



**SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**THURSDAY 11 AUGUST 2016**

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**(Formed by the Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC)**

Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo, GCSK, SC	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, GCSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha, GCSK	Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
Hon. Anil Kumarsingh Gayan, SC	Minister of Health and Quality of Life
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Marie Joseph Noël Etienne Ghislain Sinatambou	Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo	Attorney General
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Santaram Baboo	Minister of Arts and Culture
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Mrs Marie-Aurore Marie-Joyce Perraud	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Sudarshan Bhadain, GCSK	Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms

Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
Hon. Premdut Koonjoo	Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands
Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, MSK	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training

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**MAURITIUS**

**Sixth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 25 of 2016**

**Sitting of 11 August 2016**

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

**The National Anthem was played**

*(Madam Speaker in the Chair)*

## ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

### CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO – MAURITIUS SOVEREIGNTY

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger)** (*by Private Notice*) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, he will state –

- (a) if he will render public the letter dated 07 or 08 July 2016 he had received from the out-going Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr David Cameron;
- (b) where matters stand regarding the –
  - (i) resolution Mauritius is proposing to present to the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly, and
  - (ii) implementation of the Ruling delivered on 18 March 2015 by the United Nations Arbitral Tribunal under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and
- (c) if he has received replies to the letters he wrote to the President of the United States of America, Mr Barack Obama, and to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mrs Theresa May.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, it remains an undisputable fact that the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, forms and has always formed an integral part of the territory of Mauritius.

Mauritius does not recognise the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory” which the United Kingdom purported to create by illegally excising the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of Mauritius prior to its accession to independence. This excision was carried out in blatant and shameful violation of international law and United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, 2066 (XX) of 16 December 1965, 2232 (XXI) of 20 December 1966 and 2357 (XXII) of 19 December 1967.

It is a matter of deep concern that forty-eight years after its independence, Mauritius is still being denied the right to effectively exercise its sovereignty over part of its own

territory. As long as the Chagos Archipelago remains under the unlawful control of the former colonial power, the process of decolonisation of Mauritius and by extension that of Africa will remain incomplete.

Madam Speaker, in reply to part (a) of the question, I had informed the House on 17 May 2016 in my reply to a Private Notice Question that I had requested the United Kingdom to return the Chagos Archipelago to the effective control of Mauritius by a precise date to be agreed upon. I had asked for a reply to be given to my request by the end of June 2016, otherwise Mauritius would take appropriate action at the international level, including at the United Nations. My request was followed by a letter which I addressed to the former UK Prime Minister on 27 June 2016. At the request of the British High Commissioner, I had agreed to extend the deadline by another week.

On 07 July 2016, I received a letter from the then UK Prime Minister. In that letter, the then UK Prime Minister has expressed the view that it would be appropriate for discussions on the Chagos Archipelago to take place with the next

UK Government and that he would advise his successor to make necessary arrangements accordingly. He also requested that Mauritius does not refer the Chagos Archipelago issue to the International Court of Justice.

I am tabling a copy of the letter from the former UK Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, in reply to part (b) (i) of the question, our Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York wrote on 14 July 2016 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to request, in accordance with Rule 13 of the Rules of Procedure of the United Nations General Assembly, the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the next session of the General Assembly of an item entitled “Request for an Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965”.

This now appears as item 88 under section F of the provisional agenda of the seventy first regular session of the General Assembly. I am tabling a copy of the provisional Agenda. The General Committee of the next session of the United Nations General Assembly is expected to convene on 14 September 2016 to consider the provisional agenda. The General Assembly plenary will then meet on 16 September 2016 to review the recommendations of

the General Committee and adopt the agenda for the next session of the General Assembly. We are fully confident that the proposal will gain the favour of the General Assembly.

We have already prepared the draft Resolution relating to the request for an Advisory Opinion. Once the item relating to the request for an Advisory Opinion has been included on the agenda of the next session of the General Assembly, we will submit the draft Resolution at the appropriate time on the advice of our Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York.

Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, the African Union and the Non-Aligned Movement have consistently expressed support for Mauritius on the Chagos Archipelago issue, as evidenced by the various Declarations and Resolutions which they have adopted, including at the African Union Summit held in June 2015 and the Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting held in May 2014. At the last Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 and China held on the occasion of UNCTAD XIV, support was also expressed to Mauritius on the Chagos Archipelago issue.

Mauritius is actively canvassing the support of other members of the United Nations for the request for an Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice in respect of the Chagos Archipelago. I have already written to all the Heads of State/Government of other UN Member States to seek their support. In the margins of the forthcoming TICAD VI Summit, I propose to meet leaders of the African countries and sub-regions to ask for their support. The Ministerial Delegation which will participate in the forthcoming Non-Aligned Movement Summit next month will also be lobbying for support for Mauritius.

Our Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York is also actively seeking the support of other UN Member States at various levels.

Madam Speaker, in reply to part (b) (ii) of the question, as the House is aware, the Arbitral Tribunal in the case brought by Mauritius against the United Kingdom to challenge the legality of the ‘marine protected area’ which the United Kingdom purported to establish around the Chagos Archipelago delivered its Award on 18 March 2015. The Tribunal unanimously held that the purported ‘marine protected area’ violates international law. It ruled that the United Kingdom had breached its obligations under Articles 2(3), 56(2) and 194(4) of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Arbitral Tribunal also found that the United Kingdom's commitments towards Mauritius in relation to fishing rights and oil and mineral rights in the Chagos Archipelago and its surrounding waters are legally binding. Moreover, the Tribunal found that the United Kingdom's undertaking to return the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius when no longer needed for defence purposes is legally binding. The Tribunal went on to hold that the United Kingdom had not respected Mauritius' binding legal rights over the Chagos Archipelago.

In its Final Observations, the Arbitral Tribunal stated that, I quote -

“It is now open to the Parties to enter into the negotiations that the Tribunal would have expected prior to the proclamation of the MPA, with a view to achieving a mutually satisfactory arrangement for protecting the marine environment, to the extent necessary under a ‘sovereignty umbrella’.”

Following the delivery of the Award, three meetings of senior officials from Mauritius and the United Kingdom have been held on 09 November 2015 in London, 11 May 2016 in Mauritius and 03 August 2016 back in London again.

Hardly any progress has been made in these three rounds of discussions in view of the differing interpretations of the Award by Mauritius and the United Kingdom. Mauritius considers that the ‘marine protected area’ purportedly established by the United Kingdom around the Chagos Archipelago is without legal effect under international law and cannot be enforced; this view is not shared by the United Kingdom. As I had informed the House on 17 May 2016, the United Kingdom’s interpretation of the Award is very narrow.

We believe that the rights of Mauritius, as declared by the Award, are more extensive than that which United Kingdom says we have. Our broader interpretation of the Award is based on, *inter alia*, paragraph 298 of the Award under reference and I quote -

“The United Kingdom’s remaining undertakings, however, are evidently broader. In the Tribunal’s view, the United Kingdom’s undertaking to return the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius gives Mauritius an interest in significant decisions that bear upon the possible future uses of the Archipelago. Mauritius’ interest is not simply in the eventual return of the Chagos Archipelago, but also in the condition in which the Archipelago will be returned. In this respect, the question of whether the Archipelago will or will not be covered by an MPA in the potentially extended period prior to its return significantly affects the nature of what Mauritius will eventually receive and

the uses Mauritius will be able to make of it. The Tribunal does not accept the United Kingdom's argument that the MPA is irrelevant to the return of the Archipelago merely because the applicable regulations could potentially be undone. As the record of diplomatic correspondence in these proceedings amply demonstrates, the creation of the MPA was a significant political decision. If it were to remain and be developed over the course of many years, it could well become impractical or impolitic for Mauritius to adopt a radically different course. In short, the MPA's very existence bears upon the choices that Mauritius will have open to it when the Archipelago is eventually returned. In a like manner, the Tribunal considers that the benefit of the minerals and oil in the surrounding waters, which Mauritius will receive when the Archipelago is returned, may be significantly affected by the MPA, in particular in light of the expansive objective of environmental protection declared by the United Kingdom."

We have in the different rounds of talks been submitting to the United Kingdom that -

- (a) the declaration of the 'marine protected area' in its current form should be rescinded;
- (b) any future regime of marine protection of the Chagos Archipelago should be the subject of an agreement between Mauritius and the United Kingdom in the light of the outcome of a scientific study jointly carried out by Mauritius and the United Kingdom. We have also submitted that pending the outcome of the study, no impediment, whatsoever, should be placed by the United Kingdom on the fishing rights and oil and mineral rights of Mauritius, and
- (c) in view of the nature of our rights, as described in the paragraph I have just quoted, any future use of the Chagos Archipelago, whether by the United States or the United Kingdom, must be subject to the concurrence of Mauritius, as the way in which the Chagos Archipelago is used may adversely and irreparably damage the condition in which the Chagos Archipelago may fall when it is physically returned to the effective control of Mauritius. Again, the United Kingdom disagrees with this submission.

However, at the last meeting, the United Kingdom said that it was prepared to have a joint study regarding the form of protection of the marine environment of the Chagos Archipelago, but is maintaining that in the meantime the current unilaterally declared ‘marine protected area’ should be maintained. It cannot also commit itself at this stage to a jointly agreed regime of protection for the future.

A further round of talks is scheduled for end of October in Mauritius in relation to the implementation of the Award.

Madam Speaker, in reply to part (c) of the question, I received on 08 August 2016 a reply from Mr Antony Blinken, Deputy Secretary of State, to the letter which I had written last June to President Obama.

In his reply, Mr Blinken, *inter alia*, urged Mauritius not to take the issue of the Chagos Archipelago to the UN General Assembly and the International Court of Justice. He indicated that the issue can best be addressed during meetings at the lower levels of our respective Governments than at the level of the US President and the Mauritian Prime Minister. He also stressed that the US recognises UK’s sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and that the Chagos Archipelago was essential for the security that the US and the UK provide around the world.

We, of course, disagree that the whole of Chagos Archipelago is required for such security purposes, the more so as we have confirmed our willingness to both US and the UK to grant a long-term lease for the continued use of Diego Garcia for defence purposes.

We are disappointed that notwithstanding the assurances given to US, it remains stubbornly opposed to Mauritius exercising its sovereign rights over the Chagos Archipelago whilst Diego Garcia continues to be used for defence purposes.

As regards the United Kingdom, we are equally very disappointed of its objection to trilateral talks being henceforth held between Mauritius, UK and US. More so, both UK and US have sent a joint *Note Verbale* to Mauritius, issued a joint communiqué, and paid a joint visit to me and to our representative in New York, to express their opposition to the initiatives of Mauritius at the level of the United Nations.

As for the letter which I have addressed to UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, I have not yet received a reply.

I am tabling a copy of the letters to President Obama and Prime Minister Theresa May.

Madam Speaker, I wish to reiterate that the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago is non-negotiable. Pursuant to its commitment to ensuring that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mauritius are fully respected and safeguarded, my Government will relentlessly pursue all efforts in accordance with international law for the effective exercise by Mauritius of its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

In this regard, I wish to appeal to all our citizens, including those of Chagossian origin, to act with unity of purpose, so that we can attain our legitimate objective of completing the decolonisation process of Mauritius and ensuring that the independence of Mauritius is complete.

I am pleased to inform the House that, at the meeting we had at the level of the Committee of Parliamentarians on 15 July 2016, there was unanimity regarding our initiatives at the level of the UN General Assembly.

**Mr Bérenger:** Madam Speaker, can I be allowed to thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for tabling a copy of the letter from the outgoing, former Prime Minister of the UK. I shall read that letter very carefully. But, in the meantime, can I tell the Rt. hon. Prime Minister the following. The UK, of course, are actively canvassing their case, and they say that this letter represents a breakthrough insofar as, from their point of view, it is the first time that a proposal for a meeting from London, from the Prime Minister of UK is made without excluding the issue of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago from that meeting.

**The Prime Minister:** Well, if the question of sovereignty is excluded, I see no purpose in my meeting with the Prime Minister of UK. What am I going to discuss with him? Insofar as the Award is concerned, discussions are already taking place at official level.

**Mr Bérenger:** We have been informed, Madam Speaker, that the issue of the Chagos Archipelago, being referred to the International Court of Justice, has been placed on the provisional agenda and will be considered at the General Committee of the UN General Assembly and will be considered at the next meeting, and then be either included in the agenda or not included in the agenda. Can I know, at this stage, whether the UK and the US have raised objections in the General Committee of the UN General Assembly against putting that issue on the agenda?

**The Prime Minister:** What has been done so far is according to the procedure of the United Nations, and there has been no objection from any quarters.

**Mr Bérenger:** I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister rightly make reference to the Non-Aligned Movement. Now that we know that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will be in New York for the General Assembly, can I know whether he has received information to the effect that Venezuela - as I said, the Non-Aligned Movement is in a mess; Venezuela is supposed to take over the Chair from Iran and cannot call a meeting in Venezuela for obvious reasons - is trying to have the Non-Aligned Movement Summit organised in New York on the occasion of the forthcoming General Assembly? Do we have information to that effect?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I don't have information to that effect.

**Mr Bérenger:** I raised the issue before; that, whilst the Non-Aligned Movement is in a mess, the Group of 77 and China at the United Nations is very active. Can I know whether we have managed to have the issue taken up at the Group of 77 and China, and if yes, to what result?

**The Prime Minister:** From the information that I have, they were favourable and willing to support our claim on the Chagos.

**Mr Bérenger:** At this point in time, Madam Speaker, can I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether our representatives in New York and elsewhere are confident, at this stage, that if the issue is put on the agenda – not the provisional agenda, but the final agenda – of the United Nations Assembly, we will reach two-third of the General Assembly; that we will have positive votes from at least two-third of the General Assembly?

**The Prime Minister:** From the information that I have, the answer is yes.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I can move on to the next part of my question, that is, implementation of the UNCLOS Arbitral Award, Madam Speaker. Is the Rt. hon. Minister aware that, replying to a Parliamentary Question in the House of Lords on 03 July, Baroness Anelay, speaking on behalf of the Government, said, “UK and Mauritius are already engaged in talks that aim to implement the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea”? And we have been provided with a lot of information on what has been taking place until now at that meeting of the two sides. So, do I take it that the Government of Mauritius is not satisfied at all with progress at the three meetings that have taken place so far?

**The Prime Minister:** Certainly, we are not satisfied at all because the attitude of the Britishers is entirely contrary to what we are trying to discuss with them.

**Mr Bérenger:** Being given that we are dealing with the Indian Ocean in that part of the world, and with the application of the UNCLOS Arbitral Ruling, can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he has been made aware of a very serious issue of coral bleaching in the Chagos Archipelago, and has it been raised at those meetings? If I can provide the information: coral bleaching, these days, is worse than ever in the history of mankind. If I can quote –

“The coral bleaching event sweeping the globe and destroying vast tracts of valuable coral reef is now officially the most widespread in recorded history, and is likely to continue for an unprecedented third year (... )”,

according to scientists and quoted by *The Guardian*. And in the case of the Chagos Archipelago, I am sure the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is aware that bleaching is literally devastating the Chagos Marine Reserve. If I can quote from the BBC Science correspondent

—

“Up to 85% of the corals in the Chagos Marine Reserve - so called; according to us, rightly - of the British Indian Ocean Territory are estimated to have been damaged or killed in the event.”

Are we aware of that? Have we raised it and had we proposed to do anything about it?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, yes, that is true. It’s not only Chagos, many countries are suffering from that. But what can we do? We have no access.

**Mr Bérenger:** Other questions? Otherwise, I’ll put my last question.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister one question with regard to the rounds of discussions that the two sides have been having after the Arbitral Tribunal has given its ruling? The Rt. hon. Prime Minister expressed to the House his dissatisfaction with the attitude of the officials of the UK side, interpreting that it was a too narrow interpretation. What remedy do we have then? Because the Tribunal, in its ruling, was very forceful to the effect that the UK had been violating the International Law, has been in breach of its

obligation under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); the Tribunal has given its ruling in our favour and now they are being difficult. Has the Rt. hon. Prime Minister taken any advice as to what remedy do we have now?

**The Prime Minister:** We have no other remedy. The only solution is to go to the International Court of Justice and this is what I have done.

**Mrs Selvon:** As the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea has, in its recent Judgment, inserted into International Law the 1965 UK-Mauritius arrangements, recognising the rights of Mauritius on the resources of the sea around the Chagos, will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister send an expedition by sea to the Chagos in the near future, as suggested by the hon. Leader of the Opposition?

**The Prime Minister:** If there is a delegation that is ready to go, we will put the hon. Member at the head and she will go with them.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Last question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Bérenger:** I must say that proposal that I made, if I may say, *en passant*, is not at all a laughing matter, but it would all be in a question of timing. So, I think we should consider that action. It is a question of timing, but it is no laughing matter from my end.

Can I, Madam Speaker, as a final question. We are on the eve of the UN General Assembly and we have learnt today that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will be present at the UN General Assembly in New York. Now, the key moment is when the General Committee of the UN General Assembly will decide to put or not to put on the agenda of the General Assembly this issue, this resolution from Mauritius. That would be the key moment. Can I request the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to keep us informed, keep the House informed, of what goes on at the level of that General Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, between now and the General Assembly?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I don't know whether they will tell us what discussion they are having inside in order to take a decision. We will only know when the decision is taken and, of course, certainly I will inform the House.

**Madam Speaker:** Time is over!

**MOTION**  
**SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)**

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**PUBLIC BILL**

*Second Reading*

**THE APPROPRIATION (2016-2017) BILL 2016**

**(No. XVII of 2016)**

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2016-2017) Bill 2016 (No. XVII of 2016).*

*Question again proposed.*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Lesjongard!

(12.13 p.m.)

**Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River):** I wish to thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the floor to intervene during the debates on the Budget.

Madam Speaker, allow me, from the very outset, to refer to last year's Budget and the statement made by the then Minister of Finance when he delivered his speech in relation to 'Mauritius at the Crossroads', and when I intervened, Madam Speaker, during the debates, I had put the question to the then Minister of Finance, asking him: if we are at the crossroads, are we moving forward or are we changing direction? I had put that question, Madam Speaker, because I did consider at that time that that statement was a very ambiguous statement and to me the choice was not that clear and when I refer to this present Budget Speech, you will understand why I am making that argument.

Madam Speaker, 2015-2016 has not been a good year. Expectations that were there have not been met. It was difficult for Government to move forward with their agenda and the population at large is still waiting for the second economic miracle to happen. But what are the reasons, Madam Speaker? I believe the reasons are multiples. There is, and we should

agree to that, a climate of uncertainty on the world front and also locally we have seen certain sectors stagnating, Madam Speaker, whereas other sectors have performed.

It was amidst that situation that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister had to come forward with his document ‘Vision 2030’. I think he stated that at the right time because the population had started losing faith in the Government. I think it was a good decision, a good political move, and he wanted to boost his team also at the same time. But, at the same time also, it was a motion of no confidence towards the then Finance Minister.

Madame la présidente, je vais soutenir l’argument que j’avais fait un peu plus tôt de par les discours qui ont été prononcés à l’intérieur de cette Chambre. J’ai écouté attentivement les interventions des députés et ministres de l’autre côté de la Chambre, et il est vrai de dire, Madame la présidente, que, par exemple, les intervenants du PMSD ont fait référence dans leur discours au budget présenté dans un passé lointain sous l’ère Ramgoolam, budget qui avait été présenté par l’honorable Vice-Premier ministre et ministre du Tourisme, l’honorable Xavier-Luc Duval, mais aucune référence n’a été faite par ces mêmes députés et ministres du budget qui avait été présenté l’année dernière par l’ancien ministre des Finances. C’est pourquoi, Madame la présidente, l’argument que j’essaie de faire c’est que dans ce budget, je vois que l’actuel ministre des Finances est très clair dans ce qu’il veut faire. Et je me réfère, Madame la présidente, *to paragraph 8*, où il dit –

“*The choice is clear.*”

Et au paragraphe 28, il parle d’un ‘*New Era of Development*’.

A mon humble avis, Madame la présidente, cela aurait dû être le budget de l’année dernière. Pourquoi ? Parce qu’un gouvernement fraîchement élu qui voulait se démarquer complètement de la façon que le pays avait été géré par l’ancien régime, c’était ça la direction à prendre. Malheureusement, comme je l’ai dit un peu plus tôt, l’ancien ministre des Finances ne nous a pas donné la direction que ce gouvernement voulait prendre clairement.

Now, let me, Madam Speaker, start with the measures concerning poverty alleviation. What has been put in the Budget illustrates how difficult this task is and also how lightly that task was handled by the former Finance Minister, how confused we were all regarding the measures announced in the last Budget.

Madam Speaker, I stated that clearly when I intervened last year, that poverty alleviation cannot be left to the private sector only, and I refer to Parliamentary Questions

that were put in this House and replied by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, but also by the present Minister of Finance and Economic Development, and it was clear in their answers, especially on that issue concerning *parrainage*, that Government would review the situation.

I am happy that this situation has been reviewed because from replies that were given to this House, we understood that the private sector was supposed to chip in a certain amount of money to help in poverty alleviation. But, at the end of the day, I think that sum of money was not chipped in, it was just a donation in kind, and I don't know what exactly was donated by the private sector.

The measures in this present Budget, like I said, are clear, and I believe now strict control should be exercised with regard to the CSR. But I would wish when the Minister of Finance and Economic Development intervenes to be enlightened on the composition of the Board of that CSR Foundation. Having said that, Madam Speaker, allow me now to say a few words on the construction sector.

