



**EIGHTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**(UNREVISED)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**THURSDAY 26 JUNE 2025**

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(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam,  
GCSK, FRCP

Prime Minister,  
  
Minister of Defence, Home Affairs  
and External Communications,  
  
Minister of Finance,  
  
Minister for Rodrigues and Outer  
Islands

Hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK

Deputy Prime Minister

Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack  
Mohamed

Minister of Housing and Lands

Hon. Rajesh Anand Bhagwan

Minister of Environment, Solid Waste  
Management and Climate Change

Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK

Minister of Agro-Industry, Food  
Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries

Hon. Govindranath Gunness

Minister of National Infrastructure

Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK

Minister of Health and Wellness

Hon. Christian Harold Richard Duval

Minister of Tourism

Hon. Ashok Kumar Subron

Minister of Social Integration, Social  
Security and National Solidarity

Hon. Gavin Patrick Cyril Glover, SC

Attorney-General

Dr. the Hon. Mrs Jyoti Jeetun

Minister of Financial Services and  
Economic Planning

Hon. Patrick Gervais Assirvaden

Minister of Energy and Public Utilities

Hon. Dhananjay Ramful	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Darmarajen Nagalingum	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Muhammad Reza Cassam Uteem	Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations
Hon. Mahomed Osman Cassam Mahomed	Minister of Land Transport
Hon. Mrs Marie Arianne Navarre-Marie	Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare
Hon. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection
Dr. the Hon. Kaviraj Sharma Sukon	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research
Hon. Sayed Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea	Minister of Industry, SMEs and Cooperatives
Dr. the Hon. Mahend Gungapersad, PDSM	Minister of Education and Human Resource
Dr. the Hon. Avinash Ramtohl	Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Lutchmanah Pentiah	Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Ranjiv Wochit, OSK	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Mahendra Gondeea, OSK	Minister of Arts and Culture

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**MAURITIUS**

**Eighth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 23 of 2025**

**Sitting of Thursday 26 June 2025**

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis, at 3.00 p.m.

**The National Anthem was played**

*(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)*

## MOTION

### SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy 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 rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

## PUBLIC BILL

*Second Reading*

### THE APPROPRIATION (2025-2026) BILL

(No. XIV of 2025)

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation (2025-2026) Bill (No. XIV of 2025).*

*Question again proposed.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, Mr Bhagwan!

(3.02 p.m.)

**The Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Mr R. Bhagwan):** Merci, M. le président.

M. le président, à pareille époque l'année dernière, mes collègues, députés du Parti travailliste et du MMM, vont certainement se rappeler de ce triste épisode. Qu'avons-nous pas vécu et vu ici même avec les *tap latab* et l'arrogance du tandem Pravind Jugnauth-Padayachy qui ont laissé derrière eux un très lourd héritage économique au pays et à son peuple ?

M. le président, ce fut, l'année dernière, la présentation d'un budget tronqué et trompeur de la *voodoo economics* en passant par du *creative accounting* pour masquer la réalité comptable de l'économie. Le résultat de cette tromperie, M. le président, est aujourd'hui noir sur blanc dans ce présent budget. Une dette nationale représentant 90 % du PIB, soit plus d'un demi-million de roupies par tête d'habitant.

M. le président, aujourd'hui, alors que nous entamons nos derniers virages des débats budgétaires, portant sur des questions fondamentales pour l'avenir du pays. Et après avoir écouté mes collègues, il me semble évident que tout patriote digne de ce nom, en constatant le crime économique à l'encontre de l'État et du peuple mauricien, c'est que le pays a besoin de prendre des mesures courageuses et décisives pour redresser l'économie. Le peuple le sait aussi. C'est pourquoi, prenant en main sa destinée, il a mis fin aux dérives, aux abus et aux pillages du MSM et a fait triompher la justice et la liberté.

M. le président, nous avons la chance, pour cette mission audacieuse, d'avoir à la tête du pays deux hommes d'État, deux patriotes tenaces en dépit de tous les coups bas en dessous de la ceinture du MSM. Je parle ici du Premier ministre et aussi ministre des Finances, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, et du *Deputy Prime Minister*, l'honorable Paul Bérenger.

M. le président, que n'a pas fait Pravind Jugnauth au cours de ces dix dernières années pour éliminer politiquement l'actuel Premier ministre. Je ne veux pas remuer le couteau dans la plaie en énumérant ses bassesses politiques. Forts de leur expérience et en prenant la mesure de l'état catastrophique de notre trésorerie, ce tandem est déterminé non pas à rafistoler, mais à redresser l'économie sur le long terme. Ces deux leaders politiques, conscients de l'enjeu du moment pour le pays, sont déterminés à tout mettre en œuvre pour remettre l'économie sur les rails et donner à la population son pouvoir d'achat. M. le président, *they have shown us that they are made of another metal*.

M. le président, le peuple nous a donné une confortable majorité pour accomplir cette tâche ingrate et le Premier ministre ainsi que le DPM peuvent compter, je le dis, sur le soutien indéfectible des ministres, des *Junior Ministers* et députés de la majorité. Les critiques vont certes continuer à pleuvoir mais rien ne doit distraire le gouvernement de son premier engagement pris lors de la dernière élection générale, parce que nous avons pris cet engagement ensemble.

Cependant, nous restons tous à l'écoute de la population. Et le Premier ministre et son adjoint ne sont pas insensibles aux voix qui se sont exprimées jusqu'ici. Nous ferons de notre mieux pour que le fardeau soit équitablement réparti et que les plus vulnérables de notre société bénéficient d'une considération spéciale. D'ailleurs, deux comités se penchent sur les réajustements possibles, je dis possible, tout en gardant le cap sur la consolidation de l'économie nationale.



M. le président, aujourd'hui les Pravind Jugnauth, les Renganaden Padayachy, les Maneesh Gobin, les *marsan tipapie*, Bobby Hurreeram et autres, Kailesh Jagutpal, Zouberr Joomaye, Gooljaury alias Juda, où sont-ils ? Le respect de la démocratie, une *hallmark* du gouvernement de l'Alliance du changement fait qu'ils ne croupissent pas dans les cellules d'Alcatraz *Detention Centre*, avec les institutions sous la Constitution, opérant au terme des dispositions de la loi.

En tout cas pas comme sous le précédent régime comme le prouvent les enregistrements de *Missie Moustass*. Malgré ces preuves accablantes et ces squelettes dans tous les placards, nous en faisons l'expérience tous mes collègues ministres. L'ancien Premier ministre fait preuve d'une inquiétante amnésie politique tandis que ses anciens complices se terrent à l'abri de l'ire publique. Permettez-moi de leur rafraîchir la mémoire, et je vous promets, M. le président, ce sera sans anesthésie générale, contrairement à certaines cliniques, dans les hauts Plaines Wilhems et même dans l'ouest jusqu'à très récemment, bien connectés et bénéficiant grassement des données publiques – mon collègue le ministre de la Santé sait de quoi je parle.

M. le président, *the famous phrase 'kot mo'nn fote'* continue à faire des échos dans nos têtes. Il faut demander pourquoi –

- Parce que le régime de Pravind Jugnauth a franchi la ligne rouge, et je dis la ligne rouge, avec l'assassinat de Kistnen et de Kanakiah, que leur police à masquer en suicide.
- Parce qu'avec Wakashio, ce fut un naufrage écologique, *minis lanvironman* d'alors *disparet lor map*. Non-seulement un naufrage écologique mais aussi économique, mais aussi gouvernemental. L'histoire retiendra que le gouvernement dirigé par le MSM n'a rien fait pour empêcher la première marée noire de cette ampleur que notre pays a connue et qui a été répercutée à l'international. Et nous allons rendre toujours hommage à l'époque, à Rezistans ek Alternativ et à tous les O.N.G. qui ont aidé le pays à ce moment difficile.
- Parce que la *State capture* était le modèle de gouvernance par excellence, surtout avec les recettes de *lakwizinn* pour contrer les voix discordantes.
- Dictature, M. le président, *blok rezo sociaux pou esey blok* la vérité en pleine campagne électorale, nous avons vu cela.

- Renvoi des élections municipales, écoute téléphonique, *sniffing* et ce sont des révélations qui ont permis de savoir l'ampleur des abus que la dictature du MSM et du Premier ministre d'alors, et de la *State capture* permettant de verrouiller toutes les institutions du pays.

Je me rappelle qu'à un certain moment, j'ai même dit que nous avons affaire à un Pinocher local – Pinocchio est Pinocher.

M. le président, parlons maintenant de cet Alan Govinden, je ne sais pas si les jeunes collègues de l'Assemblée nationale en savent quelque chose. Parce que ce Alan Govinden a emporté les secrets des 20 millions d'Angus Road dans sa tombe. Il y a eu PNQ sur Angus Road. La population demande à Pravind Jugnauth comment il a eu cet argent pour pouvoir acheter cette campagne, belle domaine de Angus Road, *bout par bout*. Et dommage que cet Alan Govinden n'est plus là mais à chaque fois qu'on faisait état d'Angus Road, *galoupe al guet Beekarry pou blok lanket*.

M. le président, je ne veux pas parler des milliards dilapidés dans les institutions ; mes collègues en ont fait état : la SBM, Silver Bank, MIC, Air Mauritius, Airport Holdings, la Banque de Maurice, pilotée par le bureau de *savat dodo*. 50 milliards d'argent public font actuellement l'objet d'enquêtes, M. le président et ce n'est pas moi qui le dis, c'est le Directeur général par intérim de la FCC. Que dire de ces contrats à gogo accordés durant la pandémie du Covid-19 à des copains et des copines – mes collègues en ont fait état. Des terrains, y compris à Ganga Talao, la fameuse *party* à Ganga Talao avec Black Label, en compagnie des gens qui ne devaient pas être là-bas.

M. le président, venons à monsieur Navin Beekarry. Je crois que moi-même, j'ai posé des questions parlementaire une dizaine de fois, que ce soit *Question Time* ou à l'heure des examens du budget en comité.

Jamais, le Premier ministre d'alors, n'a voulu donner des chiffres, dire à la population, c'est l'argent du publique. C'est maintenant que nous savons, grâce au Premier ministre actuel que le salaire mensuel de R 525,000 et la moitié payée en dollars. Vous savez pourquoi, M. le président ? Parce qu'il a fait un *U-turn* au *Privy Council* dans le scandale de *Medpoint*. Et nous avons dit pendant la campagne, ce scandale de *Medpoint*, *lenket pou reouver, bizin reouver* parce que la population veut savoir la vérité sur l'affaire *Medpoint*. Et, ce monsieur a été récompensé en dollars, avec aussi l'arrogance.

N'en parlons pas, M, le président, de monsieur Al Capone, du Champ de Mars. J'ai fait mention, moi-même, ici à l'Assemblée, M. Lee Shim. Une GRA ultra-politisée poussant la MTC vers la sortie. Combien des fois nous avons posé des questions parlementaires sur ce monsieur. Lui-même, il a avoué qu'il avait financé le MSM des millions de roupies, à l'époque. Sur Radio Plus, il l'avait dit, publiquement. C'était un financier du MSM.

Semaine après semaine, nous avons posé des questions. Jamais, Pravind Jugnauth n'a voulu dire la vérité ni le ministre des Finances d'alors.

Semaine après semaine, M. le président, nos collègues en souviendront, cet acharnement contre M. Jean Michel Giraud – acharnement raciste et communaliste. C'est dans le *Hansard*, M. le président. Et dans tout ça, qui était l'homme à tout faire de Pravind Jugnauth au GRA ? Son Senior Adviser, Dev Beekharry. Hier, le Premier ministre, je crois a fait état de ses salaires, de ses *perks* ; il était aussi dans plusieurs conseils d'administration.

Mais nous aurons l'occasion de parler sur la GRA dans les semaines à venir parce qu'il y aura très probablement un projet de loi.

M. le président, ce n'est pas que dans l'entourage de l'ancien Premier ministre que les abus ont été légion. M. le président, parlons de ce monsieur qui voulait faire politique autrement ; c'est un traître du MMM, Steeve Obeegadoo. M. le président, il avait commencé – il voulait faire la politique autrement – raser les maisons à Riambel, à Résidence Malherbes, en pleine pandémie.

Et hier, la population a été mis au courant – 22 missions aux coûts de R7 million pour ce monsieur qui voulait faire la politique autrement. Alors que la MTPA, dont il avait la charge, faisait les choux gras à l'organisatrice immuable des concours de beauté. Je ne veux pas aller plus loin ; tout le monde le sait qui est responsable de ce concours de beauté, très proche parent de l'ancien ministre, qui voulait faire politique autrement. Ce n'est pas son argent. On m'a informé – j'espère que mon collègue va aller vérifier, il a pris l'avion 2 fois dans le même jour, pour aller-venir, aller-venir, ce monsieur.

Et, aujourd'hui, *kumadire tang linn sorti*. On le voit sortir et venir nous faire la leçon. Je crois que le Leader de l'opposition a fait état de l'émission. Vous allez voir les chiffres entre 2014 et 2024 pour les voyages ministériels, presque un milliard. Je sais qu'est-ce que je suis en train de dire. Et ils font fausse allégation sur la voiture du Premier ministre. Les voitures, M. le président, R 500 millions – *zot kas sa*, englouties pour l'achat des limousines sous le régime de Jugnauth.

Et, aujourd'hui, on vient nous faire la leçon sur les *Advisers*. Alors, il suffit de regarder de près les traitements accordés au Bala, Prakash Maunthrooa, Dev Beekharry, Ken Arian et toute la bande de *Lakwizinn* du *Sun Trust*.

N'en parlons pas maintenant, M. le président, de l'opposition persécutée ; les journalistes, les internautes traqués, par ce *Special Striking Team* et tolérée par un ex-Commissaire qui a attendu la retentissante défaite de ses maîtres pour prendre sa retraite dorée le même jour.

M. le président, c'est de loin le fléau le plus inquiétant que le MSM a légué en héritage – fraudes, corruptions, pillages, gaspillages et aussi appauvrissement. La population, en gonflant les comptes en manque des ministres et de ses petits copains. Si pendant Covid que *linn trouv moyen pou kokin*. M. le président, on peut s'imaginer qu'est-ce qui s'est passé en temps normal.

La FCC a certainement du pain sur la planche pour les prochaines années et la population attend avec impatience, des réponses claires, des sanctions exemplaires et surtout la mise en place d'un système de gouvernance qui protège les caisses de l'état contre de tels abus et nous faisons confiance, la population fait confiance au Premier ministre et Vice-Premier ministre et à leurs visions là-dessus.

Le peuple veut qu'il y ait des garde-fous, efficaces et surtout, une plus grande redevabilité des décideurs politiques et nous donnons cette garantie en tant que gouvernement.

M. le président, suite à la présentation du budget par le Premier ministre le 05 juin dernier, il y a eu des nombreuses réactions politiques. Il va sans dire que la question du BRP à 65 ans a polarisé toute l'attention obnubilant ainsi, malheureusement les autres mesures budgétaires importantes.

Commençons par les acteurs de ces manifestations. Comme il fallait s'y attendre, les syndicats, *rightly*, se sont mobilisés à bloc et certaines ONG. Par contre, M. le président, des politiciens *missing in action*, *disparet sa* depuis le 10 Novembre. *Seki pas ti lor radar pe deklar sirdar zordi*, M. le président, *ena la !*

D'autres observent de toute évidence, le deuil politique. Ils sont en deuil. On les a vu en tenue de croque mort, en plus, et une véritable tête d'enterrement. On les a vu dans les rues de Port-Louis, en tenue de croque mort. Une véritable tête d'enterrement, *figir pa ti bon !*

Et pour cause, M. le président, 60 soldats engagés, 60 capturés, 60 *Prisoners of war*, ils ont été battus, *Prisoners of war*. Mais, il y a eu deux qui sont libérés sur paroles, sur une base démocratique.

Le MSM et son leader, qui, hier bâillonnaient la liberté d'expression, peuvent aujourd'hui, grâce à ce gouvernement, *mars marse, al rod rol – eoula*, entouré de *bouncers*. Incroyable ! Les *bouncers* aussi en tenue de croque mort.

M. le président, eux, qui rêvaient de l'opportunité qu'offrait cette manifestation pour tenter de redorer leur blason orange, devenu noir pour la circonstance, voulaient servir de cette manifestation, organisée par les syndicats, pour avoir un sérum politique, sauf que ce produit n'a aucun effet sur eux – *zero serom*.

M. le président, l'issue du dernier scrutin est toujours bien présente dans la mémoire de l'électeur, l'électeur a une mémoire d'éléphant, un peu comme moi.

Le MSM a d'ailleurs appris à leur dépens, dans les manifestations du weekend. Heureusement qu'il n'y a pas eu une photo de famille avec *Pinokio*, *Savat Dodo*, Gobin, les ex-patrons de la SBM, Judas, les gens de la STC.

Heureusement, il n'y a pas eu de photos de famille, surtout tous ceux qui sont sur le *wanted list* de la FCC, *kinn pren lord ek lakwizinn*. Ils sont en attente. Ils font la queue là.

M. le président, la colère des manifestants est avant tout et surtout contre les responsables du MSM et ses alliés complices, coupables. Ils sont coupables de ce désastreux bilan. Le passage du cyclone du MSM sur notre pays a mis notre économie à genoux. Celles et ceux qui s'expriment ces jours-ci revendiquent les acquis pour les dix ans à venir, M. le président. Ce gouvernement veut voir au-delà de cette fenêtre le moyen et long terme ; 25 à 30 ans plus.

C'est la vision de l'honorable Premier ministre et du ministre des Finances, de l'ensemble du gouvernement, et de l'honorable vice-Premier ministre pour pérenniser le système de pension et le rendre soutenable. Nous avons cette responsabilité, nous avons ce devoir envers les générations à venir de rendre soutenable ce système de pension en tenant notamment compte du vieillissement de la population et la baisse de la natalité pour que nos petits-enfants ne nous reprochent pas d'avoir vidé *nou bwat kondane nasional*, ce qu'ils ont fait. *Devid bwat kondane nasional*.

Cette génération, M. le président, celles et ceux qui vont en premier lieu directement et définitivement bénéficier d'une meilleure protection à l'issue des réformes préconisées de la pension, les jeunes ne se sont nullement exprimés, mais du moins encore. Ils n'ont pas fait entendre leur voix et étaient les grands absents de la rue.

Les jeunes qui ont déjà débuté leur carrière professionnelle et qui s'apprêtent à le faire – la génération de demain et après-demain et à qui ces réformes sont destinées. Les réformes que nous avons proposé, que ce gouvernement a proposé par la voix de l'honorable Premier ministre, sont destinées à ces jeunes de demain. Ces jeunes réalisent la nécessité de cette réforme. Pour être objectif de ce présent débat, il me semble qu'au préalable, il faut écouter les deux sons de la cloche, les aspirations de deux générations et plus.

M. le président, que constatons-nous ? Une pléiade de critiques, des amalgames douteux. Une virulente désinformation. Il y a une désinformation démagogique. Des dizaines de critiques, mais zéro de proposition, alors *ki ena dife dan lakaz*. Un ou deux actuaire indépendants ont donné leurs opinions, mais aucune proposition collective. Mais pour pouvoir en faire, il faut bien comprendre comment nous nous en sommes retrouvés dans un tel borborygme.

Un budget, M. le président, est des colonnes et des lignes interminables de chiffres. Ces chiffres expriment nos attentes, nos appréhensions, nos ambitions et notre futur. Cette encyclopédie de chiffres offre la vérité à celui qui veut voir. La sagesse à ceux qui la maîtrisent et la prospérité à ceux qui savent l'écouter. Et les chiffres ne mentent pas et les faits sont indiscutables.

M. le président, mes collègues ont parlé de loup dans la bergerie ou de loup dans la peau d'un mouton. Pour garder le même registre, je parlerai des loups-garous qui profitent non pas de la pleine lune, mais de leur libération sous caution pour faire leur sortie politique. Ces mêmes loups-garous qui ont vampirisé et saigné à blanc les institutions.

Certains nous reprochent de rappeler le passé. Mais ne pas parler de dilapidation de l'héritage de toute une nation in *broad daylight* s'arrange à qui au final ? Alors, que le passé, mieux vaut l'assumer, mais pas le fuir. Il ne faut pas fuir le passé. Surtout ne pas donner l'occasion aux croque mort de l'enterrer.

M. le président, nous, de ce côté de la Chambre, au niveau du gouvernement, nous sommes prêts. Prêts à rendre à ce pays sa dignité, son intégrité et son avenir. Prêts à gouverner avec le peuple, mais pas contre le peuple. Prêts à s'attaquer aux vrais problèmes

que d'autres ont esquivés. Ils ont esquivé, M. le président. Pendant la dernière campagne, nous avons dit, nous n'avons rien caché, nous avons dit dans le programme d'élection de l'Alliance du Changement que notre première priorité, c'est de redresser l'économie et les institutions du pays.

Nous ne sommes pas passés par quatre chemins. Nous avons commencé par ici même, la Chambre en redonnant à cette Assemblée nationale ses lettres de noblesse. Ce qui n'était pas possible sous l'ancien gouvernement avec sa *shouting brigade* et ses expulsions et ses suspensions courantes transformant chaque séance en un véritable force. Je dois rendre hommage, peut-être en tant que vétéran aussi, à tous mes collègues du Parti travailliste, du MMM et aussi des Nouveaux Démocrates avec qui nous étions ensemble ici.

Nous étions comme une équipe et nous faisions face à la tyrannie. Nous avions, ensemble en équipe, fait face au MSM. M. le président, alors que nous manquons aujourd'hui la journée mondiale contre la drogue, un jour très important, j'ai une pensée spéciale pour ces mères et pères de famille dont les enfants sont victimes de la toxicomanie, pour les responsables de ces ONG qui affrontent sans relâche le danger au quotidien, qui affrontent sans relâche le danger de la mort.

J'ai en tête, M. le président, je vais toujours me rappeler, feu Père Robert Jauffret, que j'ai côtoyé moi-même dans les années 80, sur le terrain. La mort en face, nous avons combattu ensemble à cette époque, je crois l'héroïne et le *brown sugar* dans les quartiers où nombreux de jeunes étaient sous l'emprise de ce fléau.

Mais il est essentiel de se rappeler que le trafic de la drogue est devenu quasiment une industrie à Maurice grâce aux protections accordées par le MSM de Pravind Jugnauth aux barons de la drogue. Je le dis avec tout le sérieux parce que je suis un homme de terrain ; nous avons vu. Je ne veux pas revenir sur les années précédentes où certains barons de la drogue étaient ici présents dans un *gallery* d'honneur, *gouvernmen dan nou lame*. On a vécu tout ça, M. le président, dans les couloirs de l'Assemblée.

M. le président, y a-t-il un crime plus crapuleux, le fait de détourner à ses fins personnelles le *reward money*, destiné aux informateurs de la police pour combattre la drogue ? M. le président, combien de fois, nous avons demandé des questions à l'ancien Premier ministre. Donnez-nous les détails, à qui s'est payé ? Comment c'est distribué ? Rien ! *Kasiet* ! Aujourd'hui, que voyons- nous ?

