

**SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY****PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)****FIRST SESSION****SATURDAY 23 JUNE 2018**

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MAURITIUS**Sixth National Assembly**

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 16 of 2018**Sitting of Saturday 23 June 2018**

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Office of the Speaker

The Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the 18-month period ended 30 June 2017.

B. Prime Minister's Office

- (a) The Land (Duties and Taxes) (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 77 of 2018)
- (b) The Excise (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 78 of 2018)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

CWA – WATER REFORM

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Central Water Authority, he will –

- (a) state whether Government has –
 - (i) abandoned the proposed privatization thereof through an affermage contract, and
 - (ii) postponed the general increase of the water tariffs and, if so, to when, and
- (b) obtain therefrom, information as to whether, in regard to its employment policy, same includes the laying off of workers and recruitment of new ones.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a), over the past 20 years, there have been five attempts by various Governments to reform the water sector, including one attempt to privatise the Central Water Authority, this was in 1999.

Insofar as this Government is concerned, there has never been a plan to privatise the CWA. In the context of the ongoing study carried out by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, there is no privatisation, but a partnership with a private operator which will not entail the privatisation of the assets or the corporatisation of the CWA. CWA will remain a public institution.

The partnership consists in delegating the operations and maintenance of the water supply and distribution system to a private operator. The aim is to increase operational efficiency and improve the service provided to the population. It is expected that the operator will bring modern technology and expertise, which is currently inadequate and lacking at the CWA. Madam Speaker, this partnership has been purposely designed for a defined period to enable the transfer of expertise and technology to the CWA and allow it to operate without the support of an external operator at the end of the partnership.

In my reply to the PNQ of 17 April 2018, I informed the House that the IFC had submitted its report with a proposed calendar for implementation. The report is still being examined.

With regard to part (a) (ii), as far as my Ministry is concerned, there has never been any intention for a general tariff increase, but a new tariff structure was envisaged.

This was motivated by the fact that the financial situation of Central Water Authority had been deteriorating over the years, as the last tariff increase dates back to 2012, while there have been increases in staff and operational costs, including a debt level of over Rs 3 billion.

The intention was to increase the tariff for those who consume over 50m³ monthly. However, firstly, there were practical difficulties because many of the large consumers such as NHDC housing estates were on the bulk metering system and it was difficult to implement a segregation of tariffs in practice.

Further, at a meeting held with the Finance Department of the CWA, it was pointed out to me that with financial support from Government, it would not be necessary to review the tariffs. On 17 April 2018, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, in the course of a PNQ, himself pointed out that with Government subsidy, a tariff review would not be necessary.

In the face of these two points of view, I discussed the matter with the hon. Prime Minister and following further consultations with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, financial support is now being provided to the CWA and this has been announced in the Budget Speech. With regard to 50 m³ and above consumers, an additional fee of Rs500 would be payable by swimming pool owners. However, we will continue to monitor the financial situation of CWA closely.

With regard to part (b), in the past the Central Water Authority had used a system whereby contractors were chosen to supply labour to perform various types of works. In June 2016, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition will recall, I informed Cabinet of this situation and I also said that CWA would explore ways and means of addressing this state of affairs.

As at 31 August 2016, there were about 425 employees of private contractors posted at the CWA, 52 of them were performing clerical and receptionist duties without having the required qualifications. In order to redress this practice, the Central Water Board introduced a fair and transparent policy to recruit employees through well-established procedures by using

the services of the Ministry of Labour. CWA offered employment on contract to 130 workers and 16 workers performing duties of drivers and who reckoned 4.5 or more years of service as at 31 August 2016. On 01 March 2017, CWA offered employment on contract to 130 workers for a determinate period of one year. 108 were still in post as at 31 December 2017.

The CWA had 179 posts of General Worker out of which 32 posts were vacant as at January 2018.

The number of vacancies would have reached 140 at the expiry of the contracts of employment of the 108 General Workers. In order to fill these posts, the CWA requested for a list of potential candidates from the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations.

On 17 April 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations submitted a list of 300 candidates to the CWA. 149 were offered an employment on contract. 106 have joined the CWA and 3 will assume duty later.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I take some credit in the postponement, annulation of the privatisation and the annulation of the water rate increase. But Madam Speaker, can we call a cat a cat? The hon. Deputy Prime Minister stated that there will be no privatisation. What else would you call a system, a project, where you put all your assets at the disposal of a private operator, all the employees, except for a few 800, 900 are transferred to the private operator, and all the services, 100%, except for Capital Expenditure, given to that private operator, what do you call that, except privatisation of the water services in Mauritius?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Well, I do not call it, the world over calls it *affermage* and not privatisation.

Mr X. L. Duval: The Deputy Prime Minister, himself, mentioned - I have the press-cutting - that we are going to privatise the CWA. So, obviously here we have a change of word, but the fact remains the fact. I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister firstly, that he had given to this House and to the country, in fact, a timetable for privatisation of the CWA, I maintain the word, and, in fact, by May the request for qualification was going to be sent to the CPB and by next month Request for Proposals, all this to end at the end of the year, with privatisation of the CWA. What has happened to that timetable now, has it been put back a few months, what has happened to the timetable, please?

The Deputy Prime Minister: First of all, the use of privatisation, I agree, including by me, has been abused. I am not going to shirk away from this, but it is true that putting the operations in the hand of a private operator means what it means. But whatever the word

used, for which I assume full responsibility, of course, the fact remains that the assets will not be privatised and, as I have said before, I don't want to go back on to all this and waste time.

With regard to the timetable for privatisation, yes, it is still on. We are examining, we are discussing several issues. I don't want to go into it because it might ultimately affect whatever *appel d'offres* there may be. It is a calendar which was proposed by IFC, but it was subject to Government's approval as stated clearly and as is obvious. We will, in due course, get into the final details.

Mr X. L. Duval: I understand all the assets, in fact, would have been leased to the private operator for 20 years or whatever. May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether this privatisation has been postponed till after the elections?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I would invite one and all not to abuse of the term of privatisation like I did. This *affermage* or whatever it is, management contract, whatever it is, whether it has been postponed for the next general election, no. Insofar as I am concerned the timetable is still on. But, as I have said, I need to go to Cabinet, as I have said, several times.

Mr X. L. Duval: But, Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister, I have read in the Press that the Prime Minister's Office is now considering other options, not the DPM's Office; the Prime Minister's Office is considering different options now as far as the CWA is concerned. Is this statement totally false or there is some truth in that, that so many files have now been transferred to the Prime Minister's Office?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I don't know about the PMO, I know about my Ministry. Let me say something. All options are considered at my Ministry. We are looking at the IFC Report, but we are considering, we are still examining, and I am sure the Prime Minister's Office must be doing about the same exercise. I am waiting for the appropriate time to discuss that.

Let me, if I may, just say, just be very particular on one thing. All assets will remain property of CWA. No lease will be given to the operator. The operator, as the name suggests, will just operate.

Mr X. L. Duval: Can I just ask in that case what happens if you put a pump at the disposal of the operator and he breaks it? Who is responsible then?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Now, we are getting into the details of the contract. Where the devil is, I agree, and these are the sorts of details which are being worked out and which need, of course, to be addressed, and the Leader of the Opposition will at the appropriate time, on a personal level, be party to a private discussion where I will discuss some of the points which are, if he agrees, of course, difficult.

Mr X. L. Duval: Hopefully by that time I will not be Leader of the Opposition. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister concerning the famous general tariff increase. I am going to quote from a statement made and copied in the Press by the General Manager of the CWA and it says here, in fact, Madam Speaker, that –

“Avec l’aval du conseil des ministres une majoration de 20 à 30 % would happen on the prices of CWA concerning the great majority of customers who, in fact, are consuming more than 1m³ of water per month.”

This is here, 19 January 2018, and I am sure he will not deny it. This is what he said. So, we were many times talking about the general tariff increase. The Deputy Prime Minister himself said it is *inevitable*; Minister Mentor, in his own way, said it was *inevitable*. So, why are we now saying that this was not envisaged?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have already explained that in my statement. Let me just say one thing. I also hope that you will not be Leader of the Opposition for a long time. I don’t know whether there will be changes in the Opposition Members.

(Interruptions)

Yes, with regard to the general elections - I have noted it out, but thank you Minister Mentor - the Prime Minister will decide the general elections, but there is a long time waiting and they are not behind the door, that is, *derrière la porte*.

The tariff increase – the statement of the GM, I, for now, do not recollect this. I would be surprised if he said – if I may have the copy. I do not recall that he said 20% to 30% and if he said that, he was wrong because the increase - let me say it very clearly - which was envisaged - he may have thought that this was the good solution - at the level of the Ministry was much more than 30% for those consuming more than 50 m³, but there would have been no increase for those consuming less than 50 m³. Let me read what I see as being the statement of the General Manager –

“La nouvelle formule ciblera les abonnés ayant plus de 12 m³ au compteur. »

That was not correct, that was 50 m³.

« Si le document est avalisé par le conseil des ministres... »

Which it was not !

«... une majoration de 20% pour cette catégorie et 30% pour ceux qui utilisent entre 12 et 50 m³ par mois ... »

That was not on, it was going to be zero increase.

“... devrait être effectué. Ou gaspillé ou payé, martèle le directeur de la CWA. »

This is what has been said consistently. This is why over 50 m³, there would have been a larger increase, but for practical reason cannot be applied.

Mr X. L. Duval : Can I ask a trick question? How many consumers consume more than 50 m³ per month?

The Deputy Prime Minister: About 100,000. We are talking of 100,000, that includes *la classe moyenne*. I am saying off my mind...

(Interruptions)

Just one second, bear with me! 100,000 who consume what?

(Interruptions)

Let me say, 14,000.

Mr X. L. Duval : I was told 1,000, but still 14,000 is very few. Madam Speaker, I want to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, this measure that has been introduced, the Rs500 for only people with swimming pool and 50 m³, how much money is that going bring in to the CWA?

The Deputy Prime Minister: That is not the general idea. First of all, when we were talking of 14,000 people, that was going to bring a lot of money, of course, because the increase would have been very high. With this measure, this is a levy of Rs500. Well, we will have to make an appropriate survey before we are able to say how much it will cost.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I hope the hon. Deputy Prime Minister takes to task the General Manager of the CWA? Because his statement there is very confusing and has caused distress to a lot of people in Mauritius. I would like, in fact, to ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether this amount of Rs500 will only bring R6 m. to the CWA over the whole year, if you take the number of swimming pools, etc?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I know that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is an accountant who can count. So, if this is his counting, I have no reason to dispute this, but the general idea is not to bring in money, but to be a symbol.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I want to come to something very serious now. Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister aware - he may not be aware, but I think he is aware - that there has been a transfer of Rs900 m. from the Consolidated Fund, Capital Expenditure, to the accounts of the CWA now, in the last few days of the Budget, and this transfer is like the *maquillage* of the Rs2 billion for the National Environment Fund, and the purpose thereof, is to increase Capital Expenditure artificially and provide funds for the CWA next year, and that this transfer is being made in secret, nothing has been said in the Budget, and the hon. Deputy Prime Minister has not mentioned anything today?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not aware of that personally. But I am relying on what the Prime Minister has just whispered into my ear. Yes, it has not been transferred perhaps, but it is in the plan to be done because there is a need. But it is not a *maquillage*. It will be announced. It will be in the figures and the hon. Leader of the Opposition will be able to see. He can ask me a question and I will tell him!

Mr X. L. Duval: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister did not know. How can I ask him something he doesn't seem to know? Madam Speaker, this is a *maquillage*, as I have been mentioned last Tuesday. Madam Speaker, I want to come to a very important issue of the workers now because we have 150 workers, some of them have spent up to 25 years on tasks of the CWA, whether or not working directly for CWA or working for two of the contractors there, Chatursingh and Doorvah. These people are now in the 40s and 50s. Many have children. They have loans and at that age it is extremely difficult for them to find other employment. Why is it that Government has shown no heart at all and had put all these people *sur le pavé* at that age, whereas it is obvious that employment could have been found for them at that the CWA one way or another?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Well, I must state that insofar as the CWA is concerned, when a contract of one year was offered, it was made clear that they had to use that time to look for alternative employment. After the expiry of that contract of one year, a further period of three months was granted. And everybody knew that these three months were a sort of notice. I agree that it is very hard, but I did not put it in my answer to the PNQ, but I have listed several matters which were wrong with that system, very, very wrong, especially as from 2013. Now, that does not say that these persons have lost employment for ever. Let me take you just one example. Trivan Company Limited which was one of the contractors, was used for supplying labour - and that is all that it was supplying labour - once to CWA, then for a few months to other companies, etc. They have obtained a contract. Who are the workers working on that contract? They have obtained a contract for pipe laying, etc. Obviously, the same workers are obtaining. So, we will make a survey and we will reconsider the position as and when the matter requires. There is still a number of vacancies in this matter.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, this is a very serious issue. I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that one Mr Ballyraz who is HR Director, and they are all saying these people have been made redundant - promised to keep them in employment, even give them permit employment if for that one year period – we are talking about last year, 2017 – they performed satisfactorily? Is he aware that Mr Ballyraz told these people and made that promise? And I understand that these workers are even prepared to go and swear an affidavit to that effect.

The Deputy Prime Minister: First of all, I am not aware. If Mr Ballyraz or any other employee has uttered such promises, they did it off their own bat, on a frolic of their own, without any authority from the CWA or from the General Manager. The instructions were clear and they had to be complied with. Now, if in order for whatever purpose he said that, that will be a matter. If there is an affidavit that will be, of course, be another matter.

Mr X. L. Duval: I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, because we are talking above all about people, they are not numbers, they are actual real people, what advice would he give to one Mr D. Rajkumar of Pamplemousses who worked 10 years on tasks of the CWA, full-time, all the time without a break; J. Dookhy - 8 years, of l'Esperance; K. Seesungkur – obviously, not related to any Minister – 20 years; Mr Dusmohamed - 8 years? All these people! I have just taken a few out of the 150. What advice would the hon. Deputy

Prime Minister give to these people, at that age they are now, having to feed their family, having to pay their loans? What advice would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister give to them now that, after 20 years, Mr K. Seesungkur, no longer finds a means to feed his family?

The Deputy Prime Minister: If I was his adviser, because I am not, but let us say, I was in private practice, and the person came to me, we would, first of all, explore means of conciliation. Secondly, legal means of redress, and see, with the CWA, whether these people can be considered. This is what I would have done if I was a lawyer in private practice. I am not, I am the Minister. I am not here to give advice, of course.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have...

Mr X. L. Duval: Three minutes! It is plenty!

Madam Speaker: Three minutes to go! Can you let me know before you come with your last question?

Mr X. L. Duval: I will do! Madam Speaker, I am addressing the hon. Deputy Prime Minister as Deputy Prime Minister, as responsible for the CWA, who has put all these people now and made it the case that they are no longer able to feed their family on a daily basis. This is the real thing.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the manner in which the new recruitment has been made, that is, from a list - we all know it is a bogus list from the Ministry of Labour because in that list people are unemployed - that does not preclude all these 150 people who were employed by Chatursingh and Doorvah, etc. *per se* to participate in recruitment exercise.

The Deputy Prime Minister: We have not said the contrary. Let me say one thing. Already there are - I asked this question a few weeks ago we have about seven who are there, and I understand that these persons will be considered, but through the Ministry of Labour. They have to go to the Ministry of Labour. We will not do direct.

Madam Speaker: Is this your last question?

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, last question.

Madam Speaker: Then, hon. Rutnah first, if we have time.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister the list...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of Opposition, you want to ask your last question yourself. Is that so?

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes. What else would I want to do?

Madam Speaker: Okay, we have one minute.

Mr X. L. Duval: You want the Deputy Prime Minister to ask it?

Madam Speaker: There was no need for this insolent remark, hon. Leader of the Opposition. Because you had two minutes and there are two hon. Members who want to ask questions, hon. Rutnah and hon. Shakeel Mohamed, that was why I asked you whether that was your last question. Since we have lost time, then ask your last question.

Mr X. L. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much for your kindness. Now, let me ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he will circulate the list of the hundred and so people who have been recruited, their address and most importantly - because that might, in the future, interest even ICAC - what is the date that they registered at the Ministry of Labour - because that is the most important thing, the date that they registered at the Ministry of Labour - to see that the Ministry of Labour submitted a list, in all fairness, of people who have been there a long time and not taken the list of people who had been advised by people in the know, inside the knowledge. to go and register so that they will be on the list.

The Deputy Prime Minister: First of all, let me say outright that I would be immediately committing an offence under the Data Protection Act if I were to comply, to answer to the question of the Leader of the Opposition, and I don't want to do this.

Madam Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, 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.

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILL*Second Reading***THE APPROPRIATION (2018-2019) BILL 2018****(No. VII of 2018)**

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2018-2019) Bill 2018 (No. VII of 2018).

Question again proposed.

(12.06 p.m.)

The Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues (Sir A. Jugnauth): Madam Speaker, I heartily congratulate the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for presenting a Budget that addresses the expectations of the population and gears the economy towards accelerating its graduation to the league of high-income economies.

Obviously, whatever we would have done would not have pleased the Opposition. I must say, now we hear those in the PMSD talking language, trying to make us believe that they are the true patriots, they are real patriots and as if we, on this side, we are unpatriotic. Let me remind them that they were, to begin with, against Independence. They were using for all the campaign for the election for Independence very foul and insulting languages, and the worst were two slogans: *langouti nu pas oulé; envelopé nou pas oulé*. They were against Independence because they wanted to remain colonised by the British under a different name. But they went as far as going to Rodrigues, and when the Rodriguans wanted to raise the flag of Mauritius, the PMSD fellows who were there even used violence to stop the people and threw their flag down and walked over it. These are the people who are today pretending to be the most patriotic. And from questions which they put, from language which they use, they try to make the population believe that the Labour and PMSD were the best Parties which served this country, made it prosperous. And today, do you know what they are saying outside - even the new leader of Labour? We all know who he is, what he is, what he has done for this country. He is saying that we are ruining the country. This is what they are saying. But I remind them, they were against Independence, the PMSD. But after Independence, they jointed Labour Government, coalition Labour and PMSD, and they ruled.

They even postponed the general election to take place, as required by the Constitution. They changed it and they stayed for more than 10 years. Now they are supposed to be the best *gestionnaires*. Where did they take the country to?

In 1982, what was the situation in this country? Then, it is true it was ruined. The country was almost bankrupt. There were almost 100,000 people unemployed. Poverty today, people talking of poverty! Today, despite everything we are doing after a catastrophe, after a cyclone, they still think that we are against '*ti dimounes*', they are the protectors of '*ti dimounes*'. Poverty and unemployment they talk of. I was still very young. I remember in 1945 there was a cyclone, the most severe that I have known, and we know in what conditions people were living in villages. I was living in a village. Most houses were blown away. You know how people lived? They got a few pieces of wood, put them up.

Do you know that on the roofs they were putting 'gunny bags'? This is the sort of personally built houses. No help or whatsoever! No one had any chance of going in any shelter. No shelter was provided. But today, despite of all that we are doing, we are being told we are against the '*ti-dimounes*', that we are heartless, that we don't care for them. There can't be greater hypocrisy than this!

(Interruptions)

I think there were almost 100,000 unemployed! Utter poverty in the villages! They were there up to 1982 with the Labour. The conditions in the villages, except the main roads were tarred, all internal roads were earthed!

Water! Water for all villages! Public fountains were provided to collect water. No electricity, no telephone! And today, we are talking of poverty! But there are some people who do not want to do anything for themselves; they want everything to be done free for them. This is the sort of mentality that should be changed. I do not encourage that mentality, and I don't care whether such people vote for me or not.

Madam Speaker, I went to study in UK in 1951 and came back in 1955. I had to go back to my father's place in the village. The conditions were still the same as I left, and to do some work during evening or at night, I still had to use petrol lamp. And those are the people who care for the poor, who have got a heart and we are heartless! But this is how they treated the population! Then, if we look at the state of the economy of the country - they are

speaking of ruin today. There was money for buying food only for 10 to 12 days. Forget all other imports! This is the result of the *gestion* of Labour and PMSD!

Being given that situation, the IMF and World Bank were imposing on us that we should do away with the Welfare State; nothing free should be given to the population. Do you realise, if I had done that what would have happened to the population? They said the country is too poor. They used these words: ‘Your country is ruined. To save it, we have to come to your rescue. We will finance you, but provided you eliminate the Welfare State’. But despite the situation, I had the courage to tell them: “No, I am not going to do that”. And I didn’t do it!

Madam Speaker, they believed that the country would be doomed, the country would be the poorest in the world and that the life of the population was going to be very difficult! When we started working, each year, Budget after Budget, the same sort of criticisms were made to my Government, that we were deceiving the population, we would never be able to make this country manage by itself financially. We were blamed all through with the same sort of language that I hear today. It is a repetition of the same mentality, of the same wickedness. They were saying the country would be doomed! But what happened?

If I had not taken certain decisions, thousands and thousands of people would have starved and died in this country. And what happened? It was a big surprise to everybody! I, myself, went around countries, inviting people who could invest to come and invest in the country. The textile industry was dead. Tourism was following the same path. Some of our best hotels were being sold to foreigners. I took the decisions which saved both the Tourism Industry and the Textile Industry. And my Government diversified. The initiatives are from me. The economy! The financial sector! I had been to a conference in Bahamas. I have seen this financial sector over there. I came back with some pamphlets about financial sector and I urged my Minister of Finance that we start it. I was still being criticised. Today, thousands of people are working in that sector earning their lives. And if we keep on doing what should be done, the number will increase by ten times in the modern world in which we are living and we are moving to.

The next thing was the cyber city. This big mouth of the Leader of the Labour Party today, how he was criticising me for that! What had they not said! *L’éléphant blanc!* It was going to be a burden on the economy, he was saying. Also, that it is going to help more quickly to ruin this country. These were the criticisms that he was making to me personally.

But today, we know cyber city has become one of the sectors that is most important in this country. And this is a sector which can promise lots of jobs to our youth. But our people, our youth should know that when they go to study, all do not come back with B.A., B.A., B.A, Baba and what the Labour Government was saying, Labour and PMSD, when I say Labour, it is...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah! Hon. Rutnah, please!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: They were saying that what I was doing was a crime. But today, we know that what I did was useful and we have the result today. They went on governing up to 1982. The villages were left in the same condition. It is only after 1983 that I decided that this *l'écart* which exists between towns and villages should be done away with. I created the NDU, I caused extra funds to be provided for the works to be done so as to catch up, because the population deserves a decent, decent conditions. And after all the criticisms they made, what was the situation in 1995? Yes, it is true; I lost the elections in 1995. Despite all that I had done, what was there?

They were saying we were taking the country to bankruptcy. Even I lost the elections, I did not invent anything to flatter myself. But who said that this country from ruin had realised the *miracle économique*? Who said that? We were not the inventors of that. It was this very IMF and World Bank. They used this term, that Mauritius has realised an economic miracle. And when we talk today of a second miracle, each time I hear them talking, where is the miracle? As if the miracle will be in nine months, just like a baby that is born. But you know, even the first miracle, it took me two terms in Government to realise it. But today they want us, in three years, to make a second miracle come true. I ask them to be patient but one thing the people in the Opposition are lacking is good faith and honesty. They twist the truth and make it as if it is an atom bomb for the population. There is plenty of hypocrisy. Plenty! And these are the people who pretend they care more for this country, they will do better. From independence to 1982, what prevented them to do better and show to the population that what we realised could be done? Anyway, let me leave them here. But then I will come back again because there are so many other things which they have said.

Madam Speaker, the 2018-2019 Budget demonstrates, once again, that the Prime Minister is a man with a clear direction and a kind heart. Not only has he announced measures to further modernise the economy, bring innovation and accelerate the development

process, but he has paid utmost attention to the people's needs and legitimate aspirations. And he has, in fact, brought equilibrium. The economy is not neglected. Have patience! You will see the result. But what was more lacking and should have been done is about social advancement for the population. This is crucial so far I am concerned, and this Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, I say he has a good heart, he understands the needs of the people. And the comments that we heard after this Budget, that is why it reminded me of the past. Same voice, same arguments, same criticisms, they did not draw their lesson. I hope it is time to realise that if we really want to serve the population, in a Budget, I do not say 100% everything is as if perfect. There may be some valid creations that can be made. But then at least what is good, what is in the interest of the country, in general and the population specially, should be recognised, should be acknowledged, at least should, if they are real patriots. For those things, they should have, at least, congratulated the Prime Minister. But will they do that ever?

It is to be noted, Madam Speaker, that every single budget presented so far by hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth bears the same socialist characteristics which emanate from the philosophy of putting the economy at the service of the people and enlarging the national cake so that every component of our rainbow nation, every family and every individual gets a larger share of that cake.

I am proud that the Prime Minister has espoused the same philosophy, caring attitude and seriousness of purpose that has always guided my actions when and whilst I was myself Prime Minister.

This brings me to say without any hesitation that the country is in good hands and that with the amount of work being done by the Prime Minister and his Government and with new and innovative measures taken, a second economic miracle is achievable and will be achieved in the years to come.

I must confess that I, myself, am surprised by the amount of energy that the Prime Minister is putting in the activities in which he is talking part. I must confess, I was attending a number of activities, but not that many as he does. Never! Even now, I attend very, very few now. Therefore, criticising the Prime Minister who has brought such a Budget is there no lack of sincerity, lack of honesty, lack of integrity? And they are the persons who want to give us lessons! Be careful, never listen to that sort of lesson! Please! This brings me to say without hesitation that the country is in good hands and that with the amount of work being

done by the Prime Minister and his Government, and with new and innovative measures taken, a second miracle, which I just repeated, is achievable in the years to come and will be achieved.

Madam Speaker, when I read the newspapers, listened to the private radios and talked to people from various quarters, it was abundantly clear for me that the population welcomed the 2018-2019 Budget. I speak of the population, excluding those who are against us. And they welcomed the Budget whole-heartedly. Satisfaction and optimism were also displayed by all the firms of professionals and experts which unanimously acclaimed the Budget presented by the Prime Minister.

Now, I must say a word about two Members of the Labour Party who took part in the debates; one is hon. Shakeel Mohamed. He is a Member of this House, I have to call him honourable. But outside I won't use that word. He talks so much about himself, flattering himself, honesty in him. 'Sincerity' he used these words many times, when I am sure that in his consciousness, in his heart, he must be hearing a voice telling him: 'Remember the past'. And that must have been reminding him of what he is saying, is it correct? I won't say more than that. And the next one is hon. Dr. Boolell, when since he has come back, I am really shocked, every time he intervenes, it is very difficult after hearing him to make an idea of what he has been saying, what he is aiming at. I always believed that he would be a very good Member of Parliament, after all experience that he has had. But I certainly believed that was his luck last time in the by-election in Quatre Bornes. People were asking me, who do you think will be elected? I was never hesitating to say: 'It is going to be Boolell.' Because when I looked at the parties and the candidates, it was the only party which could, in those circumstances, get its candidate elected. And it's no surprise Dr. Boolell.

But try to work, although in Opposition, do constructive things, constructive criticism; if you really have at heart the welfare of the population, if you curse us, you invent things that are not true to put us down. And you people say the country is going to ruin! Will that be good for this country and the people? And they talk as if the Labour Party, of course, when I mean Labour, it is Labour and PMSD together. You know, I will remind them - hon. Dr. Boolell, does he remember Bourdet Report? I hope he still remembers. You know, his father at that time, late Sir Satcam Boolell, was the Minister of Agriculture. And he had given a contract to one of his relatives.

Today, they are all criticising us that we are helping our relatives; my son, the other's daughter, cousins are occupying such and such position. But they should be ashamed, this sort of mentality. I was Leader of the Opposition, you go and check. You will see that I have never used that sort of language. Does it mean - I take my own case - that because I was Prime Minister, I am a Member in this House, that my son, although deserves it, and according to the provisions of the Constitution, when I retired, I had not made him Leader of the MSM; it is the *bureau politique*, the Central Executive Committee. They unanimously - my friend was there - elected him as Leader of the MSM. And today, is it fair for people outside, the ignorant people, I would not care, that I think, at least, these people who are elected, who are here representing the population are intelligent people.

Do you expect them to make such cheap propaganda as *papa-piti*? But what about the Duvals? What about Dr. Boolell himself? Is he not *piti so papa*?

(*Interruptions*)

Well, Mohamed I will not say because...

(*Interruptions*)

Rather he is not here, he is outside. Therefore, in life ...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, you start again!

(*Interruptions*)

I have called him to order. You start again!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: What order? What order does the hon. Member want?

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: No, hon. Jhugroo!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Jhugroo!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo! That is the third time I am calling you to order. Hon. Jhugroo, are you ignoring me? Please proceed!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Madam Speaker...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member continues!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I will ask this Member to go and read the speech which he made here. See the qualifications he has used. I never stood up to say 'call that fellow to order'.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Hurreeram, I am on my feet!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Dr. Boolell! Please, not from a sitting position. I am on my feet and everybody should be silent. Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, yesterday, when you were having your speech, you said all sorts of things, sometimes acceptable, sometimes not acceptable. But let me tell you...

(*Interruptions*)

Do not argue with me! Let me tell you that the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor sat there, quietly listening to you and even when other Members were interrupting you, do you know what he said? I observed. He said, “no, *laisse li kozé*”. That was the situation yesterday. Now, I would appeal to you, because all Members of this House, each one of you, you have the responsibility to uphold the dignity of the House. And I rely on you to do that. Please proceed, Rt. hon. Minister Mentor!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Yes, what I was asking hon. Dr. Boolell is whether he remembers the Bourdet Report. They were doing very good work for the country to make the country move forward. And we know in what state they left this country - I just described. About Bourdet Report, the Minister of Agriculture then gave a contract to one of his relatives to bulldoze a portion of land belonging to the State. And it was to be paid on hourly basis, number of hours work done. After so many days, I have forgotten the exact number of days - but what is important is that after converting the number of days into hours, then the result was that the bulldozer was working night and day, 24 hours. And it looked so bad that even the then Prime Minister, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, was not satisfied and he caused an enquiry. Mr Bourdet presided the enquiry and he came to that conclusion: that so many days the work has been done, converted into hours, you must count everyday 24 hours. That is an example.

Today, they try to give us lessons. Hon. Shakeel Mohamed talked about unemployment. The gimmicks of hon. Shakeel Mohamed have never impressed me. But, despite that, I have listened to him very carefully. I have only added this part after listening to him. The gimmicks of hon. Shakeel Mohamed have never impressed me, but when he comes

to this House to try to undermine our achievements with disdainfully utterings, I have to reply to him.

He said that, in vision 2030, I announced the creation of 100,000 jobs in five years, 20,000 each year, and that only some 4,000 jobs have been created. I am going to prove him wrong, Madam Speaker. The truth backed by official figures are as follows -

- unemployment rate has gone down from 8 % in 2013 to 7.1% in 2017.
- As many as 12,000 vacancies have been filled in the public sector from January 2015 to May 2018.
- And the private sector, according to Business Mauritius figures, job creation amounted to 14,000 in 2015, 15,000 in 2016, and 16,000 in 2017. All these are rounded figures, of course. If we take the average annual job creation in the public sector since 2015 and add to private sector job creation figures, it nearly tallies with my announcement of 20,000 jobs.

This is the truth, Madam Speaker. This can be checked. I hope he takes the trouble to go and check.

Now, hon. Bhagwan and also another Member criticised the Commissioner of Police and blamed me for not sacking him. But they should have told me what crime has the Commissioner of Police committed so that...

(Interruptions)

Ki lin fer?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No reply should be given, please!

(Interruptions)

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I did not ask the hon. Member!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, because you made a remark. Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Yes, because...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Yes! Because the hon. Member criticised!

Mr Bhagwan: I said it!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! Please! Don't interrupt the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor! He mentioned no name. He is rebutting your arguments. That's all!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: It is very easy to say that so and so. Well, I am working with the Commissioner of Police. I talked to him and I am satisfied with the work he is doing. Why should I sack him? The way they argue is as if in Rose Hill, or whatever place it is - Vacoas, I think. A prisoner, Mr Lutchigadoo or whoever was allowed to go and enjoy himself outside. But does that mean that the Commissioner of Police, one individual, one person can be in all the stations, controlling what is taking place every hour, every day? And can he be blamed for that sort of thing? If no action had been taken after it has come to the knowledge of the Commissioner - but I am fully satisfied that he is taking all steps.