*L'adage veut, Madame la présidente, que quand le secteur de la construction va bien, tout va bien* and we have seen that in the present Budget capital expenditure by Government will be raised to some Rs19 billion. The public sector will invest some Rs34.5 billion in the year 2016-2017 and some Rs97.6 billion over the next three years. We have heard of rural and urban regeneration. We have heard of the Metro Express. We have heard of the smart cities, port and airport infrastructure. I was very critical about the construction of smart cities last year and I still maintain what I said last year, although I support this type of development. I will explain why I am still critical.

We have taken cognizance of the report on Heritage City. From an engineering point of view, I think it is a preliminary report and we need more information to be able to make a full statement. Now, when we get to smart cities, Madam Speaker, I would refer Members of this House to an article in 'Business India', where the Prime Minister Shri Modi visited Pune in India. When he visited that town, because there also they have put up a project for the setting up of 200 smart cities, he made a very powerful statement.

True it is that, in Mauritius, we want to make our island an intelligent island, and this is what smart city is. But we should not forget that we need to get our towns or villages the basic needs. For example, Madam Speaker, Government had made a statement that towns and villages would have round-the-clock water supply. I think this should happen. Our towns and

villages should be able to have a round-the-clock water supply because when people staying in those villages and towns where they don't have round-the-clock water supply will know that in those smart cities people are having all sorts of facilities, then we will start having problems in this country. This applies to the sewerage network also. In parallel when we are developing the smart cities, at the same time and at the same pace, we should develop our villages and towns in our country, and this is what I understand from rural and urban regeneration.

I would wish also to be enlightened – we understand that the person who was in charge of the whole concept of smart cities in Mauritius has resigned, that is, the architect Mr Gaëtan Siew. Maybe we would wish to know why. What was the problem? Because we know that he is a very competent person. He did not give the exact reasons why he resigned and until today, with the problems we are having with regard to the Heritage City, one would wish to know why that architect has resigned!

Now, we understand also that the Heritage City has been freezed. We do not know whether it has been freezed for a period of time or whether that Government will not go ahead with the project.

Allow me, Madam Speaker, now to say a few words on the green and blue economies. I would have wished to see also what we call today the silver economy, but later I will say a few words. Let me say something on the green and blue economies. Both are paired to reduce our dependence on petroleum products. We have heard of the Mass Transit System and I would wish to have more information on that mode of transport.

I wish to refer to paragraph 126, that is, the chapter dealing maximising investment opportunities with the green economy. At paragraph 126, Madam Speaker, if I may quote -

“Government’s policy emphasis on developing local sources of renewable energy offers a unique potential for launching a green economy, with high value-added jobs, while at the same time addressing environmental issues and reducing future oil import bills.”

When one refers to the speech made by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister on Vision 2030, where he talks about creation of jobs, he stated that some 100,000 new direct and indirect jobs will be created within the coming five years; no reference is made to jobs created within the green economy. Jobs will be created in the financial services sector, in the information and

communication technology sector, in ocean economy, in the health wellness and biotechnology sectors, education and knowledge sector, tourism sector, manufacturing sector, construction and property development, logistic, SMEs, but no reference is made to the green economy and creation of jobs in the green economy.

Last year, when I intervened on the Budget, I made this statement and this is not the first time I am making a statement. I said it seven years ago, Madam Speaker. I said –

*« Notre vision de ce concept, c'est-à-dire, de faire de l'île de Maurice une île durable, est limitée. »*

It is also about creating jobs; professional jobs such as Environmental Consultants, Biological System Engineers, Environmental Engineers, Green Building Architects, Solar Energy Engineers, Wind Energy Engineers, Ecology Educators, not only for professional, but also manual jobs such as organic farmers, eco-Technology Workers, eco-Electricians, eco-Plumbers, eco-Construction Workers. I still do not see that we are going in that direction, Madam Speaker. The vision with regard to green economy is not that clear. I would wish to have explanation to paragraph 127 of the Budget Speech –

“To this end, the CEB will create a renewable energy company, which will ultimately become a special vehicle for the production of electricity from solar photo voltaic systems of up to 15 MW. It will subsequently open shareholding to SMEs, cooperative societies and small investors.”

Why the CEB? The SMEs, the cooperative societies, the small investors, on their own, they can produce electricity, Madam Speaker. Whether this was a suggestion from Government or from the CEB and I would wish to be enlightened on this issue, Madam Speaker.

There is something very interesting at paragraph 132 and it is stated that –

“(...) As regards hydro power, the CEB will invest Rs200 m. for the upgrading of the Sans Souci plant capacity and it has identified twelve sites on private land with this potential hydro power generation.”

This concerns what we call mini hydropower, which I believe will be very interesting and will help the CEB to produce renewable energy, Madam Speaker.

Let me now say a few words on the blue economy. I believe some Members who intervened before me spoke on the blue economy because they think this parts the way forward. I also believe that this sector can become an important sector of our economy in the years to come.

Now, one should know that the concept of blue economy originates from the green economy, that is, both share the same outcome, that is, improving human well-being and social equity, but, at the same time, Madam Speaker, reducing environmental risk and ecological scarcities. I read a report recently on the ocean economy, a report with regard to Small Island Developing States and reference on that report was made to Mauritius, Seychelles and Madagascar, all three islands found in the Indian Ocean. The report makes a series of suggestions on the way forward including sharing on information on the subject between the Island States. It talks of inclusion of oceans as a key component in future sustainable development goals.

Now, what are the facts and figures today, Madam Speaker, regarding that sector? One would wish to know that we have the largest Exclusive Economic Zone in the world. Today, it stands at 2.3 million square kilometres and it includes some 400,000 square kilometres of continental shelves recently approved by the UN, which was a joint submission by Mauritius and Seychelles. That Exclusive Economic Zone, Madam Speaker, is bigger than France, Germany, Italy, Spain and UK combined together and it has an enormous potential.

Today, ocean related activities contribute some 10% to 15% of our GDP and 90% of the contribution comes from three sectors, that is, coastal tourism and marine leisure, seaport related activities, and sea food related activities. The potential for growth in the seaport and seafood related activities is enormous. The fisheries sector contributes some 1.4% of GDP and employs today some 12,000 people. The seaport related activities represent some 2% of GDP, and our country is ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> among 155 countries in terms of out shipment.

In the document 'Vision 2030', the Rt. hon. Prime Minister states that that sector in the years to come, that is, in the coming five years, will create some 25,000 jobs.

Now, what are the clusters associated with the ocean economy, Madam Speaker? We have seabed exploration, fishing and seafood and aquaculture, deep ocean water application, marine services, marine tourism and leisure, marine biotechnology, seaport related activities and marine renewable energy. A question that I would wish to ask is: do we have a roadmap

for the ocean economy or are we still working on the roadmap that was presented in 2013? What are the priorities today in that sector, Madam Speaker? We should understand, and I made reference earlier to that report. In that sector today, countries that are moving forward are now trying to create an enabling environment to allow the sector to emerge. Lots of research and development is going on in that sector. Government is coming forward with fiscal incentives. We should move fast, I believe, Madam Speaker, in that sector.

Let us have a closer look at the different clusters, for example, seabed exploration. There is one international authority called the International Seabed Authority and that authority is responsible for subsoil activities in the ocean floor. Several nations have made requests for prospecting ocean floor in areas next to our EEZ. A joint Mauritian and Japanese expedition some time back discovered inactive hydrothermal fields in our EEZ, which indicates the presence of mineral deposits. In fact, Madam Speaker, previous expeditions have also discovered such fields. Do you know what this means? This means the possibility of the presence of oil or gas in our maritime zone, Madam Speaker. I think we should give a lot of attention to that because there are various opportunities in that field, for example, licensing of concession to oil companies and eventually production of oil or gas is discovered, other goods and services related to the oil and gas industry. The possibilities are enormous, Madam Speaker.

Others have dwelled on fishing, seafood processing and aquaculture, but I will move to another cluster, which is the deep-water ocean application. This cluster has two forms of activities and I will deal with what is known as the upstream activity. I understand that Government is in presence of two projects, one in Port Louis and the other one in the South, and I also understand that the one in Port Louis has already received an approval in principle. This is converting deep-sea water for use in air conditioning purposes. I understand that there was a project submitted to Government and that project has been approved. May we know where matters are?

Now, another cluster is with regard to marine renewable energy. We understand that two studies are ongoing. One is in relation to ocean waves and the other one is in relation to offshore wind, and will be concluded, I believe, this year. Madam Speaker, demand for renewable energy is expected to increase by two and a half times by 2025. The generation of renewable energy from tides and waves, wind turbines located offshore, geothermal resources and marine biomass are possible viable alternatives for energy production. Of all those

sources of energy that I have mentioned above, the highest potential for electricity generation is the offshore wind turbines.

In the northern part of Europe, many countries are now operating offshore wind farms and Mauritius, I think, has enormous potential in the southern part of the country. Not only can we produce electricity from those wind farms, but we can couple production of electricity from offshore wind farm together with aquaculture. Certain countries have successfully, Madam Speaker, been able to implement such projects. Now, global offshore wind capacity is growing at a remarkable speed; 40% yearly, and I believe we should not waste time in trying to find investors in that sector.

Madam Speaker, the last cluster concerns what we call ‘making Mauritius a hub in this region for petroleum products, container transhipment and port services.’ And this is possible, highly possible because we are strategically located at the crossroads of Asia and Africa, that is, sea routes. And we should not forget, today the sea port contributes about 2%, Madam Speaker, of the country’s GDP, and we can increase that. The potential is there. We need to have that enabling environment and make this possible. Having said that, what I have said about those two sectors, that is, the green and the blue economy, I think both sectors can become in the years to come two important pillars of our economy. We should give ourselves the means to be able to do that.

Allow me, to conclude, Madam Speaker, by saying that the political aspect of this year’s Budget has a different meaning. To all of us here, it is the Budget of a Prime Minister in waiting. If this Budget creates a feel-good factor in the country, as stated by those who have intervened before, one person will benefit from that, and it will be the Finance Minister. But the Budget succeeds when we implement the measures in the Budget, and that will not depend only on the Finance Minister; that will depend on Government and on all the Ministers. So, time will tell, Madam Speaker, whether the measures announced in the Budget have been successfully implemented to the benefit of our population.

I for one believe that the actual Finance Minister needs this, because you will agree that he has been going through some difficult times lately. I think this will boost his morale a bit. Like we say in French, this Budget brings, maybe, *une bouffée d’air frais*, and I wish him well.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

*At 12.53 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 1.58 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Dayal!

**Mr R. Dayal (First Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil):** Mr Deputy Speaker, my intervention today will be based on our Government's prediction, intention, translated in results, oriented actions *dans l'intérêt du peuple*.

This Budget is for a *projet de société pour une Ile Maurice Durable*. It enfolds a plethora of unique opportunities and concrete sustainable measures for us all to rise to the challenge of a new era of development with the urgency imposed by a climate change.

The law and order issues, combatting terrorism and organised crime, fighting the drug scourge, including synthetic drugs, even having recourse to drones, road safety with the construction of a driving and riding centre in Constituency No. 9 with funds collected as far back as 1995, with the blessing of the present Prime Minister, modern hospital in Flacq to service constituencies in the eastern part of our Republic, despite a backdrop of global economic turmoil.

This Government is more than ever committed to bring the country back to its glorified past. We are, indeed, upholding our promises for a better, prosperous and sustainable Mauritius in all fronts, to ensure meaningful change in the public interest. We cannot afford to legate an environment which is devoid of its critical ecosystem for future generations.

Sustainability is anchored in all our initiatives and by promoting eco-friendly practices, including coral planting - I would like to show an example of what we are going to do just in a year with corals like this. The good news is this is how we are going to plant it - and dealing with the ocean due to activities of the tectonic plates and the El Nino global sea warming phenomenon.

We will be amending the Environment Act to be in harmony with our environmental strategies. In the span of some 15 months, we have visited most of the sustainable goals with strategic plan of actions.

Let me just say what we are planning to do for the bleaching of corals. We have been experimenting technological support from Australia to deal with coral bleaching, and it has been successful. We just have to bring it at project level.

I must, and we must particularly commend and thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, for honouring our country's commitment to COP21, the World Summit in Paris where, as a Minister, I accompanied a delegation comprising my very good friend, hon. François, from Rodrigues, and other professionals. And, I must say, we addressed the challenges of climate change from the perspective of a SIDs and it was done with style and distinction, appreciated by all present.

The Government's policy emphasises on developing local sources of renewable energy for launching a green economy for renewable energy, waste to energy, biomass, cane tops and trash, photovoltaic, wind energy, wave energy and hydro water is a trendsetter to drive forward our dream, aspirations, vision, endurance and effort undertaking for a cleaner, greener and safer Mauritius which is tangible right now in the landscape of our motherland.

In the same spirit, carbon ash which used to be a major source of pollution was scientifically engineered towards the production of green cement through the innovative no-emission venture of Omnicane. At the same time, to monitor our quality of air, two static units of air monitoring equipment were commissioned, one in Port Louis and a second one in Vacoas. A third one is planned.

I am gratified to note that timely provisions have been made and fundamental resources allocated to protect and manage the vulnerability of our environment, especially with regard to climate change, disaster risk reduction and management, waste minimisation and management, land drainage, renewable energy, organic agriculture, bio farming to improve food security and the Blue Economy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during my tenure of office as the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management I spared no effort towards benchmarking Mauritius as a SIDs leading on disaster mitigation and preparedness, resilience response and recovery with the support of our Prime Minister and the Cabinet as a whole. This was acknowledged by the UN Secretary General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon during his visit to Mauritius this year. My priority of priorities was to prevent death and save

human lives during natural calamities and we had no fatality. The success has been 100 per cent.

The development and operation of the National Disaster Scheme 2015, the promulgation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, the innovative and permutation of early warning system for storm surges and tidal waves with the support of Deltares, Holland and the EU, the construction of a multi-functional refuge centre for the first time in this part of the world at Quatre Soeurs with the assistance of friendly countries and coastal rehabilitation works, are all concrete evidences amongst many others bearing testimony that we have gone a long way towards risks reduction and management with community involvement. And we have had the full support of the community!

The provision of Rs22 m. for modern equipment to improve command and coordination on ground during national emergency operations will further enhance our capability to respond with all responders expediently. A Climate Change Bill is forthcoming. Nine Environment Officers have been recruited and others are forecasted. In our relentless pursuit to meet the daunting challenges of climate change, I did initiate several projects at the Ministry. Just to mention one, a 2050 Pathway Carbon Calculator - I repeat, a 2050 Pathway Carbon Calculator - has been developed for Mauritius with the support of this Government. It is a modelling tool which allows to analyse how emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs), can be reduced by changes in technologies and behaviours. I must express our gratitude to the European Union for making this possible.

At Government level we are fully conscious that we have to increase the green cover of the Republic of Mauritius with the prime objective to increase the carbon sink in line with the Green Island Concept because we are fully conscious that trees are the lungs of our country and of our planet, and it will make us meet the Sustainable Goal No. 15 and its target on land degradation neutrality will help to reduce ambient air temperature amongst other benefits.

This Budget makes provision for rehabilitation works to address the issue of beach erosion and coastal land degradation to the tune of Rs110 m. which is vital to our tourism industry and healthy lifestyle of Mauritians. Lately, the Government completed the rehabilitation of three land mark innovative beach rehabilitations at La Prairie, Baie du Cap and Bain Boeuf within a Beach Rehabilitation Master Plan. Mont Choisy, Belle Mare and Palmar are next in the list. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of this

Government is much more ambitious than the Millennium Goals as it has 17 goals and 169 targets.

This Budget testifies the Government's commitment to implement the sustainable development goals and targets. It is making sure that through the national and determined contribution at COP 21, petitioning for USD 5.5 billion in terms of grant from the Global Green Fund, technical assistance and capacity building from partners to move towards a low carbon development path, resilience to the vulnerabilities of climate change will be implemented. In the same spirit, we materialised, in collaboration with *l' Université des Mascareignes*, a cascading system in refrigeration using ammonia, an outstanding contribution to protect the ozone layer.

The House will also appreciate that Mauritius submitted its Mauritius Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) in the context of COP21 and we are amongst the first countries to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. This would not have been possible without the support of our Prime Minister and our Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, who chaired the working committees with the unflinching support of *l'Agence française de développement (AFD)* and the French Embassy. As a matter of fact, after COP21, *AFD* is helping us to convert our transfer stations costing us billions in management fees into automated sorting out and recycling waste facility, reducing the pressure at Mare Chicose Landfill site. I, therefore, note with great satisfaction that this Budget further supports the Ministry towards sustaining the efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change as well as to build a disaster resilient architecture for Mauritius.

As regards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which our Rt. hon. Prime Minister promoted, moulding a new society with green eco-culture was on top of my priorities. I truly believe that a throw-away society is far from being a modern society, rather sustainable patterns of consumption and production is the order of the day and we are striving for prosperity and green growth. This year has witnessed the successful banning of plastic bags in Mauritius as from 01 January, which the Opposition could not implement! The intent of this Government behind this banned measure was never to jeopardise business but rather shift from a throw-away society to an ecologically responsible one.

We have started to reap the fruits of our hard work. Plastic industries are greening their businesses, biodegradable and compostable bags are already on the local market. There is no more abusive use of plastic bags in Mauritius and a change in the mindset of people is

visible with the adoption of going green and green lifestyle. This showed that our initiatives had public support. There were also the rehabilitation of Le Dauguet and Priest Peak health tracks which were left abandoned and nature trails left in a very abandoned state in other places. School endemic plant gardens will give a new impetus to our biodiversity coupled with the embellishing and greening campaign launched.

It is not a secret to anyone in Mauritius that diabetes is a great killer and so far we have not been successful in combating the problem through conventional medicinal mechanism. It was high time for this Government to bring meaningful change to those suffering from diabetes and we spent lots of money in terms of insulin tablets. In this spirit, we are coming forward with the distribution to each household of medicinal insulin plant.

I am thankful to my colleague, hon. Minister Mahen Seeruttun who has provided some 10 *arpents* of lands in the area of Wooton, the centre of Mauritius for a nursery for the free distribution of the medicinal plants.

I am equally supportive of the views expressed by hon. Mrs Selvon that we should trigger initiatives in terms of green economy for fibrous plants.

*(Interruptions)*

To comfort her, I would say, apart from the 200,000 coconut plants and the two billion of plants in the project ‘Decade for Greening Mauritius’, the implementation of the Arundo Donax Green Energy Project, for which conclusive trials have been done by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and the University of Mauritius, is in the pipeline.

The re-opening of the ex-Dubreuil tea factory and a new tea nursery at La Brasserie with provision of free seedlings to tea-growers and subsidy on fertilisers will positively boost our green economy.

In the same breath, I also embark on several other green initiatives, to name a few –

- commissioning of a used oil facility at Montagne Blanche to protect our underground water;
- collection, disposal and recycling of electronic and electrical waste. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with the private sector. There is budgetary provision for a facility at La Chaumière in the same area where hazardous waste facility is being constructed;

- collection and recycling of used tyres. Projects are already on;
- shifting from the use of polystyrene containers, a source of cancer, which represents health hazards to other biodegradable eco-friendly alternatives will be the second phase of our banned plastic campaign;
- improving the system of pets bottles collection, and recycling;
- setting mechanisms for collection and recycling of other plastic bottles and containers.

The provisions made in this budget are very encouraging. Indeed, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, our Minister of Finance and Economic Development and I must say it, in the sense it supports my initiatives during my assignment as Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management.

Last but not least, I must also commend the hon. Minister for continuity in the schemes on solar water heater, rain water harvesting and composting. Notwithstanding other schemes of the living environment, these schemes will indeed support to chart our sustainable future for Mauritius.

Law and order, the provision of funds for smart camera will certainly prove a big deterrent to hit and run cases and diminishing criminal activities. Just without leaking the secret of the Smart Cameras. That camera, if properly fed, will identify stolen cars, vehicles used by drug peddlers, so on and so forth.

The provision of funds for the construction of a Police Academy will go a long way to address the pressing needs for training, infrastructure and to improve the capacity building and quality of our Police officers. This has been one of the projects that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister had at heart when I was Commissioner of Police. We even had the plans, but we could not implement it. But I think if you want good Police officers on the streets, the best and the best option is to train them properly in proper training infrastructures with proper training implements.

The need for improving our Forensic lab facilities is timely in the wake of preventing the miscarriage of justice through state-of-the-art, hard evidence gathering technical support in law enforcement in a modern society. The *surcroît dans un état de droit*.

We have, as a credible Government, the political will and public support to daringly move forward in the national interest. I would not be labouring on matters that have been raised and which are *sub judice*.

I will end here.

Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Yerrigadoo!

(2.14 p.m.)

**The Attorney General (Mr R. Yerrigadoo):** M. le président, permettez-moi, tout d'abord, de féliciter l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, ministre des Finances et du Développement économique pour la présentation d'un budget audacieux et réaliste. Un budget de relance économique reposant sur dix stratégies, et qui est aussi porteur d'espoir pour les plus démunis. Ce budget nous parle de l'avenir, de la possibilité de créer une Ile Maurice débarrassée de l'extrême pauvreté. Un tel avenir est maintenant à notre portée et ce budget nous donne les outils pour réaliser cet objectif.

M. le président, toutes les mesures annoncées par le ministre des Finances pour combattre la pauvreté sont réalistes. Le *Marshall Plan* qui a été expliqué en détail par mon collègue et ministre de l'Intégration sociale prendra bientôt son envol.