Ce haut gradé, je dis haut gradé, proche de l'ancien Premier ministre, Pravind Jugnauth, et ses *deal-ings* d'un montant de R 4.6 millions, fait face aujourd'hui aux enquêteurs de la FCC. En fait, il n'a fait que suivre les mauvais exemples de ses patrons. Que voyons-nous aujourd'hui ? Dans Le Mauricien d'aujourd'hui, on parle même de R 40 millions. C'est de l'argent public. Voter l'argent public pour combattre le trafic de la drogue, pour avoir de l'information, pour agir. Dans Le Mauricien, c'est à la une aujourd'hui.

Je me demande, M. le président, je l'ai dit au Premier ministre, si nous ne devrions pas introduire une *one line budget* pour inclure que les bracelets en acier soient en argent. *Menot*, je parle de *menot* là ! Bracelet en acier ! Vous savez c'est quoi les bracelets en acier ? *Bizin met zot brasle* en argent. *Telma zon kokin larzan. Met li en arzan.*

Par ailleurs nous avons été témoin, M. le président, de la proximité de certains barrons notoires avec les membres de l'ancien gouvernement – dans l'ouest du pays, Franklin – dont les cas les plus médiatisés comme les contrats de bail à Grand Bassin. Il y a eu des baux qui ont été donnés sans oublier les bonbonnes de compresseurs – *sous régime Pravin Jugnauth sa.*

Il y a eu certes une commission d'enquête mais ce serait bien de rappeler combien de membres actifs du MSM, proches de l'ancien Premier ministre, et de certains avocats défenseur attitrés ont dû démissionner – même un ministre je crois – à cause des liens incestueux avec ces trafiquants. L'industrie de la drogue, le *drug money*, est un puissant allié de la corruption et qui peut représenter une menace pour la démocratie.

Notre gouvernement, nous avons dit que nous allons nous attaquer à ce fléau de la drogue ; et nous avons commencé. Nous avons récemment adopté, au sein de cette Chambre, le National Agency for Drug Control pour combattre le trafic de la drogue, la dépendance mais aussi la réhabilitation des usagers de la drogue.

Alors, je rends un grand hommage, nous avons une pensée pour ces familles qui sont dans les difficultés. Je suis sûr que mes amis et collègues députés, ils sont sur le terrain dans votre circonscription. La drogue synthétique se fait rage. Il n'y a pas de politique, il n'y a pas de couleur, il n'y a pas de communauté, elles sont partout, même dans les familles aisées aussi.

M. le président, ce gouvernement *means business*. Cela implique que notre économie doit être plus compétitive. Pour atteindre cet objectif, nous devons améliorer notre



productivité, et notre efficience. Une révolution du savoir et un sursaut culturel pour que nous puissions innover et grandir encore.

Notre pays est un vaste chantier et chaque ministre apporte sa pierre à l'édifice pour redresser l'économie et redémarrer les investissements pour une croissance accélérée.

M. le président, la *Junior Minister*, Joanna Bérenger, et moi-même sommes conscients que les attentes sont nombreuses, et les défis multiples, à l'environnement et je suis fier que nous avons fait en quelques mois ce que d'autres n'ont pas eu le courage politique de faire ces dix dernières années. La plage de Pomponette a été sauvée de l'accaparement du littoral et elle est aujourd'hui une plage publique. Nous disons merci à notre ami l'honorable Mohamed, je suis sûr que mes amis de *Rezistans ek Alternativ* et de l'Association *Aret kokin nu laplaz* sont vraiment *happy*.

A travers des évaluations rigoureuses des demandes de permis EIA, et un *monitoring* constant des projets en cours, mon ministère veut assurer une gouvernance environnementale stricte pour protéger les zones écologiquement sensibles, les barachois, zones humides, *mangroves*, caves – pas de compromis là-dessus, M. le président. Oui au développement tout en préservant notre patrimoine naturel pour les générations futures et pour tous ceux qui croient qu'on peut développer sans détruire la nature. Cela illustre l'engagement de ce gouvernement en matière de protection de l'environnement.

Je suis très fier, M. le président, je suis retourné comme ministre de l'Environnement presque 20 ans après. L'histoire en témoigne de ce que moi-même, avec le DPM, nous avons accompli ; les décisions courageuses, que lui et moi, nous avons prises à cette époque en interdisant l'extraction du sable qui était un crime ; en abaissant le pourcentage de soufre dans le diesel pour combattre la fumée noire dans les autobus, dans les véhicules ; la création de la Police de l'environnement.

Sur d'autres dossiers que nous avons travaillés en cette période en tant que leader du MMM, et moi, comme ministre, avec mes collègues MMM, parce que c'était notre vision à l'époque et qui l'est toujours. Je suis très heureux, je n'aurais jamais cru que 20 ans après j'aurais été ministre de l'Environnement, je continue surtout.

M. le président, nous agissons également sur nos îlots. Nous avons commencé avec l'Île aux Bénitiers qui étouffait sous le poids du désordre. Aujourd'hui, l'île respire et j'inviterais mes amis d'aller visiter. Dommage je n'ai pas pu moi-même. Les opérateurs, désormais régularisés, travaillent avec des règles claires. Je veux ici saluer l'action collective

menée sous la présidence du DPM avec le support du Premier ministre, en collaboration avec le ministère du Logement, celui de l'Agro-industrie qui est responsable du *National Parks and Conservation Service*, le ministère du Tourisme et surtout le Conseil de district de Rivière-Noire, le président Monsieur Khemraz Ortoo et tous les partenaires concernés et nous avons fait un bon exemple d'un travail collectif et à long terme.

M. le président, ce ne sont que quelques exemples de la longue route vers la reconstruction de notre pays. Le sortir de l'abîme à la prospérité. Pour y parvenir, le premier budget de ce gouvernement jette les bases dans un contexte national et international difficile. Les incertitudes sont nombreuses en raison des facteurs externes, hors de notre contrôle. En tout cas, ce budget n'a laissé aucun secteur clé de côté – l'économie bleue, le tourisme durable, l'agriculture durable, la consolidation budgétaire et la croissance économique, sans oublier la protection des plus vulnérables.

**The Deputy Speaker:** You have five minutes to go.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Yes, I know. Dans tout cela, nous devons donc faire les bons choix pour notre environnement. Nous travaillons sur un grand projet au niveau du changement climatique. Nous travaillons sur des rapports que nous allons produire dans le sillage du *Conference of Parties* de COP30.

Un des grands problèmes aussi c'est, comme a été évoqué par mon collègue, l'honorable ministre Assirvaden, ce budget permet de débloquer environ R 30 milliards pour les trois prochaines années dans le secteur d'énergie renouvelable.

Nous travaillons sur la gestion de la zone côtière dans son ensemble. La *Beach Authority* tombe sous notre responsabilité, nous travaillons aussi sur un projet pour les plages publiques pour rendre agréable avec tous les loisirs à bon marché pour les Mauriciens.

M. le président, j'ai parlé de la plage de Pomponette ; l'accès aux plages publiques, nous travaillons aussi là-dessus et il y a des projets à Pointe aux Feuilles, Petit Sable, Pointe du Diable, Bambous Virieux, Anse Jonché, Providence sans compter les autres plages publiques dans le littoral. La Beach Authority redoubla son effort pour sensibiliser aussi la population, pour un plus propre les plages publiques.

M. le président, aujourd'hui plus que jamais, nous sommes déterminés à restaurer les droits de la nature. Nous allons modifier la Constitution de Maurice afin de mieux protéger les droits fondamentaux, y compris celui à un environnement sain et à la révision de la loi sur l'environnement, dont il y a plusieurs lacunes dans ce projet de loi.

Sans compter, M. le président, notre combat permanent avec la Police de l'environnement, dont je salue leur travail, combattant la pollution sonore et la nuisance des véhicules fumigènes.

M. le président, la pollution plastique est une menace majeure pour la santé, et les écosystèmes et c'est une priorité pour nous. En 2024, 158 millions de bouteilles PET ont été mises sur le marché, et pour y remédier, nous travaillons sur une feuille de route vers un pays sans pollution plastique. Je suis sûr que nous arrivons à bon port. Hormis le système de consigne avec remboursement, mais aussi, sur le principe de la Responsabilité Élargie du Producteur. Un cadre légal est en préparation.

Nous travaillons sur la gestion des déchets où des milliards sont dépensés, et aujourd'hui, nous pouvons dire, moi-même et la Junior Minister, nous avons hérités de Mare Chicose avec le feu comme nous sommes entrés au gouvernement. C'était un contrat d R3.6 milliards qui a été alloué le 28 juin juste à la veille des élections où il y a des problèmes énormes de gestions, et je le dis avec conviction. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous disons que cette extension ne résoudra pas durablement le problème de déchets. C'est pour cette raison que dans le budget, on parle du *Waste to Wealth*, axée sur l'économie circulaire et il n'y a pas mal d'initiatives que nous allons prendre.

Nous travaillons aussi, M. le président, sur l'incivisme qui devient un fléau. Est-ce que nous avons aujourd'hui une population de mauvaises habitudes ? Sanctionner oui, mais il faut que la population prenne conscience que l'état dépense des milliards pour la collecte des déchets. Alors, nous allons agir là aussi et nous voulons que l'île Maurice devienne une nation responsable et consciente de son programme environnemental.

M. le président, il n'y a pas mal d'initiatives au niveau du ministère et je ne veux pas oublier *Mauri-Facilities* qui tombe sous nous maintenant. Mes collègues députés savent aujourd'hui qu'ils peuvent compter sur cette unité. Ces travailleurs travaillent avec courage, bravent le soleil, le mauvais temps pour entretenir les écoles publiques, les bordures de route et les terrains vagues et d'autres espaces publics et je les rends hommage.

Pour conclure, M. le président, le budget 2025-26 est bien plus qu'un document comptable. Il s'agit d'un contrat moral avec notre pays, d'un investissement stratégique pour l'avenir de nos enfants et petits-enfants et d'un engagement politique fort. Nous avons pris l'engagement de redresser l'économie et de remettre les institutions sur les rails de bonne gouvernance. C'est à quoi nous nous sommes attelés depuis novembre dernier et la

machinerie de l'Alliance du Changement tourne à plein régime. Transformons notre économie pour accroître notre résilience et offrir des opportunités à nos jeunes. Retrouvons nos manches pour améliorer notre productivité et mettre en marche une économie solidaire.

M. le président, c'est dans la tempête qu'on reconnaît les vrais capitaines. Nous avons à la tête du pays, un Premier ministre qui n'a froid aux yeux et avec le soutien de son adjoint, le DPM, qui tiennent à deux le gouvernail avec assurance pour sortir le pays de ces eaux troubles. Notre force est que nous sommes un gouvernement à l'écoute – *nou lor terin nou* – pas seulement, et nous considérons que nous adaptons et que nous accompagnons. Nous sommes élus pour servir le peuple, nous sommes conscients de notre responsabilité, c'est une lourde responsabilité. Nous avons des gens de longue expérience. Nous avons des professionnels, nous avons des jeunes parlementaires et je crois qu'ensemble, nous pourrons faire de l'île Maurice un pays où il fait bon vivre et que nos enfants et nos petits-enfants seront fiers de nous.

Voilà tout ce que j'avais à dire sur ce budget. Merci, M. le président.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Hon. Minister Mohamed!

(3.46 p.m.)

**The Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Mohamed):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

It is not easy as I have said to my friends in this august Assembly, to be able to stand up and address the nation and take part in this debate after listening to every person speak. The more so after having listened to the excellent speech of hon. Minister Bhagwan but allow me to say that when the budget speech was pronounced before this august Assembly, I was not in Mauritius. I was in Saudi Arabia and there, I was there for the hajj and also to supervise the whole process and to meet certain officials. And from there, I sent a message to the hon. Prime Minister on the eve of his budget speech that I would pray that he is infused with everything that is required in order to think about the country first.

I have heard many speak today and on other days during this budget debate about what the qualities of a statesman are. I have also given some thoughts to it. I was listening very carefully to the words pronounced by the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance reading the budget speech and there is one thing that came to my mind, and let me share it with you today. You see, a statesman, he knows exactly where he wants to take the country, from where it is to where he wants to take it. This is a statesman. The passage and the road to

where he wants to take it will be fraught with difficulty, true but this will not in any way stop him from taking it there.

The only thing which I would like to underline here is that it is someone who is going to take the country from the current state to the future state and this is what the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance has done. It takes a lot of courage to be able to present a budget of this nature. A lot of courage. A politician, as others have said before me, he thinks about the next election. I have heard hon. Rookny say it. Some have quoted *général de Gaulle* but in this particular instance, we are here listening to the people outside. We are aware of the difficulties that people are facing. We hear their cry, their fear, their frustration. We hear it. We feel it but let me, from the very outset, say we did not cause this crisis. We are not the ones that caused the mess. We are not the ones that caused the country to be placed in a situation where we are so indebted that we have to face reality and we are here only to sort out the mess. This is what we are here for. We are here. We have two choices –

- Either we do nothing and we pretend all is good, all is rosy and we think only about our own political survival and nothing else, pleasing people.
- The other choice is to think about the country. Think and do for the country, do not think about yourself.

That is precisely what the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance has done and I would like to congratulate him for that; for his courage, for his steadfast attitude, standing tall in the face of all that are inventing stories in order to justify their lies.

When I was not here, I heard the hon. Leader of the Opposition also say in his speech and the former Prime Minister come up with another untruth. I shall use the word ‘untruth’ because a lot of people would say ‘well let us be parliamentary’. But then, one knows the one who does not speak the truth is...

**Hon. Members:** A liar.

**Mr Mohamed:** I did not say it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Come on, carry on.

**Mr Mohamed:** So, when he goes as far as to say – you remember what he said once upon a time in 2014? That the hon. Prime Minister Ramgoolam has a private jet? Do you remember that? And I was so annoyed with the hon. Prime Minister and I said ‘why didn’t you ever take me in your private jet?’ And I am sure this is what the hon. Attorney General just said. We are thinking alike.

And now, what I hear them say – and obviously this was a lie – let me say it, it was a lie but what do I hear now? That supposedly the Prime Minister is buying a new car, a Rs23 million car! That is also untrue. That is totally untrue! You see, I know for a fact that this is not true and I say it out loud, the Prime Minister has not ordered, has not bought, and is not driving a new car. On the contrary, he is driving the car that was ordered by their leader, the former Prime Minister. Whilst we were in the midst of financial difficulties, their leader had ordered cars worth Rs23 million. So, maybe he should go back to his leader who also was spreading the false lies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will during my speech, talk about – obviously – my Ministry, but before I go to my Ministry – I am not someone who is as well versed in matters of economics but at least mathematics, I have tried to do some calculations. From all the information that I have and from what I have seen, more than 25% of the national budget expenditure goes towards the old-age pension. From the calculations and from what I have seen as well, approximately 34% of the national expenditure goes towards social protection. The figures, which I am going to quote, are important.

Right now, the people out there want to know why are we in such a difficult situation. Let me put it very simply, in layman's terms.

Today, in Mauritius, we are spending 8% of our national budget for education – 8%. The hon. Minister of Education is looking at me. But in Singapore, 18% of the national budget is spent on education. 8% in Mauritius; 18% in Singapore. In South Africa, our neighbour, 21.9% is spent on education.

Let me now look at the Minister of Health. In Mauritius, we are spending 7% of our national budget on health. In Singapore, it is almost 21% on public health. In South Africa, it is almost double of our figure, 14%.

The reason we are in a situation of this nature today is because there is no fiscal space. Can you imagine from my figures – I hope the hon. Minister of Finance and the hon. Junior Minister will correct me if I am wrong. My apologies if I am wrong – my calculations showed that approximately 10-12% of the national budget is what is used for debt servicing. This is enormous!

So, today, we are in a situation because of the mismanagement. We have to look for the guilty parties. We have to find who they are, and the people have to know who the guilty ones are. Each time I show my hand towards this empty bench of the Opposition, there again, they do not even deserve the salary they have at the end of this month. You want to know about waste? Where are they?

*(Interruptions)*

Today, the waste that our country has become, the barren land that we have become, as far as the economy is concerned, it is their fault. I will explain it before I go into the details pertaining to my Ministry. I wanted to talk about the Ministry first, but allow me, because I think it important to go straight to the issue at hand. It is what these people have done to this country.

Let us look at this. Mr Dev Beekharry, Senior Adviser to the Prime Minister, Pravind Jugnauth. He had a salary of Rs119,500 monthly. Added to that was monthly remuneration of Rs35,000 as vice-Chairperson of the Gambling Regulatory Authority. He had an extra duty allowance as vice-Chairperson of the GRA for Rs25,000. At the same time, whilst the country was going through serious difficulties of COVID time, that was the time he was *le président des Conseils d'administration de* Mauritius Duty Free Paradise, Rodrigues Duty Free Paradise, Airport of Rodrigues, Pointe Coton Resort Hotel Co. Ltd, and a Board Director of Metro Express. All this, I say again, whilst we were suffering financially.

So, while people were dying, they were fleecing the people. Let us not forget Molnupiravir or the Pack & Blister scandal, the billions that were being fleeced from the taxpayers. *Les milliards qui ont été volés pendant que les gens mourraient de la Covid. Le bon gestionnaire qu'était le Premier ministre Jugnauth, voilà ce qu'il faisait dans le dos du peuple.* Today, he has the gall to come and give us lessons, with the absent Leader of the Opposition and his little partner.

Not to forget, today, as Minister of Housing and Lands, I am being told and briefed by the NHDC and the NSLD – what do we end up with? –companies and contractors are sending us claims. What are they for? For groundbreaking ceremony, stone laying foundation, events organised for Mr Obeegadoo, former DPM, to come on the sites for him to have his photographs taken, for Mr Jugnauth and his Ministers to come and have their photo opportunity. Rs32 m. of claims for the publicity for the then government!

Et là aussi, ils ont livré pas plus de 50 maisons. Et quand je dis 50, je suis généreux ! Ils ont oublié qu'il fallait qu'on ait des toilettes qui fonctionnent. Ils ont oublié qu'il fallait des drains. Ils ont oublié qu'il fallait qu'on fasse des travaux off-site, et aussi, de s'assurer que les sites ne soient pas inondés en période de pluie. Ils ont tout oublié ! Mais ce qui importait à Monsieur Obeegadoo, l'ancien *Deputy Prime Minister*, c'était de s'assurer qu'il faisait plaisir à *lakwizinn*, et qu'il avait ses photos dans la presse pour que tout le monde sache que, voilà, il travaillait.

Quand il entrait, on se souvient, *he had a lot of files*. Il était à la place de l'honorable Lobine. *It is not a very good place there. Be very careful! I do not know what you are feeling there, but it is ejectable! So, this is what he was doing.*

What was Mr Jairaj Sonoo, who was the Group CEO of NHDC and NSLD, earning? He was earning Rs501,000 monthly.

**An hon. Member:** How much?

**Mr Mohamed:** Rs501,000 monthly!

Do you think that is all? Oh, no, no, no! So, the former Deputy Prime Minister approved that salary. The breakdown was –

- Rs400,000 – his salary;
- entertainment allowance – Rs15,000. I wish I could entertain him now for free!
- driver's allowance – Rs15,000;
- travelling and fuel – Rs40,000;
- cash-in-lieu of company car – Rs31,500;
- benefits plus 25% gratuity at the end of 12 months;
- 20 days annual leave;
- 21 days sick leave and possibility of encashment if not taken;
- mobile phone allowance;
- two business class tickets, *aller-retour Maurice-Londres* annually.

These people are going to come and give us lessons today!

*Now, I say to the people*, on vous écoute, on entend vos craintes. On entend la frayeur. On entend ce que vous dites sur les pensions et les prestations sociales. On vous entend, mais



il faut chercher ceux qui sont coupables. Nous, on est là simplement pour assurer et pour protéger *the pension that people have to get. If we are not to act, if the Prime Minister does not act, even those whom we say should get will not get a penny.* On est là pour s'assurer que ceux qui obtiennent leurs pensions, même ceux qui ont obtenu leurs pensions de vieillesse à l'âge de 60 ans. Si le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances n'agis pas, s'il ne prend pas des actions décisives, courageuses, même eux, ils n'auront rien à la fin du mois.

So, in order to protect the existing pension, we have to act. In order to wipe the mess, we have to act. In order to protect this country, we have to act. We choose the difficult path. We do not choose the path that is easy because the easy path leads to damnation. The easy path leads to an *échec total* for the country. And we do not want this.

Since I am talking about that, I will go further. I said to the Prime Minister a few minutes ago, before I stood up, time flies. Time goes very fast. I still remember the time when, not far ago, the Prime Minister was Sir Anerood Jugnauth. The Prime Minister threatened to get me arrested, and I was arrested. I was taken before court. I was provisionally charged. I remember those days. I remember the Prime Minister standing before me, from beginning to end, in the court in Port Louis.

I remember, the now Attorney-General was the lawyer who was there. My late father had spoken to him and he had tried to reassure my father all along – I remember the tears of my father. I remember how he had cried because for them, doing politics was to destroy people. That was their politics – destroy people. And, a lot of you were present there with me and I thank you for that. Time flies, and see how everything changes today. And I thank the Prime Minister for having chosen me to be Minister, a very difficult position, very big position. Today, to be number three of a government is not an easy task. Time flies, things change. So, that's why I have to go back in history.

Today, we have people giving lessons. I remember Dr. Aumeer was also by our side during these difficult times. I remember you. Thank you. I remember Roshni Bhadain going for a press conference and saying: 'oh well, I don't agree that Shakeel has been arrested, this is wrong.' I remember those days but that same Roshni Bhadain, I remember him leaning on the column outside at the National Assembly in January 2015, putting his one foot on the column facing the Harbour, he was smoking his cigarette and while he puffed, he said: 'Tell your leader Ramgoolam that I am going to...' and he used a very bad word in creole and said he is going to do something not really great with Dawood Rawat.

In January of 2015, but he didn't stop there because don't forget, he is part and parcel – *parce qu'on doit chercher les coupables! Les coupables, c'est le gouvernement MSM depuis 2014 jusqu'à 2024*. Ten years, let's not forget Roshni Bhadain – my friends talked about this yesterday, with Patel Engineering. How about the billions because of their incompetence? Their wish to destroy everything on their passage. The billions that the taxpayers have had to pay in terms of damages and compensation to Patel Engineering, to Betamax. They are the guilty ones. Today, if we find ourselves in such an economic strife, it is because they have culpable on their forehead. They are the guilty ones. They are the targets. The people must look for them. They should be sought and then, I will keep the good ones for last.

Then we talked about the new company of Maradiva that has changed name to Dhyanavartam Ltd; *R 1.7 milliards a été pris*. This is money belonging to us, this country, MIC, Bank of Mauritius, *R 1.7 milliards a été pris, pas rembourser encore jusqu'à l'heure* and they go into voluntary administration. There is only one reason they try to go into voluntary administration, is to run away from their responsibility and their liability, that is the reason, because they want them, as Directors, not to be responsible personally, that is the reason.