I came to know the Commissioner only when I became Prime Minister. And if I had been a real communalist, I could have appointed somebody else as Commissioner of Police! But from all the names I looked at, their past, I came to the conclusion that this gentleman is the right person to be Commissioner of Police while I will be Prime Minister. Therefore, I got him appointed. And now, I am asked to kick him because of rumours! Because of bad words invented against him, so I listen to that, and kick? I will spend all my energy kicking and kicking!

Madam Speaker, as regards the allegations and insinuation of MP Shakeel Mohamed regarding the Commissioner of Police, I will qualify them to bullshit, and later....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Don't do that! Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, I am sorry! Please, withdraw that word!

(Interruptions)

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Instead, I will replace it by ‘cowards’. Later, during my speech, I will demonstrate to the House what amount of positive work the Police Force is doing under the leadership of the Commissioner of Police.

Madam Speaker, every time, on witnessing the way hon. Dr. Boolell deals with matters in this House, I have come to the conclusion that I shall tell this to the House. I hope the good doctor remembers his anatomy, if not, let me remind him, the human brain is made of two halves. There is a left side and there is a right side. Unfortunately, listening to what he has been saying all the time, there appears to be nothing left.

(Interruptions)

And on his right, there is nothing right, which is the unfortunate conclusion that nothing right is left on his left.

For me, the positive reactions to the Budget from the population and the economic and financial experts are master slaps on the faces of those politicians in the Opposition who have chosen to drown themselves in the apocalyptic seas of utter demagogic.

In fact, the Opposition in front of us has gone to the extreme of ridicule. They have become laughing stocks. I don’t know when they go outside what people they meet and how they come to certain conclusion. I also go around, but, maybe, I meet the right people.

(Interruptions)

Everywhere from the ordinary man in the street to even intellectuals, and people who they call ‘the capitalists’, they all tell me it’s a very good budget. They tell me that it is the first time that this country is having such a Budget.

(Interruptions)

But, at the same time, the people of the country have not forgotten all their false promises when they were in Government, their abuse of power, their uncompassionate decisions, their incompetence, and their fulfilment by bringing the country to the ruin, their irresponsibility and their inability to manage the affairs of the country.

And hon. Leader of the Opposition was there a moment ago. When he said to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister: “Ah, you are reserving it for after elections!” Therefore, it is an admission on his part that after elections we are coming back!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the Leader of the Opposition. He criticised left, right and centre while, at the same time, trying to demonstrate that he was a better Minister of Finance - a better, not butter! - and that the previous Labour-PMSD Government was a better one. I do not want to be nasty against him, although he really deserves it, but his comments prove that he never believed in '*L'Alliance Lepèp*'.

Now, I can understand better some of his manoeuvres during the election campaign that I knocked down outright, and rightly so. He was very unhappy. I listened to him here. It's as if everything we are doing, we are doing wrong things. There was not a single word in his speech to say there is a single thing in that Budget which is good. But this is the mentality and what do you expect from that?

The Leader of the Opposition cynically attacked the nation's ambition to achieve a second economic miracle. I wish to tell him that we are not dreaming like he wants the population to believe. We are working tirelessly to make that dream come true and I am satisfied that we are moving in the right direction. I will ask the Opposition Members: 'please, have patience! Wait! You will see the result, and then you will pass judgment, and then you will talk to the population.'

Madam Speaker, last Monday right on the onset of his speech, the Leader of the Opposition, and I quote, said -

"We are in obvious economic decline under this Government compared to 2014."

I think 2014 we were living in a paradise. But does he know the unemployment that there was there, in 2014? Does he know? And he should have told us what measures were taken to improve and make it better, but that you won't say. But the truth is, Madam Speaker, every time Labour-PMSD come back, it is a curse to this country. Even in 2014, everywhere, every sector, there was deficit. Even casinos were losing money. Can you believe that?

I do not know what statistics he was referring to. But I will refer to official statistics from Statistics Mauritius to show that the Leader of the Opposition got it wrong, completely wrong, utterly wrong. He should use his brain a bit better than hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell.

Let us look at the most significant yardstick for the measurement of economic wealth creation, the Gross Domestic Product. In 2014, Gross Domestic Product of our country, and I am not inventing anything, I am quoting official figures, the country stood at Rs392 billion.

In 2017, Gross Domestic Product reached Rs460 billion. In three years, our nation has created a net amount of Rs68 billion of economic wealth. That represents a cumulative increase of more than 15%. Even after providing for inflation, the increase is still significant, from Rs392 billion to Rs437 billion. But before I proceed further, I will put a question: Is that, Madam Speaker, an economic decline? And they go down the ladder, they say we are going up the ladder, and when we go up the ladder, they say we are coming down the ladder. That's how they see things.

Although GDP growth is expected to reach 4.1% in 2018-2019 from 3.6% in 2014, despite a difficult international environment and the drawback of the BAI crash. Very often, they criticise us, but had we not taken the decision at right time, the economy of this country would have been ruined. It has happened to other countries. And, of course, we are described as criminals, we only commit crimes.

The prospects for a still higher GDP growth are promising with major infrastructural works and development projects that are being implemented. These include the mega Metro Express Project, and we all know the criticisms that were made, still being made, politicians going round with demagogical ideas, brainwashing the people and make them stand where work is to be done. But I have no pity for such people. And I always say, whatever project is there and which is in the national interest for the betterment of the country, I don't care about a few individuals. This sort of project should have priority, and Metro Express is one of that. The Metro Express, Madam Speaker, will be a game changer for the country in terms of economic benefit and social progress. And what I say, I believe in it, otherwise I would not say it.

But let us see what the Leader of the Opposition delivered in terms of GDP growth when he was Minister of Finance! I wish to remind him that in his 2013 Budget Speech, he assertively announced a GDP growth of 4% which did not materialise. Confronted with the reality, he stated in his 2014 Budget Speech that "our economy is expected to expand by a good 3.2% in 2013". For him at that time 3.2% growth was a big achievement. But when we do better than that, we have failed. Today, he dares to point his finger at us when we are

delivering nearly 4% growth and more in the coming fiscal year. I leave it to the population to make their own judgment.

On the same topic, in June 2008, the then Minister of Finance who was surfing on a *nuage d'orgueil* at that time announced a GDP growth rate of 6.5% to 7% in his summing-up speech on the 2008-2009 Budget. This turned out to be a big bluff with actual growth rate reaching only 3.4%. And today you will see him writing long articles. Trying to condemn us, giving us lessons and all with the aim to make the population believe that we are truly ruining the country.

We all remember the big misleading terms like ‘green shoots’, ‘early harvest’, ‘bumper crop’, ‘robust growth’ that were used by the then Minister, and today he wants to give us lessons. That was used by the then Minister with the intent of demonstrating that his reforms were yielding fabulous results. But in reality, nothing fabulous happened so much so that the then Minister did not even get a ticket for the 2010 General Election.

He was kicked out. Madam Speaker, the Labour-PMSD Government succeeded in delivering absolute poverty rather than the promised prosperity for all. Delayed implementation of public sector projects and cost overruns were rife. Key institutions were faced with growing public mistrust.

Through hard work and courageous measures, this Government has managed a turnaround on the social, administrative and economic fronts. Madam Speaker, as I stated earlier, the economy is progressing in the right direction. The major infrastructural projects being implemented, the materialisation of smart city projects about which they talked so much ill and the Metro Express project are set to boost economic growth. And I will just ask them to wait and see. They will then say who is right and who is wrong.

We are also innovating, Madam Speaker. The announcements in the Budget with regard to Artificial Intelligence, Fintech and Blockchain are aimed at capturing global opportunities in these fields are putting Mauritius at the heart of innovative wealth creation activities. In the same vein, the financial services sector is set to undergo a radical transformation following the announcement of a new harmonised fiscal regime for domestic and global business companies and a specific fiscal regime for banks.

Also, with the decision to put an end to licensing of Category 2 global business companies, Mauritius is consolidating its reputation as a trusted and substance-based financial centre.

Madam Speaker, let me now come to the decision relating to allowing High Net Worth Individuals to acquire Mauritian citizenship and passport through a direct contribution to a Mauritius Sovereign Fund. There is nothing sinister in this decision as the Opposition is trying to make the population believe. Many countries have taken the same decision before us. I have in mind two island States like ours, namely Malta and Singapore. These countries have not been sold to foreigners as far as I know.

Let me remind this House, without analysing it in the Budget, I put this in practice – 1983. I promised Nationality and our passport to those who would come and invest in the country. Do you know the effect of that? How many people came and we gave them Nationality, we gave them passport, but after years, do you know what these people did? They went back to their country and here they are trying to make us believe that we are selling the country. If I could have, I would have sold them.

I condemn the cheap accusations of the Opposition. We have to innovate to attract investors. The traditional fiscal incentive no longer produce the results we aim at. Obviously, we are not going to open our economy to international shady people. We will take the care that should be taken. I think we are intelligent enough about that. But let me remind them when they were in Government, they gave nationality, they gave passport to South Africans and I won't say to what type of people of South Africa.

From Tamarin you go around the coast, Rivière Noire, they have settled down there, I don't know how many thousands. And do you know what they have done? No Mauritian is allowed in the vicinity there. There is no access to go to the beach. And then some people shout today "*nou la plage*"! Where were they? And you know, they are practising a real apartheid over there. These people criticising us should be ashamed of what they have done!

Madam Speaker, I now wish to respond to comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and our other opponents inside and outside the House concerning the Safe City Project which involves the installation of some 4,000 smart cameras that will act as powerful and effective tools to combat crimes and drug proliferation, and assist in more effective traffic and road safety management. They keep on blaming us, many crimes, many people dying on the road and when we try to take steps that will help us to fight crimes.

I agree, sometime I ask myself what is becoming to our population. The more they are supposed to be educated, the more they are getting education free, all sorts of privileges, but criminals I must admit keep on increasing. Maybe one of the reasons because they are spoilt

– those criminals, I don't mean the population - they don't want to work, go and rob, go and steal, that is the best job for them. But you know we must have severe laws, I always hear people saying: 'We must have the severe laws.'

But the severe laws, if they are not applied, will it serve the purpose? These days, I have seen cases, people getting three months imprisonment. Similar case - in another case I saw a fine. Well, the Judiciary must take note of what is happening in the country. They are an institution apart, they are independent. But we are all living in this country, we all have a responsibility. You think in the Judiciary they don't know how criminality is increasing in this country and they don't have responsibility!

Is it only Government's responsibility or the Police's responsibility! Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, I was in Government as a Minister with Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. With the way he was administering, I didn't agree. I told him: 'You will take the country to the ruin', and this is exactly what happened. I told him: 'I am leaving. I am sending my letter of resignation.' Do you know how he begged me not to do that? He went as far as saying: 'After me you will be the Prime Minister.'

This is what he told me. And do you know what I replied – '*Chacha*' I used to call him. I said: "*Chacha*, if I stay with you, keep on staying with you, in the next general election, which will happen in this country, your party will be wiped out, you will be wiped out and together, if I am with you, I will be wiped out also." What Prime Minister I will become? And this is exactly what happened. In 1982, not only they were wiped out; they were washed out.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: There should be - and I am sure will be - a proper due diligence carried out, and I can assure the House that this Government will not give citizenship on a red carpet basis, as it has been done before, within a few hours, as was done under the Labour-PMSD Government, to please their foreign cronies and financials.

Madam Speaker, I now wish to respond to comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and our other opponents inside and outside the House concerning the Safe City project, which involves the installation of some 4,000 smart cameras that will act as powerful and effective tools to combat crimes, drug proliferation, and assist in more effective traffic

and road safety management. Those who are opposing the project, including the former Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition of today, are trying to make people believe that these cameras will be used for spying political opponents or spying in the private life of people. At times, I have the impression that these people take the population - in Creole, we normally say *couyon* - for fools.

Let me remind the former Prime Minister - if he is not listening, please convey it to him - and the Leader of the Opposition of today, that they, themselves, started with the installation of 461 CCTV surveillance cameras in Flic en Flac in 2009, and they were right in doing so, as these cameras were useful in identifying and arresting the authors of a rape case that occurred on the Flic en Flac beach, and it was becoming quite frequent. The Leader of the Opposition, who was then Minister himself, launched the system when it went live. Subsequently, in his 2013 and 2014 Budget Speeches, he announced - why is he not there? I stood all the time and listened to him - that CCTV cameras have also been installed in Quatre Bornes, Port Louis, Grand' Baie, and that new regions to be covered, including Beau Bassin, Rose Hill and Sodnac. So, then, nobody opened his mouth to say whatsoever, that it was wrong. It is a good thing, and for that, I congratulate the then Minister. When he does the right thing, I am not afraid of acknowledging and saying yes, it is a good thing. And we are trying to do the same good thing. So many wrong things are being spoken about us.

The former Prime Minister, answering a PQ from the then MP Nita Deerpalsing in July 2010, stated that surveillance cameras network will be further extended to cover Curepipe, Belle Mare, Trou d'Eau Douce, Ile aux Cerfs, Mahebourg, Rose Belle - the whole country would have been covered -, Goodlands, Central Flacq, Rivière du Rempart, and other areas, etc., regions in Quatre Bornes.

(Interruptions)

Roches Noires! Roches Noires has become famous. He defended the installation of those cameras and even said, I quote -

“In the UK, they want to put microphones with the CCTV so that they can listen to what people are saying.”

Giving me good idea!

In March 2011, answering a PQ from then MP Seeruttun, the former Prime Minister said, I quote -

“The CCTV surveillance system is a very effective tool in the fight against crime. The use of CCTV surveillance systems fits in the overall vision of the Government for a safer Mauritius.”

They do not like to see Mauritius become safer because we are here! Therefore, the accusations levelled against us do not hold ground, do not hold water. I do not see any danger for public life if this Government is going ahead with the Safe City project, which I have been supporting myself fully.

Madam Speaker: Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, I am sorry. It is 1.30 p.m. and I do not know for how long you have. If you have for another half an hour, then we better break for lunch and then we come back, and you start again, if you do not mind.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, I am being a bit long because I have to answer to these.

Madam Speaker: I do not mind you are being long. But what I am saying is that it is 1.30 p.m. We may come back after lunch and you continue your speech.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: It will be right. It will be another half an hour. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for one hour for lunch.

At 1.30 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.38 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: The Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Minister Mentor!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I stopped while I was talking on the Safe City Project. I will end by saying that only those who contravene the laws of the land need to worry, because they will be surely caught and brought to justice, which we hope will happen.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been to Singapore recently and it is amazing how effectively the Singapore authorities deal with law and order situations through the use of smart intelligent cameras.

With the problems we are facing on the law and order front in our country, the solutions lie in the utilisation of appropriate technological tools and surely the installation of smart intelligent cameras will be of great use. I wish the demagogic of the Opposition stops.

At least, let us agree that security is not a political issue. It is a national issue and we need to join hands in making our country safer.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, another topic I wish to dwell upon is the situation in the sugar cane sector. Much has been said during the debates by Members of the Opposition who argue that the Budget failed to come up with supportive measures in the face of dwindling sugar prices.

Yet, recently, they were criticising and imputing motives to this Government on the basis of a Joint Committee Report whose recommendations were taxed as being overtly in favour of what they call sugar barons. Now that the Prime Minister has decided to deal with issues pertaining to the sugar cane sector in a serene atmosphere, they still find this wrong and they criticise.

I agree fully with the Prime Minister that measures to support the sugar cane sector in a critical juncture need to be balanced and take on board the concerns of both the large miller-planter and the small planters and workers who are the most vulnerable, because we must not forget one thing, that, if what they call the sugar barons, if they don't exist, if they are finished, will the small planters survive? Therefore, they must be careful when they talk of sugar barons, of mill owners as if they are the enemies of our population. I have never looked at it that way.

Since I became Prime Minister, whoever came to me, I never look at their colour, community or whatever they are. If the project of what they want to do is in the interest of the population of the country, they used to get my full backing, whoever they were.

Ever since 2001, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when he assumed the responsibility of Minister of Agriculture, the Prime Minister had been very careful about the balancing exercise which is an imperative factor for such a sector, which is packed by emotion and antagonisms of the past.

In 2001, he succeeded piloting bold reforms. He saved the sugar sector, which the Labour Government had brought to the brink of death. He came with measures that were to

the satisfaction of all stakeholders and we know that despite the vile attacks of the Labour Party, the VRS Scheme was welcomed by the workers, and we know the result today.

Pravind Jugnauth was the one who engaged initial discussions with the European Union to support financially the reform process in the sugar sector in a place where the Sugar Protocol was scheduled to disappear. Why I am mentioning all this, I am remembering that when I was Prime Minister, we started to have the Sugar Industry mechanised. I know on many parts, there was much reluctance.

I have been to a few places to explain to the workers and the small sugar planters because same critics were being made that I am doing everything for the sugar barons. I was explaining to them – look, if the sugar barons do not exist, they will go bankrupt. Will you worker be still working? Will you small planter survive? He could not say anything. So, I explained to them what I am doing is not in the interest of the sugar barons. It is in your interest, the workers of the sugar industry's interest and the national interest because the sugar sector is an important sector.

One place I went in the North, the then Minister of Agriculture accompanied me, I used the same arguments and I asked him to say a few words, he supported me, he was there. But I didn't stay there with the people up to the end. I left and you know this gentleman, the Minister of Agriculture is behind my back, he made a small speech again and he said –

“Premier Ministre pe vane nou, pe vane laboureur ek gros capitalist, grand proprietaire sucrier.”

This is the term he used. And the next day some of the small planters came to me and reported to me what was said.

Therefore, you see everybody for his personal interest sometimes commits blunders and they speak they don't know what they speak. And since then, I started – if I may use the word - discarding this fellow. I didn't want to see him. And since he is out, he has gone elsewhere.

The European Union eventually allocated unprecedented grants to the tune of some Rs14 billion to Mauritius under the 'Sugar Accompanying Measures for Economic Restructuring'. It is a pity that most of those funds had not been fairly distributed by the previous Government.

At that time in the Labour-PMSD Government, MP Nita Deepalsing was openly denouncing the economic philosophy of the then Minister of Finance when she accused of favouring what she called the “fat cats” of the private sector. She even wrote to the then Prime Minister stating the following, I quote –

“Since this Government took office, it has been a one-way street towards the economic elite in terms of handouts”.

I am quoting what a Member in the then Government said about the previous Government and the Minister, and, today, they have the guts. I don’t want to use another word, they will have lots of protests. They have got guts to say that we are letting down the sugar planters. Now, when I hear the former Prime Minister and hon. Boolell accusing us of favouring the big sugar producers, I can only laugh at their demagogic. Better they look at themselves in the mirror before pointing their fingers, I would say their dirty fingers, at us.

We have not forgotten how the 2005-2010 Labour-PMSD Government fleeced the population to the bones. They did not even hesitate a second to take the decision to remove the piece of bread that our children were getting in primary schools. They introduced new taxes and refused to give to workers the salary compensation they deserved. They arrogantly told the nation that there were no other alternatives, termed as TINA by a few columnists. At that time, the biggest losers in the sugar sector were small planters who were pushed towards their coffins.

And now what do we see? This Minister of Finance at that time, who has done all this crime against the small planters, is trying to lecture us, in writing long articles in newspapers. As if he was the saviour, he saved the country. I simply laughed at such non-serious and nonsensical defaulters. It is a fact that the 2005-2010 period was the most painful for the community of small planters. They were ignored, heavily taxed and left in a situation where they had no choice than to abandon their fields. It is only in 2010 when hon. Pravind Jugnauth came back in Government, this time as Minister of Finance that small planters were given the consideration they deserved.

It is worth reminding the House that he announced hundred measures in August 2010 under the ERCP Programme to restructure an ailing economy. It was a much needed off-Budget response which was further reinforced in the 2011-2012 Budget. The sugar sector, especially the small planters, was given utmost attention. The 80% advance to small planters

to enable them to better prepare their fields in post-harvest time was reintroduced. The premium paid by small planters to the SIFB was reduced by 70%. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth abolished the 15% tax on cooperative societies that was imposed by the Labour-PMSD Government. And that ex-Minister of Finance is opening his big mouth these days outside.

He abolished the tax on interests and the National Residential Property Tax that were hurting small planters who had saved some money in bank and constructed decent modern residences. Taxing the interests on deposits for small planters! Can there be a bigger crime than this! He introduced the 100% duty free facilities for small planters acquiring 4x4 cabs which were abolished by the Labour-PMSD Government.

He came up with a measure facilitating the accreditation of cooperative societies to the Fair Trade initiative, thus providing them the opportunity to get an additional 60 dollars per ton on their sugar revenue. Yet, we do nothing for small planters!

He also took a decision whereby small planters received an additional Rs1000 of revenue on each ton of molasses utilised to produce potable alcohol. In the same vein, he reduced cess. By so doing, the revenue of the small planter increased by an additional Rs2, 800 per ton of sugar and that represented a big relief for them.

Unfortunately when he left the '*Alliance Sociale*' Government in August 2011, the Minister of Finance who took over, who is, today, the Leader of the Opposition did not give or did not care a damn to the plight of small planters.

I have carefully gone through each of the three Budgets hon. Duval had presented in 2012, 2013 and 2014, respectively. He failed to give any further support to the small planters - and today he is the defender of the small planters - but joined the then Prime Minister to make a false promise that small planters would be given 35% shares in the company that would produce ethanol.

Again, in 2014, the then Government promised to give a financial support to the tune of Rs3,000 to small planters to help them join ends as the price of sugar was falling. That was obviously a false promise. They are in the habit of making false promises. That is what is in their heads, planted. They believe everybody here, on this side, speaks the same and does the same. That was obviously a false promise and the small planters kept waiting.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is only when this Government assumed office that in 2015 and 2016 Budgets, small planters were again given consideration. While all their earlier benefits have been maintained, they received a financial support of Rs3,400 per ton of sugar for the 2014 crop. DBM waived all interests and penalties on their loans of up to Rs100,000.

Small planters producing up to 60 tons of sugar also benefited from an additional revenue of Rs1,820 for the 2016 crop. These efforts show that we have not forgotten that small planters have contributed a lot to make our country what it is today.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the current circumstances, time has come again for a new wave of measures for the sugar cane sector with the price of sugar falling to less than Rs11,000 per ton. These measures are being looked into by the hon. Prime Minister himself and I have no doubt that he will ensure that all the stakeholders of the industry get their fair share of support that will be provided. It will be off-budget measures like was the case in 2010 and there is nothing abnormal about that.

I wish all of us, including hon. Members of the Opposition, realise that the sugar cane industry remains an important pillar of our economy and we must be careful not to indulge in cheap petty politics when we know that there is urgency. We are very far from the days of the sugar oligarchy and we must refrain from brandishing the etiquettes of the past.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now highlight the social achievements of this Government which to me are unprecedented. I need to do so because the Opposition and their few trumpet blowers, intervening on the private radios, are trying to make the population believe that nothing is being done to combat poverty and improve purchasing power.

In fact, there is a lot that has been done, is being done and will be done. But let us see the contrary. To answer to them, I will put forward facts and figures.

We have provided over December 2014– December 2017 period as much as Rs41 billion rupees of additional revenue to households with increases in Basic Pensions, including Basic Retirement Pension, salary compensations, implementation of the PRB Report and payment of a Subsistence Allowance to address absolute poverty. This represents a firm 21% gain in purchasing power.

Over the same period Basic Retirement Pension has increased by Rs2,185, from Rs3,625 to Rs5,810. Already, some Rs205 m. of Subsistence Allowance have been disbursed to some 10,000 families. It is estimated that Rs240 m. will be disbursed in 2018.

The hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development introduced the Negative Income Tax system, an unprecedented measure. An estimated Rs450 m. will be paid in 2018 under that scheme to around 75,000 beneficiaries.

Another unprecedented initiative which others had much talked about, but never had the courage to implement, has been the introduction of the minimum salary.

No employee working on a full time basis will ever earn less than Rs9,000 a month. This historic measure will bring as much as Rs3.6 billion rupees of additional revenue to some 100,000 workers. And those who criticised us have got the guts to say that the people are getting poorer and poorer.

Moreover, with the laudable decision of the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development to decrease the income tax rate from 15% to 10% for individuals having annual income up to Rs650,000, many families will get more disposable income that will further increase their purchasing power.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we cumulate the costs of all measures to improve the purchasing power of the population since December 2014 and including 2018, we get an impressive Rs65 billion. That is unprecedented. No government before, not even my Government, has gone that far in increasing the revenue of households in a period of four years.

It is also useful, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, to highlight that with the objective of further supporting the population, especially the needy, 52,000 families have been exempted from the payment for potable water. That is why when Pravind Jugnauth was going to be Prime Minister, quite a number of people asked me, “Are you doing the right thing? Will he do well?” I replied to them and I even made a public statement that he will do much better than I.

Moreover, there will not be any increase in water tariffs, as announced by the Prime Minister in the Budget Speech. Prices of petroleum products have been reduced as a gesture of solidarity with consumers and the price of a 12 kg cooking gas cylinder has been further

reduced to Rs240. Still there is criticism about the reduction of petroleum price. They say it is not enough. They say why it was increased. But they know that the price on the world market fluctuates. So, when it goes up, it is a reality of this world that those who use petrol will have to pay for it. Well, if we do not increase, if all things that we import get on increasing and we go on with the fixed price, what will happen to this country? Will serious people suggest that?

To add to that, 70,000 families are benefiting from a reduced tariff for electricity. 40,000 families are exempted from the payment of MBC licence fees. Why did the previous Government never care to do these things? And still they pretend they were the better one. 5,000 families have been paid Rs300 m. under the 'Casting of Slabs Scheme' in the January 2015-April 2018 period. Even more will be disbursed as from the next financial year with the decision announced by the Prime Minister to increase the maximum grant from Rs75,000 to Rs100,000 for families earning up to Rs10,000 per month, and set up new thresholds for families earning up to Rs20,000.

All these speak volumes of the financial support and benefits this Government is providing to the population, under the prime ministership of Pravind Jugnauth. I hope the facts and figures I have mentioned will help to make those who open their big mouth every day, shut up and be quiet. I hope the demagogues stop in that course which they have chosen and which they are following.

In addition to what I have mentioned with regard to purchasing power, we have all the subsidies that bring accrued benefits to the population. These subsidies, including those that are provided for rice, flour, cooking gas, School Certificate and HSC fees for children and water tanks exceed Rs2.5 billion for the period 2015-2017.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are doing our best to give the means to every citizen of this country to live a decent life and benefit fully our welfare state. And thanks to me, this welfare state is still there, because many of my colleagues, when IMF and World Bank was insisting that we do away with that scheme - we know what the situation was - told me, 'Well, what other option do we have?' In the face of such a situation, it required real strength and vision to tell the IMF and the World Bank "No, we are not going to do that".

We are also fighting the scourges that hit our society. Among those scourges, we have drug trafficking that flourished under the previous Labour-PMSD Government. They find the situation very bad. It is good they know the past. When we took over, MMM Government,

do you know what ravage the drug scourge was doing in this country? By the side of the dwelling of the then Prime Minister, drugs were being sold openly. Even afterwards, when there was pressure why not bring or put a Commission of Inquiry, there was always refusal. And even when in the Labour Party, the new Prime Minister, "Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam" - in this case, I will put his name between inverted commas - also refused to have a Commission of Inquiry.

When I became Prime Minister, I set up a Commission of Inquiry, and when I got the report, I took actions and many, many drug traffickers, dealers were sent to prison. And you know the number of threats of death I was receiving? I had to wear bulletproof jacket. During a long period of time, I had to do that. They are more patriots! My God! Well, but God listens to all that. I must tell you that when there was this alliance of MMM and Labour Party in 2014, really knowing the strength of MMM, knowing also the strength of Labour Party, that is why in the by-election I said to everybody who asked me that it is Dr. Boolell who is going to be elected. Because what is clear, what is fact, he should not be afraid to admit and to say. But Navin Ramgoolam must listen to him when he talks outside; the guts that he has, the dishonour that he has created to this country while he has been Prime Minister. Refusing to have a Commission of Enquiry on drug, talking outside right now, blaming us saying that drug is ravaging this country as never it was! And after all that the Prime Minister is doing, the amount of drugs seized, people arrested, they are doing nothing. Nothing is being done by this Government? Are they really sincere people who mean to do good for this country? I hope that those people who still believe in him will realise, will use their brain to think, and not as described earlier about the brain. They should come to the conclusion, and be honest, that this Government is doing everything to fight drugs.

After the report of the Commission of Enquiry which had been set up, and which again I did set up, I am sure plenty more will be done. We will fight the drug barons, the drug mafia. I have never tolerated and we will never tolerate that!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, another problem we are addressing forcefully is fatal accidents on our roads. While we pursue our sensitisation campaigns, and here, I wish to commend the private sector and NGOs for their own initiatives, we are going to toughen provisions of the law and be ruthless on enforcement. That is on our responsibility.

I make an appeal to the Judiciary. We are told to put severe punishments, but do you know what I have noticed? The punishments that are already provided for are not being

applied! I have seen cases where imprisonment, long-term is deserved, getting conditional discharge, 3 months, and in some cases, where in another similar case, there had been 3 months prison, and another case getting only a fine.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this country, everybody should realise that it is not only Government that has got responsibilities, but every sector, and here, the Judiciary has a greatest responsibility; they are Learned people. Don't they know what is happening in the country? Don't they know what the Government is trying to do to get rid of that? They must realise that people are trafficking in drugs, selling drugs, importing drugs in this country. If I were a judge, a magistrate, and I used to be a magistrate, and people know how I was dealing with them. They must be more severe. They are very, very tolerant. And that makes our work very difficult.

People dealing in drugs, making big money! And here, I must admit, there are even Police officers accomplices. At a prison, there have been prison guards accomplices. Well, that is why I say it is not only the responsibility of Government, it is everybody's responsibility. The Police who are supposed to maintain law and order, they should be the last persons to be involved in such practices.

And here, I must say, our system of recruitment in the Police Force should be amended. The synthetic drug has become more dangerous - I am not going to repeat everything I said, but I will make an appeal to parents. Parents also have a big responsibility. There are poisons; children are told "Poison! You will die with it, do not touch it, please." and children obey. All parents should sensitise their children that, as this poison, which will kill you almost immediately or very soon, the synthetic drug is a poison, but it takes a bit longer to finish you. Then, the children will realise that this is dangerous and must not be involved in that. I hope that everyone concerned takes his responsibility.

While we pursue our sensitisation campaigns, and here, I wish to commend the private sector and NGOs for their own initiatives - I think, I said that. I hear some people saying that with the fourfold increase of fines in cases of speeding by more than 25 km per hour above the speed limit, there will be more corruption. So, there will be more corruption, sit down do nothing! This is what they used to do! Let me warn those who think of giving or receiving bribes, they will be tracked and severely dealt with according to the provisions of our Prevention of Corruption legislation!

Now, about Police officers guilty of corruption and suspended. I knew of some cases, 8 years, 10 years and they are cashing their full pay at the end of the month. Not only that, I know personally people who are working outside, getting double pay, Government and private. Well, this situation cannot go on, cannot be tolerated. I think somehow a law must be passed and see what can be done for such cases where Government officers are concerned, where public money is being paid. Priority should be given to these cases and not allowed to drag on for years.

Law and Order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, remains a top priority for this Government. It is worth mentioning some key achievements in the outgoing financial year –

- 78 Police Stations and the Central Crime Investigation Department have been equipped with 744 CCTV cameras and audio recording systems;
- An Anti-Robbery Squad has been set up with special teams in all Police Divisions;
- Detection rate in all reported cases of crime increased from 32.7% in 2016/2017 to 44% in 2017/2018; the Traffic Police performed 44,940 speed checks with the fixed speed detector cameras;
- a new driving test for two wheelers is operational since May 2018;
- a transport squad has been set up within the ERS;
- a Disaster Response Unit has been set up at the SMF to deal with natural calamities;
- 153,758 persons were sensitised by the Police with regards to crime prevention, road safety, drugs-related offences, domestic violence, juvenile offences, child protection and community policing;
- the operational functioning of Police Hot Line 148 has been reengineered and a Facebook account has been created to encourage the public to inform the Police of suspicious activities in their neighbourhood.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a number of cases, I know, when the Police gets information of drugs being dealt with in certain places by certain people, Police go there; these people, they are already informed that Police is coming there. And then you know what happens? This is why I say many people, they do not have responsibility. They get round and try to attack the Police when the Police does not allow to intervene. Members of the public, in

a number of places, some have even injured the Police and then coming and blaming us, Government. They must blame themselves first. They are irresponsible people preventing the Police to do its job. But I hope in such cases all those involved must be stopped and the Courts must sentence them for long terms of imprisonment. If I were a Judge or Magistrate, this is what I would have done;

- 3,461 Police Officers were trained in line with the forthcoming Police and Criminal Evidence legislation;
- drugs of a total market value of Rs416 m. have been seized from July 2017 to April 2018 by the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit;
- Security has been tightened at the Port Louis and Airport regions;
- With the acquisition of three state-of-the-art patrol vessels (CGS Baracuda, CGS Victory and CGS Valiant), sea-going patrols have been increased, and
- 65 Search and Rescue Operations were conducted at sea by the National Coast Guard.

