sir. These symbols are pillars of our national identity, sources of unity, and representations of our values. By ensuring they are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve, we not only uphold our heritage but also reinforce a collective pride and responsibility among all citizens. Let us commit ourselves to protecting and honouring

these symbols through thoughtful legislation and community engagement. Together, we can foster a deeper appreciation for what our national symbols represent and ensure that they continue to inspire future generations.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your attention, and let us all strive to honour our national identity in every aspect of our lives. Long live Mauritius!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Teeluck!

(5.13 p.m.)

The Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage (Mr A. Teeluck): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The foremost objective of this Bill, as mentioned by the mover of the Bill, is to ensure the appropriate and consistent use of our national symbols, which are an integral part of our identity and heritage. Our national symbols, more particularly, the Coat of Arms and the seal of Mauritius, hold profound historical and cultural value. They are emblems of our sovereignty, representing the unity and collective identity of the Mauritian nation.

The Coat of Arms with its intricate design reflects the rich diversity and harmonious coexistence of different cultures that define our nation. The seal of Mauritius similarly signifies the authority and integrity of our Government.

The primary objective of these amendments is to provide that monochrome, greyscale, and line art versions of the Coat of Arms of Mauritius and the seal of Mauritius may be used on official correspondences and other government items, including the uniforms of various government departments, with the necessary modifications and adaptations. By doing so, we are ensuring that our national symbols are consistently represented across all forms of government communication and equipment.

Prior to the proposed amendments, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Coat of Arms and the seal of Mauritius were used in various forms and context across government departments and official documents. However, several issues were identified, which the amendments aim to address. Some of the issues identified are –

- (i) different versions and variations of the Coat of Arms and the seal were being used by various government departments, leading to a lack of uniformity. This inconsistency sometimes resulted in discrepancies in the design and representation of the symbols;
- (ii) the Coat of Arms and the seal were primarily used in full-colour versions which, while visually striking, were often impractical and costly for certain applications, and lastly
- (iii) the intricate design details and colours of the Coat of Arms and the seal made them difficult to reproduce accurately in certain contexts, such as on official uniforms or specific types of government documents. This often led to simplified or altered versions being used, which would compromise the integrity and recognisability of the symbols.

The proposed amendments will now ensure that our national symbols are represented in a standardised manner across all official documents and items, thus reinforcing their significance, and by doing so, the integrity of the symbols will be maintained.

It is to be highlighted that these symbols are seen as a reflection of our nation's values and heritage. The use of monochrome and greyscale versions of the Coat of Arms and the seal is not only practical but also cost-effective. It will help to reduce printing and production costs while ensuring that the symbols remain recognisable and dignified. Moreover, by allowing adaptations of the Coat of Arms and the seal, various mediums and contexts in which the symbols are used will be accommodated. This flexibility will ensure that they can be incorporated seamlessly into different formats without compromising their essence.

Standardising the use of the national symbols enhances their visibility and recognition both domestically and internationally. It instills a sense of pride amongst our citizens and strengthens the image of Mauritius on the global stage. We are indeed taking a proactive step in preserving our cultural heritage for future generations by codifying the use of these symbols. We are ensuring that the significance and integrity of these symbols are maintained, thus fostering a deeper sense of national identity and unity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, by allowing the use of monochrome, greyscale, and line art versions, we are primarily allowing simplified and single-colour formats to help maintain the recognisability of the symbols. Only by adopting these simplified forms, coupled with the flexibility that Government can ensure that these symbols are appropriately and consistently represented regardless of their medium or format.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these amendments are indeed very important, and it shows our commitment to preserving our national heritage and upholding standards. By codifying the use of the Coat of Arms and the seal of Mauritius, we are strengthening the ability of Government to enforce their proper use and address any instances of misuse effectively.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, I congratulate the mover for bringing these amendments to the House. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

(5.19 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me thank the hon. Members from the Government side who have spoken on this Bill. I must say that their contribution has been useful and also, informative. Since nobody from the Opposition has intervened, I take it there is unanimous consensus on this Bill. I can only commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

The National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill (No. XIII of 2024) was considered and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the National Flag, Arms of Mauritius, National Anthem and Other National Symbols of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill (No. XIII of 2024) was read a third time and passed.

Mr Speaker: I will break for tea for 45 minutes!

At 5.22 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.14 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

*Second Reading***THE STATE LANDS (AMENDMENT NO. 2) BILL (NO. XIV OF 2024)****&****THE PAS GEOMETRIQUES (AMENDMENT) BILL (NO. XV OF 2024)**

Order for Second Reading read.

(6.14 p.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, if I may.

Mr Speaker: Yes!

The Deputy Prime Minister: I move that the two Bills standing in my name, namely, the State Lands (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XIV of 2024) and the *Pas Géométriques* (Amendment) Bill (No. XV of 2024) be read a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Members will have noted that the Explanatory Memorandum for each Bill as well as the provisions of the two amendments, are practically the same because they have a common purpose of empowering the Ministerial Minister responsible for the subject of fisheries to lease *barachois* vested in that Ministry on such terms and conditions as may be approved, which is why I propose to take both Bills at one and the same time.

As at present, the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning is the only authority to grant leases over state land by virtue of the State Lands Act, which dates back to 1856 as amended, and the *Pas Géométriques* Act of 1874 as amended.

Accordingly, vesting of relevant powers in the ministry in charge of fisheries requires bringing appropriate changes to the two or four mentioned pieces of legislation; hence, the present amendments. Let me start by going back to what a *barachois* is. Now, a *barachois* is defined in section 2 of the Fisheries Act 2023 as, I quote –

“...a pond which is within or adjacent to the sea and enclosed by a weir or dam through which the sea flows and reflows;”

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, to become a *barachois*, a pond needs to be enclosed by a weir or dam. Now there is no record available as to when the relevant ponds around the island, whether private or state-owned, were converted into *barachois*. I said private or state-owned, so there are, in fact, two categories of *barachois*. There are indeed *barachois* that are only privately owned, standing on private freehold land. The exact number of such *barachois* is estimated to be less than 10, and then secondly, there are 21 *barachois* that lie on state land, all of which are under the purview of my ministry, the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning, and this amendment provides me the opportunity of sharing the information that I have at hand concerning *barachois*.

So, we have 21 *barachois* standing on state land. Of the 21, 8 have been leased over the period stretching from 1962 to 2023; they have been leased to private companies. One is located at Mon Désert, one at Anse La Raie, one at Poste de Flacq, two at Trou d’Eau Douce, and three at Saint Antoine up in the north. Eight *barachois* leased to private parties. Then there are seven *barachois* that have been vested in the ministry, which is now the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping. One is to be found at Rivière La Chaux, Mahebourg. There is another one at Albion. One is located at Butte à L’herbes, Calodyne; one at Pointe des Lascars; and three at Poudre d’Or. That’s the second category, and the remaining six *barachois* are still under the custody of my ministry, and these *barachois* are located, respectively, at Rivière du Rempart, Grand Gaube, Saint Antoine, Black River, and Trou d’Eau Douce, as well as Butte à L’herbes and Calodyne.

Now, *barachois*, when they are exploited, are used for the breeding of fish, crab, oysters, mussels, and other seafood. Until December 2023, there was no detailed policy pertaining to state-owned *barachois*. In general, as of now, no tourism activities are carried out in *barachois*, although there are *barachois* that serve for landscaping purposes within a tourism project. Now, it stands to reason that any future economic activity—and I think it should be emphasised right from the start, any future economic activity, including tourism, in or around the *barachois*—will need to conform to policy and principles pertaining to environmental protection and sustainable development. So, there was no detailed policy, and then in December 2023, Government approved a *barachois* policy that provides for the granting of leases by the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping to private parties for economic activities.

Pursuant to the *barachois* policy, three additional *barachois*, which are located at Rivière du Rempart, Grand Baie, and Saint Antoine, will be entrusted to the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping so that the latter ministry is then in a position as may be appropriate to lease those *barachois* to private economic operators. Pursuant to that policy, the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping will survey each of the *barachois* vested in it to determine its potential. That will be the first step.

Thereafter the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping would launch expressions of interest, and ensuing proposals will be examined by different technical committees comprising the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Blue Economy, as well as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agro-Industry, and the EDB prior to the launching of EOIs for leasing of the *barachois*. So, first we will have surveys and determination of potential, then together with all these different ministries and authorities, consultations, and launching of EOIs, after which those technical committees will come together again to analyse the outcome of the EOIs.

The eventual granting of a lease by the Ministry of Blue Economy, in respect of a *barachois*, will be conditional on the obtention of appropriate clearances, including, as may be appropriate, a fish farming licence for the approved aquaculture activities or authorisation from the Ministry of Tourism in respect of eco-tourism activities or authorisation from the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security in respect of inland agricultural activities and, in each and

every case, the relevant Environment Assessment Report from the Ministry of Environment. So, that is the idea, the rationale for bringing the two amendments, because as of now, only the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning can lease State land, including *barachois*.

In order to empower the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries to offer leases relating to *barachois*, the two relevant pieces of legislation, the State Land Act and the *Pas Géométriques* Act, need to be amended. The State Land Act, as per the amendment circulated, proposes the introduction of a new section 6 (A) that does three things –

- (i) It introduces the concept of vested *barachois*, which relates to *barachois* partly or wholly located on State land that are vested in the ministry responsible for the subject of fisheries;
- (ii) It empowers the minister responsible for the subject of fisheries to lease such vested *barachois*; and
- (iii) It provides as is normal practice for cancellation of such leases in case the lessee defaults on payment.

Now, being given that most *barachois* are to be found partly or wholly on *Pas Géométriques*, appropriate amendments are also being brought to the *Pas Géométriques* Act. Accordingly, a new section 12 is being introduced in the *Pas Géométriques* Act to have exactly the same effect as the abovementioned proposed new section 6A of The State Lands Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since Government is fully committed to safeguarding *barachois* as environmental assets, it is believed that vesting of *barachois* in the ministry responsible for the subject of fisheries will allow for appropriate economic activities to be conducted using *barachois*, thus contributing to national development in a sustainable manner. While aquaculture remains a priority for the Ministry of Blue Economy, the new *barachois* policy also provides for various activities, mixed-use development of *barachois* that may comprise fish farming, ecotourism, and agricultural activities. The potential is significant.

For instance, fish farming in *barachois* can potentially benefit the tourism industry by offering ecotourism attraction such as educational tours, wildlife observation, enhancing culinary tourism with fresh sea food and cooking classes and providing recreational activities like fishing

and kayaking. Fish farming could promote sustainable practices by raising environmental awareness and supporting conservation efforts. Additionally, it may stimulate economic growth through job creation and local business development while preserving cultural heritage by integrating traditional practices and enhancing the scenic beauty of the area.

So, combining fish farming with tourism can create a diverse and appealing experience for visitors, fostering both environmental sustainability and economic growth if well managed.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I now commend both Bills to the House.

Mr Toussaint seconded.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

(6.28 p.m.)

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I shall intervene on both the State Lands (Amendment) Bill, and the *Pas Géométriques* (Amendment) Bill.

Before I enter into the crux of the matter, I would like to question the urgency of such bills. The more so that last week, that is, only six days ago, we debated and voted the State Lands Amendment Bill (No. XII of 2024). So, after less than a week, we are bringing another amendment to the State Lands Bill. Mr Speaker, Sir, during my time in Parliament, I have never come across such a situation where an Act is being amended within six days. Today's bills come with a Certificate of Urgency, that is, First, Second and Third Reading. Maybe the hon. Minister during his summing up, could give us a plausible explanation for this amendment.

Having said so, Mr Speaker, Sir, these bills seek to amend the existing legislation in the process of leasing of *barachois* land. According to my information, there are not 21 *barachois*, but 22. It is my information; I have a list. I speak under the correction of the hon. Minister; there is also a serial number to the *barachois* from number 1 to 22, but this is not a big quarrel, whether it is 21 or 22. I am just mentioning it in my speech. It is mainly in the northeast of the island, and some are across the island.

Mr Speaker, Sir, crucially, these two amendments empower the minister responsible for the subject of fisheries to lease *barachois* land situated wholly or partly upon State land,

including *Pas Géométriques*, without permission or approval from the Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning. Efficient management of our *barachois* can indeed lead to enhanced economic benefits and better utilisation of our natural resources. However, as Members of the Opposition, it remains our duty to ensure that this legislation is robust, transparent, and beneficial to all stakeholders.

I will seek clarification on several issues, potential weaknesses, flaws, and certain areas of concern, which I shall address. Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the key provisions of these amendments is the significant discretionary power granted to the minister responsible for fisheries. The Minister can lease *barachois* land by private contracts on terms and conditions as approved by the Minister without prior notice for approval with the Cabinet, as is the case now for industrial site leases over *Pas Géométriques* or State land. This, Mr Speaker, Sir, raises concerns about the lack of oversight and potential for arbitrary decision-making.

Furthermore, it has come to my attention that under section 6 of the State Land Act, the lease of State land can be made by public auction. Notice of which shall be given in the Gazette and two daily newspapers at least two weeks before the day fixed for the auction. Previously, this included *barachois* land. Since the amendment is notwithstanding the State Land Act and other enactments, it would seem that *barachois* land can only be leased through private contracts according to the law. The Bill, therefore, allows for the leasing by private contract which could lead to accusations of favouritism or lack of transparency in the allocation process.

Additionally, the Minister has brought powers to set terms and conditions which could seem as excessive and potentially open to abuse. Although the hon. Minister has mentioned in his speech that the Ministry of Blue Economy, if I am not wrong, if I have listened carefully, in December 2023 has come with a policy with Expression of Interest – the hon. Minister gave the explanation, I will not repeat it again – but my point is this policy is not in the law. This policy of the Ministry of Blue Economy has not come in Parliament. It is a policy by the Ministry of Blue Economy, but it is not in the State Lands Act, *Pas Géométriques* Act and not even in the amendment.

Another critical concern is the environmental impact of leasing *barachois* land; this the hon. Minister has given some insight about. The amendments do not explicitly state whether development on this state-leased land will require environmental clearances from the Ministry of

Environment. There is no mention of environmental safeguards or assessment required before leasing of *barachois*, which are ecologically sensitive areas. The absence of explicit requirements from such permissions could lead to unchecked development potentially harming our environment and disrupting the local ecosystem.

The Bill allows the Minister of Fisheries to lease *barachois* without apparent consultation with either the Ministry of Environment or the Ministry of Tourism. We must ensure that any development of these lands adheres to strict environmental guidelines and obtain the necessary clearances. This approach will help protect our natural heritage and preserve our global appeal as a prime tourist destination. I would be more comfortable if the policy, the guidelines as the hon. Minister mentioned, were in the Bill, in the law.

In addition to the overarching issues mentioned, I would like to raise some concerns that I am sure the hon. Minister will clarify during his summing up. We need to clarify whether the adjoining land, which is very important, the adjoining land, state land including *Pas Géométriques*, will require planning permission from the Ministry of Housing and Land, which is what we normally call permissible development—the technical word is permissible development"—and whether any permissible development will require permission from the Ministry of Housing and Land.

Furthermore, it is essential to determine whether any development of the state land will require, as I said, clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Environmental Impact Assessment, EIA Certificate. Ensuring that such development meets environmental standards is crucial for sustainable development, and also the approved terms and conditions for the lease of *barachois* situated partly or wholly on *Pas Géométriques* or State Land should be explicitly tabled and made transparent.

The last clarification that I would like the hon. Minister to clarify is whether adjoining land that may be put, not necessarily, but may be put for the service of *barachois*, will it be used for an industrial site or construction of villas? Without clear guidelines again, leased *barachois* could be developed in ways that conflict with surrounding state land and use of coastal management plans.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, to conclude, while we recognise the need for efficient management of our coastal resources, it is quite essential to balance this with transparency, accountability, and environmental sustainability. We must ensure that the leasing process is fair and beneficial to all stakeholders who ensure responsible and equitable use for our nation's valuable land and marine resources.

Thank you for your attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Nuckcheddy!

(6.38 p.m.)

Mr S. Nuckcheddy (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this amendment that we are going to vote on is about amending the State Lands Act to “allow the lease of a *barachois*, situated wholly or partly upon State land and which has been vested in the Ministry responsible for the subject of fisheries, on certain terms and conditions”.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, if you go to the proposed new section 6A, subsection 1, which says that the Minister “may, by private contract, lease vested *barachois* on such terms,” here, Mr Speaker, Sir, the key word is the Private Contract. And, before I come to the keyword, let me say a few words on *barachois* itself.

Mr Speaker, Sir, *barachois* serves several important ecological, environmental, and economic purposes. It creates a unique ecological environment that supports a diverse range of flora and fauna. They often serve as crucial habitats for many species, including fish, birds, and aquatic plants.

Barachois can act as natural filters, improving water quality by trapping sediments and pollutants. Vegetation within these areas can help absorb excess nutrients and provide a buffer against pollution entering from adjacent land or coastal areas. It prevents erosion, and although separated from the open sea, *barachois* often allow for some exchange of water with coastal

waters. This tidal exchange helps maintain salinity levels and supports a dynamic ecosystem, contributing to nutrient cycling around the lagoon.

Hence, we can say that a *barachois* serves multiple purposes that contribute not only to ecological health but also to the well-being of human communities. By providing habitats, improving water quality, offering coastal protection, supporting recreation and tourism, serving educational purposes, and supporting local economies, *barachois* play a vital role in both natural ecosystems and human livelihoods. Protecting and managing these important areas is essential for sustaining their benefits in the face of environmental changes and human activities.

Now, let me go back to the key word, which is the private contract. Regulations and updated regulations are critical for promoting sustainable development, preserving public resources, and ensuring that land usage aligns with the broader goals of social equity and environmental protection.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allocating land to private investors entails complex challenges associated with land management, leading to issues such as illegal encroachments, land degradation, and inefficiencies in the allocation of state resources.

A government that is taking our country to a new height – this government is involved in constructing 8000 social houses in phase 1. We are busy constructing so many fly overs, roads, and bridges, and when I say roads, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are constructing roads that serve their purpose, not like the Verdun link road.

In my constituency, in two weeks' time, we are going to inaugurate a modern teaching hospital. We are also bringing reforms and social measures and many other accomplishments.

And what I mean to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that the government on its own cannot do everything. We have to take the help, the support of the private sector. And, already in our Government Programme 2020-2024, it mentions that our vision is to take this country towards an inclusive, high-income, and green Mauritius.

Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, the population will recall that this Opposition that we have in front of us even boycotted that Government Programme and already showed their true face. So, in that

Government Programme, we mentioned on Line 105 that this Government will explore possibilities of public-private partnership.

Allowing private sectors to utilise *barachois* State land can have several potential benefits, provided that the governance and regulatory frameworks are in place to ensure sustainable and responsible use.

Permitting the private sector to use *barachois* State Land can yield numerous benefits, ranging from economic development and job creation to improved environmental stewardship and increased public awareness.

However, it is critical to establish regulatory frameworks and guidelines to ensure that such activities do not harm the fragile environments of *barachois*. Balancing economic interests with conservation goals can lead to sustainable outcomes that benefit both local communities and the ecosystems they rely on.

Ultimately, responsible engagement with the private sector in managing *barachois* State Lands holds the potential to create a thriving synergy between development and ecological preservation.

Partnerships between government and the private sector can offer significant benefits, including enhanced efficiency, improved quality and innovation, economic development, risk sharing, and long-term sustainability. Successful public-private partnerships can ultimately lead to better public services and infrastructure, stimulating growth and improving the quality of life for citizens. However, it is essential for the government to establish clear frameworks, accountability mechanisms, and performance metrics to ensure that these partnerships effectively serve the public interest while also meeting the partners' objectives. By maximising the strengths of both sectors, we can unlock the potential for transformative change that benefits society as a whole.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, amending the Act now or should or could have been done six days earlier should not be a matter of debate. In fact, in life, there is no right time; there is only time, and we are doing the right thing, and it is never too late to do the right thing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my hon. friend from the other side of the House just mentioned that the bill, the amendments, do not make mention of whether the *barachois* will require a permit or

EIA licence, etc. But let me remind him that in our Fisheries Act 2023, the section 66(1) says that –

“(1) Subject to section 67, no person shall carry out fish farming for commercial purposes in a pond, tank, *barachois* or fish hatchery without a valid and applicable licence.”

And if you go to the section 68, it says that –

“(1) No person shall carry out fish farming in any fish farming zone without a valid and applicable licence.

(2) No person shall be eligible to be licensed under this section unless he –

(a) is a company;

(b) obtains an EIA licence (...)”

So, this is already covered under the Fisheries Act.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned, this Government is doing everything to take the country to a new height, so how can I not support a bill that is going to be something beneficial for the society as a whole?

Let me, Mr Speaker, Sir, inform the House that I am totally in favour of this amendment, and I provide my full support. Long live Mauritius! Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Maudhoo!

(6.46 p.m.)

The Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping (Mr S. Maudhoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to intervene on the State Lands (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XIV of 2024) and the *Pas Géométriques* (Amendment) Bill (No. XV of 2024).

Let me at the very outset thank the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning, Minister of Tourism, for coming with the necessary amendments in the National Assembly, which are of paramount importance to my ministry for the implementation of the *Barachois* Policy approved by the government in December 2023.

Let me first rebut with regard to the remarks made by the hon. Ameer Meea with regard to the amendment brought to the State Land Act last week. The amendment was so crystal clear. It was to allow the government to attend to the long-awaited title deed of those residing on State lands, be it EDC. We all know how the people still do not have their title deeds today and on all the State lands. So, this amendment was, in fact, very laudable. I think the Opposition should rather appreciate these amendments than try to create doubts with the amendments that the Government is bringing.

Today, this amendment will allow my ministry to lease *barachois*. In fact, in line with principles of good governance and not for building hotels, *campement*, as hon. Ameer Meea tried to point out again. So, I would rather ask hon. Ameer Meea to question how the Labour Party leased public beach in Trou aux Biches. That was the case when they were in power.

So, in fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the proposed amendments to the State Lands Act and the *Pas Géométriques* Act will empower my ministry to sign lease agreements with promoters engaged in aquaculture activities in vested *barachois* and charge a rental fee in that respect. Provisions are also being made to empower my ministry to cancel a lease and retrieve an allocated *barachois* in the event of non-payment of the rental charges. As pointed out by the Deputy Prime Minister, section 2 of the Fisheries Act 2023 defines a *barachois* as a –

“(...) a pond which is within or adjacent to the sea and enclosed by a weir or dam through which the sea flows and reflows;”

Moreover, in some cases, a *barachois* also comprises a land component which is attached to the water body.

Today, the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning has its records of 21 state-owned *barachois*. Seven of these *barachois* have been vested in my ministry since 2013 with the aim of promoting aquaculture development, namely –

- a) *Barachois* Butte à l’herbe ;
- b) *Barachois* Bassin Humbert at Poudre d’Or ;
- c) *Petit Barachois* again at Poudre d’Or ;
- d) *Barachois* Trou Cango, Poudre d’Or again;

- e) *Barachois* Fountain Bay at Pointe Lascars;
- f) *Barachois Pas Géométriques*, Rivière la Chaux; and
- g) *Barachois Pas Géométriques* Albion.

Other unoccupied government-owned *barachois* will also, as mentioned by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, be vested in my ministry in the near future.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my ministry, in line with its mandate, is responsible for allocating the vested *barachois* to private promoters for the implementation of aquaculture projects. However, my ministry is neither legally empowered to sign lease agreements in respect of state-owned properties nor charge rental fees. Accordingly, on receipt of a viable project proposal for the implementation of an aquaculture project in a vested *barachois*, only a letter of authorisation was being issued to the promoter to allow him to implement the proposed project. There are currently three cases where promoters have been authorised to implement aquaculture projects without the signature of a lease agreement but under a letter of authorisation, namely at –

- *Petit Barachois*, Poudre d’Or;
- *Barachois* Bassin Humbert, Poudre d’Or, and
- *Barachois* Rivière la Chaux, Mahebourg.

Rental charges are not being claimed as my ministry is not empowered to do so. However, Mr Speaker, Sir, such a situation has given rise to much criticism. In fact, the Director of Audit in his 2020-2021 report had highlighted that there was under-exploitation of government-owned *barachois*, an inadequate legal framework for the management thereof, and that it was being provided to promoters free of charge.

There was therefore a pressing need for an appropriate framework to allow my ministry to monitor the aquaculture projects to ensure the effective exploitation of a government-owned asset. There was also the need to introduce fair and transparent procedures for the allocation of the vested *barachois*. In this respect, my ministry drafted a *Barachois* Policy that was approved by the government in December 2023. The *Barachois* Policy defines the criteria and procedures for the allocation of the vested *barachois* to eligible individuals, private companies, and

cooperative societies in line, as I said, with the principles of good governance, accountability, and transparency.

In this respect, Mr Speaker, Sir, the *Barachois* Policy provides for my ministry to launch an Expression of Interest to invite prospective private promoters interested in implementing an aquaculture project in a vested *barachois* to submit a project proposal. The proposals received are evaluated by a selection committee against a set of criteria already defined in the *Barachois* Policy. The shortlisted promoters are then invited to submit their detailed project proposals for appraisal by an evaluation committee. It is not casting aspersions, Mr Speaker, Sir.

In fact, there are the two technical committees responsible for assessing the project proposals; they are chaired by senior officers of my ministry and comprise representatives, as rightly pointed out by the DPM, of all of the concerned ministries and departments, namely –

- The Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning;
- The Ministry of Tourism;
- The Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development;
- The Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change;
- The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security; and
- The Economic Development Board.

Based on the recommendations of the evaluation committee, my Ministry will then issue a letter of authorisation to the selected promoters, authorising them to start implementation of the approved aquaculture project in the allocated *barachois*, subject to terms and conditions mentioned therein. Again, on obtention of the letter of authorisation, the promoter is expected to obtain a Fish Farming Licence from my Ministry, in line with the provisions of Section 66 of the Fisheries Act 2023, prior to starting its aquaculture activities.

Moreover, the letter of authorisation is valid for a period of two years during which period my Ministry will closely monitor the project to ensure that the terms and conditions set in the letter of authorisation and the Fish Farming Licence are being respected by the promoter.

Moreover, three months prior to the expiry of the letter of authorisation, an Assessment Committee, chaired by a senior officer of my Ministry and comprising again representatives of all the other Ministries, will assess progress of the aquaculture project with a view to determining the viability of the project over the long-term. Based on the recommendations of the Assessment Committee, my Ministry is expected to sign a lease agreement with the promoter for the lease of the vested *barachois*.

The *barachois* policy provides for the signature of a lease agreement between my Ministry and the promoter for an initial period of 10 years, thereafter renewable for subsequent periods of 10 years.

Furthermore, in order to allow a project to become viable, the *barachois* policy provides for incremental annual rents. Accordingly, Mr Speaker, Sir, a promoter will be required to pay a rental fee of Rs1,000 *par arpent* of water body and Rs1,000 *par arpent* of land component where applicable for year one and year two. Thereafter, for the year three and to year eight, the rental amount will increase to Rs5,000 *par arpent* of land and Rs5,000 *par arpent* of water body. As from year nine to year 14, the rental amount will be increased by 25% for both land and water components of the *barachois*, and thereafter, an additional 5% increase will apply for years 15 to 20.

The Barachois Policy also makes provision for the recovery of unpaid rental charges, the termination of a lease agreement as well as the retrieval of a barachois under specific circumstances, such as non-payment of rental charges, non-compliance with the conditions set in the letter of authorisation or lease agreement, cancellation of the Fish Farming Licence issued to the promoter, or where the promoter is convicted of criminal charges, where imprisonment may be imposed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned earlier, there are three promoters already engaged in aquaculture activities in the vested *barachois*, and the *barachois* policy also applies to them. The three promoters have been requested to submit a project write-up, including the work plan, to my ministry so as to allow a reassessment of the projects being implemented prior to my ministry entering into a lease agreement with the promoters concerned and charging the appropriate rental fees. The reassessment exercise is currently ongoing at the level of my ministry.

Accordingly, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is need to bring the necessary amendments to the State Lands Act and the *Pas Géométriques* Act so as to empower my Ministry to enter into lease agreements and charge rental fees in respect of aquaculture projects implemented in vested *barachois*. These legislative amendments, supported by the *Barachois* Policy, will allow my Ministry to ensure again that vested *barachois* are allocated, and again, I will say, in line with the principles of good governance. Moreover, my Ministry will also be better equipped legally to monitor aquaculture projects in an effective manner so that more people in Mauritius may have access to fresh aquaculture products.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramano!

(6.57 p.m.)

The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr K. Ramano): Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to say a few words in support of the amendments being brought to the State Lands Act and the *Pas Géométriques* Act to allow the lease of a vested *barachois*.

These two amended Bills have clearly defined a vested *barachois* as situated wholly or partly upon State land or *Pas Géométriques* respectively and vested in the Ministry responsible for the subject of fisheries. These proposed amendments are therefore significant as they aim to provide a clear, efficient and accountable framework for the leasing and management of *barachois* in Mauritius, while ensuring the protection, better governance, as well as stewardship of our valuable coastal ecosystems.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to highlight that as per Part B of the Sixth Schedule of the Environment Act 2024, ‘Creation of, and/or development on, *barachois*’, is a scheduled activity requiring an environment impact assessment. I think this amply answers the question raised by hon. Aadil Ameer Meea.

A *barachois* refers to a coastal lagoon or shallow body of water separated from the ocean by a sandbar or barrier. As per the Fisheries Act 2023, “*barachois*” means a “pond which is

within or adjacent to the sea and enclosed by a weir or dam through which the sea flows and reflows”.

Aquaculture has long been practised in *barachois* in Mauritius. Young fish are collected from the open sea and are released and reared in fish farms and later harvested. However, to date, aquaculture has only contributed negligibly to the total fish yield of Mauritius. The growing need for *barachois* is evident with meeting the increasing fish demand. The successful implementation of aquaculture within the *barachois* can contribute to food security by providing a stable and reliable source of protein. Unlike wild fisheries, which are subject to fluctuations due to environmental changes and overfishing, aquaculture systems can be managed to ensure consistent production and supply.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the State Lands (Amendment No. 2) Bill and the *Pas Géométriques* (Amendment) Bill will provide for a holistic approach for the integrated management of these critical coastal ecosystems, which serve numerous environmental, economic and social functions.