So, today, you take money, you obtain the money and you take approximately Rs400 million from the State Bank of Mauritius, more than Rs2 billion – you look for the guilty ones, I say again, they are the guilty ones. They put us before a *fait accompli* while having lied about the figures, lied about the truth, hidden the truth. What can we do now apart from coming and sorting out the mess and making sure that we don't go straight into the wall. Because we are close to that, close to it.

But then I saw someone else popping his head out, Dr. Padayachy, the former Minister of Finance. This one is a story that I would like to take my time to tell you. Now, this is a very interesting story and it goes as follows. There is a plot of land in Roches Brunes, okay, we follow?

**An hon. Member:** Yes!

**Mr Mohamed:** Okay, so that land in Roches Brunes is a morcellement called Mount Pleasant Morcellement. Next to Morcellement Mount Pleasant where hon. Padayachy has his property and that property faces a beautiful green forest of many acres, 665 acres. That land, once upon a time belonged to Medine and Medine started the process of having a morcellement there on this plot of land which was 63 acres, just in front of the property

where Dr. Padayachy was, okay. And, I am saying this, *pour que la population puisse savoir* what type of person today comes to pretend to be cleaner than clean and they are the ones who claim to have moral high grounds to give us lessons. I want the population to know what he did. He comes up with an amendment to the law. First of all, Medine applied for their conversion and they obtain their conversion. The process was to do a morcellement. They apply for an EIA; they get the EIA. Now, the former Minister of Finance sees – ‘my God, they are going to come and build next to me, my property! They are going to be there and there is going to be people living in front of me, my view is going to go. The green space is going to disappear!’

Without consulting anyone at the Ministry of Housing and Lands, without consultation, he decides to amend the law last year, July 2024, and the Morcellement Act through section 56 of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill of 2024 and what has he do? He says that you have to have a green forest dedicated within any Morcellement development. So, look at the strategy, ‘let me use my position as Minister of Finance *pour protégé mon intérêt*’, *son intérêt à lui. Se servir de sa position comme ministre, sans consultation préalable avec les officiers ou même le DPM qui était simplement qu’un suiveur* – he had no *colonne vertébrale*. But he spoke well, nothing more.

Then, he accepted all of it, no consultation, amend the Morcellement Act in order to protect his view. But in 2021, Medine writes to the MIC and says – I need to raise capital, I have land for sale. That land was proposed to the MIC in 2021. They said no. But in 2024, that Minister, while he was Minister of Finance, – and I don’t believe in coincidences – not only does he amend the law but he gets MIC to contact Medine and said: ‘we are interested in that plot of land’ and bizarre, a land that was valued at approximately Rs600 million in 2021 by Medine themselves, was bought by the MIC, while Dr. Padayachy was Minister of Finance, the very land where his view was going to be blocked, the very land where the Morcellement was going to be built, it was sold for Rs875 million.

So, he paid himself the most expensive garden in the world, a garden worth Rs875 million, to ensure that there was no construction, no morcellement there, next to him. And the agreement that Medine had with the person, the company going to do the Morcellement, was brought to an end, purely and simply. The documents are in my possession and I can confirm that I will be communicating it to the hon. Prime Minister because this is unacceptable and when I look at the resolution of Medine. It says here: ‘an interest has been received from the

MIC in May 2024', not them contacting the MIC, MIC contacts them – 'we are interested for Roches Brunes site for a potential agri-tech', check out the word 'agri-tech' project, still nothing.

And, today, there is worse than that. I have the map of where his land is; I have the map – there is worse now. I am going to tell you what. There is a property there built by the NSLD on Roches Brunes Avenue. The entry and exit onto the property built by NSLD was on Roches Brunes Avenue, but the problem is that the road leading to Roches Brunes Avenue also led to his residence or to his property. And he did not want people from NSLD to use the same road as his.

So, what does he do? He carries out site visits there, walks with people from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, shows them, and says that they have to stop that. So, he forces the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the NSLD, to spend money by building a new road altogether for the inhabitants of the NSLD, not to pollute his environment.

You see what is shocking, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that this is someone who wears *savat dodo* slippers, but those slippers must be worth a hell of a lot, at least, because of the arrogance that this person has shown for the people of the NSLD there – you know what, there is land belonging to the state more there. Now that the MIC owns the land, I am going to, maybe, ask the Ministry of Finance and the MIC to give it to me for another social housing project as his neighbours; because, what is this? You mean to say that people have no right to come and live there. And what did he spend? I have the figures. Just to move the road and for them not to use the road he uses, they blocked the road at one point during construction with bollards, illegally, and more than Rs36 million was spent on a new road altogether by NSLD. And who has to pocket that? Who has to pay for that? Taxpayers!

Alors si les gens doivent commencer à comprendre pourquoi on se retrouve dans cette situation, alors c'est précisément parce qu'on a eu des dirigeants qui n'ont pas dirigé mais ont vécu comme des Gargantuas ; on ne peut pas digérer ce qu'ils ont fait. Ils ont tout bouffé, ils ont tout avalé, ils ont pris ce qui n'était pas à eux. Imaginez maintenant, M. le président, si quelqu'un peut se servir de sa position à la tête de l'État pour pouvoir servir de l'argent qui ne lui appartient pas pour influencer l'achat à R 875 millions, mais cela ressemble, étrangement, au prêt que la famille de l'ancien Premier ministre, elle-même, a obtenu à travers la State Bank of Mauritius et la MIC.

So, imagine now, where do we start? Where do we start putting order? But, in the meantime, the hon. Prime Minister has had to face the music because it is not something that he wrote. It is not something he planned. *We expect, as an opposition, to come ici à l'Assemblée nationale – quand on gagne les élections – qu'on s'attende à ce que les chiffres soient les vrais chiffres. On ne s'attend pas à ce que le gouvernement sortant va nous mentir à propos des chiffres, à propos de statistiques. We don't expect that.* This is the truth.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me talk about the NHDC now. I have explained to you what it was and I have had to put order there but before I go to the NHDC, let me say that at the level of my Ministry, there is Rs1.9 billion that is owed in terms of arrears by those who were on *campement* sites and industrial sites, industrial leases. Rs1,997,726,491, owed! Why? Because the previous government had amended the law in order to make it possible for people who did not want to 'pay' or 'had difficulties' during COVID-19 times to ask for time to pay and delaying tactics not to pay were applied. And this is something that required that the law be reviewed; we cannot continue, like having people on state land, owing money in terms of leases but at the same time, making money, declaring dividends and enjoying the fruits of the Republic, the land of the Republic. We can't do that.

So, I must say that we have tackled this and people have started to understand, companies have started to understand that we are not joking with this. They will pay and are paying.

Now, with regards to the two pieces of legislation which is the Town and Country Planning Act of 1954 and the partly proclaimed Planning and Development Act of 2004, there is the need, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to have a consolidated and modern legal framework for land use planning that would support government's commitment to modernising the legal frameworks to manage land resources more efficiently.

Now, we have asked and we have obtained consultancy services in view of drafting a consolidated and modern legal framework for land use planning in Mauritius and we have obtained some funds to start the process from this particular budget. We also have the National Land Development Strategy. At our meeting, on 23 December 2022, the government had decided to incorporate the recommendations made in the report – Master Plan of the Land Drainage Authority.

And, we could not, in the absence of the input from the LDA, which had refused to put its input – it was hiding, when we were not in government, all its data, and we could not

therefore finalise this document, this process, the NDS. And, we will be having a meeting in the forthcoming two weeks in order to finalise this and a meeting will be scheduled with the LDA in order to give their views, and for government, it will be sent to Cabinet for approval.

Now, with regards to that, there is also the New Urban and Rural Outline Scheme. Once the NDS is approved, a New Outline Planning Scheme which serves as a key instrument for land use planning will be developed. The services of a consultant will be required for the preparation of the outline planning scheme to address contemporary challenges including urbanisation pressures, socio-economic demands, environmental degradation and climate change.

We also have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Morcellement Act of 1990. It dates back to quite a long time now and needs to be revisited and be more responsive to today's reality and be realigned with the current online application process so as to ease and enable smooth, efficient, faster, timely application process. This is our objective.

Now, with regards to our housing strategy – we have basically come up with the idea, following discussions with the Ministry of Finance, there is the need to have a proper housing strategy. And why do I say that?

You will note that in the budget that there is a proposal to increase the threshold from Rs40,00 to Rs48,000. Now Rs40,000 to Rs48,000, is precisely because of recent increases that people have obtained and they find themselves, after waiting for ten years, fifteen years – and I can say, for a fact, that those lists of beneficiaries were once upon a time, when we were not there, being concocted because the kitchen was sending instructions who had to get houses and who did not have to get houses.

*Il y a ceux qui attendent depuis 15 ans qui n'obtiennent pas des maisons. Et je dois le dire* que this is over. Right now, we concentrate on justice, fairness, those who have applied, those who are in urgent situations. We are endeavouring to do that. We have 52,000 people waiting for houses; this is not a small figure.

So, despite claiming to build 8000, they have only delivered 40 – I had said less than 50 but in fact, the real figure is 40. So, we have a huge backlog and those people that require houses, a lot of them are within the bracket of zero to 48000 but a lot of them, are also, above 48000. And they do not have enough earnings in order to be able to afford a house from the private sector and are not poor enough to be able to be on the list of NSLD NHDC houses.

So, they are in an income trap. So, what we are doing therefore, I have consulted with the United Nations Habitat, I have consulted with the OECD and we are taking on board a consultant for a new housing strategy.

The only way forward clearly is to address in the moment of lack of finance *parce qu'ils ont tout dilapidé. On ne peut pas s'endetter. On ne doit certainement pas s'endetter davantage. Alors*, what I am proposing to the NHDC and NSLD is to work on the possibility of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

If you have a PPP, in order to build social houses, not only for those who are at the maximum Rs48,000, but also for the lower middle income. Then, we can go for cross subsidisation. I must say that I spoke to my hon. friend, hon. Osman Mahomed, who was once upon a time at the NHDC. He is one of those, when we were in the Opposition, who talked about how it is important to cross subsidise. This is something which at one point he was unfairly criticised for. But this is what has to be done.

Now, we have to build. We need 51,000 houses; we need to be able to put *en chantier* at least 10,000 houses. We need to be able to do that, but with a proper PPP, ensuring that all our procurement legislation is followed, ensuring that all is done in line with the law with a complete transparency. Not as it used to be done at the NSLD when they were in power. So, our objectives...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Minister, you have five minutes.

**Mr Mohamed:** Five minutes.

So, in regard to that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think it is important for me to add the following: I always said that the Government is a Government that wants transparency. Because of what I have said and in line with what I said, I beg to table the up-to-date details of NLSD and the up-to-date details of the NSLD for houses as to the dates of completion.

I beg to table the updated figures for all NHDC development together with all the dates since time is restricted. I will not be able to give all the dates, but everything is in there. When they will be ready, exactly what problems we have been having; I have hidden nothing. We are not in the business of hiding, and this is what we have done.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to conclude this time on the following: We have a land bank. We will look into the possibility of building the houses. Now that I made

this public, I will ask the GIS to do it. I will also put it on my social media page, and it will be given to the press. We want to be transparent about every single project.

Now, I would like to add the following in conclusion. You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no one chooses voluntarily when you are in politics. You do not walk into a situation voluntarily and say let me do something to make myself unpopular. We do not do that. When you are placed in a situation where you have to think about the country, it is very easy to fall into the trap, to think about your own survival. That is the easy way out. If you choose that, then, you will have short term gain, but the country will be found in a totally disastrous situation.

For instance, when my hon. friend, hon. Bhagwan, talked about Île aux Benitiers, on a smaller scale. When I saw the situation there, when it was brought to my attention by Cabinet, by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister; by the hon. Minister of Environment; the hon. Junior Minister of Environment; the hon. Junior Minister, Fabrice David as well was there, hon. Richard Duval; hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell, when they brought this to my attention, I followed what Cabinet had decided. Clean it up. But the reason we wanted to clean it up was for what? For it to be in a better state. In who's interest? For posterity, for children to come and for those who were trading there. What was not said? I was insulted *sur des éléments communaux*. I was told that, supposedly, I wanted to give it to private operators. I was told, supposedly, I was going to bring people from my constituency to work there, but this did not deter us from what we believed was right. Today, when we look at Île aux Benitiers, it shows that when we put our minds together to do something for the good of the people, we can succeed.

So, I would like to, in the last 30 seconds that is left, if I may, say that I have not forgotten those of my constituency. I thank them for their *confiance* that they have shown in me. Fourth time in a row elected in Constituency No. 3. It is my fifth mandate. I must say that I was astounded to see that in my constituency, no single house has been built by the NHDC by the MSM government or NSLD. Not a single house.

I am pleased to announce that we have gone to Baie du Tombeau. Baie du Tombeau now forms part of our constituency. We have land that was just lying idle. We have put up a project there. The hon. Members of Parliament, hon. Juman and hon. Minister Ameer Meea together with myself and officers of the NHDC, have gone there. We have already started a



project for Constituency No. 3, and we are providing houses. The first place is in Baie du Tombeau. That is a promise we made during the campaign, and we are keeping that promise.

Why am I concentrating on that constituency? First reason is because it is mine and secondly because nothing was done there for ten years. In No. 2 as well, nothing was done for ten years.

What I can tell you is that land has been found *que ce soit à route Militaire*, we are trying to explore the possibility of constructing, *que ce soit la route Abattoir*, we are exploring the possibility to build, *que ce soit aussi à Roche Bois* where there is the plan to eventually move the transfer station hopefully. We will have space there in order to build. We will not forget those who have been ignored for the past ten years.

So, let me conclude for real now and say I am very proud to be learning. You learn at all ages. *L'instinct te demande de choisir la facilité. Ce n'est pas évident de choisir* the hard way when you know it is for the good of the country. When you are next to the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and colleagues from Cabinet, when you make a decision in the interest of the people, we know that the country will come out even greater.

Let us all realise one thing that the people who have done us harm, the people who have destroyed the economy, the people who have filled their pockets with money not belonging to them, we will hunt them down. They will have to pay. Justice will prevail. Let us not forget that.

We will ensure that you are not forgotten and that you do not hide under a stone or a hole somewhere. We will remove the stone, we will dig you up, and you will have to pay the consequences of the crime that you have done to this country.

Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. We shall break for tea now.

We will resume at quarter past five. Thank you.

*At 4.33 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 5.18 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.*

**Madam Speaker:** Please be seated. Yes, hon. Deputy Prime Minister!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Madame la présidente, tous ceux qui me connaissent savent que je ne raconte jamais d'histoire, *zamin mo kouyonn dimounn*, comme on dit chez nous, et aujourd'hui moins que jamais on a le droit de raconter des histoires à la population.

J'ai toujours estimé et j'estime plus que jamais, Madame la présidente, que toute femme ou homme politique digne de ce nom a comme devoir premier un devoir de vérité ; dire la vérité même quand elle n'est pas bonne à dire, même quand elle est difficile à dire. Et aujourd'hui, comme en 1982, et comme en tellement d'occasions au cours de ma vie, ce devoir de vérité s'impose plus que jamais. Ce devoir de vérité m'oblige à revenir, même si brièvement, parce qu'on en a tellement parlé, sur l'héritage criminel que le MSM nous a laissé, que le MSM a laissé derrière lui.

Crime économique d'abord, et c'est ce qui nous intéresse, surtout aujourd'hui. Mais il est de mon devoir de rappeler que le MSM a commis des crimes vis-à-vis de ce pays, pas seulement sur le plan économique – la corruption, des institutions, de l'incompétence, *name it*.

Nous avons hérité après 10 ans de régime MSM d'un pays ruiné. A moi, cela me rappelle un arbre qui a poussé de travers pendant 10 ans et qu'il faut redresser. Ce n'est pas facile, parce que les arbres n'obéissent pas facilement ou même pas du tout. Dix ans de crimes contre ce pays ! Crime économique d'abord, mais crime contre tout.

Il faut tout reconstruire, et c'est ce que nous nous efforçons de faire, et dans un moment comme cela, ce n'est pas le moment de raconter des histoires. Ce n'est pas le moment de ne pas regarder la vérité en face. Il m'arrive de penser à ce que ce pays serait devenu s'ils étaient retournés au pouvoir. On a froid dans le dos. Après ces 10 ans, s'ils étaient retournés au pouvoir, ils auraient continué à *kouyonn dimounn* pendant un an, deux ans, trois ans. Ensuite, ça aurait été le crash, comme cela s'est vu dans tant de pays à travers le monde. La Grèce s'est écroulée il y a des années de cela, et cela a pris des années pour recommencer à redresser la situation, et la Grèce à l'Union européenne. Plus près de nous, le Sri Lanka, après des années de crimes par le régime en place, le Sri Lanka s'est écroulé. Mais c'est bon de réfléchir un petit peu, surtout à ceux qui pensaient être plus socialistes que nous tous ensemble. Celui qui a été élu massivement aux dernières élections Président de la République du Sri Lanka était un marxiste, un vrai marxiste mur et dur, qui s'était engagé pendant la campagne à revoir l'accord en force avec le FMI, à gouverner à gauche, sinon l'extrême gauche. Qu'est-ce qu'il a été obligé de faire ? De regarder la réalité en face, et il a eu à

accepter que pour quelques années, il aura à vivre avec le FMI, que cela prendra du temps pour redresser le Sri Lanka.

S'ils avaient repris le pouvoir, encore un an, deux ans, trois ans après le crash, et les syndicats, les travailleurs, la population va se rappeler que comme au Sri Lanka ou ailleurs, quand il y a ce genre de crash là, les pensions sont aussi balayées. Tout est à refaire quand on atterrit dans ce genre de situation là. Il ne faut pas oublier ça. Nous avons une tâche difficile mais que nous allons remplir avec courage. Mais, il est bon de s'imaginer ce qui se serait passé s'il avait repris le pouvoir.

*The real issue* –je lis la presse, je lis les intellectuels ou pseudo intellectuels, et même les vrais intellectuels. *The real issue is not IMF* comme s'il faut décider est-ce qu'on est avec le FMI ou non. *The real issue is not the IMF*. Le vrai danger c'est le *downgrading* de notre économie. Ce que les gens ne réalisent pas, si on est *downgraded at junk status*, tout sera affecté. Pas seulement notre zone *offshore* qui n'est plus *offshore* d'ailleurs, mais notre secteur financier. Pas seulement, si nous sommes *downgraded*, ce sera un drame pour le pays et tout le monde sera affecté. Tout le monde, à commencer par les plus vulnérables, par les travailleurs. Il faut se le rappeler. Si nous sommes *downgraded*, ce sera une période terrible pour le pays et c'est ça *which is staring us in the face* au moment où je vous parle. Le FMI suit mieux que nos grands journalistes – certains – le FMI suit mieux qu'est-ce que ces deux comités qu'on a mis sur pied sont en train de fabriquer ; avec une loupe et une longue vue en même temps.

Nous sommes sur la corde raide. Il faut bien le comprendre et je le répète, je ne raconte jamais d'histoires. Je ne vais pas commencer maintenant. Je ne connais que la vérité et la vérité est celle-là. *The issue is not the IMF*, personne parmi nous n'est amoureux du FMI ni de la Banque Mondiale et encore moins de Moody's. *The issue is not the IMF. The danger* est un *downgrading* par Moody's et ensuite le reste suivra. Ce que nous sommes en train de faire, c'est donner une direction au pays. Si on ne convainc pas Moody's, enfin Moody's va *look looker* ce que le FMI dit, ce que la Banque mondiale dit. Mais, ce que nous nous efforçons de faire le Premier ministre, moi-même, le gouvernement, c'est de convaincre tout le monde ; FMI, Banque Mondiale, Moody's qu'on a un sens de direction, qu'on commence quelque chose. Il faut convaincre que *we mean it*, qu'on commence quelque chose, mais que ça va continuer au fil d'un an, deux ans, trois ans, quatre ans, cinq ans, jusqu'à la fin de notre mandat. C'est ça le défi que nous avons à relever. Et je le répète, tout est en jeu.

On ne pourra pas tout faire maintenant, tout de suite, dans un an. Non, mais ce qu'il faut faire, c'est donner un sens de direction au pays. C'est convaincre tous nos partenaires que nous donnons un sens de direction et que nous allons *keep at it* pendant un an, deux ans, trois ans, quatre ans, *Madam Speaker*.

Relever l'âge de la retraite, *the non-contributory pension* à 65 ans est inévitable. Je demande à tout le monde, à commencer par les syndicats, aux travailleurs de bien réaliser que relever – à moins qu'on veuille aller vers la catastrophe – sinon, relever l'âge de la pension à 65 ans est inévitable. Et encore, nous prenons un risque. Le FMI, la Banque Mondiale, tout ça s'attendait à ce qu'on relève ça toute suite là à 65 ans. Et c'est ce que la logique économique exige, mais nous allons le faire sur une durée de cinq ans. C'est un risque. Un risque calculé, mais c'est un risque. Nous allons le faire en cinq ans. Nous sommes condamnés à le faire. C'est inévitable.

Sinon, comme je le disais, si la FMI, la Banque Mondiale, Moody's n'est pas convaincu que nous allions dans cette direction-là, c'est la première chose qu'ils regardent avec des yeux carrés. Première chose, qu'est-ce qui va arriver à notre *unsustainable* système de pension non contributive ? Ensuite, il y a le déficit budgétaire et la dette du pays. Ce sont les trois critères, les trois choses que tous, le FMI, la Banque Mondiale, Moody's, tout le monde, c'est ce qu'ils vont regarder avant tout ; qu'est-ce qui arrive à notre système de pension, qu'est-ce qui arrive à notre déficit budgétaire, qu'est-ce qui arrive à notre endettement. Tous les yeux seront braqués là-dessus. Et il faut voir les choses en face, franchement, l'âge de la pension à 65 ans, mais à travers le monde, c'est comme ça. Je ne prends que quelques exemples –

- Seychelles : 65 ans ;
- Grande Bretagne : 66 ans ;
- France : 64 ans et en pleine discussion pour être amendé ;
- L'Inde : entre 60 et 65 ans selon les secteurs ;
- L'Australie : 67 ans ;
- Le Canada : 65 ans ;
- Singapour : entre 62 et 65 ans.

Il faut ouvrir les yeux, regarder le monde réel et tous les experts sont unanimes qu'il faut en priorité réformer notre *unsustainable system* de pension. Tous les actuaires, je cherche encore un économiste qui dit le contraire. En tout cas, tous les actuaires, tous les vrais experts

en pension – alors il faut vivre dans le monde réel. Il faut bien réaliser où nous sommes et où il nous faut aller, *Madam Speaker*.