For the next financial year, not only will we be recruiting 1000 additional Police Constables but we will provide to our Police Force managerial tools, vehicles, modern technological equipment for security and disaster management, including IT logistics as well as additional sea-going assets to ensure a more effective and efficient policing onshore and at sea. The setting up of a Mauritius Forces Training Academy is a major step ahead to impart skills and knowledge to our Police Force.

We wish, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to take advantage of the Singaporean experience and expertise on policing and prison matters which I had the opportunity to take cognizance of during my recent visit to the Island State of Singapore.

Already, as the House is aware, leveraging on the Singaporean administrative and legal prison framework, I brought an appropriate amendment to the Reform Institutions Act to ban the use of any telecommunication equipment in our prison institutions. This will help to prevent inmates from pursuing criminal activities behind the bars as well as prison staff in getting involved in illegal activities.

It is with that same objective in mind that the Reform Institutions Act has also been amended so that the detainee, or any other person without lawful authority, found in possession of a mobile phone or any other articles prescribed as prohibited articles, be criminally liable and prosecuted accordingly.

We also reinforced our detainee remission system to do away with automatic remission and introduced earned remission in a bid to focus more on rehabilitation.

As far as the Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration & Exploration which is within the responsibility of my Ministry, is concerned, it is working full-swing. A new Petroleum legislation is being finalised to operationalise the hydro-carbon industry. The Department has significantly contributed in elaborating the legal and institutional framework for the management of the Joint Management Area between Mauritius and Seychelles. It is presently working, with the assistance of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation Australia, on an electronic platform for the Ocean Observatory. This will support the preparation of a Maritime Spatial plan for the Republic of Mauritius.

Furthermore, Mauritius has been on the forefront to promote Maritime Scientific Research in the region and has enacted regulations for the conduct of MSR in its waters.

The scientific expedition in the Mascarene Plateau region of the Indian Ocean, undertaken by the Norwegian Nansen vessel, one of the largest scientific research vessels in the world, has opened up new research horizons in our maritime zone. The Department for Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration & Exploration will be closely monitoring the research findings to advise Government on the way forward.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our staunch commitment to develop Rodrigues is once more demonstrated in the 2018-2019 Budget with a total provision of Rs5 billion. Projects that are high on the Rodriguan agenda are –

- the extension of the airport terminal at a cost of Rs98 m. which is scheduled to be completed in two months;
- the laying of the Mauritius-Rodrigues Submarine Optic fibre cable expected to be completed in 2019 at a cost of Rs1.6 billion;
- the construction as from mid-2019 of a new runway at Plaine Corail Airport at a projected cost of Rs3.2 billion;
- the setting up of a Technology Park to promote entrepreneurship and employment in the field of ICT, and last
- the elaboration of a Rodrigues Water Development Plan with the assistance of the Government of India.

And somebody said we are begging. I better not go further.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I am very much pleased that as for Rodrigues the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has demonstrated a similar resolve to spearhead the socio-economic development of Agaléga. The initiatives and projects announced to that effect in the Budget will no doubt make of Agaléga a better place to live in, visit and do business.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last year when I intervened on the Appropriation Bill, I was about to leave the country to present our plea to the United Nations General Assembly so that the latter votes in favour of the resolution requesting that the legal consequences of the excision of the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of Mauritius prior to our independence be referred to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion. Determined as I was and with the blessings of the nation, the job was done. The UN vote was overwhelmingly in our favour – 94 votes for and 15 votes against. Do you realise? With 2 powers like UK and US? The campaign that they were leading, the threats.

They came here in my office threatening me, using words which I would never have expected from such responsible people; those people who believe in justice and fair play. A lot of things he told me and then he said: 'If you go ahead, the country will be ruined. You won't be trading anywhere.' These sorts of insults and threats! But I told them: 'I am going forward. I am fighting for a legitimate cause. If you believe you are going to harm us a lot, that is your problem. Go ahead, but you better leave, please.' That is how I got rid of them. Consequently, the UN General Assembly has referred the matter to the ICJ. The next battle, of course, is a very important one, as important as the former one. I will be leading the Mauritian delegation that will take part in the public hearings that the ICJ will hold in September. I will personally make the main oral submission before the Court. And I look forward to do so with the energy and passion that drive me in this sacred endeavour to complete the decolonisation process of our country, Mauritius, and allow us to fully exercise our sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

I wish to have the support of every single Member of the House and the nation at large and let us hope that by the grace of God, we achieve what we are looking for. That is the final gift I want to give to my motherland before I retire from politics at the appropriate time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot conclude without saying a few words on the intervention of some Members on the other side. Hon. Bhagwan, he spoke, made very bad

remarks against one of my main advisors, who is a very honest person, who is doing his job very well. I have nothing to reproach him, but the insinuations that he made, I will not comment on that, I will only invite him to go outside in public and say the same things.

Well, I cannot end without saying a few words on the intervention of hon. Dr. Boolell talking about India. I really consider it a shame for such a person to make such rude remarks against a country that has helped Mauritius, always, that is a real friend of Mauritius. Well, we call it 'Bharat Mata'. I am not ashamed of calling it. Hon. Dr. Boolell, I strongly condemn the insults you have levelled against Mother India and I know how badly the people outside are reacting to that insult. Ever since our independence, India, as I said, has supported financially and technically Mauritius on its socio-economic journey. I said it last year and I repeat it today. And what is more shameful, the words that 'Mauritius is begging India'. We are beggars! They are not beggars; they are aristocrats. I simply ask: what is wrong if India is providing grants and very concessionary loans to Mauritius? What is wrong if India wants to help us in modernising our country and developing our economy?

Now, a lot is being said about Agaléga, but those who speak about Agaléga, that India is making a military base at Agaléga, you know, making such accusations against a friendly country who is helping us, a Member of the Commonwealth, a Member of the United Nations, I cannot digest such things. People who use such words should be ashamed. I hope that this hon. Member will apologise publicly for all that he has said about India.

On this side of the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we highly appreciate the generosity and willingness of India to help Mauritius financially to attain its development goals and build a better future for our people. Call us 'beggars', we will still pursue what we believe is right. We are very proud of the *Bharat Mata-Chota Bharat* relationship. I hope they understand what I mean. And I seize this opportunity to once again thank the Government of India and Prime Minister specially, Shri Narendra Modi ji, for the special attention they are giving to make our socio-economic dream come true.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will conclude, at last, by saying that Mauritius has embarked on a new era of progress and prosperity. There cannot be any doubt about it. I do not know what others think, but I have no doubt about it. The 2018-2019 Budget is another building block in our task as a Government to generate meaningful economic growth and national wealth that translates into a marked improvement in the quality of life of our citizens.

The significant effort the Prime Minister is making through a budgetary provision of Rs1 billion to favour youth skills development, training and employment is most laudable, and I am confident that the unemployment rate will be further reduced.

On this optimistic note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I again congratulate the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for the excellent job done in presenting a Budget that meets both the expectations of the population and those of the economic sectors of the country.

I wish the country, I wish the Prime Minister and this Government good luck, and I am sure God will bless us and we will see that everything, which we want to do in good faith for the interest of the country, will be realised.

Let us resolutely pursue our transformative journey towards propelling our country to the status of high-income economies.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for your kind attention.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

(3.45 p.m.)

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River): M. le président, la présentation du budget est un moment important dans l'histoire d'un pays. Nous avons assisté à beaucoup d'interventions jusqu'ici et, pour ma part, je dois remercier mes collègues parlementaires pour les débats, quelquefois de haute facture, auxquels nous avons eu droit.

Que ce soit des interventions pour ou contre le contenu de ce budget qui a été présenté par l'honorable ministre des Finances, nous avons pu écouter des interventions au fil des jours, des interventions passionnées, élaborées, vigoureuses, quelquefois pas à notre goût, mais c'est ainsi que joue le jeu de la démocratie, M. le président.

C'est fort dommage que malgré le fait que le budget soit traduit en créole par les radios privées et notre télévision nationale pour permettre à un plus grand nombre de Mauriciens de comprendre cet exercice crucial, le gouvernement n'a toujours pas amendé les *Standing Orders* de l'Assemblée et les autres textes de loi pour permettre aux députés de la Chambre d'exprimer leurs propositions en créole, afin de permettre à la population de suivre d'une façon plus efficace les débats parlementaires. Quand j'avais moi-même soulevé la question pour que la langue créole soit adoptée à l'intérieur de l'hémicycle, le Premier

ministre avait en effet signifié son accord en principe, mais avait argué que des dispositions d'ordre technique devraient être réglées au préalable.

Je vous demande où nous en sommes, M. le président. Le temps passe et les choses ne semblent pas bouger. En tout cas, on ne constate aucune annonce dans le budget qui a été présenté devant la Chambre à cet effet. Je trouve cela fort dommage et attristant. S'il est nécessaire de traduire le budget en créole lors de sa présentation, il n'en est pas moins nécessaire de permettre à la population de suivre les débats en créole. Mais passons, M. le président. Je préfère ne pas élaborer sur ma déception et - je dis - ce manque de sérieux, car la retransmission des débats parlementaires en créole aurait été une grande avancée pour la démocratie.

M. le président, j'ai fait de mon mieux pour suivre attentivement les arguments de l'autre côté de la Chambre, et d'emblée, je dois vous dire que je souscris à la thèse de beaucoup de mes amis et collègues qui sont intervenus sur les bancs de l'opposition.

Qui peut nier que ce budget contient des mesures intéressantes au point de vue social ? Il faut l'admettre, M. le président. Mais qui peut aussi nier qu'il pèche par manque de propositions et de mesures qui sont susceptibles de jeter les bases pour une économie plus prospère, afin d'insuffler un nouveau dynamisme pour nous propulser à la ligue des pays à revenus élevés ?

J'ai écouté comme tout le monde, avec beaucoup d'attention, le ministre Mentor, M. le président, et ma première réaction est que le Premier ministre n'aura pas beaucoup à dire quand il va faire son *summing-up*. Mais j'ai noté, malgré ce discours marathon, que ce soit dans le budget et dans son discours - je parle du ministre Mentor - qu'il n'y a rien par rapport aux défis auxquels sont confrontés les grands piliers de notre économie : le secteur manufacturier, l'exportation, l'hôtellerie, le tourisme, l'industrie sucrière, les services financiers, et j'en passe, M. le président.

Cette absence déplorable de mesures urgentes se fait dans un contexte économique mondial difficile, caractérisé par la montée du protectionnisme, le *Brexit*, la concurrence internationale et la menace constante de la hausse du prix des produits pétroliers. Où sont les mesures concrètes qui répondent à ces défis, M. le président ? Nous le savons tous que tout budget est préparé dans un contexte économique et politique précis, spécifique. Voyons dans quel contexte ce budget a été préparé.

Il est bon de se rappeler que pendant les mois et les semaines précédent le budget régnait, dans le pays, un sentiment de mécontentement généralisé, une frustration profonde, et pour cause, le prix des produits pétroliers avait assommé le petit peuple. La population avait subi cette augmentation arbitraire avec un sentiment d'injustice et de révolte. Moi-même et mes collègues de mon parti nous avons soulevé régulièrement, nous avons protesté régulièrement, lors de notre conférence de presse, contre cette augmentation arbitraire et insupportable pour la population. En même temps - je parle des semaines précédant le budget -, une menace d'augmentation de l'eau et de l'électricité pesait sur la tête de la population, et toute cette situation, envenimée par le coût élevé de la vie. Et n'oublions pas les nombreux scandales, les nominations scandaleuses et les actes de népotisme qui se faisaient entendre de temps en temps. Alors, face à cette situation difficile pour le gouvernement, on devait s'attendre à ce que le gouvernement allait riposter pour changer la donne. Et l'occasion donnée était le budget.

Voilà pour moi les raisons pour cette série de mesures ayant pour but d'amadouer ceux qui ont été les plus affectés par cette situation décadente. C'est la raison pour laquelle, M. le président, à mon avis, ce budget, même s'il est intelligent d'un point de vue politique, il est irresponsable au niveau économique. *A politically intelligent Budget, but an economically irresponsible Budget*, et j'y reviendrai, M. le président.

L'honorable Premier ministre a donc délaissé les sentiers conventionnels pour présenter un budget pour faire plaisir à toutes les couches de la population, ou du moins à minimiser le mal que son gouvernement a fait à la nation.

The hon. Prime Minister can be credited with the intellectual if not political prowess of having satisfied various clients at the micro level of their everyday life.

Mais le pire, M. le président, comme je viens de le dire, ce budget occulte les débats urgents pour la nation, par exemple, la réforme de la pension, l'industrie cannière et la réforme tant attendue dans le secteur d'eau.

J'ai parlé d'un *irresponsible Government*, des responsabilités aberrantes de ce gouvernement, et démontrées par son traitement de la situation en ce qu'il s'agit de l'endettement du pays. Rien de concret n'a été fait dans ce sens.

En juin 2018, M. le président, la dette publique représentait 63% du PIB, comme nous le savons tous. À la fin de 2019, elle restera au même niveau. Dans cette dette, on ne

comptabilise pas les emprunts garantis par le gouvernement comme celui de la *State Bank* pour le *Metro Express*, ou le *Safe City Project* pour lequel *Mauritius Telecoms* s'est emprunté plusieurs milliards. Si on devrait comptabiliser ces emprunts, la dette publique se rapprocherait de 70% du PIB. Le gouvernement donc donne le mauvais exemple lui-même. Il ne fait aucun effort pour réduire la dette du secteur public. Les chiffres du ministère des Finance en disent long sur le non-respect des engagements pris. Comme nous le savons, l'objectif fixé de la dette pour l'année 2017-2018 n'a pas été atteint. Ensuite une hausse de R 21milliards est attendue pour l'année 2018-2019. Puis, la dette du secteur public restera au niveau de 63% du PIB comme en 2017-2018, comme je viens de le dire.

Et je le répète, M. le président, considérant ces gros emprunts garantis par le gouvernement pour la *SBM, Mauritius Telecom*, et si on exclut les entreprises publiques, la part du service de la dette gouvernementale dans les dépenses publiques passera de 9.4 % à 11.9 % en espace de deux ou trois ans, M. le président.

Therefore, the hon. Minister may have very well instilled this feel good factor as we have seen. Cela a été fait, comme je viens de le dire sous la pression de la société civile, ou peut-être même en prévision des élections générales s'ils ont lieu avant la présentation du présent budget. *Be it as it may*, M. le président, l'honorable ministre des Finances a probablement réussi son coup en instaurant ce sentiment de *feel good*, de contentement et de bien-être au sein de la population, temporairement peut-être, par ces mesures électorales. Mais, comme je viens de le dire, aussi sous le coup ou réagissant à la pression populaire comme nous l'avons constaté avant la présentation du budget.

M. le président, analysons quelques dossiers qui restent toujours au-devant de l'actualité. Nous avons constaté pourquoi ce sentiment de frustration, d'insatisfaction dans la population a été provoqué par ce manque d'humanisme et ont démontré que nous avons au pouvoir aujourd'hui, un gouvernement amateur et incohérent. Je parle du dossier des produits pétroliers, par exemple. Analysons ce qui s'est passé concernant le dossier des produits pétroliers, M. le président.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when we look at the Budget with regard to this particular issue, decisions which have been taken for the petroleum products, again, the measures announced in the Budget have pleased probably the average consumer, but the sad truth, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the hon. Minister and his Government have not been able to offer any

comprehensive explanation with regard to the reduction in the prices of these products and are, in fact, shining away from the real problem.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in mid-May 2018 when the prices of petroleum products shot up, quand le Price Mecahnism Committee, l'honorable ministre, les autorités, y compris la STC avaient décidé d'augmenter le prix de l'essence et du diesel en mai de cette année-ci, l'honorable ministre était venu expliquer that it was in face of rising costs in the world market and that Government had no choice than to raise the retail prices of mogas and diesel by 10%.

Un mois après, l'honorable Premier ministre et ministre des Finances, usurpant le pouvoir du Petroleum Pricing Committee, unashamedly reduced the prices of these products, in spite of higher cost of petroleum products between May and June of this year!

Why did not the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Industry, and Government mitigate the impact of the prices of these products in May by doing exactly what they did in the Budget, by reviewing the price structure of these products. We have seen in the new structure of prices that the levy and subsidies on rice and flour have decreased. Government has agreed, or the hon. Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection, or the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, or the STC *conjointement*, they have agreed to reduce this subsidy *de R 2.70 à R 1.30*.

They have abolished completely the *Maurice Ile Durable* levy. There is a new price structure which allowed the decrease in the price of the petroleum products *lors de la présentation du budget*. This could have been done in May, one month earlier before the presentation of the Budget.

So, why were the prices not raised by only 5% in May 2018, *comme ils viennent de le faire pour le budget, M. le président?* Why did they have to inflict so much trauma on this country, on the taxi drivers, the van owners, *les motocyclistes, les pêcheurs et consommateurs en général*, en mai 2018, quand ils avaient augmenté le prix des produits pétroliers ?

Arbitrairement, M. le président, parce qu'il avait une solution, comme ils ont montré que la solution a été utilisée pour la présentation du budget. Ils ont réduit le prix de ces deux produits par 5 % lors de la présentation du budget. *So, the trauma of such significant rise de 10%, M. le président, qui a été suivi by a drop in the same price in the Budget cannot be explained when the fundamentals of these products, as I have just said, hardly change.* Et

tout le monde a réagi, M. le président, les syndicats, l'opposition, la population, nous avons tous argué que cette augmentation en mai *was unfair*, était injuste, était arbitraire. Et c'est pourquoi le leader de l'opposition avait raison quand il avait annoncé sa décision de présenter un 'Motion of Disallowance' et quand nous allons tous demander, M. le président, *that Government should review the price structure, the Government should lower the excise duty by Rs4 on each product. And if this was done, no increase of petroleum products would have taken place in May of this year.* Donc, c'est un manque d'humaniste. Voilà des produits qui sont augmentés à 10% et un mois après à l'occasion du budget réduit de 50%.

That is why I say rarely have we seen so much unanimity among the civil society. There was such outbreak of public anger when those prices were increased by 10% in May of this year. This Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will be remembered as far as petroleum products are concerned.

En janvier 2015, *when the prices of these products fell sharply*, ce gouvernement avait augmenté le *Build Mauritius Fund* par R 3 par litre, que ce soit le mogas ou le diésel donc l'augmentation du *Build Mauritius Fund* avait passé de R 1 à R 4, and at that time it was possible for the Government of passing on the decrease in the price of these products to consumers. This Government will be equally remembered, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for having "merge" the *Build Mauritius Fund* with the excise duty and increased the excise duty.

Aujourd'hui, le *excise duty*, M. le président, et de R 14.80 per litre of Mogas, l'essence, et R 7.30 sur chaque litre de diésel, *so that the excise duty compounded with the 15% VAT*, le calcul aujourd'hui quand nous ajoutons le 15% de VAT, M. le président, est à 34% *of the retail price of Mogas* et 21% sur chaque litre de diésel que nous importons.

Voilà donc la triste réalité, et *this Government will also be remembered for having, in November 2015, when there was an important drop in oil prices to have raised the contribution for subsidy on rice, flour and cooking gas* sur cet item de R 1.50 à R 2.70 per litre, M. le président.

Il y a quelque temps de cela le leader de l'opposition avait interpellé le ministre *of Trade and Industry* sur cette question, c'était le 22 mai de cette année-ci, M. le président. Et par le billet de cette question, nous avons appris, la Chambre et le pays, M. le président, avait appris que pendant 18 mois de janvier 2016 à juillet 2017, la STC a versé R 9,067,000,000 au *Consolidated Fund*. R 9 milliards *with regard to the amounts of fund contributed concerning petroleum products into the Consolidated Fund*.

Nous avons appris aussi pendant ces 18 mois la STC avait empoché R 2,039,000,000 *from the item contribution for subsidy fund on rice and flour and LPG gas*, M. le président. Donc, sur ce *levy* imposé par le gouvernement qui avait été augmenté par le gouvernement comme je viens de le dire tout à l'heure à R 2.70 sur chaque litre, cet item avait rapporté à la STC R 2,039,000,000 *contribution for subsidy fund on rice and flour*.

Mais ce qui est plus aberrant, M. le président, c'est que de cette recette de R 2,039,000,000, et ça c'est pas moi qui le dis, c'est le *Financial Statement for the 18 months period ending 30 juin 2017* publié par la STC, nous apprenons que seulement R 716 millions ont été utilisées *as subsidy for these products*. R 716 millions sur un total de R 2,039,000,000 qui avait empoché la STC sur un item seulement, M. le président. Seulement un tiers de cette somme qui avait été *extorted, extracted, pocketed from the consumers has been used for the purpose of subsidy*. And what had Government done with the remaining amount? This is what one can read in this document I just produced, I just showed you in the Financial Statement issued by the STC.

I can read, M. le président -

“In the Corporation’s Budget for the period ending 30 June 2017, the Board has given its approval for –

Payment of Dividend of Rs2.1 billion to Government out of which Rs1.25 billion has already been paid.”

Comprendons bien ce que nous disons. Donc, la STC a payé, a transféré ou a donné, a payé comme *dividend* la somme de R 2,015,000,000 au gouvernement, M. le président et R 1,025,000,000 déjà payées. C'est ce que dit ce rapport. Donc, voilà l'injustice de ce mécanisme qui a été utilisé par le gouvernement pendant des longs mois pendant ces trois ou ces quatre dernières années au pouvoir.

Therefore, today when Government comes and announces the decrease in the petroleum products or LPG gas, it is in fact *un trick mandage, une super tripe*, M. le président. Government and the STC are in fact refunding to the consumers partly what they had ignanomously ripped off from them.

Je répète R 2,039,000,000 empochées sur un seul item subsidy rice and flour, la somme utilisée seulement est de R 716 millions. R 2.15 milliards payé au gouvernement comme dividende. C'est grave, M. le président.

Alors, c'est pourquoi, pour moi, le petit peuple a été une vraie vache à lait entre les mains de ce gouvernement, s'agissant de l'importation des produits pétroliers. En lisant la réponse du PNQ du ministre des Finances, M. le président, nous nous sommes rendus compte, comment les consommateurs ont été saignés à blanc et comment la State Trading Corporation a fait main basse sur la population, en particulier les plus vulnérables déjà écrasés par la cherté de vie.

M. le président, je viens sur un autre dossier, le water sector. Ce matin, heureusement, nous avons eu droit à cette PNQ et la réponse du DPM, ministre de l'Énergie et des Utilités publiques. En écoutant le DPM ce matin, je dois dire, M. le président, que j'ai été davantage confus sur ce dossier. D'une part, au début, à certain moment, nous avons vu que le ministre, lui-même, ou son directeur, avait annoncé l'augmentation des tarifs d'eau et le 01 mai, nous avons entendu lors du meeting traditionnel que le Premier ministre avait dit: 'Aucune décision n'a été prise, que ce soit pour la privatisation ou pour la modernisation de ce secteur'.

Nous avons entendu le ministre de tutelle annonçait qu'il allait moderniser le secteur, qu'il avait recruté l'*IFC* pour une étude et, donc, il avait un *roadmap* qui avait été élaboré pour la modernisation de ce secteur, à un certain moment, et puis, le Premier ministre vient dire : 'Non, aucune décision n'a été prise.' Aujourd'hui, je semblais comprendre, il me semble que j'ai bien entendu ce qu'a dit le ministre, que le contrat d'affermage va de l'avant et le Leader de l'opposition avait raison quand il avait posé la question: est-il vrai que le bureau du Premier ministre songe à une autre option - parce que ceci a été rapporté dans la presse. M. le président - que le *CWA* allait recruter massivement des consultants, des experts, qu'ils allaient mettre à la tête de la *CWA*, pour donner un nouveau dynamisme à cet organisme. Donc, une formule est actuellement à l'étude. J'ai cru comprendre aussi que le *DPM* a répondu que ce n'est pas vrai, que cette nouvelle qui a une nouvelle formule à l'étude, à l'hôtel du gouvernement, afin de remplacer le projet d'affermage.

Donc, il y avait beaucoup de confusion dans le pays et à la tête de ceux qui suivent ce dossier M. le président. Il semblait avoir une cacophonie. D'une part le ministre de tutelle faisant des annonces dans un sens, le Premier ministre les désavouant, que ce soit sur la question de privatisation de réforme ou que ce soit sur la question d'augmentation des tarifs. J'espère qu'aujourd'hui la cacophonie, la confusion va disparaître avec la *PNQ* de ce matin.

Et d'après ce qu'a publié la Presse aussi, les procédures enclenchées au niveau la banque Mondiale avec l'Etat mauricien se poursuivent, malgré l'absence de communication du ministère, c'est ce que j'ai lu, à l'effet que projet était enterré.

Donc, ce que je voulais dire, M. le président, c'est, quelle incohérence! C'est dommage! Nous avons eu droit à autant de cacophonie au niveau d'un secteur aussi important que de l'eau. Le ministre de tutelle va être d'accord avec moi que c'est certainement négatif pour l'image de notre pays, au niveau local, international et au niveau des institutions internationales.

Donc, ce que nous savons bien compris aujourd'hui, pas de recrutement à l'étranger pour assurer la gestion de l'organisme, et j'espère qu'on tourne une page sur ce désordre qui a nui à la bonne réputation de notre pays aux yeux des institutions internationales. Mais ce qui est grave, M. le président, au niveau de la *CWA*, des hautes cadres abandonnent la banque, partent en retraite, la *CWA* est contrainte d'avoir recours à des découvertes bancaires pour financer ses dépenses courantes. Je suis au courant que le gouvernement ferme les robinets des subsides gouvernementaux depuis quelques années. Allons prendre la réduction de donner gratuitement à des familles vulnérables le 6 mètres cube d'eau, ceux qui utilisent moins de 6 mètres cube d'eau. Qui paye pour ce manque à gagner aujourd'hui ? Est-ce la *CWA* ou le gouvernement central ? Parce que c'était une politique du gouvernement central. Ce que j'ai appris, pour la première année, c'est le gouvernement central qui a fait les frais de, de cette mesure, et après la *CWA* a dû se débrouiller.

Il ne faut pas laisser la *CWA* mourir à petit feu, M. le président. C'est pourquoi les projets importants accusent du retard. La station de traitement de Bagatelle, de La Nicolière, de Piton du Milieu, de Pont Lardier, de Mont Blanc, toutes ces stations de traitement qui sont importantes, indispensables, à une bonne qualité d'eau dans nos robinets, doivent d'être opérationnelles ; et tout ceci contribue à la détérioration de la qualité de services de l'organisme, et la qualité d'eau distribuée aux consommateurs. Et j'y reviendrai dans quelques secondes, M. le président.

En attendant, ce que je voulais demander au ministre sur cette question de contrat d'affermage, puisque il semblerait que maintenant, c'est l'option qui a été choisie par l'honorable *DPM*. Le rapport a été déposé sur la Table de l'Assemblée. *L'IFC has produced a report*, mais il nous faut faire bien attention, M. le président, sur le contenu de ce report, sur le contenu du contrat qu'il va lier l'Etat, la *CWA* à ces opérateurs étrangers. J'ai suivi un peu

le dossier, j'ai été même présent à la présentation du rapport; l'honorable ministre va s'en souvenir.

Je voudrais demander au ministre la question suivante : est-il vrai que dans ce rapport, les trois *main recommendations* ont été les suivantes ?

Le contrat sera fait sur une base de 15 ans. Est-il vrai ou non, et qu'est-ce qui se passe en attendant s'il y a un problème sur son contrat, s'il y a un désaccord ? Est-il vrai que le contrat durera 15 ans ?

Est-il vrai que l'eau, finalement 24/7, *will be available around the clock to all Mauritians at best in 5 years' time*? C'est ce qui a été écrit dans le rapport. Est-il vrai ? Est-ce que ce sera dans le contrat liant la CWA et les opérateurs économiques en question ? Donc, il nous faudra attendre 5 ans encore ! Même si le gouvernement décide d'aller de l'avant avec ce contrat d'affermage et signe un contrat avec l'opérateur économique.

Et finalement, M. le président, est-il vrai que ce projet va coûter au pays, à la CWA, au peuple mauricien R 10 milliards, que la CWA aura à trouver R 4 milliards en emprunt, le gouvernement R 3 milliards ? J'ai oublié les détails, mais la somme de R 10 milliards a été mentionnée. Est-ce qu'il est vrai ? Et ce seront les consommateurs, le pays qui aura à débourser cet argent, M. le président.

Alors, voilà pourquoi le ministre de tutelle qui est, comme nous le savons tous, une personne intelligente, n'a pas le droit de nous laisser mains et pieds liés, et mettre ce pays et la CWA à la disposition d'un opérateur économique, M. le président. Il faut faire attention. Il n'y aura pas d'*increase* du tarif, *no revision of the tariff structure* dans le court terme. Mais dans le moyen terme ? Dans le long terme ? N'est-il pas vrai que des engagements ont été pris, dans ce rapport, dans la recommandation du IFC, *that water will be increased, tariffs will be increased before and after the signature of the contract*? C'est écrit noir sur blanc dans le rapport, M. le président. Alors, voilà les questions que je pose au nom de mes mandants, du pays, M. le président, et nous nous attendons à des débats honnêtes, à des réponses honnêtes et objectives à ces questions que tout le monde se pose.

Beaucoup d'annonces concernant ce secteur ont été faites dans le budget de l'année dernière, M. le président. Savez-vous que dans le budget de l'année dernière, aux paragraphes 194 et 195, il est dit ceci, et je cite -

“194. Our first priority is the water sector.

195. This Government has made a pledge that water will be made available to all households on a round-the-clock basis. Our aim is to fulfil this promise by the end of 2019 at latest.”

C'est-à-dire que d'après l'annonce faite dans le budget de l'année dernière, on aura droit à *water on a round-the-clock basis* jusqu'à décembre de l'année prochaine, *at the end of 2019*, M. le président.

Nous ne pouvons plus prendre au sérieux cette affirmation, parce que je viens de vous démontrer que les experts en la matière, recrutés à coût de millions pour faire des études sur notre système d'eau, ont prescrit que moyennant tous les investissements requis, c'est-à-dire la somme astronomique de R 10 milliards, l'eau 24/7 ne pourra être distribuée que dans 5 ans, M. le président. Et toutes ces autres mesures qui ont été annoncées dans le discours précédent et cette année-ci, M. le président. *I will not take the time of the House going in all these different paragraphs. I will stop here on this sector*, sur ce dossier, M. le président, mais en demandant au ministre du tutelle *to tread with caution on this question of reform of the water sector.*

M. le président, voyons maintenant un autre dossier which has been in the lime light, the cane industry. I will not dwell lengthily on this dossier. I have listened, just now, to the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor. In spite of the prominence which this industry occupies in our country, in terms of its strong linkages with the rest of the economy, only three paragraphs are devoted to this sector. Two measures are allegedly announced for the support of planters, but I consider it to be a letdown.