Firstly, concerning the ecological benefits –

- (i) *Barachois* act as nurseries for fish and other marine species, as well as support a wide range of biodiversity.
- (ii) They act as natural filters, trapping sediments, nutrients, and pollutants before they reach the open sea, thus improving water quality.
- (iii) They can help prevent eutrophication by absorbing excess nutrients.
- (iv) Vegetated *barachois* such as those with mangroves or sea grasses can sequester carbon, thus mitigating climate change impacts.
- (v) *Barachois* also act as a natural barrier against wave action, reducing coastal erosion and protecting inland areas. As such, they can buffer the impact of storm surges, protecting coastal infrastructure and communities.

Secondly, let us speak here about the social benefits. *Barachois* areas often provide opportunities for recreational activities like fishing and kayaking, enhancing the quality of life for local communities.

Thirdly, concerning the economic benefits, *barachois* offer economic opportunities through sustainable aquaculture and tourism, contributing to the livelihoods of local people.

By regulating the leasing process, we can ensure that *barachois* are managed sustainably. Lessees will have to comply with the environmental standards, guidelines, and best practices, preserving the ecological integrity of these ecosystems for future generations.

The amendments will also open up new avenues for economic development. By leasing these areas, the government encourages investment in sustainable aquaculture and related activities, creating jobs and boosting local economies. This aligns with our broader goal of fostering sustainable development and improving the quality of life for our citizens.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will recall that the new Environment Act 2024 has come into effect since 01 August of this year. This Act represents a history leap in our legislative framework, superseding the Environment Protection Act (EPA) of 2002.

As stressed at my Second Reading of the Environment Bill, this new legislation addresses contemporary environmental challenges with a broader scope, ensuring that our strategies are aligned with global and national needs.

The ten key innovative themes introduced under this Act, namely –

- Integration of sustainable development;
- Creation of *Observatoire de l'Environnement*;
- Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas;
- Enhanced transparency in Environmental Assessments;
- Re-introduction of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA);
- Improved Oil Spill Response Framework;

- Promotion of Circular Economy;
- Sustainable Management of Plastics;
- Strengthened Enforcement and Compliance Mechanisms; and
- Settlement Mechanism for Disputes.

These themes are designed to enhance our environmental protection efforts and to integrate sustainable practices across various sectors.

The Environment Act of 2024 ensures that the amendments being proposed in the State Lands (Amendment No. 2) Bill and the *Pas Géométriques* (Amendment) Bill are safeguarded through the licencing and monitoring mechanisms

Firstly, concerning the Licencing Mechanism, the requirement for an EIA for developments involving *barachois* ensures that any potential impacts are identified and mitigated before projects proceed.

A cornerstone of the Environment Act 2024 is the enhanced Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) mechanism. This formal process is critical for examining both the beneficial and adverse environmental consequences of proposed projects.

The EIA mechanism is designed to –

- a) To identify, predict and evaluate the potential significant environmental impacts of a development project;
- b) Incorporate Mitigation Measures to ensure that environmental safeguards are integrated into the project design and implementation;
- c) Engage in Multi-Disciplinary Review by involving various relevant Ministries, Authorities and other stakeholders to assess the project's implications comprehensively;
- d) Public Participation by facilitating public input through publication of EIA notices in dailies and on the Ministry's website. A copy of the EIA report is also made

available for consultation in the Resource Centre of the Ministry and at the Head Office of the relevant Local Authority and on the Ministry's website, thereby ensuring transparency and community engagement. Henceforth any additional information submitted by proponent in relation to an EIA application is now published for public consultation. In addition, the time limit for public consultation may be extended to afford reasonable opportunity to submit comments on EIA application. These provisions also apply to Preliminary Environment Approval and Strategic Environment Assessment applications;

- e) We have also the Director's Review, followed by examination and recommendations from the EIA Committee, which culminates in a decision by the Minister, with provisions for appeals to the Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal and even to the Supreme Court.

This rigorous process ensures that all environmental implications are thoroughly considered and that development activities are aligned with our sustainability goals.

I wish to highlight that the re-introduction of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) after 22 years in the Environment Act demonstrates the government's strong engagement for enhanced protection and environmental safeguard of Mauritius for future generations, taking on board various challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation. Part C of the Sixth Schedule of the Environment Act 2024 provides the list of undertakings requiring a Strategic Environmental Assessment Licence or approval.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Strategic Environmental Assessment will support proactive consideration of environmental and sustainable development objectives at the outset of plans and programmes, including the fisheries sector and major aquaculture projects, amongst others.

Allow me to highlight some key advantages of Strategic Environmental Assessment, namely –

- It provides a process for integrated pursuit of sustainability objectives at all levels, from the setting of decision objectives to the monitoring of implementation effects;

- It improves the information base for policy making, planning, and programme development;
- It facilitates greater transparency and more effective public participation at the strategic level;
- It enhances the ease of doing business, and
- The Strategic Environmental Assessment has greater credibility and therefore will attract more funding from international bodies such as the World Bank, EU, and UN Agencies, as compared to an EIA application carried out for various undertakings.

Secondly, we have also, as a measure of control, the Monitoring Mechanism. Contemporary environmental issues require that enforcement frameworks follow suit and be better tuned to emerging challenges that crop up over time. The enforcement and compliance mechanisms have been strengthened in the Environment Act 2024 for a more effective and efficient application of environmental legislation.

In the first instance, the Court will be bestowed with additional powers to direct an offender to take remedial actions for harm done to the environment. The Environment Act 2024 also empowers the Court at Section 134 to recover costs incurred by the State in taking measures resulting from acts or omissions by an offender.

Secondly, the Director of Environment has been conferred with additional authority to impose specific tests or other environmental monitoring and information relating to an activity likely to cause harm to the environment.

The Monitoring Mechanism also includes a requirement for a Completion Certificate. The Environment Act 2024 provides for improvements in the assessment of environmental integrity of environmental assessments. To that end, and with a view to completing the cycle of environmental assessments, proponents are now required to apply for a Completion Certificate prior to operating any undertaking in line with Section 52 of the Act. To avert environmental nuisances, it would also be incumbent upon a proponent, in accordance with Section 54, to additionally submit a decommissioning plan not later than two months before ceasing an undertaking or an activity.

Through those measures, it is undeniable that current development control mechanisms are being made much more environmentally sound and transparent, while strengthening the integration of participatory principles within environmental management in the Republic of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in conclusion, the Environment Act 2024, along with the proposed amendments to the State Lands and the *Pas Géométriques* Bills, represents a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to environmental governance. I strongly support these two Bills to ensure that our coastal resources are used responsibly and sustainably, securing a prosperous and environmentally sound future for our nation.

With these words, I thank you for your attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister!

(7.13 p.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like first of all to thank speakers on this side of the House who have provided additional information as to the application of the amended law after the House adopts the two Bills before it today.

I believe my colleague, the hon. Minister responsible for Fisheries, has expressed in great detail all the procedures to ensure that as and when leases over *barachois* will be considered.

The whole process will be done in transparency and in the best interest of the country, and my colleague, the Minister of Environment, has explained how the new Environment Act, the new legislation we debated a short while ago, will provide added safeguards for the eventual use and development of *barachois* as provided for now with the two bills.

I would also like to congratulate the hon. gentleman from the Opposition, the third Member for Constituency No. 3, who gave a very good speech both in its tone and tenure, contrasting with the usual demagoguery we hear from the Opposition benches. So, thank you to him. And, I must say, he raised many pertinent, relevant points, which I would like to address. The first point he asked is: how is it that within a week we would be amending twice the State Lands Act? Point very well taken, I must say. We could have let things go as they usually go. We

could have voted for last week's bill, which introduced a very progressive measure, as pointed out by my colleague, the Minister of Fisheries, to enable poor people to acquire their land and become land owners.

And we could have just forgotten about the present provision and let things go along as they have gone along for many, many years with *barachois* not being developed, with the potential for *barachois* development being ignored. Why did it not come together? For the simple reason that behind what is an appearance to very simple amendments, there have been a lot of complex discussions over the very same issues the hon. gentleman mentioned. Officers and senior officers of the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry in Charge of Fisheries, and the Ministry in charge of environment have been pondering over the same issues.

How do we ensure a process that is transparent, that is equitable, and that is fair in terms of allotting leases in the future? How do we ensure there are in place the required safeguards to protect our *barachois*, which are natural assets of such great value? A lot of work has gone by, and it was only ten days ago, shall we say, that all that work came to fruition, with a meeting with my colleague ministers in the presence of the Economic Development Board where we could agree on the way forward. So, I think the short amendment that is being proposed does not reflect all the work that has gone into this new, innovative proposal following the *Barachois* Policy, for which I commend my colleague, the Minister in charge of fisheries.

Never has there been a proper *Barachois* Policy and instead of asking why the Bill came at this stage, a week after another amendment, one could have pondered why it was that this was not done before by previous governments. Why is it? So, we are acting; we are assuming our responsibilities in terms of proposing that henceforth, the *barachois* that are within the control of the State, if they lend themselves to development, can be developed with the necessary safeguards.

I hope I have answered the first point raised by the hon. gentleman. His second point was to purport to correct our assertion that there are 21 *barachois* by saying 'no, there are 22'. So, I think he has been, with all due respect, misinformed, and that arises from a common misunderstanding. The so-called 22nd *barachois* most probably refers to Bassin Oozeerally, which is often thought of as a *barachois*. I stand informed that Bassin Oozeerally, a well-known spot in Trou d'eau Douce of an extent of 4 *arpents*, is not, by virtue of the decision of *barachois*

in Section 2 of the Fisheries Act 2023, a *barachois*. Moreover, the Ministry of Energy has advised us that the Bassin Oozerally is classified as a wetland or marshland under the purview of the Ramsar Committee, which is of course under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security. Moreover, the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security, my good friend, Minister Seeruttun, was consulted, and that Ministry has pointed out that the site of Bassin Oozerally is within the buffer of the wetland, and there is a high risk of waste generated by humans being released in that water body, thereby affecting the biodiversity found in the marshy land.

Hence, Bassin Oozerally, the 22nd *barachois* is not a *barachois*, which is why we have mentioned the figure of 21 and not 22. The hon. gentleman from the Opposition has referred to significant discretionary power being vested in the ministry or minister that holds responsibility for fisheries. So, it is with the Minister or Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning. However, there are procedures that are well established; there are safeguards that ensure that those powers are judiciously exercised. One interesting aspect that we have debated at length is that the whole process of developing *barachois* will not rest in the Ministry in charge of Fisheries alone.

At every stage, considering the survey, deciding upon the contents of the expression of interest, assessing and analysing whatever proposals come up, and recommending the award of a lease will be under consideration not by that one single Ministry but by all relevant Ministries, most importantly the Ministry of Environment but also the Ministry of Tourism, to guard against the development of *barachois* adversely impacting upon nearby tourism development. The Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning to ensure the development respects the principals of zoning and the safeguards concerning the lands surrounding *barachois*, which, of course, are reserves, and I will come back to that.

But also, the Economic Development Board to look at the economic viability of the proposals. The Ministry of Finance will look at the financial implications of the conditions for the award of the lease. The Ministry of Agro Industry; so, it will be a collective approach given the delicate nature of the *barachois* and the importance of the 21 *barachois* that are on State land and public auction; yes, that is in the law since I think the early 90s, but it has not been deemed to be effective and has not been pursued by any government.

Should the policy document be translated into law? Yes, that is a real option, which, in its wisdom, the Ministry in charge of fisheries might consider at the appropriate time, making regulations and spelling out the procedures expedient for the purposes of implementing the new policy. So, all in all, there will be ongoing oversight exercise by the government over the issue of leases over *barachois*.

Environmental clearances, I believe, have been dealt with at length by my colleague, Minister of Environment. An EIA, as I stated when I presented the Bill earlier, will be required for each and every *barachois* development. More than an EIA, as and when appropriate, there will be an Environment Strategic Assessment (ESA) before clearances are provided. The Minister of Environment referred to the ongoing monitoring mechanism that will accompany such projects.

Now, the hon. gentleman from the Opposition also raised the issue of the land adjoining *barachois*. So, I would like to inform him that as things now stand, land adjoining any *barachois* is considered a *barachois* reserve; that is, no development is allowed within a 30-metre buffer around any and every *barachois*. So, in fact, the permitted land-based activities around a *barachois* in general would be only for fish farming - I say in general. Exceptions could be considered on a case-by-case basis. But in general, it would be for fish, farming, like storage of fishing equipment, and cold rooms, which are directly related to aquaculture activities and which will have to obtain, in any event, the necessary clearances from the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Housing and Land Use Planning.

So, I take it that I have addressed the points raised by the hon. Member. I would like to thank everybody—the officers of my ministry, the State Law Office, the officers of the Ministry of Blue Economy and in charge of Fisheries, Ministry of Environment—that have contributed in one way or another, and the Ministry of Agro-Industry that have contributed to the thinking and all the complex discussions that lie behind these two bills.

I must say that these two bills, as short as they are, usher in new perspectives and new opportunities for *barachois* development. At the same time, they raise new challenges in terms of balancing the necessity of developing our *barachois* with the ecological imperatives of ensuring sustainability in everything we do.

But these challenges are not new. This Government has reasoned to such challenges time and time again, which is why today, in our country, we have a dynamic economy with growth rates that are unprecedented in our region and envied by other middle-income countries. A dynamic economy together with measures that are socially progressive and ecologically sound.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, with these words, I would like to commend once again the two Bills: The State Lands (Amendment No. 2) Bill and The *Pas Géométriques* (Amendment) Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bills read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

The following Bills were considered and agreed to –

- (a) The State Lands (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XIV of 2024)*
- (b) The Pas Géométriques (Amendment) Bill (No. XV of 2024)*

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, The State Lands (Amendment No. 2) Bill (No. XIV of 2024) and the Pas Géométriques (Amendment) Bill (No. XV of 2024) were read a third time and passed.

MOTION

MR SPEAKER – MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, since this is a motion on the Speaker, I would invite the hon. Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

(7.32 p.m.)

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Please be seated!

Hon. Members, prior to starting, I shall make an announcement. It is customary for the Deputy Speaker to chair a Motion of No Confidence against the Speaker.

Before giving the floor to the Leader of the Opposition, I wish to make an announcement setting out the parameters of the debate.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition gave notice of the Motion of No Confidence in Mr Speaker on 29 July 2024.

The said motion is set for debate on today's Order Paper by the hon. Leader of the House, at the request of Mr Speaker who has expressed the wish to have it considered at the earliest opportunity keeping with the tradition of the House.

The debate will be conducted in conformity with the provisions of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly and the Parliamentary jurisprudence governing the debate on such motions.

In this context, hon. Members may wish to note that this Assembly has debated two motions of dissent, one in 1963 and second one in 1982. There was a further six motions of no confidence in the Speaker, namely in 1985, 1990, 1993, 1995, 2009, 2017 and in 2020, which I presided myself.

There is ample guidance in the Hansard as to the delimiting parameters within which the debate shall take place. In 1985, in the course of debate of no confidence against Mr Speaker, the then hon. Deputy Speaker, late Mr Mahamed Yousuf Abdul Razack Hajee Mohamed, S.C., G.O.S.K observed the following quote –

“True it is that the rulings and decisions of Mr Speaker cannot be debated except on a specific substantive motion, but it must be remembered that the motion which is before the House today is a motion of no confidence. Such a motion cannot, where it concerns the

rulings and decisions of Mr Speaker, take into consideration any matter other than what reflects on the conduct of the Speaker.”

The hon. Deputy Speaker further added –

“In such a debate, what is expected is evidence of improper motive, bias, bad faith and/or malice on the part of the Speaker whenever he gave his rulings in the House or misconduct and/or misbehaviour, if any, inside the House.”

In fact, in 1993, on a motion of no confidence in the Speaker, the then hon. Deputy Speaker, Mr Jérôme Boulle reiterated –

“Hon. Members should not go in private business and the private affairs of Mr Speaker as a private citizen.”

He quoted –

“I would suggest that the hon. Member should try – as the hon. Members on this side who spoke on the motion – to restrict himself to a few arguments, and to challenge Mr Speaker’s seat in his function as the Speaker.”

In light of the above rulings and decisions of this Assembly, this debate must therefore adhere to the following parameters which I had set out in 2020. I shall state it again –

- (i) the debate must be conducted in line with our Standing Orders and rules, the precedents of this House and the Erskine May;
- (ii) the debate must relate to improper, biased, unfair, malicious, impartial conduct and/or behaviour of the Speaker in his function as Speaker;
- (iii) the debate must be limited to the period the Speaker has been in office;
- (iv) the debate must not go in the private business and affairs not relating to the office of the Speaker.
- (v) Hon. Members, you will be given ample opportunity to prove, to demonstrate, but they must provide at least some cogent evidence without wild allegation.”

These are the parameters within which I shall allow hon. Members to debate. It is a debate, not a speech. It cannot have tedious repetition, cannot be read. Any departure therefrom will be out of order. Hon. Members should stand guided accordingly.

I thank you all for your attention and I call upon the hon. Leader of Opposition.

(7.37 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. A. Boolell): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a Motion of No Confidence in Mr Speaker is not moved lightly. It is not thrust upon but brought in after careful consideration, observation, and examination.

On 14 July 2020, I moved a Motion of No Confidence in Mr Speaker. He was then anointed the bouncer of the regime. As a custodian of parliamentary democracy, a Speaker has to be fiercely independent. He should also have a culture of restraint. He cannot be perceived to be biased. He/she is not the property or chattel of any political party or Leader of the House. That is why it is a tradition to drag the Speaker to the Chair. The new Speaker was not dragged but dumped on the Chair following an institutional vote. Undeserving, as he is not fit and proper, and I will go by his own admissibility.

The best evidence to be used against a person is his own admissibility, and I am not judging. The Speaker was appointed by devious means. We should not forget that he was caught red-handed under the influence of alcohol and involved in an accident...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! Hold on!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr X. L. Duval: Shame!

Mr Toussaint: *Ekoute!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how...

The Deputy Speaker: One second. What I rightly understood was that he was under the influence of alcohol, which has not been proven yet. So, I will not allow allegations that have not been proven yet.

Dr. Boolell: I am not going to repeat what others have said, but there was breath failure of the breathalyser. That was the evidence.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he did not deny it. The Speaker did not deny it; he said it. He feels he has a licence to get away with the help of the leader of the PMSD.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the leader of the PMSD is in a mess, inadmissible of what he has said and what he is doing. If the leader of the PMSD feels awkward, annoyed, and wants to stand by kinship, let me impress upon him first and foremost to cross the floor...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order, order!

Dr. Boolell: ...and fight from Government bench!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order! Allow me to listen, please!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Speaker should not attend any functions with his colourable political partnership, and he has been on the campaign trail since he was elected Speaker. Chapter 5 part 2, section 32(4)(b)...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: When the hon. Leader of the Opposition is alleging that the Speaker has been on a campaign trail or has been attending meetings, he has to substantiate those allegations, and he has to prove them to this House.

Dr. Boolell: ... to the Prime Minister...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, do not crosstalk! I have got your point rightly, but that was his statement. Let us see if he proves. If he does not prove, I will stop.

Dr. Boolell: Yes, many will argue that this includes campaigning for office for himself or on behalf of any other individual for an upcoming election. Yes!

Merely days after this questionable election of the Speaker of the House, the hon. Speaker found himself on the campaign trail alongside Members of the governing party. The Speaker was observed...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Dr. Boolell: ...in conversation within the public sphere with Mr Santokhee, a potential candidate for Constituency...

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: So, what! So, what!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: ... No. 6, and with Minister Dr. Anjiv Ramdhany...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: That was interpreted...

(Interruptions)

...by many as a public endorsement...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: ...of his candidacy.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! One second, with the noise, I will not be able to listen to you. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am minded to allow you as much leeway as is required to make your motion, make your statement, and substantiate. I have well noted in the fourth line that you are going for the campaign trail. Fourth line, I would expect some kind of evidence rather than just mere allegations, please.

Dr. Boolell: I am not going to talk of snapshots, but there is sound evidence. Now, let me...

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Table.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: Let me remind...

(Interruptions)

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Table the evidence!

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Table the evidence and then you continue!

Dr. Boolell: Should I produce snapshots?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: You are trying to prevent me from developing my...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: If everybody is going to make noise...

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Table the evidence, and then you continue!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: ... because you feel cornered...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Subhasnee Luchmun Roy! If everybody is going to make noise, I am not going to be able to listen properly, and I want to be able to do my job properly in line with the Standing Orders. So, allow me to listen, please!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: So, please go in substantiating rather than going on an allegation, please!

Dr. Boolell: Yes, and I can substantiate. It will remind the House that the influence inherent in the speakership must not be utilised to support his political ambitions and the political ambition of any individual.

Mr Deputy Speaker, perception can always be a mirror image of reality, and perception that the Speaker is a potential candidate in Constituency No. 6 is a reality. Head or tail, he wins. His bets are hedged! The answer lies in sharing common means of transport with Mr Santokhee, former Assistant DPP, who had to ...

Mr X. L. Duval: Evidence! What evidence?

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Show evidence!

The Deputy Speaker: One second! One second!

Dr. Boolell: Yes.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Vinn koz lor Beejan si!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Balgobin: Mere allegations!

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Talk about what happens in the House!

The Deputy Speaker: Allow me to do my job, hon. Deepak Balgobin!

Mr X. L. Duval: What evidence does he have?

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Substantiate!

Dr. Boolell: When we have to ...

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: I maintain what I have said!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! One second!

It is not about maintaining what you said. Amidst the parameters that I have set out, I said I require at least some cogent evidence. So, please do help!

Dr. Boolell: I am helping.

The Deputy Speaker: Where is the cogent evidence, please?

Dr. Boolell: That he travelled together with Mr Santokhee!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Table it first!

Dr. Boolell: Of course!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: It was in the press; it was everywhere! You can query and ask from people far and close. They will tell you what I am saying.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: There they are! Yes, of course!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: ... there they are!

(Interruptions)

Of course, yes!

An hon. Member: Shame! Shame!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Ramano: *Pe perdi letan !*

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

An hon. Member: *Al lakaz!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

An hon. Member: *Enn joke sa!*

Dr. Ramdhany: *Dimann Nitish Beejan!*

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, I don't need...

Dr. Boolell: Yes, it is a joke for those it will hurt...

An hon. Member: Nitish Beejan!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Ki pe arrive?*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! I hear the next voice...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dr. Anjiv Ramdhany...

Mr Ameer Meea: *Twa ki fer tapaz! Mwa ki pe koze? Imbécile !*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Anjiv Ramdhany!

Dr. Ramdhany: *Ki imbécile to pe dir?*

Mr Ameer Meea: *Twa ki pe koze!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Anjiv Ramdhany! Hon...

Dr. Ramdhany: On a point of order.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Ramdhany: On a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Wait!

An hon. Member: *Li koner meme ki sa veut dire sa?*

Mr Nuckcheddy: *To tro kone twa!*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Nuckcheddy!

Mr Nuckcheddy: Yes?

The Deputy Speaker: Next time, I am asking you to go for some fresh air! I have to deal with a point of order.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Nuckcheddy!

Mr Ameer Meea: *Li challenge Deputy Speaker!*

Mr Callichurn: Tell him to go and get some fresh air as well!

Mr Ameer Meea: *Komie Speaker ena laba?*

The Deputy Speaker: I am quite sure; I am minded to listen to its motion because it is something very important. Anybody who wants to disrupt the proceedings of this House, I will make sure they are not present to disrupt it. Do we all get it from both sides?

I have a point of order, let us hear you!

Dr. Ramdhany: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: One second! I have his first, and then, I will come to you. The procedure is: I will listen to one point of order, then, I will come to you.

Dr. Ramdhany: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Ameer Meea uttered a very vulgar word towards me. I want him to take the...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Which word?

Mr Toussaint: ‘*Imbécile*’.

Dr. Ramdhany: The word ‘*imbécile*’.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, please do!

Mr Ameer Meea: Which word did I say? You did not say it.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Aadil Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: No, he should say which word!

The Deputy Speaker: He just said!

Mr Ameer Meea: He should say which word I said.

The Deputy Speaker: You should listen!

(Interruptions)

Order over there, please! You should listen! I have asked him which word and you should be listening! Pay attention! So, are you withdrawing the word, please? “*Imbécile*”, are you withdrawing it?

Mr Ameer Meea: I have said so many words; I would like to know...

The Deputy Speaker: “*Imbécile*”!

Mr Ameer Meea: The word “*imbécile*”, okay, I withdraw!

The Deputy Speaker: You have withdrawn it. Thank you very much!

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Dir pardon!*

Mr X. L. Duval: I humbly have two points, Mr Deputy Speaker. One is that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said that Mr Speaker was on campaign trail; that was about five minutes ago. He has not yet substantiated, although you asked him to.

The second thing he has said is that he is in a car with somebody.

The third thing was that he was having a conversation, I think, with one Mr Santokhee. Is he going to bring Mr Santokhee here as a witness?

How is he going to substantiate that? Please, can he tell us? Because he is going on and on and ignoring your request, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to substantiate!

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. But I think I have it right. As far as I am concerned, I have gone through the Erskine May and many Motions of No Confidence throughout the week. I would not stop him from making the statements and substantiate them later on.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: *To pe menas mwa la, non?*

The Deputy Speaker: I think that would be the fair way of doing things.

Mr Ameer Meea: *Non, to pe menas mwa? Non?*

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. Hon. Minister Dr. Ramdhany was threatening me. He pointed his finger at me and said ‘*to pou kone ar mwa!*’ I would like to ask him if he really means it, to come outside now!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon...

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: *Li'nn menas mwa! Ar kisanla to pe kroir to pe gagn zafer la ? To pe gagn zafer ar Teeluck la ? Eta eh!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon Aadil Ameer Meea and hon. Dr. Anjiv Ramdhany, some fresh air! Come back in 5 minutes! Please! Please!

Mr Ameer Meea: *Mo pa'nn fer nannie mwa!*

The Deputy Speaker: Please, come back after 5 minutes! I am not asking you to go away forever!

Minister, please!

Continue here!

(Interruptions)

Order! Others will go, will follow! Please!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, this is not a court of law...

The Deputy Speaker: No, I am sure...

Dr. Boolell: I cannot bring witnesses to this place!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: ...or even, you know, the mode transport. I will maintain what I say. The answer lies in sharing common means of transport with Mr Santokhee, who was a former Assistant DPP and he had to quit his job when he was reported to ...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: Of course! And let me...

The Deputy Speaker: Members...

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Let us hear you.

The Prime Minister: I have a point of order and I want you to either to rule or to allow him to continue like this. He has said he is going to substantiate the fact that...

Dr. Boolell: What do you...

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Toussaint: *Ekoute!*

The Prime Minister: *Atan ta!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: He is going to substantiate. What have we been hearing? He is going on and on and on and saying all sorts of things that he cannot substantiate at all and which are not, in fact, relevant to this motion!

Dr. Boolell: Not relevant...

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: I do not know how long you are going to allow him to continue!

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

I am requesting you, Leader of the Opposition; my parameters are quite clear. Number 6 was that I required cogent evidence. I am not stopping you again from making this statement, laying down your foundation, but come with evidence. But this is the third different subject that you are touching without any evidence. I am taking note of it. It will come to a point where I will just find that you just have mere words!

An hon. Member: *Pe fer statement!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Please, continue!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, what I am trying is to drive home to this Assembly is based on facts.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Whose facts?

Dr. Boolell: Whose facts? What, are you hard of hearing?

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Sorry?

Dr. Boolell: Well, you are *perturbant!* Are you hard of hearing?

An hon. Member: Shame!

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: ...for the Chair.

Dr. Boolell: But why is she disturbing? When I say facts...

The Deputy Speaker: One second! One second!

Dr. Boolell: Alright.

The Deputy Speaker: You address to me!

Dr. Boolell: I will address, but she has no right to disturb.

The Deputy Speaker: Rightly said! Members on my left side interrupting, not allowing the Leader of the Opposition to make his debate is going to preclude me from hearing what he is saying. So, I am going to take sanctions because I have a job to do! I am going to take sanctions! So, let me listen carefully so that the hon. Prime Minister does not have to take a point of order on matters for which I have already given indication.

Dr. Boolell: The point I want to make is that for lesser offence, a former Assistant DPP had to resign!

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: I will ...

(Interruptions)

And as a holder...

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Dr. Boolell: As holder...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no!

(Interruptions)

No, no, no, no!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: One second! Let me solve this issue! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, what does one Mr R.S. have to do with this Parliament?

Hon. Members: *Exactement!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Please!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: The motion is about the Speaker, not about R.!

The Deputy Speaker: What I am saying is: you can be saying it; I require some evidence. As far as I am concerned, today it is a Motion of No Confidence as to the conduct of Mr Speaker in this Chamber.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Exactement !

The Deputy Speaker: So, you are a Leader of the Opposition, which I am very respectful of. I am minded to be respectful all the way till the end of your speech. But please, go according to the parameters!

Dr. Boolell: It is precisely because of the parameters that I am saying that the Speaker cannot be indifferent and insensitive to the decision taken by the Judiciary and Legal Service Commission. It equally applies to him legitimately...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: ...and from a moral point of view.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no! Order!

Dr. Boolell: Because he is a holder of a constitutional post...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: ...and he can have his ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Gobin: JLSC cannot be brought to this House!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order! I cannot anticipate what he is going to say!

Leader of the Opposition, once...

Mr Assirvaden: *Laisse li koze! Be laissez li koze!*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden! Leader of the Opposition! Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Assirvaden: *Be laissez li koze!*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden!

Mr Assirvaden: Le...

(Interruptions)

Laissez li koze !

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden!

Order!

An hon. Member: *Lampoule!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: *M. le président*, on a point of order!

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Wait! I am not giving anybody any point of order! I have been here, watching both of you playing kids...

Mr Assirvaden: On a point of order, *M. le président*!

The Deputy Speaker: Once again, I have been watching both of you hon. gentlemen, not acting as gentlemen in this House.

Mr Assirvaden: *M. le président*, on a point of order!

The Deputy Speaker: Once again. I have a point of order prior to going to that, with hon. Mr Alan Ganoo. I am going to go over there. I will come back to you but next time, be mindful both of you, it is a warning. I have seen you properly and I...