M. le président, on ne le répétera jamais assez : il n'y a que l'éducation qui peut aider quelqu'un à sortir de la pauvreté. C'est pour cette raison que ce budget encourage les jeunes à emprunter cette voie. Ainsi, les élèves issus de familles vivant dans des conditions vulnérables qui réussissent à leurs examens de Grade 9, SC et HSC percevront aux résultats des «*cash prize*» de R 15,000, R 25,000 et R 35,000 respectivement. Par ailleurs, les frais d'examens des élèves qui sont issus de familles pauvres et redoublant la SC ou la HSC seront pris en charge par l'État. Le *meal allowance* des élèves fréquentant les écoles ZEP passe de R 40 à R 60. Les subventions mensuelles pour les crèches passent elles de R 1,500 à R 2,000.

Les mesures énoncées, la stratégie de « *creating more job opportunities for all* » vont permettre à quelque 21,400 jeunes, hommes et femmes, de trouver un emploi. Et pour assurer la mise en œuvre de cette initiative, le gouvernement mettra sur pied un *National Empowerment Agency* calqué sur le model du pôle emploi en France, tel que l'a décrit mon collègue, le ministre de l'Emploi.

Ce budget trace aussi la voie d'une relance pour le «*Technical and Vocational Educational Training*» plus connu comme le TVET et un «*Skills Development Authority*» verra le jour pour assumer le rôle de régulateur indépendant pour les jeunes qui ont terminé leurs études secondaires et aussi pour les jeunes diplômés. Le gouvernement prévoit également l'embauche de quelque 2,000 personnes sous le *Youth Employment Programme scheme (YEP)* sans compter le *Service to Mauritius (STM)* qui a été relancé.

M. le président, je ne répèterai pas tout ce que mes collègues de la majorité gouvernementale ont dit au cours de leurs allocutions respectives. Mais laissez-moi lancer un appel à tous ces jeunes, et moins jeunes, de retourner vers la terre. Ce gouvernement croit fermement dans le développement du secteur «non sucre» et encourage les entrepreneurs à la culture de légumes et de fleurs en usant des nouvelles technologies et avec pour objectif de créer des plantations saines qui sont de moins en moins dépendantes sur les pesticides. De l'agriculture raisonnée comme disait hier mon collègue.

Le ministère de l'Agro-industrie a introduit en janvier dernier un plan stratégique pour la période 2016-2020, où l'accent est mis sur les pratiques soutenues pour faire accroître la production agricole afin d'assurer la sécurité alimentaire, une meilleure qualité de produits et l'autosuffisance. L'accent est aussi mis sur les mesures à prendre pour la transition vers la production bio afin d'atteindre l'objectif fixé de produire 50% de nos produits alimentaires en mode bio d'ici 2020.

M. le président, il faut comprendre l'opportunité historique qui se présente à nous, et ce qu'il faut faire pour transformer l'histoire. «*A new era of development*» se profile et, nous devons tous travailler pour atteindre cet objectif commun. Nous avons besoin de l'aide de tous les Mauriciens pour réaliser ce grand projet économique et social. Même de ceux qui ont des opinions différentes de nous. Ici je citerai Antoine de Saint-Exupéry dans son récit «*Citadelle*», où il disait –

« Si tu diffères de moi, mon frère, loin de me léser, tu m'enrichis. »

C'est ensemble que nous réussirons pour le bien-être de notre pays.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me now to address the House on some specific issues. Law and order is an important priority for this Government. On many occasions, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has reiterated his commitment and that of his Government to empower the Police and address reforms to the criminal justice process. Recently, we adopted the Independent Police Complaints Commission Bill.

I wish to apprise the House on progress made on the drafting of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, also known as PACE. I had previously mentioned that my Office had sought the assistance of the Commonwealth Secretariat to assist with the review and finalisation of the PACE Bill along with the Codes of Practice related to the Bill.

Mr Geoffrey Rivlin, Q.C., who has been appointed by the Commonwealth Secretariat, visited Mauritius from Monday 04 to Thursday 07 July 2016. He had meetings with myself, the Solicitor General, law officers of my Office, the DPP and the Office of the DPP, the Commissioner of the Police, the Commissioner of Prisons, the Bar Council and the Chief Justice.

The issue of provisional information was lengthily debated, and all agreed that its abolition would represent a significant progress. The main issue was to come up with a new system, which would still empower the Police to investigate whilst ensuring that the human rights of any suspect are respected by bringing that person under judicial control at the earliest.

For the very first time in Mauritius, there is consensus from all stakeholders of a need to abolish provisional information, and I will ensure that this will be achieved in the near future once Cabinet agrees on a mechanism to replace provisional information. This review of the abusive system of provisional information has been announced in the Government Programme 2015-2019, which states at paragraph 132 -

“Government will come up with a modern legal framework modelled on the UK Police and Criminal Evidence Act to address the abusiveness and arbitrariness of the present system of “provisional charges.””

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the enactment of PACE, with a new alternative to provisional information, will undoubtedly be the biggest reform of our criminal justice system in modern times.

An amount of Rs8.7 billion has been devoted to the Mauritius Police Force (MPF). And the Minister of Finance and Economic Development has announced that a new training strategy will also be elaborated and provision has been made for a modern Police Academy at the Reduit-Ebène area. This Budget also makes provision for investing in modern vehicles and equipment for the Police. Hence, Rs292 m. have been allocated for modernising the fleet of vehicles.

In order to intensify the combat against drugs, this Budget is providing for two drone cameras with night vision capabilities. The MRA Customs will also be equipped with interceptor boats, mobile low bed scanners and other X-ray scanners.

Let me now allude to the judicial process. The independence of the Judiciary, apart from being vital for the functioning of our democratic system of Government, empowers our courts to uphold the Rule of Law to act as guardians of the fundamental rights entrenched in our Constitution, and to ensure and enforce good governance.

Throughout the years, this House has witnessed questions being raised on delays in the judicial system in Mauritius, and it has often been said that 'justice delayed is justice denied'. I invite all hon. Members to read carefully the Annual Report of the Judiciary of 2015 which has been published in June 2016. Hon. Members will see that there is considerable improvement and that the Judiciary has to be congratulated for that, but there is still need to improve on a number of other issues.

The key actions from the Judiciary include the setting up of a separate Court of Appeal Section and a separate High Court Section of the Supreme Court to improve public perception of independence and objectivity in dispensing justice and to streamline appeal cases.

In 2015/2016, the digital and audio recording systems of the Supreme Court have been upgraded. The infrastructure of the Supreme Court and the District Courts of Grand Port, Flacq and Upper Plaines Wilhems will also have to be upgraded.

Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to give a few figures regarding case management. The total number of cases lodged (excluding appeal cases) at the Supreme Court decreased by 1% to 9,091 cases in 2015 from 9,154 cases in 2014. Similarly, the total number of cases disposed of (excluding appeal cases) at the Supreme Court decreased by 9% to 9,381 cases in 2015 from 10,357 cases in 2014.

A physical count of the total number of outstanding cases (excluding appeal cases) showed that 7,765 cases were not yet disposed of at the end of the year 2015, representing a fall of 4% over the figure of 8,055 in 2014. I will not dwell on the figures relating to the other courts, but my learned friends can refer to them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the number of cases lodged under the Protection from Domestic Violence Act 1997 decreased by 7% to 1,770 in 2015. More than half of them were lodged in the urban District Courts and half of them came from the Lower Plaines Wilhems. Following the same trend, the number of cases disposed of showed a fall of 6% to 1,794 cases in 2015 from 1,916 cases in 2014.

From 2014 to 2015, the total number of applications received under the PDVA of 1997 decreased by 6%, from 1,895 cases to 1,774 cases, with drops for Protection Orders from 1,855 to 1,734, and for Occupation Orders from 35 to 34, and there was no case for revocation in 2015. On the contrary, the applications received for tenancy increased from four in 2014 to six in 2015.

The applicants for Protection Orders among spouse/partner showed a drop of 12% to 1,387 in 2015. Some 93% of them were women.

A huge step, Mr Deputy Speaker, has been achieved with the adoption of a new Protection from Domestic Violence Act (PDVA) earlier this year. This legislation shall provide better protection to victims of domestic violence by widening the definition of domestic violence to include intimidation, harassment amongst others. A lot of emphasis is also being put on training and capacity building of all stakeholders to empower them to face new challenges. My colleague, hon. Aurore Perraud, has already expatiated on these.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister is quite concerned that some of our District Courts are in great need of urgent repairs and renovations. Provision has been made for the District Courts of Mahebourg, Rose Hill and Flacq to undergo repairs and upgrading in this Budget.

The Judiciary is currently spending a lot of money on rented premises. In order to curb this, the Souillac District Court will be relocated in the SIFB building in the locality. The Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart District Courts will also be relocated in the SIFB building in Pamplemousses. A sum of Rs8 m. will be spent on these projects for this year, 2016.

The new Court House in Port Louis is currently being renovated. Rs5.839 m. have been provided for the year 2015-2016, Rs2.7 m. have been provided for this current financial year, Rs430,000 will be allocated in the year 2017-2018 and a sum of Rs5 m. for the year 2019.

As announced in the Budget, a new Supreme Court Tower will be constructed in Port Louis for a project value of Rs1.1 billion. This project will span over three years. An estimate of Rs100 m. has been provided for in this Budget. The current building housing the Supreme Court will be renovated and so will house the new Court of Appeal. An amount of Rs3 m. has also been earmarked for the upgrading of the courts' e-Judiciary system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now talk about capacity building at my Office. The Attorney General's Office, as everyone is aware, has been restructured in 2015 following the amendment to the First Schedule of the Finance and Audit Act which was amended by Act 1 of 2015 which came into force on 05 March 2015 and which gave effect to a Cabinet Decision of 27 February 2015, whereby -

- (a) the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) will function as a distinct Department of the Attorney General's Office (AGO), as was the case until 2009, but with the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) as responsible officer;
- (b) the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) to function as a distinct department within the AGO, as recommended by Lord Mackay in his reports and in 2006, with the Parliamentary Counsel as responsible officer;
- (c) the Solicitor General to be the Supervising Officer, and the Chief Legal Secretary to be the accounting officer of the whole of the AGO, comprising therefore three departments (the ODPP, the OPC and the Civil Advisory and Litigation Department).

The Solicitor General and myself will ensure that all three departments of the AGO have got adequate resources to discharge their important responsibilities.

These three departments have got separate vote items -

- 15-1 Office of the Solicitor General
- 15-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- 15-3 Office of the Parliamentary Counsel

Although legislative drafting has always been done at the level of the Attorney General's Office, it is now increasingly recognised in the Commonwealth that this is a specialised career. The drafting of legislation is a specialist career, and there are few other

types of legal work where lawyers can expect to be involved with and influence such a diverse range of issues. Officers of the OPC are involved in implementing policy decisions through legislation. For instance, they are currently working under the supervision of the Solicitor General to draft the Finance Bill to give effect to policy decisions announced in the Budget Speech.

The scarcity of skills in that area has been recognised in the Commonwealth and by our former Chief Justice and present legal consultant, Sir Victor Glover, who, in an article in “The Loophole” (a publication of the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel) in August 2011 - and it is befitting for me to cite an extract - had this to say -

“Mauritius is a small jurisdiction and it has been the practice since long for the Judges of our Supreme Court not to be recruited from the Bar but appointed by promotion of Magistrates or of law officers from the Attorney General’s Office. This has meant that legislative counsel who have undergone training at considerable expense to the State have little scope for making a career in the field but, after a few years, move to the Bench when a vacancy occurs there. It is worth noting in this connection that, between 1993 and 2003, no fewer than 5 law officers held office as Parliamentary Counsel, of whom 3 were subsequently appointed as Judges of the Supreme Court and 2 retired. Besides, the 3 law officers who hold office as Parliamentary Counsel and Assistant Parliamentary Counsel are required to give assistance by performing other duties such as giving advice to Ministries and Government Departments, appearing in court cases involving public bodies, and attending conferences in Mauritius and abroad. Thus, the time they are able to devote to the business of legislative drafting, revision, updating and research is perforce rather limited. This paucity of skilled and experienced draftsmen has led to more frequent outsourcing and, I am told, explains why successive Attorneys General have resorted to my services as consultant over the last 13 years after I had retired from the office of Chief Justice and from the public service.”

I am raising this for all my colleagues to be aware because it is an important issue. My colleagues of the legal profession would appreciate. I see a former Attorney General in the House; he would appreciate.

It is apposite to note that all officers posted in the OPC have benefitted from formal training in legislative drafting. These included Commonwealth courses for which officers

have applied for and obtained Commonwealth scholarships, training in the UK and training in the Office by both Sir Victor Glover and Professor Crabbe.

At present, there are only five law officers, including Parliamentary Counsel, who do most of the legislative drafting. Government requires legislation to implement its legislative programme and together with the Solicitor General, I will ensure that the OPC is adequately staffed with a sufficient number of law officers and support staff on its establishment to ensure the smooth drafting of legislation. I wish here to thank the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for giving my Office the means in this Budget to start working towards this objective.

Further, the OPC as well as other law officers from the Office of the Solicitor General also perform the onerous task of revising legislation under the Revision of Laws Act. This includes both the revision of primary and subsidiary legislation. This work is done alongside their normal duties, without any additional remuneration, and the onerous task is very often performed beyond normal working hours and weekends due to the heavy demands on the time the law officers have with regard to other duties.

With a view to taking over the whole process of producing, printing, publishing, advertising, marketing, distributing and selling the Revised Laws of Mauritius and the Revised Subsidiary Legislation of Mauritius, and ensuring that the work undertaken by the Law Revision Unit of my Office benefits Government rather than the private sector, we will be looking into increasing the staff of the OPC and address the possibility that the legal assistant cadre in the LRU also be given a clear career path and remuneration which shall tally with the highly technical work they attend to.

Before ending, allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to address a few measures concerning the financial services sector.

Mauritius has become over the last 20 years a world-class player in the financial services industry – an industry which started in end 1980s with offshore banks and in the early 1990s with non-bank offshore activities and with the creation of the MOBAA (under the then able leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth who was then Prime Minister and who is now Prime Minister).

Today, the financial services sector, a pillar of our economy (accounts for not less than 10% of GDP) is set to grow even more and can actually be the sector which will absorb more and more young, bright, talented and highly qualified professionals, accountants, and

lawyers. We have in Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the highest per capita ratios of accountants in the world and as the number of barristers keeps on growing, new avenues for job prospects have to be found and the financial services sector will provide those job opportunities needed.

This Budget is a milestone in the history of the development of financial services because it provides far-reaching innovative solutions and is visionary. The hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has stated that he is bringing a “new thrust” to the development of our financial services sector. Yes, we have to reach out to new markets with Africa *“en point de mire”* without forgetting, of course, our usual markets. We have to be innovative with a wide spectrum of products. With the successfully renegotiated protocol to the Mauritius-India tax treaty, new vistas would be opened, for example, in debt-structuring business into India.

The life of the Mauritius-India treaty was already on borrowed time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the OECD-BEPS initiative, the implementation of which will become effective with the coming into force of the Multilateral Instrument, (commonly known as MLI) early next year. The India-Mauritius treaty had embedded into it something which has been the reason for its very phenomenal success, but with the new international tax environment and the implementation of the MLI, the treaty would have fallen foul of the MLI. Mauritius cannot stay away from such international developments as we intend to remain a world-class, clean, competitive and compliant jurisdiction.

This Budget will no doubt set new foundations to develop the capital/securities market even deeper and broader as it looks beyond tax treaties. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 10,000 GBC2 companies will help to broaden the capital market as they will be allowed to invest in listed securities. But, most importantly, this will enhance the substance of activities in Global Business.

One of the vital criteria under both the OECD and EU requirements to sustain successful development of a financial services centre is the creation of substance in the jurisdiction. The measures announced in this Budget do exactly that. Giving a fresh impetus to head quartering schemes does exactly that. Providing a tax holiday to companies holding a “Global Headquarters Administration Licence” issued by the Financial Services Commission will create that impetus.

Concerns have been raised whether the new regime of tax holiday schemes under the Income Tax Act will be BEPS compliant. Allow me to make one thing clear; BEPS is an OECD project to make sure that profits are taxed where they arise in the source country. BEPS brings international taxation to source based taxation, and providing tax holidays does not breach that rule. There is no issue of shifting profits. And the businesses are real and create employment. BEPS project does not remove the sovereign right of a country to decide on its fiscal policy. Besides, the OECD model tax treaty does provide for tax sparing and legitimises tax exemption. All 43 tax treaties of Mauritius spare the tax credit on account of tax exemption. So, I do not see any issue with tax holidays, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

International law firms with a Global Legal Advisory Services Licence issued by the FSC will benefit from a 5-year tax holiday on income they receive. Such Global Advisory Services Law Firms will not only provide a kaleidoscope of services, advising on international law, foreign laws, and be involved in international arbitration, but they will also have to undertake to employ our local lawyers, as we believe in capacity building of our lawyers, as this is the future for our young professionals, as I mentioned above.

The vehicle which these law firms may take, as is done elsewhere, is a Limited Liability Partnership, commonly known as LLP. This is a type of partnership to accommodate the requirements of professionals, especially.

The LLP will harbinger another level of development for financial services. Besides being licensed by the FSC, the necessity for these law firms to be registered with the Attorney General's Office under the Law Practitioners Act will be looked into, as this would be desirable to maintain the highest standards of practice in Mauritius.

M. le président, ce budget était très attendu, et il a été très bien accueilli par la population. Les commentaires du secteur privé, des syndicats et de la société civile ont tous été positifs et décrivent ce budget de réaliste et propice à la relance économique. Il est vrai que certains démagogues ont fustigé ce budget uniquement sur des bases de rivalité politique. Outre de chauffer les bancs de l'opposition, ces derniers ont aussi développé le réflexe d'être opposés à tout changement, qu'il soit positif ou audacieux.

M. le président, ces démagogues devraient enlever leurs œillères et agir...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** No interruptions!

*(Interruptions)*

No interruptions!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** M. le président, ces démagogues...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Yerrigadoo:**... devraient enlever leurs œillères et agir en tant que vrais patriotes.

Ils ne peuvent pas...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Minister!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Ameer Meea!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Ameer Meea! I am calling you to order!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Hurreeram, allow the hon. Attorney General to speak!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** M. le président, ces démagogues devraient enlever leurs œillères et agir en tant que vrais patriotes.

*(Interruptions)*

Ils ne peuvent pas traiter ce budget...

*(Interruptions)*

...dont l'objectif est la relance économique, d'irréaliste, alors qu'il comprend plusieurs mesures concrètes. Ils ne peuvent pas ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** No interruptions!

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** Ils ne peuvent pas, M. le président, décrire la lutte contre l'extrême pauvreté de mesure « confettis ». Ces attaques gratuites constituent un manque d'empathie et de respect envers les plus démunis. Et c'est cette philosophie qui a gangréné le concept de méritocratie pendant plus d'une décennie et qui a conduit à la prolifération d'une culture à l'excès.

M. le président, le budget de l'honorable ministre des Finances et du Développement économique est venu rassurer la population et la communauté des affaires. Ce budget a créé les conditions pour franchir un nouveau palier de développement. Je tiens à saluer la vision de l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth et de lui réaffirmer tout notre soutien.

Ce budget est réaliste, ambitieux, et en rupture totale avec la culture de copinage et de dilapidation pratiquée par le précédent régime.

*(Interruptions)*

Je viens ici le rappeler avec force à nos détracteurs que leurs attaques ne nous atteindront pas, et nous saurons œuvrer pour assurer à notre pays et à sa population un avenir prometteur, un avenir d'opportunités et d'espoir.

Je dirai ‘Bravo Pravind ! Ensemble, nous réussirons.’

Je vous remercie M. le président.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody!

(2.43 p.m.)

**Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listened carefully to the speech of the Attorney General, but it is a matter of regret that all our institutions are being politicised. You know, concerning the post of an Attorney General, first, he is not elected; secondly, he is nominated, and third, he is the legal adviser of Government! He should not verge on politics! I would advise him to go and read what happened to one of the Attorney Generals in UK. He is here as an adviser not only to Government, but to this Parliament as well...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair, hon. Baloomoody!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Baloomoody:** ...and he should not verge into politics...

*(Interruptions)*

Don't talk about what happened in the past!

*(Interruptions)*

The elections gave you a mandate for change! The last elections gave you a mandate for change, and we expect you not to follow...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody, there is a point of order! Will you give the floor?

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** On a point of order. On the basis of our Constitution, the supreme law of this country, two of my recent predecessors, Mr Yatindra Nath Varma and Mr Rama Valayden...

*(Interruptions)*

... were nominated...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Sit down when I am on my feet!

*(Interruptions)*

Sit down!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Baloomoody, sit down!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Mohamed...

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Mohamed, deciding points of order lies within my jurisdiction! Allow the hon. Attorney General to take his point of order!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** The point of order is as follows...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Let us listen to the point of order!

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** The point of order is as follows: that it is not in order to insinuate or cast aspersions on the fact of my nomination under this Constitution as Attorney General, in view of the fact that two of my recent predecessors, namely Mr Yatindra Nath Varma and Mr Rama Valayden were nominated in the same way, manner and form under our Constitution, as I am! This is the point.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Well, hon. Members this is my ruling.

*(Interruptions)*

Silence, please! Hon. Members, it lies within the jurisdiction of the Speaker or the person presiding, which is me in this case, to decide what can be said or not by hon. Members in the speech. Therefore, I disallow you to...

*(Interruptions)*

... cross on my jurisdiction.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Baloomoody:** This won't prevent me from commenting on his speech as a politician and not as an Attorney General, for which office I have much respect.

*(Interruptions)*

It is for the Speaker to decide, not you!

*(Interruptions)*

Not you!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Baloomoody:** *Sirtou pa twa!*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody, address the Chair!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Baloomoody:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the 2016-2017 Budget Speech a fortnight ago, let me remind the House the second Budget Speech of this Government! Second! We have heard several comments and listened to several speeches from Members of this House, but let me go a few days before the presentation of the Budget.