True it is that the cane industry has been, in the recent years, blasted by important reductions in the world sugar price. *J'aurais pensé, moi, que c'est à cause de cette raison que le Premier ministre aurait dû saisir l'occasion* to come with a roadmap for this ailing industry. Why did this Government have to wait for the presentation of the Budget to set up a ministerial committee to assess the situation and to come up with an appropriate action plan for the cane industry to meet its challenges? *C'est ce qui a été annoncé dans le budget ; un ministerial committee. Je dirais que c'est une autre évidence de l'irresponsabilité et l'amateurisme du gouvernement. D'abord, je pense que le gouvernement aurait dû se dissocier du rapport du Joint Technical Committee ouvertement, immédiatement and without*

any prevarication when this Report, of which I have a copy in my hands, was finalised, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I will not go lengthily, as I said, in the recommendations of this Report. Les syndicalistes ont brûlé ce rapport ; d'autres ont dit qu'il faut le mettre dans la poubelle. Je n'irai pas aussi loin que cela pour ma part. Mais je dirai que c'est un document qu'il faut cacher dans le tiroir au plus vite, *which should be shelved*, M. le président. *It is a social time bomb and constitutes a deliberate attack on the acquired rights of the workforce of this industry.*

M. le président, personne ne nie, ne dispute la question de moderniser, de viabiliser, de rendre plus profitable *the cane industry*. Personne ! Nous n'avons pas le droit de le faire, M. le président. Mais seulement, *on the other hand*, M. le président, nous nous souvenons tous que des générations de laboureurs, des artisans de ce pays ont donné leur sueur et leur sang. Ils ont été les bâtisseurs de notre économie. Je le répète, M. le président. Nous sommes tous d'accord qu'il faut viabiliser, rendre plus profitable, trouver le *necessary package for this sector*.

Mais il est triste de constater, que ce soit au niveau des employés, des laboureurs, des artisans et les petits planteurs, que des propositions scélérates ont été faites et envisagées, alors que nous savons tous qu'un groupe a bénéficié des retombées de cette industrie au temps où elle était florissante. Oui, M. le président, l'île Maurice a besoin de repenser ce secteur afin de le redynamiser. Oui à la viabilité, oui à l'*efficiency* de l'industrie cannière, mais non à l'élimination des droits acquis pour les travailleurs, que ce soit en termes de rémunération ou en termes de pension. L'absence de consultations avec les syndicats, l'association des petits planteurs et autres acteurs condamnent ce rapport irrémédiablement.

Quel gâchis et quel temps perdu, M. le président ! Venir proposer le licenciement dans un secteur qui n'emploie que 4,000 bras de nos jours. En proposant l'augmentation de 10 sous par kilowatt de l'électricité vendue par les IPPs au CEB, permettant ainsi une augmentation de R 250 millions. En proposant que, dorénavant les petits planteurs auront à payer R 1 million par arpent en plus sur le *Land Conversion Tax* pour décourager l'abandon des champs de canne par les petits planteurs, alors que nous savons tous qui sont ceux qui ont joui des *land conversion rights*, M. le président. Et j'en passe !

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ganoo, I wish to remind you that out, of 51 minutes, you have 2 minutes to conclude now!

Mr Ganoo: Well, I had one hour as far as I know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

...because my friend, hon. Barbier did not, as you know, intervene and we had 90 minutes the two of us and some minutes were, of course, allowed to hon. Shakeel Mohamed.

The Deputy Speaker: I understand. A last five minutes!

Mr Ganoo: *I will wrap up in a few minutes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.* Donc, ce que je disais, M. le président, ce document constitue une recette à une crise sociale programmée et doit être mis de côté au plus vite possible.

M. le président, I will now talk on a few sectors very rapidly, but before doing this, I will come on the question of import substitution. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, paragraph 61 announces the reintroduction of import substitution schemes and for meeting food requirements. The Sheltered Farming Scheme could appear to be an attractive project, but then, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on this question of import substitution, I think, we should go back to the 1980s when the then Government decided to abandon this strategy.

Have the policy advisers gone back and review all the IMF and World Bank reports and the specialised consultancy reports that have rejected the import substitution strategy, *M. le président*? Does it make sense to encourage import substitution strategies today when there is a glut in food supply in the whole world, when Mauritius cannot find agricultural workers? Without manual labour this project cannot survive. How do we reconcile import substituted strategy in the domain of agriculture when we know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we cannot reconcile these measures with the goal of developing hi-tech sectors and achieving high income status? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we must review this strategy.

I will say a few words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on this question of artificial intelligence. Now, this Budget proposes the setting up of an Artificial Intelligence Council. The same thing was proposed last year. It is clear that in the field of artificial intelligence nothing serious has been achieved, *M. le président*.

When we look at what is happening in other parts of the world, in Africa, for example, the progress they have achieved, we should be more proactive and commit ourselves to build a truly innovative Mauritius. I was just reading, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Africa's nascent Artificial Intelligence Sector just got its biggest boost from Google, which is opening its first Africa Artificial Intelligence Research Centre in Accra, Ghana's capital. I can read also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the company says it is trying to bring together top machine learning researchers and engineers. Google is making a big bet on artificial intelligence for its future. In 2016 alone, it invested 30 billion USD on artificial intelligence. AI is already having major footprints across Africa in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe. Research from PricewaterhouseCoopers estimated artificial intelligence technologies will increase global GDP by 15.7 trillion USD, a full 14% by 2030, of which 1.2 trillion USD will be added for Africa. I can go on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We must be more proactive and not content ourselves with announcing measures.

Just like the small and medium enterprise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, year in and year out, what do we hear? Access to finance, access to markets, other infrastructural supports in terms of industrial estates, equipment leasing, these are the traditional schemes to foster the development of MSMEs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. These traditional strategies seem to have been unfruitful and they have not helped in the flourishing of this sector. It is high time, and this is what I am proposing that we take serious rethink of our strategies and promoting these MSMEs as they can be a major contributor, as we know, in our economic growth.

What I am proposing is that Government should adopt a value chain analysis of certain products that could be manufactured partially in Mauritius and attract the production of that process in other countries. Mauritian entrepreneurs could then be encouraged to be involved in the production of that segment of the production process. For instance, we can partner with cellular phone manufacturing company, equipment manufacturing industry where the MSMEs can produce a component in the production process. This is what happened in Thailand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Thailand has built its industry on that value chain basis, as I have just mentioned. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I invite you to conclude, hon Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the energy sector as well, when we look at what is happening in this sector we must be worried. I am talking of renewable energy. The main source of electricity generation in our country is still coal, 41.6%, followed by diesel and

fossil fuel to the tune of 37.4% and renewable source is 20.9%, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In spite of all the efforts done by the Minister and the Ministry, we have not been able to reach where other countries have reached. This is why, according to the official statistic, total energy production for local renewable sources has decreased by 4% in 2016 to 2017. Electricity generated from renewable sources decreased from 664 GW to 661GW, down by 0.5%, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Landfill gas has decreased by 10.5% from 19 GW to 17 GW, bagasse by 6.8%. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is an alarming situation.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ganoo...

Mr Ganoo: I wonder what...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ganoo, I shall have to stop you here. Thank you.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I just conclude? I just wanted to say that although I will not insist and dispute your ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to end up by saying one thing and I am sure you will not prevent me from saying that. Sir, I was saying that this Budget has come up with a few social measures. But, I think the Government should also pursue in its endeavour to come up with new social measures.

I am thinking of the fishermen, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Now, we have a minimum wage, we have a negative income tax, I think that we should think of a minimum wage or a minimum bad weather allowance and a different social formula pour les pêcheurs de ce pays, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank you, hon. Ganoo! Thank you very much. Hon Bodha!

(4.43 p.m.)

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is great honour and privilege to address the august Assembly on the occasion of the Budget Speech. But the last of the Mohicans, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, has made such a formidable speech and he has used a bulldozer that my task has become simpler, I will have to do some fine derocking and pursue the plantation of seeds for the development of this country and the prosperity of our people. I would like really to congratulate Sir

Anerood Jugnauth for a memorable and historical journey in the speech which started in the 50's and ended up in 2018.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development has understood two things -

1. the challenges of the World Economic Contest today, and
2. the challenges of Mauritius which is to get out of the Middle Income Trap.

which we have been within for a number of years now.

First of all, let us paint the international context today. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today itself, the American President Donald Trump imposed 20% tariff on cars being imported from Europe. We are at the beginning of a trade war which is not only transatlantic between a US and the EU or transpacific between the US and the Far East. But it is also transborder with Canada and with Mexico.

The Prime Minister and Jayen Cuttaree who was the Minister of Commerce in the 2000-2005 mandate and myself and the hon. Speaker, Madam Hanoomanjee, we worked - it took 2 years to come to the Doha Round to be able to have a World Trade Order which would have benefited all the countries. And Mauritius did remarkably well because we organised here under the chairmanship of Jayen Cuttaree the G90 Meeting and we were heading the G90 Meeting.

It took two years but the Doha Round did not lead to an agreement on the World Trade, but one President of the United States has distorted and dismantled the whole Economic and Trade Order in 3 or 4 months and we still don't know what is going to happen. Why I do say thus because we are having talks on the AGOA in the next 15 days and AGOA has been a pillar of our industrial development, our exports to the United States and we relied heavily on the AGOA to be able to see to it that our Industrial Sector thrives and is competitive.

What is also in the international context today, very volatile petroleum prices and the volatile petroleum prices is also linked to a very volatile situation in the Middle-East where Western Democracy has not been able to find a solution in Libya, in Syria, in Iraq and to find also a peaceful settlement for the Palestinian people which we support and that sector, that region can flare-up any time within what is going to happen as an impact is going to be the price of oil.

In Europe, we have a distortion of the European market with the *Brexit* and we don't know what is going to happen as regards to the free movement of goods, services and persons. So, this is the context and the Prime Minister is very much aware of it, because for a number of years he has been following this situation. This is where we have to be able to drive Mauritius. In many cases, I understand there has been a lot of criticisms from the Opposition's side. There have been a lot of criticisms, in fact we have tried to score and they have been trying all the time to commit fouls. Well, that is the way; it is the rule of the game. But nobody mentioned this. We are not an isolated island. Mauritius is not the world in itself. Mauritius depends ...

(Interruptions)

The world today, we have to take care of that because of our exports, because of our development process and the Sugar Protocol is no more. I am glad my colleague for International Trade is here.

The Sugar Protocol is no more, what if tomorrow AGOA is no more and in Europe, we have this agreement between the ACP and European Union. The Convention of Lomé which was so helpful to us, the Sugar Protocol is no more and the European Union is trying to dismantle the ACP as a group so that we have regional partnerships.

(Interruptions)

Post Cotonou. So, this is the context and it is in this context that we are sailing. And it is in this context that the Prime Minister and this Government is harnessing the energy of the people of Mauritius to find solutions.

Because we are talking about the International Context, hon. Dr. Boolell made a number of remarks about India. I will say two things and I will come back to India later on the Metro Express. May I remind hon. Dr. Boolell that in 1996 there was - and the hon. Paul Bérenger will know about this because he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs - a vote on the draft Global Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and, as far as I remember, Government had already decided to vote.

Dr. Navin Ramgoolam went to India and met Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and from there he asked for Mauritius to abstain on this issue because India convinced him that this document was a worthless piece of paper. I am not saying that what we did was wrong but I am explaining the type of relationship that we have. Do you know what happened, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? The Resolution approving this Comprehensive Test Ban

was supported by 158 States – Cuba, Lebanon, Mauritius, Syria and Tanzania abstained, supported India.

And two years later when the Prime Minister Vajpayee came to Mauritius, he explained why he had taken that position and, as far as I remember, he also met hon. Paul Bérenger who had become in the meantime the Leader of the Opposition. This is the type of relationship that we have with India and the way he spoke I don't think that it was reflective of the bond that unites Mauritius to India. I spoke to a few Indians who are here; officials and they said maybe it is out of despair, that was the explanation which was given to me.

(Interruptions)

So, the facts are wrong, but what Mauritius did. Anyway, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now come to the macroeconomic fundamentals in Mauritius. When we see the rate of growth over the years between 2001 and 2018, the forecasted growth rate was never attained, was attained only during five years. And in some years like 2001, it was forecasted at 5.6 and what was achieved was 2.4. In 2005, the forecast was 5.1; what was achieved was 2.2. In other years, it was forecasted at 3.5 and it was 3%. I am saying this because hon. Uteem said that we have failed because we have never met the objectives which we had fixed.

The Budget always is a target and we have a number of conditions and a number of factors which come in, like in 2001 we had a cyclone, and we had September, 11, which impacted on industrial exports and tourism.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what are the factors that have become challenges in the middle income trap: productivity; labour skilling; how to upgrade from where we are, that is, in the lower middle income to get into the upper middle income. This is a formidable challenge and Lord Desai said it will take years for us to be able to achieve this. This is what we are trying to do, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And when it comes to the job market, we know how the mismatch is. Do you know how many thousands of jobs are available in the construction sector today? But we don't have people. It is because we have the work culture which has also changed in Mauritius. When we made our constituents on Wednesday, do you know what is the focus? It is some sort of an obsession on the public sector. But if we really want to get out of the middle income trap, we have to go on multi-skilling; we have to go on more expertise; we have to develop a number of new sectors.

I agree with what hon. Ganoo said about the Artificial Intelligence Sector. Yes, there is a potential. He said that Google has gone to Accra, but the European Union also have come

to us. This is what my colleague, hon. Sawmynaden, had said. So, these are the problems that we have in Mauritius as regards the economic fundamentals, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Now, this Government has taken some very bold measures. We had the audacity of purpose to do that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Nine-Year Schooling, nobody speaks about it, but Nine-Year Schooling the touches 250,000 families and removes the rat race. It is the extension of what we did between 2000 and 2005, when we came with the regionalisation of the schools. The second one, we came with the Minimum Wage. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you see the labour movement for the last hundred years, this is one of the most significant pillars, political decisions ever taken. So many countries in the world do not have a minimum wage. And we have been able to do so. And my colleague rightly put the two words without ‘distorting and disrupting’ the labour market. A lot of people thought that with a minimum wage they would have sacking and job losses by thousands, which would have shrunk the labour market. But we did that. It was very ingenious to come up with this top-up of the scheme to be able to do it without destructing and distorting the labour market. This is a formidable achievement. It is a historical achievement, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Then, there is the Negative Income Tax which impacts on tens of thousands of families.

Another bold to decision, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the Commission of Inquiry. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth mentioned this. He spoke lengthily about it; the conditions of 1986. I remember only one thing; Lady Jugnauth in tears seeing him wearing a bullet-proof jacket. This is what I keep from that period. And then, the report came out and the audacity and the severe offences which were later enacted in the Dangerous Drugs Act which led to the dismantling of the mafia then.

Another bold decision which in 2005, we also tried to do it, is the request for an advisory opinion on the decolonisation of Africa with reference to the Chagos at the United Nations General Assembly. This was also a bold decision. I remember in 2005, the issue of getting out of the Commonwealth was also raised. That was a bold decision. I think that for these bold decisions, it shows that we have charted our way in a very difficult, international and local context very ingenuously, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Let me now say few words on the drug issue. Sir Anerood mentioned it. The amount of drugs which have been seized recently which is around Rs500 m. I would like to say one thing about it. In fact, from January to June the amount seized is Rs2.5 billion. In 2015, it was

Rs178 m. In 2016, it was Rs170 m. Now, let me explain one thing. The Commission of Enquiry's report with the steadfastness and the bold decisions that we can take - and I am convinced the hon. Prime Minister will take - will crush in its embryo the cartelisation of the drug business in Mauritius. If we see what has happened in Colombia, if we see what has happened in the Latin America where the mafia, in fact, and some having its own army, its own people in the Judiciary, its own people among the political class, its own people, of course, selling and trading, and these people don't touch drugs - within the police. You have heard about Medellin Cartel. It becomes a carte and, in fact, fights against the democratic system because of the billions and the power and the resources they have.

We are now attacking the embryo of it in Mauritius. Just like the prisons have become some sort of control tower of drugs trafficking. I am sure that the way the hon. Prime Minister is handling the issue, the way Sir Anerood Jugnauth, this Government is handling the issue, with the report, we would be able to crush in their embryo the cartelisation of the drug business. Already, with the seizures we are having an issue, its availability of synthetic drugs and the cheapness of it. We have to attack this!

And the solution is, of course, fighting the drugs, fighting the market, fighting the trafficking. But there is something which has to be done. *Les forces vives, les forces socio-culturelles* have a role to play. Each family has a role to play to see to it that their children do not fall prey to this scourge. This is the only way to win the battle, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Now, let me come to sugar. I will be quite brief because a lot has been said. The first VRS was financed by a loan which was taken by the sugar industry. That was the first VRS. The second VRS was funded by accompanying measures for eight years, of Rs2 billion, and those accompanying measures were negotiated by the Prime Minister and myself with Commissioners Lamy, Michel and Mandelson, and it lasted eight years. We were the only country of the ACP in the world - hon. Dr. Boolell knows this - which had a direct injection in the Budget. Otherwise, what happened, the money was in Brussels, you had to come with your projects and they would disburse the money and, in many cases, this money was never disbursed like for the Banana Reform in the Caribbean. They got nothing and the industry died.

We got Rs8 billion every year, from 2006 to 2014, and it was in the pockets of Rama Sithanen, the Minister of Finance, and Xavier Duval the Minister of Finance after. The other billion was to go to the industry, corporate and small planters, and we were talking about

tablissement, ti planters. This was what I was advocating, and we wanted to regroup the small planters. We wanted to have their own estates and, in some cases, the sugar estate managing them so that we can have a cost of production which was competitive, so that we have the economics of scale, we could put all the land, the small plots together and revamp the shrinking of the small planter area. But what was done? We know what was done. Two-third of that money had to go to the corporate sector and one-third was supposed to come to the small planters. The small planters, nothing was done; some irrigation was done and some de-rocking was done. It is the failure of the second VRS which led to the solution to the problem today, together with the shrinking in prices, because now we are at Rs10,000 per tonne of sugar.

Today, we are being told that we have to do this; we have to burn the report. But we have no lesson! The Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, this Government has no lesson! We have stood by the industry in the national interest all the time, and this time as well this will be done. The blueprint and the acquired rights. When it comes to early retirement, the acquired rights are here and I do not think that these acquired rights will be tampered with, because we have to find a solution for the workers, for the small planters and for the corporate sector. Then, we will be able to see to it that the cane industry continues to be one of the pillars of the economy.

The tea industry is very dynamic, is regaining vigour, but I would like to remind hon. Dr. Boolell. He was the one who came with the idea of uprooting the tea estates and...

(Interruptions)

Listen! I listened to the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: I am stating the truth.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member!

Mr Bodha: So, he came with the policy of uprooting...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, just extend the courtesy. Hon. Bodha, please resume!

Mr Bodha: So, he came with this policy of uprooting the tea estates, and do you know what happened, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Millions were spent to remake the drains and the roads, and that was a scandal. Hundreds of millions to make drains and roads in the former tea estates to be able to plant cane. And we know what happened to those cane plantation. He is a very good friend of mine, but as Sir Anerood Jugnauth said, we have to tell them a number of things.

(*Interruptions*)

No, I never challenged what the hon. Member said.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bodha, address the Chair!

Mr Bodha: So, this is for the tea sector.

Let me come now to a few issues which have been raised there as regards infrastructure, Terre Rouge-Verdun. But this time I did not see the scaring remarks and criticism over the Metro Express that we had last year. I think people have come to terms with it.

What I would like to say now is about the construction industry. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last year, 2017, the gross fixed investment in that sector was Rs80 billion, out of which the construction sector was Rs50 billion. And let me tell you one thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The industry started declining in 2011 and the decline in 2013 was 9.4%, 2014, 8.5%, 2015, when we took over, it was -5% and in 2016, it reached the level of 2010. But, last year, the industry grew by 7.5%, and this year, it is expected to grow by 9.5%, and as we usually say, *quand la construction va, tout va*.

Now, with the dynamism of this industry, it will have a considerable impact on the growth of the economy, and I am sure had it not been for the slump in sugar and the fact that we had some problems in the manufacturing sector, we would have gone beyond the 4% this year. This is a psychological figure that we have to go beyond, and we have targeted it for next year. I am sure that we will reach that figure next year.

Let me now come to the Metro Express. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Jahangeer is not here, he said we copied the project of the Labour Party. The Metro Express has been in the DNA of the MSM since long - Sir Anerood Jugnauth already, and the Minister was Ramduth Jaddoo. In 1995, the light rail was on track, it cost then Rs4 billion. When we came back in 1995, it was shelved, and when we came back in 2000 with the MSM-MMM Government, we promoted it again. And then...

(Interruptions)

I will explain that. I will explain that, do not worry!

In 2005, as soon as the Labour Party came in, their favoured option was the bus lane. That was the favoured, and between 2005 and 2010, Anil Bachoo, my predecessor, introduced a number of arguments in this Parliament to explain the Halcrow Report - a number of reports. Some of my colleagues are here to explain that the bus lane was the preferred option for the Labour Party.

(Interruptions)

And in 2010, when we were negotiating an alliance with the Labour Party, the Prime Minister sent me and Mr Dev Beekharry to talk to the then hon. Prime Minister, that we are going on *le projet de société* and that there were a number of key issues that we wanted to introduce. One was the school fees, the other one was the non-taxing of dividends, on the interest rate, the third one was NRPT and one was the Metro Express.

In fact, when we came back, the Prime Minister now, the Minister of Finance then, he organised a meeting and we came with a figure of about Rs14 billion/ Rs15 billion for the Metro. We left in 2011, and nobody was talking about the Metro. I am answering to hon. Shakeel Mohamed. And then, all of a sudden, in 2013, the Prime Minister went to Singapore and came back, saying that Singapore Corporation Enterprise now will review the project. And we came with a figure of Rs24.5 billion. Rs10 billion more! That is why we wrote this letter before the Elections. It was Rs24.5 billion. So, he went to India, had a negotiation with the Indian Government and got a Line of Credit, which, if the project was implemented, it would have cost the country Rs30 billion. This is your Metro at Rs30 billion!

(Interruptions)

We have not changed anything, except for one segment!

Your Metro was costing the country Rs30 billion. That's why you shelved it! And the word we had used was 'shelving' because it is a project which has always been to the MSM.

In 2016, the then Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth had a meeting with the SCE of Singapore. And they said: "You know, we can bring this sum to a reasonable one; you can have your Metro." So, Sir Anerood Jugnauth said "Yes, prove it to us." That is how they came with a figure of Rs17.7 billion. I asked them what the difference is. Where? It was a difference of Rs4 billion which was called preliminaries and it was there. So, I said: "Ask them for what do these Rs4 billion stand for?" They said: "For preliminaries to start the project". Later, we understood how this figure had been computed.

(Interruptions)

The SCE came back to us to say that it can be done for less than Rs18 billion. The Prime Minister went to India, and India gave 200 million dollars as grant and 260 million dollars at a concessionary loan interest of 1.8%, with seven years moratorium and 26 instalments to be paid in thirteen years, which we are doing. That is why I mention about the relationship with India

Now, let me tell them something else. The first 250 million dollars is a grant. The Government of India has accepted that we can do whatever with that grant, pay whoever we wish. Often grants have conditionalities. For the 260 million dollars of Line of Credit, usually India imposes that goods and services from India range to about 75%. This is a bit what happens. We know what happens when you have a Line of Credit from China; even *la brouette vient de la Chine. C'est comme ça. C'est la vérité.* The Indian Government usually imposes a conditionality of 75%. When L&T came with the figures about accessing goods and services from India, it came to only 35%. And exceptionally, as a one-time measure, the Cabinet in India accepted that we have 30% only of goods coming from India.

And what is the result, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Trains are coming from Spain, paid by Indian money. Rails are coming from England and Russia, paid by Indian money. Signalling and systematising is coming from France, paid by Indian money. And we have been given the possibility to use that money.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this shows the exceptional quality of the relationship between India and Mauritius, and the exceptional quality of the trust between the Prime Minister of Mauritius and the Prime Minister of India. This was said to us in the letter.

Now, to come to the Metro Express, we have had so many...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members! Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dr. Boolell, please! From a sitting position, don't disrupt the proceedings!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dr. Boolell!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bodha, please resume!

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the Indian authorities agree, we can table that document in the National Assembly. I will ask them.

Let me come to the Metro Express now. We have had so many criticisms, vibrant, violent coming from the Opposition. They did everything for the project not to take off. Once it was taking off, they were saying: "There are problems! With about 600,000 inhabitants in a conurbation, which is densely populated, you cannot open up this structure with all the utilities which date back to 50-60 years, the electricity, water, and wastewater and not disturb the whole thing."

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have always asked the population to understand us.

Today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, work is being carried out at the same time on a 24/7 basis on eight different sites. The Metro is on track, on time. The trains are coming in June-July for the three months' testing and we will keep the pledge – I like that word, it is from hon. Shakeel Mohamed - of the Prime Minister to the nation, that we are going to have a Metro between Rose Hill and Port Louis in September 2019.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a very complex project. You have the civil engineering. You have the levelling. You have the laying of the rails, the electrical links, the rolling stocks. We have the systematising. In about two or three weeks, we are going to GRNW to lay the foundation stone of a bridge of 250 metres to cross the river with the Metro Express. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 400 piles have to be built and we are piling two piles a day. It is 200 days just for the piles.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are on track to provide an amazing transportation system. When I see all the criticisms, all that has been said, I find a soothing feeling when an old lady of 80 whom I met, said : “*Beta, rail gari mé hum kab chharab*”, that is, “When will I go on board the train?” I saw her excitement and asked why. She then said that when she was a child in the 50s, she went on board a train and she wants to do it again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the Metro which is Rs18.8 billion of investment, we are not only doing a rail track, - I have always said that we are not doing only a rail track - we are re-engineering the whole urban landscape from Curepipe, Vacoas, Quatre Bornes, Rose Hill and Port Louis. We are building the urban terminals.

I am so happy today to announce that the urban terminal of Victoria is on course. The Consortium has accepted all the conditions which have been imposed by the letter of intent of the Cabinet. And on the 28, that is, on next Thursday, we are making a presentation to all the Ministers, to all the hawkers because they have been playing political games on this. 1,000 hawkers to be housed in a market, paying Rs4,000 a month. Because they have always said we are not doing it. On Thursday, we are presenting it to the hawkers and to the Ministries and all the stakeholders, including the Municipality of Port Louis, and works are going to start in 4 months. It is costing Rs1.6 billion together with a trail passenger track, together with a bus terminal, parking, food court, market, office and a plaza. And we are renovating the old stone building, which was barricaded by the former Minister, to the tune of Rs300 m., and for Immigration Square, the request for proposal has already been done.

We have 3 international companies, some based here, some based abroad, who have made a proposal which will go beyond the Rs2 billion. I would like to reassure my good friend of Constituency Number 16, hon. Baboo, that the experts of the UNESCO - and my colleague is here, Pradeep Roopun - have gone through the documents before the bidding, have met the bidders on PPG6 and at the same time they are going to be part of the evaluation team. Because we want to respect this World Heritage Site, not only respect it but the spirit of

the site will also be included in the design of the terminal, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The 2 experts came to Mauritius and they have been working with us and their report is going to be handed over to my colleague in the days to come. UNESCO will be on board all the way in the supervision as well of this project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross-talking!

Mr Bodha: We will obtain the clearance, do not worry about that. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you are a Minister, a Prime Minister, a Government, we are ultimately responsible. As Sir Anerood said, the CP is ultimately responsible for whatever happens but he cannot be in every Police station. I am ultimately responsible for what has happened in the Terre Rouge-Verdun, and I assume that responsibility. I have to explain; that road, first of all, the alignment is wrong. Second, the road works were wrong. Third, they did not detect that the whole slope is unstable.

Now, we are finding it in Côte d'Or. This whole region, and it took us time and I am satisfied today that we have understood what has happened and we have the solution. I think those who pass by, will see that the works have accelerated for the fill, and we are putting 150 piles along the side to contain the slope. And this structural work will be done by the end of this year, and we will do the road works at the beginning of next year. So, hopefully, the road is going to be open at the beginning of next year and not, as said in the Budget, in December 2019. I assume what has happened because we cannot fail. I can bear all the criticisms but I cannot do something which will fail. We cannot do that. We owe it to the country that we have to give something, and I have been given the assurance that it will last another 100 years, in an area, in a terrain which is extremely complex and extremely difficult to master.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to address the issue of Quatre Bornes because hon. Dr. Boolell is here. When I said the alignment between Curepipe and Port Louis has never been changed. It is the same project. The only place we have brought some significant changes is that we have brought it from elevated to ground between Curepipe and Curepipe Road. The rest is the same. So, in all the projects, Roland Armand was at grade since 1990, and the traffic in Quatre Bornes, from St Jean to Quatre Bornes was four lanes, 2 lanes for the Metro and 2 lanes for the traffic. We came with another solution; the solution is from Quatre

Bornes to St Jean, it will be only an exit traffic. So, we need an entry traffic, and that entry traffic is an overpass at Hillcrest to the tune of Rs330m which we are going to do before the works. It has already been designed and now we are going to launch the tenders to have those works, that there is an overpass from the motorway to enter Quatre Bornes on 2 lanes so that we enter Quatre Bornes at Hillcrest and you get out of Quatre Bornes in the St Jean normal traffic today.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this was something I really wanted to say. Again, when we come to land transport, we are working with the Singapore Corporation Enterprise and Pricewaterhousecoopers and the trade unions to find the best interface between the Metro and the bus industry, because the bus industry will be affected at UBS, CNT and Rose Hill. So, we are working to see to it that there is no redundancy, that all the jobs which are available in the rail industry are given to those who are from the bus sector and we are also considering the possibility of an early retirement in case some of the workers opt for an early retirement, but the solution that we have, with the feeder buses, that normally there should be no redundancy in the industry with the advent of the Metro Express.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I now come to the issue of accidents. Again, ultimately, we are responsible. There has already been a big debate about penalty point system, the new system, and when I came with the new system, everybody said that it was because we had this problem of double jeopardy. And, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that 18 months under the penalty points system, there were 5 cases of suspension. And 18 months with the new system, we have 43. The only thing is that we have to make people aware and this what we are doing because after 3 offences, we have reduced it from 6 to 5 for a suspension, and after 3 offences, people will be notified that you have only 2 offences left now. And with the battery of measures that have come in the Budget, and some measures which are coming after, that is fighting alcohol, drugs and speed, I think I am sure that we will be able to make much headway. But the problems are simple and very complex, it is the DNA of the Mauritian as a driver; second, the 2-wheelers; third, the pedestrians. We have a driving culture and we should be able, and this will change with time, with education; with the starting in the schools, with the curriculum development. 2-wheelers, we have the *moto-écoles*; we have 2, we are going to have 4.

We are going to open up the market so that you cannot - people are saying that the tests are too difficult now, but they have to be. And the first test is for you just to stay on the

motorbike for 23 seconds, many people cannot. The second one is to be able to brake 50km/h within, about 30m, this is difficult? You can only achieve it if you go to the *moto-écoles*. And this is the way we have to it, because we cannot accept that we lose and that we lose the life of a young person. It is always a tragedy. Life, I have always said, is never the same before an accident or after an accident.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are many measures which have been addressed and which have been commented. I, for one, believe, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we are builders. We are born to build. If you see modern Mauritius since the 80s up to now, it bears the stamp of the leaders who have a vision to build this country. Just imagine what is happening between JinFei and Quay D! Close your eyes, we will make it become a boulevard of six lanes. Just imagine what is going to happen between Curepipe and Port Louis with the Urban Terminal, with the Caudan entry, with the train going at ground plus 2.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to build the other pillars of the economy: AI. I was very impressed by what my colleague said about all data. We have set up the institutions, but there should be a change in the mindset. You can't have a basic IT Diploma and say that you will be in the industry because the industry is focused. The industry needs expertise, skills to start up.

So, there are new pillars of the economy. As I said, had we had sugar at the same level as last year; had we had textile at the same level as last year, we would have gone beyond the 4%. And we hope that we are going to go beyond. The Opposition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, we want to score and they have been all the time committing fouls. We accept the game. This is the rule of the game.

(Interruptions)

50 years from now, I can imagine the heated debate in the Assembly regarding Independence! Today, we are reconciled to this and we celebrated 50 years – *la main dans la main* - as a united nation which is ambitious and which has the trust of its people, but is also confident in its future. Were we confident in our future in 1982? No. Were we confident in our future in the 1968? No. But today we are. We stand up as a people. When I listen to Sir Anerood Jugnauth today, I remember the speech he made at the National Assembly because he is the last of the Mohicans of the 1965 Constitutional Conference at Lancaster House.