Alors, face à tout cela, il n'y a que des palabres, franchement. Surtout ces derniers temps, qu'est-ce que l'opposition – et des journalistes aussi – qu'est-ce qu'on n'a pas raconté sur les salaires des *Junior Ministers* ? Des insanités ! Et on a beau prouvé que ce n'est pas le cas, les salaires des *Junior Ministers* sont exactement les mêmes salaires que les PPS et les *allowances* aussi. On ne va pas faire comme le MSM, toute sorte de trucs pour donner tant de salaire et puis toutes sortes d'*allowances*, toute sorte de présence sur des *boards* etc. C'est des experts en *kokin*. On n'est pas comme ça nous. Mais malgré ça, il y a quelque chose qui fait un tort terrible. De mon point de vue, il y a deux choses ; les Facebook anonymes. Et encore si quelqu'un au moins va sur Facebook, il a son post, etc., mais au moins il a le courage de signer. Tout ça est anonyme, et tout ça est financé en grande partie par le MSM !

(*Interruptions*)

Mais pas seulement par le MSM, il y a des tas de... *I think they get a kick out of it*. Un post anonyme, et la presse sérieuse de quoi parle-t-elle ? Une vague de protestations. Pas un nom ! Il y a un tas de *posts* anonymes, mais « il y a une vague de protestations. »

Il y a une autre chose. Moi, j'ai fait l'école de journalisme de Paris. Pour moi, la profession de vrai journaliste est une des grandes professions. C'est pourquoi je parle avec respect quand je parle des journalistes. Et même des erreurs. Mais à part les *posts* Facebook anonymes et autres, il y a les caricatures, les cartoons. Certains cartoonistes se croient obligés de distiller du cynisme. Cela fait un tort terrible. Cela donne l'impression que nous sommes tous pareils, que tous les hommes et les femmes politiques sont des pourris et des opportunistes. Cela fait un tort considérable.

Je suis les caricatures après caricatures et les cartoons après cartoons. Et je demande à toutes ces Mauriciennes et à tous ces Mauriciens, aux journalistes, aux cartoonistes, aux syndicalistes : ne faites pas de tort à notre pays. Il a déjà assez souffert. Ne faites pas de tort à notre pays. Je les supplie à un moment comme celui que nous traversons. Mais allons laisser cela derrière nous.

Fini avec les *Junior Ministers*, maintenant c'est la pension des parlementaires. On dit toutes sortes d'insanités. Moi, je connais des gens honnêtes qui avaient une carrière et qui ont abandonné leur carrière pour se lancer en politique et qui n'ont pas été élus. Ils ont fait ce

sacrifice. Si on me dit ce qu'il faut changer dans les pensions des parlementaires ou ce qu'il faut améliorer, je vais être à l'écoute. Mais je ne trouve rien. Je vous le dis franchement. Qu'on me dise, faites ceci, amendez cela, mais ne venez pas faire comme si on était une bande de jouisseurs et que tout le monde devient député pour avoir une pension. C'est l'impression que certains donnent. S'il y a quelque chose à améliorer, nous tous qui sommes là, nous le ferons.

Plus récemment, c'est sur les *Advisers*. On n'est pas le MSM. Avec raison, le Premier ministre a fait un *statement* montrant de quoi le MSM était capable. On a mis de l'ordre et de la transparence, parce qu'avant, sous le régime du MSM, il y avait soi-disant des salaires. Mais après les salaires, il y avait les *allowances* à n'en plus finir. Il y avait les présences sur des *boards* à n'en plus finir. On a bien catégorisé les choses.

Mais les gens ne savent pas. Je me souviens qu'il y avait des questions sur le fait qu'il y ait tant d'*Advisers* dans le gouvernement. Les gens ne se rendent même pas compte que par défaut, par faiblesse dans notre système bureaucratique, par exemple, pour un médecin spécialiste, on ne sait pas comment le rémunérer. D'où, *Special Adviser*. Alors, finalement, dans l'esprit des gens, il y a 50, 60, 70 *Advisers*.

Nous avons voulu mettre de l'ordre dedans. Il y a les *Advisers* techniques. Et puis, il y a différents grades d'*Advisers*. Ce n'est pas au ministre de venir en décider. Le Premier ministre a parfaitement raison. Il fallait mettre de l'ordre. Il fallait apporter de la transparence. Mais cela n'a pas empêché des dérapages ! Heureusement, il y a bien des gens et des journalistes qui se sont rattrapés et ont payé hommage à la vérité quand il le faut.

Allons laisser tout cela derrière nous. La situation est trop grave pour qu'on perde beaucoup de temps sur ce genre de *fake news*, de palabres. Allons revenir aux choses sérieuses !

Je disais un peu plus tôt qu'on va passer à 65 ans sur cinq ans. Pas tout de suite. Même cela s'est emporté. Les gens oublient ! C'est en cinq ans ! Je disais que c'est inévitable. Mais on est en train d'essayer de voir pour les plus vulnérables, les emplois les plus durs, les mères qui n'ont pas de revenus du ménage ou les gens qui, de par leur santé, ne peuvent pas travailler au-delà de 60 ans. On est en train de voir.

Il y a deux comités qui ont été créés et ces comités vont travailler dessus. On est jeudi. Demain, c'est vendredi. Et on n'aura pas fini. Après, ces deux comités vont travailler ensemble. Ensuite, il faudra que cela revienne devant le Cabinet et le Conseil des ministres. Donc, on sera déjà dans la prochaine semaine. C'est au Premier ministre de décider de ce qu'on va faire. Aujourd'hui, c'est jeudi. Demain, il y a le Conseil des ministres. Dans l'après-midi, le Parlement va siéger. Et dans l'après-midi, il y a aussi la fête nationale d'un des cinq pays d'où notre peuple est sorti, le Madagascar. On ne va pas leur faire affront de ne pas aller saluer leur fête nationale. Donc, ce sera au Premier ministre de voir si on reviendra ici ou si on siégera samedi. Ou bien, il y a d'autres possibilités dans notre arsenal parlementaire. On essaye de faire un travail sérieux sur les catégories les plus vulnérables.

Mais je le dis tout de suite, notre marge de manœuvre est extrêmement étroite. Très étroite ! Il faut que les syndicats ainsi que tout le monde gardent cela en tête. Avec courage, on a présenté une réforme de notre système de pension sur cinq ans. On essaye de voir la possibilité, à quel coût, de venir en aide aux plus vulnérables. Mais il ne faut pas perdre sur les deux plans cette fois-ci. On a pris les décisions difficiles concernant la pension. Si maintenant, on va au-delà de notre marge de manœuvre, on va perdre là-bas aussi. On sera *downgraded*. Il faut éviter d'être où nous en sommes. Il faut faire le maximum pour les plus vulnérables. Mais le maximum ne doit pas nous mener à un *downgrading* de notre économie. Ce serait perdre des deux côtés, comme on le dit en bon créole de chez nous.

J'aimerais aussi rappeler ce que le Premier ministre avait fait. Il y a deux choses. Là, on prend à bras-le-corps le problème de notre pension non contributive et *unsustainable*. Comme mon ami, le ministre de la Sécurité sociale, l'a bien dit, les syndicats ne doivent pas oublier les vrais criminels qui ont tué la NPF. On a oublié ! Maintenant, tout le monde manifeste contre ceci. Mais, qui a tué la NPF ? Qui a créé ce monstre CSG ? Pas seulement Pravind Jugnauth ! Certains syndicalistes, quelques syndicalistes, un en particulier. Ceux qui ont tué la NPF ont créé ce monstre où il n'y a plus un sou. Tout a été dilapidé, et ils osent manifester ? *Eh ou la* ! Difficile de ne pas dire un gros mot là. Bien difficile ! Mais c'est à cause de vous que je me retiens, bien sûr.

**Madam Speaker:** J'apprécie !

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** On travaille sur qui présidera cette commission et qui seront ces membres. On l'a annoncé, et on confirme, une commission d'experts pour voir

comment mettre de l'ordre. Mais de vrais experts, actuaires avant tout, économistes et sociologues. Une commission d'experts pour voir au-delà de ce que nous sommes en train de faire. Il faut reconstruire tout le système de la pension. Le MSM a tué la GWF. C'est un de leurs plus grands crimes. Il n'y a plus de CSG. Tout a été dilapidé. Maintenant, qu'est-ce qu'on fait ? Comment reconstruire ?

Ce soir, je passe sur Radio Plus sur la drogue. Là aussi pareil, ils ont tué le NPF, ils ont tué, du côté de la drogue, NATReSA. C'est un véritable crime. Je salue à nouveau le travail que mon collègue le ministre de la Justice, l'Attorney General, avec ses experts de chez lui. On a fait un travail formidable. Mais partout c'est comme ça.

Voilà le MSM, ils ont tout ruiné, ils ont tout pollué et nous on est obligé de recommencer partout. On a ce courage-là, mais je demande aux syndicalistes, aux journalistes, aux caricaturistes, aux jeunes surtout, de bien réaliser qu'on fait tout cela au nom de la jeunesse. On ne fait pas cela pour nous, on fait cela au nom de la jeunesse : les enfants d'aujourd'hui et les enfants de demain aussi. Il y a un travail derrière nous, donnez la chance à cette commission d'experts de faire leur travail. Cela prendra le temps que cela prendra – six mois, un an. Là, notre job, c'est de bien choisir : qui va présider ? Quels experts ? Et cela ne manque pas à Maurice. Parfois le courage manque, mais l'expertise ne manque pas à Maurice.

Donc, on a ce travail devant nous, mais ensuite il y a une chose, parce que cela avait été annoncé par le Premier ministre ; la création de cette commission d'experts, mais il avait aussi annoncé, il avait dit – on met la pression sur les riches, une pression fiscale intense sur les riches. Et les riches ne sont pas seulement des Mauriciens, ce sont des étrangers qui ont plusieurs pays à choisir où ils vont aller avec leur investissement, avec leur argent. Si on appuie trop fort, ils iront ailleurs. La concurrence est rude. Moi, je suis un socialiste, pas par fanatisme mais parce que je crois que c'est le chemin de l'avenir ; comme hier, aujourd'hui, demain, ce sera le chemin de l'avenir ; le chemin du socialiste, de la solidarité. Mais il ne faut pas tuer la poule aux œufs d'or et cette fois-ci ce n'est pas la poule aux œufs d'or, c'est la poule aux œufs en plomb. Nous sommes plombés où nous sommes là.

Donc, on a même une pression intense, mais le Premier ministre a dit que c'est provisoire. Ceux qui ne sont pas d'accord ont le droit de ne pas être d'accord, mais nous on croit, dans la conjoncture actuelle, qu'il n'y a pas de voie sauf une voie de développement avec une fiscalité légère. Donc, aussitôt que possible, dans un an ce ne sera pas possible, mais



dans deux ans, trois ans, on reviendra et il faut que les étrangers le comprennent bien et on est des gens de parole, on ne *kouyonn* personne, pas même les étrangers. On le dit et on le fera. *We mean it* de retourner à une fiscalité légère aussitôt que possible. Ces mots-là, nous les adressons surtout aux étrangers, aux investisseurs étrangers, à ceux qui sont venus et qui peuvent hésiter devant les choix qu'on a faits dans ce budget, mais c'est temporaire. Nous voulons cette pression-là temporairement. Voilà ce que j'avais à dire.

Madame la présidente, comme vous le savez, je ne parle jamais très longuement et je lis rarement. Mais à la fin, je vais lire ce que j'ai écrit. Je crois pouvoir lire. Ce que nous sommes obligés de faire aujourd'hui à cause de dix ans de crimes MSM contre notre pays, nous le faisons par devoir. Nous le faisons pour les enfants de notre pays et pour les enfants à venir. Nous ne faiblirons pas, Madame la présidente. *Nou pei e so bann zanfán avan tou!*

Merci, Madame la présidente.

**Madam Speaker:** Merci !

M. le Premier ministre !

(5.48 p.m.)

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, let me, at the very outset, thank all the Members of this House who have participated in the debate on the Budget. I have taken note of their views. I might have to repeat a few things, but I will try to respond to them.

I will want to explain the rationale behind the budget. I think the Deputy Prime Minister has actually put it in a nutshell, exactly, focused on this but *laissez-moi aussi remercier la population qui dans sa grande majorité – ne regardez pas ceux qui écrivent sur Facebook, il y a une machine au Sun Trust, des gens qui sont payés, une équipe, et certaines personnes croient comme si c'est la majorité des gens. Non ! La majorité de la population qui, je leur remercie, comprend dans quelle difficulté nous nous trouvons aujourd'hui à cause de l'irresponsabilité du précédent régime. Les mesures budgétaires que nous avons prises sont nécessaire pour empêcher à ce que notre pays sombre dans le précipice, in the abyss.*

But the first question that we should be asking ourselves: why the hell are we in that position? People should be asking that question. Why are we having to take difficult decisions, bold decisions? Instead, we could have done like the MSM – print money, spend, give left, right and centre, and everybody would have been happy, as the hon. Deputy Prime

Minister just said. But we are socialist parties. We believe in the truth and we believe in being responsible.

Laissez-moi aussi dire, Madame la présidente, que je déplore le fait que certains aient pu mettre en doute le professionnalisme et l'intégrité des fonctionnaires, ceux qui sont du ministère des Finances surtout, qui ont préparé *the State of the Economy Report* – un document basé sur des données crédibles et non des chiffres cuisinés comme l'ancien gouvernement faisait. These are – what can I say – invidious innuendos, des petits innuendos comme le *DPM* a bien dit tout à l'heure : de faux news et puis des choses...

Tout à l'heure, le ministre Shakeel Mohamed a dit, comme si je suis allé acheter une voiture – une personne a dit R 57 millions, en passant, donc c'est plus qu'une Rolls-Royce. Et, tout cela est faux ! Au contraire, j'ai refusé. Il fallait changer là mais j'ai refusé. La voiture officielle dans laquelle je voyage, le *DPM* le sait, je le dis aujourd'hui, était même tombée en panne. J'ai dû changer de voiture en chemin. Mais j'ai refusé de changer la voiture.

Et je dois dire que les fonctionnaires n'ont travaillé sous aucune pression – il y en a qui sont là – aucune pression ou contrainte politique. Non, ce n'est pas notre méthode. Et je suis fier du travail qu'ils ont accompli. Je suis fier !

Madam Speaker, on 05 June, I introduced a bold, and what I call, strategic Budget that puts the country first, above party lines and not political manoeuvring, demagoguery and populism, like the MSM has done.

Madame la présidente, je ne vais pas répéter tout ce que j'ai dit. J'ai fait des *statements* ici ; je ne vais pas répéter tout cela. Mais prenons juste deux chiffres, celui du déficit budgétaire – 9,8 % du PIB, c'est-à-dire R 70 milliards et la dette publique – 90 % du PIB, c'est-à-dire R 642 milliards. Nous savons tous maintenant que l'ex ministre des Finances, Monsieur *savat dodo sipa dodo savat, mo nepli konne*, il avait annoncé un déficit budgétaire mais de 3,4 % du PIB. Cela fait R 26,8 milliards. C'est-à-dire presque 3 fois moins que le vrai chiffre. Une différence – tenez-vous bien, de R43,2 milliards.

Madam Speaker, many people have no idea how precarious the situation is if you allow the budget deficit to increase and you increase public debt. They have no idea. And you have so much debt, in fact, that you won't even be able to pay, all your money will go in paying interest and you will go bankrupt. Like the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said about what

happened in Greece – people went bankrupt, lost their houses, lost their jobs, and lost their pensions. This is what we are looking at.

L'honorable Reza Uteem l'a très bien expliqué dans son discours. Dans un langage simple, il a cité l'exemple d'une famille qui touche R 25 000 comme salaire mensuel et qui commence à dépenser un peu plus que R 25 000. Il a donné cet exemple et je trouve que c'était un très bon exemple parce que la famille commence à dépenser plus qu'elle gagne, commence à prendre des emprunts. Et maintenant, on doit payer les intérêts sur les emprunts et graduellement vous entrez dans une spirale infernale et vous ne pouvez plus payer. Vous commencez à recevoir des lettres, la maison est saisie ; vous perdez l'emploi. C'est la faillite ! C'est pour une famille mais c'est la même pour un pays, seulement sur une plus grande échelle. C'est la même logique !

Madame la présidente, les médecins qui sont là vont comprendre que le déficit budgétaire est comme la tension artérielle. Votre tension montre graduellement – 100, 110, 115, 120, 140, 200 et boom ! Vous ne réalisez pas que la tension monte. Vous savez il y a des gens à Maurice – les médecins vont comprendre – qui ne prennent leurs médicaments de l'hypertension que lorsque la tension artérielle est élevée. Et quand vous leur demandez –

« Comment vous savez que la tension artérielle est élevée ? »

Ils vont dire –

« J'ai une douleur à l'arrière de la tête. »

High blood pressure is a symptomless disease. It is misnomer to say that when you are getting a headache then you know that your blood pressure is high. It's a silent killer. And then what happens? You suddenly get a stroke.

Vous êtes paralysés ou bien vous avez un arrêt cardiaque. Peut-être on a le temps de vous emmener dans un ICU, comme c'est le cas à Maurice, ou bien probablement vous perdez votre vie.

This is what a rising budget deficit does! Because when you rise the budget deficit, you are rising the public debt at the same time. So, you get into the same *spirale infernale*, which leads to bankruptcy. You should never, never allow the budget deficit to get into double digits, but here, budget deficit is 9.8 %! So, not very far from being a double digit; not very far at all. And, as I said, a rising deficit means a rising public debt.

As I stated in my Statement, our public debt is up 90% of GDP. They had manipulated figures and had forecasted 71.9% of GDP, that is, Rs574 billion, but in fact, it is Rs642 billion – 90%!

Let me remind the House, those in the Labour Party will know, when we left office, we had rigour. You know, I had an Adviser, who was the Adviser of the former Conservative Prime Minister, Lady Thatcher – Sir Alan Walters. I had taken him because he is a good economist. And when he left, he told me –

“At least people won’t be saying that you mismanaged the economy.”

Our public debt was below 60 % –59.1%, which is the normal European redline. We were not following all of them, but it is that.

What did they do here? They increased it from 60% to 80% by statute. And, then, they themselves, did not follow the line. They did not respect what they had put on statute and they brought it to 90% of GDP. Now, 90% of GDP debt, do you know what it means? Debt servicing at Rs21.8 billion!

Notre revenue est à peu près R180 milliards. Donc R21,8 milliards, on va payer les intérêts sur nos dettes. C’est l’argent qu’on aurait pu dépenser ailleurs, pour la santé, pour l’éducation. *Instead, we are paying the interest on the debt.*

30 % de notre revenue pour payer les intérêts sur la dette qu’ils ont accumulé. Et pour créer illusion que tout est bien, tout est rose, qu’est-ce qu’ils ont fait ? Ils ont obligé la Banque de Maurice, *the Central Bank*, d’imprimer des billets. R180 milliards de billets, pour donner de l’argent à – nous avons su – leurs proches, à leurs amis, copains/copines, comme cadeaux avant les élections.

This is what the MSM regime did to the people of this country. We should not forget this. We should never forget this. This was a criminal, reckless management of the economy – just to hang on to power and to continue, of course, to steal and loot the country. That is what they had been doing.

They remind me of Pied Piper, for those who know the story, where he took his flute, played nice tunes, everybody followed until they all fell in the precipice. That’s exactly what he did. *C’est ça la trahison. La vraie trahison du MSM envers le peuple mauricien.*

I will tell you a story. I will try to stick to my time; there is no limit, but I know. Before the election – we had fought the election separately in 2019 – but they reached a point that I

met the Deputy Prime Minister and there is one question that I asked him if he remembers. I said –

“You have been Prime Minister, I have been Prime Minister, are you agreeable with what is happening to the country?”

Of course, he did not agree.

Then I said –

“But we can’t sit and let it happen to Mauritius because we are both patriots. We can’t let this happen.”

This is how, and thank heavens, we did.

It is what I asked myself; we asked ourselves. Is it conceivable? I remember you asked me that question. Is it conceivable that the ex-Minister of Finance, Mr Padayachy, or the former Prime Minister, Mr Pravind ‘Jaganath’, that’s the way we should call him, did they not know? Do you think that they did not realise what they were doing to that country – irrevocably pulling the country towards a precipice and bankrupting the country?

Were they economic illiterates? If they did not understand anything about economics, they should have gone and bought these series, dummies for economics. They should have bought one and see a bit.

C’étaient deux illettrés économiques qui s’en foutaient des Mauriciens et du pays. Pour eux, ce qui était important c’était de s’enrichir et s’agripper au pouvoir ! *This was their objective ! Voilà la réalité ! Distribuer de l’argent qu’on n’avait pas pour rester au pouvoir.* This is the naked truth about the MSM! They committed, what I can call, ‘economic vandalism’. This is what they did. *Des vrais voyous aux commandes du pays !*

But, thank heavens – the people, in spite of giving them all these gifts, *cadeaux*, jobs, money, treats, all this – booted them out because the people knew, what they did not know or not care to know. The people knew that there is no such thing as a free lunch; it does not exist!

You cannot defy economic gravity with impunity. Basic economics ça! You know, there is a saying, I don’t know why they don’t know this. When you have fallen into a hole, the first thing you do is stop digging! They continued to dig.

You know, like the Deputy Prime Minister said, I shudder, had the people not voted for our alliance, what would have happened to this country. I dare not think. We did not compare notes, but I wanted to say the same thing. It would have been exactly what happened in Greece and what happened in Sri Lanka. The same way! In Greece, people lost their jobs, their pensions and their houses, like I said.

And as the hon. Deputy Prime Minister pointed out, Greece had the advantage that we do not have. First of all, it is a bigger country with the advantage of being in the European Union with the European Central Bank behind it trying to help. But in spite of this, they paid the dire consequences of what the previous government did. This is exactly what would have happened to us, to all Mauritians. This is exactly what would have happened.

The previous government took away our liberty and freedom. There is no such thing more precious than liberty. People understood this. They voted *avec la rage*. *Vous avez vu ?* But *ils ont aussi confisqué l'État mauricien*. As I said, had we not taken over, me, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, you, and the whole population would have been economically dead by now.

Madame la présidente, je n'ai parlé que du déficit budgétaire et de cette dette publique. Je vous ai dit que je ne veux pas tout répéter. Sinon, ce sera trop long. Mais chaque semaine, à travers les questions parlementaires bien pertinentes de certains de nos *back benchers* – et je dois les féliciter – nous découvrons les frasques du gouvernement MSM et de ses acolytes. La liste est trop longue pour les répéter. Il y a d'autres orateurs qui l'ont répété, qui l'ont redit d'ailleurs. Mais ce n'est pas juste la dette publique ; c'est ce qu'ils ont fait aussi.

But it is clear, Madam Speaker, that we had to take the bull by the horns and take the difficult but essential measures to steer the State ship out of this wreckage and bring it out into the calm open sea. That is why we say, 'From Abyss to Prosperity'. But as the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said, we also need to understand that our mandate is for five years. We have inherited a mess. It will take time. Rome was not built in one day! Who does not know this?

This is why, just like the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, I also ask people to show solidarity. Let us do the right thing. It will be a sacrifice not forever, but for maybe two years, three years or a bit more. We will see. But let me make it very clear: there is no other option!