Before the presentation of the Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been a deliberate and well-orchestrated mission, both by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development and especially by his Senior Adviser, Mr Sanspeur, not only to manage public opinion! They succeeded to convince the majority of people that tax will have to go up, VAT will have to be increased...

(*Interruptions*)

*Mone dire sa?* As if...

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Silence!

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Baloomoody:** ...days before the presentation of the Budget - not that *journal*! Go and watch TV! Your TV, not my TV!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair, hon. Baloomoody!

**Mr Baloomoody:** On all the media, on the private radios, the Government TV, in most of the national papers, Mr Sanspeur was in all the media, on all fronts, as if his mission was to *faire la nation gagne peur*, that there will be increase in tax here, increase in tax there. And speaking on one of the radios – I have the CD if they want me to depone it – the adviser to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development had this to say, and I quote –

« *Le ministre l'a dit, le budget doit être différent de ce qui se faisait dans le passé par les anciens ministres des Finances; Rama Sithanen, Vasant Bunwaree, Xavier-Luc Duval and Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo !* »

A Minister of this Government!

Whilst the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development was delivering his speech on that famous Friday, we had the usual *tape la table*. And we could hear Members of the Government side, and most specially my good friend, the Chief Whip, who always leads the bandwagon, cheering ‘*aster la travail la commencer!*’

(*Interruptions*)

After 20 months in power! *Aster la travail la commencer!*

(*Interruptions*)

This is very telling, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Baloomoody:** It means that this Government has wasted ...

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr Baloomoody:** It means that this Government has wasted 20 precious months of Government days. Government in power, 20 months in doing nothing with regard to economic development! In fact, all the economic indicators reflect this accession, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, except, of course, for inflation. Even the Attorney General just said it. Most of those who intervened on the other side strongly emphasised that we are now moving towards a new era of development. 20 months after! A new era! *Patiner en place* for the last 20 months in power!

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** No comments, please!

**Mr Baloomoody:** *Nettoyer?* You will see what you have *nettoyé*. *Nettoye* gold, *nettoye la poudre*, this is what you have cleaned!

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody!

**Mr Baloomoody:** Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is supposed to be a budget *de rupture*.

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Dayal:** On a point of order!

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Baloomoody:** I did not mention the name of any Member of this House, so I will not give way to any point of order!

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody, will you give the floor? Please, sit down; he is not giving the floor.

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Baloomoody:** I did not mention any Member; I don't intend to give way! Thank you.

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** He is allowed not to give the floor.

**Mr Baloomoody:** So, it was a *budget de rupture* from all the previous budgets: from hon. X. L. Duval, from hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, from hon. Rama Sithanen. But who is hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo? Hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo presented last year's Budget. And, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is what hon. Pravind Jugnauth had to say on 10 April last year when he concluded his speech on last year's Budget of hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, and now he wants *rupture* from this Budget. I quote –

“Let me, therefore, congratulate and thank the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development who, even after 25 years of absence from this august Assembly, displayed an avant-garde mindset and a very dedicated and innovative approach to give our country a new hope for a better future. Indeed, Madam Speaker, the Budget has enunciated many bold (...)"

‘Bold’, a word used by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister after the Budget.

“(...) many bold measures (...)"

Instead of ‘gold’ measures, ‘gold’, and measures probably!

“(...) measures that will lay the foundation for the second economic miracle that is cherished by our hon. Prime Minister.”

This is what hon. Pravind Jugnauth had to say last year on the Budget presented by hon. Minister Lutchmeenaraaidoo. In today's Budget, not a single reference to last year's Budget. Only those who made reference to the previous Budget are the Members of the PMSD. Hon. Ms Sewocksingh started. She was the first one to lead, then hon. Minister Perraud. They were eager to emphasize, in fact, that this is not a Budget of *rupture*. And even you, Mr Deputy Speaker, when you addressed the House yesterday as a Member of this Parliament.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody, I am presiding over this debate!

(*Interruptions*)

Do not involve me!

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Baloomoody:** You made a speech and I am referring to Hansard. You referred to the Budget of hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, the previous Budget, and the PMSD Budget. And, of course, you rightly! Hon. Mrs Perraud listed - I do not want to waste the time of the House - not one, not two, not three, 20 projects which were initiated by hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. Is it a budget of *rupture*? A new era! And it was so obvious ...

(*Interruptions*)

*Mo dormi bien moi, pas trakasé twa ! Mo dormi très, très bien mwa!*

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody, address the Chair!

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Baloomoody:** *Mo pena oken la mort lor mo conscience!*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair, hon. Baloomoody!

**Mr Baloomoody:** *Mo pena oken la mort lors mo conscience moi. Mo dormi bien mwa.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody, are you ignoring me?

**Mr Baloomoody:** It was so obvious among the Members of the Government side! It was so obvious that there was no unity with regard to the interpretation of the Budget. Even

hon. Bodha was sent on the front line! He had to make a political statement to say that the Alliance is strong, that they are all together - all three in the Alliance were together. United!

(*Interruptions*)

Never mind!

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Silence!

**Mr Baloomoody:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a lot has been said about this Budget and there is no doubt that there are some positive measures, especially when it comes to poverty. However, this has always been the case in most of the Budgets. There are some very positive measures, a lot of *effets d'annonce* but, very often, most are not put into practice. So, it has always been the practice. There are some good measures, some popular measures, but when it comes to put them in practice, they very often are not implemented.

When my good friend, hon. Ramful, was addressing the House, he made reference to the failure, the disastrous effect of last year's Budget - and last year's Budget of the then Minister of Finance, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo! - not only on this country, but on the economic development of this country, and also at international level. Referring to that, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, in a sitting position, had said: '*Abé guet kot li eté zordi!*' He was referring to his ex-Minister of Finance. He is not fit to be the Minister of Finance. Is he fit to represent our country at international level, when we know there is the ICAC inquiring in cases against him, when we know there are cases at the DPP to give advice? His future hangs on the balance of these institutions!

**The Deputy Speaker:** These matters are *sub judice*, hon. Baloomoody. Being a barrister, you should know better than anyone.

**Mr Baloomoody:** There is the legality of things and the morality of things in politics. I am talking about the morality of things. Forget the legality! Already last year, there was a major project, that of JIHAI at Pailles. Money was spent, Ministers have travelled, *per diem* has been spent! Where is that project today? Same thing as the Heritage City, the first casualty in this Budget! Parliament was supposed to be moved at the Heritage City. We learned today that Rs40 m. have already been spent on fees. Let alone the number of visits sovereign Ministers had; one went to Dubai, the other went to India, and then the other one

went to Taiwan to get money. *Per diem!* So, how much money was wasted on so many mega projects which, today, have been rejected by Cabinet?

(*Interruptions*)

You always put your own goal.

**The Deputy Speaker:** No crosstalking!

**Mr Baloomoody:** So, this supposed *budget de rupture*, apart from the list mentioned by the hon. Members from the PMSD, a lot has been said in previous budgets. No new era! Just to mention a few: creation of industrial park, fast track for business, the Youth Employment Programme, a new Supreme Court House, the Blue Economy, usage of green energy, facilities for the film industry, facilities to access to African market, water supply 24/7 – my hon. friend will remember what he said; port development, implementation of metro project, etc.

So, there are lots of repetitions. A lot of things that have been said before, but which have not been implemented. I will make some propositions after. I have listened to so many Budgets in this House and quite a lot of time there are many good things in the Budget, but when we come next year, 50% or 75% of what was mentioned in the previous Budget remain *effets d'annonce*.

This is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at paragraph 11 of the Budget Speech of this year, the hon. Minister of Finance had this to say –

“The challenges of tomorrow cannot be met with our mindset, policies and actions locked in the paradigm of yesterday.”

I fully agree with that statement, and I would add that it is about time that we look at the functioning of our Parliament itself. We can't lock ourselves. We can't lock today's activities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century institutions. We have to see what is being done in other democratic countries.

This is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that there is no established institution to follow the implementation of Budget, in each and every year's Budget, we hear from the hon. Minister concerned: “I am having a committee set up. There will be a steering committee set up. There will be an implementation committee set up.” But there is nothing,

nothing, nothing which has been done, and we know that all these Budgets that we have had for the last 20 years, only half or less than half of what the intentions were have been implemented. This is why I am coming with a proposition. It is not a new idea. It is in many Commonwealth countries and in many SADC countries.

Like we have the Public Accounts Committee which looks after post expenditure, we should have a Budget and Appropriation Committee with the same composition of the PAC; majority Members from the Government and Members from the Opposition. They sit down, they meet every week, every fortnight, call Ministry by Ministry, get the Budget here and ask questions. This works very well in a country like Kenya where we were in mission last time, and I had the opportunity to go to the Parliament and I witnessed one in action. The Minister does not come. The accounting officers come, the Budget is here and they ask questions: 'why this is not being implemented? Give us reasons.' And they will call them again after three months or six months. So, we will have reasons as to why what is said in the Budget is not implemented. It is a matter of coordination, control and monitoring. So, I will ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister if he can think seriously on that. It is not difficult. It is like we are amending the Standing Orders to have a Gender Caucus. Many are saying 'Women Caucus'. It is not a Women Caucus. It is a Gender Caucus' that we are going to have because I am a member of that committee. I will and I hope to be a member of this Caucus. It is a Gender Caucus. So, it is simple. Amend the Standing Orders, have this committee, and it will meet every week or every two weeks or every fortnight and look at the Budget and call in the appropriate Minister, as we have, like I said, in many other countries. This was with regard to the Parliament.

I will come to two other institutions which repeat themselves every year in our Budget. But before doing that, let me address the issue of law and order. We all agree that the primary duty of the State is to maintain law and order and to provide security for its citizens. The Police are one institution having the responsibility to maintain law and order and safeguard the way of development. There are few measures mentioned in the Budget. Like I said, they are interesting measures; implementation is the issue. We have to look at the Police Force itself. In most of the Police stations, the working condition is unacceptable. I was in Moka recently. There was a table with four *lamok* on it! It was leaking. The Police Officer was taking a statement from my client. There is a problem of toilet facilities for Women Police Officers in our Police stations. There is only one toilet in some of the Police stations. There is understaffing, especially with regard to the middle management level. But,

most importantly, there is the number of Police Officers who have been suspended. This, I can't understand! The Rt. hon. Prime Minister replied to a question this Tuesday. He informed us that there are 184 Police Officers who are suspended. And I have looked at the list. There are at least over – I am saying there is a lack of middle management in the Police Force – 30 Police Officers over and above and rank of PS. And the last one to join the league was the Ag. Deputy Commissioner of Police. These people are being paid. But one thing I can't understand, there are two Police Officers who have been suspended since 2002. And what is the charge? Conspiracy! Are we to understand that, since 2002, a case of conspiracy has not been tried and completed before our Court?

*(Interruptions)*

Drug trafficking! There is one Police Officer who was suspended in 2004, 12 years ago, for drug trafficking. Are we to understand that this case has not been on trial yet? Sentence has not been delivered!

*(Interruptions)*

Since 2007, possession of drugs! Bribery, damaging property, since 2008! This case has not been over. And when we know that there is a judgment of the Supreme Court, the judgment of Sooklal; 2005 Supreme Court Judgement 35 and this refers to the Disciplined Forces Service Commission Regulations, section 40, which reads –

“All acts of misconduct by members of the Disciplined Forces shall be dealt with under this part as soon as possible after their occurrence.”

And in the Supreme Court it has interpreted: “(...) as soon as possible within at least maximum four years (...). Within two to four years! So, when these people will go to a disciplinary committee, they will take the point in law. So, no disciplinary action could be taken against them. So, these people who have been suspended over two to four years, you can't take disciplinary action against them.

*(Interruptions)*

They can be enjoying, but not at the interest of taxpayers' money. Action has to be taken either to sack them and more so they are preventing others from being promoted. They are still on the establishment. Action has to be taken hon. Prime Minister. *Nouveau changement!* New era! But we are still living in the past.

*(Interruptions)*

Now, this year – the date is important – on 18 July, 593 Trainee Police Officers were enlisted. Hon. Dayal just informed us that to have efficient Police Officers, they have to be trained properly in the good environment and be given proper training. Firstly, there was much controversy regarding the recruit of the 593 Trainee Police Officers. For the first time in history, there has been no interview for the recruitment of these Police Officers. First time in history! Are we getting the best? Are we getting the best in the Force? Not even before or after the medical and physical test! No, psychology test! No interview! And this gentleman tomorrow will be in possession of a gun.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Mohamed, you will speak later! Reserve some points!

**Mr Baloomoody:** When he has not gone through any psychological test, he may tomorrow be in sentry in any Police station.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody, I just want to direct your attention to the provisions of the Standing Orders concerning statutory commissions and that their conduct should be raised upon a specific motion and should not be debated upon. I will allow you to some extent, but beware of what you say!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Baloomoody:** I agree! I won't go any further. Now, the Police Officers were recruited on 18 July. According to Police Standing Order 93, they have to undergo the Trainee Police Constable Foundation Course, which is a 27-weekly course, a 27-classroom based course. So, for 27 weeks, they have to be in a classroom to be trained. What has the Commissioner of Police done last week? On 06 August, not far last week, only three weeks after these people have been recruited - not even recruited, enlisted because when you recruit you take the oath, you become a Police Officer with all the protection as a Police Officer - only three weeks after they have been enlisted, the Commissioner of Police, with regard to his recent campaign of disciplining the pedestrians in Port Louis - I think it was on the paper everywhere - was even, himself, on the road, got these people to be on the road to discipline

pedestrians, to be in the middle of the road to show people how to cross the road when they, themselves, have not been taught about it...

*(Interruptions)*

Part of training! They are not supposed to be there because they are not insured. If tomorrow they get injured while giving signal of the traffic when they are supposed to be in a classroom! You go in the public only when you have taken the oath, and when you take the oath, you are covered by a certain privilege as a Police Officer. This is when you go public, not after two or three or five weeks, you just send them on the road and tell them to look about pedestrians and you expect these people to become efficient Police Officers. So, this is serious, very serious, and I hope that the Police Academy which has been promised for such a long time will see the day and that you will have proper training with regard to the Police Officers.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what do we need with regard to the Police Officers? We need Police who can uphold the law fairly and firmly, who can prevent crimes, who can pursue and bring to justice those who break the law - only those who break the law -, protect, help and reassure the community. And what we expect from a Police Officer is compassion, courtesy towards the public, patience, acting without fear or favour or prejudice to the rights of others, professionalism and calmness. So, the Police must be customer-centric service, equality and impartiality in policing, strive to reduce public fears, respond to the well-founded criticism with a willingness to change. This is the Police Force we expect, and I hope that this is with all the money we are giving to the Police.

I don't want to deal with transport. We have just seen that they have been given 50 new 4 x 4. On Sunday, I drove from Curepipe to Mahebourg. On my way, I passed two – I won't make publicity - food sellers; one at Curepipe and there is one in Mahebourg. They sell by *le guichet*. So, you have to queue with your car. I saw one of these in the queue and he was nearly the 10<sup>th</sup> - So, he will spend at least one hour queuing to get a Kentucky - and another one in Quatre Bornes. In Mahebourg, it is the same thing. When you phone the Police Station: '*pena transport*'. We are giving transport, we are giving the facility. But are they being managed properly? The hon. Members know, when you see the amount of waste there is in the garage, the amount of waste there is with regard to spare parts, the way money is being spent there. Unfortunately, the PAC - I will come to the PAC in a few minutes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir – does not have power to recommend action or sanction.

Now, the prisons...

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Rutnah, you will speak after!

**Mr Baloomoody:** It is unfortunate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Nothing has been said in the Budget with regard to prisons; only the current expenditure. When we know so many problems we are having with regard to law and order. At least, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development is *prévoyant* with regard to law and order. He has made provisions for two more detention centres; so, expecting a rise in the crime rate or a deterioration in law and order. Two more detention centres and Police station. But when it comes to the prisons, there is a lot of problems in the prisons. Already all the cameras are not working. I just mentioned to the House last week that a drone entered the yard of Beau Bassin prison last Thursday, and I have been informed that they have been told not to talk about it anymore. Cover-up!

I will probably ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to bring it further to see how that drone entered. And what was in that drone? *Gandia! La drogue!* God knows! The Rt. hon. Prime Minister, himself, replied to a question which I put, namely B/462, where he stated that at the top security prison, following a random search, 69 mobile phones; 36 batteries; 25 battery chargers; 21 ear pieces; 39 SIM, and many other...

(*Interruptions*)

A call centre. And you know for years and years, the Police Officers have asked for that equipment to jam communication within the prisons and it has not been provided. Simple, we call it a jammer, but there isn't.

(*Interruptions*)

One day, I was surprised when somebody was phoning one of the private radios, complaining about what is happening in the prison from the prison. Where are we? There is still that problem of staffing. There are so many vacancies there which have not been filled. There are so many posts which have not been filled, and there is nothing, unfortunately, in the Budget. There are many officers who have been suspended again, and there it is even worse. There are, at least, 14 officers who are suspended and they can't have their hearing. Do you know why? Prior to 2009, there was no union in the prison.

With the new Labour Act in 2009, the Prison Officers were allowed to unionise. Now they are members of trade unions. Prior to 2009, they were governed by the Standing Orders of the prisons. The Standing Orders of the prisons say that when you have to be before a Disciplinary Committee, you cannot be assisted by Counsel, you have to be assisted by a Senior Officer of your Department. Now these officers are in union governed by the Labour Act, where the Labour Act says whenever you are before a Disciplinary Committee, you can be assisted by a lawyer. So, these 14 persons wanted to retain the services of lawyers also three-five years ago. The Prisons Officers are refusing access to lawyers. I have got a case there and the matter is still at the DPP's Office for advice. So, I will ask the hon. Attorney General, instead of concentrating what the Opposition is doing, to look into the matter seriously, urgently. At least, we will release these 14 officers. Whether they are guilty or not or they will continue to be on the payroll, at least they know what future lies for them. It is the Labour Act which is more important now, not the Standing Orders, and they should go according to law. If that officer chooses to be represented by a Counsel of his choice, he should be allowed. That is his constitutional right!

Mr Deputy Speaker, every year, since Independence, we have a Budget and we have an Audit Report. All the Budgets that we have had, we only speak about the amount of money which has been budgeted, the amount of money that is going to be spent, but we never talk about the money which has been wasted, and there is a lot, a lot, a lot of wastage in the public service. This is why I say we can't lock ourselves in the 20<sup>th</sup> century institutions. We should review. You had the intention in the Government Programme. Let me come to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development on 29 July. I quote what he said on the eve of the presentation of his Budget -

*« L'une des options immédiates - that was in « Le Mauricien » - est de mettre l'accent sur les dépenses, surtout en termes de gaspillage dans le secteur public. »*

Waste!

*(Interruptions)*

In the Government Programme 2015-2019, at paragraph 250, and I quote -

“A significant reduction in misuse and wastage of public funds will be the order of the day in all public institutions, etc.”

At paragraph 431 of this year's Budget, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development says -

“This Budget does all these while at the same time maintaining strict fiscal discipline, and eliminating wastage and inefficiencies in the use of taxpayers' money.”

It is a very good intention, but the hon. Minister of Finance does not inform us how he intends to do so. Don't tell me Ministers are going to supervise waste! First, they don't have the time, and they are not professionals to do it.

Paragraph 251 of the Government Programme says -

“The public sector will be re-organised and reformed to make it more productive, transparent, accountable and customer friendly.”

What is more interesting, at the same paragraph it says -

“A Public Sector Efficiency Bureau has already been set up as a department of the newly crafted ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reform.”

Come on! Not this Minister of Good Governance! This is a bluff! We know what has happened to the Heritage City, we know what has happened to the previous Minister of Finance and what we know is that every year millions and millions of rupees are wasted in the public sector for several reasons! I am not talking about corruption. I am talking about wastage, lack of feasibility study, like we have had recently in the Heritage City. Artificial creation of emergency projects so as to avoid the Procurement Act! In the Civil Service, they decide, it is urgent!

*(Interruptions)*

Sorry?

*(Interruptions)*

You have said it in your programme! Forget when it started! Have you noticed it before preparing your programme? Has Government identified this issue? You decided to take action and you put it in your programme. You should take action! I am not blaming you, I am not blaming anybody else, I say put into action what you have promised to do.

Artificial creation of projects so as to avoid the Procurement Act! The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life knows very well how many times the Civil Service will come and say that they need such and such medicines, it is urgent. This could have been planned months before. But, when medicines are urgent, they are urgent! So, just to bypass the Procurement Act, they go and order directly, urgently!

*(Interruptions)*

But this is artificial! If you read the PAC Report, you will know what I am saying! Members of the PAC here will understand what I am saying. It is artificially created, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

Extension of projects! Projects which started first for X millions end up to be X +++ millions.

*(Interruptions)*

So, what I am saying is this: under our Constitution, we have a National Audit Office. The National Audit Office is a public office, it is a constitutional office and every year we vote millions and millions of rupees for the running of this office. This year, we have budgeted Rs158 m. just for the National Audit Office. Every year, we have the report of the National Audit Office. But, then, what do we do with that report? Every year, it is the same thing, and mind you, the National Audit Bureau, because it is understaffed, what we see in their report is the top of the iceberg because they are not manned enough to go to each and every department of a Ministry. If today they go to the procurement of medicines at the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, that's it; for this year, it is only the medicines. Next year, they will go to the same Ministry and they will see the kitchen.