(Interruptions)

He spoke from his heart. He spoke with his mind. And he spoke also of his ambition to decolonise not only Mauritius, but also the Continent of Africa by going to, again, put up a case at La Haye.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I explained, the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development has understood the fundamentals of macroeconomics in the world. He has understood what are the challenges of today, here . He has also understood that we have to unite our people. We have to unite our people. We should rise up to a land where there is no extremism. We should rise up to a land where there is no my child marriage. We should rise up to a land where the Mauritian genius will be able to stand up and say: “Yes, this is my country”. A bit like what was said in the ‘Financial Times’. I don’t know whether you have read it. It is an extraordinary article which says ‘Mauritius puts in the shape Australia’. Why? Because at the Commonwealth Summit, the Prime Minister of Australia said: ‘We have had no recession for the last 23 years’. Then, the Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, stood up and said: “We haven’t had a recession since 1983, so that’s 35 years”. So, we have not...

(Interruptions)

And how have we been able to do it? Because of the Mauritian capacity to be able to stand up and the Mauritian genius to address all challenges. I think that this Budget explains what is happening in the world and explains what can be done here. It is a Budget with a heart, and for that we should congratulate the hon. Prime Minister.

The Deputy Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour!

At 5.38 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.08 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Armance!

Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Merci, Madame la présidente, de me permettre de donner mon point de vue sur le budget 2018-19, quatrième budget du présent gouvernement. Je pense être parmi les derniers orateurs de l’opposition, et je ne vais m’attarder que sur quelques points pendant mon intervention.

Apres avoir écouté avec intérêt mes collègues des deux côtés de la Chambre, je suis forcé de constater que ce budget n'est qu'un budget racoleur, médiocre, teinté d'une vision à court terme.

En effet, Madame la présidente, le ministre des Finances et son équipe de super héros ont été dans l'incapacité de répondre aux attentes les plus basiques de la population. Pour n'en citer qu'une, l'eau 24/7 ; un échec cinglant, Madame la présidente. Malheureusement, le DPM n'est pas là. Par conséquent, comment pouvait-il répondre favorablement aux attentes économiques, culturelles, sportives ou encore environnementales ? D'ailleurs, parlons-en des mesures pour l'environnement. Apres le passage de deux ministres de l'Environnement, le ministre Dayal, hélicoptère, l'autre ministre plongeur, nous voilà avec un troisième ministre fantôme - il n'est toujours pas là -, ministre biscuit.

Avant de rentrer dans le vif du sujet, Madame la présidente, je souhaiterais revenir sur les R 2 milliards qui ont été transférées des fonds du gouvernement vers le *National Environmental Fund*.

Madam Speaker, in 2002, when the Environment Protection Act was proclaimed, the Fund was included under the Act. In May 2017, I raised a PQ in the House, replied by hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo, and she insisted in her reply that the Bill will be soon introduced in the House and that they have sent it for approval at the State Law Office. We are now nearly three and a half years, and since this time of the PQ, no idea when the EPA is going to be reviewed. However, I understand from the Budget and the Estimates that the EPA will now be reviewed, but for how long are we going to wait?

Madam Speaker, let us have a look at the objectives of the National Environment Fund under the EPA Act, and let us compare it to what has been said in the Budget. In the Budget, Madam Speaker, I fail to understand the three first measures that were announced, namely construction of drain, which is already under the NDU and the Land Drainage Authority, with a budget of already Rs24.5 billion. The second measure regarding the 12 local authorities, again is under the Municipalities and a Budget of Rs3.5 billion. The third measure, acquisition of an aerial 3D Imagery Digital, again under the Land Drainage Authority and the NDU.

Now, Madam Speaker, I fail to understand how the measures announced match with the objectives of the National Environment Fund under the EPA. Significant contradiction

prevails. The National Environment Fund, Madam Speaker, is actually under the Ministry of Environment. Despite hon. Sinatambou saying, in his speech, that the Prime Minister trusts him, we feel that the NEF will now be diverted under the Ministry of Finance. In addition to the Rs2 billion, an additional sum of Rs300 m. has been allocated in the Budget.

Madame la présidente, je fais le malheureux constat que ce gouvernement n'a rien à faire de l'environnement. Le *National Environment Fund* est une mascarade. Son objectif réel est de faire de la publicité gratuite afin de booster l'image de l'honorable Premier ministre, et ministre des Finances qui peine encore à construire une légitimité. Par le biais ce fonds, il peut aussi grossir artificiellement ces *achievements*. Quelle honte, Madame la présidente !

Si on se réfère à l'article publié sur 'Sunday Times', on voit un peu la performance des ministères et on voit en haut de la liste le ministère des Finances avec 41 % des mesures budgétaires qui ont été implémentées. Beaucoup de points pertinents du budget 2018 ont été traités par mes collègues de l'Opposition. Et le constat est le même pour la majorité d'entre nous. C'est un budget préélectoral. Il est rempli de cadeaux empoisonnés, anesthésiant pour la population. Avec ces mesures populaires, telles que la baisse du prix de gaz ménager et du carburant dont l'objectif est de 'faire *la bouche doux à bann ti-dimoune*. *Kan fini nous guet plafond nou riyé !*'

On se souvient encore, Madame la présidente, l'année dernière le prix des cigarettes à augmenter lors du budget 2017-2018. Et quelques mois après, il y eut une seconde augmentation. C'est à se demander ce que le gouvernement nous réserve avec son budget aigre-doux de cette année. Sommes-nous à l'abri des nouvelles augmentations au cours de l'année ? Je ne pense pas, Madame la présidente.

Madame la présidente, le paragraphe 73 du budget annonce une augmentation du *customs duty* sur l'importation du sucre, passant de 15% à 80%. Il est évident qu'une augmentation du prix du sucre à usage commercial conduira une flambée de prix d'aliments de base, tels que les produits laitiers, boissons gazeuses, jus et autres. Un budget, Madame la présidente, c'est pour permettre principalement à l'honorable ministre des Finances de planifier l'avenir du pays. Cela lui permet de prévoir l'avenir du pays et le permet d'injecter les fonds nécessaires dans le projet pour faire avancer le pays.

J'ai écouté attentivement plusieurs orateurs de chaque côté de la Chambre. Certains ont essayé de noyer le poisson avec les mesures bassement populaires, d'autres ont essayé de

justifier l'injustifiable, c'est-à-dire leurs performances médiocres en tant que ministres ou PPSs. Je tiens spécialement à remonter le travail du PPS Aliphon. Tous ces mesures qu'il a annoncés, étaient incessamment. Donc, il n'y avait rien de concret, Madame la présidente.

Vous savez, Paris a la Tour Eiffel, Londres a le Big Ben, l'Inde a le Taj Mahal. Aujourd'hui, grâce au PPS Aliphon, l'île Maurice à son monument, un 'bus stop 5-étoiles' ! Merci à l'honorable Aliphon ! Il faut le reconnaître, Madame la présidente, il a réussi là, où les autres ministres de la Culture ont échoué. Même l'honorable Dan Baboo n'a pas pu faire mieux que lui.

Madame la présidente, je ne vais pas m'attarder à répondre certaines bêtises qui ont été dites dans cette Chambre. J'ai eu l'occasion de discuter des mesures budgétaires avec les amis pêcheurs de ma circonscription, notamment à Cassis et Pointe aux Sables. Ils ont été choqués par le manque de considération du gouvernement à leur regard. Un *ice box*, Madame la présidente ! Heureusement que le ridicule ne tue pas. L'honorable ministre des Finances a annoncé, dans son grand oral, qu'il va offert un *ice box* aux pêcheurs !

L'année dernière, le même ministre des Finances avait annoncé un *grant* pour l'achat de véhicules réfrigérés. À en croire l'honorable ministre ne sait pas comment fonctionnent le secteur de la pêche dans notre île. The *Transformative journey of the Government*, en 2017, véhicules réfrigérés ! En 2018, un *ice box* ! Qu'est-ce que nos pêcheurs vont recevoir l'année prochaine ? Peut-être un *cooler bag* !

Madam Speaker : Extracting from the budget ! You should not do that !

Mr Armance : Madam Speaker, the fishermen ask the Government to help them by making provision for a cold room. He failed to understand the difference between an *ice box* and a cold room. We need to help our fishermen to survive. When we talk about fishermen, we should not only consider the cooperatives. Let us think about the thousands of individual fishermen who are trying to earn their living by going fishing early in the morning and sometimes coming back home with no catch, and they still have to care of their family. Those fishermen, Madam Speaker, they cannot afford a Rs400,000 deposit on the acquisition of a semi industrial vessel. Where are the incentives for the fishermen to buy proper equipment? Where are the incentives of the fishermen to enable them to increase their catch? Is it by opening our shallow water to foreigners? Are we not killing the artisanal fishing industry in Mauritius and directly the artisanal fishermen community?

Oui, Madame la présidente. C'est un crime contre la communauté des pêcheurs. J'espère que l'honorable Premier ministre n'ira pas avec de l'avant avec ce projet ridicule. Qu'il commence à écouter le vrai cri du cœur des pêcheurs qui sont directement visés par ce projet néfaste, et ce sera alors un bon début.

Madam Speaker, I will now elaborate on the measures Government has taken since 2017 to eradicate poverty in Mauritius. Before going into details, I would like to say it loudly that I believe that the Government is not looking at the correct measures to eradicate poverty in Mauritius. Let's take, for example, squatters in Mauritius.

Les nuits et les jours se ressemblent pour beaucoup de familles qui vivent sur les terres de l'État. On les appelle les *squatters*. Malgré les nombreuses promesses du gouvernement, beaucoup de *squatters* sont toujours en attente d'un miracle. Par exemple, les *squatters* à La Ferme ou à Bambous.

So many promises have been made by various the Ministers of Housing and Lands, but, so far, Madam Speaker, no convincing solution has been found for them. Since the torrential rains of January and February 2018, some of them are still living in the Community Centre at Bambous and Baie du Tombeau. Yes, Madam Speaker, il me semble que les autorités les ont oubliés ces oubliés de la société !

À Bambous, au bureau du *CAB* un député du gouvernement de la circonscription¹⁴ reçoit ses mandants régulièrement. À quelques mètres de là, où vivent ces gens, 18 personnes, dont huit enfants, et n'a même pas le courage de se déplacer pour aller voir ces gens-là pour essayer de trouver des solutions pour eux. Je sais qu'il n'est pas dans la Chambre. Vous savez de qui je parle. Vous n'avez qu'à regarder de l'autre côté.

Ces enfants dorment par terre, Madame la présidente. Je peux vous montrer, j'ai les photos. Regardez dans quel état ces gens sont en train de vivre ! Ça, c'est la salle de bain ! A Baie du Tombeau ! Est-ce qu'en 2018, les gens peuvent toujours prendre un bain à la belle étoile, alors qu'il y a un gouvernement central qui est supposé aujourd'hui venir avec des mesures pour éradiquer la pauvreté, et on se tape l'estomac pour dire qu'on est en train de réussir à éradiquer la pauvreté complètement à l'île Maurice.

A Cité Vallijee, Madame la présidente, il y a une famille qui a vécu dans le centre pendant presqu'une année. Et au moment où je vous parle, il y a une autre famille qui a pris abri dans le centre et on ne sait pas quel destin est réservé à ces familles-là. Dois-je vous

rappeler que c'est la circonscription même de l'honorable ministre de l'Intégration social ? Il se peut qu'il ait oublié, étant donné son manque d'intérêt à l'égard de cette famille. Quelle honte !

Madame Speaker, I believe that both Ministries which are responsible for these issues have failed in their duties, the Ministry of Social Security and the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment!

Pendant les pluies torrentielles, ces gens avaient reçu des biscuits et de l'eau, et depuis, ils n'ont plus rien. Ils sont laissés à leur propre sort pour trouver de la nourriture, des vêtements et subvenir aux besoins de leurs familles. Aucune aide de l'État ! Rien ! Tout le monde se souvient de ces fameux biscuits et de le et de l'eau, et du mépris de l'honorable ministre envers ces réfugiés. Quelle honte, Madame la présidente, venir aujourd'hui dire qu'il n'y a plus de squatters à Maurice, qu'il n'y a plus de gens qui vivent dans la pauvreté. Ces gens doivent descendre sur le terrain et aller voir ces gens qui sont en train de vivre à Cité La Ferme ! Allez voir dans quelle situation sont leurs maisons ! Moi j'y étais, pourtant ce n'est pas ma circonscription. Leurs maisons sont en train de tomber sur leurs têtes, Madame la présidente.

(Interruptions)

Je ne vais pas perdre mon temps à leur répondre !

(Interruptions)

Madame la présidente, au début de mon discours j'avais parlé de la National Environment Fund et j'aimerais attirer l'attention de la Chambre, sur un des objectifs de ce fonds, *to compensate victims in situation of environmental emergency and spill.*

Avec R 2.3 milliards en caisse aujourd'hui, il y a amplement d'argent pour que le ministère revoit sa stratégie par rapport aux réfugiés. Qu'on ne vienne plus avec des biscuits et de l'eau, qu'on vienne avec des mesures concrètes pour pouvoir aider ces gens-là quand ils sont en difficulté. Ils n'ont pas demandé d'aller dans les centres de refuge. Ils n'ont pas demandé à la pluie de venir inonder leur maison, ils n'ont pas demandé aux vents de saccager leur maison.

On dit souvent, mieux vaut prévenir que guérir, l'argent y ait. Les R 2 milliards ont été transférées et il y a encore R 300 millions qui étaient ajoutées à ce fonds.

Bref, Madame la présidente, je condamne toujours ce manque d'égard et de mépris dont fait preuve le ministre Sinatambou envers ces pères, mères et enfants obligés de quitter leur toit et qui étaient au chaud dans un *home sweet home*. D'ailleurs, je n'ai pas été le seul à le condamner, puisque le gouvernement a soudainement changé le porte-parole après l'épisode biscuit-de l'eau. Je souhaite que le ministre vienne vers nous dans son discours, il parle un peu, après moi, avec des mesures concrètes, des solutions pour les gens qui sont en difficulté.

Madam Speaker, a lot of measures have been announced in the Budget to help our brothers and sisters with disabilities. However, I would like to comment on some of them and I will ask the Minister if he can please take into consideration my comments and recommendations.

Since 2015, Madam Speaker, the Government promised that it will come forward with the Disability Bill under item 25 of the Presidential Address in January 2015. *Ça fait déjà 3 ans!* In 2016, the then Leader of the Opposition, hon. Bérenger, in a PNQ asked about the Disability Bill and the Minister said 'we are working on it at the State Law Office and it will soon be presented at the Cabinet.' It was in 2016. Since then, Madam Speaker, another Minister took over and has done nothing. Nothing for the last three years. Same promise, *effet d'annonce*.

Hon. Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo promised she will have consultancy with NGOs to discuss about the Disability Bill. So far, Madame la présidente, le dossier reste fermé, je ne sais pas où, peut-être dans le tiroir de l'honorable Sinatambou. Malheureusement, le Premier ministre et ministre de Finances pour son troisième budget, et sûrement le dernier aussi, n'a pas trouvé nécessaire d'inclure le *Disability Bill* pour défendre les droits de nos frères et sœurs handicapés. C'est une honte ! C'est la preuve de l'indifférence du gouvernement à leur égard.

When it comes to employment of people with disability, it is worse. As for the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act of 1996, amended in 2012, it makes provision to fulfil a quota of 3% of employing people with disabilities. The present Government has failed in this legal obligation to fulfil same in the public sector. I would like the Minister to come in this House with a statement confirming if I am wrong or not.

Again, Madam Speaker, the three Training Centres of TEDPB have been closed down by the Government. Despite my PQ in this same House informing them of the alarming

situation there, they did nothing. They also closed down the three centres. So, are we now going to wait? How long are we going to wait? How long are the people with disability going to wait to have the training centre open again?

Concerning the public transport, I take note of the answer of hon. Bodha that he will take into consideration the visual aspect, the sound aspect and accessibility to allow people with disability to benefit from this transport. But, Madam Speaker, I fail to understand why the permit to operate a bus with ramp has been refused to the transport company and yet no buses in Mauritius are provided with such a facility. I believe the Minister should look into the matter urgently, while reforming the public transport system.

Madame la présidente, comme tous mes collègues de cette auguste assemblée, j'ai aussi jeté un coup d'œil sur les performances des ministères pour l'implémentation des mesures budgétaires 2017-2018. Premier de la liste, le ministre de Finances, pas étonnant, sa politique - tout pour moi et le reste pour mes ministres, et bon dernier de la classe ou premier dans la queue, si on veut être plus optimiste, le ministère de l'Intégration Sociale. Personnellement, ces chiffres ne m'étonnent pas, même si je trouve ceci révoltant. J'ai écouté avec beaucoup d'intérêt le long discours de l'honorable Alain Wong Yen Cheong. Tout en l'écoutant, je suis venu à la conclusion que le travail pour lui, c'est comme de la confiture, Madame la présidente. Moins on en fait plus on étale les chiffres qui parlent d'elles-mêmes.

Lauréat de la classe ou plutôt *katar*, comme on dit en créole, le ministre de l'Intégration Sociale avec 0.9% des mesures implémentées, même pas 1%, même pas, avec l'énorme budget qu'il a bénéficié, même pas 1% de considération pour les gens pauvres de ce pays.

This Ministry has been created in 2010 under the purview of the then Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Xavier Duval and the accomplishment, Madam Speaker, from 2010 to 2014 has been so far better than what they have been doing for the last two years. Let us have a look at the report!

In 2016/2017, construction of fully concrete housing by the actual Ministry of Social Integration is 140. Year 2013/2014: 401. Placement and Training Programme, there have been 8,606 persons that have been trained. It is only now, in 2018, that the training is starting again at the Ministry. We can see.

Since 2015 to date, the NEF has only submitted its Annual Report of 2013/2014. The Director of Audit, in his report, has mentioned clearly that there has been no follow-up and action at all levels of the NEF to comply with the MoU of the Ministry. Even the bank statement that the NEF was supposed to submit to the Ministry in relation to the National CSR account has not been submitted on a monthly basis. The lack of monitoring at all levels of this Ministry is shocking. The Director of Audit pointed out there is no monitoring at all.

Madam Speaker, recently, there has been a call for project. Around 230 NGOs have benefited from the NCSR Foundation. The way things are being managed in this Ministry, the way the CSR is managed is a real shame. The guidelines regarding the eligibility of the Fund is now still under review. Since the first call of the CSR, we are still waiting for the second one. It is going to be soon. I do not know when.

From the old system, Madam Speaker, you can imagine how many projects, NGOs would have completed in the last two years, lapsed, wasted by the Ministry. Criteria for selection of CSR Projects to be financed are again a total confusion. How can the hon. Minister explain that one NGO has benefited about Rs8 m.? Only one NGO with 11 projects, else some of them have been refused funding. Some NGOs have closed down because there is no funding. Because the private company does not want any more to contribute under the CSR. Yet, we come here, one NGO - this is the list that has been tabled by the Minister - same NGO, 11 projects for Rs8 m. There is something wrong. What about the monitoring unit of the Ministry? I am not an accountant, but I can simply conclude that there has been a very unfair allocation of fund. Some projects which were escalated over several months are having 50% of the project when approved, while other projects of short duration are also having the 50%. How can the Ministry assess that the NGO will be using the money to fund the project, or use the money elsewhere? To my information, there are only three staff at the monitoring unit. Three people monitoring 230 projects.

In addition, Madam Speaker, I am against the fact that the contribution for private company will be 75% of the CSR as from this year. This measure is killing the willingness to help NGOs. The NCSR has allocated funds only once since its setting up while NGOs are working very hard continuously with the support of the private firms. In this Budget, I was really expecting that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development will review the 75% as it is important for the survival of the NGOs.

Hon. Members will remember there had been a question in the Assembly about NGO Pastel which had not been allocated funds. Yes, Madam, up to now Pastel has received zero rupee from the National CSR Foundation! I will have to pay tribute to Mrs Mélanie Valère and Mrs Helena Rioux for their job despite they are not having the support of the Government. Madam Speaker, time is running out, I will have to conclude on my constituency.

En effet, depuis les pluies torrentielles de janvier à février, bon nombre de chemins ont été sérieusement dégradés, surtout dans la région de Pailles. Ils représentent à ce jour un danger certain autant pour les automobilistes, les cyclistes ou pour les piétons. M. la présidente, un jeune a perdu la vie à Pailles parce qu'il y avait eu un accident de la route, il y avait des trous sur le chemin. Néanmoins, je tiens à remercier les quatre conseillers municipaux du PMSD, Daniella Hector, Sundy Jhurry, Gino Perraud et Mamad Khodabaccus, pour leur contribution à traiter les problèmes relatifs à la municipalité de Port Louis.

Madame la présidente, avant de terminer mon discours, j'aimerais parler de la discrimination à tous niveaux. Récemment, le père Véder, le père Mongelard, José Moirt ont lancé le *affirmative action*. Ce mouvement soumettra aux Nations unies un rapport alternatif sur la discrimination raciale à Maurice. Ce mouvement a pour objectif principal de combler les inégalités, éliminer toutes sortes de discriminations et promouvoir la diversité de la société. Je souhaite aussi prendre une minute pour parler de notre compatriote qui vit et travaille aux États-Unis, Monsieur Giovanni Merle. Ce Monsieur, un professionnel employé à l'ambassade de Maurice à Washington, a porté plainte à *l'Equal Opportunities Commission* pour harcèlement et discrimination sur son lieu de travail. Le responsable de ces harcèlements n'est nul autre que l'ambassadeur de Maurice à Washington.

C'est certain, ce dossier a atterri sur le bureau du ministère des Affaires étrangères, mais silence radio. De ce fait, j'aimerais que le ministre Lutchmeenaraidoo nous dise ce qu'il compte faire. Va-t-il fuir ses responsabilités ou va-t-il enfin nous donner la garantie que ce dossier sera traité avec tout le sérieux requis ? Il y aura-t-il encore une fois un *cover up* dans cette affaire délicate qui a terni l'image de Maurice à Washington? Madame la présidente, la balle est dans son camp.

Avant de terminer j'aimerais dire à Sir Anerood Jugnauth que le respect ça se mérite. Ça se mérite, Madame la présidente! En 1983, il avait sollicité l'aide de Sir Gaëtan Duval

pour remporter les élections – idem Sir Gaëtan Duval. En 1987, il avait encore une fois sollicité l'aide de Sir Gaëtan Duval pour avoir les élections. En 2014, il a encore sollicité l'aide de Xavier-Luc Duval pour gagner les élections. A en croire que le MSM *monte kada lor zepol* PMSD!

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order Please!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Armance: Pour conclure, Madame la présidente, mon collègue, l'honorable Lepoigneur...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Armance:...disait dans son discours que le sport est malade. J'ajouterai que ce n'est pas juste le sport qui est malade, mais le pays tout entier va mal.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo!

(6.37 p.m.)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr S. Lutchmeenaraidoo): Madame la présidente, je suis appelé, donc, à commenter sur le budget du Premier ministre et ministre des Finances. Et la première réaction que j'avais eue en écoutant le budget a été la phrase suivante : « budget cohérent et qui a réussi un équilibre très difficile entre le besoin de croissance économique d'investissement et de maintenir le pays développé » et de l'autre « nous assurer à ce qu'il y ait une distribution équitable de la richesse qui est produite ».

Très rare dans un budget d'arriver à ce niveau d'équilibre où on ressent que, finalement, il y a une volonté d'une part de croissance économique, mais il y a aussi une volonté que cette croissance soit partagée au niveau national. C'est ça le budget! Pourquoi j'ai utilisé le terme de 'cohérence' ? Parce que ça fait quatre ans que nous sommes dans le

gouvernement et en retraçant ces quatre budgets, on voit qu'il y a eu une cohérence au niveau du gouvernement dans l'implémentation de la politique économique et sociale. Et je pense que mon collègue, l'honorable ministre Bodha, a très bien dit qu'en 2015 budget, on est arrivé vite à la conclusion que l'île Maurice, au fait, se trouvait dans une situation d'un pays à revenu moyen et pris dans le piège des pays à revenu moyen.

C'est-à-dire que depuis 10 ans, le taux de croissance n'arrive pas à dépasser les 4% et reste autour de 3%. Avec un taux de croissance de 3% à 4%, il est connu qu'un pays qui est pris dans la trappe de pays à revenu moyen ne pouvait pas s'en sortir. Il fallait, donc, au départ même nous rendre compte que le cycle de 1983 à 2014, qui était un cycle extrêmement productif, mais aussi a permis de suivre une politique économique très cohérente, est arrivé un peu à sa fin, à une période où il fallait, donc, réinventer cette économie pour que le pays puisse reprendre.

Ce n'était pas facile. Parce que actuellement - et 2018 n'a pas changé - nous vivons dans un environnement hostile face à l'extérieur. Et sur le plan intérieur nous avons à faire face à des situations dont les gens sous-estiment parfois. Le prix du sucre *has collapsed*. Le prix de tonnes de sucre est tombé à R 10,000 par tonne qui ne couvre même pas le coût de production. Entre 2015 et 2017, nous avons donc utilisé les fonds du SIFB pour donner des subsides au secteur sucrier, mais il est clair qu'on ne peut pas le faire toujours.

Le ministre des Finances a eu le courage, par exemple, de parler du thé et personne n'en a parlé. C'est qu'on se rappelle qu'en 1983 - et j'étais élu dans une circonscription de petits planteurs de thé - le revenu par livre de thé ne permettait même pas de subvenir aux besoins de base - *tire ration dans la boutik*. Et nous avons pris en ce temps la décision que le budget allait aider les petits planteurs de thé à survivre, et on l'a fait.

Et en 2018, je vois le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances qui fait la même chose, qui vient encore une fois au secours d'un secteur qui a besoin de soutien. Concernant le secteur du sucre - mon collègue, le ministre de l'Agriculture, travaille dessus - mais il est clair qu'on doit faire face à une situation exceptionnelle. et l'Union européenne Lefebvre, 11, nous traite comme un pays à revenu moyen. Non seulement ce n'est pas une bénédiction, mais c'est pire que cela. C'est une malédiction! Parce qu'en tant que pays à revenu moyen on a droit à rien. On n'a pas droit à l'assistance financière, très peu d'assistance technique. Ce qui fait que depuis, donc, qu'on a été qualifié pays à revenu moyen, l'île Maurice s'est

retrouvée prise dans un sandwich, pas assez riche pour vivre bien et pas assez pauvre pour avoir accès à l'aide.

Et l'honorable ministre Bodha a parlé de *post-Cotonou* et on entre maintenant dans une nouvelle configuration où les pays ACP, dont on forme parti actuellement, doivent négocier avec l'Union européenne une nouvelle philosophie de coopération, un nouveau *partnership*. C'est facile à dire, mais dans cette approche nous sommes une petite île Maurice, *a SID*, une île qui a à faire face à une vulnérabilité propre aux îles, nous l'avons dit déjà avant. Donc, environnement hostile, il fallait dans cet environnement de 2015, dire comment est-ce que notre pays pourra développer des secteurs qui pourront nous permettre de percer le plafond du revenu moyen pour tomber dans un revenu élevé.

Il est clair aussi que le secteur du thé a connu une crise fondamentale, le secteur du sucre vieillit. La zone franche, n'en parlons pas! C'est un secteur qui est dans le *ICU* depuis toujours et qui arrive à peine à s'en sortir, mais qui survit. Mais on a quand même trois sous-secteurs qui ne nous aident pas à aider au niveau de la croissance, restent le tourisme, le secteur financier et d'autres. Donc, quelque part, comment arriver à un taux de croissance de 6% à 7%?

Le défi est le même maintenant - *we have it now*. Comment arriver à ce que ce petit pays que nous sommes, relativement isolé, parvienne à un taux de croissance que les autres pays riches n'arrivent pas à arriver, même les pays à revenus moyens, 6-7%. Et c'est là où nous avons réinventé tout le concept de notre pays. Et c'est simple à dire. Toute notre philosophie économique depuis l'indépendance a été axée sur le *pebble*, sur le caillou, que l'île Maurice est jetée dans l'océan ; petit, restreint, très lointain. Et leur stratégie était basée, donc, sur un développement qui était centré sur l'intérieur, que ce soit le tourisme, que ce soit le sucre, que ce soit le thé. Et en 2015, on s'est dit, « Mais non ! L'île Maurice n'est pas petite. Nous ne sommes pas un caillou.

L'île Maurice est en fait un caillou enveloppé d'une zone maritime de 2,3 millions de kilomètres carrés. Nous sommes un Etat océan. » Beaucoup ne l'ont pas compris encore, mais c'est ce changement de comportement d'un pays qui est petit, qui a des complexes d'un petit pays, de pouvoir élargir sa vision en Etat océan. Etat océan veut dire qu'il n'y a pas que nous, l'île, le caillou, mais il y a aussi une zone océanique colossale qui est notre responsabilité, mais qui est aussi un océan. C'est à nous de l'utiliser de façon durable à partir de ce concept, donc, de changement dramatique, et nous tous ici nous devons nous habituer

maintenant, parce que les 50 ans qui viennent vont être déterminants pour le pays en fonction de notre capacité à éclater de ce concept, à voir plus loin et à voir que l'océan nous connecte à l'Afrique, l'océan nous connecte à l'Australie, nous connecte à l'Asie. Donc, avec l'océan, nous sommes un continent, *very powerful, and we have to believe in it*. J'ai toujours vendu des rêves, mais parfois il faut y croire.

Donc, la nouvelle stratégie est très différente de l'ancienne. La nouvelle est basée sur le fait que nous aurons trois nouveaux piliers économiques, qui sont le secteur océanique, l'économie océanique, et il y a le ministère de l'Océan. Donc, le nouveau gouvernement a compris qu'il fallait quelque chose de spécifique pour l'Océan. L'honorable Koonjoo est maintenant le ministre de l'Océan et des Ressources océaniques. Donc, le nouveau pilier reste l'océan, mais évidemment, *SDG* ; évidemment, l'utilisation durable, soutenable, donc, de l'exploitation des ressources marines. On est très conscient qu'on doit protéger la mer, qu'on doit protéger l'océan, l'écosystème, mais qu'on peut aussi utiliser l'océan pour mieux vivre.

Le second composant de cette stratégie économique nouvelle est le pilier du port. Pourquoi le port ? J'ai été à Dubaï voir DP World, et je leur ai dit, « Vous savez, on serait intéressé à développer l'île Maurice, avoir un port maritime un peu comme Dubaï, un peu comme Singapour ». Et le chairman me dit « Nous sommes prêts ». Je lui dis « Mais je suis très surpris que l'île Maurice lointaine vous intéresse pour le développement portuaire ». Et il m'emmène voir un plan, mappe monde, une carte de la région, et effectivement, ce n'est pas un accident que l'île Maurice *is the star and key of the Indian Ocean*. Nous sommes situés stratégiquement par rapport au reste de la planète. Donc, nous sommes importants, nous sommes incontournables.

Deuxième secteur, donc, le projet maritime est un projet qui va faire d'un petit port isolé dans une petite île, un port maritime qui s'étendra finalement du port de Grande Rivière pour finir à Jin Fei. L'honorable Bodha a parlé tout à l'heure de cette connexion fabuleuse qu'on est en train de faire entre le port franc de Jin Fei - il faut bien qu'on puisse exporter - et, donc, la connexion autoroutière de six *lanes*, dont deux routes - le rouge - qui vont connecter Jin Fei au port. Tout ceci forme partie de quoi ? D'un plan stratégique qui va faire de l'île Maurice le port le plus important de la région dans les 15 ans qui viennent - vision 2030. *And we can do it*. On a un peu de retard je dois dire, parce que sans le port de pêche, on ne peut pas parler de l'océan, on ne peut pas parler de la pêche, on ne peut pas parler de la

pêche industrielle. Et là, je dois dire que Les Seychelles ont une avance sur nous. Il faut bien le reconnaître. Donc, le deuxième pilier de cette économie reste le port.

Troisième, c'est quelque chose qui parfois peut paraître drôle, lorsqu'on parle du rêve africain de l'île Maurice. Je n'aime pas ce mot stratégie pour l'Afrique. Stratégie fait intérêt personnel ; ça fait gagner sur les autres. Alors que nous, on dit que nous sommes africains, on forme partie des 55 pays de l'Union africaine, on appartient au COMESA, SADC. On est membre à part de ce continent, et c'est une force extraordinaire. Donc, on a dit que l'Afrique est le continent incontournable pour le siècle à venir. Incontournable, parce que l'Afrique a la plus jeune population de la planète, et parce que le continent a aussi 40% des ressources minérales de la planète. *You cannot forget it.*

Beaucoup ont douté ; beaucoup ont dit que c'est du rêve. Et puis on dit que l'Afrique ce n'est pas pour demain. *Let us be frank about it*, et c'est vrai! C'est vrai qu'il n'est pas facile. L'honorable Bérenger, qui est ici, a essayé tant bien que mal depuis les années 70 de pousser vers une intégration régionale, et il vrai qu'il est plus facile d'intégrer Maurice à l'Europe que d'intégrer l'île Maurice à l'Afrique. Donc, *challenging*, et pourtant, ce troisième composant stratégique est impossible à ignorer. Notre avenir à nous est l'Afrique. Cela n'exclut nullement le fait que nous soyons très proches, des amis de toujours, de l'Inde, de la Chine, de la France. Je ne pourrai même jamais remettre en question, pendant une seule seconde, que l'Inde reste pour nous une relation émotionnelle, une relation économique qui dépasse tout.