Mr Assirvaden: Moi, je n'ai pas d'intérêt là-dedans !

The Deputy Speaker: Why are you even talking?

Hon. Alan Ganoo, please!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wanted to come back on the comments you just made a few minutes ago concerning the comments made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition against Mr Santokhee. As you rightly said, this motion of no confidence is against Mr Speaker. The comments made on Mr Santokhee by the hon. Leader of the Opposition have certainly no relevance to the debate. So, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Allow him! One by one!

Mr Ganoo: What the press said is another thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Santokhee...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister!

Mr Ganoo: How do we know that he is linked to the Speaker?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

An hon. Member: On a point of order!

The Deputy Speaker: Allow me to deal with it!

Hon. Minister Ganoo...

Mr Bhagwan: *To pu ale montrer boug la so travail la ta ?*

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Hey Bhagwan, ale pran impe l'air!*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rajesh Bhagwan! Hon. Minister Ganoo, this is the exact point I took. You don't have to restate it.

Mr Ganoo: But...

The Deputy Speaker: I am already convinced!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, that's where I want you to continue with a Motion of No Confidence, speaking on Mr Speaker, the present Speaker, who is the hon. Adrien Duval; that's where you keep your debate. I am minded to cut you short now.

Dr. Boolell: I was solicited to produce evidence, I will certainly...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: It's not for you to decide. I have Clerks working with me. Allow the Clerk to have a look; she will decide whether we will allow it or not. There is a procedure here. Don't you know?

Dr. Boolell: You want me to read it?

The Deputy Speaker: Allow the Clerk to have a look at it, please.

Dr. Boolell: Let me read it just to make sure that you know, to drive home to those people who don't want to listen and to understand –

“Monn participe dan football, dan badminton competition with Mr Adrien Duval, Speaker National Assembly, et mo ti particip dan prayer kot sa.”

Who said it?

(Interruptions)

Minister of Public Service said it!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Wait! Wait!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Dr. Boolell: So, you got evidence as to who said it?

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Speaker...

The Deputy Speaker: This is becoming very unruly!

Mr X. L. Duval: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir...

The Deputy Speaker: I haven't allowed, one second...

Mr Callichurn: Sports competition, not political!

Dr. Boolell: A sport is not sponsored by Government...

The Deputy Speaker: Order! I am not giving you the floor yet!

(Interruptions)

I am not giving you the floor yet. Please listen to me! Whatever you intending to table, please convey it to the Clerk, we will decide whether it can be tabled.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Macarena!*

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order...

The Deputy Speaker: One second, there are so many points of order right now, I am minded...

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Before the...

The Deputy Speaker: One second...

Mr Mohamed: Something really bad has just happened!

The Deputy Speaker: One second, one second! Right now, prior to going to any point of order because I have been dwelling with point of order for so long, I want to hear what are the arguments of the Leader of the Opposition that are substantiated, not just mere cutting from here and there.

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you just said that it had to be things in this House. I understood you very well that matters had to be raised concerning actions in this House, not in a football stadium, if I may suggest.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker...

The Deputy Speaker: No, wait! I won't listen to him. As far as I am concerned, let me make it very clear. If the Leader of the Opposition somehow manages to show that this impact on the conduct, which you are not doing at all, that...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: at all.

Mr Assirvaden: *Ganoo ki to pe rakont laba twa?*

An hon. Member: *Lampoule! Lampoule!*

Mr Assirvaden: *Taler mo pou tire to cv la!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! No, let's continue!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you know...

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, sorry, there is a point of order!

The Deputy Speaker: Prior to this...

Mr Osman Mahomed: It is not here. It has nothing to do with this. Something else, nothing to do with the speech...

The Deputy Speaker: One second, allow him to take his point of order! He is a big boy!

Mr Balgobin: *Li bizin l'aide!*

The Deputy Speaker: What I am asking you hon. Osman Mahomed...

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes!

The Deputy Speaker: Is it something very important?

Mr Osman Mahomed: It is!

The Deputy Speaker: Let's hear you!

Mr Osman Mahomed: It is important because I have never heard such words in this Parliament before...

Mr Mohamed: Swear words!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Swear words which have been uttered by the hon. Dr. Ramdhany towards the person of hon. Aadil Ameer Meea!

Mr Assirvaden: Shame!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Osman Mahomed: If you want, I can write it for you! But I won't pronounce!

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Wait!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order!

I just asked you to take some fresh air and you are coming back here! You will take the car back home too.

Hon. Dr. Ramdhany, what I am asking you is I didn't hear anything personally. Did you say any foul word right now?

Dr. Ramdhany: Firstly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

The Deputy Speaker: No, just reply me!

Dr. Ramdhany: I have not said any foul word. I only said 'macaroni'!

Mr Osman Mahomed: No, no...

Mr Assirvaden: *Menti!*

The Deputy Speaker: I will verify it! Done! We are done!

Continue please!

Mr Mohamed: This is not...

The Deputy Speaker: I will verify it!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Be dir li ki tonn tende!*

The Deputy Speaker: Go on!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yes, we continue. I have stated that the Chair cannot be at the forefront of party politics. Let me remind the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the

former Speaker was evicted without any notice served and learnt of his resignation from his hospital. Let me please make my point. It was an opportunity for political trade off on the threshold of dissolution of Parliament, and this is the price to pay for the deed...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Wait! Wait!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: ...even if it is for a few Sittings.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, who cares about institution or separation of powers

...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: ...to be served.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order in the House!

One second! I will suspend for 5 minutes. I want the Leader of the Opposition with me in my office.

At 8.01 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 8.15 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Please be seated! Last reminder to all Members; I want discipline in the House. I want the Leader of the Opposition to go by my parameters and all of the Members to go by the parameters, please!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we were interrupted and we had to come and see you in your office and I am glad that certain things have been sorted out and I have been allowed to

have a certain leeway. I will refer to institutions and separation of power where interest has to be served, and I must say, you are a collateral damage to the system.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

Dr. Boolell: I will refer to...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no! Order! Allow me to regulate the House! I am not a collateral damage! I am happy with what I am doing!

Dr. Boolell: Yes, thank you very much. Now, I refer to what Me Valaydon stated, *expert en matière législative et qui porte un intérêt particulier pour l'interprétation de notre Constitution*, I will quote –

« La section 32 de la Constitution dit comment nommer et qui peut être nommé comme Speaker après les élections générales. La Constitution ne précise pas la procédure à appliquer lorsque le poste de speaker devient vacant en cours d'une session parlementaire. Et pour cela, il faut se tourner vers les Standing Orders de l'Assemblée. Or, le Standing Order 7 (1) (b) dit que « c'est un membre élu seulement qui peut être choisi comme Speaker. »

It stands to reason that the Speaker has made a false start because the election was flawed. I hope it is not a foretaste of what to expect at the general elections.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! Election being flawed is a matter to be contested before the Supreme Court!

Dr. Boolell: It is a matter of interpretation! You know we are at the threshold of general elections, so!

The Deputy Speaker: I am not...

Dr. Boolell: Okay! I grant you your right. I grant you your right, okay? But you know if you want to contest it, it has to be before a court. Mr Deputy Speaker, this is the second Motion of No Confidence in a Speaker I am moving since the regime was sworn in. But beneath the veneer of apparent change brought by the new Speaker, there is an element of bias. There is over partisanship, and the facts are there.

Let me start with discretionary powers that have been used abusively. There have been no consultations with the Leader of the Opposition to ensure fair representation....

The Deputy Speaker: Hold on!

Dr. Boolell: ...of Members of the Opposition to...

The Deputy Speaker: Hold on! Again, this is the procedure for the election of the Speaker. Today's Motion of No Confidence is on the conduct of the Speaker, not his election.

Dr. Boolell: But I am referring to the discretionary power of the Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: No, I do not have any qualms with whatever you are discussing.

Dr. Boolell: Yes, sure.

The Deputy Speaker: But it does not form part, it does not arise out of a Motion of No Confidence, you see?

Dr. Boolell: But I am coming to specifics, which will be to your delight, Mr Deputy Speaker. Now, there is no consultation with the Leader of the Opposition to ensure fair representation of Members of the Opposition to attend overseas meetings or parliamentary visits. Fair representation does not mean selective and arbitrary choice. On what criteria was the MP from Constituency No. 1 selected? Is it because he is a member of PMSD? Not that he is undeserving; I am not saying that he is undeserving, but the decision has to be motivated.

It is a weak argument to say that it is the privilege of the Speaker. The Speaker so decides. Should the hon. leader of PMSD be allowed to exhibit unparliamentary...

The Deputy Speaker: One second, one second! I will listen to your point of order!

Mr Armance: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in his statement, he mentioned that I have been selected. On a point personal explanation, can he give me some more details of what I have been selected for, please?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

It is not a joke! We are not here joking! He has asked for something! I think it is quite fair, and I appreciate the way he has put it nicely. I expect every Member to act this way and be very nice, whether on Government or Opposition side. Please, you said he obtained something?

Dr. Boolell: Yes, but I am not the Speaker! It is up to the Speaker to justify!

(Interruptions)

What, do you want me to bring the Speaker here? Is he not bias? Selecting one of his!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: So, one second, one second! So, what I rightly got is today we have an audience on this side just applauding. Allow me to do my job! Allow him to talk!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dhunoo, take a walk!

Continue!

And you come back!

Mr Armance: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a point of order, he has been imputing motives.

Dr. Boolell: What motives? I am not withdrawing...

The Deputy Speaker: Who is? No, one second! We have already cleared it, hon. Member! We are moving forward now. Let's move forward.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to make this point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: If it is relevant!

Mr Ganoo: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Leader of the Opposition, of course, has all the leeway because this is a Motion of No Confidence. But he cannot accuse the present Speaker of doing things which he has not done. The choice of a Member from No. 1 was in fact the doing of the previous Speaker, not of the....

Mr Armance: *Exacteman!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! Order! Order! Now, we are going on matters I am already handling. We do not have to handle one subject twice!

Continue!

Dr. Boolell: I come to the second part. Should the hon. Leader of PMSD be allowed to exhibit unparliamentary behaviour, and he was not called to order or to tender apologise by the Speaker. That was evident during the last parliamentary sitting when an altercation between hon. Bhagwan and hon. Xavier-Luc Duval resulted in only the former being reprimanded by the Speaker. The Speaker deliberately tries to frustrate and annoy the Opposition. A psychological warfare indeed, but it is game for a laugh. As we say, try it elsewhere.

Thirdly, he has steadfastly refused to accede to the legitimate request of the main Opposition, that is, the alliance of the Labour Party/MMM/ND, to revisit the seating arrangement, notwithstanding our specificity. This kind of mischief is impregnated with pettiness! A seating arrangement that any impartial Speaker would have acceded to set aside. Elementary, as we say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Unfortunately, the Speaker wants to serve the interests of this party first and foremost, trying, as we say, to be a rooster well ready to be roasted in the oven!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

The Prime Minister: On a point of order. How can you allow the hon. Leader of the Opposition to continue saying that the Speaker is serving the interests of his party when, up to now, he has not been able to substantiate anything about the Speaker being involved in party matters? He is going on and on and subtly putting this regularly each time!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will also move that all the allegations that the Leader of the Opposition has been making which stand unsubstantiated should be erased from the Hansard.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Assirvaden: *M. le président*, on a point of order! On a point of order!

Mr Deputy Speaker: One second! One second! We will go over there. Is it along the same line?

Mr Assirvaden: *Yes! Yes!* Sur ce qu'a dit le Premier ministre !

The Deputy Speaker: Go on!

Mr Assirvaden: On a point of order, *M. le président*, ...

The Deputy Speaker: Don't point your finger! Don't point finger!

An hon. Member: Don't point your finger!

Mr Assirvaden: Vous êtes le président de séance. M. le président, le Premier ministre se permet de vous dire : *'how can you allow'*. C'est une forme de pression sur vous fait part le Premier ministre.

The Deputy Speaker: No point of order!

(Interruptions)

Order! I am sure everybody knows I do not take pressure from anybody ...

Mr Assirvaden: *Comme il a fait !*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! I cannot prevent anybody from talking. But I do not take pressure from anyone. Be sure I am independent. I have been for 4 years, and I will continue to be until the last day as the Deputy Speaker of this House.

As far as the Prime Minister is concerned, I do take note of your point of order. As far as I am concerned, as per Erskine May, until now I feel that despite not being able to substantiate quite a few things that have been stated, I would still allow the Leader of Opposition to talk so that I can listen to what's happening. If it is not relevant, you direct me to the relevant point. We will erase it if the need be.

Mr Assirvaden: Erase?

An hon. Member: On a point of order!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House does not belong to the Leader of the House and he cannot exercise his influence...

(Interruptions)

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Be pa pou tosi sa ta.*

The Deputy Speaker: No! No! We are not going over there!

(Interruptions)

No! No! We are not going over there!

(Interruptions)

We are not going over there!

(Interruptions)

We are not going over there!

(Interruptions)

An hon Member: *Pena argument.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: We are not going over there! Leader of Opposition, right now I need you straight to the point, please!

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker ...

The Deputy Speaker: One second, let me hear him, please. He's been so much of ...

Mr Mohamed: I am going to help.

The Deputy Speaker: No! No! I do not need any help.

An hon Member: Yeah, of course!

The Deputy Speaker: Go on!

Dr. Boolell: Yes, coming back to the seating arrangement, I say a seating arrangement which any impartial Speaker would have acceded to, but it was set aside.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek your guidance!

Dr. Boolell: Unfortunately, as I have stated, the Speaker is serving the interests of his party.

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Dr. Boolell: Despite an overwhelming consensus from the rank and file of the main Opposition, he did not want to budge an iota on his unlawful decision.

The Deputy Speaker: No! No! No!

Dr. Boolell: And I have appealed to reasonableness...

The Deputy Speaker: No! No! Wait! Wait! I have allowed everything, but I am not going to allow the word 'unlawful' before the word 'decision'. So please withdraw the word 'unlawful'. It is his decision; that is his prerogative. That is within his power.

Dr. Boolell: Yes. I withdraw the word 'unlawful', I would say, unacceptable decision.

The Deputy Speaker: There we go. We are coming to some point.

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much. And I have appealed to reasonableness, and I have appealed...

Mr Assirvaden: *Duval, tonn ...*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden! What's happening?

Mr Assirvaden: *Non!* ... to apologise.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No! No! No!

Mr X. L. Duval: He is missing me.

The Deputy Speaker: No! No! Hon. Xavier Luc Duval! No! No!

Mr X. L. Duval: I will not do it.

The Deputy Speaker: No. This is the third time you are doing it, and you are taking me for a ride now!

(Interruptions)

Yes, and I am not going to be taken for a ride, whether by you or anybody in this House.

Go on! You have a point of order; let's hear it!

Mr Dhunoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am listening to the Leader of Opposition. He has on point of order (40(5) –

‘Conduct of a Member can only be debated by a way of substantive motion’.

He has pointed to hon. Duval but he cannot comment on the character or the conduct of a member. So, he has to refrain from doing that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: No. I take it as he is expressing what he feels personally. I am not going to stop you from expressing what you feel about it. But that's not a matter of fact. Okay!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: I am seeking your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

An hon. Member: *Ayo!*

The Deputy Speaker: Over the same thing?

An hon. Member: Standing Orders...

Mrs Luchmun Roy: No!

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Go on!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for allowing me to seek your guidance today. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in your beginning statement this year and in the year

2020, I will quote what you said; you mentioned that in 1985, in the course of the debate of No Confidence against the Mr Speaker, Sir ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order over there! I want to listen.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: ... the then ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: One second! One second! Order!

Mr Assirvaden: *To pas menace mwa....*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Wait! Wait!

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: *Alle dow!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr X. L. Duval: *Sak fois li pe get deyer li pe koz ar moi!*

Mr Assirvaden: ... Non, *be pe dire pas toi comment...*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the National TV see!

(Interruptions)

Mr Assirvaden: *ene diskour tou dimune koze !*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am going to allow National TV to see. For now, though, I am asking both of you, take some ...

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

The Deputy Speaker: One second!

Mr X. L. Duval: He is turning around ...

The Deputy Speaker: One second! One second!

Mr Assirvaden: *M. le président, il fait des commentaires parce qu'il se sent visé !*

The Deputy Speaker: Don't you get it that I have not recognised you yet? Whether it is hon. Patrick Assirvaden or hon. Xavier Luc Duval, I have not recognised you yet. I am really giving you a last chance; next time you are walking out, whether you are turning at the back or whether you are pointing in front. Let it be clear. No other warning is upcoming!

Go on. I want to hear it from the beginning because I did not get you with so much noise.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: It is a point of clarification referring to your statement in the House which, was in 2020, but you referred to the same statement this year as well, where you mentioned that in 1985, I quote, in the course of debate of no confidence against Mr Speaker, the then variable Deputy Speaker observed the following, I quote –

“True it is that the rulings and decisions of the Mr Speaker cannot be debated except on specific substantive motion. But it must be remembered that the motion which is before the House today is a motion of No Confidence.”

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the motion concerns the rulings and decisions of Mr Speaker, and it should be taken into consideration that any matter other than that reflects the conduct.

So, it is what you have said yourself: whether the decision of the seating arrangement does not fall under the debate for today. So, please kindly refer to your statement that you yourself gave in 2020 with regard to the 6 parameters as well, and this is not going accordingly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, I am just asking your clarification whether it is within the parameters and whether the seating arrangement is under the rule of what you have already said. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: There are two ways of interrupting the proceedings. One is being given way, and second one is by point of order! You just made a speech. Thank you very much!

Continue!

Mr Bhagwan: *Met to mask!*

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Met to helmet!*

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have appealed...

The Deputy Speaker: Order, over there!

Dr. Boolell: I have appealed to reasonableness, but the Speaker remains unreasonable on fairness and legitimacy, and the rights of the Opposition have been violated. Nothing stops me from inferring some conclusion, wrongly or rightly. But what can stop anybody from saying that the Speaker is serving somebody else's interest at the expense of the majority in Opposition? A majority, which had an absolute consensus, and he set aside our legitimate request. Can I not say that it was a precondition fully endorsed by the then Leader of Opposition to ensure that the PMSD remain like a finger between the bark and the tree?

Now, we want to have our say, but the Chair chooses to vacillate. Yet a Speaker is next to God, and Parliament is the temple of democracy. As a responsible Opposition, I went to see the Speaker, accompanied by the Whip of the Opposition and the Whip of the MMM, but it was a meeting with no outcome as he was hell-bent to dispense special treatment to the PMSD. Where is his independence if he exercises undue influence?

The Chair has no *droit à l'excès!* And I was disappointed, not only I but the Members of the Opposition, because the Speaker does not have a culture of restraint and wrongly stated to the Press that I had not followed procedures over my legitimate rights to ask for the lifting or waving of suspension of three Opposition MPs. Yet, I wrote to the Leader of the House to appeal to his good sense.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when all arguments fail, then we become small or a big member of one's community. Pleading to be a victim – is this the politics of a new dawn? I was stunned that in defence of the Speaker, a prominent Member of the PMSD appealed to basic instincts. Our Republic is craving a growing sense of national unity and unity of purpose. We pin a lot of hope upon the young to show the way and to lead from the front or the rear. Opportunity was

knocking for the leader's designate, but he has thrown his chances away. Unfortunately, no lessons have been drawn, and the Speaker is constantly attending functions in the said constituency, and snapshots speak for themselves.

Let me come to PNQ. PNQs are usually of great national interest and importance. Unfortunately, they are amended with the consent of the Speaker to favour Government. If you read the original question, ...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! The power to edit is the prerogative of the Speaker.

Dr. Boolell: Not always!

The Deputy Speaker: No. As far as I am concerned, I know which question you are talking about the editing. You agreed to the editing. You might not be happy with the way it is edited, but tread carefully!

Dr. Boolell: Okay, I will err on the side of caution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my appeal to keep the question as it was unfortunately fell on the deaf ears. I refer to a precedent in relation to a question put by the former Leader of Opposition, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, on 18 November 2022. My question is when I say that it was horribly and unfairly amended, but it was amended when the word 'murder' was substituted for 'death.' It changed the whole question, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am appalled and shocked that the Speaker was indifferent despite the fact that I drew the attention of the Clerk repeatedly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now remind the new Speaker of what he said in a press conference on 06 February 2021. In fact, he congratulated Nando Bodha for having resigned from MSM Government...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

Dr. Boolell: ...in the aftermath of the Kistnen...

The Deputy Speaker: This is not...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

The Prime Minister: On a point of order!

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Wait!

An hon. Member: *Pe perdi letan la !*

Mr Nuckcheddy: Waste of time!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order, order!

Dr. Boolell: *Ki* waste of time?

An hon. Member: Take a motion!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! 2021...

(Interruptions)

Order! Allow me to speak! We have the Prime Minister with a point of order. Hon. Leader of Opposition, what I am saying is 2021 was not the time when hon. Adrien Duval was Speaker. Do we agree with that?

Dr. Boolell: I was reading what was stated in the...

The Deputy Speaker: No, do we agree with that?

Dr. Boolell: Alright, okay.

The Deputy Speaker: So, it is for conduct during his term of speakership.

Dr. Boolell: Alright, I will come back over there.

The Deputy Speaker: Or conduct that is...

Dr. Boolell: Alright!

The Deputy Speaker: ...influencing his speakership.

Dr. Boolell: Although it was linked, but I...

The Deputy Speaker: Do you still have a point of order?

The Prime Minister: That was my point of order...

The Deputy Speaker: So, I have taken it already.

The Prime Minister: ...because he has to take it from when he became Speaker until today.

The Deputy Speaker: I have taken it already, so...

Dr. Boolell: There was an intricate link with a PNQ that I put. Anyway! An insensitive and inhumane discourse by the Prime Minister in his reply to the PNQ on 02.08.2024 on the murder of Mr S. K. was tolerated by the Speaker. And it was shocking! An independent and unbiased Speaker would have prevented that from happening, as Mrs Kistnen had nothing to do with the question asked!

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: But...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: One second! One second!

(Interruptions)

One second! Hon. Leader of Opposition, I am at a loss. I fail to understand where we are...

(Interruptions)

Order! I fail to understand. Did you say Kistnen?

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Yes!

The Deputy Speaker: What does that have to do with the Motion of No Confidence?

Dr. Boolell: The reply to the question given by the Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: And there was an onslaught on the character of a widow!

The Deputy Speaker: No, no!

Dr. Boolell: It was uncalled for!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: What does Mrs Kistnen has to do with that?

Dr. Boolell: I am talking, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of human rights...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no!

Dr. Boolell: ...and these should have been complied to!

The Deputy Speaker: No problem. Look...

(Interruptions)

Look... Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of Opposition, we started one hour ago. I do not think anybody else would take as much time to try to get your debate within the parameters that exist for a long time. I am here for only four and a half years. This country has been a republic for 56 years. Four and a half years, I have been very patient. I am minded to give you unlimited time. This is what I am instructed from the Whips, but right now, if you do not go to the point that we can fit between the parameters, I will not have any option, you see?

I am not taking pressure from anyone, nor can anyone put pressure on me, nor do I want you to feel that I am pressuring you. All I want you to know is that I really want to get the job done properly within the best of my abilities, and I have been doing that since my first day. Please help out!

Dr. Boolell: I am referring to PNQ, and I thought it would have been in the interest of one and all, especially in defence of human rights, that the Speaker would have asked the Prime Minister to err on the side of caution and to be careful. That is all I was trying to say. That is why I said, Mrs Kistnen, the hunter was being hunted by the regime because she is fighting to bring the perpetrators of a most heinous crime...

(Interruptions)

...to justice...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: That is what I am saying!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! I hear a voice from somewhere around here which is very pertinent. I think it is almost annoying!

Hon. Leader of Opposition, no more treading on that line again! You are not going on that line again!

Dr. Boolell: ...I will refer to...

The Deputy Speaker: You can refer to it, but show instance of impropriety, impartiality.

Dr. Boolell: Impropriety and decency, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, please!

Dr. Boolell: The House was taken aback – and I am referring to the same PNQ – by the double standards of the Speaker. Our Prime Minister was allowed to refer to the affidavit sworn by Mr Shibchurn, but I was abruptly interrupted by the Speaker when I quoted from the same affidavit in relation to two letters sent respectively to the Commissioner of Police and the Chief of the Central CID.

As I said, it was the *silence des agneaux*; the CP and the CCID chose to remain silent. Why do I raise this? Because I had the impression that the Speaker was scared to rebuke the Prime Minister. It was only after my good friend Shakeel Mohamed rubbed the nose of the Speaker and reminded him that the Prime Minister had referred to the affidavit that I was allowed to put my question.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we say, it is still the Leader of the House who pulls the strings. My concern is that Parliament is supreme, but we cannot allow the political arm of the Executive to have a stronghold on the Chair. To make matters worse, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a bondage, whether we like it or not, between the leader of a political party in Opposition

and the regime. It would be of the utmost decency if he/she, who is in bondage with the regime, should cross the floor and assume one's responsibility.

(Interruptions)

You cannot be an Opposition loyal to Government!

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

Dr. Boolell: Either you are in Opposition or you cross the floor!

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

Dr. Boolell: And join Government!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: One second! Hon. Leader of Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of Opposition, Dr. Boolell?

Dr. Boolell: Yes?

The Deputy Speaker: There is no motion against hon. Xavier Duval here!

Dr. Boolell: No, but...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: ...But you cannot...

The Deputy Speaker: Ne mélangez pas les affaires, s'il vous plaît !

Dr. Boolell: ...be in polyvalence with people sitting on the Government bench in indefensible defence of the Speaker!

The Deputy Speaker: Alright!

Dr. Boolell: That is all I...

The Deputy Speaker: Move on! Move on!

Dr. Boolell: Yes, either you are in Opposition or you are on Government bench!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order!

The Deputy Speaker: One second.

Mr X. L. Duval: Can you refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to Section 45? Can you have a look at Section 45, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

The Deputy Speaker: I know it.

Mr X. L. Duval: Where you cannot question the conduct of a member, in this case, it is myself. I would like you to ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to withdraw whatever he said against me because it is against the Standing Orders.

The Deputy Speaker: No, this is what I have just done.

Mr X. L. Duval: Section 45, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

The Deputy Speaker: This is what I have just done. I have asked him not to dwell on that.

Mr X. L. Duval: No, no! He has to withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

If it is against the Standing Orders, it should be withdrawn! Please!

The Deputy Speaker: I will check the wording! I will check the wording!

Mr X. L. Duval: Please, as you know, section 45!

The Deputy Speaker: I know the section quite well. I can read it out to you as well – the conduct of a Member. What I am saying is hon. Dr. Boolell, I will check that line. You will appreciate that I will check the line properly and then do the needful, okay?

Mr X. L. Duval: Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Go on!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me continue.

An hon. Member: He has not withdrawn!

Dr. Boolell: Sorry, to withdraw what? If you want to withdraw, you have the choice!

The Deputy Speaker: No, I will check it and then, I will do the needful! Continue!

Dr. Boolell: Yes, thank you very much.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not here to make a case for the Deputy Speaker, but what I am saying has been echoed throughout the island. Now that we have a few Sittings, we expected the Deputy Speaker to be in the Chair, not out of love or favour but in the name of justice. Unfortunately, amongst the first to set aside the logical interpretation of Section 32 of the Constitution and Section 7 of the Standing Orders is the leader of your party.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no, that is not...

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Give clear rulings! You have to give a clear ruling!

Dr. Boolell: Otherwise, he would have stood against this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order! Order! One second! One second, Leader of the Opposition! One second!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Give a clear ruling!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Balgobin!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: You have not been able to give a clear ruling!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am humbly asking you, how long do you think you have with your debate?

Dr. Boolell: I have some time to go.

The Deputy Speaker: How long approximately?

Dr. Boolell: 5 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: 5 more minutes.

Dr. Boolell: I can cut it down if you want.

The Deputy Speaker: No, I am not asking you to cut it out. I am here to listen to you, everything that you have to say. But right now, I want you, because I have gone through all the way for at least...

Dr. Boolell: Sure.

The Deputy Speaker: Listen to me! For at least one hour, I have been trying to get you within the parameters. What I am suggesting is we come back after dinner and then, you complete the 5 minutes. So, we suspend for one hour.

At 8.45 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.47 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much! Please be seated!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to highlight a specific case in relation to collusion between the Speaker and his leader. I recall I had a personal conversation with the Speaker over two issues of substance—one, the drawing of lots, and two, the seating arrangement—and I was appalled, flabbergasted, and shocked. Why? Because the content of the private conversation, which I had, was echoed almost word for word by the leader of the PMSD at a press conference. And while I put a legitimate question as whether, in defence of the indefensible, he is loyal to the government of the day—it was a legitimate question—we cannot have an Opposition within the rank and file of the Opposition simply defending, what I call, the indefensible because already an alliance has been contracted.

Let me remind the House about what we have witnessed tonight. We have witnessed tonight yet another instance of censorship, where the autocratic behaviour of this Government

has prevented open debate on the conduct of a Speaker who should not have been in the speakership in the first place. And the MSM Government will be notorious for the disgraceful way in which it has politicised the speakership...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no, no!

Dr. Boolell: ...which has become a bargaining instrument.

The Deputy Speaker: No! MSM politicising whatever is not Motion of No Confidence against the Speaker. Hon. Dr. Boolell, I am minded to tell you to try to wrap up!

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, I can understand but it is...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order over there!

Dr. Boolell: Sorry?

The Deputy Speaker: Behind you. Keep on going!

Dr. Boolell: What were we told, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? We were told, with a few sessions remaining in the current life of this Assembly, that the then Speaker was ill, and when someone is ill, he goes on sick leave.

The Deputy Speaker: It is nowhere close to...

Dr. Boolell: Hence, his Deputy handles procedures.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

An hon. Member: Time over!

Dr. Boolell: What do you mean 'time over'?

The Deputy Speaker: I will decide that!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, we are nowhere close to the Motion of No Confidence.

Dr. Boolell: Sorry?

The Deputy Speaker: Your last sentence is not relevant to this Motion!

Dr. Boolell: The debate is circumscribed in such a manner that I am limited in what I have to say but, I have to say it because people want to know what has really happened.

The Deputy Speaker: According to the parameters, please!