So, what we see in the National Audit Report is not the full wastage in that Ministry; it is only partial. But, then, no action is taken. We don't debate that report in Parliament and we don't have a follow-up on that report. What we have is the next year's report, which will come with the same things. The report will be debated on radio, they will call the Chairman of the PAC to come, the Auditor and some Members of Parliament. They will discuss on the radio, speak on the press and that's it, it is finished! Because the National Audit Office has no power to go further. It can only report.

So, it high time that we look at that again, see what is happening in other Commonwealth countries and how they have progressed with the report. Now, it is debated in Parliament, it is questioned and action is taken if not sanction. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister just mentioned since how long. But, in the Government Programme 2015-2019, at paragraph 252, he identified the problem and he said –

“Government will give serious consideration to the findings and recommendations of the National Auditors.”

It is in your programme!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair, please!

**Mr Baloomoody:** Twenty months have gone and nothing has happened! So, we hope...

(*Interruptions*)

*Encore 40, beaucoup l'argent pu fini aller!*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair, hon. Baloomoody!

**Mr Baloomoody:** Yes, but tell them to shut up!

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is, at least, the third time I am telling you this, now!

**Mr Baloomoody:** Tell them to shut up!

(*Interruptions*)

If truly you want to stop waste and make people who waste public funds, taxpayers' money accountable, we should come with a Fiscal Responsibility Act. This is what we have in most countries of the Commonwealth and in the UK. You said it at paragraph 252 of the Government Programme -

“Ministers, their accounting officers, and directors of parastatals will be held accountable for abuse or misuse of public funds.”

But how can you make them accountable? You must have a tool, and the tool is the Fiscal Responsibility Act. We have just seen what has happened in ICTA. Don't come with that argument that it is legal fees, we can't challenge, when we know that Clarel Benoit Chambers

have claimed a high fee, Government has refused to pay and the case has gone to Court. So, why, in that case, that Rs19 m. has been paid in such a rush? We heard yesterday that he committed an offence in ICTA, and the RDA sacked him!

*(Interruptions)*

The RDA sacked him because he has committed an offence in ICTA!

*(Interruptions)*

What is worse is that ICTA is under the Prime Minister's Office! Do you know yesterday what was worse?

*(Interruptions)*

Not only getting him out, you should go further. Go as to what you have said in your programme!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody, if you don't address me, I will have to make you sit down! You cannot ignore my ruling like this!

**Mr Baloomoody:** Yes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Baloomoody:** Okay. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I am asking the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is to act according to paragraph 252 of the Government Programme –

“(...) directors of parastatals will be held accountable for abuse or misuse of public funds.”

Whilst we were shocked here, do you know who was happy sitting in this House? There was a gentleman sitting down there, a director of ICAC. He was laughing at us!

*(Interruptions)*

I don't know what is his name!

**The Deputy Speaker:** No need to mention names!

**Mr Baloomoody:** He was laughing at us here when the Rt. hon. Prime Minister said he was shocked. He should be sacked! All those on that Board who approved that Rs19 m. payment for a simple case, when ICAC is a co-defendant, not only a defendant; you claim that much of money! The Board should be sacked. I hope the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will give the example to directors of all the parastatal bodies to sack the whole Board and come with a new Board.

*(Interruptions)*

Now, let me come to another important institution which can eliminate a lot of wastage and save millions and millions of taxpayers' money, that is, the Public Accounts Committee. What I am saying is not new. My predecessors, be it hon. Ganoo, when he was Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, and most specially hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, who even commissioned a report - because the Ministry of Finance commissioned a report, which I have submitted to the hon. Prime Minister, as it was released when I joined in as Chairman - to look at how we can make the Public Accounts Committee more efficient.

It becomes more important now when we have so many parastatal bodies and State owned companies. It will become even more important when we have so many projects. Be it public/private project, be it parastatal bodies, be it state-owned money, it is taxpayers' money. They should be made accountable to the Public Accounts Committee. Now, our Public Accounts Committee is governed by our Standing Orders, and second it does not need any money. It is only a motion from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to say it in the Standing Orders.

Our Public Accounts Committee is limited to verify only that part of the audit report of that Ministry which the auditors have audited. I will give you one example. Last time, the PAC decided to go for a site visit at Flacq Hospital. In the report, they made some comments about the building. So, we went to see the building. We asked question about the building. Whilst going to the building, we went through the store, and what we saw in that store was unacceptable. Unacceptable!

*(Interruptions)*

The store at the Flacq Hospital!

So, we started to ask questions. Then, we were gently, and rightly so, stopped by the Deputy Clerk, I think ...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Baloomoody, are you commenting on the Public Accounts Committee Report? Are you referring to it right now?

**Mr Baloomoody:** No!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Because you know that this is not allowed.

**Mr Baloomoody:** No, I am just giving an example of how it is limited. We were informed that we could only look at the building and that we could not look at the store, because the auditors had not looked at the store. So, what is the purpose of having a Public Accounts Committee? It sits *in camera*. Why should it sit *in camera*? When we question you, Rt. hon. Prime Minister, as well as the Ministers - on Tuesday, we are going through Committee of Supply, and we are going to question Ministers on each and every item - they answer in public! Why do the officials have to sit *in camera*?

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you just stopped me because I am not supposed to say what happens in the PAC because the Standing Orders say so. Why should it be like that? Why that protection to the public officers? It is a Public Accounts Committee! The public should know how their money is being spent like we do in Parliament at Committee of Supply when we question the Prime Minister and Ministers on each and every item on the Budget. Why, when it comes to the PAC, it should be limited? We cannot examine report of parastatal bodies. At paragraph 364 of this year's Budget, this is what hon. Pravind Jugnauth, the Minister of Finance has to say –

“(...) all public sector bodies that have been making losses and accumulating debt will be required to submit their plan to turn around (...). This includes the MBC, the Mauritius Post, the National Transport Corporation, Rose Belle Sugar Estate and the Mauritius Meat Authority, amongst others.”

Do you think we would have reached such a stage if these bodies were accountable to the Public Accounts Committee and to the scrutiny of Parliament?

Now, what about the follow-up of the report? We have had so many Public Accounts Committee reports! The same thing with the Audit Report. We give each and every Member a copy. I do not know how many read it. There is no debate on that report. Nothing! So, we will have our next report. There will be comments like ‘we were shocked, we were surprised.’ We cannot recommend sanction. We can make recommendation, but we do not know whether it is abided to. So, in most countries, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Public Accounts Committee report is debated. They reserve two days sittings in Parliament, especially for the Public Accounts Committee. It is debated, not voted. The Ministers concerned come and say what they intend to do, how they intend to redress the situation.

In other jurisdictions, the Public Accounts Committee gives 30 or 60 days for the Ministries that have been named to come with a report and say how they intend to redress the situation. This is what we should have in this Parliament as well. A smaller Parliament like ours, Malta, has a Budget Committee, a Public Accounts Committee, and an Expenditure Committee. Why cannot we have this here? In Uganda, it is worse! In Uganda, the Public Accounts Committee tells the public officers, ‘you go, take action and get the money. In six months’ time, we will call you and you will have to tell us what action you have taken. You have gone to court, and so how much money you have brought back in the kitty.’ But, here, in the Public Accounts Committee, we just make reports and that’s it. It is easy! We have done our work. In the last report, we said it.

We have had working sessions with the Solicitor General’s Office, and he has made recommendations. We met the Rt. hon. Prime Minister; we gave him a report of what amendments have to come. There is only a simple amendment: delete only one phrase, ‘Standing 69’. When we met the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, he was agreeable to that idea. We gave him a copy of that report which was commissioned by the Ministry of Finance, but, unfortunately, still nothing. So, we will continue to meet again. You know what is worse? What respect will these public officers have towards the Public Accounts Committee when they know whatever questions you are putting, whatever remarks you are saying, nothing will happen? They will come here next week and they will answer the same questions again. Next year, nothing will happen! They will laugh at us! So, we have to look into that matter seriously.

We are members of the SADC PAC. We are members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association of PAC. I am the Treasurer of CAPAC. We have to harmonise.

These countries have gone forward. There are very, very interesting works which their Parliaments are doing. So, we have to go forward if truly we want to eliminate wastage.

This is what I had to say to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. Let us review our institution; come with a fiscal responsibility on how to eliminate waste. Let make the Audit Report more applicable. Let us have a strong PAC. Then, we will eliminate – I will not say eradicate – wastage slowly in the public sector.

This is what I have to say on this Budget. I wanted to add a few issues regarding my constituency, but I will mention only one, because my good friend, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is here. It is about what the CEB is doing at Bain des Dames. Is it storage of inflammable liquid? There is much concern at Bain des Dames. I hope the hon. Vice-Prime Minister will address the issue, so as to alleviate the fear of the people in my constituency.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me end here by concluding that there are some good measures in this Budget, as I said. Implementation is very, very important. We have to review the function of our institutions. It may be politically a good Budget, but it is only one year. It will be only next year that we will be able to say whether it has been economically a prosperous Budget.

Thank you.

**Mr Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, I apologise, I have to suspend the sitting very briefly. Please remain seated!

*At 3.42 p.m., the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 3.44 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I do apologise! Hon. Rutnah!

**Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. After having listened to hon. Baloomoody, I propose to start on a philosophical note.

*(Interruptions)*

In life, we can be either a patriot or a traitor, and or we might as well be complacent. *Laissez faire!* Let things happen, we don't care!

“Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon em”.

From Twelfth Night of Shakespeare.

And, Greatness comes by virtue of your deed, what you do in life. I am a bit saddened when I heard this disgusting attack that hon. Baloomoody directed against the hon. Attorney General. I have got great respect for him. He is a man of great experience and wisdom in the discipline of law and he is also a hon. Member of Parliament for many years. But I am saddened by the kind of attack he threw towards the hon. Attorney-General. If I may refer him to section 69 (4) of the Constitution, this is the section that actually deals with the appointment of the Attorney General, and for the sake of record so that never ever again, such a vile attack could be addressed against any Attorney General of this House irrespective of the political parties he comes from.

Section 69 (4) states as follows –

“Where the person holding the Office of Attorney-General is not a Member of the Assembly, he shall be entitled to take part in the proceedings of the Assembly, and this Constitution and any other law shall apply to him as if he were a Member of the Assembly.”

This is the Supreme law. So, I was not expecting such a disgusting attack against a hon. Member of this House. But in any event, I anticipate that in future, all of us, whether lawyers in this House or non-lawyers will extend the respect and courtesy ordinarily expected of us towards an Attorney General.

In relation to the Budget 2016/2017 - before I reply to a number of points that hon. Baloomoody has made - hon. Pravind Jugnauth has not only demonstrated his ability and skill of persuasion, his ability and skill of delivery, and his ability and skill of understanding the fundamentals of economics, he managed to get the grasp of what the population is expecting of this Government. He managed to get the grasp of the interactions of the market that determine the rules, if I may say, of demand and supply. If you look at the Budget Speech, the macroeconomic policies that he has taken, the fiscal policies that he has taken, the social policies that he is advocating through this Budget, it is indeed a budget that is going to change the future of this country. I have heard intently a number hon. Members from both sides. But, unfortunately, if I may say, the hon. Members of the main Opposition party in

relation to the Budget, are not singing from the same hymn sheet. At times they criticise, at times they say: "It is a good budget". One said: it is interesting". The other said: "It is marvellous."

*(Interruptions)*

And, if I may refer...

*(Interruptions)*

...in terms...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Don't interrupt the hon. Member!

*(Interruptions)*

It does not give you a right to interrupt!

*(Interruptions)*

Let me decide that, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Rutnah:** Let me deal with what hon. Quirin said first, then, if that is the case because he is sitting next to hon. Ameer Meea and I still remember the discourse of hon. Ameer Meea. I will come to him as well and compare. Look at what hon. Quirin said in his very first part -

*« Madame la présidente, il va sans dire que l'honorable ministre des Finances a été habile et astucieux dans la présentation du budget 2016/2017. »*

Second –

*« En effet, certaines mesures annoncées par le ministre des Finances en faveur des plus démunis de la société sont considérées comme des décisions qui vont dans la bonne direction. »*

*(Interruptions)*

*Sa même mo p dire là !*

Third -

*« Le ministre des Finances a fait preuve de subtilité dans la présentation de son budget en mettant en avant les mesures prises pour lutter contre l'extrême pauvreté. »*

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Quirin, you don't have to! You are not engaging in a discussion!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Rutnah:** It's Okay, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. His exuberance lies in his verbosity.

Fourth -

*« Madame la présidente, nous savons tous que notre république fait face à une situation préoccupante au niveau de la drogue. »*

And then, he goes on –

*« Il est vrai que, dans sa présentation du budget, le ministre des Finances a consacré quelques lignes au combat contre la drogue. »*

These are only parts. If I have to make point after point - I have been given only our hour to speak to - I won't be able to deal with all.

*(Interruptions)*

Now, my very able and learned friend, hon. Uteem - that's why he started with the quote of 'Twelfth Night' today –

"The hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has tried to touch the hearts of people by announcing a series of measures to eradicate poverty."

This is one.

Second -

"The cash award for students who have achieved higher level education is also a welcome measure."

Three -

"Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development was also not insensitive to the plea of the hon. Leader of the Opposition in

favour of disabled persons which he made in his PNQ of the 12 July of this year.”

And then -

“He has removed (...).”

Listen to this!

“He has removed an injustice with regard to the allocation of Basic Invalidity Pension to children. Henceforth, a child even below the age of 15 would be entitled to Basic Invalidity Pension.”

It seems as if a hon. Member of this side of the House is talking.

Fourth -

“Madam Speaker, we also welcome the decision of the Government to increase the grant-in-aid to NGOs dealing with children with Special Education Needs.”

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** No comments, please!

**Mr Rutnah:** Fifth -

“(...) if we generally welcome the various measures announced in this Budget to fight poverty.”

Now, when we heard hon. Ameer Meea’s discourse yesterday, he was singing from a completely different himsha. For him, it is dark, gloom, doom.

*(Interruptions)*

I am not going to go into details because of most of the criticisms - Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when one is in Opposition, one’s duty is not simply to criticise. Responsible Opposition, what they do? They criticise and then they propose an alternative because they are, according to the system of our governance, the Government in waiting.

*(Interruptions)*

But I am glad. That’s what I am saying. If you listen to what hon. Ameer Meea said yesterday and compare to what today hon. Baloomoody said, they are in contradiction.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** No comments, please!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Mohamed, I told you, you will speak after!

**Mr Rutnah:** So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these are the few things that I want to highlight insofar as where today our main Opposition party is in relation to their arguments about this Budget. I have not finished with the Opposition. There is my very able and learned friend, hon. Ramful. All the bad things that are happening in this country have only started since the last 20 months! In the very starting part of his speech, he said the following -

“I will refer to a document published by the present Minister of Finance and Economic Development back in 2010 when he was Minister of Finance and Economic Development. It was during the last ten years. ‘Facing the Euro Crisis: Restructuring for Long Term Resilience’, the hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth in August 2010 –”

And he reads –

“The Mauritian economy is, once again, buffeted by a major external shock, this time by the euro zone crisis. Once more, and in a relatively short span of time, Mauritius is called upon to demonstrate its capacity to respond effectively, to adapt its policies and even to rethink its strategies.”

So, when I went and checked what the position was with hon. Pravind Jugnauth in 2010, I managed to find a document, it is the Budget Speech of 2011 which was then presented by hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. If we look at what he did in 2011 and what he did on the presentation of the Budget of 2015-2016, we will find a common thread in both budgets, and 2016-2017, but in other Budgets, on the previous one which I referred to in 2011, we will find a common thread and that common golden thread is this: golden, that he always believes in an equal society, he always believes in alleviation of poverty, he always believes in fiscal incentives, he always believes in an equal society. Look at what I found! I found that in 2011, he spoke about the Mauritius Duty Free Shopping Paradise. This is what he said –

“Mr Speaker, Sir, we will also need to integrate the development of tourism industry in the duty free shopping paradise vision. It is a new industry that will have a major impact on most key sectors of our economy. It will attract franchised rights of international brands label and open up significant opportunities for local

manufacturing, the luxury and prestige brands and even premium and fashioned brands in Mauritius. It will generate an unprecedented synergy and put Mauritius on the same development track where countries like Singapore and Dubai have trodden before.”

The blueprint on the development of Mauritius as a duty-free shopping paradise is being updated. We will make use of expertise that can draw from international experience to enable us to implement the project. In the meantime, Government will work with existing and forthcoming shopping centres so that they integrate the concept of duty-free shopping paradise in their design and making.

But, we know what happened after 2011 and his creation of the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise - the way he wanted it - what happened to it? Dilapidated by the former Government! And, we know where the money from the Mauritius Duty Free Shopping Paradise is now - Dufry/Frydu! We know what has happened and we know those who have dilapidated that Mauritius Duty Free Shopping Paradise where they are now! And they won’t be able to come and defend themselves in this country. They are hiding somewhere, there up in the hill, somewhere in Italy!

And, he also then said that the BOI will be set up and the BOI will set up a dedicated desk for promoting the duty-free shopping as a new sector of the economy. Dealing with fiscal measures, this is what he said –

“I am taking steps to deal with anomalies and deviations from international best practice in our VAT legislation. Thus the following items will be moved as from 01 March from the list of zero-rated supplies to exempt supplies: Wheat flour and bran, edible oils, margarine, sterilised liquid milk, curdled milk and cream and yoghurt, live chickens and chicks, animal feed and fertilizers. Producers of such goods will be able to recover input tax when they export.

As regards gains from sale of land and immovable property, a reduced rate of 10 per cent will apply to individuals.”

And then he goes on to say how much of exemption would the ordinary people receive. Then he said –

“Mr Speaker, Sir, we made a pledge. It was about a tax that weighed too heavily on the budget of our elders in particular, and on taxpayers relying on revenue from interest sources.”

And, this is most important –

“I am abolishing tax on interest income.”

I am abolishing! Why he abolished? Who...

*(Interruptions)*

Who imposed tax on interest?

*(Interruptions)*

*Lake sat?*

*(Interruptions)*

It was the former Minister of Finance of the Labour Government!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** No comments, please!

**Mr Rutnay:** And this is what Rama Sithanen said in his 2010 Budget Speech at paragraph 420 –

“Twelfth, I am also raising the threshold for payment of NRPT to Rs400,000.”

What hon. Pravind Jugnauth did about it in 2011?

“Mr Speaker, Sir, I am abolishing the NRPT (National Residential Property Tax) with effect as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010.”

This is Pravind Jugnauth...

*(Interruptions)*

This is Pravind Jugnauth insofar as his measures are concerned relating to fiscal policy, macroeconomics; understanding of the needs of the population and alleviating poverty! Now, we know, I don't write my speech but I have a list of failures which I have written. I'll come

to it because I have to respond to hon. Ramful properly. But, before coming to it let me read the progress that this country has made and it is in the introductory part of the Budget Speech of 2016-2017.

“The unemployment rate went down to 7.6 per cent in the first quarter of 2016 from 8.7 percent a year earlier.”

Remember a year earlier we inherited a country which was made bankrupt and thereafter there was also the subject of the BAI.

*(Interruptions)*

I will come to the R 5000!

“The inflation rate is significantly down to 0.9 per cent for 2015/16 (...)"

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** No comment, please!

**Mr Rutnah:** “The overall Balance of Payments was in surplus of Rs20 billion, with the current account deficit, as a ratio of GDP, reduced to 4.6 per cent for 2015/16.

“The official reserves increased from 6.2 months of imports in December 2014”

This is when we took power –

“(...) to reach 8.5 months at end June 2016.

And the Budget Deficit for the financial year 2015/16 is estimated at 3.5 per cent, with total revenue and grants amounting to Rs88.2 billion against a total expenditure of Rs103.1 billion.”

These introductory words demonstrate that our economic performance has been an honourable one as he puts it in his words. Those who always come to criticise that we have been in Government for 20 months and nothing has been done, let me say what hon. Ramful said. He said we have been in Government for 20 months and that the people are still expecting to see development in the country. In 20 months, we have also been criticised that we did not do enough to create employment.

Let me remind everybody that employment is down since we took power and major economic reform could not be done. It is not because this Government has not been working, it is not because of Ministers who have not been effective, it is because we did not realise although the coffers of the nation were dilapidated like in 1982, we did not realise that we were also inheriting the BAI saga! This is a list that I have made and I am going to refer to it. We did not realise then that the MPCB toxic loans of Rs3.2 billion

existed; DBM, loss of Rs538 m.; Mauritius Post Ltd loss of Rs202 m.; Casinos, have you ever heard casinos making loss?

(*Interruptions*)

Casinos, loss of Rs628 m.

(*Interruptions*)

Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation indebted, Rs1.2 billion; Bagatelle Dam which was initially thought to have been completed for Rs3.1 billion later on doubled. Regarding Terre Rouge-Verdun, there was initially a project for Rs2 billion, eventually Rs4 billion was spent and it was not yet finished. There was the need of an additional of Rs300 m. to fix the road, a road which collapsed and on which even an ant at that time did not pass on it. We could not even find an insect crawling on that street yet it collapsed.

Regarding Biometric Identity Card, initially, it was Rs400 billion, but eventually Rs1.2 billion was spent. Like I said, I do not write my speech, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but if we have to sit down and make a list, the list goes on. My friend, hon. Toussaint, is reminding me of NDU – *R 1 milliard*. I have not checked the figure, but I anticipate he is right about the figure. So, against this background, the Opposition claims that we have not done enough!

True it is that this Budget is now going to take us to a new era. When we first took power, measures were taken so that we could build the base of this country. What we built is the confidence of people. We built *la paix sociale*. We built *l'harmonie sociale* in this country. Hon. Baloomoody, during his discourse, made reference to the management of public opinion prior to the presentation of this Budget. He said that there was this management of opinion to create this perception that taxes will be increased and VAT will be increased because there will be no money to pay to the people. But do you remember what they were saying when we promised that we are going to pay our elderly Rs5,000 per month? The language came again from the Opposition side - *cot zot pu gagne sa l'argent là?* But the *l'argent was gagné!* How the *l'argent was gagné*?