Et pour ceux qui ne savent pas peut-être, dans les moments les plus difficiles en 1983, un gouvernement qui n'a pas de parti politique, et Sir Anerood comme Premier ministre, il a fallu réinventer le tout, créer un nouveau parti, *get it going*. Et il a fallu surtout faire face à une situation qui était, sur le plan étranger, *very tough*. Le monde extérieur disait que Maurice est en pleine crise politique, c'est foutu, il faudra attendre. Et c'est dans ce contexte qu'il nous fallait compter sur le groupe consultatif de Paris, qui était le rassemblement des *bailleurs* de fonds de l'île Maurice. Je suis descendu à Paris - je savais que c'était très difficile, que je risquais de rentrer à Maurice sans rien - et j'ai réussi à contacter le fils du Président Mitterrand - l'ancien - qui nous a aidés, qui a envoyé son chef de Cabinet présider la réunion, et à partir de là, la France a dit une chose : « quel que soit le gouvernement en place, la France et l'île Maurice, c'est une union pour toujours ». Vous comprenez pourquoi,

donc, nous ne voulons pas remettre en question cette relation privilégiée qu'on a avec la France, avec la Chine, avec l'Inde aussi.

Quoi qu'il arrive, *whatever happens*, notre stratégie actuellement, en termes de diplomatie - je vais passer dessus quelques secondes -, notre région est devenue un centre d'intérêt des grandes puissances, comme jamais. Vous avez dû le remarquer. J'ai été un Russie, invité, donc, par le ministre des Affaires étrangères Lavrov. Je l'ai rencontré, longues discussions, cela a abouti à la signature déjà d'un accord entre le FSC et la Banque centrale russe. Et la bonne nouvelle, à partir du 1er octobre, nous aurons trois vols Maurice-Moscou via Rome. C'est que nous sommes en train de nous ouvrir nous aussi aux nouveaux, mais sans blesser l'ancien.

Au fait, nous sommes trop petits pour prétendre prendre position. Et je l'avais dit il y a quelques jours en créole « *Nou kamarade ek tou et ennemi ek personne* », et c'est vrai. Je l'ai fait comprendre aux ambassades étrangères aussi ; nous sommes petits. *We are too small to pretend* qu'on va prendre position pour l'Angleterre contre la Russie ou contre les grandes puissances. Mais on doit constater en même temps que les choses ont changé, que notre océan est devenu un centre d'intérêt géopolitique hors du commun. On ne peut pas ignorer que la Russie est ici, la Chine est ici, l'Inde est ici, l'Europe est ici, les américains. Nous sommes devenus une région qui peut devenir chaude demain, parce qu'il y a des intérêts géopolitiques en jeu. `

C'est la raison pour laquelle je dis que nous, l'île Maurice, nous sommes trop petits pour prendre des positions draconiennes lorsqu'il s'agit de politique étrangère, et nous adoptons actuellement une stratégie que je pense sera payante à la longue ; c'est que l'île Maurice est un peu la Suisse de cette partie du monde, non-ingérence dans les conflits des autres, mais pouvoir aider évidemment. Le problème malgache, nous avons proposé et nous le ferons aussi. Si les partis politiques malgaches n'arrivent toujours pas à trouver une solution, l'île Maurice va offrir notre pays, en tant que pays ami, pour *host*, pour que les dirigeants malgaches puissent venir à Maurice discuter et négocier en toute indépendance, et tant que président de la COI, mettre à leur disposition toutes les structures.

Un peu cette approche que nous sommes là pour aider mais pas pour prendre des positions qui puissent nous faire mal plus loin. Donc, toujours à cette amitié extraordinaire entre l'Inde, la Chine et la France, et j'ajoute Bruxelles. Pourquoi j'ajoute Bruxelles, c'est parce que l'histoire est là, parfois on oublie l'histoire. En 1968, personne ne

pensait que ce pays aller survivre. Personne ! Meade ! Titmuss, qui reçut le Prix Nobel de la paix ! Ils sont venus à Maurice, et ils ont dit de ce pays, a non-starter, a failed State. And they used these words: 'Mauritius will be a failed State'. Un autre, Monsieur V.S. Naipaul, qui parlait de l'île Maurice dans son livre, 'Overcrowded Barracoon' - j'ai dû aller voir dans le dictionnaire pour comprendre ce terme. Donc, ce monsieur est venu à Maurice. Et qu'est-ce qu'il a dit ? A failed State ! Il faut bien comprendre, pourquoi nous avons aujourd'hui la responsabilité d'une nation, *the Nation Building*.

En réponse à l'honorable Armance sur le problème de Washington, j'ai une seule réponse : Personne n'a le droit de jouer avec l'unité nationale. *No one ! Nation Building is sacred !* Jamais je ferai une différence entre quelqu'un de gouvernement, quelqu'un d'un autre parti lorsqu'il s'agit de prendre position pour nous battre pour que la nation puisse se construire encore. Donc, sur la question de Washington, celui qui est coupable aura, bien sûr, à prendre les responsabilités. C'est le propre d'un gouvernement qui est engagé, en termes de *Nation Building for the long-term*.

Pour revenir à 1968, *countries' consultants gave up on Mauritius*. Et c'est vrai ! Qu'est-ce qu'on avait en 1968 ? On avait le sucre, monoculture de sucre et au moindre cyclone vous voyez les maisons qui s'écrasaient. Sir Anerood Jugnauth l'avait dit la dernière fois. Maintenant les mauriciens pensent à l'*instant gratification*, je veux ça, je dois l'avoir immédiatement ! Mon grand-père venait de ce pays ; il est venu comme immigrant. Il a travaillé, il a sué, il a économisé. Il a fait tout pour que je sois ici aujourd'hui. It has been hard work, nothing more than hard work; savings and discipline. And I think we have to keep this in mind in this country, et *non pas donner l'impression à la nation, que sur demande, sur simple caprice they will have whatever they want !* Parce que nous sommes partis de 1968, et là, je dois dire que la décision de Bruxelles, en 1971, a été décisive.

Et je crois que c'est vrai aussi, Sir Gaëtan Duval a été le maître d'œuvre pour partir sur Paris et repartir sur Bruxelles. On n'était même pas membre associé à l'Union Européenne. On n'était même pas membre de l'OCAM, de l'association de EAMA. Nullement ! On était en dehors, et Bruxelles a alloué à ce petit pays plus de 50 % de son quota sucrier pour tous les pays des Caraïbes et Afrique. *Never seen that !* C'est le destin du pays ! Parce que sans le protocole sucre qui nous a donné le matelas pour survivre les temps les plus difficiles pour le pays ; parce que le protocole sucre nous a donné un prix du sucre largement supérieur au coût mondial. *And this has saved us. In all humility, when I go to*

Brussels, I say thank you people. I love you, parce que grâce à vous nous avons pu passer le cap le plus difficile de post indépendance jusqu'à récemment.

This is a way of recognising friends *et maintenant à Bruxelles, nous avons des amis, nous sommes soutenus à fond et en même temps on nous reconnaît.* History is built on the performance of a Nation. *Sir Anerood Jugnauth a été un des architectes les plus grands que le pays ait connus. Je pense que Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam a été aussi un grand chef pour le pays, c'est lui qui nous a amenés à l'indépendance et que we made it. Moi, ce que j'aime, as a Nation, we made it.* Une nation condamnée à périr, *together we have made it.* Avec les pays étrangers, avec Bruxelles et le protocole sucre. En 1983, il faut le dire, c'est vrai, il fallait prendre les décisions qu'il fallait. Il fallait avoir une vision de l'avenir, une façon de voir l'avenir.

N'oubliez pas les amis, en 1983, que ce soit Sir Anerood Jugnauth, que ce soit moi-même, que ce soit Anil Gayan ou autres, on était issu du MMM et on combattait le secteur privé. Je me souviens que Madame Sheila Bapoo disait que nous allions nationaliser toutes les usines sucrières, et on ne menaçait pas. *We were going to do it.* Parce que c'était la conviction du MMM, du parti, que le secteur privé est en train de nous voler, le secteur privé est en train de nous piller.

Donc, il fallait en 1983, que ce soit Sir Anerood Jugnauth ou moi-même, basculer notre idéologie anti secteur privé, et aller à la télévision et dire aux gens, excusez-nous, il y a un gros problème de chômage. Pour créer de l'emploi il faut l'investissement ; pour qu'il y ait l'investissement, il faut qu'il y ait la confiance, et pour qu'il y ait la confiance, il nous faut le secteur privé. Il faut que le secteur privé soit partie prenante de l'opération que nous, nous vendions. Donc, ça a été très dur pour nous cette transition idéologique.

Je me souviens encore de l'époque, basculer en quelques mois de cette période hostile vers le secteur privé. Une période, où nous avons dit au secteur privé, vous avez votre place, vous avez votre rôle. Mieux encore, on a ouvert les investissements aux étrangers, et c'est là, où, les gens de Hong Kong sont venus. La Zone Franche est repartie. Donc *we made it.* Je dis que nous sommes une nation qui reste une référence pour cette planète - parfois on l'oublie - qui est bourrée de conflits, de divisions, de distensions, de recherche de guerre et de conflits. *This nation has lived together with all the communities of this planet.* Toutes les communautés, toutes les races, toutes les cultures and *we made it through because we believed in what we were doing.* C'est pourquoi le budget de Pravin Jugnauth est important.

We have to be seen as a Government that is equitable. And when it comes to distribution of wealth, it is distributed in an equitable way. On la fait parce que *this is part of Nation building*.

En 2015, donc, nous sommes arrivés à cette situation, à la croisée des chemins. *Either we make it or we break it!* Je dis franchement, *either we make it or we break it*. L'environnement international ne joue pas avec nous. Sir Anerood l'avait dit ce matin. Je crois que c'était Rama Sithanen qui, à peine quelques mois après la crise de 2008, avait dit '*Green Shoots of the economy*'. Il avait tort.

En 2008, le monde est entré en crise économique et dans une récession normale. Une récession dure 3 à 4 ans, avec une perte de prospérité de 10 à 11 ans. C'est le contraire qui arrive, c'est-à-dire que le monde est toujours en crise de 2008 à 2018. Rien n'a changé, la seule chose qui a changé sur la planète Terre, je vais vous dire c'est quoi. On a pris beaucoup plus de dettes. Les banques centrales américaines, japonaises et européennes ont imprimé comme si il n'y aura pas de lendemain, des trillions de dollars, d'euros et de yens, en pensant qu'ils allaient pouvoir faire reprendre l'économie mondiale. Rien ne s'est fait !

Nous sommes dans la même situation qu'en 2008, à la différence près, que si le taux d'intérêt du dollars US ou de l'euro passe à 3% à 4 %, personne ne peut rembourser. L'Amérique sera en état de défaut si les taux d'intérêt passent de 3% à 4 %, ils le savent aussi. Ils ont imprimé des billets, ils ont pris des dettes, ils ont racheté les dettes ; ils ont fait des choses que personne ne fait. L'Anglais appelle ça '*kicking the can down the road*'. *And now, we are at the end of the road, there is no can and we have to know how to survive. But this is the environment !* 2018, la planète est toujours en crise ! Si quelqu'un peut me dire le contraire, venez le prouver. Moi, je vous dis, les banques centrales ont fait tout ce qu'elles pouvaient pour *restart, kick-off the world economy*. Ça n'a pas marché, parce que les cycles, personne ne peut jouer avec. Un cycle a son printemps, été, automne et hiver. Personne ne peut le changer. Et on le demande à nous ! C'est pourquoi le ministre des Finances à un rôle extrêmement pénible parce que l'économie mondiale n'est pas en train de jouer en notre faveur.

Le tourisme, c'est de 3%, 4%, 5 %. Le sucre, *it is collapsing*. Donc, on vit dans un environnement très difficile, et c'est dans cet environnement qu'on a dit : '*We can do it !* Et j'aime le dire quand on me pose la question ! On me dit que je rêve ! Et c'est vrai, que je rêve ! I love dreams. Et je vais vous dire aujourd'hui cette petite île, aujourd'hui un État

océan, a un destin gigantesque. On va devenir une très grande puissance dans la région, incontournable. C'est la raison pour laquelle toute la coopération qu'on fait avec l'Afrique doit être coopération sud-sud, *win-win* et dans le respect le plus total de l'autre. C'est le principe sur lequel nous avons bâti des *joint commissions* et les accords qu'on fait avec les pays africains actuellement. On peut en parler plus tard. Sinon je vais parler trop.

L'essentiel dedans est que le gouvernement est en train de foncer dans un environnement qui n'est pas facile. Je dois dire une chose ici et peut-être que nous devons faire une forme d'introspection parce que la première crise économique a été due à quoi ? C'était parce que le régime Travailiste a été trop généreux. Dès que l'argent est entré c'était distribué et dilapidé ! Dilapidé en 75 déjà la balance des paiements, la balance des comptes courants, la balance commerciale dans le rouge ! Et il nous a fallu donc passer par une crise économique majeure pour pouvoir en sortir lentement et péniblement après trois dévaluations de la roupie.

We don't want to repeat it. So, quelque part nous avons aujourd'hui un électoralat qui est ce qu'il est mais qui est en même temps un produit de la classe politique parce que d'élection en élection, on a fini par faire croire aux gens that from womb-to-tomb we will be with them et qui ne manqueront de rien parce que nou gouvernement pou prend tout en mains ! Who are we Government? We can only give what we have and nothing more, unless we bluff!

So, quelque part, nous avons actuellement un électoralat et croyez-moi si on donne à cet électoralat le droit des élections, il y aura un changement de gouvernement chaque six mois dans ce pays ! Savez-vous pourquoi ? Nous avons une population maintenant qui n'est plus satisfaite de rien et c'est grave ce que je dis. Nous avons atteint et le ministre du Travail disait que les Mauriciens maintenant n'aiment pas faire certains travaux. Alors qu'est-ce qu'on fait ? On importe la main-d'œuvre étrangère.

But this is very serious. Parce que le moindre bouleversement économique qu'il y aura devant, croyez-moi, les gens vont commencer à pleurer. Les gens doivent réaliser qu'on ne peut donner que ce qu'on a premièrement et deuxièmement, une population ne peut pas devenir exigeante au point où il y a une forme d'ingratitude, une forme de vouloir toujours plus. Il faut bien réaliser une chose, cette planète Terre, notre planète d'ici 2035 si la consommation mondiale continue comme elle est, il nous faudra deux planètes Terre pour survivre en 2035. Il n'y a pas d'option B. Le plan B d'une deuxième Terre n'existe pas.

Donc, quelques part *we have got to start learning one thing*, apprendre à être heureux avec moins parfois. On ne peut plus continuer avec une civilisation qui croit qu'il faut toujours plus que ce soit les *laptops*, que ce soit la façon de vivre et tout. Donc, nous sommes arrivés maintenant à une situation où je vous le dis franchement, je pense personnellement et c'est un peu de notre responsabilité que la population est arrivée à croire à la magie, à croire que ce qu'elle a besoin elle l'aura. Et croyez-moi le réveil sera difficile après. *Very tough ! Parseki nou ine fini perdi nou muscle* lorsqu'on perd ses muscles de combat, on devient très fragile après.

Donc, on importe de la main-d'œuvre si on a besoin. Peut-être. Mais on ne peut pas passer notre temps – *moi on me dit franchement : bhai Vishnu, met ou la main ladan, mo piti la, done li ene place messenger trankil*. Jusqu'à maintenant on parle ce langage. *So, there is a problem in the country and the problem comes also* avec de la surenchère. J'ai écouté le discours du député Armance avec beaucoup d'intérêt et j'ai réalisé que finalement *nous la pou done tout. Ene la case brule nou bisin là*. Je suis d'accord qu'il faut être là pour les gens qui sont dans la peine. Un mauricien qui est dans la peine c'est moi qui suis dans la peine. *We are just one*. J'ai fait une dizaine de budgets mais tous mes budgets étaient braqués sur le fait que la grande souffrance nationale doit être intolérable. Nous sommes tous comme ça ici. Tout le gouvernement et l'opposition aussi a cette réflexion de solidarité nationale.

Je rappelle juste en passant une façon d'aborder pas la charité mais *l'empowerment*. En 1987, CHA était en faillite. *Pena cass dimoune pa le payer*. R 1 loyer b kot pou gagne ça ? *J'étais à Souillac, Madame la présidente, j'ai été chez Madame Lepoids, je me souviens encore, ene gros trou. Mone dire Madame Lepoids ou pas ti capav repara ça ? Li dire ayo missier Vishnu kot pou ale repara ça, pena cass*. Donc, on parle d'une réalité. 33,000 maisons concernées ; les maisons CHA, les maisons de la *Sugar Industry*, les maisons des municipalités aussi. 33,000 familles vivant dans des conditions déplorables. Et j'avais dit à Madame Lepoids '*beh si gouvernement donne ou la case la ? Li dire ayo missier Vishnu si mo gagne sa pou dire ou mo pou occupe li couma mon baba ! Empowerment !*

This is what you call empowerment. And we gave away all the 33,000 houses. Il m'a fallu deux budgets pour le faire et payer un minimum de R 300 pour les maisons Alix et Carol, R 500 pour les maisons Gervaise. Dériosoire ! *Small amount but we proved one thing: we proved that people who are poor need to be empowered.* Et quand quelqu'un est devenu propriétaire de sa maison, il change complètement. Faites l'expérience vous-même. Toutes

ces cités qu'il y avait, pas de Vallijee, je parle d'ailleurs, aller voir ces cités aujourd'hui. Les gens ont construit des maisons à étages. Dans ma circonscription c'est pareil. Le VRS 1, 2 également ont aidé les propriétés à se réformer tout en distribuant des terres à leurs travailleurs et artisans.

*So, we did it in 1987-1988, giving away a ce temps-là et on dit *nou pe vine trop généreux*. Non! Parce que l'intention derrière la décision a été *d'empower*. Quand on est venu juste après avec le *Housing Corporation* pour leur donnait de l'argent pour qu'ils puissent refaire leurs maisons ils l'ont refait. *This is this nation! This is this country! We can never give up. But then we have to empower*. Ne me dites pas de donner de la charité. *No one in this nation* a besoin de la charité ni être traité comme une charité. *I mean it. I really mean it. We have the deepest respect for those who are in need and we must be there for them but it must be for empowerment and not to say: mone done li im pe cass or lot la la dan problem mone done li 5 feuilles tôle. No! we need to empower. This is now we have empowerment, three Ministers in this Government work on empowerment to ensure that people who are poor are given the right facilities to build up this nation. That is where we are.**

Lorsque j'ai vu les commentaires sur le budget de Pravind, 'budget populiste'. Vous ne pouvez pas savoir comme j'ai aimé ça. 'Budget électoraliste' j'ai aimé encore plus ! Parce qu'il n'y a pas d'élections.

(Interruptions)

Je ne sais pas qui s'est mis dans la tête qu'il y aura des élections qui viennent maintenant mais non, ce gouvernement est là jusqu'à décembre 2019...

(Interruptions)

Excusez-moi, la Constitution nous permet d'aller six mois encore. Donc...

(Interruptions)

...excusez-moi mais c'est mathématique. Maintenant si on vient me dire que c'est un budget électoraliste, je suis fier. Il n'y a pas de meilleurs compliments qu'on puisse faire à un ministre des Finances que lui dire budget électoraliste...

(Interruptions)

Non, c'est un très bon budget. C'est un budget qui balance les deux et je dois vous dire une chose, moi-même j'avais parfois des doutes lorsque Sir Anerood partait et que Pravind prenait la relève et nous tous on avait un peu de doute. Ce n'est pas facile de prendre la place du vieux. C'est vrai. *Then we have had the proof.* Je vous le dis franchement je n'ai jamais vu un Premier ministre travailler autant ! *Never in my life !* 18 heures par jour, il est sur le terrain. *A worker like never before* et *Pravind has got those three qualities* : il écoute, il prend son temps pour décider et il décide...

(*Interruptions*)

And it makes sense, c'est vrai. So, je vais vous dire une chose en toute humilité ce gouvernement va être là une deuxième fois...

(*Interruptions*)

...et je pense aussi...

(*Interruptions*)

Je pense aussi sincèrement. Il n'y a pas de politique dedans. Et je pense que l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances a fait ses preuves pour être le Premier ministre de l'île Maurice pour longtemps encore. Merci.

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Soodhun!

(7.12 p.m.)

Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Very difficult! Believe me, today, since this morning, I think the population in general, in Mauritius, is very lucky to have the speech directly. I would like to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, for taking this initiative, and we can say that whole population is watching today, what Sir Anerood Jugnauth, what hon. Nandcoomar Bodha and hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo were saying.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth, for me, is an archive, a political library. He is a guide. I think that those people don't respect him, they are the real poor people; the poorest people in the world. I know Sir Anerood Jugnauth since more than 30 years. I have worked with him very closely and till today, really when we listened to him carefully, believe me, he is not giving a lesson. He spoke from his heart, from his experience. He has started his career in 1963 as an

MP and he has been the father of the economy of this country, which all African countries recognise today.

I met last month the President of Guinea, Alpha Condé, and he was talking about Sir Anerood Jugnauth. I was really shocked the way he talked. He paid respect to Sir Anerood Jugnauth and he said: “I know Sir Anerood Jugnauth. He is still in politics. He is still Prime Minister”. He told me something very important. Alpha Condé is a well-known President. He is a socialist. He mentioned to me: “You are lucky Showkut that you have a guide like Sir Anerood Jugnauth and you should consider him as an archive”. This is why I am mentioning to you. People like Alpha Condé who pays respect to Sir Anerood Jugnauth. So, I am very hurt when I hear some Members of the Opposition. Maybe I did not agree, but I did respect Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, *Père de la Nation, Père de l'Indépendence*, but also Sir Anerood Jugnauth has paid a very vital role in this country.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth started his career and, in 1982, we remember that he was the Prime Minister in the Government of MMM, and this is the country where, in 1983, more than 100,000 people were unemployed. We didn't even have food, rice to eat. Sir Anerood Jugnauth never hesitated. He went personally abroad to find out food for his people. He is a real father of this country. Sir, we do respect you. If those don't respect you, we will respect you. This is what we have to learn from him.

But, while listening to my friends, hon. Nandcoomar Bodha and hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, when they were talking about the population, sometimes I agree to disagree with my good friend, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, and saying people are not responsible. There are certain in the Opposition, *les meter choolahs*, these people campaign; whatever the Government, any government of the day comes forward with any changes in the interest of the country, some Members of the Opposition will go and just provoke the people and say the contrary. We should not only blame the population. We have to blame also the one who is creating this problem. So, saying that and, in fact, while we are talking about hon. Pravind Jugnauth...

(Interruptions)

...what has not been said out to him in the past! And today, you can go to any place in this country, and people talk about him. People now discover hon. Pravind Jugnauth as a real Leader, as a real Prime Minister. This is what today people feel. And people feel that they are

safe under the Prime Ministership of Pravind Jugnauth. This is very important for the security also.

So, Madam Speaker, I will come on the improvement as a trade unionist, as my good friend, hon. Paul Bérenger, also was a trade union leader, the well-known trade union leader in the world, not in Mauritius. We have been in prisons many times

(Interruptions)

Veda ti mo avocat!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I thank God Almighty for, once again, giving me the opportunity to address this Assembly. Allow me, at the very outset, to congratulate hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development and his team for the crafting of this caring Budget.

Madam Speaker, a Budget which has a vision and a philosophy – first it has a vision and a philosophy - to ensure a strong continuity of the mission of this Government and build a bright sustainable future for Mauritius, and more importantly, to ease the life of Mauritius. So, a Budget is very important that every people, *toutes les couches de la population*, can find themselves that they are concerned and they have been taken into consideration while presenting this Budget.

Madam Speaker, 2016-2017, the Ministry of Finance set the base of proper Mauritius into a new era of development and prosperity. Nobody can deny. 2017-2018 Budget witnessed the introduction of measures to further accelerate our progress and the impact of these measures has been translated into economic growth and recognised by international organisation agencies such as IMF and Moodys. What has not been said at the international level about Mauritius? This is why we have to, not only to read, ‘*L’Express*’, ‘*Sunday Times*’ or whatever. We have to go and read the ‘*Times*’ in England. Go and read other newspapers so that you come to know how people at the international level, do respect Mauritius. This is very important.

So, Madam Speaker, today, the Government has set up a target for Mauritius to become a high-income economy. This is very important and well mentioned by my two friends and Sir Anerood Jugnauth this morning. We are now at the fourth Budget as

everybody is aware for this Government and third for hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth in this mandate. The 2018-2019 Budget thinks to pursue the transformation agenda to achieve the set target. Our vision paving the way to transform Mauritius into a high-income country is, I can see, a challenge in itself. But the most difficult element is to ensure an inclusive growth; one which looks at all the components of the sections of our rainbow society. This Government is working to ensure that there are equitable opportunities for all our economic players and prosperity for all Mauritians, and most importantly, that no one is left behind into the quest for the becoming of a high-income nation.

Once again, I have to commend the hon. Prime Minister. He has crafted this Budget to create the necessary enabling environment to make the transformative change happen.

My colleagues from both sides of the House have already intervened broadly on the Budget and, therefore, I will not delay the proceedings of the House by stating what has already been mentioned before me during the past week.

Our friends from the Opposition have criticised the Budget, and that is their job. In 2014, we were here together, congratulating Sir Anerood Jugnauth - *embrasse so la main, temps en temps* ‘well done, Sir’. *Au lieu donne la main, ti pe embrasser* in 2014 when we were in Government. But today they are in Opposition and they consider that their role is just to criticize, though some of them have timidly agreed that the Budget does contain good measures. But what matters more is the Mauritians at large.

Madam Speaker, since last week, I personally went about asking the views of several of my constituents. This is important. You have to go and ask your people in your constituency, different class of people, meet the people. So, as Mao - poker Mao - did say in the past, as a MP, you should be like a fish in the sea. So, you meet all the people and can gather information, not only just sit down and ask some few people around you. Opposition people cannot go in their constituency because before, they were in the Government, and now in the Opposition. How are they going to explain that? You have seen the result. I will not go to the result of the last election.

I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that, especially at the time of Eid, I had the opportunity to go and meet many people. I took the opportunity to ask various people from all walks of life and made different social gatherings. Believe me, with regard to the Budget, all the people - this is the reality - you can go to all villages and every corner of the country, they will tell you ‘yes, we can say that the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has done

something for the poor, *pour la classe moyenne, pour le petit peuple*, he has a special consideration'. You know why, Madam Speaker? Because this Budget was prepared - they all think, I don't know where, *dans l'hôtel, dans la cuisine, dans salle de bains* - in consultation with the trade unions, with the social workers, with the private sector, with the promoters, with the MPs, with the Ministers.

Everybody was there when we had discussions with the Prime Minister, who never refused. Being the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in the past, he used to meet those trade union people. It is not easy to meet the trade union people. I have been a trade union leader. But he has the guts, he has the courage, he has the determination, and can face the people and say 'yes, this Budget brings all the people together; come with a suggestion. Well defined by my good friend, hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, the character of our lovely Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.

This is my opinion. You can agree to disagree, there is no problem, but this is what I can say. He has taken into consideration the social groups; he has taken into consideration the trade unions. Do you imagine, Madam Speaker? I know my colleagues, the trade union leaders, have said that they congratulate the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for taking the noble decisions. Do you think it is easy to take the decision to implement minimum wage? I have been a trade unionist, I have been Minister of Labour, and I can tell you that even in the United States of America, in UK, in France, in all Africa, in China, there is no minimum wage.

In 2015, workers in the hotel *comme femmes de chambre* had a salary of Rs4,025 per month. Let me explain what is important. It is a fact and it is the law. In 2015, the salary of the *femmes de chambre* was Rs4,025. This is the reality - and today, there are some hotels. Now they have changed, and they have to work 48 hours per week to get this salary. And today, they are having a salary of not less than Rs10,000. If this is not socialist, what is socialist? Tell me what socialist is. Give the definition of socialist! So, this is a responsible Prime Minister, and before taking this decision - this is what they use to say, no risk no gain. He takes the risk, and today we can say that there is no problem. This is very important. What is the salary? The salary is the dignity of the worker. The dignity of the worker is the salary. So, this is what the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance today - the due respect that he has for the workers - has given; the dignity of all workers, more than 100,000 workers

of the country. This is the reality. And do you imagine, my sisters, our sisters working in the private sector, which is not easy even to get local leaves, sick leaves, and a permission!

Today, the law for our sisters is that even if you have not worked for 12 months, you get maternity leave. So, do you imagine the condition, the treatment, the status of the worker? So, this is very important. We have to take cognizance of the situation. This is why I say that, today, all the people, the workers of the private sector and the public sector well deserve what has been given in this Budget. People are talking of *ine baisse gaz, pe tire gaz. Pa pe tire gaz!* LPG gas for poor people!

Today, I agree with hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, we do not have poor today. Who can tell you that there is poor today? Can you tell me, in Mauritius, who is going to sleep without food tonight? No!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please!

Mr Soodhun: Madam Speaker, today, we are talking about workers getting the minimum wage. Normally, in Mauritius, in every household there are two people working. Today, we can say that they bring a minimum of Rs20,000 as salary per month. A minimum Rs10,000 to Rs20,000, when in the past it was Rs10,000, that is, Rs5,000 plus Rs5,000! Today, a mason is working for Rs1,200 per day. I can give you an example. There was one guy who applied for a post of scavenger at the Municipality and he was selected. But they told me this guy has refused the job. I was shocked. I went to see him and ask him why he refused. He said: 'I am going to draw a salary of Rs10,000 whereas, now, as a mason, I am getting more than Rs25,000 per month'. I congratulate him! This is today, Madam Speaker! When people say we have unemployed, yes, maybe, those people who do not want to work. I agree with hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo. Do you imagine, today, there are people from Bangladesh, from Nepal, from China, from India who leave their family and country to come to work in Mauritius as labourer, even working in bakeries ! *Si zott pas travay dan boulangerie, di pain ou pas gagner dimin si pena Bangladeshi.*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker : Please !

Mr Soodhun: This is the reality today You can see them working everywhere, be it as labourer, as mason, in the petrol station, in restaurant etc. Even when there is road works, they are making the ‘stop and go’ signal. So, if these people can come to work, since they left their country, why can’t Mauritian people do the works...This is why I say that we can’t say there is unemployment today.

Madam Speaker, they are talking about the decrease in the fuel price. There is also the decrease of 5% to 10% in the income tax. Do you know how many people are benefitting? So, we just can’t say that this Budget is a *confetti* or whatever. They have to be responsible people. And what about the Education Sector! What did the then Minister Jeetah do? People have forgotten about the fake University. At that time, he said that he was going to produce one graduate per household. This is what we have today.

(Interruptions)

And who is coming now to find a solution? It’s Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, this Government is coming forward now to have 1,000 graduate entrepreneurship, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I am not going to be too long. Let me say something, if people do not want to understand, they are not going to understand. Another measure, Madam Speaker, the Work at home scheme! It was started in 1985 by Sir Anerood Jugnauth, when he was Prime Minister. And people were very happy, they did not have to go to the factory to work, they could work at home and do their house jobs as well. Government is going to start this again. It is a very good decision and we are going to have lots of people working at home.

Madam Speaker, I would like to say a few words concerning my constituency, because now I am an MP. I have more time to look after my constituency. I am doing my job as a true MP; I go there three times a week. I must say that I presided a meeting at the Municipality with my good friend PPS, hon. Benydin, the Mayor and various officers. Maybe, my colleagues will be very surprised to hear what I have to say.