Dr. Boolell: According to parameters. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have stated, it is a sad day. While the whole country knows that the Speaker was in Constituency No. 6 in the company of MSM politicians.

The Prime Minister: Well, again...

Dr. Boolell: This is matter which I am preventing from canvassing...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Boolell: ...when I am making my discourse on his conduct.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Beejan MSM sa!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! I am not allowing it, hon. Leader of the Opposition! I am not allowing that sentence! Please, withdraw it!

Dr. Boolell: Okay, if it pleases you, I withdraw the sentence.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Dr. Boolell: But let me remind our friends that it is not the tyranny of numbers...

(Interruptions)

...which will legitimise the legal rights of the Speaker to be in the Chair.

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Dir poudinn aster!*

Dr. Boolell: I have said it; I have spoken and the people...

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Dir poudinn!*

Dr. Boolell: ...out there, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, know exactly what is happening in this very House – the collusion between the PMSD and the MSM...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no!

Dr. Boolell: ...at the expense, Mr...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no!

Dr. Boolell: ...at the expense of ...

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Koz macarena! Laont!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Are you done? Done? Thank you very much!

Prior to changing orator, I would not allow you to use the word ‘collusion’ in absence of any kind of evidence. You might think so, no issue. I think it is improper. If you are saying it, that is not a problem for me, but saying that there is collusion is not appropriate for this Chamber. It is allegations!

Dr. Boolell: It is a fact.

The Deputy Speaker: No, it is not a fact! You withdraw it and we are done with it!

Dr. Boolell: Okay, I withdraw the fact!

The Deputy Speaker: No, not ‘withdraw the fact’! Collusion is not a fact! It is an inference drawn from two facts! Hon... Yes?

The Prime Minister: May I know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whether, since the Leader of the Opposition has finished his speech, all the allegations that have been unsubstantiated now...

Dr. Boolell: Ah! Come on!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Let us hear the...

The Prime Minister: ...would that be erased from the Hansard?

Mr Ameer Meea: It is never...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Ameer Meea: *Zame inn’ fer sa!*

An hon. Member: *Ki zame inn' fer?*

Mr Ameer Meea: *Zame inn' fer!*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, I am minded to go back to this speech and work my way all the way through it. I am minded to go back to the speech and read it all through and assess appropriately what is expected from the Standing Orders. You would appreciate that it has been a noisy session. It has not been easy for me to listen to each and every word. There is so much more to be done. But you can rest assured, hon. Prime Minister, that I am going to do my utmost best for the dignity and in the interest of the country. You can rest assured!

Hon. Dr. Rawoo!

(9.53 p.m.)

Dr. I. Rawoo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac): *Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Members of the House,* pour commencer mon discours, je dois souligner à quel point notre nation doit être fière de la décision courageuse prise par notre Premier ministre, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. Certainement, cette décision audacieuse doit être une pilule amère à avaler pour certains dinosaures de la vieille garde de l'autre côté de la Chambre. Leurs yeux de manipulation pathétiques ont définitivement foiré...

The Deputy Speaker: No, hon. Dr. Rawoo! No use of the word '*dinosaure*' ! Nobody is a '*dinosaure*' here!

Dr. Rawoo: Okay, I remove it.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, thank you very much.

Dr. Rawoo: Pour certains de la vieille garde de l'autre côté de la Chambre, leurs yeux de manipulation pathétiques ont définitivement foiré. Je me permets de rappeler que ce n'est pas la première fois que l'honorable Dr. Boolell tente une telle manœuvre.

En juin 2020, il avait déjà présenté une motion de censure contre l'ancien Speaker Sooroojdev Phokeer. À l'époque, il accusait de partialité en faveur du gouvernement.

The Deputy Speaker: Come back to this Motion of No Confidence!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Rawoo: Aujourd'hui, quatre ans plus tard, avec...

Mr Quirin: 4 ans...

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Rawoo: ... avec une nouvelle accusation, cette fois-ci sans fondement, contre notre actuel Speaker. Lors de la nomination de l'honorable Adrien Duval le 18 juillet 2024, ces mêmes membres de l'opposition ont refusé d'assister à la session parlementaire. Aujourd'hui, ils sont présents pour débattre de cette motion de censure. Pourquoi cette motion ? Parce que le Speaker est le plus jeune que notre pays ait connu ? Parce qu'il a réussi par ses propres mérites ? Dites-moi, M. le leader de l'opposition, quelles sont vos véritables raisons ?

Mr Ameer Meea: Address the Chair!

Dr. Rawoo: En tant que jeune parlementaire, je constate malheureusement que chaque fois qu'un jeune accède à une position par ses propres accomplissements, des questions démagogiques et sans fondement sont soulevées par des membres chevronnés. Vous, membres de l'opposition, vous n'étiez pas présents au Parlement lorsque nous avons pris des décisions historiques pour la population. Permettez-moi de citer un seul exemple, M. le président, un seul exemple. Nous n'avons voté que pour tous les patients atteints du cancer nécessitant des traitements coûteux à l'étranger...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No! No!

Dr. Rawoo: Ils n'étaient pas là !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Dr. Rawoo: Où étiez-vous ? Aujourd'hui, M. le président...

The Deputy Speaker: Hold on! Stick to the Motion of No Confidence!

Dr. Rawoo: Aujourd'hui, M. le président, ils n'ont même pas voté pour cela. Vous êtes là pour travailler sérieusement pour la population, mais...

The Deputy Speaker: Don't comment on my work!

Dr. Rawoo: Yes ! Cette motion est purement démagogique et infondée. L'honorable Dr. Boolell, cessez ces attaques non fondées. De plus, il est navrant de constater que vous choisissez d'être dirigés par des personnes comme l'honorable Bérenger et sa fille !

(Interruptions)

Dr. Rawoo: Ils ne sont même pas présents pour écouter vos arguments infondés !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Rawoo: L'honorable Dr. Boolell, ...

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Rawoo: ...une fois de plus, vous faites preuve de démagogie en prétendant que le Speaker a assisté...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Rawoo:... une fonction en présence d'un ministre du gouvernement !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Don't you get it when I say order?

Wait! I recognise you! One second! There is too much noise; I have only two ears, I can listen to one conversation.

Yes, you have a point of order?

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, il faudra demander aux membres *to stick to the motion*. Là, il raconte...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I have already done it!

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, l'honorable Bérenger...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Let me regulate it! I think I am doing it fairly!

An hon. Member: *To rev Bérenger mem twa!*

The Deputy Speaker: Once I have taken your point of order, we are done with it. Please, continue! I don't need anybody adding more juice to it.

Yes, hon. Dr. Rawoo!

Dr. Rawoo: Permettez-moi de clarifier ce point. Lorsqu'il a dit que le Speaker a assisté à une fonction organisée en présence d'un ministre du gouvernement, il n'y a absolument rien d'illégal ou d'inapproprié dans le fait qu'un speaker participe à des événements publics. Cette pratique est acceptable dans notre démocratie.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Voilà!

Dr. Rawoo: Vos accusations ne sont qu'une tentative désespérée de déstabiliser notre Assemblée sans aucune raison valable. Vous essayez de transformer une action normale et légitime en scandale politique. Rien dans ces actions n'a enfreint les *Standing Orders* ou les

principes de notre Constitution. Vous tentez de discréditer le Speaker en utilisant des accusations fallacieuses. Cela ne fait que relever la faiblesse de votre position.

M. le président, c'était une honte de voir les honorables membres de l'opposition se comporter comme des *bouncers* de boîte de nuit, forçant la porte de l'hémicycle...

(Interruptions)

...bousculant les policiers et le...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members: Shame! Shame! Shame!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

An hon. Member: Boîte de nuit !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Attacking the conduct of a Member is not permissible while I am in the Chair!

Withdraw it, please!

Nobody is a bouncer here! Withdraw it!

Dr. Rawoo: I withdraw, *M. le président*.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you!

Mr Assirvaden: *Eh....*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden, go for a break and come back! Go for a break!

(Interruptions)

Mr Quirin: 5 minutes, ale, ale!

The Deputy Speaker: Go on, hon. Dr. Rawoo, please!

(Interruptions)

You come back in a little bit, don't worry!

Dr. Rawoo: M. le président, je dis cela parce que j'ai écouté attentivement le discours du leader de l'opposition, l'honorable Dr. Arvin Boolell. Je dois admettre quelque chose : j'ai une réelle sympathie pour lui et je suis sûr qu'il sera d'accord avec ce que je vais dire. À un moment de sa carrière, il n'y a pas si longtemps, il aspirait à devenir le leader du Parti travailliste...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! It has nothing to do with this motion! We are not going there!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Rawoo: Comment oublier qu'il a dû courir pour sa vie, il n'y a pas si longtemps, devant les locaux du Parti travailliste ?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No!

Dr. Rawoo: Malmené et brutalisé par des videurs de son propre parti, M. le président !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Hon. Dr. Rawoo!

Dr. Rawoo: It's a fact!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Rawoo! It's a fact; how does the fact relate to the Motion of No Confidence, please?

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I don't expect you to be laughing when I am doing my job!

Please, hon. Dr. Rawoo, how does your fact relate to the Motion of No Confidence? It's not a joke!

An hon. Member: He is rebutting!

Dr. Rawoo: I am rebutting...

The Deputy Speaker: Stay to your motion! Let's get done with the job!

Go on! Continue, please!

Mr Rawoo: M. le président, je suis triste qu'il a été malmené par des videurs de son propre parti. *That's why...*

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! If you go down there, I am minded to cut you!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin! Hon. Quirin, take a walk!

You are not serious! Hon. Quirin, it only appears to me that you didn't come here to debate on a Motion of No Confidence!

Please, allow me to do the job!

Dr. Rawoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming back to the appointment of the new Speaker, I stand before this Assembly today with a sense of pride and historic significance as we have witnessed a landmark moment in the story of our Parliament.

For the first time, an ex-member from the Opposition side, especially the PMSD, has been elected as the Speaker of the National Assembly. This unprecedented event marks a new era of political maturity and bipartisanship in our legislative process.

First and foremost, I would like to commend the Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, for his courageous and visionary approach. By recommending a Member of the Opposition for the esteemed position of Speaker, the Prime Minister has demonstrated a willingness to bridge political divides and foster a spirit of cooperation. This decision underscores his dedication to enhancing the democratic fabric of our nation and ensuring that all voices are heard in our legislative process. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to our new Speaker, hon. Adrien Duval.

Cette nomination est non seulement un témoignage de ses qualifications et capacités personnelles, mais aussi un symbole de notre engagement en faveur de l'inclusivité et des valeurs démocratiques. Son *leadership* apportera sans aucun doute une perspective nouvelle au fauteuil et contribuera au fonctionnement juste et équilibré de notre Assemblée. Depuis sa nomination, le nouveau président de l'Assemblée a fait preuve de calme et a montré des qualités remarquables de leadership même face aux provocations incessantes de l'opposition. Malgré l'agressivité et le comportement démagogue des membres de l'opposition, l'honorable Adrien Duval est resté calme et digne, dirigeant notre délibération parlementaire avec intégrité et équité.

Il est important de souligner que la conduite perturbatrice de l'opposition est restée constante, reflétant leur comportement avec les *Speakers* précédents comme Madame Maya Hanoomajee, comme Monsieur Soorojdev Phokeer. Cette instance dans leurs actions indique clairement que le problème ne réside pas chez le *Speaker*, mais chez les membres de l'opposition eux-mêmes. Leurs tentatives répétées de créer une atmosphère intolérable au sein de l'Assemblée ne sont pas simplement fortuites, mais sont des stratégies délibérées visant à favoriser la démagogie et le sensationnalisme.

M. le président, la motion de censure contre l'honorable Adrien Duval est une question sérieuse qui exige nos considérations attentives. Cependant, les motifs de cette motion sont fondamentalement erronés et proviennent de l'attitude démagogique de l'opposition. Plutôt que toutes préoccupations légitimes concernant la légalité ou la probité. Le poste de président est une responsabilité immense et nécessite une personne intègre, impartiale et dévouée au principe de la démocratie. Le rôle du président est d'assurer que les débats parlementaires se déroulent équitablement et que les voix de tous les membres soient entendues. L'honorable Adrien Duval incarne ses qualités et sa nomination en tant que président est un pas vers le renforcement du cadre démocratique de notre nation.

M. le président, d'emblée je vais rentrer dans le vif du sujet du jour en citant un article de l'Express paru le 28 juillet 2024 écrit par le rédacteur en chef Nad Sivaramen de la Sentinelle comme titre « Pitoyable » *I quote, I quote...*

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: Hold it.

Dr. Rawoo: I quote.

The Deputy Speaker: Hold it.

Mr Mohamed: No, the Standing Orders do not allow us to refer to newspaper publications and to quote from them.

Mr Toussaint: *Ancien Speaker!*

Mr Mohamed: Not even speeches.

An hon. Member: *Ah bon!*

The Deputy Speaker: The Standing Orders are clear about it that reference should be limited but I will allow you, I want to hear what you say.

Dr. Rawoo: Thank you very much, *M. le président*, I will quote part of the said article –

« Toutes proportions gardées, et surtout vu de Washington, DC (où je suis en visite privée/familiale), la tentative inédite de forcer l'entrée du Parlement du jeudi 18 juillet, à Port-Louis, pourrait rappeler l'assaut de triste mémoire du Capitole le 6 janvier 2021.

Même sous Sooroojdev Phokeer, (qu'il se soigne et repose en paix), on n'avait jamais vu un tel spectacle pitoyable, affligeant, entendu de tels cris de guerre, ou vu de telles images – filmées de surcroît, en direct, par une députée suspendue !

On est tombé bien bas à Port-Louis... »

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no. Hold it. Hold it. Nothing to do with Motion of no confidence.

Dr. Rawoo: I am quoting....

The Deputy Speaker: I do not get it. What is your point? Relate it. Relate it to the Motion of no confidence against the Speaker.

Dr. Rawoo: So, I cannot quote what the...

The Deputy Speaker: No, I am asking you to relate it to the Motion of no confidence against him. You are debating in favour of the Speaker.

Dr. Rawoo: I quote what is related to the Motion of no confidence –

« Un show pathétique et grotesque puisque ce n'était pas illégal, comme sont venus ensuite le confirmer... deux éminents légistes proches de l'opposition travailliste, de surcroît anciens speakers, nommément Kailash Purryag et Razack Perroo. »

This is related.

« Incapables de soutenir leurs cris de guerre par des arguments juridiques, Boolell et Bérenger, entre autres, ont alors changé de refrain ! Sans s'excuser du désordre qu'ils ont provoqué dans les couloirs du Parlement. Un baroud du déshonneur, où la lie des opposants est venue se vautrer dans le temple sacré de notre pays. Le lieu sacro-saint où jadis un Sir Harilal Vaghjee exerçait afin de préserver, protéger et défendre la Constitution du mieux de ses capacités exceptionnelles. »

The Deputy Speaker: I give you one more minute about to wrap up.

Dr. Rawoo: Yes, wrap up about the quote.

The Deputy Speaker: You have about 15 minutes. I understand that's what Opposition Members as well have, 15 Minutes yes?

Mr Ameer Meea: *Fini ariv 17 minit.*

Dr. Rawoo: *Fini?*

The Deputy Speaker: You have passed 15 minutes; I am giving you one more minute. You are on 16 minutes.

Dr. Rawoo: M. le président, pour élaborer davantage sur les incohérences de l'opposition concernant l'élection du président de l'Assemblée nationale, il est crucial de mettre en évidence les contradictions flagrantes et les changements de position qui démontrent une absence sérieuse et un manque de cohérence dans les déclarations publiques. *I am trying to wrap up.*

The Deputy Speaker: What are you doing? No murmuring please! I want to listen. The hon. Member prepared his speech, he is making his best to complete in time, at least show him respect.

Dr. Rawoo: M. le.....

The Deputy Speaker: I am not asking you to rush Dr. Rawoo but make sure to wrap up. Be mindful of time.

Dr. Rawoo: M. le président, vous savez que je suis souvent interpellé par les membres du public sur une question récurrente. Saviez-vous qu'ils demandent avec instance, M. le président – les gens dans la rue, à travers toutes les circonscriptions de l'île, me posent toujours la même question : est-ce que les membres de l'opposition confondent l'Assemblée avec un cirque ? C'est vraiment pitoyable, ils confondent le temple de la démocratie avec un cirque.

En passant, je dois féliciter l'honorable membre de l'opposition, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval, pour organiser des webinaires sur l'intelligence artificielle.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no!

Dr. Rawoo: Parce que....

The Deputy Speaker: No, Mr Rawoo! Complete.

Dr. Rawoo: I am trying to wrap up about the *motion de censure*, il doit inviter l'honorable Dr. Boolell...

The Deputy Speaker: Why are you thanking hon. Xavier-Luc Duval? Why are you thanking him?

Dr. Rawoo: Because it is concerned with the....

The Deputy Speaker: Motion of no confidence?

Dr. Rawoo: I am just finishing the line. If it is irrelevant, I will remove it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Stick to it!

Dr. Rawoo: À juste titre, je dois saluer le leader du PMSD qui a déposé une motion de censure contre le leader de l'opposition, Dr. Arvin Boolell, à l'Assemblée nationale ce lundi 5 août. L'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval a fortement raison de condamner fortement le comportement indigne du chef de l'opposition lors de l'investiture d'Adrien Duval au poste de *Speaker* de l'Assemblée nationale.

The Deputy Speaker: And, the time is about over.

Dr. Rawoo: I am trying to conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am concluding.

M. le président, il n'est pas trop tard pour l'honorable Dr. Boolell ; j'espère qu'un jour vous pourrez inspirer votre véritable potentiel et vous lever comme un vrai leader pour affronter les dictateurs de votre alliance et pour conclure, j'ai un message particulier aux membres de l'opposition, particulièrement à l'alliance des grands-pères, des dinosaures de River Walk et de tous ces transfuges, permettez-moi de reprendre des mots bien choisis par Nad Sivaramen –

« Vous êtes pitoyables, plus que pitoyables. Vous êtes constamment grotesques et pathétiques dans votre action. Marquez ces mots. Bientôt vous allez subir une défaite retentissante, *bate condire lor zot prochain eleksion zeneral* et une fois pour toute, *zot pou rente dan depotwar de l'histoire* et très bientôt l'honorable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth reviendra en tant que Premier ministre de notre pays. »

Merci, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(10.13 p.m.)

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I apologise. I was not here when the hon. Member on the Government Side started his discourse. I was, however, intent on following him while I was driving back to the National Assembly. Let me try to start rebutting at least what was said.

Now, I fail to understand what hon. Pravind Jugnauth becoming Prime Minister has got to do with the Motion of No Confidence. That's for one. So, obviously, any little opportunity to politicise and to try to make it the business of the ruling party is never missed when the whole object of today's Motion of No Confidence, I thought, was precisely to try to remind members of the public listening to us to discuss and debate amongst ourselves on the importance of neutrality.

But the very discourse of the previous orator has shown us that there is clearly, in his understanding, nothing to do with the simple objective approach of discussing being neutral as Speaker – the position that demands neutrality. We may agree with one another; we may disagree with one another, but it has certainly nothing to do with the glorification of Pravind Jugnauth as the Prime Minister. I am sure that there are other opportunities for him to do so, but that he jumps on it today – he has his own reasons – but it is a pity that one is confusing a lot of issues.

Now, let me at the outset say that this is not an easy debate for me personally to address the House. The reason why I say so is precisely because very often, members of the public forget, and very often, friends on both sides of the House forget, for reasons best known to them, that before we are politicians, we are not machines; we are human beings. As human beings, we have feelings. As human beings who have feelings, we have what we call relationships that we build over years.

I know the Speaker personally outside the ambit or the parameters of this House. I have known him before he ever became the politician, we know he became eventually. I know, and I am proud to know his esteemed father, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. I have known his late grandfather, whom I have had the honour to know as a politician, but most importantly, as a member of the bar. I have appeared against him, and I have learnt a lot from him. Why I say it is difficult today is because it is not a matter of discoursing, making speeches, and personal attacks

against anyone. Certainly, it is not the objective of this debate today for me to make any personal attack against the Speaker. That's not the point.

It is not about me pulling the blanket upon myself and trying to say, 'you know what, I am better than you, and you are worse than I am,' and trying to score political points and trying to take in political points like Members on the other side have done. That is not the objective of this debate.

Let me first of all say that I am speaking today on certain matters of *principes*. Let me try to make it more relevant to the motion. We may say whatever we want to say, but I will refer to a book entitled 'Mr Speaker: The Office and the Individuals since 1945.' It is written by Matthew Laban with a foreword by the Rt. hon. late Betty Boothroyd. Ever since the book was published, that past Speaker is now deceased.

I refer to page 3 of the particular work and I refer to the third paragraph on page 3, and I quote, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir –

“It is this total impartiality and obligation to quit party politics for life which sets the Westminster speakership apart from presiding officers in other Parliaments.”

I have heard that the hon. Speaker, Mr Adrien Duval, has indeed resigned from his membership in the PMSD. Let me use this opportunity as a friend of democracy, a friend of even those against whom we are making this motion. There must have been *un oubli* somewhere; before making my speech, I make my research, and I do not say that it was intentional on the part of the Speaker, but I suggest that he at least suspends certain of the Facebook accounts, because he has several accounts that still show him with the colours of the PMSD there. It must have been *un oubli*, and I do not lay it at his doorstep as being done intentionally. This is not what I am trying to say here. But what this book says is that there is the total impartiality and obligation to quit politics for life.

I go on Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I quote –

“Even the Commonwealth Parliaments which have sought to emulate the United Kingdom Speakership have not managed to achieve this degree of neutrality.”

I am of the view that Mauritius is one of those Commonwealth jurisdictions. We try to emulate the Westminster system; we try to emulate the House of Commons. In our Standing Orders, we refer to the House of Commons, but we have not even been able to achieve, ever since independence until today, the independence in impartiality that is instilled in the system of the House of Commons. We have not been able to do it!

In the United Kingdom, you have had members of the Labour Party, then in the Opposition, who were made Speaker. It is a rule there; it is a tradition, and it is the practice. Do not blow your own trumpet simply for some obscure reason that this new Speaker has been chosen. Let us not be political hypocrites! Let us leave aside political hypocrisy. There is a reason; I will not go into that. It is not the subject of the debate. But we have never been able to emulate this impartiality, the independence in the House of Commons, ever since independence. I am not being *la politique partisane*, but until today, we have not been able to.

I refer to page 5 of that book. I read the second paragraph. The overall notion of impartiality is taken very seriously, and in his short book on the Speakership, (...) Lord Maybray-King made the point that, once elected to the Chair, the Speaker should treat everyone equally.

A Speaker lives a lonely life. I had said that when I had been the mover in the Motion of No Confidence against the former Speaker, Mrs Maya Hanoomanjee. I had said that a Speaker lives a lonely life because he is not allowed to mix with his old friends and colleagues in the tea rooms or bars of the House of Commons, lest he invite accusations of favouritism.

What has been the practice in our House ever since 2014? What has been the practice since 2014, and what is the practice today? You are not supposed to mix with your old friends as Speaker. There is no bar here in this House. There is no bar. Well, at least, from what I know, there is none. Even whatever I know, I will not talk about it.

Then again, you are not even allowed to be seen to mix with your old friends in the lunchroom of the National Assembly, by always being seen to be seated only with members of government. You are not allowed to do so! This is a bad practice, and this is what is condemned in the United Kingdom.

On ne peut pas faire semblant d'avoir une Assemblée nationale qui prétend suivre les principes d'équité, d'impartialité *of the House of Commons* du Royaume-Uni, mais en même temps, ce qu'on fait, c'est exactement le contraire. Le contraire ! Parce qu'il est clair et tout le monde le sait que le précédent Speaker et ce Speaker continuent cette pratique. Et je ne dis pas qu'ils le font exprès pour se montrer d'un côté de la Chambre ou faire du favoritisme, mais c'est la perception. Et c'est précisément ce que l'auteur condamne.

The prior Speaker, who was here, Mr Sooroojdev Phokeer, did exactly that for all those years when he was chosen as the Speaker. And the practice is continuing under this Speaker! Bad practice! A continuation of bad practice does not make it good.

The hon. Prime Minister or any other orator on the other side will come and say, 'well what was it like when you were here?' I do not really care what it was like when I was here. What are you doing to change things?

(Interruptions)

What are you doing? Instead of changing things, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address to me!

Mr Mohamed: ...this Prime Minister has sat down, taking two Speakers day in and day out, and this has not contributed to democracy!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: The one I...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Mohamed: ...condemn in this matter today is him: the hon. Prime Minister!

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

An hon. Member: *Motion la pa lor PM!*

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

Mr Mohamed: The one I blame for this...

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Motion la pa lor PM!*

Mr Mohamed: ...lack of decorum, the one at stake for this lack of impartiality...

The Deputy Speaker: Hold it! Hold it!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Yes? I am not using any unparliamentary words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

An hon. Member: You are!

Mr Mohamed: I am not! I am being very careful in the choice of my words!

The Deputy Speaker: Allow me to speak.

Mr Mohamed: Please do!

The Deputy Speaker: Allow me to recognise you.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you!

The Deputy Speaker: And then allow me to bring the point, okay?

Mr Mohamed: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Today it is a Motion of No Confidence against the Speaker. By pointing towards the Prime Minister doing certain things, it is not, in my opinion, tackling the conduct of the Speaker.

Mr Mohamed: I am talking about the conduct...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, I am sure, but maybe you might have to give me enough information so that they know where you are going, but right now it is attacking the Prime Minister. I would not allow it, okay?

Mr Mohamed: I am not attacking the Prime Minister, but I take note of what you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, said. You see, very often it is when it hurts that you feel attacked, but I hope I am not hurting anyone by speaking the truth. So, if it is taken as an attack, I do apologise,

but the fact remains that the actual Speaker is continuing a practice adopted by the previous Speaker and the Speaker before that, who basically has, ever since I do remember, never invited a Member of the Opposition to be seated at the high table as though they are lords of the country, dictating to us!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

An hon. Member: *Ce n'est pas vrai cela !*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

An hon. Member: That is not true!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

Ms Anquetil: C'est tout à fait vrai !

The Prime Minister: On a point of order!

Mr Mohamed: You will have the time to speak!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Wait!

The Prime Minister: On a point of order!

Mr Mohamed: What is the point?

The Deputy Speaker: He has a point of order!

Mr Mohamed: Okay, point of order, under which section?

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Wait one second!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Les li koze!*

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

Mr Mohamed: Under which Standing Order?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: One second!

(Interruptions)

There is only one Speaker in the Chamber for now.

The Prime Minister: I think...

Mr Mohamed: The reason I say so is because...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

Mr Mohamed: ...if it is a point of personal explanation, I am not giving way!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, you know, I know my Standing Orders quite well.

Mr Mohamed: I know.

The Deputy Speaker: And you know that I know the principles by which this House is governed.

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: So, I will listen to the point of order of the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think you have allowed the hon. Member to try to elucidate as much as he can with regard to the motion that is before the House, that is, the Motion of No Confidence in the actual Speaker. Now, I have been patient, also listening to what he has been saying. I do not want...

Mr Mohamed: You have to be more patient.

The Prime Minister: I do not want to go into... because I will have time to rebut what he has been saying. But saying that the Speaker sits with the Prime Minister and others at lunchtime, in what way is it tackling...

Mr Mohamed: But that is not a point of order!

The Deputy Speaker: *Attendez! Attendez! Laissez...*

Mr Mohamed: That is not a point of order!

The Prime Minister: It is a point of order!

Mr Mohamed: It is a speech!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It is a point of order!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Wait!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Mohamed: It is not a point of order!

The Prime Minister: It is!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! No, no, hon. Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mohamed!

The Prime Minister: *Pa twa ki bizin dir! Li ki bizin dir!*

Mr Mohamed: That is not a point of order!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Wait!

Mr Mohamed: *Al apran to* Standing Orders!

(Interruptions)

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Al apran pou twa!*

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: *Mo kone mwa; se pa* Standing Orders!

Mr Nuckcheddy: *To pa kone!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! Do not do that!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: ...relevancy of the debates!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed! Order over there!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: I cannot be interrupted for that!

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: *Ekoute!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! I am listening to your point of order, Mr Prime Minister, not a speech!

The Prime Minister: Yes!

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

The Prime Minister: Because one of the parameters that you yourself have laid down for this debate, I want to know in what way this is improper, biased, unfair, malicious, or impartial conduct and/or behaviour of the Speaker in his function as Speaker by sitting and having lunch, which has always been the case all the time!

Mr Mohamed: Under your prime ministership!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Do not reply!

Mr Mohamed: Under your prime ministership!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Don't! Don't!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: When you were here; father and son!

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Pran takeaway twa!*

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

(Interruptions)

First of all, withdraw that, hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Withdraw what? The practice has been on the...

(Interruptions)

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Me kan Ramgoolam ti au pouvoir ?*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Wait, let me tackle with it!

Mr Mohamed: But it has been the practice.

The Deputy Speaker: Listen to me. First, you...

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: *Li pou twa ek to papa?*

The Deputy Speaker: Are you withdrawing that 'father and son', '*papa-piti*' or whatever you said?

Mr Mohamed: Okay, I withdraw it...

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Mr Mohamed: ...for the sake of being able to proceed. May I proceed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

The Deputy Speaker: Wait, one second. Hon. Prime Minister, I take note of your point. He is giving his perception of things and I will allow him.

Mr Mohamed: I will refer...

The Deputy Speaker: Mais seulement, l'honorable Mohamed, restez dans les paramètres.

Mr Mohamed: Now, I have taken the point of the Prime Minister, and I have listened to him even though I do not share his point of view that it was a point of order. It was a point of a personal explanation, but then again, I mean, he tried to push it through as a point of order. Fair enough.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no! Do not go commenting on it! Go ahead!

Mr Mohamed: But what I am trying to do here, to respond to him immediately, I refer—and I have the impression that he has not listened or he pretends not to hear—page 5 of that book that I have been quoting. When I said, ‘The Speaker lives a lonely life,’ I go on in the next paragraph. If he had done his homework, he would have remembered what I have said against the former Speaker, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee and it is here. Speaker Michael Martin, however, chose not to distance himself too much. On retiring from the House in 2001, Tony Benn stated –

“In my opinion you, Michael Martin, are the first Speaker who has remained a backbencher. You have moved the Speaker’s Chair onto the backbenchers. You sit in the tea room with us.”