(*Interruptions*)

No, it is the diligence and competence of the Government in the decision-making process. That is what allowed the Rs5,000 to be allocated.

(*Interruptions*)

There were also criticisms about money spent on foreign missions against Ministers. Again, I am not a Minister and I am not doing politics about it. But tell me something! If we are not going to send our Ministers to foreign countries to go and negotiate our development, how are investors going to come here? If our Ministers do not go on missions, if our country is not represented in many important conferences, then we will be criticised. We have to be in line with what we call proper international relations. Every country has representatives and their representatives go on missions. The reason why they go on missions is to promote their country, to promote international relations so that investments can be brought to the country.

There is one thing I would like to ask hon. Baloomoody. As Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, how many times he has travelled?

*(Interruptions)*

At least!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please, address the Chair!

*(Interruptions)*

Don't engage in discussions!

*(Interruptions)*

You cannot reply! You do not have the floor, hon. Baloomoody! You should know that!

**Mr Rutnah:** Not only that, as Opposition Member, how many times he has also travelled on missions overseas? But this is something which is natural. It is something which comes with the job. You have to go abroad for the benefit of your people, for the benefit of your country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in relation to poverty ...

*(Interruptions)*

In Madagascar, we had a great time!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Rutnah, address the Chair, I have been clear about this earlier. The warnings to hon. Baloomoody applies to you as well, hon. Rutnah. You address the Chair! It applies to all Members of this House. Have some respect for the Chair!

**Mr Rutnah:** Forgive me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Let me deal with the issue of poverty. After the presentation of the Budget, during the weekend, I walked in Rivière du Rempart where I live and I met my friend who is a peanut seller - I will not name him because it is not good to name names here, I understand. He said to me '*budget mari bon!*' Then, I went further and met this *kalou* who sells vegetables. I asked him: "How do you find the Budget?" He said to me: '*Masha Allah, nu pe done beaucoup dua Pravind Jugnauth.*' On the same Saturday, I went to Plaines des Roches where I met this guy who is known in the locality. He is a labourer. He said that it is for the first time in his life when a Budget has been presented, no basic products have been the subject of a price increase. On the contrary, he said he never thought that any Minister of Finance would ever decrease the price of gas.

(*Interruptions*)

No, wait!

On Sunday, I went to a wedding in Plaines des Papayes ...

(*Interruptions*)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea, don't interrupt him!

**Mr Rutnah:** On that Sunday, I went to Plaines des Papayes in a wedding where I met this old *dadi* and I asked her: "how are you feeling?"

She said to me, "I am feeling better..."

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, in Bhojpuri!

...but my diabetes is a bit high." I said to her, "Don't worry, your kids will buy less sugar as from this month, because the Government has put a tax on sugar. So, the lesser sugar you consume, the more improvement for your health."

(*Interruptions*)

On the same Sunday, I met friend of mine who is a taxi driver.

*(Interruptions)*

He said to me, “You know, everybody is talking about this Budget. It is an extraordinary Budget”. So, I asked him, “What is so extraordinary about it?” He said, “You know, I have got children who are going to university, and my neighbours in Roches Noires are poorer than me.”

*(Interruptions)*

No, it is not on the coastal side!

*(Interruptions)*

He said, “My neighbours have children as well, and I am so glad that those children also will be able to go university now, because this Government is providing incentives and encouraging people who are poor to study and they will be compensated for their hard work.” So, these are the kind of soundings that I received from my constituency, coupled with what has been said by the trade unionists, which my friend, hon. Benydin, has said. I am not going to say everything that working class has said about this Budget. Then, when we hear the hon. Leader of Opposition himself saying that it was “*intéressant*”, this means that there is some credential to be given to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development that he has presented a marvellous piece of work to this Assembly, dealing with poverty.

The other day, there was a PNQ on poverty, and it appears to me that the Opposition wants to make it sound like we are going to distribute money to everybody who purports to be poor. It is not going to be like that!

*(Interruptions)*

It is not going to be like that because we do not want our State to become a nation that will rely on income support for the rest of their life.

*(Interruptions)*

Self-reliance! That is why I asked that supplementary question referring to paragraph 301 of the Budget Speech. Eradicating poverty does not only mean that you give people money and they are going to spend it, we don’t know how. But we have to take them out from the cycle

of poverty, and to take them out of the cycle of poverty, this is what the Budget Speech says

—

“At the same time, we are introducing a major programme to empower these families to break away from the poverty cycle and stand on their own feet.”

So, this Budget is making provision to empower those people. And how do we empower people who are poor? We give them the right education, give them the right social support, give them the right psychological support, give them the right *encadrement, comme on dit*, so that these people can come out of the poverty cycle and be the future of tomorrow, because the future of this country does not lie in our hands. The future of this country lies in the hands of the children who are growing now and will be the adults of tomorrow, and together with them, we are going to shape the future of this country. This is how this country should be run. It should not run in the fashion that it was run for almost 10 years, from 2005 to 2014.

In relation to drugs, quite a lot has been said about the problems of drugs; cannabis, synthetic drugs. Government has made provision to deal with the issue relating to drugs. But let me say one thing. There is a tendency by some people, in particular in the media, who are also working together with some NGOs to fuel an atmosphere, to make people believe that there is so widespread of synthetic drugs in our country that, virtually, every youngster is taking drugs. And also they say that there is a campaign, in fact, to decriminalise or depenalise the use of cannabis. And to advance their campaign to decriminalise cannabis, they are saying, “Decriminalise it so that those youngsters will not take synthetic drugs, they will rather rely on cannabis because cannabis is natural, cannabis is medicinal. It is good for your health.”

But there is one thing I have not heard from any NGO or any media. None of them, who are today campaigning for the depenalisation, has ever said to our youngsters, “Go and plant a neem tree because neem tree has medicinal ingredient. It is good for your health”. I have not heard anyone saying, “Go and

plant some lemongrass because it is good for your health. It fights diabetes. It fights cancer. It has got antioxidants. Go and plant a *mouroum* tree because it is good for your health. Go and plant a *tulsi* in front of your house because it has got virtues that can cure any skin related disease. Go and plant some *apanā* because it contains antiseptic and it cures all kinds of

diseases.” None of these media people and NGOs has ever said this to our children. But what they go and say around to our children in a very convincing and persuasive manner is that “Cannabis is okay.” But can I ask them rhetorically whether they will allow their children to smoke cannabis because it is good for their health? I have met many people who say, “Legalise cannabis, depenalise cannabis”, but when you ask them, “Would you allow your son, your daughter to take cannabis?” They would say, “No, not my children!” So, why bringing these kinds of campaign against our children?

Now, coming to the crux of the matter, there is only a fraction of users who are taking – only a very tiny fraction – and the way that it is presented, they make it sounds like our children who are going to schools, colleges, universities are living as if on cannabis, are living as if on drugs, demonising the people, demonising those youngsters, demonising those children. But, that is not the case. We are a country where we give credence to values - I say it time and time again – culture, tradition. I have said it before that we have, as Members of Parliament, encouraged our peers, our people in our villages, in our towns, everywhere, to set up again the Baitkas, the Pathshala, the Muktab, *l'Ecole Cathéchisme* so that children can go there and learn about values, cultures, tradition, etc., so that we build a better Mauritius for the future.

A lot has been said about the way the PSC has recruited Police Officers recently. I was not expecting members of the Bar to come and say things in this House about the Public Service Commission in the way they did, and the DFSC. The PSC and the DFSC are creation of the Constitution by virtue of Section 88, Section 89. We, as Members of Parliament, of Government, do we have the right to interfere with the functions of the DFSC or the LGSC or the PSC? Do we have the right to interfere with the Board and the Board that had been nominated by the previous Labour Government to give an impression that there has been some kind of *magouille* in the recruitment by the DFSC? But, if there is any proof about any kind of...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Rutnah, I have already given a ruling on this!

*(Interruptions)*

It does not matter to whom. A ruling is a ruling, hon. Minister! So, please don’t comment on the behaviour! Don’t make any allegations about any statutory Commission!

**Mr Rutnah:** I am grateful for the guidance. I have not made any allegations.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is not guidance, it is a ruling!

**Mr Rutnah:** Yes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is a difference.

**Mr Rutnah:** I am grateful for your ruling, if you call this a ruling, but I have not made any attack.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Rutnah, are you questioning my ruling?

**Mr Rutnah:** I said...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Sit down, please, when I am on my feet! Are you questioning my ruling?

**Mr Rutnah:** I have not made any attack on the PSC. I am not going to make any attack on the PSC because I have respect for institutions and this Government has respect for institutions and no Member, on this side of the House, will ever attack any institutions which are creation of Statute or creation of the Constitution of this country.

If anyone has got any proof that there has been some kind of *maldonne* or *magouille* in the recruitment, go to the Police, bring the proof, give it to them, let them investigate, go to ICAC; there are institutions independently which work in this country.

Now, dealing with my final point about this Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a lot has been said about implementation. Yes, it is good that there has been a very good Budget and the policies need to be implemented, the works need to be done. I will request those who are in authority to ensure that implementation takes place and we know that there are certain people within the civil service who red tape policies.

I will urge upon the hon. Minister Civil Service and Administrative Reforms to ensure that proper disciplinary framework is set up against those who red tape economic policies of any Government, because it is unfair to the population, it is unfair to any Government and it is unfair to us all if we have policies to be implemented, but then those policies are not being implemented simply because there is some kind or some degree of red tapism within the Civil Service. If we do not set up proper framework to deal with them in a disciplinary Tribunal or somewhere, then we are still going to be lagging behind.

Overall, Mr Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Pravind Jugnauth has demonstrated his leadership qualities. Leaders foster collaboration

and build spirited teams. He demonstrated that he can bring together a nation, he can bring together our society. Like in Henry IV, Act V, Scene II:

“Let each man do his best.”

And in Hamlet, Act I, Scene III:

“Give every man thy ear but few thy voice.”

So, he is a Minister of Finance who listens and then reacts and I am sure he has the blessing of the population, of this country to take this country to the right direction and shape the future of our children.

Thank you.

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

*At 4.39 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 5.19 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo!

**The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr S. Lutchmeenaraidoo):** Madam Speaker, there was one word which came to my mind while walking out of Parliament, it was the word ‘impressive’. That was my first reaction. The Minister of Finance and Economic Development gave us an impressive Budget not only at the level of quality of the speech itself but, most importantly, at the level of substance that is in the Budget and which makes it extremely impressive and gives it a power of its own. I would never have thought that a Minister of Finance could, in 130 minutes, present more than 300 measures! This, by itself, is an incredible feat and all those measures have been worked out one by one in-depth before coming to this Table for proposal.

Therefore, the Budget is an impressive Budget that allows us now to define the roadmap for the future. Roadmap for the future is important for what reason? We have to go back into recent history and I will not, at any point, try to put blame on the former Government when we took over. But what the nation knows is that we inherited a situation that was disastrous and a level where institutions were near collapse. So, that was not an easy transition. We took over in a situation where we either worked out the right vision or we would have been carried off. So, that was what we had. When we took over, we realised one thing that Mauritius is what we call a country that is stuck in the middle-income trap.

In fact, the most important point that we put up after the elections was this: we are at the crossroad. I never use the words ‘we are at a crossroad’, ‘we are at the crossroad’ which means either we make it or it breaks and then we lose Government because a nation cannot stay within the middle-income trap for long.

Middle-income trap means that you cannot go above the rate of growth that can allow the country to move further up towards a more developed economy. We were stuck there. Why we were stuck there is very complex because the various sectors of the economy have matured and are giving less result for investment we made, number one and number two, we have also a problem which, I think, the House should now give due consideration. If we want to get out of this middle-income trap, we need a higher growth; there is no way out of it. To reach the level of growth that we will need to reach to come out of it, let us say, 4%, 5% or 6% there is no doubt that we will have to, number one, redefine the strategy, but number two, it is essential that the nation follows. This is probably where whichever Government is there; this is where we are having problems presently. It is not the fault of the people. It is the fault of a system where people take things for granted now, instant gratification. People do not want to take challenge, do not want to do the effort to join - because to join in a wave which will bring us up, there needs to be improvement in productivity. You should know this.

Productivity has been stagnating for the past ten years, which means that labour productivity is not moving up. No nation can move out of this development without higher productivity. This is why we are facing a situation where, in this country, if you do a survey and ask people, ‘where would you like to work?’, they all will tell you *‘mo lé rente dan gouvernement.’* All! It has become an obsession. People speak of unemployment. We have some unemployment. Hon. Pravind Jugnauth spoke about it. We have less than 8% unemployment in Mauritius, but when we go to the constituency, meet with the people, we get the impression that this country has got 50% of unemployed. They are all complaining. They are all without a job while they are working, but they are looking for something better. Now, how can we emerge? We have a total of 42,707 - those are the latest figures - of foreigners working in this country either with a work permit or with an occupational permit. 42,000 is more than the level of unemployment here. So, there is something which is going wrong in this country. On one side, we are importing labour because we, Mauritians, no longer want to do the job and, on the other side, we are not doing what we have to do to improve ourselves and to improve in productivity. This is a challenge. Whatever Government comes, Madam Speaker, speaking of coming out of the middle-income trap, I feel, will never

happen if the nation itself does not realise that it must be a national move towards more effort, more work and more discipline. If we do not have this, then rest assured - I do not want to predict things or to forecast things which I do not want to forecast - things will get worse. Things will get worse for one simple reason: we are not producing enough. We are not productive enough. So, last year, when we took over from the former Government, I said we were at the crossroad because I knew that if we do not put in the effort, we will never come out of it.

So, these two aspects which hon. Pravind Jugnauth have taken up beautifully - one, is a new strategy. If you want to move from 3%, 4%, 5% or 6%, you need to develop new sub sectors of the economy. So, we redefined and we reengineered the whole economy last year. We developed three subsectors which, in the 10 years-15 years to come, will become the backbone of this economy – number one, the ocean economy of my friend, hon. Prem Koonjoo. My friend Prem is technically President of the water continent of 2.2 million square kilometres; that's him. When we speak of ocean economy, a pebble that has been thrown in the ocean by the Lord; we, at the same time, have got this incredible gift of being surrounded by 2.2 million square kilometres of EEZ. India does not have it, even China, I think, does not have it, but we have it. So, we are a continent of water. So, it quite natural that when we think of the future of the country the first thing which comes to our mind is the ocean economy whether it be for fisheries, whether it be for exploration, whether it be for exploitation, the future is here the blue economy. Naturally, we have to be careful because we are speaking of nature, we are speaking of environment, we are speaking of the planet which is threatened. We have to be very careful, but I know that small Mauritius can develop in an intelligent way the ocean and derive revenue for the development of this country. So, we put the ocean economy as the number one in these new three pillars of development.

The second pillar which is obvious by everyone is the port. Then, we put the question. How is it that Mauritius has been called the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean? This is no accident. You take the map of the region and you will see that Mauritius is exactly situated strategically to become the most important port in this region. We are God bless from this point of view. So, we have stayed. Let us forget this small port, let us create a maritime hub which rose from 1.5 km to 8 km. That will start with Bain des Dames, Grand River North West, flowing down to Port Louis and finishing in Jin Fei. It is a new huge development. Why this? I'll come to it in one minute.

The second component, which is the maritime hub, implies what? It implies that the ocean economy can no longer develop with *les pêcheurs qui ne sont pas professionnels* or who cannot make money. All the investment we have made for the DBM for fishing boats, all collapsed and we don't have the fishermen now who want to go far for fishing. Yet, we need to develop the fishing industry *en amont*; we need also to transform and export with the objective that Mauritius becomes a hub where you can sell to the region seafoods. The project is what? You start with Grand River North West, which is a marina. The marina is followed by a fishing port going in the ocean on one kilometre and that can host at all times 18 fishing vessels, professional ones, and backed up by river capacities to ensure that those catch are transformed and exported. So, this is the second aspect of it, which is the one kilometre quay for hosting 18 to 20 fishing vessels.

Next to it, we come to the cruise quay. The cruise quay is for the development of cruise and tourism. This has got to come. It will have to come. It is coming. After that, we have the whole project of bunkering and petroleum hub because if and when we become a maritime hub, it means a huge increase in traffic. A huge increase in traffic means sale also of petroleum products, therefore, the maritime hub continues with this aspect of bunkering and petroleum hub whereby we buy and we supply. After that, we come to the centre of Port Louis. On the right, we have the port development, Cargo Handling Corporation. This is why Government is negotiating with the Dubai Port to ensure that we improve on the handling of freight because we will never become an important port if the freight level is higher than elsewhere. There are competitors in South Africa who can beat us. This is why Government is negotiating with DP World. This is new, and this is how we had the third leg of this new strategy, which is Africa. You know, when Jin Fei did not come out of the ground, we decided, as Government, to take back those lands, and that was a very courageous move because we were dealing with a huge country and ally, China.

But, at the same time, they realised that the land was not being put to the best use. So, after lengthy negotiations, we took back 325 acres from Jin Fei, and it is those 325 acres of Jin Fei that will become the Freeport. Why a Freeport? Firstly, because you can't have vessels that come to Mauritius if there is no freight. You need freight. So, you need merchandise. Secondly, why a Freeport? It is for the very simple reason that the third element of the strategy is Africa and it is not Africa in the sort of going to meetings. No! Africa is our future. This is how I say it. Africa is the long-term future of this country. MCB is showing it among the first. This bank is drawing more than 50% of its annual profit

overseas, in Africa. So, this is being done already. We need freight, why? It is because finally, in Mauritius, we are members of all organisations. You call it, and we are there; COMESA, SADC. We are not in the East African Community yet, but we are setting up a tripartite free trade area, which will include the three, which will involve 26 countries and 620 million inhabitants. Huge! And we are a member of all this. So, the idea is what? That we become very much like Dubai and Singapore, that the Freeport be used for the production, transformation of goods and services for Africa.

Those are the three components of the new strategy. Naturally, we added with it other components which were essential internally like the smart cities, which will become sort of showcase of what Mauritius will be in 50 years. There is also the work which is being done for SMEs. My friend, hon. Bholah is here, he has invented MyBiz; beautiful word! We, therefore, took a series of measures that will accompany this new strategy. And the Budget of the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development goes exactly in the direction which it needs to go. It is setting the road map for the implementation of all those measures, and this is what is beautiful and what is nearly magical with it. The hon. Minister has succeeded a master. I must tell you one thing. The Budget of the hon. Minister of Finance is masterful. It contains in it nearly all that we need, to ensure now growth enough to come out of the middle-income trap. Now, it will depend on the nation, on the country, on us also to ensure it. And the Budget itself, people would try to put more accent on the social aspect of it, though I would say one thing; we can't ignore the social. We can't ignore social peace. And in this Budget, the hon. Minister has declared war on poverty. Hon. Jugnauth has declared war on absolute poverty through the Marshall Plan which is being handled now by my colleague, hon. Roopun. This implies what? It implies that we are living in a country, a nation for all, and we cannot afford to grow if the growth is not shared. The hon. Minister has come with extremely powerful measures to ensure that absolute poverty disappears in this country in the next few years. This will be done, and it is our responsibility also to ensure that it is done. You know, at times, we try to associate poverty as if it is a sickness. It is not a sickness. Poverty is an economic state. The poor people don't come and ask us for charity. They don't come to see us for assistance. This is where this Budget is different. Those people want to be empowered. They want to say, "We want to come out of poverty forever, for always." And you can't do it in one year.

My friends here on both sides of the House have made the experience of looking at the *cités ouvrières*. You go anywhere, you will have them: in Batimaraïs, no.13; *cité EDC* à

*Camp Diable* and *cité Mère Thérésa à Triolet*. You call it. When you move inside, then you understand that the problem is not only at the level of money and subsistence. It is the whole family structure which has been destroyed, where members of the family live in conditions which are deplorable. And this exists! The mother very often is a prostitute; the father takes drugs, the children grow up. One lady told me, “Why should I send my children to school? I have not been to school. Why should I do it?” When you go to those places, you realise that this can’t be done in one year or two years. Empowerment - and my colleague knows it - is a generational work where you take the father, the mother, the grandparents and the children and you help them at all levels, so that in ten years or 15 years they become the citizens that we are all today; respectful, respected and who are happy to be Mauritians. That is what hon. Jugnauth has done.

The hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has said, “I am declaring war on poverty and I am putting everything that needs to be put to ensure this happens.” In a difficult year, people don’t realise this Budget was very difficult to make because firstly, we increased the pension to Rs5,000, and that costs money. We gave a compensation of Rs250, and at the end of the day we increased the recurrent budget by Rs7 billion. This was done. We had to do it in the name of social peace.

Secondly, we never thought that there would be a black swan that is called BAI that would collapse. BAI has two direct consequences. Firstly, we had to inject public funds, that is, Rs3 billion in the two banks which collapsed to create a third one. The Bank of Mauritius had to issue a line of credit of Rs3.5 billion to NIC to pay for those who have lost their money. So, we increased the national debt, by doing it, by nearly Rs7 billion. We never wanted to do it. We never took Government to come across BAI or come across a situation which we had to deal with, and we have dealt with it. So, the feel-good factor of last year disappeared very quickly when we were confronted with 240,000 people who could have lost all their money either in the banks or in the scheme or with their policyholders. We managed it, I think, in an elegant way. This was done, and it costs money.