Madam Speaker, I will give you the results of one year in my constituency, with the collaboration of my colleagues and the support of various Ministries/Departments, the RDA, Municipality and NDU. In one year, the construction of drains has been undertaken in more than 72 different places at the tune of Rs13,200,000; construction of a new road has been carried out to the tune of Rs10,835,000, while road surfacing amounting to Rs12,275,500 has been carried out.

Coming to water supply! Apart from Camp Fouquereaux, the water issue has been solved fully in my constituency. I have to thank my good friend, the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Ivan Collendavelloo as well as his staff. Madam Speaker, there is a lot of things to say. Sometimes people don't know. In my Constituency, La Caverne/ Phoenix, there is no problem of water, only at Camp Fouquereaux where the problem will be solved soon by the installation of new pipes.

Also, 400 street lanterns have been fixed at a total cost of Rs1,600,000. Some 1,000 street lanterns have been repaired due to the recent heavy storm and lightning during the period of January to March.

Madam Speaker, it is worth pointing out that upon our coming into power in 2014 there was only a mini soccer pitch in my constituency. Today, I am proud to inform the House that 4 additional mini soccer pitches have been constructed only at La Caverne/ Phoenix, not vacoas – *Nando p zalou!*

A Multi-Use Game area has been set up at Closel behind the India Gandhi Cultural Centre in collaboration with Mauritius Telecom Foundation, comprising a mini soccer pitch, an open gym, a children playground, a pétanque pitch, a jogging track. This is the first innovative project of its kind in Mauritius which is in line with our Prime Minister's objective to encourage the gathering. Madam Speaker, I have no doubt that this example will be followed.

Madam Speaker, there are more projects, but I won't enumerate all of them. The NDU has financed in one year some Rs36 m. for projects. Madam Speaker, I am glad that the Government is prowl the avenues of corporation with certain Gulf countries. I will fail in my duty if do not mention it. As mentioned by the Prime Minister before, the Minister Mentor, Minister Nando Bodha my colleague, we have a good relation with India and we are having all the help and facilities. It is not because of hon. Pravind Jugnauth, but because we have created the approach. Hon. Pravind Jugnuath does not go to India just to see the dancing like Dr. Ramgoolam was doing in the past, he has been there working seriously, working hard, and this is what he have obtained from hon. Pravind Jugnauth. Madam Speaker, I will not elaborate on what we have already received from the countries of the Gulf region, such as for Hadj, and today, Madam Speaker, I am proud that for Mauritian people we do not need visa to go to Dubai. This is very important and it is for all Mauritians.

Let me tell you that even for China, for the whole Africa, Pakistan, India, and Seychelles, we do not need a visa; we can stay for 3 months. And on top of that, let me tell you also that, the financing of facilities, assistance, especially after heavy rains, this has already been widely published. I am not going to mention it. People know that we have received USD20 m. from Prince Mohamedbin Salman. But I wish to mention that with the support of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, the Prime Minister, we have secured USD6 m., Rs210 m. as a sponsorship from the UAE to build a swimming pool complex at Closel, Phoenix. This is what we have obtained from UAE. The tender for the project will be published within a few months.

In addition, Madam Speaker, there are two secondary schools and nearly 20,000 students who are going to use it and 107,000 inhabitants will benefit from the swimming pool. Madam Speaker, I am also pleased to announce that very soon 140 strong high-level delegation from Saudi Arabia, led by his Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef is soon coming to Mauritius to explore avenues of cooperation. That is very important, and the Prime Minister, once again, has been instrumental for finalising this visit of the delegation.

Madam Speaker, allow me to conclude. The Budget has created a feel good factor across Mauritius. For long, we have tried and are still trying to become like Singapore and other developed countries. The reason being places like Singapore and Dubai have reached a level of progress and degree of prosperity and quality of development that the rest of the world envy.

Mauritius has made significant efforts to emulate their best practices and try to adapt their methodologies to the Mauritian context. We have progressed but still have to achieve more. It is true other countries have started, but I believe, Madam Speaker, that not only we can catch up but we will catch up with these countries and why not, even maybe overtaking them. The degree of our success in meeting goals lie in our resolves to stick to them. Because, Madam Speaker, with a strong mindset and lots of hard work, collaboration and dedication from one and all, we will make it and definitely *Insha Allah* we will make it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. Hon Baloomoody!

(7.47 p.m.)

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we are debating today the fourth Budget of this Government. And if there is only one person on the other side who has reminded us that we are talking about the fourth Budget, is hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo. Everyone seems to have forgotten his Budget, they all refer to the three Budgets of the Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Jugnauth. They forget that we are doing the fourth Budget of this Government and this Government has completed already 70% of its mandate.

Madam Speaker, this Budget, as rightly pointed out by the Economist Pierre Dinan *s'inscrit dans la mouvance législative. La question est de savoir si c'est soutenable.* The hon. Deputy Prime Minister, when asked about the non-increase of the water price *le lendemain* of the presentation of the Budget, he said it is a political decision. So, clearly this Budget is a political Budget, leaving aside the economic realities and the economic fundamentals.

Madam Speaker, this Budget, in fact, contains some good measures. Some populist measures but, most importantly, it contains a lot of *effets d'annonces*, a lot of *repetitions. Tappe la table!* As we have seen recently, I have stated in one of the newspapers, 105 measures out of 253 which were mentioned last year have not been implemented. 105 out of 253! And today, again, we are having a Budget with many repetitions and a lot of *effets d'annonce.*

Madam Speaker, after having completed 70% of its mandate, we have to see in what context this Budget has been presented. There was a *vague généralisée des mécontentements* against this Government out there, especially after the recent rise in petrol prices, not forgetting the level of corruption in the country, favouritism, the issue of law and order generally, the amount of fatal accidents on our roads, security on our public road, close relationships and familiarity of those closed to the Government, and some are still in Government with the mafia *la drogue*, the *politique des petits copains* and *petites copines*, the gift given to hon. Dayal, Rs15m. of taxpayers' money with regard to a case which was entered after 2 years. The hon. Attorney General is here. I hope that as from now on, State Law Officers will not take the point as a preliminary point of law in cases where poor people who are involved in road accidents, poor people who are victims of medical negligence, of Police brutalities when they enter a case outside the 2 years period that this point will not be taken. Let this gift to Mr Dayal be a precedent in our Court as from tomorrow.

There is a total discontent, Madam Speaker, among the youth graduate professionals. Those who have been qualified, who have been unemployed for years see those who are coming after them to the country, recently being employed after 2 or 3 months, while they have been waiting for years to be employed. You just have to look, recently Canada hosted a *foire* at Pailles. You just have to look at the number of youngsters who want to leave this country. You are talking about the demography; we have to get foreigners very soon to work in our country? But are we thinking about the brain drain?

Professionals, youngsters who want to leave the country because they do not believe what they are saying, especially those who have worked, probably are doing some pupillage of 1 or 2 years in Europe. When they come here they see how close you have to be with those in power. You must have a relative in power to get a job, to be employed after having spent 5 years or 6 years studying abroad? And also let's not forget the appeal of the DPP against the judgment of the Supreme Court in the case of Medpoint which is coming on 15 January next year. It is with this background, with the events which are *à l'horizon* that the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development had no choice than to come with a Budget containing some good, like I say, and populous measures.

Let me start with the issue of law and order. It is unfortunate that the Minister Mentor is not here. I will refer to the Government Programme 2015-2019. It is important to remember 2015-2019 because we are talking of a Budget 2018-2019. So, this Budget is supposed to take care, is the last furlong of this Government to complete what was mentioned in that programme. 2019 the programme ends, 2019 this Budget ends and probably the General Election after.

I don't intend to read because of time constrains. All what was mentioned from paragraph 128 to 133, but I will read one because I am going to lay emphasis on this one. Paragraph 133 –

“Government firmly believes that in order to achieve results, the Police Force must attract and retain the best competencies. To promote transparency and meritocracy, an independent body will be set up to conduct examinations within the Police. Degree holders will be encouraged to join the Force and new incentives will be introduced to reward performance.”

But, I will come the main ill of our Police today. There is no political will, and the Commission of Police has got a large responsibility when it comes to the manning, the way

he deals with the Police Officers, the way he deals with the trade unions, the way promotions are done and - mind you - I went on the MSM site on internet on the day that the PSC is going to recruit officers in the morning, on the same day, it is on the net of the MSM. *On va recruter la police*, etc., and they start to give the procedure. It is advertised on the MSM site. In fact, if you go on internet, you type Mauritius Police Force, it comes by itself.

Now, crime has been constantly on the increase since 2015. The situation with regard to law and order has been deteriorating. Every day, we hear about criminal acts committed on children, relatives, elderly women, and what is worse, Madam Speaker, some crimes are committed by those who were supposed to enforce the law.

Madam Speaker, for the Financial Year 2016-2017, Rs8.7 billion were allocated to the Police Department; 2017-2018: Rs8.5 billion and in this year's Budget: Rs8.4 billion, again. Are we getting value for money? Is money being rightly spent? Can we say that we are in a safer Mauritius today?

Madam Speaker, in last year's Budget, it was announced, amongst others, recruitment of 583 additional Police Officers, acquisition of 18 Light Armoured Personnel Carriers, reinforcing Police patrols, technological support, implementation of the Police Academy at Côte d'Or City and the *Brigade des Mineurs* will be reinforced. That was said in 2017.

Answering to a PQ on 24 October 2017, with regard to law and order. PQ B/594, this is what the Minister Mentor, I would say, was made to answer. Unfortunately, he does not know the reality. The answers are prepared at Casernes, he just answers here. We know, we have seen, I am not blaming him, with due respect to him. When we ask supplementary questions, most of the answers are: 'I don't know', 'I can't say', 'I am not aware', when we put PQs on the Police and on the prison. This is what he had to say –

"Police have recently set up a common platform to work jointly with Private Security Companies(...)"

Do you know who are the companies? There is only one company, Brink's which is working in collaboration with the Police. And what is worse, this private company is managing all the CCTVs and all the data are kept by this private company. He said –

"Front Line Police Officers will soon be provided with up-to-date personal security equipment such as expandable batons, handcuffs, federal streamers and torch lights fitted on a tactical belt(...)"

He gave the same reply, a few months to the PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition on 12 December 2017. Up to today, no single equipment has been given to the Police Officers, protective equipment or for them to carry on their job. Only one which was given to them. Do you know what was given to them, Madam Speaker? The expandable baton. It was given to them.

Listen, it was given to them on 01 or 02 of March before Independence Day. We are going to celebrate *50 ans d'Independence donne zot baton* for security reason. after independence, on 15 March, each and every Police Officer received a letter telling them to return the batons, as there have been minor technical problem. I found this document, it is interesting, and it's good for posterity to see how we cheat our Police Officers. After Independence Day, on 15 March, each of them got a letter to return the batons. And this is the only equipment which was given to them.

In last year's Budget it was mentioned that 583 Police Constables will be recruited. In fact, only 210 Police Constables were recruited on 28 September 2017. Not 583, as promised! In this year's Budget, we are being informed that 1,000 more Police Officers will be recruited, when, in fact, on a question put six months ago, there are 653 funded vacancies in the Police Force. And if you add the six months those who have retired, left the Police, we must have more than 1,000 vacancies in the Police Force. In fact we are not increasing the Police Force although criminal activities have increased, and crimes are recurring more and more often every day.

Now, we are saying CCTV cameras in all Police Stations. We have seen what has happened in Vacoas. One person put it to me: 'What happens to your country? *Premier ministre passe par l'imposte, prisonnier sorti par la grande porte.*' A CCTV in a detention centre in Vacoas, prisoners are allowed to go to be replaced, to come and go, and nothing on the CCTV, only two weeks after that it was discovered. There is no point of having CCTV if it will be controlled by the same officers in that police station. You must have the CCTV controlled by a headquarters, with independent people, not even Police Officers, those who are not *dan meme groupe*, with the same shift. CCTV cameras will reduce police brutality! Are we going to put CCTV cameras in all rooms in a police station? So, I don't know how much having CCTV cameras will help unless it is properly controlled and properly manned.

Talking about CCTV cameras, my friend hon. Fowdar, my friend hon. Thierry Henry, and my good friend here, hon. Ameer Meea - I will come to that later - we visited Melrose

Prison when I was Chairperson of the PAC. 50% of the CCTV cameras are not working, and when you go to the control room, you see that, for 80 to 90 cameras, there is only one person watching them. And when we come to the vote on Prison, we will see how many people were recruited. So, what is the point of having all these technologies if they are not properly manned?

There is a total lack of Police Officers in our police stations. These armoured vehicles we are supposed to buy now was in the presidential address in 2015. It is only the first time it is in the Budget for them to be bought. For the last four years, no equipment has been bought for the Police Officers. The morale is low in the Police Force. Hon. Dayal knows it very well. Why? Because there is a complete lack of consideration by the *état-major*, including the Commissioner of Police, towards the Police Officers.

We voted a law to allow them to form a trade union. The hon. Prime Minister always come and say that the Commissioner refuses to meet these people, there is no discussion because they are not in compliance with section 33 of the Employment Relations Act 2008. But do you know what is happening in the Prison? Pressure is being put on the junior officers not to join any trade union. This is why they could not reach the 30% threshold to be recognised. Pressure is being put on them because there is no transparency in promotion, there is no transparency in the exam from Sergeant to Inspector, from Inspector to Chief Inspector. People who have passed exams for two years, three years, are still waiting to be promoted. This is why they are not joining trade unions, and the Commissioner of Police is harassing leaders of trade unions. This is a fact. That Police Officer, trade unionist, has gone on radio. He said clearly, and the next day, Central CID Officers were at his place in Rose Belle; three cars of Police Officers were there to see him. Fortunately, he has good legal advice, he has not been arrested yet.

Now, as we are talking about violence, let me briefly mention about domestic violence, which is very important, as you know, Madam Speaker. The Gender Caucus has just done a research with regard to domestic violence in Mauritius. It is on the increase and it is serious; 2014 - 1,452; 2016 - 2,077; 2017 - 2,269, and it was said in the presidential address that “Government will set up a National Coalition against Domestic Violence Committee under the aegis of the Prime Minister’s Office”, etc., with the Police, one-stop shop. Now, in today’s Budget, we have a one-stop shop - *zero*.

Nothing has been done to improve the *sort* of the victims of domestic violence. The Parliamentary Gender Caucus has made a report to find the causes of these on the perpetrators - not on the victims, on the perpetrators -, why they do commit acts of domestic violence: unemployment, substance misuse, excessive use of social media, level of education, mental health, work-life balance, gender inequality within the household setting.

Now there is a report. Early morning, we listened to hon. Mrs Jadoo-Jaunbocucs, the Minister concerned. There is no mention about what actions she is taking. I hope she had the opportunity to go through the report. It is a Parliamentary report, it is not a partisan report. They have made recommendations on how we can set, we can have a network of social workers on the ground, how to educate the people, how we can use the people at the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. All these canvassers to do and see how we can convince the perpetrators, educate the perpetrators, and assess them in their needs. Instead of using them for the *1er mai meeting* to organise people for the meeting, let us use them for a better use.

Now, let me come to the Reform Institution. Talking about Police Officers - this is another interesting thing - I asked a question about uniform, and look at the answer we had. There is a lot of complaints outside, especially in Curepipe. I received it from the Police Officers who are doing night duty and who are supposed to sit in a van at Wooton, 24 hours, with the light on in the van; they are not allowed to put the heater because the petrol is controlled. So, they asked me to put a question for a quote; we have not received a quote.

Look what the Rt. hon. Minister of Mentor had to say. Trousers and shirts provided between December 2017 and March 2018, shoes and socks between January and April 2018. As regards winter, Police Officers are issued one cardigan, which is a woolen pullover, with long sleeves, every three years. Come on! Can you expect a Police Officer to give the best of himself using one cardigan for three years? And this is the way you treat them and you want them to give a better service!

Now, let me deal with Reform Institution. I will not go in detail as time does not allow. When we discussed the Reform Institution (Amendment) Bill recently, I went in detail with regard to the management of the Prison under this Commissioner of Prison. Since then, I must say, things have deteriorated. You know what decision he has recently taken, according to my information? Prison Officers who work on night duty are not allowed to bring their meal for security reason. So, if you start your shift from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., you must have your dinner at 5 p.m. at home; *pas gagne droit amene catora, pas gagne amene manzer, pas gagne*

droit amene narien. You will be provided with tea there. And when it comes to the meal of the prisoners, another drastic decision has been taken. And what do we have in this Budget with regard to our Reform Institution? Only one phrase – 38 additional Prison Officers will be recruited; that's all. So, recruiting 38 additional officers, *tout va bien* in the Prison, when we know there is a lack of personnel in the Prison. Are you aware, Madam Speaker, that very often, the watch towers - somebody was saying 'wow, now nothing enters our prison' - are not properly manned because of lack of Prison Officers? At least, one which I know is Borstal. Very often the watch tower is unattended.

This is why telephones or whatever are thrown over in the prisons because there is no people to watch from the watch tower. One officer at night to watch three to four blocks of detainees! And to prove that the Commissioner of Prisons has been a total failure with regard to the management of prisons, ask yourself the question: why did we have to reopen La Bastille Prison, when Melrose Prison was supposed to be the top security prison? Though, today, prisoners prefer to go to Melrose than going to Beau Bassin, where they have a good time, and they are supplied with their needs.

I just mentioned the CCTV room. There also, no qualified personnel to watch all these cameras! Strategic points, like the Search Room, where prisoners coming from Courts are admitted, this also is not properly manned. When it comes to equipment, it is the same situation in the Police: no handcuffs outdated ZTV radios; most of the metal detectors are outdated; jamming of equipment.

(Interruptions)

I hear somebody saying 'jamming of equipment'. All those who have a mobile in the prison can communicate from outside! You will be surprised! When the Mauritians were arrested in Madagascar recently, within seconds the prisoners in the prison were aware of it! When the three Mauritian prisoners were arrested in Madagascar, the rumour has already circulated among the prisoners in Melrose. And you talk of jamming communication!

There again, the Prison officers' trade unions are being harassed. I raised that issue and I thought that the hon. Minister of Labour would have come, at least, in his speech, to tell us what he has done. There is a sort of union bashing, be it in the Prison, in the Police Force, at the Agricultural Sector, at the Post or in most of the Civil Service. His reply was: "I will

conduct an inquiry”. I read the next day, on a Monday newspaper that enquiries would be conducted on these cases. But nothing in the Minister’s speech today!

What about the Correctional Youth Centre? Not a single word! Not a word, when we know what happened recently. I raised the matter, here, the next day. In the report of the Ombudsperson for Children 2016, this is what she had to say –

“I was shocked to discover how distressing living conditions were in the CYC and RYC. How can rehabilitation be possible in such deplorable conditions?”

That is what was said in 2016! Two months ago, after I raised the issue at Adjournment Time, the Chairperson of the National Mechanism of Human Rights Commission, Mr Hervé Lassémillante went there the next day. And in ‘*Le Défi*’ of 22 June, this is what he had to say. I quote -

«A l’intérieur il y a de l’urine par terre. Les matelas sentent mauvais. Les toilettes sentent mauvais. Les toilettes sont cassées. 20 à 22 mineurs vivent dans une seule unité. Il faut améliorer tout cela. »

So, there is no concern about the youths, the unfortunate youths who have seen themselves on the wrong side of the law at their age! And there is nothing in the Minister’s speech regarding the Correctional Youth Centres.

Briefly, I will talk about Education because much has been said already. When we discussed about the Tertiary Education Sector, when we discussed about the MIE (Amendment) Bill, making of MIE an institution to provide degrees ...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I will go quickly. I did mention at that time that we should do an audit of our Tertiary institutions before embarking upon any decision to allow the MIE and other institutions to give degrees; but Government went ahead.

On 09 May 2018, there was a PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition on the University of Technology. The hon. Minister of Education went out of her way to defend that institution, saying everything is perfect. Alright! No problem! Now, we have had the Audit Report from the TEC. They have carried out an audit report. The report is damning, hon. Minister of

Education! There are so many recommendations which deal not only with the infrastructure, not only with the trio, the three political appointees, but also of the quality of the courses.

(Interruptions)

Instead of looking at the interest of these children, they defend these political appointees! If they are not performing, sacked them! Put in professionals because the children are spending not only their money, but their life, their future in that institution!

My request is to the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, let's have an audit in all the institutions which are issuing degrees.

(Interruptions)

I understand, even in the University of Mauritius! I hope they make the report public and that actions will be taken on each and every report.

Madam Speaker, hon. Rutnah made mention of a document which was circulated by Mr Parsuramen, the Chairperson of Global Rainbow Foundation. In that report, TEC made recommendations, that amendments have to be made for the infrastructure for disabled person. It's true!

Hon. Rutnah, my friend got the same document! But when we are a honest politician, when we are a honest professional, if we have to quote a document, we don't quote only the part of the document which is in their favour. We quote the total document! Like I said, there are some good things in that Budget. The Global Foundation did mention a list of good decisions taken in that Budget, but there is a lot he has asked for. Where is the Disability Bill? What about the employment of the disabled? Three persons were supposed to be employed in each and every sector according to law. Where is it? We are providing taxi for primary and secondary education, but the public transport, does it answer the needs of those disabled?

One simple thing he was telling me when I spoke to him on the phone, for those persons who do not hear, buses do not announce at which bus stop you have reached. Like if you are at Vacoas, at the bus stop of Georges Guibert Street, etc., a bus stop in Port Louis. Simple things! It should not be difficult. Another thing he asked for is the carer's allowance. The carer's allowance is limited only to those who are bedridden. There are many people

who are disabled; who are not bedridden, but they need a carer's allowance. Probably this has to be looked into. So these are issues which have been raised by the Global Foundation.

I will briefly ask for two issues which concern my Constituency. One is the issue of allowing industrial fishing companies to fish in our shallow water. Madam Speaker, it is clear there has been no consultation or whatsoever with the fishermen before coming to that decision. They are worried out there. According to them, if this happens, 10,000 people will lose their jobs. According to them, there should have been a survey to see whether we need more fish.

My next item will be the fishing port of Fort Williams, which will be a private funded project. We were informed by hon. Koonjoo, many years ago, that this has been shelved. Now, it is back in the Budget again. So, we want to have more details. Who is going to finance that, which company, how much people in the vicinity will be employed, all these we want to know, so I hope the hon. Minister when summing-up...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, I am really sorry. I will ask you to conclude because I have already...

Mr Baloomoody: I am concluding. I have said that this is the fourth Budget, some have said this is the last Budget, some have said that there will be another Budget. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, this is not in the hands in the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, it is in the hands of the five Judges, their lordships who will decide in January, then we will know whether we will have a fourth Budget or not.

I am done, Madam Speaker. Thank You.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Sinatambou!

(8.23 p.m.)

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr E. Sinatambou): Madame la présidente, permettez-moi tout d'abord au nom de la population, de mes mandants et en mon nom personnel de féliciter le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances et du Développement Economique pour son budget pour l'année fiscale 2018-2019.

Madame la présidente, sans le moindrement compromettre le développement durable et tout en s'assurant que les *economic fundamentals* soient respectés, l'honorable Premier

ministre et ministre des Finances et du développement économique a adopté une approche cohérente et pleine d'humanisme en définissant les sept orientations de son budget.

Cela me fait immensément plaisir de n'avoir aucun membre de l'opposition qui soit assis vis-à-vis de ce côté de la Chambre, Madame la présidente, parce que je sais que ce que j'ai à dire ne leur plairait pas. Parce que, voyez-vous, Madame la présidente, je suis arrivé à la conclusion qu'ils sont prêts à tout. Ils sont prêts à tout pour essayer de prendre le pouvoir et gouverner ce pays.

(*Interruptions*)

They always say that, but they do the contrary. They always say they are your good friends, but they always do the converse.

(*Interruptions*)

Donc, Madame la présidente...

(*Interruptions*)

Laissez-moi, s'il vous plaît, cher amis. Merci.

J'ai essayé de déchiffrer, j'ai essayé de comprendre la méthodologie de l'opposition dans ses vaines tentatives de démolir le gouvernement. Le mot est bien choisi, parce que leurs tentatives ne s'apprêtent pas à la démocratie, leurs tentatives ne s'apprêtent pas à des méthodes acceptables dans une démocratie, et je vous expliquerai comment dans quelques instants.

Je crois que l'île Maurice, en général, connaît aujourd'hui leur fameux syndrome '*narien pas bon*'. Nous sommes aujourd'hui bien conscients que l'opposition a adopté une méthodologie qui fait croire, pour le dire en anglais, *either nothing you do is good in Government, or everything we do is bad*.

You just read the newspapers, you just hear what they have to say, what their partisans have to say, what some media under the garb of so-called independence are saying. You just find the flow, '*narien pas bon*'. I think that this has been uncovered, this undemocratic approach, I think now is quite clear for the country to see.

However, there is another feature which I have now uncovered, because it takes time to see why is one saying this, why is one doing that, why is this being said and it takes some

time to reflect before you uncover that there is another piece of the jigsaw which is actually just a lethal weapon trying to shoot you down. And the other aspect of their manoeuvres, which I have uncovered, I have seen it again here on a number of occasions, because here we heard them in a repetitive manner, we heard them, we saw and we said: ‘what is going on here?’ And I managed to uncover another aspect of their manoeuvres. It is the ‘you are no good’ syndrome.

First, everything you do is not good, ‘*narien pas bon*’. Second, ‘*to pas bon*’. And I have seen it against several Members on this side of the House. I will just give you the last one I observed, witnessed personally last night. I made it a point to take the transcript. Hon. Thierry Henry made a speech last night...

(Interruptions)

Yes but he is just one of them, and he said about the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture –

“Le ministre avait aussi annoncé la construction d’une médiathèque - zéro plombage.”

That was said yesterday evening, yesterday Friday the 22nd. Yet, the Minister had already announced it in his speech and did so on the eve: he inaugurated the *médiathèque* on the preceding day, Thursday 21 June.

The Minister did not intervene at that stage but something else happened in the course of the speech of the hon. Member. He said –

« En parlant de l’UNESCO, j’aimerai bien faire une parenthèse dessus. Notre ministre de la Culture était parti à l’UNESCO pour une réunion de travail bilatéral. Mais notre ministre a eu une réunion, avec qui? Avec un chef de section ! Même pas un Directeur! C’est ça notre ministre de la Culture! C’est une honte !”

So, after the ‘*narien pas bon*’ syndrome, the ‘you are no good’ syndrome.

On a point of clarification, the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture addressed the Chair and said, I quote –

“I have had a meeting with no other than the Director General of the UNESCO when I went there.”

Do you think that this was the end of the matter? No, because they are now going for the ‘you are no good’ syndrome. The Member said –

« Enfin, s'il veut s'exprimer, mais j'ai ça sur papier, M. le président. Le ministre n'a été reçu que par un chef de section. C'est ça sur papier. »

Ah, où est le papier? Well, I have got a paper, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I have got a paper, because I made it a point to find two pictures, because, in fact, he has met two successive Director Generals of UNESCO. I made it a point to get two pictures of the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture with two Director Generals of UNESCO in the course of two different meetings in Paris. But look at how...

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, I table.

Look at how they act and to what extent they will go. To what extent they will go! And this is a major conspiracy as far as I am concerned which is going on in this country.

I just heard. I mean, I just heard, just now I just heard something else which really...

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, it's unheard of in the course of the debates, but I am really happy, because it means they cannot stand the truth. They would not be able to answer back, because we are speaking the truth here.

Let me go to something else, Madam Speaker, because this is something which has been going on since January of last year, which is an insult to our democracy and to our Constitution. Day in, day out they use the expression *papa-piti* and it is taken again in some media by some so-called independent journalists who are, in fact, partisan. *Papa-piti!* But when the Rt hon. Minister Mentor resigned as Prime Minister, the Supreme Law of the land, the Constitution states that it is the Leader of the party who commands the majority of votes, who actually forms the next Government. So, it is just the application of the law, of the Supreme law of the country. But they are going on and on and on, as if there was something improper. But, on that side of the House, the Boolell has got *papa-piti*, hon. Bérenger has got *papa-piti-gendre-beau-fils-tifi*, what is that? You have got the Mohamed, *grand-pere-papa-piti*, you have got the Duval, *grand-pere-papa-piti*. No newspaper will say that. Isn't that shameful? Isn't that shameful, assuming there was something improper, that you needed to

coin an expression *papa-piti*, some sort of concept, some sort of unethical concept, unethical political concept called *papa-piti*.

How could it apply to only one side of the House and not to the other side of the House? But I am just trying to show, Madam Speaker, that this is what is going on with this, after *narien pas bon, to pas bon*. And this is what is going on. I want that to be recorded, because once we see the trend, we will be able to uncover it every day. Since it is a sort of Stalinist approach, you take a lie, you repeat it once, twice, three times, five times, well, the 25th time people start saying, it must be true, it has been said 25 times! Now, why am I saying that Madam Speaker? I will take a few examples. In fact, I would like here to take my own example.

When I was Minister of Foreign Affairs, I was quite proud, first of all, because I was instrumental in the longest renewal of AGOA for 10 years, from September 2015 up to 2025. I also consider that I am, in a way, the father of the Free Trade Agreement between China and Mauritius because it was negotiated and announced when I had the first bilateral discussions with no less than the Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister, Wang Yi. So proud! But then there was a rating of all Cabinet Ministers by one newspaper and I was ranked *avant dernier*. I thought I was doing a good job as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, how come *mo avant dernier*? So, I thought, let me ring the newspaper and see on what basis, how they actually came to this rating. Well, first of all, the Editor-in-Chief would not speak to me, I had to speak to his secretary. Then I asked them: 'Do you have a journalist who covers foreign and international affairs?' 'No.' 'Do you have one who covers regional integration?' 'No.' 'Do you have one who actually covers international trade?' 'No.' So, I asked: 'How then did you come to this rating?' They said: 'It is the feeling of our journalists'. That is how it goes on and on and on. So they choose something. You see, they will try...

Je vais le dire, ils essaient de vous abaisser. *They try to make you believe that you are worth nothing*. Ils essaient de briser votre confiance. *They will do everything to destroy your credibility and self-esteem*. Ils vous insultent et ils sont aidés dans ce sens par certains - et je le dénonce ici - par certains qui se prétendent des journalistes indépendants, mais qui le sont pas. J'ai été traité d'imbécile par M. Bérenger, une phrase inacceptable. Cela ne sort pas dans le Hansard parce qu'il était *in a sitting position*. Par contre, le journaliste du Mauricien, il me traite d'imbécile dans son journal. Voilà comment, si vous ne jouez pas leur jeu, si vous êtes

franc, si vous faites votre travail comme il le faut - faire votre travail comme il le faut veut dire ne pas accepter tout ce qu'on vous dit de l'autre côté, et ça ils ne peuvent le sentir.

I go one step further because Okay it happened at Foreign Affairs. I was then appointed Minister of Technology. I was very happy once again, because I was once a Minister of IT, more than 11 years, I think about 11 years ago. I was even elected the best IT Minister of Africa. So, being appointed Minister of Technology was a great thing. I could do even more things. I was so happy because we worked on IT Indicators, and on the 7 most important IT Indicators in the world, Mauritius came out first in all 7 for Africa. Quite proud of it. But then, knowing how this might be treated in our country where *narien pas bon* or where *to pas bon*, I thought let us compare ourselves to two giants, compared to us as an emerging country. The two IT giants I chose were India and China. And you know what happened, Madam Speaker?

In four out of them, we did better than both India and China. In the fifth one, we were better than China, but doing less well than India. In the sixth one, it was the converse, where we were doing better than India, but less well than China. In only one of the seven indicators, were the two giants jointly doing better than us. We got the next rating of Ministers by that newspaper, this time I was rated third before last! You can see why I was prepared to affront the Opposition and why I know they would not be there. Because I will tell them what I think is the truth in their face. That is their tendency. We are no good, nothing is good. And what is happening? They have got some agents to go and try to instil that into the population.

Why did I start with this, Madam Speaker? Madam Speaker, the reason is because I now take this general rule and I would like everyone on this side of the House to remember that. Let's take those two general rules; their tactic is to, very undemocratically, claim that nothing you do is good. And secondly, that you are also no good at all. And let's try to apply that to the Budget Speech. I will give you chapter and verse Madam Speaker. I have taken care to take 15 adjectives where leaders and deputy leaders have actually qualified the Budget

—

(i) Mr Duval –

- Rien de bon dans le budget ;
- C'est un budget raté;
- Le budget manque de substance, et

- Duval qualifie le budget de creux.