The issue here, therefore, is that here—not me, but authors who have no interest of their own to serve—are given an independent opinion as to what the conduct of the Speaker should be. It is not a question, as the Prime Minister says; where does it show impartiality? It is not only a question of actual impartiality, but the perception should not be of partiality.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, I got you.

Mr Mohamed: The perception is important!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Yes?

The Deputy Speaker: If you will watch the time, we have gone past 15 minutes. We are approximately about the same amount of time hon. Dr. Rawoo spoke.

Mr Mohamed: No, he spoke for 20.

The Deputy Speaker: Have a look, how long have you got?

An hon. Member: 20 minutes!

Mr Mohamed: 20?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, you are on 17 minutes. Whips agreed on 15 minutes.

Mr Mohamed: Okay, so...

The Deputy Speaker: Look, I am being fair.

Mr Mohamed: What I would like to do and I will...

The Deputy Speaker: So, I want you to try to wrap up.

Mr Mohamed: I will do it. I will wrap.

You see, I will say something. Today, I heard the hon. Prime Minister – and to rebut what he said as well – where at some stage he said that he would invite you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to remove and to edit, in other words, *biffer ce qui est dit ici à l'Assemblée nationale* from the Hansard because according to him it can be done.

I will not debate on whether it can be done or not...

The Deputy Speaker: It does not have anything to do...

Mr Mohamed: But you see, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. If he believes something is wrong and he believes that it should be *biffer*, I was looking at Hansard, and why is it that until today, his low attack against the actual Speaker was never *biffé* from the record when in Hansard...

(Interruptions)

...18 October 2022, you attacked the Speaker!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: One second! One second!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: You...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Why don't you apologise?

(Interruptions)

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Time is over!

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Apologise!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Apologise!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Apologise!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mohamed! Order!

An hon. Member: *Soular!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: *Li ti dir!*

Mr Nuckcheddy: *To leader mem soular!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Yes?

The Deputy Speaker: What is going on?

Mr Mohamed: I am telling him to apologise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

He gets on his high horses! Apologise!

(Interruptions)

Apologise!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed! With all due respect, you have been here longer than me...

Mr Mohamed: That is why I am telling him to apologise!

The Deputy Speaker: You ought to be recognised first before taking the floor!

Mr Mohamed: I agree...

The Deputy Speaker: So, who is going to apologise?

Mr Mohamed: I apologise to you.

The Deputy Speaker: Oh! Such a gentleman! And from now onward, I think your speech is done. Your speech is done?

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: My speech, give me ten seconds. Ten seconds!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Mohamed: Ten seconds, not even more.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! I will give you the ten seconds, but you will withdraw what you just did.

Mr Mohamed: Okay. Everyone knows he should apologise. Let me withdraw it.

The Deputy Speaker: Wait.

Mr Mohamed: Apologise!

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! Done!

Next orator! Hon. Ganoo, please!

Mr Mohamed: I would have apologised.

The Deputy Speaker: You are done?

Hon. Minister Ganoo!

(10.33 p.m.)

The Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail (Mr A. Ganoo): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you for allowing me to say a few words on this motion before the House today. Unfortunately, because of the time allotted to me, I will not be able to make my classical speech. But I will try, firstly, to rebut what has been argued by the Leader of the Opposition and the last orator, hon. Shakeel Mohamed, who spoke before me.

Let me come to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Firstly, I must tell you that I have been in this House, as you know, for a very long time. You mentioned yourself, I think, this is the seventh or eighth Motion of No Confidence against the Speaker. I have been present, I think, during five or six of these debates against the Speaker and I must say it is the first time that I have listened to a Motion of No Confidence against the Speaker and – I am sorry to say it, Dr. Boolell is a very good friend of mine – it is the worst motion speech that I have heard.

In fact, hon. Dr. Boolell has been...

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: One second!

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: I will listen to you!

Mr Ganoo: ...has been making...

The Deputy Speaker: I will listen to him.

Mr Ganoo: Yes, okay.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Which section?

Mr Mohamed: I will tell you what section! He has no right...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Take a little walk, hon. Mrs Subhasnee Luchmun Roy, please!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Avec plaisir !*

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you! And you come back!

Mr Mohamed: The hon. Member has a long experience, he cannot, here, be condescending and insulting with regard to his value judgment. He cannot do that!

An hon. Member: Which section is it? Under which section?

Mr Mohamed: He is not a teacher in a classroom.

The Deputy Speaker: Done! Done! Done! Done!

Mr Nuckcheddy: You are! You are a master!

Mr Mohamed: Of course!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: I am not any...

Mr Ganoo: It is a...

The Deputy Speaker: Be careful not to make attacks!

Mr Ganoo: In other words, this was a very poor speech, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, the motion of hon. Dr. Boolell was like a wild goose chase, wild allegations, *un discours décousu, un discours mal ficelé, mal fagoté*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Not convincing at all! Both sides of the House have listened to Leaders of the Opposition coming with Motion of No Confidence against the Speaker in the past. Although I was on the other side, I was very often impressed by the tenor and by the arguments against Mr Speaker in certain speeches, although I was on the government side. But I am very sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this motion is very disappointing, I must say.

Nevertheless, I am duty bound to answer a few remarks that he made. Firstly, with regard to the Standing Orders and the Constitution, hon. Dr. Boolell referred to section 7 of the Standing Orders and said, quoting Mr Valaydon, who was a former Clerk of this Assembly. I do not know if he is a professor now; I think he mentioned Doctor or Professor Valaydon. Whatever it is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. He highlighted the contradiction between the Standing Orders and the Constitution in terms of having a non-elected member as a Speaker. I do not know if you have seen this contradiction.

The Deputy Speaker: I have seen it!

Mr Ganoo: There is a contradiction, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I know.

Mr Ganoo: The Standing Orders still speak that only an elected member of the Assembly can be the Speaker, whereas, as you know, in 1996, we amended the Constitution, and the amendment that was brought was “from among its members or otherwise.” These two words allowed all these non-elected members to become Speaker after Mr Jeewoolall. But if this amendment has not been brought to the Standing Orders when the Constitution was amended, who is responsible? It was a Labour-MMM government that did this, and the Leader of the House was Dr. Navin Ramgoolam!

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Paul Bérenger ensam!*

Mr Ganoo: He decided to amend the Constitution, and I was the Speaker in the Chair for one week to allow this amendment to be brought and carried. Then, I resigned and became Minister of Housing, but it was a Labour-MMM government. And the Leader of the House, the one who is responsible for amendments to the Constitution and to the Standing Orders, is the Prime Minister. It should have been the Prime Minister of that time making a motion towards the Standing Orders Committee to correct this anomaly and to align our Standing Orders with the Constitution. This is to answer, hon. Dr. Boolell!

Now, he said no consultation for the Speaker. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will come to party loyalties in a few minutes to answer to hon. Shakeel Mohamed, whose whole speech was based

on party loyalties. I will explain what the difference is between the UK's Speaker, Speakers in Mauritius, and Speakers from other Commonwealth countries. No consultation for the Speaker; this has always been the case.

When Mr Jeewoolall was chosen as Speaker, was there any consultation? When Mr Peeroo was chosen as Speaker of the House for the Labour government, was there any consultation? When Mr Ramnah was chosen as Speaker from 2000 to 2005, he was a member of the MMM party. Was there any consultation with the Opposition at that time? Never, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Because, as we know, we are living in another political environment, which we cannot compare to the UK in any way. Even in the UK, there is no consultation. You know why? Because the Speaker is chosen before elections by both the Opposition and Government and nobody can contest the election of the Speaker. Both sides decide that such and such parliamentarian should become the Speaker, and he is allowed to be elected. There is no opposition against his election. Let us compare like with like, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition also talked about lifting suspensions and so on. He came and met with the hon. Speaker and talked about lifting suspensions. Again, we all know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the House and the Speaker do not have the right to lift the suspension against a member. As we know, the Standing Orders provide that –

“(5) Suspension from the service of the Assembly shall not, unless the Assembly so decides, exempt the Member so suspended from serving on any committee (...).”

It is the Assembly to rescind this motion of suspension which has been voted by the House.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Ganoo: It is by way of another resolution of the House that this motion can be rescinded even if he tenders his apologies. The House must then vote on a motion to rescind. It is not the Speaker or the Leader of the House who can rescind this motion of suspension, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Now, seating arrangement, section 6 of the Standing Orders. What does section 6 provide, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

“The allocation to Members of seats in the Assembly Chamber shall be made by the Speaker.”

We all know that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There is another section in our Standing Orders which has never been referred to, but which I would like to cite for the enlightenment of the House.

Section 79 says –

“The Speaker shall not be bound to give any reason in support of any of his or her decisions.”

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is for the Leader of the Opposition!

Regarding PNQs, again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has been a practice in the past. All Speakers have the right to ask the Leader of the Opposition to rephrase, to reframe, or to recast his PNQ as it is done with any PQ. It is up to the discretion of the Speaker. If you are not happy with that – the Speaker does not have to give any reason for his decision – it is by way of a substantive motion. If that motion is voted, then you are right.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I come to party loyalties. I mean the intervention of the hon. last speaker has unfortunately made me digress from my speech, but I will come to party loyalties. Again, I disagree totally with everything that hon. Shakeel Mohamed has said, and I will give you my reason, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Firstly, let me tell you one thing. He referred to the fact that, in fact, we have to copy what obtains in the UK. Yes, we have to do that, but not regarding how our Speaker functions, whether he should sever all links with his party or not, or party affiliation. What Mr Mohamed was referring to is in Section 1 of our Standing Orders, which reads as follows –

“In cases of doubt, these Orders [the Standing Orders] shall be interpreted in the light of the relevant practices of the Commons House of Parliament of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.”

That is, we follow what we have not provided for in cases of interpretation of our Standing Orders.

Now our Standing Orders do not say anything about our Speaker, whether he should delink himself with his party, with political meetings, with affiliation, and so on, and I will come to that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We are wrong if we think that we can or we should do as the British do. We are wrong, and hon. Shakeel Mohamed is right; he has read a book written by the previous Speaker of the UK Parliament. Fair enough, I agree, but he is not comparing like to like, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. What do I mean by that? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I mean by that is that all Speakers in our history, be it Mr Ramnah, be it Mr Kailash Purryag, be it Mr Peeroo, all these Speakers have been chosen by their political leaders, the political leadership of the different political parties, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and there are even cases where after their speakership, they have gone back to politics. Mr Peeroo, Mr Ramnah, so does that mean that because somebody has been Speaker in Mauritius, this is the end of his political career?

An hon. Member: Yes!

Mr Ganoo: The past, our history, does not show that, and it is not only us; it is also in India, Mr Speaker, Sir. Who can blame India for not being a democracy, and parliamentary democracy doesn't prevail or can be criticised? Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a book called the 'Office of the Speaker' in India, and this is what I can read –

“In this study, an attempt has been made to analyse the procedure adopted for the election of the Speaker in the Central Legislative Assembly and the present Lok Sabha. Our Speakers retain party affiliations during their term. In India, neither the Speaker nor the party in power has taken the initiative in establishing sound conventions. Moreover, the Constitution too has not provided requisite provisions to make this institution impartial. As such, the Indian Speaker is the nominee of the party in power and invariably a prominent politician with high political ambitions.”

This is what obtains in India, and can we say anything against democracy in India or parliamentary democracy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? So, let us agree, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us be frank about this, because we know that this is the tradition, not only in our country but in other Commonwealth countries. Rare are the Commonwealth countries; sometimes it happens that a previous Judge or previous Clerk of the House has acceded to the position of the Speaker but this has taken place in a few minority countries in the Commonwealth, but the majority of Commonwealth countries choose somebody among their ranks to become Speaker, and when he becomes Speaker, that is true, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he should stop wearing his garb of politician and realise that he is now the servant of the House, and there is nothing wrong with somebody with a political past or somebody with a political future. I just mentioned a few names because this is our tradition, our national ethos, unlike the UK, where things are different, as I said, where the Speaker is not contested during elections, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

So, we have not yet come to this practice, and perhaps we shall never come, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We shall remain as we are, but does that mean when Mr Adrien Duval, who has been in the PMSD Party, resigns from his party and he comes and presides over the debate, he cannot be fair because of that? Mr Peeroo was fair! Mr Kailash Purryag was fair, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Jeewoolall, who was a Labour Minister and so on, was fair...

Mr Ameer Meea: Phokeer?

Mr Ganoo: Once you wear the garb, this depends on the individual, on the man, on the incumbent of the Chair, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Once you become Speaker, and you strip yourself of your political garb, nothing prevents you from being a Speaker, and once your mandate is over, in our tradition—and it will be like that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir—you can still become a candidate of your party once you finish with your mandate. Is there anything wrong with that? What is important is when you are in this Chair, you be fair, you allow the minority to have its say, and, of course, you allow Government to have its way, as we say in our parliamentary jargon, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, this is to answer the hon. Shakeel Mohamed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to end up, let me say something. In fact, why are we today here? I shall not say waste our time, but spending our time listening to these Opposition. This is a political vendetta!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Exactement!

Mr Ganoo: This is a political vendetta! They failed in their first attempt when Mr Speaker was being elected. This was a scheme, a ploy to discredit the PMSD. I have nothing to do with the PMSD. You know that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir but I am speaking objectively. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that was *un compte à régler, un règlement de compte politique* because the PMSD deserted them, left them, abandoned them. So, what did they do? They brought the political *batail sur le terrain parlementaire*.

So, they ambushed the Speaker who was going to be elected; they came here, and they made a lot of noise. I would not come back to that, this disorderly conduct, but they know that they were *désavoué par* monsieur Kailash Purryag, monsieur Razack Peeroo, monsieur Marc Hein, all these independent personalities, knowledgeable persons, and knowledgeable lawyers who denounced them, who told them that they misinterpreted Section 32 of the Constitution, that what was done on that day was according to procedure, convention, and all previous elections of the Speaker, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There was nothing wrong, nothing *illegal*, as Mr Bérenger and Ms Bérenger were shouting near the door, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There was nothing illegal.

(Interruptions)

Therefore, I will end up, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This was a political ploy and what did they do then? They had to come back to the Assembly *la queue entre les jambes*.

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: La honte!

Mr Ganoo: When Mr Speaker refused to cow down to their ultimatum of lifting the suspension or changing the seating arrangement, they had to come back to the Assembly, and because of this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now they found another scheme coming with a motion of no confidence against the Speaker. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so, this is why we are here. To conclude, have I ended up on time...

The Deputy Speaker: You have taken 19 minutes. I have given you ample time, try to conclude within...

Mr Ganoo: Okay, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so this is the story. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I therefore end up, by saying that, in fact, I think this was totally wrong when we see hon. Adrien Duval; I repeat, he has never been a member of my party, nor have I made any alliance with him in the past, but when we have seen him operating in this Chair, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *c'est dommage que l'opposition a essayé au début de sa carrière de Speaker de discréditer ce nouveau Speaker, de ternir sa réputation, M. le président.*

Malheureusement, comme tous les autres *PNQs* de l'honorable leader de l'opposition, cette motion de blâme a été un *fizet* et finalement un pétard mouillé, et qui démontre la faiblesse de cette opposition qui a perdu non seulement une bataille, mais a déjà perdu la guerre.

Merci M. le président.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, please!

(10.54 p.m.)

Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Merci, M. le président. Cette Chambre est appelée ce soir à débattre sur une motion de *No Confidence* sur le président de l'Assemblée nationale. De mémoire de parlementaire, jamais une telle motion n'a été présentée alors que le président est entré en fonction que deux semaines de cela.

C'est dire l'importance de cette démarche du leader de l'opposition qui, au cours de son intervention, a donné les raisons qui justifient sa démarche de venir avec une telle motion.

Erskine May, la bible des parlementaires, définit le rôle de Speaker comme suit, et je cite –

“The Speaker is expected to lay aside any party or group affiliation on appointment and to refrain from political activity, including voting in the House.”

J'y reviendrai.

M. le président, le rôle d'un Speaker est avant tout d'assurer d'une part l'impartialité des travaux au sein de notre Assemblée et, d'autre part, d'avoir une action aussi exemplaire et apolitique à l'extérieur de cette Assemblée. Il doit être au-dessus de tout soupçon. Or, le speaker fera face à un procès en novembre prochain. Ce n'est un secret pour personne. M. le président, le 21 septembre 2022...

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I do not even need to tell you, I think. You should stop this Member.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Pourquoi ?

The Deputy Speaker: Stay within the parameters of your debate!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Je continue mon discours.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! Stay within the parameters I have set.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Sorry?

The Deputy Speaker: Continue, but within the parameters I have set!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Exactement.

The Deputy Speaker: I have been lenient since the beginning, but do not...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Alors, je disais donc, en septembre 2022, l'actuel président de cette Assemblée a été impliqué.....

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir....

Mrs Navarre-Marie: ...dans un accident de la route à...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order! Wait! I will take your point of order.

An hon. Member: *Li pa konpran!*

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *Non, mo pa konpran !*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! I cannot listen to five people at a time! Who wants to go for some fresh air?

(Interruptions)

I cannot listen to five people at the same time!

Mr Quirin: *Non, fode pa to ...*

The Deputy Speaker: I think you want to go for a second time?

Mr Quirin: Sorry?

The Deputy Speaker: I think you want to go for a second time? To take some air?

Alright, I will listen to your point of order. I recognised hon. Xavier-Luc Duval first.

I will come to you.

Mr X. L. Duval: I refer to your ruling and I wonder whether you caught the date that this Member is referring to, 2022. Do I need to say more or is it clear that she is not speaking within the parameters that you have clearly set?

The Deputy Speaker: That is why I just guided her to stay within the parameters.

Mr X. L. Duval: But what is she...

The Deputy Speaker: I cannot anticipate what is on her mind!

Mr X. L. Duval: She said 2022!

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, 2022, but I do not know what is coming! Just give me second, allow me to listen. I will do the needful!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Je continue.

The Prime Minister: But my point of order?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, I will take your point of order. One second! Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the hon. Member withdraws what she said that the Speaker will have to face *un procès en cour à l'avenir*.

Mr Quirin: *Tonn blie ki tonn dir twa?*

The Prime Minister: This has nothing to do...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: This has nothing to do with the conduct of the Speaker during the time he is Speaker.

Mr Quirin: *To ti trait li de soular!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Quirin: *Mwa ki ti dir sa ou bien twa?*

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Quirin: *Be li mem ki ti dir sa ! Tonn blie twa si ?*

(Interruptions)

Ton blie twa si, non ?

(Interruptions)

Ale do ta !

The Deputy Speaker: Withdraw that word, please! I am not asking you to withdraw; I am asking you to withdraw the word!

(Interruptions)

Withdraw that! Withdraw the word! I do not like this!

Mr Quirin: I withdraw the word!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Tout le monde...

The Deputy Speaker: I do not need you to go on matters whose limit arises out of the conduct of the Speaker in this Chamber. Do you get my point?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Un speaker est supposé être au-dessus...

The Deputy Speaker: Do you get my point? Yes? No?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Oui!

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mais le président de l'Assemblée est supposé et est censé être au-dessus de tout soupçon. Or, il fera face à un procès en novembre prochain !

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Tout le monde le sait par un accident...

The Deputy Speaker: Wait, wait, wait! Wait! Wait! Right now, *il fera face à un procès ou pas*, I do not know. Can you substantiate it? Do you have anything to tell me that he is going to face a *procès*? I do not know!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Vous ne le savez pas ? Vous n'êtes pas au courant ?

The Deputy Speaker: *Non! Non!* Do you have something to substantiate it today?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Tout le monde le sait !

The Deputy Speaker: *Non! Non!*

(Interruptions)

Order! What I am saying is that there are the Standing Orders and I have to go by it.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Il sera poursuivi en novembre prochain...

The Deputy Speaker: Non, non, non! C'est ce que je vous fais comprendre. Je le fais très gentiment.

An hon. Member : *Teti kouma Bérenger mem !*

The Deputy Speaker: Je le fais très gentiment. Do not go over there! Go on, continue! But do not go over which I have clearly set parameters.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Monsieur Adrien Duval est accusé par la police de conduite en état d'ivresse.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: *Non, non, non!*

Mrs Navarre-Marie: ... est un accusé par la police...

The Deputy Speaker: *Non, non, non!* Withdraw that! Withdraw that, please!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Withdraw what?

The Deputy Speaker: Qu'il est accusé par la police *or whatever*. I do not have any documents!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mais, M. le président, tout le monde sait qu'il est accusé par la police !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Non, non!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Il a refusé....

The Deputy Speaker: Non, non, non!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Il a refusé....

The Deputy Speaker: Non, non, non!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Il a refusé de se soumettre....

The Deputy Speaker: *Non, non, non! Vous ne m'écoutez pas honorable Navarre-Marie !*
I would like to listen to you, give you all the time and all the leeway possible. But these parameters, as I have stated to the Leader of Opposition, I have not set it out, have I? I have not set it out. You agree with me? These parameters have been here since a long time. Since 1980! And it's been five motions. Do you want me to change it now? I cannot do that!

So, stay out of it!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

The Deputy Speaker: I will listen to you!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Le Premier ministre lui-même avait...

The Deputy Speaker: If it is not the same thing, hon. Ganoo, please!

Mr Ganoo: On this issue!

The Deputy Speaker: I have already guided her that I do not want to go over there. If you are going to tell me the same thing, I am not listening!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Is it the same thing?

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me read it and then you will understand.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no! Is it the same thing? That is what I am asking you, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! But over and above this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

The Deputy Speaker: Over and above it?

Mr Ganoo: Section 41 of the Standing Orders says –

“A Member shall confine his or her observation to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matter not relevant thereto.”

The Deputy Speaker: That is what I have already told her!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: M. le président, le Premier ministre avait lui-même déclaré en octobre...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: ...2022...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

(Interruptions)

No, no, no!

(Interruptions)

Order! Allow me to get on with this speech.

Mr Quirin: *Li pa pe koz menti!*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Yes, please? Sorry!

The Deputy Speaker: No, it is becoming unbearable! You are always talking. Allow me to do the job! Allow your friend; she is from your party, isn't she? Is that how you show her respect? Is that how you are going to show her respect by cross-talking while she is talking?

Mr Quirin: I have to support her!

The Deputy Speaker: Support her in the right way; not like interrupting her. She is already been...right now...

Last warning! I am not going anywhere on that topic. I am minded to stop you completely if you so push me!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Non, il faut rappeler que le Premier ministre avait dit ceci –

(Interruptions)

“Mr Speaker, Sir, my ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order!

Mr Ameer Meea: *Pas kann nanye do ta!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Next one I see talking is out.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: C'était dans le Hansard !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Next one I see talking is out!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: It is lack of respect towards your ruling.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Toussaint, please go out for a walk!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Next one who talks is out!

Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie...

Mr Osman Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he is pointing fingers at you.

The Deputy Speaker: Let them point. When I see, I will deal with whatever I have to deal with. Right now, there is no way, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, that you dwell in a matter that has taken ...

Mrs Mayotte: *Pe fer palab...Monsieur li line fer sa ... line faire sa !*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please go for a walk, hon. Mrs Sandra Mayotte! Go for a walk!

I am listening. Are you listening to me? By no means are you going to introduce any of those matters that you have tried to introduce at least on four occasions. The fifth one might be fatal.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Donc, nous savons, M. le président, que la nomination de monsieur Adrien Duval est un deal pour sceller l'alliance entre le MSM et le PMSD.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Xavier kin dire twa.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Patrick Assirvaden, take some fresh air. I am looking for the next one to take some fresh air.

Hon. Deepak Balgobin, fresh air!

Mr Balgobin: What is fresh air?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I order you out!

An hon. Member: *Al dormi!*

The Deputy Speaker: I am ordering you out to come back again, for 15 minutes only!

Hon. Assirvaden, take some fresh air.

Mr Assirvaden: *Tone kontant la!*

The Deputy Speaker: Don't come back straight away. You came back in 3 minutes last time; this time take 6.

An hon. Member: *3 minit mem?*

The Deputy Speaker: I need you to ...

Mr Assirvaden: *Arianne to pe koz laverite, koz laverite!*

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Lampoul brile!*

Mr Doolub: *Sa pas order out sa!*

An hon. Member: Named!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: The truth hurts!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: This is provocation!

The Deputy Speaker: No. we are staying on the debate.

Mr X. L. Duval: *So leader ki enn soular!*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Xavier Luc Duval, take a walk!

Mr Quirin: *Kan to ti ensam ar li lerla ...*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No! Hold on! You withdraw these words and then move away.

Mr Quirin: *Li pa pli soular ki twa ta !*

Mr X. L. Duval: Withdraw what?

The Deputy Speaker: That he's a *soular*, it is not good!

Please withdraw it!

Mr X. L. Duval: If he is not a *soular*, then ...

An hon. Member: *Ale do ta!*

(Interruptions)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: M. le président, je disais au début de mon discours que, selon Erskine May, le *Speaker is expected to lay aside any Party or group affiliation*. Or, à peine avait-il été nommé au poste de Speaker que monsieur Duval s'est empressé d'honorer ses nouveaux amis politiques en participant à un événement éminemment politique dans la circonscription no 6.

The Deputy Speaker: No! No!

(Interruptions)

No! Hon. Members, probably amidst all the interveners today, I am probably the youngest. I am probably the youngest amongst all the interveners here. There are parameters. There are rules, there is Erskine May, there are rulings, and there are precedents. What does it have to do with the Motion of No Confidence on the Speaker?

I am here just for a job. I am not here for politics. I am not even considering which party I belong to. I am just doing my job. Please do your jobs, all of you here; at least work for this country; we are not here to play.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Sa présence dans une fonction politique ...

(Interruptions)

C'est une faute extrêmement grave...

(Interruptions)

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Shame !

Mrs Navarre-Marie: ... et qui remet en question...

The Deputy Speaker: One second!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: ... la notion de ...

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Luchmun Roy: She is going against your ruling!

Mr Dhunoo: Mr Deputy, Speaker, time and time again she is going against your ruling.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Look! Madam, with all due respect that I hold to you, I have a job here to do. I am guided by books. I have not written them myself. I have a duty where the whole nation is looking at me, ensuring that I am giving you adequate time to speak. I am doing my best despite you contravening all the parameters.

Hon. Madam, I would like you to listen to me rather than having a little advice from hon. Ameer Meea. I am working in the interest of the country; I am working to give you all the

possible opportunities for you to make a debate. In fact, if you read my last line, I would not permit anybody reading as well.

Clearly you are reading right now. I am not even going there. I am not being as nasty as that. What I am suggesting is, with all the patience in the world that's required from me, let's work for the country within the parameters of the laws.

Do we agree?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Doing my job within the parameters of the law.

The Deputy Speaker: Do we agree on this? One more ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes!

The Deputy Speaker: One more statement outside the parameters I have set out; I have worked my way through the Leader of Opposition, and everybody, please stick to it.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Je vais aborder le sujet de *seating arrangements*. Le président de l'Assemblée nationale a non seulement besoin d'assumer le rôle d'arbitre et de prendre en charge les débats parlementaires pour s'assurer que les députés peuvent participer librement aux travaux tout en respectant les règles.

Il doit également assurer le bon fonctionnement du Parlement, comme par exemple faire le *seating arrangement* adéquat pour assurer que chaque parlementaire se retrouve au sein de son groupe, et cela est la pratique à travers le monde.

Depuis la fin de la Covid-19, M. le président, cette possibilité nous est refusée, y compris par le nouveau Speaker. Nous avons dit et nous le disons encore une fois que l'actuel *seating arrangement* favorise largement la dispersion parlementaire de l'opposition. La convention veut que chaque bloc de sièges soit réservé à un parti politique. Les membres d'un parti se regroupent dans un bloc spécifique. Cela est important dans le sens où des membres d'un parti doivent se consulter rapidement sur un cas ou une situation spécifique.

The Deputy Speaker: You have to wrap up! One minute!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Pardon!

The Deputy Speaker: You have to wrap up! We are about 17 minutes.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Non, mais il y a...

The Deputy Speaker: 17 minutes we are. I am checking the time.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Vous m'avez interrompu à plusieurs reprises, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Excusez-moi, le précédent Speaker a fait un galimatias de ce *seating arrangement* avec un agenda ...

The Deputy Speaker: No! No!

(Interruptions)

Order! Unless you have something hon. ...

An hon. Member: There is no speech.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Navarre Marie, unless you have something different to canvass, I am minded to stop you here right now.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: I am speaking for the seating arrangements.

The Deputy Speaker: No! No! We are done! Do you have another matter to canvass?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Oui, le *seating arrangement*.

The Deputy Speaker: Another matter! *Un autre sujet ! Avez-vous un autre sujet pour débattre ?*

Try to do it within one minute, please.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *L'issue de voyages.*

Mr Nuckcheddy: *To pe anvi voyager!*

Mrs Navarre-Marie: ... missions des parlementaires à l'étranger.

Donc, ...

The Deputy Speaker: Order! No murmuring. I want to listen to it. It is a new point!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Il y a un orateur qui a parlé du fait que le voyage d'un député de l'opposition avait déjà été approuvé par le précédent Speaker. Mais la perception est parfois plus forte que la réalité.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: We then...

(Interruptions)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Je me demande sur ce sujet...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Oui, okay!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: ... où sont les notions d'impartialité, d'indépendance et de l'éthique ?

J'en ai terminé.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon. Mrs Kalpana Koonjoo-Shah!

(11.14 p.m.)

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Mrs K. Koonjoo-Shah): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you, and allow me to start by expressing very heartfelt condolences to the Opposition. Condolences, because it is clear that the die is cast, their coalition is in terminal stages, and the one who was previously their best friend, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, has changed his cologne, and they do not like the....

The Deputy Speaker: What does it have to do with the Motion of No Confidence?

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I am bringing it into perspective with your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Here we are, once again, another frivolous attempt through this motion, a desperate attempt...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Once again, was that not enough that I had such a long conversation with you, telling you to stop interrupting the business? Was that not enough? I want you to reply to me, please! I have recognised you right now! Can't you reply to me, please? Please be respectful! It is a tough job that I am having to do, listening to everybody. I do not want to miss any point.

I am trying to be fair to the Opposition and Government. So, please help! How many times can I keep on telling you this? Even little school kids do not do that! Please!