So, when my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development came, he was confronted with a quasi-impossible situation, a catch-22 situation where resources are scarce, where recurrent revenue has increased, and we don’t forget also the PRB, the last one, I think, Rs1.3 billion. When you add all this together, you come to say, “How can you make a Budget?” And he made it! Not only he made it – *un ministre des*

*Finances est avant tout un bon père de famille.* Maybe you have not taken note of it, but the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has come and has said that he is going to prepay Rs4.3 billion of debt. Prepay! *Payer avant terme!* And this, I think, is the stuff of which this Government is made. We mean business, but at the same time we want to ensure growth, development, and ensure also a fair distribution of wealth at all times. This is where we are today. I think that we had faced incredible black swans. Who would have expected that in Rodrigues and in Mauritius we would have this foot and mouth disease? No one! It came. People say, ‘Well, it is a financial tragedy.’ It is well beyond it. Each cow that is killed creates in the family a sort of *deuil*. I have lived it and you have lived it also. So, when you cull 4,500 cattle, it means an incredible tragedy.

This is why I have spoken to my colleague, the hon. Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security and to hon. Pravind Jugnauth to say, “You should go there because those people are losing their animals to which they are attached.” I will tell you one short story. I was living in Saint Pierre. Near our house, there was a plot of land under cane for my father and we had a neighbour, Pitka. He had one cow and the cow died.

He came to ask for permission to bury the cow in the field. We said, ‘No problem!’ Then, I went there as a shrine, and I saw the whole family weeping as if they have lost a child. This is the tragedy. We are not dealing with Rs5,000, Rs15,000. We are dealing with a national tragedy, and for Rodrigues I know it would be very difficult to manage at the emotional level, but also someone who has lost *son instrument de travail* needs to continue living.

My point is this. Since we have taken Government, we are having systematic numbers of black swans which were not provided for, but which are there. One good thing happened, and thanks God! I said it in one newspaper – I speak very rarely, from time to time. I said that the absence of Pravind Jugnauth in Government is traumatic for each of us in Government, because how can the leader of the principal party in this alliance be himself out of Government! So, we went through difficult times; I lived it and you all have lived it here; we went through difficult times. This is probably, for 2016, the best news that you can give me. Pravind won his case, and this is where I think the good things start.

1. He won his case.
2. He made an extremely good Budget.
3. He will become the Prime Minister of Mauritius.

*(Interruptions)*

This is what will happen, and this is what the good news is.

It is on these notes, Madam Speaker, that I will ask our colleagues here and the Opposition Members also to join us and say 'Bravo' to Pravind Jugnauth.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(7.41 p.m.)

**Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I have listened with much interest to the very able discourse of the former Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

I have listened to each and every word that he has uttered and there is one thing which I must admit, and we should all admire: it is his ability to discourse, his ability to pronounce words, his ability to make some people for a certain amount of time live a certain dream. But there is certainty in what I will say today. Many of us here, today, mainly on the opposite side, will not admit it. Many of those, on the opposite side, will not have the courage to say it to him. His words of alleged wisdom, his words of supposed decorum, in presenting his thoughts, cannot in any way hide the failure of his Budget of last year.

No words, no theories, no beautiful compliments to the actual Minister of Finance and Economic Development, neither rubbing him on the back in the right direction, not to say anything more; nothing of that will hide the fact that he has, indeed, a protector in this House and that protector deserves the compliments of the former Minister of Finance, and his protector is the actual Minister of Finance!

Can he hide from us the beautiful picture that he painted for us last year, that he would create thousands of jobs? Can we not forget that he came to this august Assembly telling us that now starts the Second Economic Miracle, not in 2016, but in 2015, he said! I remember each and every Member, on the opposite side, making statements and saying how happy they were with this Budget of 2015, how many jobs it would create, how now the miracle will start, how it was a much awaited Budget, recovery from the doldrums of the last ten years. And he goes on repeating about the doldrums and the problems of the last ten years *ad nauseam*. Words! Words! Words!

But what has happened in the meantime? In the meantime, he is no longer Minister of Finance, and in the meantime, not long ago, not even 48 hours ago, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister sitting here listening to a Member of the Opposition criticising the former Minister of Finance's measures and his Budget of 2015, clearly said from a sitting position, "That is why he is no longer Minister of Finance."

What type of courage must one have? Normally, I was told that in politics you have to develop a thick skin. But what type of thick skin must one have to be able to sit in this august Assembly and accept the Prime Minister of this country say, "That is why he is no longer Minister of Finance." Clearly, *ce n'est pas là un compliment que l'actuel Premier ministre* has thrown in the way of the former Minister of Finance. No, it wasn't! It was, in fact, a certificate of incompetence thrown to him. But he sits on and he waives on and he now says: "Oh, no, we started the work last year. Now, we are starting it again." What about the thousands of jobs that he had promised us? Where are they?

I don't have to go further than look at the statistics themselves. The statistics of this country proved that the net job creation for 2016 will not be more than 2,200 jobs. How come not more than 2,200 net jobs created in 2016? How come? What will they say? Because the previous regime messed up so much that we could not create jobs! The previous regime messed up, that's why we could not give jobs and really keep our promises. Because of the BAI affair, we could not create jobs, because of the BAI affair, we could not ensure that FDI would go up. We had no choice. Obviously, it fell and plummeted because of the BAI affair, because of the previous regime. It's not their fault. Oh, no! How can it be of their fault? It is not theirs. It is never their fault.

Madam Speaker, it is never the fault of the actual Government, but always the fault of the previous. It is never the fault of the Ministers concerned, but always the fault of the previous Government or BAI. And what have we heard recently, civil servants are at fault! In a speech just before me, a Member of Government has said, "It's civil servants who are at fault." Should I take more time to describe the type of individual or the type of Government that never can accept that they are wrong, that they do wrong, they always place the responsibility on others and not them? How can they, therefore, explain if such a Budget was so amazing last year, why is it that the actual Minister of Finance goes ahead and talks about *rupture*? Why is it, as hon. Baloomoody rightly put it, that the adviser of the actual Minister of Finance says, "*Rupture* from the previous Budgets" - specifically mentioning the Budgets of hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, hon. Jugnauth and hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo.

We have a Government that is specifically very good at one thing, that is, fighting with one another. I have just gone through some of the discourses. Minister Bhadain! What did he not say about the previous Budget of 2015! In those days, he was full of compliments for the actual Minister of Finance and he stood up criticising hon. Uteem and getting quite annoyed that hon. Uteem had dared criticise the Budget, and the Government has not changed on that. They call themselves democrats, but they fail to understand that we have a right not to agree. And if we have a right not to agree, instead of agreeing to disagree, what they do is that they hit below the belt and criticise you personally. This is what happens in this House!

So, when I look at the speech of hon. Minister Bhadain, what do I read from his speech at the budgetary debates of last year? He says –

“Everybody is aware of the sincerity, the seriousness, the pragmatism which have guided the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development and his team in the preparation of this Budget.”

Did hon. Minister Lutchmeenaraidoo think about those compliments coming from hon. Minister Bhadain? Sincerity, seriousness, pragmatism? When he swore his affidavit and talked about the other one being a KGB operative, did he think about these compliments? Oh no! This is also another element of what happened ever since. The hon. Minister Lutchmeenaraidoo swears an affidavit, calls his colleague a KGB type operative and still sits in the same Cabinet as him and has the courage and thick skin to sit here with him behind! Not afraid that he will be hit in the back!

*(Interruptions)*

Very courageous man! And that type of thick skin, I never want to have and I will never have. And I don't want it!

*(Interruptions)*

But then, I will say something else. How full of compliments they were in those days, hon. Minister Bhadain to hon. Minister Lutchmeenaraidoo! He says, in his speech on the Budget –

“The Stock Market's reaction to this budget was in fact the litmus test.”

And he goes on to explain, *voilà*, the Stock Market has really gone up. It is rising. And what happened? Whatever rises for a short time falls. Does he not know that? He should know it

and better than everyone else. Whatever goes up comes down! What happened? And he goes on to say –

« *Les investisseurs étaient en mode d'attente jusqu'à la fin de la semaine dernière. Le signal fort du gouvernement visant à doper la croissance les a ramenés (...)* »

Well, investors are back! These are the words of hon. Minister Bhadain!

« *Les investisseurs sont retournés.* »

Where? Where are thou investors? Where are thou? We have Ministers standing in this august Assembly saying such things. They should have had the courage to apologize to the people! We have had estimates, but we will blame it on BAI! We could not bring the foreign direct investment into Mauritius, we could not bring those investors, but what we have done over and over again, as this Government has done - and they have done it - just promise and promise that they we will do.

Just now, I heard hon. Minister Lutchmeenaraidoo talking about ocean development and supposedly the great work that has been done by Minister hon. Koonjoo! Supposedly, he has done such a great work. A man who believes that you have to be a labourer's son in order to be able to be elected in Parliament! A man who believes that the only quality of someone who has to be elected in Parliament and the one who can have le *discernement d'être au service de l'Etat est celui qui est le fils d'un laboureur, et que si vous n'êtes pas le fils d'un laboureur, vous ne pouvez pas prétendre à être ici, à l'Assemblée nationale !*

(*Interruptions*)

*Il l'a dit dans son discours !* He said it!

(*Interruptions*)

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mohamed! Hon. Mohamed, please sit down!

(*Interruptions*)

Order! Order!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Mohamed! Hon. Mohamed, first of all, you cannot say that the hon. Minister is a 'menter'. Please, withdraw this word!

**Mr Mohamed:** I withdraw, but I....

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Now, what I am going to tell you is that I know you are very passionate about what you are saying...

*(Interruptions)*

This is very good that you are very passionate. But, then, please refrain from making personal attacks!

*(Interruptions)*

Right! Don't make personal attacks. I would request you to be passionate about what you are saying, but to do so very calmly.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Koonjoo:** On a point of order, Madam.

**Mr Mohamed:** I am not giving way.

**Mr Koonjoo:** I never said that!

**Mr Mohamed:** This is not a point of order! This is a point of explanation!

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Please, sit down. Yes, what is your point of order?

**Mr Koonjoo:** I never said in the House that you have to be the son of a labourer to be in the Parliament. I never said that!

**Madam Speaker:** Okay!

**Mr Koonjoo:** I said that I am the son of a labourer! He is the son of an advocate.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Please!

*(Interruptions)*

Calm down! Please!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Koonjoo:** Never! Liar!

**Madam Speaker:** No, no! Hon. Minister, I just asked the hon. Member to withdraw that word ‘liar’. It is unparliamentary. Please withdraw that word!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Koonjoo:** I withdraw the word, Madam, but the hon. Member is misleading the House.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mohamed, please continue. I know, as I said, you are very passionate, but then be calm.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Mohamed:** I will here, Madam Speaker, quote from Hansard what hon. Minister Koonjoo said, and if he would like a copy, I can even give it to him right now! 08 August 2016! He just said that he never said that no one here is a son of a labourer. Can we read?

*(Interruptions)*

He goes on...

*(Interruptions)*

He says here, nobody...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

**Mr Mohamed:** He basically says here –

“Have you ever felt the pang of hunger? No, you don’t ...”

And looking at us! And then, he goes on...

*(Interruptions)*

He goes on -

“Nobody because the Labour Party is Labour Party in name only, Madam Speaker.

Have you found any Member whose father was a labourer in the Labour Party?”

Word for word!

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** *Non, non...*

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Minister Koonjoo!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Minister Koonjoo, please calm down!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Mohamed:** I rest my case!

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mohamed, please continue with your speech, but refrain from making unbecoming remarks. Please!

**Mr Mohamed:** You are right, Madam Speaker, I should ignore unbecoming people!

Now, what I find really shocking is that he comes here and says, as though hon. Minister Koonjoo is doing a fantastic job with regard to Blue Economy, and when I look at the document that has been produced by hon. Minister Jugnauth, this is what? A New Era of Development, Supplement to the Budget Speech 2016-2017! I look at page 64 and this is about Ocean Economy, Production of fish (in wet weight equivalent) in 2013 high seas. The total production was 3,625 and the total production was 5,795, but it went up to 12,000 or so in 2014 and 12,650 in 2015. So, as far as the increase is concerned, ever since hon. Minister

Koonjoo has been in power, according to the figures of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, it is measly (650 minus 351) which is basically 259! Measly!

But when the Labour Party that he is so good at criticizing was in power, it jumped more than doubled in the space of one year, and on average it increased by 1,000 or slightly less than 1,000 every year.

*(Interruptions)*

And when we look also at the job creation in the sector, why is it that hon. Minister Koonjoo did not give us the figures as to how many...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** *Non!* Hon. Minister Koonjoo, please! Do not interrupt! Allow the hon. Member to ...

*(Interruptions)*

*Non!* Allow him to make his argument!

**Mr Mohamed:** I am here referring to the document which is that of...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** No!

**Mr Mohamed:** I am here referring to the document which is that of Ocean Economy, the one that - maybe, he does not know - was, in fact, attached to the Budget and is a supplement. Maybe the hon. Minister is not aware. Maybe he should be aware now that there is a supplement and not only his speech! And maybe it is not only what his civil servants give him, but it is more than that. When you look here...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** *Non,...*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Mohamed:** ... the employment...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** I will again appeal to the hon. Member. You have got valid arguments which you can bring up and you are bringing evidence with some report in your hands. Please, make your arguments, but don't make provocative remarks!

**Mr Mohamed:** When you look at the figures, employment in the Sea Food Hub between 2014 and the figures given by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development in the Sea Food Hub for 2015 – employment, Statistic of Mauritius, that is the source - over one year, ever since he is Minister, the increase according to this document is of 60 jobs in the seafood hub. 60 jobs! I am not talking about 60,000, Madam Speaker. I am talking about 60 jobs. I am not here inventing anything. It is at page 63 of the supplement to the Budget. Now, maybe the hon. Minister could care to explain at an another session or at an another occasion, or another colleague of his could maybe help him out, but this is not something which I am inventing. This is not something which anyone else has really put here as an invention. I am basing myself on this document emanating from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

I listened to hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo saying how this is a pillar of the economy. Now, if this is a pillar of the economy that has supposedly been started by this Government in 2015, that has been helped to grow and grow very, very strongly by the former Minister of Finance and Economic Development, then, I really wish that we could have a better act in 2016 because 2015 was a total failure if we could only create 60 jobs, according to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, in the seafood hub.

Now, one looks at what hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo has done when he said in his previous Budget that he was going to create eight Smart Cities. Where are they? If there was one, at least, Madam Speaker, I would say *commencement de preuve*. There is none! Am I here, Madam Speaker, inventing this? No! I am here referring to simple reports that clearly have analysed what is it exactly that the former Minister of Finance and Economic Development had promised, had been applauded and approved by every single Member of Government, be it Cabinet or non-Cabinet Members. And what has he achieved? We are still waiting for the eight Smart Cities. But instead of the eight now, hon. Pravind Jugnauth talks about three - it is not only three - and the Heritage City. That is what is mentioned in the Budget. Heritage City! So, the growth of 4.1% that he refers to takes into account Heritage City.

It is the first time in history that I find that the debates are not over, Committee Stage has not started, the voting has not taken place, but part of an essential element of this Budget, that is, Heritage City, which is taken into account in the equation for the calculation of growth on an annual basis, is no longer in reality. It just disappeared. Will the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development come and circulate an amendment to his *prévision* and his estimates? Because he is duty bound, Madam Speaker, to come and explain to us.

Now that he has talked about 4.1%, when we have all the billions that were supposedly going to go to Heritage City, the thousands of jobs going to be created, the trade that was going to be ensued, all these are no longer on *sur les cartes*. Will he now not review? Clearly, let me say it today, it is not an exaggeration simply because of this element ‘no longer being in the equation’ that the growth will never ever reach go than 3.6% to 3.7%. That is a fact. I am not the one saying it; Economists out there are saying it; Accountants are saying it; business experts are saying it; Members of Government are saying it.

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Please proceed!

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

**Mr Mohamed:** Madam Speaker, I am talking here about the first Budget of this Government in 2015, but then we have had, as a *rattrapage*, because the Rt. hon. Prime Minister saw it coming from afar, he saw it coming from afar. That is why in August of last year he ensured that there was the presentation of his Vision Statement 2030 because he had to correct the mistakes, because *le pays ne démarrait pas*. We were stuck in the mud. He came up with Vision 2030. But what is scary is the following because the preparation of Vision 2030 was not solely the job of one man. He may have led this whole project. He may have led through his vision. But the figures that were given to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister clearly came from somewhere and it would not surprise me that those figures came from the officers of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. I am sure that the same Minister of Finance and Economic Development was also somewhere party to the preparation of these figures. I, therefore, do not blame the Rt. hon. Prime Minister when he said last year that his Government would create 60,000 jobs in 2015/2016. This is in his Vision 2030. In Ébène, in a beautiful backdrop, this is what was said in the Vision 2030. In 2015/2016, 60,000 jobs would be created, and he goes on to say, ‘We will create 100,000 jobs in the next five years, and Statistics Mauritius talks about the net job increase of 2,000 or so jobs in 2016.

Clearly, therefore, whatever *les prévisions qui étaient formulées par l'ancien ministre des Finances, les chiffres erronés, clairement, qui ont été donnés au Premier ministre, Sir Anerood Jugnauth et l'actuel ministre des Finances qui vient nous dire que cette année-ci, il*

*y aura vingt et quelque mille emplois qui seront créés*, you can only believe a Government in what they say if they can, in a recent past, prove to us that what they have said they have done. But as far as their record and promises are concerned with regard to job creation, we cannot really say that they have credibility because hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo promised jobs he did not deliver. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister, unfortunately, was misled. The officers of the Minister of Finance and Economic Development and the other members of his team could not deliver because the figures were clearly exaggerated.

Today, when the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development comes to say that he is going to create so many jobs, he is going to revamp the whole employment sector, he is going to tackle the skills gap that exists, he is going to find solutions to the mismatch that exists, what he should also underline is that he is promising a lot, but will not be able to deliver. He has also, *dans son intérêt, venir admettre* what he has to do. He said that the majority of those jobs that he has referred to, in a big way, a big chunk of it, belongs to the Youth Employment Programme. A Youth Employment Programme does not give a permanent job, but gives a job that is precarious. This is the reality.

Now, as I have said, I have read what hon. Bhadain said in the former Budget. I also read what hon. Bodha had said in 2010. Madam Speaker, I have had the honour of representing the Republic of Mauritius and this is my third mandate. It is not long. It is nothing compared to the years and years and the decades that some Members have had in this august Assembly. This month, I turned 48. I am on my third mandate. I have had the honour of being a backbencher in Government. I see the youth and the dynamism opposite me and salute it. I may not agree with everything they say, but I salute the vigour.

I have been the Minister of Labour, and now I have the honour, and thank God, of being in the Opposition because this is also where one has to learn the trade. Many before me have been in such situations and have learnt the trade that way not only of being in Government, but also in the Opposition, and that is a good path. And I appreciate that. I thank the inhabitants of my constituency for having given me this opportunity of being elected again, second time in my constituency.

I have been giving a lot of thoughts to the Budget as to what, apart from the criticisms I may have about the Budget - a lot of us have criticised, a lot of us have congratulated. It reminds me of the time when I was also a backbencher and it seems as though that all of us, whenever we are in Government, we suffer from a serious virus, a syndrome. It is that we are

never wrong. I was in Government, I remember a time when I used to stand up as backbencher and I remember hon. Sinatambou was Minister when I was backbencher. It has been a pleasure to have him as a senior colleague. I remember the time when each and every time, he also would stand up and tell the Opposition they were wrong. Opposition is always wrong, Government is always right! Are we right, Madam Speaker, to behave in such a way? And yes, most probably, if I was still in Government, I would still not see straight. I admit!

Hon. Ramful said, “They seem to be living in an ivory tower”, but I extend it. Even the Labour Party, when we were in Government, we were living in an ivory tower. A time comes when in the life of any Government, if you start living in this ivory tower and you don’t realise that, this is the end of your time. We have heard a lot of things this week, about Rs19 m. being paid to lawyers. This is the sign I am talking about; of living in the ivory tower. There is sign of a Minister saying that, “synthetic drugs do not cause death”. He may be right in the equation, but it would be like President Zuma saying or reported to have said that...

*(Interruptions)*

Sorry! Basically having sexual intercourse without...

*(Interruptions)*

and can give AIDS ...

*(Interruptions)*

I am sorry, he reported it. He said it!

**Madam Speaker:** No!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Mohamed:** I am sorry. He said it! It is also saying...

*(Interruptions)*

It is public knowledge for God sake! I don’t exaggerate. I can say it in public.

**Madam Speaker:** Whatever you have said hon. Mohamed, you take the responsibility for it!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Mohamed:** I know what I am saying and I know I have the right to say it. Now, this problem which I am explaining right now is, when Government lives in an ivory tower, they believe that they can give lessons to every single Member of the Opposition, just like when I was in Government. Whenever someone would put a question to me, I always thought that they had an agenda and their agenda was surely to do me harm and nothing else! What I should have thought is that maybe what they are trying to do is try to tell me, “Listen, there is another way of doing things. We don’t necessarily want the harm, be it you or Government. We want the good of the country”. I should have reacted that way, but I didn’t. And maybe if I had been in Government for many, many more months, I would still be reacting the same way that my friends on the other side are. It is one of the diseases of power. It is one of the diseases that we suffer from, and I have decided today to come and say it.

I had a conversation with my friends from the Labour Party and I said to them, “It is time for us to come and say that, when in 2014, the Government lost the elections, there was a very strong message that the people had sent us.” And the message that the people had sent, I will not get into the details as to whether it was the Alliance; whether it was the programme; whether it was the five years’ President or seven years or what not. These are excuses as far as I am concerned, many reasons, but, at the end of the day, excuses, because then, deep down, there is a message that the people of Mauritius have sent to us. It is, “We were not happy with the way that you were governing”. Simple! You can’t get around this reality. The people of Mauritius were not happy with the way that we governed and we lost the elections!