Madam Speaker, as I am addressing the issue of public debt, I also want to disprove the false accusations made by the Opposition on the increase in public sector debt for the past

seven months. They have said it. You will see the MSM *chatwas* at Sun Trust writing; then you will see a member of the press take it up, and they start believing.

The Leader of the Opposition has been, malevolently I think, accusing the Government of increasing public sector debt by Rs96 billion over the period we have been in power. At the same time, the former Minister of Finance is claiming that, since we assumed office, the public sector debt has increased by Rs66 billion. So, which is which?

Their estimates are different. Clearly flawed! They could not even agree between themselves on what is the figure. They are placing the blame for the rise in public debt on the Government, but conveniently forget completely, they ignore the fact that we are actually still executing a budget they themselves presented. Their budget ends at 30 June of this year. This is what they are doing. This is the increase in debt. Except, what we did is that we paid the 14<sup>th</sup> month bonus to the maximum of people that we could and then, put the salary compensation.

The public sector debt will increase from Rs586.4 billion from September 2024 to Rs642 billion at the end of June of this year. As I said, the only thing we did was to add Rs8.4 billion for the 14<sup>th</sup> month bonus and the 2025 Salary Compensation. These were the two measures we had promised. When I met the hon. Deputy Prime when we were in the Opposition, we did not know. We knew they were massaging figures. It was obvious.

People have resigned from official positions because they refused to cooperate and manipulate figures. I will not mention names. Some took early retirement. We knew that this was happening, but we did not know the extent of it. So, as a caring government, we decided in spite of that that we will pay the 14<sup>th</sup> month bonus – 90% of people got it – and the salary compensation. There has been a massive depreciation of the rupee and inflation was double-digit. We had promised to try to bring prices down. So, this is what we did.

The bulk of the increase in public sector debt was due to that irresponsible fiscal stewardship of the previous government. A staggering 85 percent of the Rs55.6 billion – 85 percent of the rise in public sector debt is attributable to them. And I do not have to tell people; everybody knows that they had overstated revenues, significantly underestimated expenditures, all aimed at creating the illusion that everything is rosy and fine.

As a result of this disastrous decade of fiscal mismanagement, public sector debt has increased from 59.5 percent to 90 percent of GDP, which is a dramatic increase of 30 percentage points.

Madam Speaker, let me now address this issue that has been raised: the Basic Retirement Pension. As the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said, who wants to become unpopular and try to do something that will not please people? Who? But you have to think of the country first. Not yourself! First of all, we have said it, it is a non-contributory pension. Many people don't know it. For instance, they speak about MPs. These are contributory pensions. You pay for it every month. The BRP is non-contributory.

Non-contributory means that the beneficiary does not contribute anything, but he receives a pension. How do we pay for it? It is paid from the National Budget, taxpayers' money and government borrowing. As such, all the increases in the amount of BRP can only be financed either through higher debt or higher taxes. There is no other way. There is no magic bullet.

Second, the cost of the BRP payment has become explosive. BRP spending in Mauritius has soared. In 2010, it was 1.9%. It reached 7.8% in 2024-2025. Expenditures just on Basic Retirement Pension are going to be Rs55.4 billion this year.

As I said in Parliament, Madam Speaker, it is rare for a country to provide old age pension to all persons who are 60 years, irrespective of their income or assets. And, as I said, the pension is non-contributory pension.

Mauritius is a very rare case. The hon. DPM just said it that in France, it is 64, and they want to increase it again. Germany wants to make it to 70. The Deputy Prime Minister mentioned Seychelles. In most cases, it is contributory and means tested, and in our case, it is universal with no eligibility test.

The third point that I need to make, demographic pressures are aggravating the cost implication of the BRB. Mauritius is facing a rapidly ageing population – rising population and declining birthrate. You do not have to be a great mathematician to understand what is happening. The population aged 60 and over has grown substantially from 186,400 in 2015 to 257,600 in 2024, and it is expected to reach 315,000 by 2038. As a result, the cost of the Basic Retirement Pension on the Government budget will then exceed Rs100 billion. Do people realise what it means?

Fourth, with this demographic trend, the ratio of the working-age population per retiree is plummeting. This means fewer workers are supporting more retirees. This obviously will place ... because I explained how do we pay this BRP. In other words, with the decrease, there will be fewer workers who are going to support more retirees.



And fifth, a budgetary crisis is looming. The BRP expenses now – unbelievably, you know people do not realise this – outstrip the combined budgets for health and education, and possibly we could put part of housing in it.

In the last 14 years, spending on pension has ballooned to a staggering, believe it or not, 828 percent! In only four years, from 2020 to 2024, it almost doubled from Rs27.9 billion to Rs55.4 billion. 828%! *Une augmentatioin de 828%, Madame la présidente!* This is why we say it is unsustainable; not just us, go and see, every expert is saying it. Largely due to ballooning pension liabilities.

We are already experiencing actuarial deficits of Rs51.4 million in the Statutory Bodies Pension Funds. This constitutes a contingent liability, which again, will weigh on public finance.

Madam Speaker, the writing has been on the wall for a long time. Let me quote the former finance minister, Pravind Jugnauth, then Minister of Finance. Let me quote what he said –

“A number of reports have questioned the long-term sustainability of the Basic Retirement Pension, especially as our population is fast ageing and BRP is fully funded out of Government revenues.” – the Budget Speech 2004-2005.”

Madam Speaker, in a draft report of a Technical Committee on Pension Reforms, under the MSM regime in February 2018, this is what they said, and I quote again –

“Given the progressive ageing of the population, existing pension plans are fiscally unsustainable.”

They themselves said this! Their own report! But the MSM ignored all the warnings, why? For pure political reasons!

That report recommended a number of reforms to be brought to the pension system. All of them were totally ignored for sheer political reasons and lack of courage – no guts to take the right decision for the country.

They knew the patient was in the ICU. They knew what the prescription was to get him out of the ICU, but they did not have the guts to do the right thing. They did not prevent the patient from going into a coma. This is what they did.

As far back as 2015, I have got the report out; I read it, the IMF, in an expert report, projected that by 2050, expenditure on BRP will be at an unsustainable level of 8 percent of

GDP. They said that in their report, but because of the irresponsibility of the previous government, we have already reached 7.8%. They predicted that by 2050, it would be 8%. Already in 2025, we are 7.8%, that is, we are 25 years ahead of what the IMF had projected. Do you realise what this means?

The report of the World Bank in 2021, “Mauritius through the eye of a perfect storm” says, and I quote –

“The bulk of social spending, [is] more than 50 percent, [this] is currently on the basic retirement pension (BRP), which is increasingly costly, poorly targeted and creates adverse labor market incentives.”

Let me quote something else. The World Bank says something else, it says –

“Mauritius is a rapidly ageing society, which will lead to a rapid growth of spending on the BRP, with the potential for squeezing out pro-poor spending.”

And of course, – it does not say this, I am unquoting – it is also clear that we are crowding out of investments.

The CSG tax, in spite of that clear evidence they had, in spite of the repeated warnings they got, in spite of the plea that you must do the reform, the previous government swept it under the carpet. They even made it worse through their reckless policies, notably by introducing this famous *Contribution Sociale Généralisée*.

The CSG was introduced in September 2020, replacing the National Pension Fund (NPF), which was established in 1976 through the vision of SSR. Let me remind the House, it was a contributory, funded scheme. Both employees and employers made mandatory contributions and these were prudently – not invested anywhere – invested to ensure their long-term sustainability and to provide retirement benefits linked to individuals’ contributions. In contrast, this CSG was designed as pay-as-you-go. It was not invested; pay-as-you-go. So, they pay out the benefits immediately. No direct link between what the individual contributes and what he/she ultimately receives.

Very early on, it has revealed deep structural weaknesses that now threaten the very foundations of our pension systems and the fiscal health of our nation.

First and foremost, there has been a diversion of the CSG revenue that they were getting toward non-pension related expenses just for political expediency. Nothing to do with

pension! Then, they failed to secure retirees. So, they added Rs9 billion to the government deficit this fiscal year – 9 billion! No projections, no policy change, but greater liabilities.

Let us be clear that the CSG... We said this when we were in opposition, I know the MMM also said it, maybe our friends already said it as well, I do not know. We all said that the CSG is a regression and it is a tax. That's what it is!

Unlike the NPF, the CSG is not managed by any independent fund. So, it is vulnerable to political abuse and fiscal mismanagement. And we have witnessed this – we have seen examples. It undermines the principles of ring-fencing pension assets for the exclusive benefit of the retirees. That is what has happened!

The absence of a funded reserve in the context of a budget deficit means that today's CSG contributions are immediately spent. They left nothing for tomorrow's retirees. The model is clearly unsustainable. Is it a pension? It is a tax! Under the CSG, there is no direct relationship at all between what the individual pays and what he/she receives in retirement.

Therefore, what happens? This discourages savings, erodes public trust in the system – which it has – and worse, the former Minister of Finance, I do not know how this happened, somebody asked him a question, he ended up saying 'well, there is no money at all in the CSG now... completely depleted'.

And this has forced the Government to finance pensions directly from the budget. What happens? It adds to the public debt, crowding out, as I said, other essential expenditures. People do not realise what has happened – it has placed the entire pension system at the mercy of politicians and fiscal constraints. Therefore, there is nothing predictable for our elderly.

The CSG is a failed policy, like most of the policies of the previous government. All have failed! And it has failed to resolve that essential challenge of pension sustainability. In fact, it has compounded the problem, placing our seniors, our public finances, and our social fabric in jeopardy. This is what it has done. This is why we must urgently reconsider the system, restore independent contributory pension funding, and ensure that the sacrifices of today's workers are not squandered for short-term political gains. This is what we must do.

Even the reserves that are left in the NPF will also be exhausted eventually. While we are taking bold decisions that should have been taken, as I said, a long time ago, *ils ont le culot – comme a dit le Deputy Prime Minister et aussi je crois certains autres ministres* –

*d'aller manifester avec les travailleurs ; ces mêmes travailleurs dont ils ont dévalisé les pensions.*

**An hon. Member:** *San lamour prop!*

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** *Oui, prends tou valiz, tu as raison.*

*(Interruptions)*

You know, they are like these maggots, which come out of dead bodies, but at least the maggots are eating the dead bodies. Those people, those maggots are for greed. That is why they are there, real maggots.

It reminds me of a well-known Bhojpuri expression.

*(Interruptions)*

*“Kaal ke goonda, aaj ke Saadhu.”*

**Madam Speaker:** Translate it!

*(Interruptions)*

Translate it!

**The Prime Minister:** *Je vais traduire –*

*“Yesterday’s hooligans are as if today’s angels.”*

We are seeing the emergence of political skunks without an iota of self-respect, writhing out of their stinking holes and they are trying to reclaim their long-lost political virginity. That is what they are doing.

Ces mêmes vautours, Madame la présidente, reconnus par la population comme étant les fossoyeurs de l’État providence, ont aujourd’hui le toupet de venir dire que ce budget est la fin de l’État providence. *Koumadir Alibaba inn vinn Robin des Bois aster !* Moi aussi je mers un peu le *kreol*, Madame la présidente, un petit bout.

*(Interruptions)*

This is why, as the Deputy Prime Minister said, we will not shudder from our decisions. And I’ll tell you frankly, I think about it. We have a dream team; I have said it many times. It is the luck of this country that myself and the Deputy Prime Minister are there together with our friends Ashok Subron and Richard Duval.

You know, I think I need to say this, the Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the MMM has been a finance minister. And I will tell you something, I was not in politics at that time, but I followed, and SSR followed. He also agreed. He took the hard decisions then in 1982 in spite of two devaluations from Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo who was Minister of Finance. I even discussed this with him, and do you know what he said? Maybe the former Prime Minister, hon. Paul Bérenger will agree. He told me that they made a mistake and they should have devalued by more the first time. But, again, probably, due to political pressure, they devalued by less, they had to re-devalue again, and this is what happened. And hon. Paul Bérenger took the decision that had to be taken. I think he spoke to the IMF; the IMF came. Had he not taken those decisions, this is the... What can I call it? *Le ...*

*(Interruptions)*

Ce n'est pas la vie...

*(Interruptions)*

This is a paradox.

**Madam Speaker:** *Le takdir? Maybe le takdir!*

**The Prime Minister:** *Takdir?*

*(Interruptions)*

This is the paradox!

He took the difficult decisions! He was pilloried on a communal basis because the decision was difficult. Not everybody could have taken it. He could have taken it, but not everybody would have taken it. He was pilloried and they turned it into a communal argument. And then they claimed they collected the fruits and they said, '*je suis le père du miracle économique*'. *C'est lui le véritable père du miracle économique !*

I tell you; I really believe it. It is the destiny of this country.

**Madam Speaker:** That's it!

**The Prime Minister:** It is as if God's hand is showing us the way that we had to come in at this time.

I remember what Churchill said. Churchill had all his difficulties, but he was also a great orator. When he eventually became Prime Minister, he said –

“I am walking as if my whole life was preparing me for this moment.”

And I tell you, this is the moment that we have to be there together, as one, to save that country otherwise, we are all dead. And we are going to do what we can do. We are socialists. We, both parties, the *Rezistans ek Alternativ* as well and we are happy that they are with us; *Nouveaux Démocrates peut-être pas trop, mais un peu.*

*(Interruptions)*

We were born in the Opposition, fighting for those who had no voice, the voiceless of this country. Both parties! I was telling this the other day to my good friend Ashok Subron, we started that way, and then being pragmatic like what happened in Sri Lanka, we moved a bit to the centre. The MMM followed the same, and I am hoping you will follow too.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** *Je ne vais pas vous presser seulement.*

**The Prime Minister:** This is why we have done two things, Madam Speaker. We have announced at paragraph 240 in the Budget Speech that we will set up a Committee of Experts – we are not experts – to carry out in-depth study of the pension system and to come up with a sustainable and fairer system. That is what we want to do.

And secondly, Cabinet has agreed, we are naming two Commissions to look into provision relief. I am chairing one. My friend, hon. Ashok Subron is chairing the other. We are looking at possible relief if we can for those who do hard jobs, who are on low pay. There is a principle in taxation. You help those on low income. That is the basic principle in finance, but we will look at all this.

Those who should not have received their pension, they are now probably going to get it. I have spoken to the Deputy Prime Minister and to my friend, Minister Subron, and we think that, maybe, in the interest of time, we should merge these two commissions together eventually so that we come to rapid decisions because it is a very, very difficult situation.

Madam Speaker, we are a small island state, vulnerable to global, geopolitical, and economic events. Our history is fraught with examples of how we have combatted the tyranny of both history and geography to shape our destiny. The other day hon. Dr. Ms Jeetun mentioned the two Nobel Prize Economists. You mentioned two, but there are three, in fact – James Meade, Ronald Coase, and there is V. S. Naipaul as well.

No man, Madam Speaker, is an island unto himself. No man! We are all part of the main continent. Our nation too is part of the world. So, we cannot be shielded from the ripple effects of global events.

Current geopolitical tensions in Asia, in Europe, in the Middle East – we have seen what is happening in the Middle East. Fortunately, we hope things have calmed down. We have more frequent natural calamities. We saw what happened in France yesterday. Nobody believed it, in full summer! The resurgence of trade protectionism is sending shockwaves through the international markets, straining supply chains, raising import costs, especially for our key sectors – food security and energy. They pose fresh challenges to our export-driven industries, to our tourism industry, and overall, for our economic outlook. As I said, no one is an island unto himself. They remind us, Madam Speaker, that our destiny is inextricably linked to the broader currents of global affairs.

We are a trading nation, a small country be it, but we are a small open economy. We will have to sail to the rough seas and troubled waters.

We cannot expect to be totally immune from the adverse effects of global events, but we can be determined and resilient. That, we must be!

As I stated in the House on Monday, Madam Speaker, let us hope that good sense and wisdom will prevail in that fragile peace agreement between Israel and Iran, and that we will get a peaceful, permanent solution to that conflict. This is extremely important for the stability of the global economy. And precisely because we are a small island State, but we are not immune to the global effects.

I need to also add to what the Deputy Prime Minister said about Moody's rating and why it is important for us. We were discussing on this. We did not compare notes, I can tell you. The first thing is they misinterpreted both the roles of the IMF and of Moody's. The Deputy Prime Minister just mentioned it in very clear terms. The IMF has nothing to do with this budget. I do not know who thought of this!

The IMF publishes reports on all countries it covers. It is not dictating us what to do. We are not in that position. We have not reached that stage. Some countries have reached that stage – Sri Lanka has, even Great Britain, the United Kingdom I should say, had at one point in the 70s. We want to avoid this, Madam Speaker.

But to escape it, we have to take the corrective measures that should have been taken because the shipwreck is looming.

We cannot, so to speak, ignore what the credit ratings of institutions like Moody's report. We cannot ignore their report. Among other things, Moody's issues credit ratings to countries. Why? So that investors are aware of the economic situation in that country and the risks of investing in that country. That is what it does.

Now, let me just clarify something which perhaps people do not follow properly. The highest rating for Moody's is Aaa. That is the top notch. The lowest is Caa3 or C. When that happens, a country is described a junk status. It is given that status.

A downgrade to junk status has dire consequences, as the Deputy Prime Minister said. We must absolutely avoid it. What it means is that a country will not honour its debt – more likely it will not honour its debt – that is, if you invest in that country, you might lose, you might not be able recuperate your money. That is what it means.

The country is likely to default on its payments. It means that if that country wants to borrow money abroad, again, they will think twice before giving you any money.

I must tell you something that perhaps people do not realise – we have been saying it enough – when we left the Government in 2014, do you what our credit rating was? It was Baa1. Stable. A very high investment grade. A high grade, not the highest, but next to the highest. This is how it was when we left.

In April 2020, Moody's downgraded Mauritius to Baa1 Negative. Not junk, but still a downgrade. What does a downgrade mean? That you have to correct a few things. You do not continue as if nothing has happened. But they did not!

So, in March 2021, one year later, Moody's downgraded us again, and this time to Baa2 Negative. Nothing changed! It is as if it is coming through one year and going to the other. *Pass lor zot latet sa !*

**An hon. Member:** *Zot pe inprim biye !*

**The Prime Minister:** *Zot pe inprim biye zot ! Zot pe kont dolar ! Sa ki zot pe fer !*



One year later, in July 2022, again, Moody's downgraded us to Baa3 this time. Still nothing!

What happened in 2024? It came out in January of this year. Again, Baa3. Not stable, but negative!

So, Moody's has downgraded Mauritius four times under the MSM regime when in power due to their incompetence and mismanagement of the economy. Four times! They did not react, just like the pension swept under the carpet!

This is why they were surprised. You know why? They think they can do whatever they want. When the election comes, they would do a propaganda. I have been attacked every day on MBC. Every day! I am still here. The Deputy Prime Minister has been attacked. As if 'Bérenger, no, no!' This is what they do when the elections come, and they thought that this time it would work as well. But God decided otherwise! They did not count on this. They did not take any action, and we are facing this problem!

Now, I must say also, Madam Speaker, when a country loses its investment grade status and is labelled 'junk', it can face several economic and financial consequences. Others have said it briefly, but I want to add a few more –

The first thing that happens when a country becomes 'junk' is that it has higher borrowing costs. A downgrade below investment grade means higher risk to investors. Therefore, investors demand higher interest rates to compensate for that risk. Thus, everything becomes more expensive.

The second thing which happens that people do not realise is capital outflows. Many institutional investors sit in New York, in London or wherever. They want to make money and profit. They don't come here because they like our beaches and our sea.

So, when they see that this is happening – I am talking about pension funds, insurance companies; these are big investors, and they have mandates, they have boards, not *chatwas* on the boards, real boards, but they have to answer questions. So, they have mandates to invest only in countries that are safe. The result: a downgrade can trigger forced selling of a country's bonds, therefore, leading to capital flight, and therefore, pressure on the currency. What happens? You get depreciation again, because you have reduced investor confidence, capital is outflowing, you get pressure on your rupee, and you get, again, depreciation.

Depreciation means higher cost of imports and then you get fuelled inflation. This is what happens. And, in Mauritius, we are highly dependent on imported goods in foreign currency denominations.

Weaker investor confidence, credit ratings means that this country is not sure for economic stability. Therefore, both foreign and domestic investors won't invest.

In the banking sector, our domestic banks – perhaps people don't know this – hold large amounts of money in government bonds. If these go, it weakens the balance sheets. Again, this reduces their capacity to lend and raising, again, the financial risk in that sector. A downgrade may also reflect concerns about fiscal discipline, governance and macroeconomic stability. Therefore, again, it erodes trust among investors, trade partners, and even citizens.

Therefore, the potential for a vicious cycle is there, in front of us, staring at us as the DPM said. It's staring at us now. I will tell you something, when we won the elections, Moody's had already stated, just when we came in, on what they did, they should downgrade us. We made pleas to send the Chief Economic Advisor – and I thank him – to talk to them and give us a chance, and not downgrade us. We did all the efforts that we had to do. Because otherwise everybody is affected, not just the banks, not just the businessmen, but even the individuals who are here will be affected. This is why we are doing our level best to take all the measures we can to stop the rot. Otherwise, we would slide into economic chaos.

Now, I ask myself: who in the world in this country would want this to happen? Who? Nobody! And I repeatedly said, Madam Speaker, *je n'ai pas de bâton magique dans ma main*. It doesn't exist. *Le pays est dans un précipice économique et social. On a reculé de dix ans. Tout ce qu'on a bâti depuis l'Indépendance depuis 1968 s'est effondré entre 2014 et 2024 sous le règne des vautours successifs 'des papa-piti Jugnauth', papa-piti zo'nn touy pei la zo'nn garde, zo'nn ale*. But, as I said, I am ready to assume all the responsibilities I have to and so is the DPM. We have a united front. We are all united in this fight because we are patriots and we have to defend this country. Difficult decisions, yes, but we have to take the difficult decisions to let Mauritius become Mauritius again. That is what we have to do. Neither I nor the DPM are doing this *de gaiété de Coeur, comme il a dit*, but in life, you must do what you must do to save your country as a true patriot.

Madam Speaker, the doctors again will understand, if the patient has a gangrene in his foot, the surgeon has no choice. He has to chop off the foot to save the patient otherwise the patient will die. This is exactly what we are doing. It is a difficult choice. This Budget is not

about austerity, as some people are saying. It is about responsibility. It is not about the politics, day-to-day politics but it is about the prosperity and the well-being of the whole nation, of our youth, of our children and grandchildren of tomorrow.

Therefore, let us move forward, Madam Speaker, boldly with courage, with purpose, with compassion, with confidence, with determination and leave a proud legacy for future generations that we must do to save this country.

Les défis nationaux et mondiaux appellent à des solutions courageuses et innovantes, Madame la présidente. Je suis persuadé que la population, dans sa grande majorité, comprend la précarité de la situation. Elle n'est pas bête, qu'elle fera preuve de solidarité et qu'elle participera à la reconstruction du pays.