Are we agreeable on this now? Are we, please? Hon. Member, are we agreeable to this? Are we? You do not want to talk now? I hope it stays the same way!

Hon. Minister, to the motion, to the subject!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. To the motion, another frivolous attempt by the Opposition, a very desperate Opposition that has been losing battles after battles on the ground. What do they do after such a loss? They bring their tired and tedious political squabbles to the Assembly. Very rightly so, one of my colleagues from Government earlier on reminded the Opposition that this Assembly is not a political arena.

I have listened to hon. Shakeel Mohamed, who is *fidèle à son habitude* not present in the House and managed to shoot off the tangent of this motion. We witnessed his gesticulations very wildly, making the Leader of the House the subject of his unwarranted and completely misplaced diatribe.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to tell the hon. Member, hon. Shakeel Mohamed, that we have no lessons to learn from an Opposition that has broken all records of absenteeism in this House. Hon. Shakeel Mohamed is making irrelevant references. Again, he is stepping out of the parameters which you yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, rightly put forward

at the beginning of the debates of this motion. He is making irrelevant reference to whether the Prime Minister should be sitting for lunch and God knows what other criteria! I would not be surprised; it would not come as a surprise if the new Speaker were blamed for today's dismal performance of the Leader of the Opposition with his PNQ *fizet*.

This is a Leader of the Opposition who is inspiring zero confidence. In fact, I congratulate hon. Xavier-Luc Duval for having tabled a Motion of No Confidence because he inspires zero confidence, especially today during the PNQ. I think the whole population got a chance to see that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Opposition which has tabled the Motion of No Confidence against the new Speaker, where was this Opposition when this Government, this Prime Minister, was busy bringing bills to this House? Bills that are going to be setting the scene for our future generations. Yet, today, they were absent! In case they do not remember where they were, they were either doing press conferences outside this House or yelling in the precinct of the Assembly.

Today, this Opposition has the audacity to strut in here and table – in all due right – a Motion of No Confidence against a new Speaker who has been elected and dragged to this Chair with all the provisions of the law being respected.

In fact, we will remember that when the election of this new Speaker was taking place – again, I repeat – adhering to all the provisions of the law, what did we not witness? The population as a whole witnessed the circus that happened on that day. Members who were suspended falsely claimed that they had received summons to attend that day's session, which is a lie.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am refuting points that have been put forward by the Opposition. We had Members of the Opposition commenting on where the Prime Minister should sit and have his lunch. I mean, there could be nothing more irrelevant to the motion than that!

We have witnessed how the Opposition, who, again, through its very weak methods, is trying to cling to some semblance of political existence by tabling a Motion of No Confidence

against the new Speaker and making frivolous accusations. There are very troubling accusations that have been made in the House today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And they are more troubling because of the total absence of evidence to support those accusations. You yourself have ruled against those accusations today.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are refusing to accept one simple fact, a simple fact that the people have already placed their faith in this Government. They have placed their faith in our institutions, and they have placed their faith in this Assembly. When we talk about the Assembly, we talk about the legislative process, we talk about the fairness, we talk about the integrity of the House, and we are talking about the integrity and the role of the Speaker! So, the Motion of No Confidence towards the Speaker holds no water whatsoever!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, words that have been spoken here go down in Hansard and it goes down on record. But history is not only going to remember words! History is going to remember actions. History is going to remember what has been witnessed within the walls of this august Assembly. History will recall their absence! To be very honest, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not even think that the seats occupied by the Members of the Opposition ever had a chance to even get tepid or even warm because they have never been here! They are always absent!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Opposition today is clinging to a straw. They are drowning; they have no substance, and they cannot even articulate a vision of their own. Like I said earlier on, today, this Motion of No Confidence is their only way to have *les caméras braquées sur eux*. It is either that or go and have press conferences at every minute and every hour of the day.

The new Speaker, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the moment he has assumed his duties, he himself has reversed some of the decisions of the previous Speaker. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the newly appointed/elected Speaker has brought in digital innovative measures to be brought into this House. We are here talking about a new Speaker, who has already carried out successfully and admirably well the duties of Deputy Speaker in the past. So, what we are seeing today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by the Opposition, of course, is just another addition to the list of *Iznogoud* when they are in Opposition.

This is the sole objective of this Motion of No Confidence, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. They talked about respect. They talked about how the provisions of the law were not respected. Their own colleagues, previous Speakers of this august Assembly, have come forward and said, No, in fact, you, Members of Opposition, are wrong; all the legal ways have been respected in the election of this new Speaker. So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not going to dwell too long on the embarrassment that is the Opposition and what they are trying to achieve.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a motion that has resoundingly been rejected by the population who is following these debates – resoundingly. So, I do not think there is an iota of doubt that, at best, this motion is merely a ploy to gain some political brownie points, but at worst, it is characteristic of the abhorrent ploy of the Opposition. The Opposition, today, has come to this House, like I said, to gain some political survival, to obtain some serum. I heard hon. Shakeel Mohamed, earlier on, saying *papa-piti*.

The Deputy Speaker: He withdrew it!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I mean, how debasing is that?

The Deputy Speaker: I asked him to withdraw it, don't...

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: No, but he did make the reference.

The Deputy Speaker: He has withdrawn it. It is no longer part of the...

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I speak under your correction. Before hon. Shakeel Mohamed, how many of the Members of the Opposition have made reference to the new Speaker being the son of a Member of this Parliament?

The Deputy Speaker: Don't question me, hon. Minister!

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order.

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I am not...

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order. I am sorry, Sir, I never...

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Wait! Wait! Wait! I recognised you... Wait! Wait!

Hon. Minister!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I asked him to withdraw. I am not tolerating any more reference to *papa-piti* or whatever it is. Okay?

Mr Mohamed: But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I got a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: I am coming to you!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Now!

Mr Mohamed: When I said father and son, as opposed to the creole version....

The Deputy Prime Minister: Which Standing Order, please?

Mr Mohamed: When I said father and son, I never referred to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I never said the Speaker. I meant Sir Anerood Jugnauth and Pravind Jugnauth.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no! It is not a point of order.

Mr Mohamed: That is when I withdrew it.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Inacceptable *sa!*

The Deputy Speaker: It is not a point of order. It is a point of clarification.

Go on Minister, please!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you for allowing me to continue. I am going to conclude, but once again, I reiterate: it is not in order, it is not proper, it is not gentlemanly, and it is unbecoming to make reference because we are all *pitis* of our *papas*. Well, at least, Members on this side of the House can claim to be *pitis* of our *papas*. And I am of the

firm belief that this Motion of No Confidence has only been brought to the Table of this august Assembly in an attempt of the Opposition de *se refaire un peu la virginité* after the MMM, their leader of their coalition having kicked out, booted out the PMSD from their coalition. Like I said now, PMSD is no good.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we speak about the Motion of No Confidence, when we speak about *la loi*, the law according to which this Parliament operates, the Standing Orders, the National Assembly Act, all the laws pertaining to where we are sitting today, it would have been extremely important that this other *piti* of her *papa* would have learnt a bit, have done her homework before coming in here and purporting and yelling outside the Assembly that we are violating our Constitution, and this is somebody who has recently passed the bar. We ask ourselves whether it is *Bar Chacha* she has passed. I do not know!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to, very resoundingly and unequivocally, say that we, on this side of the House, are definitely not going to be supporting this motion. In fact, I reiterate what hon. Ganoo has said: there is no motion. This is just a show; there are some clowns who have thought that this Parliament can be turned into a circus, and we will have none of that.

Long live the Republic of Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much! Did I rightly hear – you said, there are no clowns? Did you use the word ‘clowns’ in reference? You should withdraw it!

Mrs Koonjoo-Shah: I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much!

Hon. Xavier-Luc Duval!

(11.29 p.m.)

Mr X. L. Duval (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to be so cool, you will not believe it.

The Deputy Speaker: I am really looking for it to get cool!

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, we look forward because, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this motion is so *fizet*. It is even worse than the worst PNQ ever that I have heard in my life this afternoon, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, I am going to be very cool because there is not much to answer to my colleagues or my friends from both sides of the House, including Mr Mohamed. I have said what needs to be said. Some have descended below the belt but that is only to be expected of the MMM, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And also, the Leader of the Opposition was not so kind as he ought to have been.

Nevertheless, I want to congratulate Mr Speaker, hon. Adrien Duval. I note that a lot of well-thinking Members here have not taken part in this debate. Don't be fooled; they have not taken part because they have not wanted to be associated with this motion of the Leader of the Opposition, most of them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The new Speaker has brought a breath of fresh air. Like it or not, that is a fact, and the people of Mauritius realise that. The new Speaker has brought serenity and peace to this House, which has suffered for such a long time. I take my hat off to him; he has been able to keep calm; I would not have kept calm. He has been able to keep cool; I would not have kept cool. Even in the face of the most calamitous attacks that you can imagine, a young man of 34 years old has never attacked anyone in this House, never been subjected to such demeaning words, hurtful words from people. And they are *kapon*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I will tell you why they are *kapon*. They attack the Speaker because they fear attacking the Prime Minister. That is why they have attacked subsequent Speakers, because they fear to attack people who can hit back, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! I said I would keep calm; I am sorry about that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now, I think it was during the Leader of the Opposition's intervention that you said that you will ask him to remove; you will remove from Hansard whatever has not been substantiated. I, therefore, raise a few issues that have not been substantiated.

Meeting – there was in the north, yes. Political meeting? No, not at all! That was one meeting with the MSM, and then there was another meeting with the Labour Party. These were sponsored activities by big firms. Have you ever seen people putting up banners and then saying this is a political meeting? There were civil servants there, lots of people there, and as Speaker, he should be there. And he will be there, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Now, whatever some people may think or say, he has shared a transport. He has a government car now. He never shared any transport, and even if he had, what would have been the problem? But here, we have some *bay louke* to look at transport.

The Deputy Speaker: Withdraw that!

Mr X. L. Duval: I am not talking about anyone. Did I say anything on any Member?

The Deputy Speaker: Who is '*bay louke*'?

Mr X. L. Duval: I am thinking outside of the Parliament as *bay louke*. Many *bay louke* outside of the Parliament.

Now, someone raised in this House that the Speaker has been talking in the ear of a Mr R.S. I did not know. I found out who this Mr R.S. is. This is not true! But is this a matter to bring to this House? I haven't talked to the Prime Minister about it; I say it, though, that this is some part of a deal. It is not! The Prime Minister, to his credit, never put any conditions on the appointment of the Speaker, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir – to his credit. I must admit that I was myself surprised by this. He did not, and I have greater respect because of that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Now, the fact about hon. Armance, by the Leader of the Opposition, who never does his homework, he goes and says in this House that it is the new Speaker who nominated hon. Armance for a mission. He should apologise! It was done by the previous Speaker. The previous Speaker! He never does his homework. He comes and goes without ever doing any homework!

I will raise this, hopefully, *Inshallah*, if my motion comes! We will raise this.

The Deputy Speaker: *Inshallah* means God's wish. You will have to translate *Inshallah*.
It...

Mr X. L. Duval: No, I don't! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you don't understand it, I am very sorry for you!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: But you cannot use a language outside...

Mr X. L. Duval: Very sorry if you don't understand it!

The Deputy Speaker: No, don't be so rude!

Mr X. L. Duval: Sorry about that!

The Deputy Speaker: No, don't be so rude!

Mr X. L. Duval: With me, you don't joke! With me, you don't joke! You come straight! I am straight, you come straight!

The Deputy Speaker: *Inshallah* (If Allah wills).

Sure!

Mr X. L. Duval: Okay? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these guys should be praising the new Speaker, should be praising him to heaven! Drawing of lots – what have we not seen in the press? That for the drawing of lots, it was the Clerk and the previous Speaker who were messing around with the venerable questions of the hon. Members. He changed it overnight. From now on, it's all clear-cut like before. Did you hear the Leader of the Opposition mention that? That is bias! That is what bias is all about.

Now, what about committee rooms? The hon. Leader of the Opposition is a much undignified champion of having his press conferences by the Victoria Statue! The new Speaker, thinking not of him but of the decorum of the House, that they should be back to where we were before. Even though you were attacking him, calamitous attacks, his greatness of mind: use the Committee Room. It's the previous Speaker who had abolished the need to do that. Did you see any Members in this House thank him?

The third thing: Members who have been named – I have never been named since my election here – I will come to some Members who have been named so many times. They now can have access to the premises, park their cars, and use the library. I doubt if they ever use the library, but they can use the library if they want!

Now, questions on local authorities. This was dubious whether it should be allowed or not. Again, in a spirit of goodwill, let the hon. Minister answer questions: how many lorries are broken down? As if it's his responsibility, which it is not, but still, the Minister has to answer now. Do you see anyone thanking the new Speaker?

Of course, Parliament needs to be brought into the new era. I think one Member was talking about a webinar and didn't understand what it was. But webinars are what is happening all the time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, bring the use of AI to automatically translate what we are saying into French and into English for a start. Bring AI so that people can question, just like you go on ChatGPT and you question what is this, what is that, you can go and question how a motion is prepared and other things.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he has given additional time for PNQs. The useless PNQs are given additional time now! They are given additional time! He never gets any point across, but he is given additional time to make a fool of himself!

Hon. Members: Ha, ha ha!

Mr X. L. Duval: He is also a fool, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Hon. Members: Ha, ha ha!

The Deputy Speaker: No! No!

Mr X. L. Duval: You want me to withdraw it? I withdraw it. I withdraw it before you ask.

The Deputy Speaker: No! No!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a question was even allowed on the overseas travel of the previous Speaker. These are things, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from someone who has been attacked from the start and nevertheless...

You have seen him in the Chair. He does not have any anger against any of these Members. He doesn't have any! This person, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hearing all this rubbish people are talking about, how hurtful is it to hear that? I thank the Members of the Opposition who have not taken part, who have shown that they are decent people. I thank them! I will never cease to thank them. Even hon. Mohamed was decent in his speech, and I thank him for that. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have the same words for the Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, therefore, he has done many things.

Obviously, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a lot of theatre. The Speaker lives a lonely life in the UK, but that is the UK! Here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the Opposition today tells me that they will not stand against an Adrien Duval, if ever he stands in a campaign for the election, then he won't go anywhere. But it's not the case, is it? They are not going to say to Adrien Duval, 'You have been a Speaker for a few months, and we are not going to stand against you in the Parliament now that you are automatically elected.' Why don't they do that? They don't do that! But they want the other side; they want their cake and eat it too. They want their cake and eat it too! It's not going to be like that! It's not going to be like that!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they say, 'The Speaker lives a lonely life, and he must not go anywhere.' But have you ever seen in the UK the spectacle that we saw here?

Hon. Members: Hmmm!

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: Talking about *soûlard*, talking about all sorts of horrible things! Even the ladies were talking about that! Do you think that would have happened in the UK? Does hon. Mohamed ever think that this spectacle would have happened in the House of Commons?

The Prime Minister: Shame!

Mr X. L. Duval: So, you are asking the Speaker to hold up the banner of the UK's Speaker, but at the same time, here, people act as cheap hooligans? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no, it is not possible!

I tell you this, and the hon. Leader of the Opposition should know that, if they thought they could attack Speaker Phokeer and nobody would answer, it's not going to happen like this! You choose to attack the Speaker? Why? Because he cannot answer back! There is nothing more cowardly, nothing more cowardly in our politics, than to attack someone who cannot answer you back! He can just suspend you; that's all he can say! You go out; that's it! And you have insulted him.

But that's not going to happen like that! This is why I have put the motion next week, hopefully. I don't know when and if it is ever going to come. Because it is cowardly, and I don't like cowards, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! I don't like cowards!

Mr Nuckcheddy: We too!

Mr X. L. Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what about engaging in politics? Where does it say it? In which part of the law? This was amended by the Labour Party and MMM. My father was Leader of the Opposition in 1996. Please, show me, I beg you, which part of the law says that the Speaker should not engage in politics or should not be a candidate?

We have had Speakers as candidates. I was elected the same year as Dr. Arvin Boolell in 1987, and Mr Ajay Daby was the Speaker. You should hear his speeches at that time against the MMM, who were adversaries and still are. You should hear! He was Speaker!

You, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if they wanted to appoint you as Speaker, would you then have said you will not ever go anywhere and you will stay at home?

The Deputy Speaker: That's outside the ambit of the debate!

Mr X. L. Duval: That's outside, okay! That's outside. I will withdraw that.

The Deputy Speaker: I am not aware; nobody approached me to propose me as the Speaker. Nobody approached me! Anybody can say anything.

Mr X. L. Duval: No, I am not saying approach you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. But the hon. Leader of the Opposition said so in his speech. He said so!

The Deputy Speaker: It is inadmissible...

Mr X. L. Duval: That's why I am raising it! If he had not raised it, I would not have raised it. You are a member of ML, I think. What would have happened then?

Now, why did we ask Adrien to resign from the instances of the party? Not because we thought it was illegal, but we did not want him to come under the influence of the control of any member or of any instance in the party. That is why he is not in the *bureau politique*. Because in a *bureau politique*, more or less, you all have to listen to what the leader says or what the *bureau politique* decides. He is not there anymore. He is not in the *exécutif* either, not because he is not allowed to by some law.

If the government wanted to make the Speaker someone who would ever have a stand again, firstly, nobody would have taken the job, especially not at 34 years old. Secondly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they did not do it. It's not in the law. So, don't talk about things that are not in the law.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us go to some of the other issues. I will not be so long. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was this rowdiness here, which was a shame. And then they say the Speaker should never answer. No, no, no, he must not answer. You go and tell him any rubbish, and he does not answer, and I am just mentioning one thing on this issue of drawing of lots regarding the question. You heard all the *tamtam* that there was.

When they were invited, and I know this from the Government Whip, when they were invited to witness, and they even put the integrity of the Clerk into question, and when they were invited to come and witness the drawing of lots for the question, nobody came. They were busy; twice, not once, twice. Two weeks in a row they did not come; they were too busy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, now what about me wanting to move? I am not just anyone; I am not a proud person, but I happen to have been a Deputy Prime Minister. I have 30 years or more in this House. I was their revered Leader of the Opposition for six years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I am not going to sit up there and let someone else come and sit in my place. If I understand correctly, the hon. Members of the Opposition, who I think are in alliance, I am not sure if they are in alliance; they would be very happy to sit wherever they want. They say it is communal because I am sitting behind the Leader of the Opposition, and I think there is *no égalité des chances*. I cannot sit behind the Leader of the Opposition because it is communal.

That is what they say all the time; it is communal. But swap between themselves, let the hon. Bérenger sit there next to his friend, and so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, do not dwell on communal.

Mr X. L. Duval: No, *mais*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you must be clear on one thing. They raised the seating issue many times, many times! As if that was the issue, why this gentleman, who never comes, has not come.

The Deputy Speaker: No, I am sure.

Mr X. L. Duval: Now, I am allowed to respond to this to say that they have been given the chance to move around

An hon. Member: *Premier Minis si in dir banla.*

Mr X. L. Duval: They have refused to move around, keeping the political point like the question that they have a problem with seating, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, I presume you are going to stop me in moment; you are looking at your watch.

The Deputy Speaker: It is past the time, yes. It is past the time. I will give you two more minutes

Mr X. L. Duval: Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will not go into this. There is one thing that has been raised also in this House that I was rude to hon. Bhagwan but, hon. Bhagwan did not say how he was addressing the Speaker who was in the Chair. You have heard of how the Speaker should be apolitical, but then, what about honourable Members? I was rude to him, and then, out of my own volition because nobody heard it, I apologised. I told him to come and sit here; he refused. I was not upset with him, but you cannot break the rules and get upset when your neighbour – and I did not even have hon. Armance next to me; I would have felt safer. I was alone, but still I said, come and sit here. I am not against you, but do not insult the Speaker and then get upset when we get insulted.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will finish with this. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just to say that people are attacking, and I will say this: I hope hon. Speaker is listening. People are attacking the Speaker not because he is incompetent, not because he is lazy, not because he cannot do the job, but precisely the opposite: because they fear him. They fear that he will be too good for the job. They fear that he may affect their electoral chances, and they are willing to go

to any step, down in the gutter if they need to, just to protect their ambition to become some sort of government in the future, and we need to make sure this does not happen, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I do not know about you, but I need a break for about 10 minutes.

At 11.49 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 00.13 a.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Please be seated!

Hon. Minister Ramdhany, please!

(00.12 a.m.)

The Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms (Dr. A. Ramdhany): Good morning, and thank you...

The Deputy Speaker: Good morning to you as well.

Dr. Ramdhany: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for allowing me to bring my contribution.

Such a thought-provoking theme for the Members of the Opposition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I wanted to clarify to the Leader of the Opposition, he showed many photos, but he did not say that he is the Leader of the Opposition, he is not the Leader of the MSM party or alliances. He will not decide who will get tickets or who will not get tickets in this party, and he should see if he will get a ticket in his own party. Firstly, there is one incident that struck the parliamentary history, *du jamais-vu*. Allow me to put it into perspective, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

La nomination d'Adrien Duval en tant que speaker de l'Assemblée nationale le jeudi 18 juillet a suscité un débat intense sur la légalité. Pour l'opposition, la nomination du *Speaker* était anticonstitutionnelle et illégale.

All belonging to the Labour Party, the MMM and *Les Nouveaux Démocrates* continually hindered the proceedings by screaming and making loud and noisy interruptions. Scandalous slogans and insults were proffered in an attempt to impugn the very legitimacy of the election of the Speaker and to hamper its due process. This behaviour was intended to undermine the integrity of the constitutional office of the Speaker and the dignity of the National Assembly as a

whole. At the same time, these members caused irredeemable damage to the image of the nation in the eyes of the world.

J'ai entendu Paul Bérenger dans une conférence de presse qui stipulait que « La *Clerk* de l'Assemblée et le *Leader of the House* sont complices. » Il faut rappeler à la Chambre, surtout de l'autre côté, que la *Clerk* présidait la séance en conformité avec la législation. Il faut faire ressortir que les protestataires disaient qu'il fallait appliquer la section 50 de la Constitution.

The Deputy Speaker: No! No! Hon. Minister Dr. Ramdhany, this is clear. The election process of Mr Speaker is not contested.

Dr. Ramdhany: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I ...

The Deputy Speaker: If it has to be contested, it has to be done by a court.

Dr. Ramdhany: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to show something to the House that *de ce fait, cette clause précise que quand le Speaker est absent et que le Deputy Speaker qui préside la séance est aussi absent, alors, il faut voter une personne qui n'est pas un ministre pour y présider.*

On that particular day, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was no Speaker given the fact that Mr Phokeer had resigned. In this view, section 32 (1) applies where it states "when the post of the Speaker is vacant," *il est impeccable que la procédure décrite dans la section 32(4) qui régit la nomination d'un speaker soit appliquée.*

Selon la Constitution, après la démission d'un *Speaker*, il est obligatoire pour la majorité parlementaire d'élire un successeur. Par conséquent, après le départ de monsieur Phokeer, le Parlement devait siéger et il était le devoir du *Leader of the House* de venir avec un *Order Paper* avec l'élection d'un nouveau Speaker.

Et, M. le président, c'est la première fois que quelqu'un de *general population* est devenu *Speaker* dans cette *House*.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: What is this about?

The Deputy Speaker: No! No!

Mr Mohamed: What is this about?

Dr. Ramdhany: Félicitations au *Speaker*. Ce qu'a fait l'opposition ...

Mr Mohamed: Shame!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order!

Mr Mohamed: Shame!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Mohamed: Why shame; you wouldn't understand it!

Mr Osman Mahomed: *Ala li re zoure enkor!*

Mr Mohamed: You will never understand it.

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Mohamed: *Zoure si to le ! Dir li for!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Mohamed: *Dir li for!*

The Deputy Speaker: No, hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: He is swearing at me!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Again...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Osman Mahomed: And you are tolerating ...

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Minister Dr. Ramdhany, *vous frôlez le communalisme ! Je ne veux pas de cela dans...*

Dr. Ramdhany: Ce n'est pas du *communalisme*. C'est la première fois dans cette Assemblée...

The Deputy Speaker: I don't need an answer from you! I am just telling you; I am reminding you. *Je ne veux pas qu'on frôle le communalisme dans cette Chambre !*

Dr. Ramdhany: Okay!

Ce qu'a fait l'opposition est du jamais vu, M. président ! Face, tu perds, pile, je gagne. L'opposition constitue des politiciens malandrins qui cherchent toujours à avoir raison, mais cette fois-ci, ils se sont relevés sous leur vrai jour. À la manière des véritables amateurs, ils se sont laissés piéger dans leurs propres manigances. En s'attaquant à l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval et à l'honorable Adrien Duval jeudi dernier au Parlement, ils ont mis à jour leurs propres incohérences.

Heureusement pour la population, le MSM a introduit le service *Parliamentary TV*, permettant à tous de suivre en direct la démagogie flagrante de ces personnages comme l'honorable Paul Bérenger, Dr. Arvin Boolell, Rajesh Bhagwan. Les trois députés les plus anciens de l'Assemblée nationale qui distillent leurs critiques depuis une décennie pour l'honorable Dr. Boolell et près de 20 ans pour le tandem, l'honorable Bérenger-Bhagwan.

Ils doivent probablement détenir un record mondial du *longest sitting Opposition Member*. S'il existait un tel classement, ils en seraient des champions '*Made in Moris*'. Par ailleurs, ce trio est également dans le top 5 des députés les plus souvent expulsés du Parlement depuis 2019 pour mauvaise conduite. Au cumul, l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan et Paul Bérenger totalisent ensemble 76 suspensions et ont été déjà nommés 17 fois.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Dr. Ramdhany: Il n'est pas nécessaire de préciser que l'honorable Ms Joanna Bérenger...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister...

Mr Mohamed: *Steve, to zorey pa pe fermal?*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Please I will ask you to take some fresh air too. Do you want some?

Mr Mohamed: No! No!

The Deputy Speaker: Not yet! Alright, do not attack! Substantive motion...

Dr. Ramdhany: I will substantiate.

The Deputy Speaker: Substantive motion to attack the character and conduct of Members.

Dr. Ramdhany: I am substantiating afterwards, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Non, vous ne comprenez pas ! Substantive motion is different from substantiating!

Dr. Ramdhany: *Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir*, il est nécessaire de préciser que l'honorable Ms Joanna Bérenger a été suspendue 30 fois et a été nommée à cette reprise. À ce rythme-là, la fille de Paul Bérenger pourrait surpasser l'honorable Bhagwan et revendiquer...

Mr Bhagwan: *Koz bon koze !*

The Deputy Speaker: *Non ! Non !* Hold on! Hold it! Hold your horse!

(Interruptions)

Hold it!

An hon. Member: *Pa so tifi sa?*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Anjiv Ramdhany ...

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Kan koz lor Bérenger, komunal !*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Anjiv Ramdhany, your mic is not even on!

(Interruptions)

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Twa ki batiara!*

Mr Bhagwan: *Twa ki batiara!*

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Twa ki batiara! Get dan ...*

The Deputy Speaker: I can see all of you, all that you are saying and you are doing! Come back in a little bit! Because I don't appreciate using the word 'B' in this Chamber. Do you think it is fair? It is becoming from you?

An hon. Member: *Hon. Bhagwan sa!*

The Deputy Speaker: Please, go out! And you come back in a little bit.

Mr Nuckcheddy: For how long?

The Deputy Speaker: I will tell you! I will inform the Serjeant-at-Arms when I am ready to receive you!

Hon. Minister, with all due respect, we maintain a minimum decorum. I don't want this *papa-tifi, papa-garson*. What is going on?

Dr. Ramdhany: I did not say *papa-tifi* !

The Deputy Speaker: Non! J'ai résumé ce que vous essayez de dire.

Dr. Ramdhany: Okay ! C'est vous qui l'a dit, M. le président, *papa-tifi*.

The Deputy Speaker: Non, *do not challenge me!*

Dr. Ramdhany: It is matter of fact that this very procedure is not is not a first one.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, les membres de l'opposition hurlaient illégalement dans l'hémicycle, alors qu'il n'y a rien d'illégal dans l'élection d'un non-élu au poste de *Speaker*.

Mais, M. le président, il s'agit simplement d'un règlement de compte contre l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval, car ce dernier a quitté leur alliance de l'opposition. M. le président, cela a déjà été gravé dans l'histoire parlementaire. Aucun *Speaker* n'a subi une telle insulte et n'a vécu ce qu'Adrien Duval a ressenti. Mais quelle honte !

We often heard the Members of the Opposition saying pas de « démocratie parlementaire. » C'est donc le MMM et le PTR qui avaient dans le passé fermé le Parlement pendant neuf mois. Comment osez-vous parler de la démocratie, M. le président ?

Mr Speaker Sir, the Members of the other side of the House disobeyed the order for suspension from the service of the Assembly imposed upon them, which is yet another unprecedented occurrence in our Parliament. Despite their suspensions, at the Sitting of 18 July 2024, they forcefully made their way to the door of the Chamber in breach of the Standing Orders, whilst they were not allowed to have access to any parts of the precincts of the House on a Sitting day.

Mais quelle audace, M. le président ! Et cela continue, M. le président. When refused access, the three suspended hon. Members stated that they had received a convocation to attend the Sitting.

The Deputy Speaker: No! What does that have to do with the Motion of No Confidence? Mr Speaker was not even appointed at that time!

Dr. Ramdhany: What a shame, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Let me come to another fact. As Minister of the Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reform, I highly condemn any insinuations vis-à-vis any civil public officers since they are the backbone of our country pour *le bon déroulement de notre système*. I further wish to extend my gratitude to the Clerk of the Assembly for her endearing work.

D'ailleurs, M. le président, le *Speaker* était également présent, comme l'honorable leader de l'opposition l'a dit, pour le *Prize Giving Ceremony* de l'*International Karate Organisation*

Tournament 2024, où il y avait des membres de l'opposition, l'honorable Ehsan Juman, l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad et aussi un officier dans sa fonction officielle comme fonctionnaire qui s'appelle monsieur Beejan.

The Deputy Speaker: No! Do not use name of those who are not present here.