(ii) Mr Bérenger –

- Budget panadol;
- Budget décevant;
- Budget effrayant, et
- Budget confetti.

(iii) Mr Uteem –

- Budget irresponsable;
- Budget réchauffé;
- Budget farceur;
- Budget trompe l'œil;
- On patauge dans la médiocrité;

Nothing, nothing is good, et narien pas bon. This is what they are doing to this country. And you know why it is so bad? Because they are bringing this country down. If I were an investor willing to come to Mauritius and I read about the Budget, that it is *rien de bon, raté, manqué de substance, creux, irresponsable, rechauffé, disque rayé, farceur, trompe l'oeil, panadol, décevant*, I would say ‘What?’ and I would run away.

This is how bad those people are. This is why this cannot go on. There is a German concept called ‘PAAP’; PA, the first part, is about problem analysis, and AP, the second part, is action planning. I am saying all this today, before this House, and to the Nation, the problem analysis shows that those people on the Opposition side of the House will do everything wrong that they can to try and take power. They have just said it, and the speaker who was speaking before me was praying that the court case against the hon. Prime Minister goes against him. We could see that just now. You can see the way they are craving but this will not work.

Speaking after hon. Rutnab who had mentioned something about a document from Mr Armoogum Parsuramen, hon. Ameer Meea stated that, as a responsible person, if you are quoting from a document, you must, apart from stating what is in your favour, also mention what is against you. Have they done that?

If you take the Budget Speech, if you take what they have said, they have completely failed to apply it to themselves. So, I am saying this, Madam Speaker, because the problem analysis says they will do everything they can to say '*narien pas bon*', and they will do everything they can to say '*to pas bon, to pas bon, to pas bon*'. I have shown to you, through my own example, through that of the Minister of Arts and Culture, through that of the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, *nou pas bon la, zot ki bon!* They are never in a position to make valid proposals. In fact, I must say, although he was critical of me, I had still liked the speech of hon. Armance because he had made a number of objections on the National Environment Fund, on the Disability Bill, on the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, to which I was going to reply. But since he is gone, there is no point.

What there is point to do is to show how to tackle the '*narien pas bon*' syndrome in the Budget. We know the concept now. '*Narien pas bon*' is one, and '*to pas bon*' is the other. Tackling the '*narien pas bon*', what should we do? So, we say it is good, they say it is not good. What do we do? Well, we try to go and find what neutral people, who are neither with us nor with them, would say; what experts would say; what stakeholders would say. I have gone to try and find a few of those stakeholders, Madam Speaker, and I found Jocelyn Kwok from l'AHRIM -

« *Un budget de continuité dans l'effort. Les projets vont dans le bon sens.* »

Vinod Seegum -

« *Le budget fait la part belle au social et à la classe moyenne. C'est globalement positif.* »

Reaz Chuttoo -

« *Rien de comparable avec l'ancien régime !* »

And I even like what he said -

« *Ou bizin appel ene sousou ene sousou.* »

Haniff Peerun, from the Mauritius Labour Congress -

« *Des mesures positives.* »

Satyadev Tengur -

« Des mesures en faveur des consommateurs. »

Narendranath Gopee -

« Le budget est très balancé. »

I will not quote Deepak Benydin because we have his brother here. But he still said -

« Ce budget est une bouffée d'air frais. »

So, that is for the trade unionists. I made it a point to go through the last edition of *Business Magazine*. There also, I must say, again you see « *Duval qualifie le budget de creux* ». But nowhere do you have something where someone from Government said something. That is what is happening. So, you see, the first thing on this ‘*narien pas bon*’ syndrome and ‘*to pas bon*’ syndrome, we need to find outside parties who actually come and give their views, and we will find views which are quite favourable. Let me tell you another one I got - *Business Mauritius*.

« Business Mauritius trouve que le budget 2018-2019 a une forte composante sociale et est encourageant dans l'ensemble. »

MEXA, Lilowtee Rajmun -

« Durant les deux derniers budgets, des mesures importantes ont été prises dans le but de relancer le secteur de l'exportation. Nous commençons à récolter les fruits de ces mesures. »

Here is what non-partisan people are saying, and I think this should be used to sum up what actually is the substance of this Budget. Let us not fall in the trap. Let the population not fall in the trap of the Opposition. I think they are dishonest, I think they are hypocrites and even liars, if you look at what they did in the case of the Minister of Arts and Culture.

Now, this being said, I must say one thing, Madam Speaker. I smiled when the hon. Third Member for Savanne & Rivière Noire quoted Winston Churchill, saying that -

« La critique peut être désagréable, mais elle est nécessaire. Elle est comme la douleur pour le corps humain : elle attire l'attention sur ce qui ne va pas. »

Ça c'est de la vrai critique ; la critique légitime, la critique honnête.

Why I smiled is because I thought to myself, if Winston Churchill had seen what type of criticism those people actually are capable of, he would probably have swallowed his cigar. Because he was making it a point to see that there was some good comparison about Winston Churchill smoking the cigar. I am sure that had he been alive, he would have swallowed that cigar.

I must say, Madam Speaker, that I would like to address one particular issue with, not utmost length, but at least in a fairly thorough manner. It is the citizenship issue. The citizenship issue is from my perspective so improperly criticised. You see, the '*narien pas bon*' syndrome, they are now getting xenophobic, they are saying that we are selling our country, they are saying *que nous bradons la citoyenneté et le passeport, et que nous ne sommes pas des patriotes*. The very same people who were against independence now say we are not patriots. I must pay tribute to hon. Rutnay, who found an article, which he shared with me, in *The Guardian* of 02 June, this month, and this phenomenon of passport and citizenships is called CIPs - CIP because Citizenship by Investment Programmes. And it says as follows -

“Citizenship-by-investment programmes offer the super-rich an opportunity to acquire a new nationality. It’s the must-have accessory for every self-respecting 21st-century oligarch, and a good many mere multimillionaires: a second - and sometimes a third or even a fourth - passport.

“But there are as many as two dozen other countries, including several in the European Union (EU), where someone with the financial resources of the Chelsea football club owner - Roman Abramovich - could acquire a new nationality for a price: the global market in Citizenship-by-Investment Programmes - or CIPs as they are commonly known - is booming.”

And it goes on to say that wealthy countries such as Canada, the UK and New Zealand have also seen the potential of CIPs (Citizenship-by-Investment Programmes). The United States even has a programme which is worth about \$4 billion dollar a year to its economy. But those countries sell their schemes more around the attractions of a stable economy and safe investment environment than on freedom of movement.

What have the Opposition Members tried to do all this time? They took the example of low-income countries, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Comoros to come and say that, Oh!, the country is therefore being doomed, getting into ruin to go and sell nationality to earn money. No! We offer the right investment climate; we have brought the Business Facilitation Act; we are 25th on the Ease of Doing Business Index. Therefore, having a stable economy and a safe investment environment, we can actually go into that business and not leave the market to the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand. That is what the citizenship issue is about, and I must add something which, I think, is important.

At some stage there was a problem which arose - because someone showed me a screenshot. Someone showed me a screenshot on his cell phone; the other side of the House is apparently heavily criticising the Citizenship-by Investment Programmes (CIPs) proposed in this Budget Speech. But that screenshot shows MC Law Chambers proposing its services for the Mauritian programme for citizenship and passport!

(Interruptions)

This is incredible! And MC - I didn't know - stands for Mohamed Chambers!

So on the one hand, here, they are telling us '*narien pas bon, to pas bon*', but they are advertising the very same thing which is allegedly '*pas bon!*'.

(Interruptions)

Exactly! So, I think that this, in itself, shows that there are things going wrong.

Let me take another aspect in this '*narien pas bon*' syndrome thing. If you take hon. Bhagwan's intervention, you find, again, that '*narien pas bon dans sa pays-là*'. He said that all layers of the State have been corroded. All layers of the State have been corroded? He tells you : *Quelle image qu'on envoie à la communauté internationale!* He speaks of the 'putrefaction of politics'; he speaks of '*État voyou*'. I think in all this, you should take away the word country and put MMM!

(Interruptions)

You would have the real situation of their party! It is their party which is corroded, their party which is in *putrefaction*, their party which is sending the wrong message, and their party which is a bit '*voyou*'! Anyway! Just in the way they insult people in this House! Look

at the way, especially, when they walkout, the insults that they emit! I think this state of things applies not to the State of Mauritius, but applies to them....

(Interruptions)

,, to the *simulacre* of a party! However, Madam Speaker, because I said 'PAAP', problem analysis is one thing, then comes action planning. So what do you do? You need to go to some extraneous observer, acceptably independent, either people, either index, either institution. So, this time I made it a point to go to what action planning. As I said, we have to go to some extraneous observer, analyst and so on, let's find whether there is some sort of democracy index. And I found one. There is a democracy index which is actually done by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), a very reputable institution, an emanation of the economist; so, surely credible. And in its democracy index, the EIU has four categories –

1. The full democracy.
2. The flawed democracy – democracy, but with defects.
3. Where it goes worst, the hybrid democracy.
4. The totalitarian regime.

And I found out that there are only 20 countries in the world which qualify as a full democracy. Guess what, Madam Speaker! I was so proud; Mauritius is one of the 20 countries, one of the only 20 countries in the world to be a full democracy.

(Interruptions)

And those people tell you 'of putrefaction'! This is what I want this House and this country to realise: they are putting us down, they are putting this country down, and they are putting our reputation down! Very often, you tell me off for telling them to shut up - that is exactly what they should do. I must say, and I say it loud and clear, we need the media, we need the fourth power, but we need a real fourth power. A fourth power which is independent, truly independent! Non-partisan, truly non-partisan, not one which claims to be independent, but is partisan. There is something wrong here.

Let me finish with this index of the Economist Intelligence Unit. Not only are we are one of the only 20 countries to be a full democracy in the world, because I know that if I say that, they will always try to find something. So, I go one step further, like Mauritius did. If we have survived in the course of the last 50 years, despite the fact that Meade and Titmuss

said that we are doomed, despite the fact that Mr V.S Naipaul said that we are crowded by raccoon, it is because we were always one step ahead. And, with those people on the other side of the House, we really always have to be one step ahead, because they have recourse to devious means and they are helped in that by some very nasty acolytes who stand in an obscure manner behind your back.

So what did I do, I said, Oh!, what is Africa, where does Africa lie? And I found that something even nicer, we are the only countries in Africa and Asia to be a full democracy. I don't know of any organisation in Mauritius that contributes, that actually sets the criteria that goes there. So, it must be based on some real neutral observations.

So, first, we are –

1. One among the only 20 countries to be a full democracy;
2. We are the only country in Africa and Asia put together, which is a full democracy, and
3. Putting aside Uruguay we are the only country in the Southern Hemisphere to be a full democracy.

And if you had listened to hon. Bhagwan, hon. Ganoo : « *mécontentement généralisé, sentiment de révolte, nombreux scandales, nomination scandaleuse, népotisme* ». they are just ruining our reputation. We are not saying hide or cover up. No! We are saying this happens. No one is perfect. The only perfect entity I can say because I know it is God. Otherwise I always knew that we are all imperfect. I am not saying that we should hide imperfections. I am saying be patriot, be fair to your country don't go everywhere - they make allegations of an improper nature. We tell them: 'listen, don't do it – under the cove of immunity, go to the Police station, go to ICAC, go to the Central CID.' They will tell you: 'no, the Police is mafios', they will say ICAC will cover up. So, they are always putting this country down.

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: No conversation!

Mr Sinatambou: This should stop, you can see the point. This cannot go on. So, that is what I wanted to say here. Now, there is one thing, they said '*ce budget contient quelques*', there was something which bothered me. I have made it a point to take down what hon. Ganoo was saying because *il disait que*, he started like this – '*qui peut nier que ce budget*

contient des mesures sociales intéressantes, and I smiled because among the newspaper cuttings which I didn't quote him because there was today an inconsistency.

In the newspaper cutting, he had said '*ce sont des mesurettes*'. So, do you know what is happening? They know that by going on this totally negative '*narien pas bon*' approach towards the Budget, it will kick them in the face. When people earning less than Rs50,000 a month, are going to be able to pay only 10% tax, Mr Ganoo is going to be unable to sustain his claim of *measurette*. The other guys, those who have said *bidze creux, bidze vide*, Budget this, Budget that, Budget 100% negative all this is going to sort of blow up in their face. So, I was very happy to see that, he changed his tune although I did not however quote what he had said.

I have till what time, Madam Speaker, 21.30 p.m.?

Madam Speaker: 21.20 p.m.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Sinatambou: So, it allows me to say a few more things. What I want to share with the House now is something which when you hear them saying that *quelques mesures*, I made it a point to try and check the figures, the Negative Income Tax covers about 75,000 people, the 10% income tax band rate now will cover about 60,000 people. The minimum wage is supposed to cover about 100,000 people. I have tried to be very conservative.

Pensions, when I add together Basic Retirement Pension, Basic Widow's Pension, Basic Invalidity Pension, Basic Orphan's Pensions and Child Allowance together with other basic pensions, I have 298,518 beneficiaries. So, here is a Government which in its budget covers something like more than 500,000 people and those people commented you – '*bidze creux, bidze vide, bidze enba la haut, narien pas bon*'.

You can see why I am so happy that they are not here.

(*Interruptions*)

It would have hurt. So, the point I am making is that it is quite clear.

(*Interruptions*)

No, in fact, the hon. Prime Minister is so generous that it also covers them. Yes, many of them get their Basic Retirement Pension.

(*Interruptions*)

There was another feature which I would like to say before my 15 minutes lapse. Unemployment, I was listening to the way hon. Mohamed was shouting about this 20,000 per year. Actually, there is a theory, Madam Speaker. Lawyers use that theory. Whenever you

tackle the public, if you know the law, you speak the law. If somehow you know the law and you know the facts, then you don't speak any law, you speak the facts, but if somehow you know neither the law nor the facts, you know what you do, Madam Speaker, you yell like hell.

(Interruptions)

And I felt that the hon. Member might not know anything for him to be yelling like that over there about unemployment and I will tell you why. Whatever was said, whether 2030 Vision, 2020 Vision Government Programme, whatever was said, there is one constant figure, it is that unemployment in this country today is the lowest it has ever been since 2001. That is an inescapable fact.

The figures cannot change, that is the point. The figures are such that – I am just going – I hope all my colleagues here remember that '*narien pas bon, to pas bon*', now everything we do, we have to find after having done the problem analysis, now we have to do the action planning, know how to put it back into their mouth. So here we know it that -

- (a) unemployment is on the decrease;
- (b) is the lowest it has been for over 15 years;
- (c) the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development puts Rs1 billion to actually bring 14,000 people into employment and they are complaining, and they are criticising .

If the figures are right - here I am not sure, I need to counter verify - I understand it is about Rs42,000. Let's say it is 45,000. If at 45,000, we are at 7.1%, if we are tackling, Rs1 billion to absorb 14,000; so it is nearly a third. So, you imagine what is going to happen to the percentage rate of unemployment in this country? And indeed I also, again, I made it a point to go and check with an external source. This time I went to the IMF Article 4 Consultation Report Annex. I took an extract of the Article 4 Consultation Report of the IMF from 2017, the 2018 one is not yet out.

Guess what, Madam Speaker. The selected Economic Indicators from 2014 to 2022 says that in 2019 they expect our rate of unemployment to go to 6%. So, that is why I think we have to bear in mind that the other side is not playing cricket. You know it is as if we are going on a football match, especially it is the World Cup, I think I could give that metaphor, we are going in a football match *et zot p trap boule zot p zouer r la main*. That is what they are doing every single day.

(*Interruptions*)

Non, zot pas kwar! Zot pé zoué kokin!

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Please!

Mr Sinatambou: That is the problem! So, here the unemployment figure is - and I just hope when you look at this figure of taking 1,000 graduates paying them Rs14,000 a month over two-year period, getting them into SMEs, we hope that the SMEs will then be able to absorb them. So, I don't know whether it is the winning formula, but I think that it is a well thought strategy, a well thought measure, at least, the least you can say, the right sum of money, Rs1 billion, to bring down unemployment. Because, to me, I must say, I am someone who will soon have done 20 years in politics, if there is one thing I would like to have been able to contribute to achieving, is bring down unemployment to its minimum, at least during the last 15-20 years.

So, you see, Madam Speaker, there is so much to say. There is just not enough time. The lack of audience there does not bother us. This audience here is most interesting. I believe that there is more to say about my Ministry but - it is 10 minutes more isn't it?

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: It is 6 minutes more!

Mr Sinatambou: Therefore, I will just say that I think it is good that I point out a number of things which have not come out yet. Yes, I think it is very important to say that.

Pension: I think there are a few figures which I made it a point to get it with precision. Pension has moved from Rs3,623 to Rs5,810 for all pensioners aged 60 to 89, an increase of over 60%. But pension has increased from Rs10,789 to Rs15,810 for those aged 90 to 99, which is an increase of nearly 50%. And, for centenarians, pension has actually been increased from Rs12,300 to Rs20,810 which is an increase of nearly 70%. And those guys still tell us '*narien pas bon!*' Now, what they want from me to come and tell them what is the pension reform we are going to come up with. Just wait! We will do what we have to do. For now, the hon. Prime Minister wants it to be known nationally that he cares for our senior citizens and that he will leave no stone unturned to show his love for them.

(Interruptions)

We will see how to reform! Incidentally, it is good that the House knows, Madam Speaker, that there was an anomaly. Two years ago, the hon. Prime Minister of Finance and Economic Development actually corrected an injustice because invalid people aged less than 15 years did not get an invalidity pension. So unfair!

Now, what we have discovered now is another anomaly. That anomalous situation is that if you are a retired person and you receive a Carer's Allowance, you receive Rs3,000, per month. But you are aged below 60, you receive Rs2,500 per month. So, why should you earn Rs500 less because your age is less than 60. The hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development has corrected this anomalous situation...

(Interruptions)

....because now the monthly Carer's Allowance to bedridden people who are invalid is being increased from Rs2,500 to Rs3,000. It is here worth noting that Government is correcting apparently, I am informed, an anomaly which has existed for more than 25 years. More than 25 years! Elderly day care centres, there were 20 in Mauritius. Another anomalous situation! There were 20 in Mauritius and none in the west of the country. The hon. Prime Minister has now decided that there shall be two elderly day care centres in the west of the country; one in Bambous and one in Chemin Grenier. Three Social Security Offices will be built. One in Rivière du Rempart, one in Bambous and one in Bel Air Rivière Sèche. Not in 14!

Last, because time is of the essence. Madam Speaker, I am pleased also to say that hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development has brought an addition to social aid in kind. In the Budget 2016-2017, the household income threshold for applicants to benefit from hearing aids, wheelchairs, dentures and spectacles, was increased from Rs150,000 per year to Rs300,000 per year. This year it is the Budget itself which has been increased from Rs15 m. to Rs30 m.

(Interruptions)

A measure which will reach 13,200 beneficiaries, at least.

Madam Speaker, I should end now. I have one minute left. I always like to be on time. Madam Speaker, I, indeed, through you, would invite the hon. Members of the Opposition to appreciate all the efforts made by this Government to promote the welfare of this country; to

ensure through this Budget of the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development all those things that he is doing for the welfare of the country. Indeed, although I don't think it will bring the desired result; I would urge them to stop with their '*narien pas bon syndrome*' and their '*to pas bon syndrome*', but I don't see them stopping that.

Maybe I will end, Madam Speaker – it is just 21.20 – by sharing with you my first comment. You know, as soon as you leave the House after the reading of the Budget Speech, you are nearly assaulted by the media. Someone asked me: "So what do you have to say, Minister Sinatambou, about the Budget?" And I said to the person: "Pour moi, le Premier ministre aura démontré qu'il est non seulement un très bon Premier ministre, mais aussi un excellent ministre des Finances".

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: I will now ask the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Fowdar!

(9.20 p.m.)

Mr S. Fowdar (Third Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Certainly, I don't have any right to get my friends to starve tonight, so I will be very short. And also, I don't want to repeat all those which have already been said by my friends here, and I am not going to dwell on the same issues although I have got some points.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was listening to the Opposition in the Press, in the House. And I was waiting for them to criticise the Budget. But at the end of the day, they were talking of everything except the Budget. The only one thing they were dwelling about, it was the issue of Mauritian passport. We are selling passport. Except that, nothing! They had no issues regarding the Budget. Yesterday, hon. Mrs Aurore Perraud was talking about '*budget confetti*' and tried to defend what is '*confetti*'. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since I was a child I know, I still remember *confetti* is used when there is celebration.

(Interruptions)

The one who said: “It is a budget *confetti*”, he is perfectly right because we need to celebrate this Budget. We need to celebrate this Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is, in fact, a celebration. The second thing that keeps on coming is ‘*un budget décevant*’. Of course, it is! But not for us, for them! It is *un budget décevant* because they were expecting, and I was really worried for the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development. *La marge de manœuvre n'était pas suffisante. Ce n'était possible de présenter un budget comme il l'a fait.*

You tell me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you are also a MP, you go out to talk to people. It is not going to listen to them or to the Press, I know what the press is doing these days, but you talk to people. I have not heard anyone saying ‘I am not in agreement with the Budget’, that there are things which are not correct in the Budget. It is unanimous for the first time. I have been in the House, I think, for eight years now. We have got lots of complains when Budgets come out. It is the first time it is unanimous that people are happy; people are happy on all fronts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have read the Budget yesterday and today. I have heard the Budget; I listened to the Prime Minister. I have gone into the depth of it to see what is in the Budget. The other thing is that all the time when there is Budget presentation, Ministers of Finance do a lot concession to the private sector; give them boost for investment, create jobs, reduce tax. And this did not happen this time, but still people are happy. Do you know why? Because this Budget concentrates on the human capital, on the people. People are happy, because if you look at people, on all the fronts, wherever they are, they all have got something out of this Budget. I cannot enumerate. It is a long list of benefits - pig breeders, tea planters, sugar cane planters, fishermen, taxpayers, those earning Rs50,000 or less pay 10%. Extraordinary! Because these people need some more money, they are the middle class. Excellent!

Now, homeless, security of people. I do not know what is in their mind. This Safe City project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - I lived in Europe - is going to change Mauritius completely. Once you put it in place, crime, robbery, accident, dangerous driving, all will be filmed and all will be sanctioned. People will calm down; they will tone down. This is a project I am looking forward. I never realised that the Minister of Finance would come with this 4,000 cameras. I always thought that the solution for robbery, for accident, is cameras. In Europe, everywhere you have cameras. Whatever you do at night, during the day, people are

not watching you, but you get a paper at home, you are fined. You are driving fast, you are surprised. Even in places where you do not have cameras, you have the CCTVs, exceptional CCTVs for everything. So, this...

(Interruptions)

Of course, he will not! He will be watched! Of course, he does not like it. Now, the other thing also is *baisse du prix du gaz ménager*. I did not expect that, and people are happy about this. Rs30! Some people will say Rs30, *c'est rien*. But Rs30 for many people in Mauritius is a lot, and people were expecting bread price to come up - this will rise, other articles will rise. But the Minister of Finance came up with a decrease in petroleum products. This has cooled down everything. This is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is *décevant* for them; the Budget is *décevant*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are certain items in the Budget which are really interesting, for me at least. We always talk about the mismatch on the job market. We have forthcoming mismatches. Those who will come from schools, colleges, universities, will find themselves jobless, and now we have existing unemployed people who are suffering from the mismatches that we have. And the Minister of Finance has come up with - this has just been mentioned by hon. Sinatambou - 14,000 people will be employed for two years - extraordinary - and Rs1 billion earmarked for these people. Now, this is going to close the mismatch if the hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance gives proper guidance to his staff that people who are recruited are placed in jobs which would be in demand in a year or two years' time or in the forthcoming period. They must not be given ticking or filing exercise so that they come out after two years with no experience. They will still be useless. Even those who have done chemistry and biology, two years practice in accountancy or in whatever job, would be qualified for a new job. That would mean reskilling them. So, these two years for the 14,000 unemployed would be pressing, and this has to be well monitored, properly manned and monitored very closely so that after two years, these people get an employment. So, the private sector will have to play their role here and they have to come up with their plan on what sort of jobs would be required by them in a couple of years, in the near future.

The other thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that would again close the gap between those people who are unskilled and those who are skilled, that is, between the vacancies and unemployment, is career guidance. I salute the initiative taken by the Prime Minister, and this

was my wish all the time; that the HRDC is now under the Prime Minister, is under the PMO. This is excellent because the HRDC is crucial, is a very important institution. The HRDC is about manpower planning.

Now, since Labour Government took over - the Prime Minister would remember, this is something we brought between 2000 and 2005 - what we intended to do with HRDC was not being done by them. They turned it upside down completely, and the HRDC is now just a *commis de l'Etat*. They are paying grants and subsidies to those who go for training. But, in fact, HRDC is supposed to work on the future requirements of skills. They need to identify the areas where jobs would be available and would guide consequently the school leavers, those who go for university, on what to study.

Once this is going under the Prime Minister's Office, we have seen that we are going to change the Board members. This is excellent. We had - if you remember hon. Prime Minister - 14 sectors of the economy represented in HRDC, different sectors, and they contributed in working out the future manpower for the country for the five years, for the next ten years, for the next 15 years. So, the HRDC, now under the PMO, will have the importance that it deserves. I hope - this is the second measure - that would close the gap between the skills required and unemployed people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, I am not going to be long, but I have got some few points again. I have had the privilege to be ACP delegate for Mauritius in Brussels, and I must inform you that Mauritius is on the map there, because I, together with a French MP, we have presented a paper on SMEs. It has gone in the first page and it has been very welcomed by all the members.

Believe me, they were all asking me 'your economy, Mauritius is a model for SME'. I was saying 'No', not formally, but I was a little bit shocked. Because believe me, now when you look backward, when you look back to our country, we are doing perfectly well on SMEs. We have got cooperative banks when most of the ACP countries do not have the structure for financing for SMEs, and here we have DBM, the cooperative banks, which is excellent.

Now, the facilities given, because the biggest hurdle for the SMEs is access to finance and we have a lot of training being given to them, a lot of guides being given to them, but access to finance is a main hurdle and SMEs are really important. We have to give them some support, they would create jobs and they will increase our GDP.

Now, loan facilities at 3%, this is below the bank rate which is 3.5%. Excellent! We are subsidising this 3%, and then we are giving up to Rs3 m. to them. Again excellent! Mr Prime Minister, you have introduced something which is not introduced elsewhere, only in developed countries. You are introducing debt factoring for SMEs. Factoring is a vehicle which is going to boost up the sector.

Now, what is factoring? The SMEs, the entrepreneurs usually they have to wait for their debtors to pay them, then they reinvest. Debt factoring would mean they will have their invoices sent to their clients, give it to MauBank or to DBM which would then cash the invoices for them and give them money, of course, less a small commission. That would give them immediate finance to continue doing their business. Debt factoring? I don't understand why all these technicians are there, why didn't they spot this out? They are selective! So, debt factoring is innovative and there is a lot of innovation in this Budget.

I remember that during my intervention on the Budget debates of 2016, I stressed a lot on innovation and the then Prime Minister congratulated me, and he said, well said about innovation. This is done now. Innovation is the future. If we don't invest on innovation we are going to lag behind. All the countries over the world, they are all investing money on innovation, and here, the creation of the institution to look after innovation, and money put aside for innovation is really laudable.

But, there is one thing, I would address to the hon. Minister of Finance and Prime Minister, it is the SMEs again. We have got two types of SMEs. We have the starters and the existing SMEs. For the starters, we have got everything in place for them, money, finance, guidance and what not. But, the existing SMEs, their stock, they have not been able to service their loan properly, and they are struck with the negative MCIB. They cannot avail themselves of further loans but, in fact, these are the people who would bring immediate results to the economy because they have got the structure, they have got the knowledge, they got experience, they have got the networking. They are well equipped, except for the last bad economic period, which have brought them, not to bankruptcy, but to debts which they cannot finance.

I know it is very difficult. I don't know how we are going to work on that. If it is on a case to case basis to see whether the SMEs who are in financial difficulties are being given a special consideration, waive this negative MCIB, give them some sort of support, loans, monitor the loans, monitor their accounts as if they are in administration; have some

managers to monitor them so that they can pick up. There are loads of them, hon. Prime Minister, I can assure you. A lot of people are in this situation and this can help us to pick up on the economic side quite quickly.

Lastly, I was really concerned with the Judiciary. I have no complaint with anybody in this House about Judiciary. It was *un cri du cœur*. If you look at what is happening - cases taking so much time before being heard in Court. I spoke to the Prime Minister, I spoke to my good friend the hon. Attorney General, but they can't do anything because we have to comply with the separation of powers. We have no right to interfere with the judiciary. But I am happy, hon. Prime Minister, that you have made provisions, because what you can do here, is, we can increase the number of Courts, we can increase the staff, bring more magistrates, judges, bring more administrative staff and then put everything electronic, get it as soon as e-judiciary must have been quickly.

In the Budget, you made provision for a New Court House in Forest Side. You made provision for renovation of so many Courts around the country, also for allowing small tribunals to go up to Rs200,000 to allow more cases to be heard in small Courts. This is laudable; it is as if *le cri du cœur* has been heard by you.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is something which concerns everybody, where we are saying delay in justice is painful. There is a start up here. I am very happy that you have come up with something in the Budget with regard to judiciary.

Last time I met the Prime Minister; I was emotional on that day when we were talking with the backbenchers, and I was saying to him: "you need to be a different Prime Minister. If you want to become a different Prime Minister, you will not be the traditional Prime Minister, the conventional one. We are evolving with globalisation, there are so many different things. If you differ, you will succeed." I am happy to see that we are really doing things which have not been done before. I have been in politics for over 20 years, and my good friend, hon. Ivan Collendavelloo, will not say no to me. We have always been talking about minimum wages for years and years, fighting for it. Today, this is a reality. This Government has come with minimum wages. This is extraordinary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And without hurts, because I were the first one to tell my good friend, hon. Callichurn, *nu pu ena enn problem ek sa*. There would be a lot *licenciement*.

Another thing which I never realised would happen here. I was an accountant in the UK and I used to do payrolls. There, I cropped up with one thing called Negative Income

Tax. I was asking myself what is this Negative Income Tax. I had to learn it, but I never imagine that in Mauritius, a small island, a small economy, we are able to pay back taxes to those people who need this money. So, they are two achievements.

Now, you are bringing one more thing, hon. Prime Minister, it is Work from Home. Those people who never worked from home, they don't know what that is. I have worked from home in the UK. This is going to create a revolution in this country. We put all the structures in place, you will see yourself. We have this problem of traffic, giving stress to people, discouraging people to come when they are late.

Also this will incite women to work now, because if they have children, they can work at home and at the same time look after their babies. It will reduce traffic, and when you reduce traffic by half, traffic becomes fluent. So, working from home is going to create a revolution in the job sector. A lot people can work from home. It is not only job that are available in Mauritius, hon. Prime Minister. There would be jobs around the world which will come to this country if we can start this thing of working from home. Because you don't need to see the staff, he/she stays at home, and delivers whatever by computer and they are being paid. So, working from home is fantastic. I can only welcome this initiative. And we need to see that this is implemented within this Budget year and as quickly as possible.

And the last thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said I am not going to take much of your time. Really, I did not prepare anything, I just noted down some points. The issue of passport, people must be stupid to think that we are selling passports. Why do we sell passports? What is the initiative here? Hon. Rampertab and myself, we were in the UK, we were partners in business. We had a company, it was an immigration company, we were giving immigration advice to people. And I can tell you, because of this, we had to learn what other jurisdictions are doing, Australia, Singapore, US, Canada, they are all fighting for the best brains in this world. They are all chasing the best people to boost up their economy. And this is what we are doing here. We are selling passports? We are not selling passports. We are buying brains; we are buying intelligent people for the economy. There is nothing extraordinary here and my advice to you is you go ahead. Do not listen to the dogs, they will always bark, this is their job. You do whatever you need to do and I think this is going to boost up the economy. In Mauritius we have the good people, but the new technology, new stuffs, they are out there and some people need to come here and instruct our people and get things going.

So, I must, again, congratulate the Minister of Finance and the whole Government. Of course, it is the work of whole of the Cabinet Ministers, but especially the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. On behalf of my mandate, I must say thank you to you, thank you to your Government because I can feel my mandates are happy.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Monday 25 June 2018 at 11.00 a.m.

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 9.46 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Monday 25 June 2018 at 11.00 a.m.