I also make this appeal as the Deputy Prime Minister did, even to those who don't seem to understand, please, try to understand. There is a reason why everyone here came from different continents and God put us on that small piece of land. It is our duty, because when it rains, it affects us all; when there is a cyclone, it affects us all. Similarly, it doesn't matter who you are. You might be belonging to any community, any caste or whatever, you will be affected by the rain, by the sun. So, we have a duty to be able to live together and save our country. That is what we are doing, Madam Speaker. I promised, in my Budget Speech, I won't promise to take you to heaven but I certainly shall prevent you from going to hell. That is what I said.

Je termine, Madame la présidente. L'histoire nous jugera sur l'héritage que moi et le *Deputy Prime Minister*, et aussi nos partenaires Rezistans ek Alternativ et Nouveaux Démocrates, laisserons aux générations futures. We are at a crucial point in our history. We are walking with destiny. It was our destiny; it is our destiny to be here, now, at this point in our history, to come and save the nation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill read a second time and committed.*

**Madam Speaker:** May I correct what I said earlier about '*takdir*' which means destiny? There is also '*takbir*' which means what you do yourself. I just want to correct so

that there is no misunderstanding. Destiny, but ‘*takbir*’ means I will also do something. *Je ne fais pas que subir. C’est ça que j’ai compris de ce que vous avez dit.*

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY – PROGRAMME CODE – TIME ALLOCATION

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Members, please be seated.

Hon. Members, I wish to inform the House that an indicative time allocation, normally should have been worked out and be mutually agreed between the Whips but I understand, it didn’t actually work. So, what I do is I am myself suggesting as I can, as Speaker, as a general rule that we opt for two minutes per programme. I have had it worked out all beautifully. So, I will exercise some flexibility when the need arises. Accordingly, we will proceed page by page for the orderly conduct of the Committee of Supply.

I am also drawing your attention to Standing Order 73(3) which reads as follows –

“(…) Discussions at the Committee shall be confined to the details of the Estimates and shall not refer to the general principles of Government policy and administration.”

Hon. Members are requested to be brief in their questions and hon. Ministers are encouraged to keep their responses, equally, concise. Moreover, hon. Members, are further informed that the votes pertaining to the centralised services of government will be called out of turn, that is, immediately after the committee, will have considered the votes of expenditure for the Ministry of Finance.

I rely on your cooperation to ensure the smooth and orderly conduct of the Committee of Supply.

Thank you.

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Chairperson, before we begin, may I ...

**Madam Speaker:** Please stand up when you speak to me!

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Chairperson, did we understand correctly that it will be two minutes per programme and not per item as was discussed?

**Madam Speaker:** Per item! Per item! Sorry, it was per item.

Okay we will start.

**PUBLIC BILL**  
**THE APPROPRIATION (2025-2026) BILL**  
**(No. XIV of 2025)**

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

*(Madam Speaker in the Chair)*

(6.54 p.m.)

*Office of the President – Programme Code 0101: Presidency Affairs was called.*

**The Chairperson:** You have a question?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. May I refer to page 2, Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*. There is an increase from Rs6,300,000 to Rs9,000,000. Can we be provided with more information with regards to the increase?

**The Prime Minister:** That is provision for uniforms, provision for personal secretariat of retired Presidents and Governor General.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, yes. You have a question?

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Chairperson, may I ask the Prime Minister, on page 2, item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. There is an increase of 159% for this financial year. May we know, firstly the number of Advisers that are being appointed, if we can be provided with their names, qualifications, and the total remuneration, in kind and in cash that they will perceive?

**The Chairperson:** No! No! All you need to know is why it has been increased. Well, let us see what the Prime Minister has to say.

**Mr A. Duval:** I ought to know. I am entitled to know.

**The Prime Minister:** You might be entitled to know but I am not entitled to give you if I don't know. Do you think that I can get you all the names? Where do I get this?

**Mr A. Duval:** But it has to be provided.

**The Prime Minister:** I can table it. Of course, I can table it but I will not be able to give you all the names now. I can table it.

But can you tell me again on which page and what number?

**Mr A. Duval:** 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, Page 2.

**The Prime Minister:** It is about increase in provision to cater for salaries and allowances payable to three Advisers and they are Advisers to the current President of the Republic. He is entitled to have advisers; he has taken his Advisers. I can give you the names later.

*Office of the President – Programme Code 0101: Presidency Affairs (115,500,000) was, on question out, agreed to.*

(6.59 p.m.)

*Office Of the Vice-President – Programme Code 0102: Vice-Presidency Affairs was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Okay. National Assembly.

**Mr A. Duval:** I have a question.

**The Chairperson:** But you didn't say. I looked.

*(Interruptions)*

*Members, I have said it in the past –je ne suis pas une maîtresse d'école, arrêtez. Si vous voulez qu'on gagne du temps, vous me laissez faire. J'ai un peu petit peu d'autorité je crois. Allez-y mais faites-vous bien remarquer à chaque fois. Allez-y, je vous écoute.*

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, thank you. Page 4, item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. I will ask the same question to the Prime Minister. There is a 35 % increase. May we know the number of Advisers that have been appointed, their names, qualifications and remuneration, in kind and in cash, please, if the hon. Prime Minister can provide us later?

**The Prime Minister:** We mentioned earlier in the speech; you were not here. This is why we tried to clarify. Anybody is called advisers. Now, here for example, you have two household attendants but they are classified as advisers. The is one cook classified as adviser. They are not advisers but this is something we want to cure because people think that that the Vice-President is taking so many Advisers but it is not that.

Basically, this item refers to the basic salaries of about Rs6,175,000. Then there is salary compensation. Then you have allowances, you have house allowance, duty allowance and so on. Then you have extra assistance; the extra assistance is for payment of salaries of one Adviser – one cook and two household attendants.

I will let you about the name of the Adviser but this is what I have to say.

*Office Of the Vice-President – Programme Code 0102: Vice-Presidency Affairs (Rs21,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.02 p.m.)

*National Assembly – Programme Code 0103: Parliamentary Affairs was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Leader of the Opposition, do you have a question?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Can we go to Page 8, item – 31112.442 – *Upgrading of Building?* Can we have more information with regard to item – (b) *Repairs of Old Parliament House?*

**The Chairperson:** It's taking place, right now, by the way.

**The Prime Minister:** This is a project that was supposed to be implemented in the last financial year, but it was not. It was delayed for some reason. So, it had to be reprogrammed.

**The Chairperson:** Yes!

**Mr Lesjongard:** The same page, item 31122.824 - *Acquisition of Equipment for Live Broadcasting (Studio for Parliament TV)*. Can we have an indication of the type of equipment we are talking about?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, it is exactly what says. It is for live equipment. There is a live broadcasting studio that they have to upgrade.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, for studio! *C'est écrit*. Can we have the vote?

*National Assembly - Programme Code 0103: Parliamentary Affairs (Rs268,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.04 p.m.)

*Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission - Programme Code 0104: Supervision of Electoral Activities and Review of Electoral Boundaries (Rs3,300,000) was called and agreed to.*

(7.05 p.m.)

*Electoral Commissioner's Office – Programme Code 0105: Electoral Services was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Lobine!

**Mr Lobine:** Yes, Madam Chairperson, on page 16, under caption *Human Resources SN 6 - Electoral Officer*, may we have more details as to why you have fundings for only 15 posts instead of 20, as was the case in the last financial year, please?

**The Chairperson:** Have you found it?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, they are saying that the funds provided are not for 20, but for 5 because they are 15.

**The Chairperson:** Because?

**The Prime Minister:** They are 15. That is there are five less.

**The Chairperson:** There are five less.

Hon. François!

**Mr François:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. Page 15, Item *22120.016 - Fees icw Elections*. Rs10,000,000, may I have some more details about this item, please?

**The Prime Minister:** This is provision for the fees for the Chairperson and the members of the boards.

*Electoral Commissioner's Office - Programme Code 0105: Electoral Services (Rs123,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.08 p.m.)

*Judicial and Legal Service Commission - Programme Code 0106: Recruitment and Promotion of Judicial and Legal Officers (Rs3,000,000) was called and agreed to.*

(7.09 p.m.)

*The Judiciary – Programme Code 0107: Administration and Delivery of Justice was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** On page 20 Item 22030 – *Rent*, can we have information why is there such a big increase in rent, Madam Chairperson?

**The Prime Minister:** There is the rental for Curepipe District Court, for the Bambous District Court and Flacq District Court. Plus, there is the rental of parking slots for five managerial staffs as they work in the Supreme Court. It is the vicinity of the Supreme Court. Also, there is rental for CCTV at the new Court House.



**The Chairperson:** Thank you, hon. Prime Minister.

Yes, hon. François!

**Mr François:** Thank you. On page 21, Item 27210.010 - *Legal Assistance in "in forma pauperis"*, can the hon. Prime Minister table the number of cases and costs and also with the number of beneficiaries from Rodrigues, please?

**The Prime Minister:** Can you tell me the item number?

**Mr François:** Item 27210.010.

**The Prime Minister:** For Social Assistance Benefits in Cash?

**Mr François:** That is correct.

**The Prime Minister:** This is for legal advice and counselling during the recording of statement and the warning from detainees. There is also for legal representation when they apply for bail, and the expenditure for the different years.

**Mr François:** Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Yes! Page 23?

**Mr A. Duval:** May I ask the hon. Prime Minister on page 23, Human Resources, 48 et 61, Word Processing Operator and Court Usher, there is a reduction of nearly 20 posts, important posts for the functioning of justice being reduced. May we know why and what is going to be done?

**The Prime Minister:** He is asking a question about the page with the different titles, but not on the item as such.

**Mr A. Duval:** No, but if I may, hon. Prime Minister?

**The Prime Minister:** If you go to page 25, ...

**Mr A. Duval:** You will see, in fact, the total is reducing. I wanted to know why is there the reduction and what will be done.

**The Prime Minister:** So, you are asking about the personal emoluments?

**Mr A. Duval:** No, Human Resources.

**The Chairperson:** I think what he wants, hon. Prime Minister, is why are there less Word Processing Operators.

**The Prime Minister:** There was a provision for 20 Word Processing Operators. It is not there anymore.

**The Chairperson:** Et l'autre, c'était quoi?

**Mr A. Duval:** Actually, for three posts. There is Court User and Senior Court Officer; all three posts have had reductions. We wanted to know what will be done.

**The Prime Minister:** For example, for the Court Usher, there are 65 in post.

**Mr A. Duval:** From 74.

**The Prime Minister:** From 74. Probably, they are getting the message that they have to save money.

**The Chairperson:** Time is up. Time is up. We have already done it. Time is up!

*The Judiciary – Programme Code 0107: Administration and Delivery of Justice (Rs806,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.13 p.m.)

*Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions – Programme Code 0108: Criminal Advisory and Litigation (Rs215,000,000) was called and agreed to.*

(7.14 p.m.)

*Public Service Commission and Disciplined Forces Service Commission – Programme Code 0109: Public Service and Disciplined Forces Service Affairs was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. François. Page please?

**Mr François:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 29, item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*. Can we have the names of chairpersons and commissioners?

**The Chairperson:** Of the PSC and DFSC, you can table. Please table.

**The Prime Minister:** It is already published now, *me mo kapav re dir*.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, it is already public.

*Public Service Commission and Disciplined Forces Service Commission – Programme Code 0109: Public Service and Disciplined Forces Service Affairs (154,800,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.15 p.m.)

*Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal – Programme Code 0110: Determination of Appeals (Rs20,200,000) was called and agreed to.*

(7.15 p.m.)

*The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to -*

*0111: Office Of Ombudsman – Protection against Maladministration in the Public Sector (Rs20,500,000)*

*0112: National Audit Office – External Audit Services (Rs195,400,000)*

*0113: Employment Relations Tribunal – Industrial and Employment Dispute Resolution (Rs26,000,000)*

*0114: Local Government Service Commission – Local Government Service Affairs (Rs 56,500,000)*

*0115: National Human Rights Commission – Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (Rs37,000,000)*

*0116: Office of the Ombudsperson for Children – Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children (Rs26,600,000)*

(7.18 p.m.)

*Independent Police Complaints Commission – Programme Code 0117: Investigation into Complaints against Police Officers was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Mr Duval!

**Mr A. Duval:** On page 53 – *01117: Investigation into Complaints against Police Officers*, may I the hon. Prime Minister, how many formal charges have been lodged out of which successfully convicted? If he has for the last year, of course.

**The Chairperson:** No, I do not think. You can put a PQ on this. Question?

*(Interruptions)*

Everybody is going to tell me what to do. Okay, I am going to sit and relax. I am saying that you can put a PQ on this issue because all we need to know is the question of finance.

**Mr Lesjongard:** This is in terms of percentage.

**The Chairperson:** Okay, percentage of? Stand up.

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Chairperson, it speaks of percentage of cases, disposed etc. I wanted to know how many formal charges have been lodged in the last financial year and how many have been successfully convicted? It is a fair question.

**The Prime Minister:** I can give him details but this should have been a question because if you think I will tell you how many charges and all this. Anyway, I will tell you, there were 4918 complaints. Out of these 4918 complaints, 2006 are still under investigation but 78 complaints have gone to Court but we are waiting for the Court determination and 2834 cases have been completed.

*(Interruptions)*

*Independent Police Complaints Commission – Programme Code 0117: Investigation into Complaints against Police Officers (Rs16,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.21 p.m.)

*Office of the Ombudsperson for Financial Services – Programme Code 0118: Protection of Consumers of Financial Services (Rs17,500,000) was called and agreed to.*

(7.21 p.m.)

*Financial Crimes Commission – Programme Code 0119: Combatting Financial Crimes was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes. Stand up!

**Mr A. Duval:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

*(Interruptions)*

Madam Chairperson, please, if you may ask them not to interrupt as soon as you rise. It completely breaks your concentration and it is very childish. Page 59, item 26313.164 – *Financial Crimes Commission of which staff costs.*

**The Chairperson:** Okay, I can see it, *Extra-Budgetary Units.*

**Mr A. Duval:** There is a notable increase in staff costs. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister the number of additional staff that is being recruited and will he kindly provide us the grades for which they are being recruited?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** We want to clean these corrupt people who are still stealing in different places. We have had to increase the number of staff. We are increasing the number of staff because there are too many people who have committed all kind of frauds and crimes during the regime of the MSM. We have to clean. So, we have increased the number of staff to 94 new posts.

Secondly, I have also asked Scotland Yard to bring people to look at financial crimes, crimes and all these things. So, this also is going to cost.

**Mr A. Duval:** May we know if the Prime Minister will kindly provide us with the grading, the posts, for which the 94 are being recruited?

**The Prime Minister:** That is advertised in the paper but I can table it.

**The Chairperson:** It seems that there is a lot of information that is already available.

**Mr A. Duval:** It is the role of this Assembly to examine...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** You expect me...

*(Interruptions)*

You expect me to tell you the 94 grades?

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, but they have not yet been advertised.

**The Prime Minister:** No, you can wait.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Okay!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Duval:** So, we should not expect any answer now?

**An hon. Member:** You won't get any.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Are we going to work or stay until 2 o'clock in the morning?

*(Interruptions)*

Financial Crimes Commission! Mr François, yes!

**Mr François:** Yes, I have a question, Madam Chairperson. Page 59, *Item 26313.164 – Financial Crimes Commission of which Other Operating Costs*. Does this sum of Rs 50 million include the special missions to Rodrigues and can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House the number of missions carried out in Rodrigues for Financial Year 2024-2025 if available? Thank you.

**The Prime Minister:** They are independent as you know. I do not ask them how many times they are going. They do not have to tell me but it includes Rodrigues, yes.

**The Chairperson:** Because Rodrigues is part of the Republic.

*Financial Crimes Commission - Programme Code 0119: Combatting Financial Crimes (Rs 415,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.25 p.m.)

*Programme Code 0201: Prime Minister's Office was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Prime Minister! Prime Minister's Office, your office now.

**Mr Lesjongard:** We have a lot of questions.

**The Chairperson:** *Attention!*

*(Interruptions)*

*Faites attention!* Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson, page 64 *Item 22900.985 - Expenses icw Chagos Archipelago*, there is an increase of almost Rs15 million Can we have details with regard to that?

**The Prime Minister:** The increase is for catering of the following –

- There is the creation of a marine protected area around the Chagos island that we plan to start working on. So, we put a sum of Rs5 million there;
- There is the visit to Chagos Archipelago, and then
- There is resettlement in the Chagos. We have to start planning for this, and also there are other expenses in respect to that.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, stand up please.

**Mr A. Duval:** Can we ask the Prime Minister the budgeted sum for the visit to the Chagos Archipelago? Can the Prime Minister give us the details thereof? Who is expected to go? What is being planned for that visit for that budget?

**The Prime Minister:** I think the Deputy Prime Minister actually said that we are planning to have a full visit. First of all, we have to get the transport, the ship, we have not done that yet. We have started organising but we have to plan for it. We intend to go definitely Whether we will go together or separately, how many people can go in the ship, that we do not know yet. So, all this, we are working out.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Hon. Prime Minister, on the same page, *Item 31112.442 - Upgrading of Building*. Can we be informed which building is being upgraded?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Prime Minister.

**The Prime Minister:** I can let you know but I know it is for waterproofing and also for the doors. But I can tell you which buildings, I do not have it here.

**The Chairperson:** Does anybody want to help the Prime Minister? But we know that this is going on by the way.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, I must tell you, when I walked in my own building, PMO, it was leaking. God knows why. It is the treasury building. The other thing is that probably Clarisse House has collapsed. *Patrimoine de Maurice, rien n'a été fait*.

**The Chairperson:** You have got a piece of paper?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** *Inn kasiet tou bann kitsoz ladan!*

**Mr A. Duval:** I have a question.

**The Chairperson:** Alright, stand up please!

**Mr A. Duval:** Are we on the next programme, Madam Chairperson, page 66?

**The Chairperson:** If you want, 66 yes.

**Mr A. Duval:** For same *Item 21110.005 - Extra Assistance*. May I request to the Prime Minister, the list of his Advisors, number thereof and if he can provide to the House qualifications and of course, benefits in kind and in cash?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I can give you what I can at the moment. Three of them are on a *pro bono* basis. You have –

- Mrs Fong Wen Poorun as Secretary for Home Affairs;
- Mrs Bhanji, Senior Chief Executive;
- Mr Ramdhun as Director Government Information Service.

And then, I will give the list of others that are there.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Lesjongard:** On page 66, *Item 22900.014 - Other Goods and Services of which Hospitality and Ceremonies*, the budget has almost doubled for Financial Year 2025-2026. Can we be given more information?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, this is connected with dinners and lunches done for State visits. There were State visits as you know and also the accommodation of official delegations, VVIPs, Government guests. There is also a payment to ATOL because they use up the State and VIP lounges.

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Chairperson, may I?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, but we are going a bit late on this one.

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, Madam Chairperson, just to clarify from the Prime Minister. He gave me the names of Advisors but...

**The Chairperson:** And he said he would give the rest!

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, and this is what I wanted to clarify. When the Prime Minister will provide his list, can he also provide ...

*(Interruptions)*

**An hon. Member:** *Mama oh !*

**Mr A. Duval:** Can he...

**The Chairperson:** Vous voulez prendre ma place, M. Jhummun ?

**Mr A. Duval:** Can he provide in the interim...

**The Chairperson:** Are you sure? *Moi je m'en vais si vous voulez !*

*(Interruptions)*



**Mr A. Duval:** ...the number of Advisors that he has appointed in the interim? Only that.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I can.

**The Chairperson:** Yes. That is fine!

**Mr Assirvaden:** Madame la présidente, je voudrais avoir un éclaircissement parce qu'éventuellement ça va venir sur d'autre ministères, est-ce que c'est un *PNQ* ? Le membre de l'opposition a le droit de poser des questions supplémentaires sur ces items-là ?

**The Chairperson:** Non, non. Il est parfaitement...

**Mr Assirvaden:** Alors, il faudra savoir !

**The Chairperson:** Je peux répondre ?

*(Interruptions)*

Je peux répondre ? Si à chaque fois vous allez faire des *points of orders*, on n'est pas sorti de l'auberge.

**Mr A. Duval:** Ce n'est même pas un *point of order* !

**Mr Assirvaden:** Il faut savoir !

**The Chairperson:** Mais, vous pensez que je ne sais pas ?

**Mr Assirvaden:** Non, je sais que vous savez, mais...

**The Chairperson:** Et bien, alors ?

Faites-moi confiance !

*(Interruptions)*

**An hon. Member:** *Ena pe anvi al l'auberge !*

**The Chairperson:** Faites-moi confiance !

**Mr A. Duval:** *Ou pann gagn repons la, abize sa ?*

**Mr Assirvaden:** Il abuse !

**Mr A. Duval:** *Abize sa?*

**Mr Assirvaden:** Oui, c'est abusé !

**The Chairperson:** Parce que sinon, moi je m'en vais !

*(Interruptions)*

Qu'est ce qui se passe encore ?

*(Interruptions)*

Qu'est ce qui se passe encore ?

*(Interruptions)*

It is perfectly in order! No! You cannot...

*(Interruptions)*

No, you cannot!

*(Interruptions)*

No, because we are late!

*(Interruptions)*

We are late! Honestly, I am telling you, if we go on like this...

*(Interruptions)*

If we go on like this, I am going away! Okay?

*(Interruptions)*

Non, mais ce n'est pas possible ! *We are still on Prime Minister's Office. Prime Minister, take your time but give us the...* On est à quelle page ? On est à page 68-69. Allez y.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I refer to page 68 *Item 22900.811 - Other Goods and Services of which Expenses icw MNIC Unit*. There is a substantial increase. Can we be provided with more information?

**The Prime Minister:** I won't say there is a substantial increase. There is an increase but not substantial. I can give you the details. It is provision for uniforms and then there is catering, meal allowances to officers who work, very often in the Prime Minister's Office, we work after-hours, so we have to provide meals. There is an annual payment of syndic fees and then there is provision for electric chargers, telephones, rent office equipment, furniture, maintenance of building.

There is an action plan to combat trafficking in person, that also, we have to provide Rs2,000,000. Expenses registered to Counter Terrorism Unit and the running cost of Security Unit.

**Mr A. Duval:** May I?

**The Chairperson:** Okay. Yes.

**Mr A. Duval:** Thank you. May I ask, the hon. Prime Minister, at the same page 68, item 22900.910 – *Running Cost of Security Unit* – how many officers and personals are posted at the security unit?

**The Prime Minister:** The number of officers is six.

**The Chairperson:** Good. Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Page 69, item 31121.801 – *Acquisition of Vehicles (b) Security Division*. There is an increase from Rs35,000,000 to Rs100,000,000. Can we know why, hon. Prime Minister?

**The Prime Minister:** These are vehicles for the Security Division. They had to purchase vehicles for the Security Division and also to replace an old vehicle.

**Mr A. Duval:** On page 69?

**The Chairperson:** You are still on 69.

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Chairperson, may I ask, the hon. Prime Minister, item 31122.999 – *Other Machinery and Equipment (a) Home Affairs* – there is an amount of Rs15,000,000 for Home Affairs; may we know what is this amount for?