Dr. Ramdhany: Monsieur N. B. qui était présent là-bas est le candidat pour l'alliance parti Travailleiste-MMM, l'alliance *galimatia*, mais il était présent là-bas ! Mais, M. le leader *of the Opposition did not say anything about this. Why? Because they are protecting someone else. All I can say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the Members of the Opposition have gone beyond the limits of indecency in the temple of democracy.*

Ils sont frustrés de voir une personne représentant la jeunesse. Cette évolution est comme une opportunité pour élargir et moderniser les institutions parlementaires et d'ailleurs, le *Speaker* a annoncé la mise en application de l'intelligence artificielle à l'Assemblée nationale. L'objectif est de permettre à tout le monde de suivre les travaux parlementaires en tenant compte de l'ère de la technologie.

M. le président, je déplore les grotesques mensonges qui ont actuellement été véhiculés.

Firstly, I shall address the issue of a politically orchestrated character assassination from the Opposition Whip. On a newspaper article on l'Express dated Tuesday 30 July 2024, the president of the Labour Party, *l'honorable* Patrick Assirvaden –

« dit détenir des informations selon lesquelles Adrien Duval a même voyagé dans la voiture d'Anjiv Ramdhany en compagnie de Roshan Santokhee. »

Mais il n'y a pas de preuves pour cela. Ils ne peuvent pas prouver ces points-là.

I would like to invite the hon. Member to give more explicit details on the following averment that he purported to the media. I wish to reiterate to the House, the entire population, this has never happened. The Speaker of the Assembly is being entrusted with the highest responsibilities of the legislature and is working diligently, ensuring that fairness and equity prevail at all times.

De plus, je voudrais attirer l'attention sur les mots prononcés par le whip de l'opposition, qui, dans son discours, a lancé qu'un politicien doit avoir un peu de moralité. C'est ainsi la définition de moralité, M. le président ? De mentir ?

Besides, I am grateful for the confidence the Prime Minister has put in me, and I have the privilege of serving the nation as the Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms, and I hereby vouch neither to retreat amidst the character assassination and to continue working for the betterment of all Mauritians.

But before finishing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there will be another Member who will talk after me, l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan. Je veux dire quelque chose avant qu'il parle. Pour comprendre l'origine de ce conflit, il est utile de remonter plus d'une décennie en arrière, durant le mandat de Sir Ramesh Jeewoolall en tant que Speaker de l'Assemblée. Des tensions similaires étaient déjà présentes. Il semblait que l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan ait toujours eu des différends avec l'autorité du Speaker, peu importe l'individu occupant ce poste.

Le terme « haine » est fort, mais il reflète bien le niveau d'hostilité perçu dans l'interaction de l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan avec les différents *Speakers*. Même l'ancienne *Speaker*, Maya Hanoomanjee, n'a pas été épargnée par les critiques de l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan. Cette attitude récurrente soulève des questions sur la motivation de l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan.

Au lieu de se concentrer sur son rôle de représentant du peuple, l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan semble souvent se retrouver dans des vifs échanges. Je constate aussi que l'honorable Bhagwan a un bilan bien rempli de *walk-outs*, de suspensions, d'expulsions au sein de l'hémicycle.

The Deputy Speaker: What does that...

Dr. Ramdhany: Et si c'était un *Speaker* issu de la famille mauve, peut-être que le ton serait différent.

Merci, *Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir*, pour votre attention.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. You are the only Member who respected 15 minutes. Thank you very much!

Hon. Bhagwan, please!

(00.28 a.m.)

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Merci, M. le président. Je ne vais pas répondre à l'honorable Dr. Ramdhany parce que moi, j'ai un électorat, et c'est l'électorat qui me juge, porte le jugement sur mon action. Et quoi qu'il ait pu dire, mon électorat, l'électorat de ma circonscription et aussi de l'honorable Quirin m'a toujours fait confiance, et je suis sûr que dans quelques mois, lorsque les élections générales vont arriver, je serai ici et peut-être pas lui.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, je ne suis pas arrogant. J'étais tranquille depuis ce matin. Beaucoup ont observé, j'ai bien écouté avec beaucoup d'attention tout ce que les membres du gouvernement ont dit dans leurs interventions.

M. le président, après le discours du troisième député de Belle Rose-Quatre Bornes, l'honorable Duval, chaudement applaudi par les membres du gouvernement lorsqu'il a dit qu'il faut faire tout pour empêcher l'alliance Parti travailliste-MMM-Nouveaux Démocrates de remporter les élections. J'espère que pour la prochaine séance de l'Assemblée nationale, il va se mettre de l'autre côté de la Chambre avec le gouvernement.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, je n'ai pas interrompu...

The Deputy Speaker: No, look at me! Look at me! Look at me!

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, l'honorable Duval, j'étais beaucoup peiné par les commentaires qu'il a faits sur son collègue de la circonscription, l'honorable Dr. Arvin Boolell qui, je crois sincèrement, ne mérite pas les mots qui ont été prononcés par l'honorable Duval à son égard et je ne veux pas faire mention des mots qu'il a dits sur l'honorable Dr. Boolell.

M. le président, j'ai aussi écouté l'honorable Duval parler du désordre qu'on a fait et beaucoup d'autres membres. *Me zot kone ki arive dan Lok Sabha ?* L'honorable Ganoo a fait mention de Lok Sabha. Allez voir combien de *walk-out*, combien de manifestations, combien de fois le Lok Sabha, même le Rajya Sabha a été renvoyé parce que c'est la plus grande démocratie ; c'est notre droit de venir manifester. *Pa riye Ganoo ! Pa riye ! C'est comme cela ! Pa fer boufon ar mwa !*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, c'est le Lok Sabha...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Address me...

Mr Bhagwan: ...est une référence.

Mr Nuckcheddy: Hooligan!

Mr Bhagwan: Allez prendre l'exemple, allez voir ce qui se passe le jour du Lok Sabha et du Rajya Sabha, le nombre de fois que les membres de l'opposition – aujourd'hui le *Congress Party* et les autres – comment ils font leur manifestation à l'entrée, à l'intérieur de la Chambre, même en brandissant des pancartes.

M. le président, l'honorable Duval a aussi fait mention lorsqu'il parle du *Speaker*. Pas même qu'il y avait un peu de décence ! Il parlait à chaque fois d'Adrien, Adrien. Je croyais que c'est le papa qui parle ou l'honorable Duval ?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no!

Mr Bhagwan: Le *Speaker* a un nom : Adrien Duval, et j'y ai porté beaucoup d'attention. À chaque fois, Adrien, Adrien, Adrien. Adrien, c'est à Grand Gaube, à la maison. Ici, c'est le *Speaker* et il y a l'honorable Adrien Duval. Il a un titre : l'honorable Adrien Duval.

M. le président, l'honorable Duval a aussi fait mention d'un incident qui s'est produit mardi dernier. Comment cela s'est passé ? C'est pour cette raison précise que, moi, je voterai pour cette motion de *no confidence*. À un certain moment, lorsque l'honorable Shakeel Mohamed, le *Speaker* avec une certaine autorité, a demandé à l'honorable Shakeel Mohamed d'*apologise* – on peut le revoir sur le *Parliament TV*. Je n'ai pas été dur ; le ton avec lequel le *Speaker* a demandé à l'honorable Shakeel Mohamed d'*apologise*, cela m'a rappelé l'honorable Phokeer, l'ancien *Speaker* Phokeer. Et c'est pour cela que j'ai dit '*be pe fer mwa rapel Phokeer*'. Je n'ai pas été brutal, je n'ai pas été une brute, et c'est à ce moment qu'il a dit des jurons.

The Deputy Speaker: No, no!

Mr Bhagwan: Qu'il a *apologise* après, j'accepte.

The Deputy Speaker: Non, les jurons...

Mr Bhagwan: Non, M. le président, parce qu'il a fait mention de cela, et je dis mon opinion. C'est par cette action que le *Speaker*, pour moi, s'est disqualifié. Il n'a pas montré son impartialité. À plusieurs reprises, je lui ai dit, c'est sur Hansard : '*talk to your father*', '*your father is threatening me*'. À aucun moment, j'ai même demandé un droit de parole. Il m'a refusé, et c'est *on record*, M. le président, *Parliament TV* et Hansard.

M. le président, aujourd'hui ce qui s'est passé dans cette Chambre : 'Ah Bérenger, Joanna Bérenger' *zot per ! Zot per !*

(Interruptions)

Bwat tapaz ! Zot per ! Zot communal ! Kontign kriye mem, nou inn' gagn immunite lor la. Nou pa pou gagn traka, we are immune! Bérenger is immune! Joanna Bérenger is immune!

M. le président, quand Alan Ganoo a terminé son discours, il a dit, *zot pou gagn batay. Bate zot pou gagne ! Pa batay, bate bef ! Ale atan ! Al partaz molton em, bate bef to pou gagne !*

The Deputy Speaker: No, what does that have to do?

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, il a terminé là-dessus.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Al bwar lysol! Al bwar lysol!*

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président...

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: ...*zot per sa laliens la!*

An hon. Member: *Bwar lysol!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: *To kone ki mo pe dir twa! NSS dir twa to dan tasse...*

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: *...saem to pe pran sa 5 sou la!*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: *Yes, M. le président. Je vais revenir...*

The Deputy Speaker: I...

Mr Bhagwan: Je vais revenir, M. le président...

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Bwar lysol!*

The Deputy Speaker: One second! One second!

Mr Bhagwan: Oui.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, address me!

Mr Bhagwan: I am being provoked...

The Deputy Speaker: Address me! Address me!

Mr Bhagwan: ...I will be replying...

Mr Ganoo: You mentioned my name.

Mr Bhagwan: I am being provoked.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: But he mentioned...

Mr Bhagwan: I am being provoked.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister Ganoo!

Mr Bhagwan: I was replying to what you have said.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister Ganoo, you have been Speaker.

Mr Bhagwan: I was replying to what you have said: *to pou gagn lager*.

The Deputy Speaker: No!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ki lager pou gagne?*

The Deputy Speaker: What are you doing? Both of you, gentlemen, address me, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: I am listening very attentively, you know.

Mr Bhagwan: Of course. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: So, address to me!

Mr Bhagwan: Merci.

An hon. Member: *Lysol!*

Mr Bhagwan: *Wa, dir to lysol! Mo ena 5-6 fioles pou twa! Vini ! To pou bwar !*

The Deputy Speaker: Who said that? Who said that?

Mr Bhagwan: Somebody else there.

An hon. Member: Who is the somebody else?

Mr Bhagwan: Nuckcheddy or somebody else.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no! He does not know! Don't go on slippery matters!

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo immune ar sa! Dir ki kantite to dir! Mo pena problem pou twa mwa!*

M. le président, j'ai écouté attentivement les débats depuis le début de cet après-midi et je peux vous assurer qu'en 40 ans de vécu parlementaire – quoi qu'ils puissent dire, j'ai été élu à chaque fois et je le serais encore – je ne pense pas avoir été témoin d'une séance inspirée – pas par vous – et adaptée aussi méthodiquement du théâtre de l'absurdité. Tous ceux qui nous regardent, M. le président, la population, nous discutons, c'est *live*. Allez voir sur Facebook. Allez voir !

Mr X. L. Duval: Nobody is watching!

Mr Bhagwan: I am not talking to you, hon. Duval.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Duval!

Mr Bhagwan: I am not talking to you.

Mr X. L. Duval: I am sorry. I take a walk?

Mr Bhagwan: Please, I am not talking to you.

The Deputy Speaker: No, I am not asking you to take a walk. I am asking you to be responsible!

Mr Bhagwan: Venez écouter le *meeting* à La Louise, *I'll talk to you. Vinn La Louise, mo pou koz lor twa !*

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no! Don't address him!

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, yes.

M. le président, tous ceux qui nous regardent et nous écoutent, la population sait déjà le jeu politique. *Fiansay inn' fer la ! Sa post Speaker la, fiansay sa ! Maryaz la pe vini !* Le Premier ministre le sait, M. le président.

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Pou invit ou dan chawtari !*

Mr Bhagwan: *Non, pa bizin ! Merci. Milion merci !*

M. le président, la population ne se soucie guère des points de droit ou du *Standing Orders*. Ce qu'elle sait, c'est que le président de la Chambre doit être un personnage important, qu'il soit un personnage important de l'État. Je crois que c'est le quatrième personnage de l'État. Il doit avoir une personnalité morale et sans tâche. C'est ce que la population veut et cherche. Et elle sait ce que nous avons aujourd'hui. Il doit incarner le respect. Un *Speaker* doit incarner le respect, la probité et la confiance. Est-ce que ce *Speaker* a la confiance de l'ensemble de la Chambre, M. le président ?

Hon. Members: *Oui !*

Mr Bhagwan: *Pa zot ki reponn! Le peuple le sait.*

Le Speaker doit être le serviteur impartial de l'Assemblée. Impartial?

An hon. Member: *Oui !*

Mr Bhagwan: Nous avons vu l'autre jour, M. le président. La population comprend trop bien la situation. Vous allez m'empêcher, mais c'est dans le *Hansard*, sur le *Parliament TV* ce que le Premier ministre avait dit. Vous allez m'empêcher de le dire, il a déploré une conduite criminelle. C'est le Premier ministre qui a dit cela.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you have already ruled...

Mr Bhagwan: This is what I am saying.

The Prime Minister: ...and you are allowing him now to continue and continue?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Prime Minister, I will have to listen to him first to be able to stop him. Please, allow me some time.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, c'est sur *Hansard*.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rajesh Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: *C'est sur Hansard.*

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Withdraw! Withdraw!

An hon. Member: Ask him to withdraw!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rajesh Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, don't dwell on matters which have already been ruled out!

Mr Bhagwan: Yes.

An hon. Member: And withdraw!

Mr Bhagwan: Withdraw?

The Deputy Speaker: Withdraw that word!

Mr Bhagwan: Withdraw what?

An hon. Member: He has to withdraw!

Mr Bhagwan: I will not withdraw. I won't say it again.

An hon. Member: *Ki pa withdraw!*

Mr Bhagwan: I won't say it again. *Eh*, you are not the Speaker!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: No, you withdraw! There is a ruling!

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: *Eh*, you are not the Speaker! He is not the Speaker!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: There is a ruling! You withdraw!

Mr Bhagwan: You are not the Speaker!

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: What 'I withdraw'?

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: I won't say it again.

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, la population de l'île Maurice veut le changement, le changement, ici, dans cette Chambre, changement d'attitude, pas d'arrogance, pas de corruption...

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Pas de dynastie !*

An hon. Member: *Get zot mem dan laglas!*

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Koz deal papa-tifi la!*

Mr Bhagwan: *Dir li dan mo figir, kifer ou pe kasiet?*

The Deputy Speaker: No! What are you doing, hon. Bhagwan? How many times should I tell you, if there is anything, address to me!

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, ce que je veux dire c'est que ce qui se ressemble s'assemble forcément. Regardez de l'autre côté !

(Interruptions)

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Get zot trouve!*

Mr Ameer Meea: *Eh ki pe arive sa!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Al fer gagn dizef apre ou koze !*

M. le président, la population refuse que le *speakership* soit offert comme cadeau suite aux fiançailles politiques. La population ne veut pas que l'Assemblée devienne 'l'Assem...bleue', parce qu'avec ce qui s'est passé et ce qui va se passer...

(Interruptions)

Non, mwa, touletan mo kombat li do mo kamwad!

An hon. Member: *Bleu la fatig twa!*

Mr Bhagwan: *Non, non, touletan mone manz li mwa! Touletan!*

An hon. Member: Address the Speaker!

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, aujourd'hui, nous sommes à la veille des élections générales. L'honorable Duval, en venant dire aujourd'hui que certaines choses ont changé, il a désavoué le gouvernement, parce que c'est le gouvernement qui avait mis l'ancien *loudspeaker* comme *Speaker*. C'est l'ancien gouvernement qui avait toléré l'ancien *Speaker*.

The Deputy Speaker: Relate it to...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: C'est l'honorable Duval qui...

The Deputy Speaker: Relate...

Mr Bhagwan: Vous l'avez laissé parler, M. le président. Il a fait état des changements.

The Deputy Speaker: Non!

Mr Bhagwan: Je fais état des changements.

The Deputy Speaker: Non, je n'ai pas de problème que vous faites...

Mr Bhagwan: Je suis en train de répondre, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Non, j'ai aucun problème...

Mr Bhagwan: Vous avez laissé à l'honorable Duval de dire ce qui a changé.

The Deputy Speaker: No, I know that. I know what he said. I have been listening to every single word attentively. What I am saying is, please, stick within the parameters...

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, I am sticking.

The Deputy Speaker: ...of the motion of no confidence against hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, je dois en quelques mots répondre à l'honorable Duval.

The Deputy Speaker: Je suis d'accord, mais....

Mr Bhagwan: Parce qu'il a parlé des changements qui ont été effectués par ce *Speaker* qui a été nommé, nous savons dans quelles circonstances. C'est à moi de venir lui répondre parce qu'il l'a dit juste avant moi. Les arguments avancés par...

The Deputy Speaker: Je vous écoute !

Mr Bhagwan: ...le troisième député de Quatre Bornes, c'est un désaveu au gouvernement qui a toléré l'ancien *Speaker* venant prendre des décisions drastiques contre les membres de l'opposition, brutales, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: *Non, non, non !* This is what I am trying to point out. What the other Speaker did, I know you are comparing it, but today, there is a motion against hon. Adrien Duval as to his conduct within the Chamber. This is what I want to hear!

Mr Bhagwan: I am...

The Deputy Speaker: Not that the previous Speaker was not...

Mr Bhagwan: No, but you have not prevented hon. Duval to say all these things, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: No, I know!

Mr Bhagwan: This is why I am rebutting.

The Deputy Speaker: I know you are rebutting!

Mr Bhagwan: We have been victims of the previous Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: As long it's certain lines. *Allez-y, continuez! Continuez!* Let us hear you.

(Interruptions)

Stay quiet! Let me listen!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Eh les mo koze, pou gagn lamerdman ar mwa ein! Ala mo pe dir!*

The Deputy Speaker: No!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo pa'nn interomp person!*

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, no, no, no, no!

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Bouncer ou!*

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo pa'nn interomp person mwa! Pe rod lamerdman! Pa ek mwa!*

The Deputy Speaker: No! I am not going to tolerate these, hon Members...

(Interruptions)

An hon. Member: *Bouncer!*

Mr Ameer Meea: *Banla pe tro aret aret li!*

The Deputy Speaker: I am not going to tolerate you threatening people! '*Pou gagn lamerdman' tousala*, withdraw it!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Apologise first!

Mr Bhagwan: ...every time...

The Deputy Speaker: No, withdraw it! End of matter!

Mr Bhagwan: Okay, I withdraw!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Apologise also!

Mrs Mayotte: Bouncer!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Apologise! *Menas nou!*

Mr Bhagwan: ...*fey lisou do matlo!*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy, one speaker at a time!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Ki zot gagn drwa menas nou!*

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, *this Speaker has right from the start set the wrong tone and started with the wrong footing*. En effet, au lieu de rechercher un consensus pour le bon fonctionnement de la Chambre, le Speaker n'a pas agréé aux demandes du leader de l'opposition.

Pour en revenir au *seating arrangement*, je prends comme exemple...

The Deputy Speaker: Two minutes!

Mr Bhagwan: I beg your pardon?

The Deputy Speaker: You have about two minutes.

Mr Bhagwan: Le *seating arrangement* avait été fait d'une façon machiavélique, communale par l'ancien Speaker ...

The Deputy Speaker: Non, non, non...

(Interruptions)

No, I have just...

An. hon. Member: What a shame!

Mr Nuckcheddy: *Kuma to koz* Bérenger, communal!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Nuckcheddy! I don't want you to go on any communal line please.

Mr Bhagwan: Okay, not communal. So, machiavelic...

The Deputy Speaker: Mais ne faites pas référence au fait qu'il y a des choses communales qui se passent dans cette Chambre. *Come with a substantive motion for that.*

Mr Bhagwan: Et la population, M. le président, n'a pas perdu le temps pour faire entendre sa désapprobation. Allez voir dans les journaux, allez voir les remarques sur l'internet.

M. le président, aujourd'hui nous sommes appelés à voter en faveur de la motion de blâme, mais cette motion de blâme a déjà été votée par la population. Mais, M. le président, quoi que puissent dire les membres du gouvernement, ils ont la majorité numérique, mais en dehors de la population, ce gouvernement... Il y a un gouvernement dans quelques mois *pe aler sa....*

(Interruptions)

Et nous donnons la garantie que nous allons nettoyer les écuries d'Augias que sont le MSM, le ML, le PMSD, le Parti *Kabose*, etc....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Nous allons nettoyer....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Et le Parlement va connaître une ère nouvelle...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Deal papa-tifi...*

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: Parlement va connaître avec le *papa-tifi*.

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

An hon. Member: *Arret koz papa piti.*

An hon. Member: *Navin so nouvo bhagwan!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mrs Luchmun Roy: *Deal papa-tifi! Meeting papa-tifi!*

The Deputy Speaker: Order, over there, please! Order on top!

Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, please!

(00.45 a.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Merci, M. le président. En arrivant à l'Assemblée ce matin, je n'avais pas de discours préparé, mais j'ai été inspiré par les orateurs de l'opposition, car les masques sont tombés et j'ai tout compris de leurs sombres desseins.

Qu'est-ce que c'est que cette motion, M. le président ? Rien qu'une manœuvre politicienne démontrant un mépris flagrant pour la démocratie parlementaire ; en fait, un abus de procédure qui, d'une part, reflète le désarroi du Parti travailliste/MMM suite à la nomination d'Adrien Duval comme président et, d'autre part, c'est la poursuite de la stratégie de déstabilisation entamée depuis 2019. Un règlement de comptes politiques, comme le disait mon collègue Alan Ganoo un peu plus tôt. Cette motion est-elle fondée ? Pour rappel, le précédent président de l'Assemblée nationale a été accusé de tous les mots, mais le fait est que, quels que soient les torts

ou les manquements imputés au précédent Speaker, la vérité, c'est que dès le premier jour de cette nouvelle Assemblée nationale élue en 2019, il y a eu un refus d'accepter les résultats des élections, un refus d'accepter le Speaker, un appel à la désobéissance civile, l'obstruction permanente, la politique de la chaise vide et, quand ils sont présents, un comportement visant à provoquer des suspensions, du jamais vu dans notre histoire parlementaire.

Cette motion est-elle fondée, M. le président ? Le problème pour l'opposition de les écouter aujourd'hui, c'est la désignation d'Adrien Duval, quelqu'un issu du PMS tout comme tous les Speakers de l'Assemblée, tous les présidents étaient issus d'un parti politique quelconque. Aujourd'hui, ils ont cherché à reprendre des déclarations du nouveau Speaker datant de 2021 pour établir son appartenance politique et, bien, il est évident que, comme tous les Speakers, il appartenait à un parti politique. Nous faisons face à la stupéfaction, à la colère, au désarroi du Parti travailliste/MMM puisque le PMSD les a abandonnés et a pris le large.

Voyez aujourd'hui les attaques contre le leader du PMSD, accusé de complicité avec la majorité, c'est ça leur problème. Madame la députée Navarre-Marie nous disait plus tôt que la nomination d'Adrien Duval est un deal pour sceller l'alliance. C'est ça leur problème. M. Rajesh Bhagwan nous disait plus tôt *fiansay inn fer maryaz p vini*. Voilà leur problème ! La vérité, c'est l'incapacité à accepter qu'une personnalité issue du PMSD, leur allié d'hier, soit désignée aujourd'hui comme président de l'Assemblée nationale. C'est ça le problème, comme le disait M. Bhagwan, la population ne veut pas de 'l'Assem...bleu'. Donc, il n'est pas question de reproches, de manquement du Speaker, mais le problème, c'est comment accepter que le PMSD ait tourné le dos à cette alliance Parti travailliste/MMM ?

D'ailleurs, M. le président, l'opposition au Speaker n'a pas attendu la prétendue participation de M. Adrien Duval à une manifestation sportive qu'ils disent politique, mais a commencé dès sa désignation comme Speaker. Madame Navarre-Marie nous disait que c'est son précédent, qu'à peine deux semaines après sa nomination, il y ait une motion de blâme, mais le Speaker n'a même pas eu deux semaines de grâce. Dès le 18 juillet, le jour même de sa désignation, il y a eu l'argument d'irrégularité du leader de l'opposition qu'il a repris, qu'il a eu l'outrecuidance de reprendre aujourd'hui alors même que l'opposition a été désavouée par les anciens Speakers : Razack Peeroo et Kailash Purryag. On a connu les manifestations à l'extérieur de l'hémicycle dont se flattait le député Bhagwan comme si c'était un exemple de démocratie. La

tentative des députés suspendus de forcer la porte de l'hémicycle pour accéder à la Chambre – ce que M. le député Bhagwan trouve tout à fait normal. Les insultes, des invectives à l'adresse des élus de la majorité et du personnel, et M. Bhagwan nous parle de recherche d'un consensus.

M. le député Bhagwan reproche au Speaker de n'avoir pas été à la recherche d'un consensus, alors qu'au moment même de sa désignation, il y a eu un désordre sans précédent créé par l'opposition. Quel consensus ! Et après, y a-t-il une contestation en cours ? C'est la preuve que tout cela n'était qu'une manœuvre politicienne. Quelques jours plus tard, le mardi 23 juillet, le jeudi, c'était la désignation, le 23 ; boycott de l'Assemblée lors du Finance Bill. Alors même que l'opposition avait posé des questions, des interpellations auxquelles nous devrions répondre. Donc, si le Speaker avait fauté, quand a-t-il fauté ? Dès sa désignation, il y a eu boycott. La première séance suivant sa désignation, il y a eu boycott. Donc il n'y a pas question d'une quelconque faute, d'un quelconque manquement du Speaker parce qu'il s'appelait Adrien Duval et qu'il était issu du PMSD, il était condamné dès le départ. C'est cela, la vérité. Rien qu'une manœuvre politicienne.

En ne se mettant pas debout lors de leur retour au Parlement, expliquez-moi cela ? Quelle était la raison de ne pas se mettre debout ? Ils ont réservé au nouveau Speaker de la Chambre le même traitement qu'ils ont infligé à l'ancien président de l'Assemblée nationale des années durant. Donc, ont-ils donné une chance au nouveau Speaker ? Ont-ils donné une chance pour ce que le député Bhagwan appelle la recherche de consensus ?

Mais non, M. le président. La vérité, c'est que, sous la pression de l'opinion publique, ils ont dû, comme disent mes collègues, la queue entre les jambes, revenir à l'Assemblée nationale le 30 juillet. Pour ne pas perdre la face, ils ont inventé cette histoire de siéger *under protest*.

Mr Toussaint: Quelle farce!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Et, M. le président, avant leur retour à l'Assemblée, ils retournent à l'Assemblée le 30 juillet. Dès le 29 juillet, monsieur le leader de l'opposition dépose sa motion de blâme à l'encontre du Speaker Adrien Duval. Donc, s'il y avait ne serait-ce qu'un iota de vérité à ce qu'ils disent, cette motion de blâme aurait dû suivre leur première participation à l'Assemblée sous la présidence d'Adrien Duval. Mais non ! Elle a précédé leur retour parce qu'il s'agissait d'une manœuvre pour sauver la face. Adrien Duval était condamné dès le départ

parce qu'il s'appelait Adrien Duval et qu'il était issu du PMSD. Ce n'est rien d'autre que cela, la vérité, M. le président.

Cette motion est-elle fondée ? Aujourd'hui même, qu'a dit le leader de l'opposition ? Qu'a pu faire le *Speaker* pour mériter cette motion de blâme ? On a entendu une motion de blâme non pas contre Adrien Duval, mais contre un certain monsieur Santokhee qui n'a rien à faire dans cette Assemblée aujourd'hui. On a entendu une motion de blâme contre monsieur le député Xavier-Luc Duval qui n'est pas le *Speaker*. On a entendu une motion de blâme contre le MSM, et dans le cas du député monsieur Shakeel Mohamed, une motion de blâme contre le Premier ministre.

L'accusé, c'était la collusion alléguée entre le PMSD et le MSM, c'est cela le problème. Les reproches contre le *Speaker*, il y en a eu très peu. Mon collègue, le ministre Alan Ganoo, a brillamment démonté les quelques arguments qu'ils ont mis en avant. Les reproches d'une présence alléguée à une manifestation sportive ou d'une conversation avec une personne qui serait un candidat potentiel. Nous avons entendu tout à l'heure le ministre Dr. Ramdhany nous dire qu'en fait, à cette manifestation sportive, il y avait aussi la présence de deux membres de l'opposition.

Donc, cette motion est-elle fondée ? Pourtant, le nouveau président de l'Assemblée nationale a été, comme le disait avant moi monsieur le député Xavier-Luc Duval, attentif aux représentations de l'opposition, qu'il s'agisse de la méthode adoptée pour le tirage au sort des interpellations. L'accès des députés suspendus à l'Assemblée nationale en dehors des jours où nous siégeons. Qu'il s'agisse de l'accès, de l'utilisation des salles de conférence, des interpellations se rapportant aux collectivités locales. Autant d'exemples que le nouveau président de l'Assemblée nationale a été attentif aux représentations de l'opposition. Mais avec quel résultat ?

La vérité, M. le président, et entendez-moi bien, c'est quel que soit le *Speaker* qui aurait été désigné par la majorité, surtout s'il s'agissait de quelqu'un issu du PMSD, mais même s'il s'agissait d'un membre de la majorité, ils auraient été contre. Ils auraient manifesté le jour de la désignation, ils auraient boycotté la séance suivante et ils auraient porté une motion de blâme. Tout cela a été décidé d'avance.

Mr Ganoo: Prémédité !

The Deputy Prime Minister: Prémédité ! La vérité, c'est que l'opposition aurait objecté à n'importe quel *Speaker* que nous aurions proposé. Cette motion est-elle fondée, M. le président ? Je le dis aujourd'hui, j'accuse l'opposition en fait de nous avoir joué le tour d'une tentative de faire diversion pour justifier face à l'opinion publique leur présence. Mais ils ne s'attendaient pas à ce que cette motion soit débattue. C'était pour la galerie que la motion avait été déposée. Ils ne s'attendaient pas à ce que cette motion soit débattue. D'où le spectacle absolument pitoyable que nous a offert le leader de l'opposition, un leader de l'opposition incapable de soutenir avec des arguments cohérents et convaincants cette prétendue motion de blâme.