**The Prime Minister:** This is the provision for two stand-by generators which had to be replaced. They are 45 years old.

**The Chairperson:** Good. Page 72.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Page 72, item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. Can we be provided with more information, Madam Chairperson?

**The Prime Minister:** This is the provision for the extra assistance for payment of salaries and allowances to the new Director of Information Services; the other one has left. And also, a new Adviser on information matters.

**The Chairperson:** Yes. Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Lesjongard:** On the same item, since the hon. Prime Minister mentioned the new Director, can we know who is the new director?

**The Prime Minister:** The old one was delving into politics every day. He had to be replaced and he has been replaced by his deputy, Mr Ramdhun.

**The Chairperson:** Yes.

**Mr A. Duval:** Page 73, item 31132.801 – *Acquisition of Software (Mobile App)*.

*(Interruptions)*

They are answering for you. I just wanted more details on why there is no budget for that.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Prime Minister.

**The Prime Minister:** The reason no provision has been made is because the payment had already been effected in January of this year.

**Mr A. Duval:** Madam Chairperson, that is not the question. The question is what was the project, if we can have details on the project?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Details? This is a software!

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, details on the acquisition.

**The Prime Minister:** It does say it is for software!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Duval:** But what software is it?

**The Prime Minister:** I can't give you details on software in the Prime Minister's Office. We need software.

*Prime Minister's Office – Programme 0201: Prime Minister's Office (Rs1, 500,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.41 p.m.)

*The following programme codes were called and agreed to –*

*0202: Pay Research Bureau – Pay and Conditions of Services (Rs47,000,000)*

0203: *Civil Status Division – Programme Civil Status Affairs (Rs 148,000,000)*

0204: *Government Printing – Government Printing Services (Rs227,000,000)*

(7.42 p.m.)

*Rodrigues And Outer Islands – Programme 0205: Rodrigues and Outer Islands was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, first.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Page 87, item 22170 – *Travelling within the Republic*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, when he intends to travel to Rodrigues?

**The Chairperson:** As soon as possible! Yes, hon. François!

**Mr François:** Thank you. I have a few questions, but let me start with item 26321.001 – *Rodrigues Regional Assembly*. There was a provision of Rs1,285,000,000, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm the real expenditure with regards to capital budget?

**The Chairperson:** Page 87, *Other General Government Units – Rodrigues Regional Assembly*, that's what you want?

**Mr François:** Yes!

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

**The Prime Minister:** I know it's for recurrent expenditure but I can give you the details. I don't have the details of the recurrent. Is it Item 23321? We approved a capital estimates amounting to Rs785,000,000 and then the different projects, you want me to name the projects?

**Mr François:** No need!

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Chairperson, I refer to page 87, item 25110.011 - *Special Rodrigues Holiday Package*, there is an increase of almost Rs15,000,000. Can we be provided with more information as to that increase? Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Yes!

**The Prime Minister:** That is the provision made to meet the cost of subsidy on airfare for residents of Mauritius travelling to Rodrigues. As we said, in view of boosting the tourism sector there.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Mr A. Duval!

**Mr A. Duval:** On the same item 25110.011 - *Special Rodrigues Holiday Package*, may I ask the Prime Minister for the last financial year, how many Mauritians benefitted from that subsidy, that is, travelled to Rodrigues?

You should have it.

**The Prime Minister:** I would not be able to say for the last financial year. I can tell you for this year. You mean from the beginning of last year, you were in government.

**Mr A. Duval:** No, I was not, hon. Prime Minister. That's not true. Secondly, you should be able to because they have the figures here because we have the sum here. Otherwise, if you can give me for the Rs 35 million, how many are expected to travel?

**The Prime Minister:** ... want the details of last year?

**Mr A. Duval:** Okay, if you can't give me for last year, but I am sure you can, give me for this year Rs35 million?

**The Prime Minister:** The amount disbursed, that's what you want to know?

**Mr A. Duval:** The number of persons who travelled.

**The Prime Minister:** Persons travelled? How many people travelled?

**Mr A. Duval:** How many people benefited from that subsidy? It's the subsidy on the air ticket.

**The Prime Minister:** Okay, there are 142,000 beneficiaries.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Chairperson, we cannot work...

**The Chairperson:** Qu'est-ce que c'est ces enfantillages ?

**Mr Jhummun :** Exactement !

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Non, mais vous vous ennuyez ou quoi ?

**Mr A. Duval :** Je crois oui ! Il n'a pas de questions !

**The Chairperson:** Ça suffit! On est tous là en train de travailler, y compris le staff. Il n'y a pas que nous, il y a aussi le staff. Allons travailler, on est là pour ça. Alors la question, s'il vous plaît, la question ?

**Mr A. Duval :** Je l'ai posé !

**The Chairperson:** Oui, vous avez eu la réponse ?

**Mr A. Duval :** Oui, il a répondu !

**The Chairperson:** Très bien !

**Mr A. Duval :** Il y a du tapage qui continue derrière.

**The Chairperson:** Je vois bien qui c'est ! L'honorable François!

**Mr François:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 87, item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants*. Can we know who are the consultants for both projects by the AFD grant with water sector and renewable energy?

**The Prime Minister:** We don't have the names of the consultants; we have Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières but they didn't give their names.

**Mr François:** Okay!

**The Chairperson:** Vous avez compris ? Très bien!

One more?

**Mr François:** Let me put another question, Madam Chairperson, with regards to same page 87, item 28213.030 - *Airport of Rodrigues Ltd*. There is a provision of Rs26 million for this year but the projection for Financial Year 2026-2027, there is no money, may I know why?

**The Prime Minister:** It is probably not worked out. I will certainly give details. We don't have it because it is after one year that you are talking about. I think they haven't worked it out because this...

**Mr François:** Okay!

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. On the same page, that is, page 87, item 28217.010 - *Support to Sustainable Development in Rodrigues (icw Rodrigues Airport project)*. Can we have an indication of the status of that project, hon. Prime Minister?

**The Prime Minister:** They had planned to do the project. I think preliminary works have been done and we are committed to carry on as long as we can do it on time, it will be funded. What is the status, how long they have managed to do, I can't say.

**The Chairperson:** I think we are done with Rodrigues if everybody is happy.

*Rodrigues and Outer Islands – Programme Code 0205: Rodrigues and Outer Islands (Rs 6,470,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.50 p.m.)

*Reform Institutions and Rehabilitation – Programme Code 0206: Rehabilitation of Offenders and Children in Probation Institutions (Rs121,000,000) was called and agreed to.*

(7.52 p.m.)

*Forensic Science Laboratory – Programme Code 0207: Forensic Science Services was called.*

**Mr A. Duval:** On page 93, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister on the item 31112.019 - *Construction of the Forensic Science Laboratory*, may we know when is the new laboratory expected to be up and running?

**The Prime Minister:** The contract date was 29 November 2023. Now, they have revised the date of completion to 01 December of this year.

**The Chairperson:** Okay, Mr François!

**Mr François:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 92, item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, I see under key performance indicators there is about 60% of cases, may I know the exact number of cases treated and resolved?

**The Chairperson:** Will you have that, hon. Prime Minister?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, sure! I don't have it here but how many cases have been resolved; I will give it to you. I am sure they will give me.

**The Chairperson:** Everybody at the back must be on their toes!



**The Prime Minister:** I can give you some more details. For the number of cases, there are in total 3,496 cases, of which, 1,960 are for drugs, 952 for toxicology and 584 for biology.

*Forensic Science Laboratory - Programme Code 0207: Forensic Science Services (Rs650,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.54 p.m.)

*National Disaster Risk Reduction - Programme Code 0208: National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (Rs33,000,000) was called and agreed to.*

(7.55 p.m.)

*Mauritius Meteorological Services - Programme Code 0209: Meteorological Services was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 99, *Item 31112.401 – Upgrading of Office Buildings*, can the hon. Prime Minister provide us with information as to which buildings are being upgraded?

**The Prime Minister:** It is for the Radar Station. Then, there is the hydrogen generator and the upgrading works at Plaisance Station. There is also some waterproofing works.

**The Chairperson:** Oui, Monsieur François!

**Mr François:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 99, *Item 31122.999 – (a) Automatic Rain Gauge and Weather Stations and Climate Database Management Systems*, Rs23 m. From the key performance, there will be an increase of eight additional automatic stations. May I know how many there will be for Rodrigues?

**The Prime Minister:** I know Rodrigues is included, but they have put it all together. Maybe they will tell me.

**The Chairperson:** Okay, yes!

**Mr A. Duval:** Under the same *Item 31122.999 – (a) Automatic Rain Gauge and Weather Stations and Climate Database Management System*, can the Prime Minister give us details of this system?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not know the details for the systems, but I know the costs. If you want different costs, I can provide it. But not the details on the system.

**Mr A. Duval:** What is it for?

**The Prime Minister:** It is exactly what it says here. It is a rain gauge.

**Mr A. Duval:** Can I have...

**The Prime Minister:** It is a rain gauge; I do not have to look at the paper. It is a rain gauge!

**The Chairperson:** C'est un truc spécialisé !

*Mauritius Meteorological Services - Programme Code 0209: Meteorological Services (Rs163,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(7.59 p.m.)

*External Communications - Programme Code 0220: Policy & Strategy for Port and Airport development was called.*

**The Chairperson:** External Communications, page 104, Mr Lesjongard first.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 104, *Item 32155.071 – Airports Holdings Ltd*, can we have more information as regard to that item, please?

**The Prime Minister:** It is a long explanation. There was a loan agreement of USD 184 million signed with the World Bank on 05 June 2024. The previous regime signed that to finance the new runway project at Plaine Corail. Then, were two components related to the construction of a new airport runway, as mentioned just now. The remaining two components relate to water, food security and so on.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Mr François!

**Mr François:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 104, *Item 31121.805 – Acquisition of Tugboat (funded by Government of Japan)*, there is a provision of Rs82.5 m.

May I know whether this item will cater for the replacement of the old tug at Port Mathurin, Rodrigues?

**The Prime Minister:** I know that it is the Government of Japan which is extending its grant. We have not specified where the tug will be used. It could be used in Rodrigues as well. I cannot see why not.

*External Communications - Programme Code 0220: Policy & Strategy for Port and Airport development (Rs1,107,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

**The Chairperson:** I think we can suspend, if you do not mind, hon. Prime Minister? I think everybody is hungry.

So, I suspend the Sitting for one hour until 9 o'clock.

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

*On resuming at 9.06 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.*

**The Chairperson:** Thank you, hon. Members. You may be seated!

(9.07 p.m.)

*Police Service - Programme Code 0230: Police Services was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson, May I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 111, Item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, there is an increase of Rs4 m. almost. Can we be provided with further information related to that item. Thank you.

**The Prime Minister:** There are 30 retired Police Officers employed at the Passport Office and Immigration Office. Also, there is an Adviser at VIPSU and there is an Adviser at CCID. Then, you have cash in lieu of leave, end of year bonus and the interim allowances.

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I again, Madam Chairperson?

**The Chairperson:** Yes!

**Mr Lesjongard:** With regard to the Adviser, can we be provided with the names and qualifications, hon. Prime Minister?

**The Prime Minister:** I know the names if you want to ask me. The Adviser at VIPSU is Mr T. Dwarika. The one at CCID is Mr Daniel Monvoisin.

**The Chairperson:** Yes!

**Mr A. Duval:** With regard to the sub-programme *023001 - Management of Police Services*.

**The Chairperson:** Page?

**Mr A. Duval:** Page 111.

**The Chairperson:** Item 023?

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes. Management of the functioning of the different Police Units - *Office of the Commissioner of Police*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister, the number of officers, Commissioner of Police and Deputy Commissioner of Police who are currently on contract in that office?

**The Chairperson:** I am sorry. Did you get it?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. It is not within my purview.

**The Chairperson:** Which item?

**The Prime Minister:** Because I do not do the administration for the Police. There are directives on policies.

**Mr A. Duval:** No, but...

**The Chairperson:** Would you please tell me which page again?

**Mr A. Duval:** Page 111. The heading for sub-programme *023001 - Management of Police Services*.

Let me ask it differently. For the *Human Resources* part on page 113.

**The Prime Minister:** Page 113?

**Mr A. Duval:** It is the same question.

**The Prime Minister:** Go page by page.

**The Chairperson:** Be precise!

**Mr A. Duval:** It is the same question, Madam Chairperson.

**The Prime Minister:** It is not!

**Mr A. Duval:** For the management of the Office of the Commissioner of Police.

**The Prime Minister:** When we come to page 113, then you ask!

**Mr A. Duval:** Well then, Madam Chairperson, may I have a question on page 112?

**The Chairperson:** Yes!

**Mr A. Duval:** *Construction of Mauritius Disciplined Forces Academy*, may we have...

**The Chairperson:** Item?

**Mr A. Duval:** Item 31112.049 - *Construction of Mauritius Disciplined Forces Academy*.

**The Chairperson:** 049 - *Construction of Mauritius Disciplined Forces Academy*.

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes!

**The Prime Minister:** Which page?

**The Chairperson:** Page 112.

**The Prime Minister:** Page 112? And then?

**Mr A. Duval:** May we know from the hon. Prime Minister, when is the construction expected to happen and what will be the training capacity of the academy once it is set up?

**The Prime Minister:** From what I remember, as you know, this is from a line of credit from India. But what has happened is that there has been an unsuccessful tendering. So, they are now re-talking to the financing bank to restart the process.

**Mr A. Duval:** May I?

**The Chairperson:** Yes!

**Mr A. Duval:** Will the hon. Prime Minister clarify when we can expect construction to be completed because we see...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** No!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Duval:** He has not answered!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** There are many Prime Ministers in this House!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Duval:** Right!

What will be the capacity for training of the academy once it is set up?

**The Chairperson:** It is tendering.

**The Prime Minister:** That is temporary because they are looking at all the tendering procedures at the moment.

**The Chairperson:** Too early, too early. Yes!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 112, Item 22900.973 - *Expenses i.c.w Safe City Project*. There is an increase of Rs150 m. Can we be provided with the information as regards to that increase, Madam Chairperson? Thank you.

**The Prime Minister:** They are getting 4,000 intelligent video surveillance cameras.

**The Chairperson:** Yes!

**Mr A. Duval:** Page 113.

**The Chairperson:** Yes!

**Mr A. Duval:** Page 113, *Human Resources*, Madam Chairperson.

**The Chairperson:** Which one, please?

**Mr A. Duval:** Page 113.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, but which one? All of it?

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, generally speaking!

*(Interruptions)*

Madam Chairperson, there is a total in there you will see.

**The Chairperson:** Okay!

**Mr A. Duval:** There is a total there, Madam Chairperson, you will see, 2174. My question was how many persons in that office are currently employed under contract?

**The Chairperson:** Employed under contract. That is what he wanted to say.

**The Prime Minister:** I will not be able to say for the whole office but for the moment I know, the Commissioner of Police is under contract.

**The Chairperson:** No question? Yes. Mr Ramdass.

**Mr Ramdass:** Page 111- Item 22120.

**The Chairperson:** *Non, on a fini. 113, on a fini. On est à la page 114 maintenant. Je sais qu'il est tard mais essayez de suivre. La pages 114, 115 ?* No questions.

**Mr A. Duval:** Page 116, actually.

**The Chairperson:** Page 116, okay.

**Mr A. Duval:** May I ask the Prime Minister, with item 31112.012 (d) – *Goodlands Police Station*. I see that this is a new project. Where is this police station going to be constructed and what would be the capacity?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Okay sit down. Answer? Do you know Prime Minister where?

**The Prime Minister:** I remember having answered a PQ on this. It is exactly the same place. Wait, I am answering you.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** *Li anvi met sa Grand Gaube!*

**Mr A. Duval:** Hon. Prime Minister, your officers are here!

**The Prime Minister:** Instead of making you wait, I am answering you.

**Mr A. Duval:** If I may, Chairperson, the reason for this exercise is to elucidate where is...

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** *Twa to pou montre nou?*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Duval:** ... Rs5 million, it does not matter if it has been answered 10 times. It has to be answered here. This is the precise reason.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Chairperson, I just answered him. It is at the same place where we have the...

**Mr A. Duval:** But I didn't know...

**The Prime Minister:** But I am answering. If you do not know, I am telling you.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Same place as the actual police station.

**An hon. Member:** Trois boutiques...

**The Chairperson:** You better find out. *Moi, j'habite Rose-Hill, je sais où est la station de Rose-Hill.*

**Mr A. Duval:** ... if there is a renovation. Madam Chairperson, you cannot construct something which is already there. There is a renovation.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** You see, you missed. You are not listening. I said the same place. I did not say the same building. There is space there.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** You will find out. Next page please! Pages 118, 119, 120? Page 120 !

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes. Can I ask the Prime Minister, we see that, yes, I am coming to it.

He must be very thankful for all assistance he is getting with the questions. Item 31122.805 – *Acquisition of Security Equipment*. Can we have the details of security equipment being budgeted for the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit?

**The Prime Minister:** I cannot go into security matters. I know it is for ADSU but I cannot give you more.

**The Chairperson:** No, but it is obvious, isn't it? It is for security. I am sorry, what is your question? It is so obvious. What do you want to know?

**Mr A. Duval:** ...more than entitled to know exactly what it is.

**The Chairperson:** For security, you cannot detail more than that.

**The Prime Minister:** I cannot give details on security.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** 121? Page 122?



**Mr François:** On page 122, Madam Chairperson, item 31121.801- *Acquisition of Vehicles - Light Armoured Personnel Carriers*. Can we know, how many have been procured under this financial year and for next year how many will be procured as well?

**The Prime Minister:** I will tell you for the actual, it is 12.

**Mr A. Duval:** I had 121.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Too late, but you are talking to someone.

**Mr A. Duval:** But I wasn't!

**The Chairperson:** I am sorry. 124? Try and follow. Page 125? Keep awake all of you. I say keep awake because I am going to the fast.

**Mr François:** Yes, thank you. Page 125, Item 22060.008 – *Ships*. May I know whether the maintenance is being done here in Mauritius or abroad?

**The Prime Minister:** Normally, they try to do it here. If it is not possible then they send it abroad.

**The Chairperson:** Okay.

*Police Services – Programme Code 0230: Police Services (Rs 13,200,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(9.20 p.m.)

*Prison service – Programme Code 0240: Prison Services was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Beware!

Which page?

**Mr François:** Page 130, item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*. May we know the actual overall number of inmates in Mauritius?

**The Chairperson:** *Mais là c'est le* Personal Emoluments.

**The Prime Minister:** You mean the prison officers? 143.

**The Chairperson:** Pages 131, 132, 133, 134? *On a presque fini.*

*Prison Service – Programme Code 0240: Prison Services (Rs1,202,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(9.22 p.m.)

*The Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance – Programme Code 0250: Policy and Strategy for Public Finance and Economic Development was called.*

**Mr A. Duval:** Page 138, *Item 21110.005 - Extra Assistance*, may we know from the Prime Minister how many Advisors he has appointed under this Item and then secondly, if can provide us with the qualifications and benefits in kind and in cash that they will be entitled to?

**The Prime Minister:** I can tell you the name of the Advisors but I will have to circulate it or you ask a question.

*(Interruptions)*

I will not know their qualifications, their age...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Lesjongard:** Table, table!

**Mr A. Duval:** But at least their names!

**The Prime Minister:** Three.

**The Chairperson:** Sinon nous aussi on va donner les nôtres si ça continue. On peut tous donner nos CV nous aussi. Allez-y, vous allez circuler.

*(Interruptions)*

He is going to circulate!

*(Interruptions)*

*Allez, où on est ? Page 142. Yes? Which one?*

**Mr Lesjongard:** I raised my hand for page 138.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Page 138?

**Mr Lesjongard:** *Item 22030 - Rent*. There is a substantial increase. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister why that substantial increase?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Prime Minister!

**The Prime Minister:** The increase is not just for building and parking slots but also for equipment and when they do events, facilities for events.

**Mr Lesjongard:** No, this is rent.

**The Chairperson:** No, he is talking of rent because you also have office equipment afterwards. You are getting the answer.

**The Prime Minister:** This is what I said. It is the rental for a new office at Newton Tower and then there is the provision for an additional office for Garden Tower.

**The Chairperson:** Okay. Yes?

**Mr A. Duval:** May I ask the Prime Minister, on the same page 138, *Item 26313.020 - Gambling Regulatory Authority*. We see an increase of 10%. Rs10 m. in the budget for this financial year. May we know why there is such an increase for this financial year?

**The Prime Minister:** Because of prices but basically it is the recurrent expenditure of the Gambling Regulatory Authority. This is for compensation of employees and goods and services.

**The Chairperson:** Page 143. Yes, Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Chairperson, I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 143, *Item 26313.043 - Mauritius Revenue Authority*. There is an increase of almost Rs100 million. Can we be provided with more information as regard to that increase? Thank you!

**The Prime Minister:** It is basically for combating drugs and smuggling and also people who under evaluate their revenues. They want to upgrade ICT infrastructure and also start using Artificial Intelligence.

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, under *Item 21110.001 - Basic Salary*.

**The Chairperson:** *Item 21110.001 - Basic Salary*.

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, we see an increase of Rs12 million when the HR total number of staff is in fact decreasing. So, can we know why there is an increase when the staff is in fact decreasing?

**The Prime Minister:** It is not decreasing. It is 325 funded persons here.

**Mr A. Duval:** It is 325, in fact, down from 350 but the basic salary is up Rs12 million. So, can we know why there is an increase in basic salary? Such an increase when in fact the funded positions are decreasing.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, there are provisions for the payment for the salary compensation for years 2022-2025 which have not been paid.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Duval:** It is salary compensation. May I ask the Prime Minister?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, once you finish, I have to go back because we lost two of them. *Allez!* Carry on.

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, I see the salary compensation is a sub-heading and you will see that it only amounts for Rs2 million. So, the question again, there is a Rs13 million increase and 25 less funded positions. So, ....

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, they were not paid for all those years. That is what it seems from here.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Members, while calling, it seems that there are four pages for Ministry of Finance which I have missed. So, I am calling Ministry of Finance, page 135. We have already done that but I have to call it.

*Ministry of Finance - Programme Code 0250: Policy and Strategy for Public Finance and Economic Development (Rs388,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

**The Chairperson:** And then there is another one which is page 140, which we just did.

*Ministry of Finance - Programme Code 0251: Public Finance and Budget Management (Rs 3,935,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

**The Chairperson:** Now we are back to normal.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Prime Minister to page 145, *Item 22120.008 - Fees to Consultants*. Can the hon. Prime Minister provide the House with information about the studies to be carried out and when those consultants will be appointed? Thank you.

**The Prime Minister:** This is for consultancy services in the recruitment of project managers for the project management and contract administration unit.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you. Now, we go to pages 146, 147 and 148. Now, I am on page 148, Ministry of Finance.

(9.33 p.m.)

*Ministry of Finance - Programme Code 0252: Economic Development and Resource Mobilisation was called.*

**The Chairperson:** We are still on the Ministry of Finance. So, page 149.

**Mr A. Duval:** May I refer the Prime Minister to page 149, Item 26313.148 – *Economic Development Board*. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister, for the last financial year, how many occupation permits have been delivered by the Economic Development Board?

**The Prime Minister:** I know they are doing it regularly, but I will not be able to say the exact number. If they have it, they will give it.

**The Chairperson:** You need notice of the question.

**Mr A. Duval:** May we wait for that?

**The Prime Minister:** I will circulate it.

**Mr A. Duval:** Prepare the statement and...

**The Chairperson:** He will provide in due course. I carry on.

*Ministry of Finance - Programme Code 0252: Economic Development and Resource Mobilisation (Rs 635,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(9.36 p.m.)

*The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to –*

*0253: Ministry of Finance - Procurement Policy and Services (Rs148,000,000)*

*0254: Treasury - Government Accounting and Payment System (Rs226,800,000)*

(9.37 p.m.)

*Statistics Mauritius - Programme Code 0255: Provision of Statistics was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Pages 161-162. *Je vous écoute.*

**Mr A. Duval:** May I know from the hon. Prime Minister, there is...

**The Prime Minister:** Which page?

**The Chairperson:** Page 162.

**Mr A. Duval:** But you do not even have to answer.

**The Chairperson:** But I am nice, that is why I answer!

**Mr A. Duval:** May I know from the hon. Prime Minister, there is a reduction in Statistical Officers, a quite considerable one. In fact, 20% of the number of Statistical Officers are being reduced. May we know what is the reason?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, it has been reduced to 113 officers.

**Mr A. Duval:** It is down from 134.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes.

**The Chairperson:** There is no particular problem?

**The Prime Minister:** No.

**Mr A. Duval:** May we know the reason why?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** *Chut!*

**The Prime Minister:** Actually, they are telling me that there were only one or two officers in post. Procedures have been initiated for the other vacancies.

**The Chairperson:** Okay. You have a question? Yes!

**Mr Lesjongard:** On Page 161, Item 26210 – *Contribution to International Organisations*, quite substantial increases in the contribution, may we know why?

**The Prime Minister:** Can you tell me exactly which number you are referring to because there are many in there.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Items 26210.041, 26210.042 and 26210.043.

**The Prime Minister:** There is the annual membership for IAOS, ISI and IASS that has to be paid.

**Mr Lesjongard:** It has increased?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** *SADC mem zot pa'nn paye !*

**The Chairperson:** It has increased, I suppose?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, because the membership price must have increased. That is why it has increased.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, *le temps passe !* Okay, can we finish for Statistics?

*Statistics Mauritius - Programme Code 0255: Provision of Statistics (Rs 217,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(9.41 p.m.)

*The following Programme Codes were called and agreed to –*

*0256: Corporate and Business Registration Department - Corporate and Business Registration (Rs190,700,000)*

*0257: Registrar-General's Department - Registration of Deeds/Documents and Conservation of Mortgages (Rs 178,700,000)*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Members, I do not know if you can follow, we are now going to Centralised Services of Government. This is the one I mentioned that is out of turn. It falls under your purview, hon. Prime Minister, on page 532.

(9.43 p.m.)

*Centralised Services of Government - Programme 2701: Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes!

**Mr A. Duval:** On page 533, item 22180 – *Mission Expenses (Ministers, Delegates and Officials)*, may we know from the hon. Prime Minister, out of the budget allocated for the last financial year, how much has been spent by his government on mission expenses for delegates and officials, the total cost up till now?

**The Prime Minister:** It's difficult for me to tell you the exact cost up to now. We vote an item in the budget for so much sum and then we use, if there is excess, we come out with a supplementary budget, otherwise no.

**The Chairperson:** I understand, he cannot tell you the exact sum...

**Mr A. Duval:** No, I understand but he should have the information for the last financial year which is ending now 30 June, he should have the amount that has been spent out of the Rs125 million? He should know how much has been spent?

**The Prime Minister:** Rs81 million has been spent.

**The Chairperson:** Good? So, now we are going to call.

*Centralised Services of Government – Programme 2701: Centrally Managed Expenses of Government (Rs3,690,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(9.45 p.m.)

*Centralised Services of Government – Programme 2702: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.*

**The Chairperson:** This one is page 534 to 536. Question!

**Mr A. Duval:** Under page 535, item 28212 - *Transfers to Households*, can the hon. Prime Minister provide eventually to the House, or otherwise if he has it now, the number of beneficiaries that have been paid out under all of the different decimals' subprogrammes under this heading? Yes, if you could provide the...

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I can provide, I can give you now. The beneficiaries for the negative income tax allowance is 2900. It is very long, if you prefer, I will table it.



**Mr A. Duval:** Yes! Thank you.

**Mr François:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. On page 534, item 21110.010 - *Service to Mauritius Programme*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister, the number of youngsters or persons who benefited from this provision for this financial year and also, whether there is a quota for Rodrigues as well from this provision?

**The Prime Minister:** All I know is that they have advertised for 300 interns, there are actually only 80 interns. The remaining 220 would be enlisted in this financial year.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Page 535, may I refer the hon. Prime Minister to item 28212.054 - *Prime a L'emploi*, can we know the number of beneficiaries?

**The Prime Minister:** I know the value but I don't have the number. Maybe they have the number, they will give me.

**The Chairperson:** You are waiting.

**The Prime Minister:** I will have the numbers. 15,000.

**The Chairperson:** Yes. Hon. Whip!

**Ms Anquetil:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 535, item 28213.029 - *State Trading Corporation*, pourrait-on avoir les détails sur la somme de R 2 milliard, s'il vous plait ? Merci.

**The Prime Minister:** This is to compensate the STC for the deficits in the subsidy account for LPG, flour, and rice. But they have been treated as receivables from the government in the books of the STC. Now, Government owes some Rs2.6 billion to the STC for the period July 2021 which will end in June 2025.

**Ms Anquetil:** Unbelievable!

**The Chairperson:** Yes. Mr François!

**Mr François:** May I know whether this sum also made provision for the construction of a new STC warehouse in Rodrigues?

**The Prime Minister:** Not that I see, it's not earmarked in this one.

**Mr François:** It is not earmarked.

**The Chairperson:** Okay, Mr Duval!

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, Madam Chairperson. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, same page 535 under the item 28212.041 - *CSG Income Allowance*, may we know the number of beneficiaries that are benefitting from the...

**The Prime Minister:** Number of beneficiaries, I will not know.

**Mr A. Duval:** If I may ask the hon. Prime Minister, I asked earlier if he could table under the heading itself all the beneficiaries?

**The Chairperson:** Let us see whether he can tell you.

**The Prime Minister:** When you say table all, you mean, not their names, I hope?

**Mr A. Duval:** No, the number!

**The Prime Minister:** The number is 370,000.

**The Chairperson:** Good, okay now we can move on. Page 536-537. Vous voulez parler sur 536 ? Allez-y !

**Mr Lesjongard :** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Prime Minister to item 32155.059 - *MauBank Holdings Ltd*, can we have more information on that amount of Rs1.4 billion provided in this year's budget?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, this is a provision for MauBank Holdings Ltd. They have to repay their loan obligations to African Development Bank which is Rs0.8 billion to MauBank Rs0.6 billion. Loan contracted with ADB USD100 million in 2019 and MauBank, Rs3 billion was contracted in 2018 and still not paid.

*Centralised Services of Government - Programme 2702: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs35,037,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

**The Chairperson:** Now, we are done with you hon. Prime Minister. We got one more. We got the last one.

(9.52 p.m.)

*Centralised Services of Government - Programme 2703: Contingencies and Reserves (Rs4,500,000,000) was called and agreed to.*

**The Chairperson:** C'est bon, on a fini avec le Premier ministre.

(9.53 p.m.)

*Deputy Prime Minister's Office - Programme 0301: Deputy Prime Minister's Office was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Question? Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. May I refer the Deputy Prime Minister to page 170, item 21110 .005 – *Extra Assistance*. Half of his office budgetary assistance goes to Advisers. Can we be provided with the names of the Advisers, qualifications and their respective qualifications?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Yes, Madam Chairperson, Advisers are –

1. There is one Ambassador, Vijay Singh Makhan, Senior Adviser on Diplomatic Affairs;
2. Maître Kishore Pertab, Senior Adviser on Policy and Strategic Matters;
3. Mrs Daniella Bastien, Senior Adviser on Communications and Strategic Matters, and
4. Mr Shaffick Ahmad, Senior Adviser.

Merci.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you. Yes?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Will you table the information?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Of course, you want me to table, I will table it.

**The Chairperson:** What more information did you require?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Chairperson, the Qualifications and responsibilities...

**The Chairperson:** You will give the qualifications.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Well, it is too long!

**The Chairperson:** So, you will table it. Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, you can table it.

Another question.

**Mr A. Duval:** May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister, there is Rs10,000,000 for four Advisers. The budget is meant to fund how many posts of Advisers? Is it for these four or are there going to be more?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I have four Advisers, if I need more, I will ask the Prime Minister.

**Mr A. Duval:** No that is not the question. The question is, there are Rs10,000,000. Are we to understand that these four Advisers are costing Rs10,000,000?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** You want their salaries also? Ask.

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes.

**Mr A. Duval:** The question, Madam Chairperson, is there is Rs10,000,000 for extra assistance...

**The Chairperson:** You want to know if these Rs10,000,000 are for these for people?

**Mr A. Duval:** Exactly!

**The Chairperson:** That's easy to ask.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Then, there is no problem.

Ambassador Makhan, salary and allowance – R 163,250

Maître Kishore Pertab – R 163,250

Mrs Daniella Bastien – R 122,000

Mr Shaffick Ahmad – R 120,000 plus one extra duty allowance of R 8000 per month.

You got everything?

**The Chairperson:** May I do this vote? It is going to be my last for tonight.

My friend is going to stand in for me.

*Deputy Prime Minister's Office – Programme 0301: Deputy Prime Minister's Office (Rs22,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

**The Chairperson:** Will you please excuse me? I will ask the Deputy Speaker to step in.

I will take a rest if you don't mind. Thank you very much, everybody.

*At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*

**The Chairperson:** Please, be seated.

(9.59 p.m.)

*Ministry Of Housing and Lands: Programme 0401: Policy and Strategy for Housing and Lands was called.*

So, you tell me the page and code, please.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Page 177, item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants (Housing Strategy)*.

**The Chairperson:** No, let's go page by page. Anybody on page 171?

**Mr François:** Yes. Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 171 – under the item – *0401: Policy and Strategy for Housing and Lands*, there is the National Development Strategy – I just want to know whether there is a component for Rodrigues, under this item?

**Mr Mohamed:** It does not concern Rodrigues. No.

**Mr François:** Will you consider same?

**The Chairperson:** That's a policy decision.

**Mr Mohamed:** In fact, the study that has been carried out does not concern Rodrigues. Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Page 172, Page 173, Page 175, Page 175...

**Mr A. Duval:** You are going too quickly.

**The Chairperson:** But you have to stop me if you have already prepared a question. You must stop me when I am going.

Okay, you have a question?

Do you have a question? Do you have a question? If you have, on which page on which code?

*Ministry Of Housing and Lands: Programme 0401: Policy and Strategy for Housing and Lands (Rs137,500,000) was on question put, agreed to.*

(10.03 p.m.)

*Ministry Of Housing and Lands: Programme 0402: Social Housing Development was called.*

**Mr Chairperson:** So, we go to page 176, any questions?

**Mr A. Duval:** Page 176, *Construction of social housing units*. There is no item number. So, there are 5,550 housing units targeted.

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Chairperson, can the hon. Member at least tell me the item?

**The Chairperson:** On which page are you on?

**Mr A. Duval:** There is no item number.

**Mr Mohamed:** Then, no questions!

**Mr A. Duval:** It is the heading.

**Mr Mohamed:** Okay, the heading.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, your question!

**Mr A. Duval:** There is a target of 5,550 houses to be completed and delivered for 2026. May we know now, if he is in the position to say it, how many of those have already been completed, and if any of those have been delivered or are they to be delivered?

**Mr Mohamed:** As I have said, the former government has constructed, as it says here, what is ready provisionally is 58. But in terms of delivery, approximately, 40 have been delivered.

I am really sorry it is not much! But then, again, that is the performance of the previous government.

**Mr A. Duval:** Mr Chairperson, is it going to be delivered?

**Mr Mohamed:** No, we will perform.

**Mr A. Duval:** As and when. How many?

**Mr Mohamed:** No, we will perform. You can see the huge difference.

**Mr A. Duval:** That is not the question.

**Mr Mohamed:** What I am trying to say, Mr Chairperson, is that they have delivered 40. Basically, within the time that we are in power, we will be delivering 5,550 next year.

**Mr A. Duval:** But that is not the question!

**Mr Mohamed:** Obviously! The answer is that.

**Mr A. Duval:** The question is: can you explain how it is going to be delivered?

**Mr Mohamed:** How?

**Mr A. Duval:** Can you give details? You are targeting 5,558. We want to know what is the delivery programme.

**Mr Mohamed:** I have the delivery programme. Basically, there are several sites. The sites are for NHDC and NSLD. I can table the details.

**The Chairperson:** Okay, you will table it. Thank you.

**Mr Mohamed:** In fact, most of the work will be done by this Government.

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, you have said that already!

**Mr Mohamed:** I am saying it again! I am enjoying it!

**The Chairperson:** Page 177.

You have a question, hon. Leader of the Opposition?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Minister to Item 28212.

**Mr Mohamed:** Which page?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Page 177.

**Mr Mohamed:** Yes.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Item 28212.023 - *Maintenance of NHDC Housing Estates (b) National Syndic Scheme (New)*, which is a new scheme, can we be provided with information regarding that new scheme?

**Mr Mohamed:** With regard to this scheme, as the figures point out, Mr Chairperson, funds amounting to Rs40 m. have been provided. It is for the establishment of the new National Syndic Scheme to ensure the better maintenance of the NHDC estates and timely provisional scavenging services.

Obviously, what we are going to do right now is try to find solution to a problem that has existed for many years. As the former Minister and the Leader of the Opposition should know, there is a lot of money that has been spent on maintenance of property that no longer belongs to the NHDC. We have to ensure that there is proper maintenance instead of putting good money which is not really bringing results.

So, we want to ensure to find the proper solution. Have a syndic that is created in order to be able provide the syndic services.

**The Chairperson:** Page 177.

**Mr A. Duval:** Yes, on the same item. May we know if this fund is going to be centrally managed or is it going to be allocated NHDC Housing Estate?

**Mr Mohamed:** Centrally managed.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Minister to the same page, *Item 28222.018 - Rehabilitation of ex-CHA Housing Estates*, there is no provision made in this year's budget. Do I understand that the rehabilitation works have been completed?

**Mr Mohamed:** I have an explanation with regard to that. With regard to rehabilitation, as at now, 1,553 EDC houses have been dismantled and replaced by new concrete houses. 1,560 EDC houses were still in existence whereby I can table the details.

Financial clearance was sought in July 2024 for financing of a pilot project on two sites at La Ferme and Dubreuil. NSIF contribution is at 66.7% of the cost, and government contribution is at 33.3%. No further funds have been earmarked for this forthcoming budget.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Same page 177, Item 22120.008 - *Fees to Consultants (Housing Strategy)*, can we...

**Mr Mohamed:** Could you repeat the item again?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Yes. Item 22120.008 - *Fees to Consultants (Housing Strategy)*, can we have an indication of the time frame?

**Mr Mohamed:** Fees for consultant for housing policy roadmap. As it stands right now, this is a very urgent matter. We have had meetings recently with the senior officers of my Ministry, and I have asked that this matter could be wrapped up within three months. But obviously, the time that it takes with the procurement process. I am always like that; I want to go faster than what is normally allowed. I do apologise to my officers.

But as soon as we can do it. It will be fast because it is very urgent.

*Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 0402: Social Housing Development (Rs1,210,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(10:11p.m.)

*Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 0403: Land Management and Physical Planning was called.*



**Mr Chairperson:** Question?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson. I refer the hon. Minister to page 179, Item 22070.011 - *Cleaning of Islets*, can we be provided with a list of islets to be cleaned? How will be the procurement process for cleaning those islets?

**Mr Mohamed:** I confirm that, in fact, there are 52 islets to be cleaned. One of them has already been cleaned. I have a list of the various islets, which I can table. I can assure the hon. Member that everything that will be done will be done in line with the laws pertaining to procurement and totally transparent as usual.

**Mr Chairperson:** Do you have another question?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Yes!

**Mr Chairperson:** Same page?

**Mr Lesjongard:** Hon. Minister, I refer you to the same page, Item 22120.008 - *Fees to Consultants*, there is a substantial increase. Can we have information with regard to that increase?

**Mr Mohamed:** So, in line with Government Programme to modernise legal framework to manage land resources more efficiently, ensure sustainable urban development and in response to the challenges of a rapidly evolving society, the Ministry will hire the services of a consultant to draft a consolidated and modern legal framework for land use planning in Mauritius to replace the Town and Country Planning Act and the Planning and Development Act of 2004. Now, the project details are available and I can table that as well.

**The Chairperson:** On the same page? Hon. François !

**Mr François:** Item 22900.986 – *Expenses icw Land Research Monitoring Unit*. Can I have more details about this unit and what are the provisions made for? Page 179.

**Mr Mohamed:** I have details which I can table.

**The Chairperson:** Page 180. Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I refer, the hon. Minister to item 31132.101 – *LAVIMS Project*. This item has been in our budget for quite some time. Can we have an indication of the status of the implementation of this project, hon. Minister?

**Mr Mohamed:** The *Digital State Land Register* contract was awarded to Infosystems AA. Ltd in the sum of Rs7.9 million on 17 July 2018. 70% of contract value already paid. The contract is still ongoing and is expected to be completed by end of June 2025.

*Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 0403: Land Management and Physical Planning (Rs1,023,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(10.15 p.m.)

*Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 0404: Valuation of Immovable Properties (Rs151,000,000) was called and agreed to.*

(10.16 p.m.)

*Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change – Programme Code 0501: Policy and Strategy for Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Page 186. Yes.

**Mr A. Duval:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I ask the hon. Minister, item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*. May we know the name of his advisers, their qualifications and their remuneration?

**Mr Bhagwan:** We have four advisers, Mr Chairperson.

- Mr Rajoo and Mr Hishaam Ibrahim, Senior Advisers;
- Mrs Marie Ken Karen, Adviser on Information Matters;
- Mr Baboo B. Budlorun, Adviser on Public Relations Matters.

I will circulate the list.

*Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change – Programme Code 0501: Policy and Strategy for Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change (Rs120,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(10.20 p.m.)

*Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change – Programme Code 0502: Protection and Conservation of Environment was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Page 189? Page 190? Yes, hon. Leader.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Minister to item 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants*. There are three studies which will be carried out and can we have an indication of the timeframe for the three studies, please?

**Mr Bhagwan:** The studies are ongoing, Mr Chairperson, I will circulate the timeframe.

**Mr A. Duval:** On the same item 22120.008 – (c) *Environmentally Sensitive Area Maps*. Can the hon. Minister provide more details on this project to the House?

**Mr Bhagwan:** This is in process and we will circulate all the result of the plan.

*Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change – Programme Code 0502: Protection and Conservation of Environment (Rs170,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(10.22 p.m.)

*Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change – Programme Code 0503: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Page 193?

**Mr François:** Page 193 item 22120.008 (d) *Coastal Risk Assessment Study*. Can we know the list about this item, where?

**Mr Bhagwan:** We have a lot of studies which are being carried out along the coast of Mauritius. We will circulate list?

**Mr Lesjongard:** The same item, Mr Chairperson, on the same item that is 22120.008 – *Fees to Consultants (Grant Funded)*. May I again ask the hon. Minister to provide House with a timeframe those five studies listed and the consultants also?

**Mr Bhagwan:** There is a list of consultants appointed by the previous government and which are undertaking, ...

*(Interruptions)*

I know you do not have to tell me and you are on the other side. Mr Chairperson, we will circulate the list with the timeframe and the name of the consultants.

**The Chairperson:** Thank you.

**Mr A. Duval:** Item 22120.002 – *Fees to Chairperson and Members of Boards and Committees*. Will he provide the list of persons appointed on these boards and committees?

**Mr Bhagwan:** These are the fees of the board where there are civil servants who are participating in these boards. We will circulate the list.

*Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change – Programme Code 0503: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (Rs 90,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(10.22 p.m.)

*Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change – Programme 0504: Cleaning, Greening and Embellishment was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Page 194? Page 195, yes.

**Mr A. Duval:** May I ask the hon. Minister, *Item 26313.161 - Mauri-Facilities Management Co Ltd.* Will he provide the list of the persons that have been appointed on the Board and their remuneration as well as the Chairman and the Chief Executives?

**Mr Bhagwan:** The Mauri-Facilities Board is being reorganised and this is run by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Finance. So, there will be a new Board which will be appointed in the days to come.

**The Chairperson:** Page 196? Page 197? The question is that the sum...

*(Interruptions)*

Sorry? On which page are you?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** *Zot pe rode mem! Aster la ki zot pe lir. Zot pe rode mem!*

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Put your question!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** *Apran fer travay do pares! Pares!*

**The Chairperson:** Put question!

**Mr Bhagwan:** *Aster ki to pe gete la?*

**The Chairperson:** *Allez* come on, put your question!

*(Interruptions)*

Which page?

**Mr A. Duval:** Page 197.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** *Ti bizin lir avan!*

**Mr A. Duval:** *Item 26323.003 - Beach Authority*, may we know the members of the Beach Authority appointed to the Board?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** There is the Chairman of the Board, Mr Rajoo and also the representatives of the different Ministries. We will circulate the list with the revenues.

*Programme Code 0504: Cleaning, Greening and Embellishment (Rs1,590,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 0505: Waste Management and Resource Recovery was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Any question on page 198? 199?

**Mr A. Duval:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 199, *Item 26313.156 - National Environment Cleaning Authority*, may we be provided with the list of the persons appointed to the Board and their remuneration?

**Mr Bhagwan:** The NECA is again on the process of reorganisation from the mess which we have inherited. The Chairperson is the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Solid Waste Management and the representatives of the different Ministries. So, there are no independent members. So, we will circulate...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr A. Duval:** No additional...

**Mr Bhagwan:** No, the same as previously.

**The Chairperson:** Yes?

**Mr A. Duval:** *Item 22070.003 - Operation of Landfill Sites*, there is a considerable increase in the budget. Can the hon. Minister provide us with the reason for the increase?

**Mr Bhagwan:** The increase is due to the contract value, they knew there was a contract which had been awarded in June last year.

I am sorry, it is an increase which has been provided for this current one.

*Programme Code 0505: Waste Management and Resource Recovery (Rs764,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Prime Minister!

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Chairperson, I move that the Committee of Supply reports progress and asks leave to sit again.

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed.*

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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 27 June 2025 at 3.00 p.m.

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House stands adjourned!

*At 10.28 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 27 June 2025 at 3.00 p.m.*