Plus encore, cette motion n'est qu'une expression de la hargne vis-à-vis du PMSD qu'éprouve aujourd'hui le parti Travailleiste et le MMM. Cette motion n'est qu'un leurre, a *face saving device*. Je vais terminer, M. le président, en demandant à cette opposition que j'appelle antidémocratique et antipatriotique.

Je pose une question à laquelle je voudrais obtenir une réponse solennelle. Nous, de ce côté de la chambre, même si nous sommes convaincus que nous remporterons facilement les prochaines élections, nous, de ce côté de la Chambre, nous nous engageons à respecter l'issue des élections telles qu'elles soient. Je me tourne vers l'opposition pour leur demander, eux qui ont vilipendé le commissaire électoral et la commission électorale.

Mr Mohamed: *Ki sa ena a vwar ladan ?*

The Deputy Prime Minister: Avant de revenir à de meilleurs sentiments, sont-ils prêts, Monsieur le député Shakeel Mohamed, à prendre un tel engagement ?

Sont-ils prêts, quelle que soit l'issue des prochaines élections générales, à s'engager, à respecter l'issue des élections comme le MSM et même le MMM l'ont toujours fait jusqu'en 2019 ? Voilà ma question à laquelle j'attends une réponse de l'opposition.

Merci, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, hon. Deputy Prime Minister. Hon. Prime Minister!

(1.01 a.m.)

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Motion of No Confidence being debated in this House today is the ninth of its kind in the history of our parliamentary democracy since 1963, as you yourself rightly pointed out in your announcement before we started the debate.

As you have done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have also had the opportunity of going through most of them. I can say that none was as tenuous and devoid of merit as the present one. This Motion, which is before the House today, is totally unjustified and uncalled for and it is a futile attempt from a disgruntled Opposition to cast aspersion on the person of the Speaker.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, having said this, I must add that, if this Motion is on the Order Paper for today's Sitting, it is because I, as Leader of the House, wanted this Motion to be debated as early as possible so as to call the bluff of the Labour/MMM/ND Opposition.

En passant, M. le président, j'ai d'ailleurs noté que pour le *Sitting* d'aujourd'hui – j'espère que je ne fais pas erreur – depuis ce matin, l'absence des deux députés, l'honorable Richard Duval et l'honorable Kushal Lobine de la Chambre. Sachant très bien que les deux députés sont issus du PMSD, élus sous la bannière du PMSD, qui ont fait bande à part après un certain temps, même si leurs noms n'étaient pas sur la liste des orateurs.

Pourquoi je dis ça, M. le président, parce qu'une motion de censure contre le président de la Chambre est une notion extrêmement importante pour l'opposition et surtout cette alliance.

Voilà quel genre d'alliance que nous avons, même deux membres du parti Nouveaux Démocrates qui sont absents tout le long de la séance, même pas présents pour soutenir cette opposition. Pour moi, c'est déjà une fissure, ou bien c'est une alliance qui est mal collée.

Alors, indeed, this Motion, I must say, was totally unwarranted given that, since the election of the Speaker of the National Assembly, hon. Adrien Duval has taken a number of initiatives that are a clear testimony of his respect for democratic principles and the distinctive manner in which he has chosen to exercise the functions of his office and conduct the business of the House.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I listened carefully, of course, to the speech of the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I must say, I have nothing to rebut because ...

(Interruptions)

No, I am frank; I am sincere, and I am not making criticism just like that because, well, we have all been patient, including you, who have been very patient because he's been saying a number of things – most of them of course, irrelevant, some of them unsubstantiated, just coming from his mind and saying things just like that. And, I must say that, right from the beginning, I had absolutely no doubt in my mind that the Opposition would not be able to substantiate this Motion at all, precisely because it is devoid of substance and is totally baseless and has really nothing to do with the conduct of the Speaker inside the House, whose speakership, I must say, has so far been unimpeachable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Motion standing before the House today does not have its *raison d'être*, to start with, and I would say it is a real waste of the time of the House. The reason being that there has been nothing in the conduct of the Speaker, inside the House, which could, by any stretch of imagination, be qualified as improper, biased, unfair, malicious, or impartial. On the contrary, in the short span of time that he has been presiding over the Sittings of the Assembly since his election on 18 July last, he has already taken a number of decisions which only confirmed his independence and impartiality.

To remind, and speakers before me have been mentioning those measures that have been taken, but it's good that we remind again the Opposition –

- The Speaker has reviewed the modalities for the drawing of lots for parliamentary questions, on which the Opposition had been casting aspersions and were unhappy, I must say, for quite some time;
- The Speaker has decided to now allow access to Hon. Members from both sides of the House to the Committee Rooms of the National Assembly on Sitting days for the purpose of holding their *point de presse*;
- The Speaker has also announced that Parliamentary Questions falling under the purview of Local Authorities will henceforth be allowed;

- He has also decided to henceforth allow suspended Members to have access to the precincts of the Assembly on any day other than a Sitting day, and
- Last but not least, the Speaker has also announced a project for the modernisation of the National Assembly through a digital transformation strategy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been hearing most of, well, most of what I have heard outside this House from the Opposition, that it is the Prime Minister who dictates to the Speaker what to do, what action to take, and so on. So, if it were the Prime Minister who dictated, I would have dictated, supposedly, and I would have gone against my own dictation today.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the real truth is that the Speaker assumes his responsibility in all independence, and he does what the rules of the National Assembly allow him to do. And we, in spite of the fact that the hon. Mohamed is making a lot of fuss about lunchtime, dinnertime, and teatime when we sit together, it is as if the first time that he is seeing a Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and others sitting with the Speaker.

Where was he? I think he was in this House when he was part of the Labour government, previous Speakers. Where was he then? Ah! Then, he was sitting and having lunch and dinner and tea and enjoying himself. And he did not have anything to say? Ah, perception! Then there was no perception then? But as from 2014, perception! Perception!

Of course, we sit, we have lunch, but I can tell you, but this is private; even with the former Speaker, I did not dictate anything. I assume my responsibility as Leader of the House whenever we have, of course, to decide on the agenda of the work of the National Assembly. In Cabinet, this is what we do, and it is for the Speaker to act according to his responsibility and his role. And, whatever the former Speaker has done, he has done. The new Speaker has chosen now to do what I have just mentioned, to reverse certain decisions. That is his doing, and I commend him also for that because I can say I have also my own opinion on things which have been done in the past and things which are being done now. And, I say it again; I commend him because he is showing his impartiality, his fairness, and his total independence.

We have seen at PNQs, the Opposition before was criticising and saying –

“Well, we don’t have time and so on.”

I have answered PNQs; my colleagues have been answering PNQs with the new Speaker, hon. Adrien Duval, in the Chair. We have seen how much time he has been giving to the Leader of the Opposition and to the Opposition, to other Members in fact.

In fact, there have been moments where the Leader of the Opposition *a jetté l'éponge parce qu'il ne pouvait plus. Il a dû passer la main à d'autres*. Well, that is his right; it is your right. But normally I would have expected that they were complaining before, that they were not having enough time, that the former Speaker was applying the *guillotine* when time was over. Now, giving them time, now they are complaining! They can't, and yet, they are criticising the new Speaker. And, as rightly had been said by the Deputy Prime Minister, from day one.

Can you imagine, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even before the Speaker assumes the Chair, even before he performs as a Speaker, *ils ont déjà eu un préjugé. C'est cela qu'on appelle juger quelqu'un avant qu'il puisse commencer à perform, et c'est pour ces raisons que je ne vais pas répéter ce qui a été évoqué par l'honorable Deputy Prime Minister*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these initiatives of the Speaker leave no doubt—I say it again and I say it loud—no doubt as to his impartiality and independence and his allegiance to the Chair. Hence, I say again, the futility of this Motion. I would have thought that, after taking into consideration this clear and unmistakable evidence of impartiality, the Leader of the Opposition would have allowed his better sense to prevail and would withdraw the Motion, in fact, which was the most sensible thing to do. It is never too late. He can always do that, but he, unfortunately, chose to maintain the wrong track and pursue a lost case, which this Motion is, after all, just like their assertion that the election of the Speaker on 18 July was illegal!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, again, in regard to the procedure followed for the election of the Speaker, the majority of the Opposition Members, and I would say in particular, hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger and hon. Ms Joanna Bérenger, they were heard shouting in the precinct of the Assembly, claiming that the election was in breach of the Constitution. They were there! Everybody saw their behaviour in this House! The House and the whole population, I must say, were left in shock and dismay at the grossly disorderly, shameful, and reprehensible conduct of the Labour/MMM/ND members towards the newly elected Speaker, in total disregard to the decorum and dignity of this House.

And by the way, again, where is hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger?

(Interruptions)

Why do I say this? Again, I have to repeat myself. A Motion of No Confidence against the Speaker and hon. Paul Bérenger is the co-leader with Dr. Navin Ramgoolam of this alliance and is a Member of this Parliament! I will not dwell on what the former speaker has been saying again. How many times has he been outside? This is not the purview of this Motion. But today, we would have expected hon. Paul Bérenger not only to be present, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but to participate, to speak in favour of the Motion. What has he done? Do you know what he has done? Il a emmené cette opposition à l'abattoir !

(Interruptions)

He was the leader there! He was the leader as if he was in the street. Maybe it reminded him of those days when he was conducting protests and so on. He was protesting here. We saw it live and direct, and he was the leader in front, and the rest were somewhere a bit shy. But then, on that day he was leading *la meute et aujourd'hui, il est absent. Il laisse l'opposition...*

(Interruptions)

Allez-vous ! Allez de l'avant ! Allez avec votre motion maintenant. Lui, il se repose !

They were completely oblivious to the fact that the Speaker represents the House and when he is insulted, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is an insult to the highest institution in our democracy, and I would say by extension, to the whole nation. They were certainly wrong in their interpretation of the Constitution and the Standing Orders and the Rules of the National Assembly. They were either ill-advised in their interpretation of the law or they had completely misread the law and the rules, or – and this is what I believed in – it was a deliberate and planned attempt on their part to disrupt the proceedings of the House on that day. But nothing could have justified their gross misbehaviour and their vilifying the newly elected Speaker on that day. But I must also say that the Speaker on the very first day demonstrated remarkable wit and wisdom in handling the situation on that day and it all goes to his credit.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the election of the Speaker of the National Assembly is governed by section 32 of the Constitution and Standing Order 7 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly. In fact, section 32(4) of the Constitution provides as follows, and I quote –

“Where the office of the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker becomes vacant at any time, the Assembly, in the manner specified in subsection (1), shall, unless it is sooner dissolved, elect –

- (a) from among its members or otherwise, a Speaker;
- (b) from among its members, a Deputy Speaker”.

And section 32(6) of the Constitution provides that no business shall be transacted in the Assembly (other than the election of a Speaker) at any time when the office of Speaker is vacant.

Moreover, section 7 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly provides for the procedure for the election of the Speaker and which is as follows and I quote –

“(1) No business shall be transacted in the Assembly, other than the election of a Speaker, at any time when the Office of Speaker is vacant. Accordingly, the Assembly shall –

- (a) at its first sitting after any general election; and
 - (b) if the Office of the Speaker becomes vacant at any time before the next dissolution of the Assembly, except in the circumstances mentioned at paragraph (4) of this Order, at its next sitting after the occurrence of the vacancy, elect from among its Members, other than Ministers and Parliamentary Private Secretaries, a Speaker of the Assembly.
- (2) The procedure for the election of a Speaker shall be as follows –
- (a) Any Member, addressing himself or herself to the Clerk may, subject to paragraph (3) of this Order, propose to the Assembly some other Member then present, and move that he or she “do take the Chair of the Assembly as Speaker”. The proposal shall require to be seconded, but no debate shall be allowed.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the relevant provisions of the Constitution and the procedures laid down under the relevant Standing Order of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly were scrupulously followed for the election of the Speaker on 18 July 2024.

Hon. Bérenger was seen brandishing a copy of the Constitution in public and claiming that the appointment of the Speaker on that day had been made in violation of section 50 of the Constitution. Well, at least those who know the MMM and hon. Bérenger, he is the most, I would say, intelligent lawyer on the other side of the House. He knows. I have known him for some time and I am sure the other Members also. Constitutional or any field of law, he is the expert and he always *amenn zot dan trou finalman!*

Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us see what section 50 of the Constitution in fact says, and I quote

–

“The Speaker or in his absence the Deputy Speaker, or in their absence a member of the Assembly (not being a Minister) elected by the Assembly for the Sitting, shall preside at any sitting of the Assembly.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear that section 50 of the Constitution provides for presiding of the Assembly during the temporary absence of the Speaker. On the other hand, section 32(4) of the Constitution provides for the action that must be taken when the Office of the Speaker falls vacant. Hon. Bérenger and his team clearly failed to make that difference.

M. le président, d’ailleurs, les déclarations de deux anciens *Speakers*, des figures de proue du parti Travailleiste de surcroit, notamment de Messieurs Kailash Purryag et Razack Peeroo, confirment que les procédures établies ont été respectées pour l’élection d’Adrien Duval comme *Speaker* de l’Assemblée nationale.

Monsieur Kailash Purryag a déclaré, et je cite –

« Les dispositions de la Constitution ont été respectées pour élire Adrien Duval comme Speaker de l’Assemblée nationale, mais il y a une confusion chez certains, entre la Clause 50 et la Clause 32 (4). Dans ce cas précis, c’est bel et bien l’article 32(4) qui devait être appliqué, ce qui a été fait, et non pas l’article 50. Dans ce cas, il ne concerne pas l’absence du Speaker de l’Assemblée mais le siège du Speaker vacant. »

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a point of order?

The Prime Minister: De son côté, Monsieur Razack Peeroo a déclaré, et je cite –

« Tout s'est déroulé selon les procédures établies et il ne faut pas politiser cette nomination pour des raisons inutiles. »

Et monsieur Razack Peeroo va plus loin, il a également souligné qu'Adrien Duval a toutes les qualités pour être un bon *Speaker* et que la démocratie parlementaire doit être respectée.

M. le président, ces déclarations venant d'anciens *Speakers* et, je dirais, de l'entourage rapproché du Parti travailliste retentissent comme des claques sonores qui mettent *KO* les membres de l'opposition, Ptr/MMM/ND, et aussi le député Nando Bodha que j'ai oublié en passant. Le leader de l'opposition est désavoué par ses propres frères d'armes. Je note aussi l'absence du député Ritesh Ramful. Je ne sais pas, je pense que c'est un peu normal que je puisse conclure que le député ait dû prendre conseil de l'ancien *Speaker*, monsieur Kailash Purryag. Je ne parle pas de relations de famille, mais je sais qu'ils sont proches. Et, aujourd'hui, il n'est pas présent. Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire, je ne sais pas.

En tout cas, il est clair que le Parti travailliste s'est laissé emporter par la furie du MMM et de son leader Paul Raymond Bérenger qui trouvait illégale l'élection d'Adrien Duval. Tels des suiveurs aveuglés par l'obsession de tout opposer, les députés du Parti travailliste se sont joints à ceux du MMM pour agir d'une façon indigne. Ils ont vilipendé, ils ont injurié le *Speaker* Adrien Duval. Ils ont violé les règles élémentaires de la démocratie parlementaire. Ils ont fait un show grossièrement indécent et totalement inacceptable. Et le peuple a suivi tout cela en direct à la télévision et, j'en suis sûr, en a pris bonne note. La population découvre de plus en plus le danger que représente cette opposition maladivement hostile, malhonnête, irrespectueuse de notre Constitution et foncièrement antidémocrate et antipatriote.

M. le président, j'ai agi en tant que *Leader of the House* en respectant la Constitution et les règles de cette auguste Assemblée, comme je l'ai fait ressortir plus tôt. Je dois le dire parce que, vous savez, lorsque l'opposition, à sa tête l'honorable Paul Bérenger et le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, avait déclaré que cette élection est illégale, la première chose, bien sûr, c'est bien de prendre note, mais de vérifier, quoi qu'on avait déjà vérifié auparavant, quelle est la procédure à adopter. Et de mon côté, je ne suis pas un expert, je dois l'admettre, quoi que je sois un juriste, mais je consulte les personnes qui sont concernées. Et, bien sûr, j'ai pris note de ce qu'on avait

proposé pour l'élection du nouveau *Speaker*. Je dois dire qu'on est allé voir dans le passé ce qui a été fait.

Deux autres anciens *Speakers*, notamment messieurs Iswardeo Seetaram et Sir Ramesh Jeewoolall, ont été élus suivant les mêmes procédures que celles dans le cas de l'honorable Adrien Duval.

En effet, en 1987, sous *le prime ministership* de Sir Anerood Jugnauth, les mêmes procédures avaient été adoptées pour élire Iswardeo Seetaram au poste de *Speaker* en remplacement d'Ajay Daby. Situation identique en 1996 pour l'élection de Sir Ramesh Jeewoolall au poste de *Speaker*. À noter qu'à cette époque, Sir Gaëtan Duval, leader de l'opposition d'alors, avait secondé la motion de Navin Ramgoolam, Premier ministre de l'époque.

Mr X. L. Duval: C'est vrai ?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

M. le président, il ne peut donc y avoir de justification aux agissements indignes de l'opposition le 18 juillet dernier lors de l'élection du *Speaker* Adrien Duval. Non seulement ils ont agi de manière répréhensible dans l'hémicycle quand ils ont lancé des invectives à l'adresse d'Adrien Duval, mais ils ont voulu l'intimider et l'empêcher de prêter serment comme *Speaker* et de faire sa déclaration de circonstance, ici même. On l'a vu en direct. Qui plus est, ils s'étaient permis auparavant de bloquer l'entrée de l'hémicycle et de proférer des injures et des propos haineux. Du jamais vu dans l'histoire de notre Assemblée nationale.

Je trouve également indigne et scandaleux que les membres de l'opposition Ptr/MMM/ND refusent de se mettre debout lorsque le *Speaker* fait son entrée dans l'hémicycle.

Hon. Members: Shame !

The Prime Minister: Il ne peut y avoir de justification à ce comportement odieux qui témoigne de leur petitesse d'esprit.

M. le président, il n'y a plus de doute que l'élection d'Adrien Duval comme *Speaker* a été effectuée en toute légalité. Ceux qui hurlaient « illégal, illégal » ont dû rabattre le caquet tellement ils ont été désavoués, non seulement par Messieurs Kailash Purryag et Razack Peeroo, mais aussi par nos compatriotes, notamment sur les réseaux sociaux. Les membres de l'opposition Ptr/MMM/ND ont vite su que leur show – je dois dire que c'est un show de très mauvais goût, du jamais vu. En tout cas, moi, je n'ai pas autant d'expérience que mes collègues et d'autres qui ne sont pas membres de l'Assemblée nationale, à qui j'ai demandé comment auparavant se passaient un peu les séances à l'Assemblée nationale. Mais à l'unanimité, c'est du jamais vu que les membres de l'Assemblée sont venus pour bloquer l'entrée ici. Et en plus, ils sont entrés et se sont mis debout là pour manifester. Enfin ! J'allais utiliser certains mots, certains qualificatifs, mais je préfère ne pas les utiliser ici. Mais comptez sur moi, je vais les utiliser à l'extérieur de la Chambre.

Toutefois, comme pour prouver qu'ils avaient raison, ils ont boycotté le *Speaker* en s'abstenant de la séance parlementaire consacrée au *Finance Bill*, un projet de loi d'une très grande importance pour le pays. Ce comportement a été largement condamné à travers le pays. Les membres de cette opposition indigne étaient tellement acculés par l'opinion publique qu'ils ont dû revenir à l'Assemblée, comme on l'a dit auparavant, la queue entre les jambes, et pour certains, la tête entre les jambes. C'est un fait indéniable !

M. le président, je ne vais pas commenter ; d'ailleurs, moi-même, j'ai objecté à ce qu'on commente sur les activités sociales du *Speaker*, parce que, de tout temps, moi-même, j'ai été à combien d'activités dans le passé avec d'autres *Speakers* qui étaient présents. Mais rien n'était choquant. Ce qui peut choquer, oui, c'est si jamais un *Speaker* prenait part à une activité politique ou prenait la parole dans une activité politique. En tout cas, il y a eu des éclaircissements et des commentaires et je ne vais pas revenir là-dessus.

M. le président, l'opposition, je dois dire, a tenté depuis les élections générales de novembre 2019 de déstabiliser le gouvernement à travers toutes sortes d'allégations farfelues et aussi en agissant systématiquement pour semer le doute et la confusion au sein de la population. Elle n'est pas parvenue à ses fins, car elle a affaire à un gouvernement qui fait son travail dans le respect des lois et des règles établies, dans l'intérêt du peuple. Nos actions et notre bilan sont

notre réponse à cette opposition parlementaire et extraparlementaire qui ne fait que patauger dans une démagogie outrancière et une hostilité à tout bout de champ que la population, dans sa majorité, j'en suis sûr, rejettera catégoriquement.

Cette nouvelle manœuvre indigne de l'opposition suscite le mépris. Et de ce côté de la Chambre, nous allons expédier la motion de blâme de l'opposition contre le Speaker Adrien Duval dans la poubelle de l'histoire. Une partie de l'opposition aussi !

M. le président, l'opposition croyait que cette motion de blâme n'allait pas être débattue. Elle aurait alors accusé le gouvernement de fuite en avant et cela aurait été leur plat de résistance pour leur meeting qui est prévu dans quelques jours. Mais c'était mal me connaître. J'ai bien écouté le discours de l'honorable Mohamed. Je dois dire qu'il a bien parlé, sauf qu'il s'est trompé de parlement. Il croyait qu'il était dans le *House of Commons* en Angleterre. Soyez franc, l'honorable Mohamed ! Moi, je sais que vous le savez très bien. Vous avez fait ce discours parce qu'il n'y avait pas de documents à apporter pour la motion. Vous savez très bien que ce qui s'applique en Angleterre dans le *House of Commons* ne s'applique pas à Maurice.

D'ailleurs, je ne vais pas répéter ce que l'honorable Alan Ganoo a dit parce que le *Speaker* ne jouit pas d'un même traitement qu'en Angleterre qu'à Maurice. Je ne vais pas aller dans les détails de ce que l'honorable Alan Ganoo a dit et dont je souscris. En Angleterre, c'est totalement différent. Alors, il ne faut pas confondre. Il ne faut pas surtout induire la population en erreur et venir dire des choses qui ne sont pas comparables.

L'honorable Dr. Boolell, ai-je dit, n'a rien répliqué. Je dois dire, M. le président, que cette opposition que je qualifie d'ignoble ne me fait pas peur. Je respecte et je respecterai toujours la démocratie parlementaire. Et j'ai voulu que cette motion de blâme soit débattue le plus vite possible pour que justement cette opposition soit démasquée encore plus. C'est ma réplique à leur démagogie et à leur stratégie infecte. Contrairement au Parti travailliste et au MMM qui avaient délibérément fermé le Parlement pendant plus de neuf mois en 2014 afin de concocter une alliance dans le dos du peuple, faisant fi de la démocratie parlementaire qu'ils prétendent défendre aujourd'hui. J'ai demandé à ce que l'Assemblée nationale siège aujourd'hui, même si normalement les vacances parlementaires interviennent après les débats sur la *Private Members'*

Motion. M. le président, les vrais démocrates sont de ce côté de la Chambre. Le peuple peut le constater une nouvelle fois.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I stated earlier, we, on this side of the House, do not see any justification for this Motion of No Confidence, nor has it been substantiated in any way by the Opposition. The House will recall that when I presented the Motion for the election of the Speaker on 18 July last, I had highlighted the qualities and proven track record of hon. Adrien Duval, and I can say that he has so far discharged the functions of the Office of Speaker in an exemplary manner. He has done justice to the Office and the House by upholding its democratic principles and traditions and protecting its dignity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will agree that the job of Speaker of the National Assembly is a tough one. You know it; you have been in the Chair at least on quite a number of occasions. The incumbent requires tact, courage, grit and tenacity, apart from other qualities and competences. In the short span of time after his election, the Speaker has amply demonstrated his mettle and suitability for the job. He has actually lived up to the commitment he took when he was sworn in.

There was, therefore, absolutely no ground to cast aspersion on his performance in the Chair and move such a frivolous Motion of No Confidence against him. We, on our side, reiterate our trust in the Speaker, as we are convinced that he will continue to discharge his responsibilities with fairness and impartiality and maintain the sanctity of this temple of democracy, which this House is meant to be.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister!

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(1.42 a.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. A. Boolell): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will make some concluding remarks. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you deserve our appreciation.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you!

Dr. Boolell: Had the Deputy Speaker been proposed to be Speaker-elect for the few Sittings left before Parliament goes into recess and dissolution, it would have been a different case scenario. I thank all the Members who have intervened on the motion. It's healthy for parliamentary democracy, except that we have to face an autocratic regime.

We have witnessed another instance of censorship to protect the Speaker. There has been more sound and fury than substance from those under Government bench. I have been the easy target, and I take it without fear or prejudice. I maintain all I have said, and I say it again that it was wrong and premature for Mr Duval to be in the Chair.

I have a thick skin, and no unwarranted criticism could deter me. I dare to put politically embarrassing questions and never paid lip service to safeguard my interest. I do not condescend; dignity has no price. I do not trade off my party for a few pennies more.

What is the object of the Motion? No confidence in the Speaker. He has to be independent, and he has to be fiercely independent. The parameters set are circumscribed to protect the Speaker. Why? To restrict the Opposition from having its say, but out there, they will have to face the electorate. Let them enjoy their tyranny; their days are numbered.

We have seen a rape of parliamentary democracy. The Leader of the Opposition sitting on the Opposition bench has made no bones about an alliance with the MSM regime. This is a foregone conclusion; the leader of the PMSD knows what I am saying. Are we surprised that the Speaker was part of the deal? The electorate knows who has defined the *contour* of the parameters.

The Speaker has been given a passport by the regime and the PMSD to be on all platforms. It is a sad day that while the whole country knows that the Speaker was in Constituency No. 6 in the company of MSM politicians. This is a matter that I am prevented from canvassing when I am making my discourse on his conduct. He is less loud, but he has shown in the course of a few proceedings which he has presided, that he just another gatekeeper for the MSM and the PMSD by being partial and unfair.

La nomination au poste du Speaker était prématurée. I am not the one saying it; independent political analysts have said it. We have justified the reasons as to why the Speaker is biased and partial; I do not intend to repeat them. They are political; nothing more, nothing less.

The interpretation given by hon. Ganoo and the Prime Minister in respect of specific clauses of the Constitution and clause 7 of the Standing Orders does not mean they are right.

On the issue of waving of suspension, I wrote to the Prime Minister. Unfortunately, he did not have the authority and sincerity of purpose which other Prime Ministers had and who did not hesitate to waive suspension. I recall Dr. Ramgoolam, then Prime Minister did waive suspension of the then Leader of Opposition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is it a favour dispensed by the Speaker to the Opposition because the legitimate rights of MPs are restored? The right to put questions. For example, the right to put questions on local government was denied to us, and these are our legitimate rights. Whilst he had no choice, he had an obligation to give us our legitimate rights. A Speaker who has failed...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, previous Speaker is gone, long gone. Probably he is not coming back again.

Dr. Boolell: But I am saying, but the rights that were restored were not a favour.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon....

Dr. Boolell: It was not a favour dispensed; it was a right.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, over there!

The Prime Minister: In fact, we have to praise the new Speaker for that.

Dr. Boolell: But I am saying it is a legitimate right which has been restored to us because we have obligation.

The Deputy Speaker: Address to me! Address to me!

Dr. Boolell: We have obligation and rights.

Mr Toussaint: *Dir merci Adrien.*

Dr. Boolell: The Speaker failed to protect the rights of a widow desperate to bring the perpetrators of the heinous crime to justice, deserving contempt. The Motion is not futile; it is largely justified. The truth has been revealed. I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: If this Motion is not seconded, it therefore lapses. Motion has to be seconded; nobody has seconded it. Therefore, it is lapsed.

(Interruptions)

The Motion has to be seconded. Nobody has seconded it. Therefore, it is lapsed. Mr Speaker shall resume his seat at this stage. Thank you very much anyway.

At this stage, Mr Speaker took the Chair.

The Prime Minister: We welcome you again, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 15 October 2024 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: Adjournment matter!

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Mohamed!

MATTERS RAISED

(1.49 a.m.)

MSAW – INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE REPORT – ACTIONS

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to raise an adjournment matter. This concerns the Minister of Agro-Industry, if I am not mistaken. It is about the situation at MSAW. I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could look into the issue of the report of the Investigation Committee dated 23 November 2021. That particular report is with regards to the disastrous situation that happened some time back in 2020 and 2021.

I mean that was not when he was Minister, but it was his then-now Attorney General who was Minister, but that report had made certain recommendations, you will recall, Mr Speaker, Sir. There are animals, dogs eating dogs, and this report has established and made conclusions for prosecutions against three people, but it seems as though the Minister of Agro-Industry in those days had decided to keep that report quiet and not do anything about it.

So, may I therefore refer him to that report? If he wishes to have a copy, I can give him one. Obviously, his ministry does have one; I managed to get my hands on it, and that report recommends criminal prosecution against three people, but instead of that, they have been given golden handshakes, and they have not been prosecuted, but the poor dogs are dead. Now, if we could try to be humane in our approach and try to, in the name of decency, not cover up and not take over dogs' lives in such a manner. I have the report, but I am sure he has it.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Seeruttun): Mr Speaker, Sir, well noted. So, I will look into that matter.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

(1.51 a.m.)

PLAINE VERTE – RAT INFECTION – REMEDIAL ACTION

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The issue I am raising tonight is addressed to the Ministry of Health. I have already put two questions on it, two PQs, but unfortunately, they have not come because of time. It is in relation to rat infection in some part of my constituency, more specifically in the area of Porte Rouge Street in Plaine Verte but also at Magon Street. Several inhabitants have made their complaints and have sent emails and letters to related authorities, but

as of yet, no concrete action has been taken. So, I would urge the hon. Minister responsible for this issue to take urgent remedial action. Thank you.

The Minister of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training (Mr S. Callichurn): I will pass on the message.

Mr Speaker: Thank you very much. The House stands adjourned!

At 1.53 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 15 October 2024 at 11.30 a.m.