*(Interruptions)*

Now, it is always easy for hon. Members of Government to come and laugh at what I say. It is easy for them to come and criticise what I say. It is easy for them to come and chuckle, and enjoy that I am admitting that we did wrong, but I believe it takes courage and it takes humility to admit that we were wrong and we are not always right.

Now, what I would like to add here is: what of the message of the people in December 2014, Madam Speaker? It is a signal they were sending us and sending politicians; the leaders of today and tomorrow, and the actual leaders. They wanted a ‘*rupture*.’ And I’ll come to the word, the word that is used by hon. Jugnauth in the presentation of his Budget,

‘*rupture*’. And he says that there has been a rupture. Now, I humbly state that there is no ‘*rupture*’. I was reading a document - because I have had the chance, as I said, of being in Government and seeing how things work – of what exactly would be ‘*rupture*’, and rupture is not found in this particular Budget.

When hon. Jugnauth came up and said that it had to be different to what there was in the past, there were certain things I expected, and those are certain things that a lot of people in Mauritius were expecting because those are the issues contained in the message that the people of Mauritius have sent to *la classe politique*. And I thought that finally someone has understood that message and would put it into practice and would translate it. We were wrong because we could not do it. We did not hear. We were not listening maybe, but maybe now in Government, he would listen because he has heard. But I was wrong again, he had not heard. Because if you really want to have a rupture, one of the first things you must do is, have a fundamental reform of the Civil Service. No Government, be it the Labour Party; MSM-MMM, we have never managed to achieve, implement, undertake, study and put into action a proper reform of the Civil Service. None of us! We may talk about - a Civil Service Academy, the Civil Service institutions for training - all that, but the fundamental fact remains that you cannot talk about progress, and I here read from a document which I read with much interest, written by Ruth Richardson in the *Telegraph*, and in that document, she talks about the reform of Government. Herein this document, I read –

“The public sector is such a big player, economically and socially, that no transformation programme can succeed without embracing Civil Service reform.

I learned that success in government relies on ensuring that the forces of productivity and innovation, so crucial to lift private sector performance, must equally be allowed to make themselves felt in the ranks of the Civil Service.”

This paper talks about having to do away with the burdens of bureaucracy. And here I am not blaming the civil servants. The civil servants can only work within a system that we, legislators, create.

*(Interruptions)*

Can you imagine, Madam Speaker, that hon. Baloomoody was here talking about the Public Accounts Committee, and the Standing Orders do not allow us to even criticise the Public Accounts Committee! Can you imagine that we cannot criticise the Public Service

Commission, if they do anything wrong, within this Assembly unless we do it by a substantive motion! Is this democracy? We have no right to question any civil servant in public, we have no right to question the PSC if they have done something wrong or even call them within a Committee of the House because the Standing Orders say we cannot. This is what I am talking about, Madam Speaker. If we want to change fundamental issues in this country, I expected the hon. Minister of Finance to come and change the method of working of the civil service. When it comes to us as Parliamentarians having the right, a democratic right to question in public the working of Government, it also goes as far as each and every officer of the civil service because there needs to be accountability.

If there was *rupture*, which there is not, I would expect hon. Pravind Jugnauth to come and do so something that we could not do. Maybe we did not have the courage to. I admit. Maybe we did not even have the vision to. But, now, let me say it out loud. I would like to see a piece of legislation that comes to make a Minister accountable for wrong that he does to the country when it comes to causing damage and prejudice and losses to the coffers of this country.

A Minister must be able to pay the consequences of his decision. If he has made a wrong decision, if he has intervened in such a way as to make a wrong decision and later on down the road the State is to pay damages, the Minister must be liable for that and he cannot hide forever behind the Public Officers' Protection Act. A civil servant or a Police Officer cannot keep on hiding *derrière le* Public Officers' Protection Act and you have two years within which you are to enter a matter; otherwise, you are finished. This is not democracy! This is not accountability! And this is evidence, Madam Speaker, *qu'il n'y a pas eu de rupture* because today, tomorrow morning, next week, next month and next year, we will still be working within the same old decrepid system which is also archaic. Other countries have evolved, Africa has moved forward, and we are still, *on fait du sur place*. We did not have the courage to do it. We did not have the vision to do it. I apologise for that and I just pray that this Government would. I pray this Government could.

Now, if there was to be *rupture*, Madam Speaker, we did not have the courage to do it, I say it again. But what I take the solemn commitment to do is the following: that the Labour Party - and me as a Member of the Labour Party - will keep on fighting, and I will not keep quiet if we have political nominees ever again. I don't agree with it. Other Members may not agree with me, I respect their opinion, but I don't agree with it. I will give you a simple example. Yesterday, I raised a matter at Adjournment Time, and I here salute the Rt.

hon. Prime Minister. When I raised that matter at Adjournment Time, he acted promptly. What was this matter about? It was about someone had been nominated as a lawyer at the Equal Opportunities Commission and that person was wrongly nominated, because that person allegedly had five years practice at the Bar which the law says she must have, but she only had two. In other words, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister immediately took action. I salute him for that. Because this is the type of reaction, as a Member of the Opposition, I would like to see from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister because he has acted in the interest of the country and I stood up in the interest of the country. There was no party politics there. But the fact remains: how was she nominated?

The fact remains that there were civil servants somewhere who processed those documents. There were certain people who informed the Rt. hon. Prime Minister that she was eligible, certain people did not give the right information to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister and because of their wrongdoing, the President of the Republic, Her Excellency, got the wrong information and made a nomination going against the parameters of the law. Now, who is going to be accountable for this? The system of Government we live in, *la rupture il n'y en a pas eu, parce que s'il y avait rupture*, there would have been a method, a system whereby the person who is responsible should pay for it and should pay for it in public, because we cannot tolerate such mishaps. Can you imagine a simple mistake of this nature? Because we have politicised the nomination at the head of a body of that nature. That is what I am getting at.

The Labour Party also did that. The Labour Party also chose; if it has to be a member going to be named, let's find who is close to us, we are going to name him. The excuse that we used is well, because they believe in our policy, that's why we are going to name them! We were wrong! This is the message that the people of the country sent us in 2014. *C'est cela le message de la rupture*; that we should give the opportunity to people with the ability to be in these Committees, to have Bipartisan Parliamentary Committee, interview people, graduates, qualified people, who can come and speak the truth as far as their CV is concerned, not rely solely on the recommendations of the Leaders of an alliance. *Il ne faut pas se baser seulement sur ce que les leaders de l'alliance font comme proposition et, de ce fait, causer un embarras à la Présidence et au bureau du Premier ministre.*

If we stop political nominees and we choose to go with transparency where we have Bipartisan Parliamentary Committee to interview people, then the Rt. hon. Prime Minister chooses, but he chooses on the basis of a report and the ability, *la méritocratie*. This is what I

believe in. I say it again, we did not have the courage to do it, but this would have been *un budget de la rupture* because it comes to propose something that is diametrically opposed to what had been done ever since Independence. We have not seen that *rupture*. The youth out there, *en 2014*, wanted to see *la télévision privée*. Where is it? *S'il y avait rupture*, we would have had clearly either a privatisation of the MBC, because even under the regime of the MMM, the Labour Party, the MSM, the MBC has always been *une institution* that is not the pride of the nation.

*Rupture* means that we would have had to have an MBC where there is no longer political nomination, there is no longer control, there is even privatisation if need be, but there is also *la création d'une télévision privée*. We are still waiting. The people out there are waiting. This is not a criticism. This would have been evidence of certain *rupture* that there is in there.

I came across another article that really took me aback. It is an article in which I have seen the hon. Prime Minister of the Netherlands riding his bicycle to the office. I am not asking the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to ride a bicycle.

*(Interruptions)*

I am not asking you to do that!

*(Interruptions)*

No. But I would even offer you my services to take you along. But this is not what I am saying. What I am saying here is *la mentalité*.

*(Interruptions)*

What I am talking about here, Madam Speaker, *c'est la mentalité*. I am sure there are lots of friends, on both sides of the House, who would understand what I mean. In a paper - I have it here and I will show it to you - it is the Prime Minister who is riding and it is in Kenya today...

*(Interruptions)*

No. He is riding a bicycle, not going to the office as far as your hon. father is concerned, but he is doing it for pleasure, which is still good. Now, I would not compare playing ball, like I do at the office, I am talking about riding to the office. It is a matter of principle. Now, what this article says is that it is shocking - and this is a report from Kenya today - and what the

article says also is that whilst the Netherlands is in economic powerhouse, ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of GDP, by all standards the country is rich, yet the Prime Minister is never driven in convoys.

The Labour Party has had long convoys for their Deputy Prime Minister and their Prime Minister. The former Governments of 2000/2005 have had long convoys. In 1995, I remember, CA205, the first BMW, the white one the Rt. hon. Prime Minister had. I remember it. Now, please, we all have had convoys. But, the thing is when you talk about a developed country you don't have long convoys. Why is it that they can avoid not to have convoys? So, what I am trying to say here is in my programme of *rupture* for the Labour Party, this is a method which we should study. Now, he will go on and say, "What do you mean? That the former Prime Minister will ride bicycles?"

*(Interruptions)*

What I am saying here is that this country should, therefore, start thinking about a new generation of politicians, a new way of doing things whereby we can leave convoys behind, we can leave *les signes de riches* behind, where we are not afraid of walking without bodyguards and riders in public and walk to our office and even ride a bicycle to the office, like a Minister of the Republic of France using his moped and going to his office in the Republic of France. This is what I would have called *rupture*!

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Order! Order, please!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Mohamed:** Madam Speaker...

*(Interruptions)*

Madam Speaker, what I am suggesting, let me say it again, for fear that I may be misunderstood.

*(Interruptions)*

I don't want to be misunderstood, Madam Speaker. I say that those are measures that even our Government could not even fathom, could not even dream of. When we were in Government, we could not even think about implementing them.

But those are new methods of going to the public. Those are new ways of doing things and those are the ideas that exist out there among the youth of this country. When I see hon. Duval, the third, nodding, then I say there is, therefore, hope. There is hope! When I see hon. Duval nod, approvingly, then I say there is the possibility of better days ahead. There is the possibility of turning the page and not in any way criticising the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, but saying that maybe it will be the last Prime Minister of the last era. But the new era *de la rupture* would be where we will do things without necessarily having to have riders accompanying us and blocking the roads and being nasty to members of the public, where things are different. This is the type of idea that the youth out there expect and expect ever since December 2014.

Now, *s'il y avait rupture*, Madame la présidente, I would have expected something else from hon. Minister Jugnauth. He has talked about a new sector of the economy, Albion. People are screaming about Albion, their constituency going to have a mobile oil platform and, that platform, I hear, according to the press, would be owned by Mr Roland Maurel. If that is true - it is besides the point whoever it is - I would expect hon. Minister Jugnauth to come forward and say, "*au nom de la rupture*, we have heard the message of the people and the youth, we now instil a new system in Government, because it is with such a new system, we are going to have a referendum about it." Because a referendum about it would give the people of Mauritius the right to choose. Is this the path they want to go upon? Is this the type of development they want?

*(Interruptions)*

I am not inventing anything. In Geneva, Madam Speaker, the construction by the WTO of a simple annex has required a decision by referendum. The construction and the change of a public building in Geneva has ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Can we have less noise in the House, please?

**Mr Mohamed:** ... required a referendum because the vote and the voice of the people matters. We cannot keep on saying we are running this country *au nom du peuple et pour le peuple*, but we do not go to them and tell them we are going to have a floating platform before their eyes, we are going to have an oil refinery...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** I just said. Can we have some silence in the House, please?

**Mr Mohamed:** And finally, we just have not had a *rupture*.

Madam Speaker, I have listed and those are just a few of the list that I have given. But then, I was talking to hon. Jhuboo and he was telling me how in Rwanda, in Kigali, the new leader of that country, once a month with all people of his Cabinet, just as Mr Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore used to do when he came to power in Singapore, insists that you have a national day of cleaning. The cleanest city in Africa is Kigali. The cleanest city in Africa is found in Rwanda. When you look around - and I talked about this; unfortunately, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is not here. He would understand - when you look at all the dirt...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo, please sit down!

**Mr Mohamed:** ... tourists are sending me documents, photographs about how Mauritius has become dirty, how Mauritius is not clean, how Port Louis is not clean. Then, we understand that we have something to do. So, what I call upon the Government to do, *rupture* would mean that, at least, once a month, all the country can together go to the streets and put our hands down in gloves and clean Mauritius in the name of posterity and for posterity. This would be *rupture*!

Whatever the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has proposed has nothing new. It has nothing new because the system within which it will operate is the same system that has existed ever since Independence. Now, I have only spoken very honestly and accepting liability when I can accept and accepting wrongdoing whenever I need to accept it. Now, it is unfortunate, I cannot please everyone and in response to me being very honest and accepting wrong when we have done wrong, I am hearing people from the other side just saying, “bla bla bla!”

But, let me basically say one last thing to the Member who keeps on saying “*bla bla bla!*” This week - and this would be a *rupture*, but there is no *rupture* whatsoever - we have heard about Rs19 m. of taxpayers’ money going to one man for one case, and the case is not over and it is only a watching brief. We have heard about someone named at the level of ICTA who has no qualifications, but has still been named by the President of the Republic, and that person may have benefited from salary and car facility when she was not entitled to it.

(*Interruptions*)

That’s EOC? Alright!

(*Interruptions*)

There have been interviews carried out at the level of the ...

(*Interruptions*)

Choomka!

(*Interruptions*)

Who is paying the consequences? She is still in office on top of it!

(*Interruptions*)

**Madam Speaker:** No conversations, please! I don’t think he needs your help!

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Mohamed:** Well, I appreciate. But, now, I have just received information that has come to my attention only a few minutes before I started this intervention. That information, I will share with this august Assembly. There have been recruitments at the CEB and those positions were meant for internal staff only, promotions from within. I have the document here that clearly shows the salary scale, the notice, the reference of the notice. I have it all here. And that document shows that it was for internal staff only, lo and behold no internal staff has been appointed! But external staff have been taken in lieu and instead. This *budget de la rupture est une façon de rupture avec le passé*? We may have done wrong, but does that mean that we can continue such wrong again, where people of a specific constituency are recruited externally in spite of advertising for internal? Is this *un budget de la rupture*? Is it a

*budget de la rupture*, when you have two people who have been suspended from the CEB - I will not go long more - Mr Fakim and Mr Kurreemun! Those two people have been suspended from the CEB. Why those two? Who is in charge of the Disciplinary Committee to listen to them? Someone from Collendavelloo Chambers, Mr Colunday! Is this *rupture*, Madam Speaker? We are all very shocked when we see Mr Trilochurn earning Rs19 m. But no, it is not the only fact of wrongdoing, there is the case of Christelle Sohun! Collendavelloo Chambers happens to be a member of the IRP. So, *rupture*? There is no *rupture*. There is none.

Let me, once again, do what others cannot do. We were condemned for wrongdoing in 2014. This Government has changed nothing, in spite of the good intentions enunciated by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. The Leaders have a responsibility, as I have said, and I repeat it, of not wrong footing him, and the Leaders have done what I have just said behind his back. If today, the lady has been fired from the Equal Opportunities Commission, has been asked to leave, thanks God. I raised the matter yesterday and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister reacted promptly. This is a Government of trial and error! But the only problem with this equation is what? They make the error and we go on trial!

Long live Mauritius! Long live *la rupture*!

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Minister Sinatambou!

**The Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr E. Sinatambou):** Madam Speaker, please do not listen to the gentleman who spoke before me. He has got a sweet tongue, but a tongue full of venom. His ploy is to try and make believe that this Government is as dirty as the one to which he belonged; he will try and make believe, especially to those sitting up above there. Because he has not made his speech first. We will see tomorrow in the newspapers...

*(Interruptions)*

That's the point, hon. Rt. Prime Minister. This is a tongue full of venom which he is trying to throw filth instead of looking at the filth lying in his own party and his previous Government. It is all too well to come before this House this evening to claim, to give us lessons as to what *rupture* means. You always see the light when you are in Opposition. That seems to be the

trend of the First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East. As he says, he has had three mandates. Three mandates during which he never saw the light!

*(Interruptions)*

I am sorry! Well, maybe, you'll have the third when we are 65! Two mandates, where he never saw it fit to tell his then Leader of the House, Prime Minister of this country that they needed to have a proper reform of the Civil Service, that it would be fundamental, he says, to get rid of an old and decrepit system.

Today, when we are at the helm of power, when we have to attend – I will here borrow the words of my distinguished friend, hon. Bhagwan. When patient Mauritius is ill, we should stop attending to the patient to embark onto what I think would be an ill-advised reform of the Civil Service. Patient Mauritius which has been fed with poison by the Opposition sitting here was in the worst possible condition when we took over. And, the country must know that it will take us some time to get patient Mauritius in better condition. However, we need to reassure this House that patient Mauritius is in the best of hands. We will not...

*(Interruptions)*

Yes! In any medical institution ...

**Madam Speaker:** No interruptions!

**Mr Sinatambou:** In any medical institution, you have a whole medical team - in any medical institution worth its name. I am sure, Madam Speaker, you will agree with me that any medical institution worth its reputation, you don't have only one specialist, you will make sure that you have a full medical team which can adapt to the circumstances.

I will concede one thing, Madam Speaker, this evening. Yes, we do not get it all right every time, but then, again, who does? But what I am here to challenge is the preposterous allegation that this Government is doing what the previous Government did. I would strongly object to that because I refused to participate in what the previous Government was doing. And what is even worse is when the previous orator actually comes on to say that he will have no more political nominees, that there should be no more such things in Government. If that were the case, how come - I mean, I believe that when he speaks of political nominees, he also has in mind political acolytes. Now, if we go by the very explanation of the Leader of

the party to which he belongs, the 227 odd millions of rupees are apparently the ownership of that party. How could he, saying that – if you believe in rupture, to stay away from political nominees - stay in a party, which is actually keeping money by hundreds of millions coming from political acolytes and such nominees?

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr Sinatambou:** I would like, at this stage, to ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Minister, please proceed!

**Mr Sinatambou:** I would like, at this stage, to mention to you, Madam Speaker, that I made it a point because I was going to speak after the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, to go to his speech on the Budget of last year. I wanted to just instruct myself about the type of tone he had taken, the type of contribution he had brought to the Budget of last year and I must say I was quite satisfied with the substance of his speech last year because he came up with something, which I will now devise as an expression. I call the '*narien pas bon*' syndrome.

As he says, and he said it again today, that sometimes if you are in Government, you would claim that everything that is done is good and when you are in Opposition, you will actually say everything that happens is wrong. Now, when I look at the debates coming from the other sides of the House, I must say that, fortunately, the '*narien pas bon*' syndrome has been the appurtenance of only a few. It has not been generally the tone and tenure of everyone. And I think that we can only...

*(Interruptions)*

Well, we don't need to divide you!

*(Interruptions)*

You will really need to!

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea, please!

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Sinatambou:** When one wonders...

(*Interruptions*)

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr Sinatambou:** As someone was just telling me, “one wonders in how many *bouts* the MMM has got split now!” So, I don’t think they need me to divide them. What I am trying to say here is that we were expecting, and I think that this country should expect from its elected Members, constructive criticisms. And this is where I beg to disagree with what the previous speaker has been saying to this House.

(*Interruptions*)

The previous orator! I beg your pardon. Thank you, Rt. hon. Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, I see what he was saying to this House in two tiers. The first one is where he had put the former Minister of Finance and Economic Development on trial. And that is not the purpose for which we are all here, not only this evening. This is not the purpose for which we are in this House, debating the Budget of this year.

The second tier was about – I won’t even say it is idealistic. I won’t even say this utopian talk about rupture. It was sheer demagoguery. *C’était de la démagogie!* Just trying to make people, with simple things which may bother them, to react in his favour or in favour of his party! We all know if we go outside among the public, very often, for every single frustration which is suffered by members of the public, they just put it ‘*fonctionnaire ça. Bann là pareess, bann là pas travail!*’ Fortunately, he could not change the Ministers because we are elected by the people. Now, it would be appealing to a segment of the population that we say, “Yes, we need to change and reform the public sector”. But even if it were the case, Madam Speaker, that there has to be a reform of the public sector, now is not the time! The time is to attend to the economic health of this country. The time is to address the economic problems of this country. We will look at other things afterwards.

Now, it also looks at how it is sheer demagoguery when he says that there should be no convoy, I mean, if the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has to come to Cabinet, you look at the

congestion problems of Port Louis, I mean, in fact, if he comes on bicycle, he might arrive quicker.

*(Interruptions)*

But it sounds so appealing to come and say that the Prime Minister of such and such country in the northern hemisphere, goes to his Ministry on a bicycle and that will be appealing to another segment of the population.

This thing about political nominees, we know, we have heard of nine years of scandalous behaviour where monstrous things were happening to this country. So, it is now the right time to come and appeal to another section of the population and say: “Well, I wouldn’t do that!” While I heard him coming up with six particular proposals...

*(Interruptions)*

Especially the four others! Make it ten!

Why were they not part of the political manifesto of the MMM/Labour Party fiasco alliance when they thought they would win elections by 60-nil? Why was it not part of their winning alliance? It wouldn’t be because he knows he will never do it. Now, in addition, Madam Speaker, to what I have heard the previous orator saying, let us make a wise suggestion to him through you. Why doesn’t he bring it to the next political bureau of his party and have it put to the vote at the next Congress of the Labour Party?

*(Interruptions)*

If he does, we look forward to reading the results. I can already see the leading Members of the Labour coming to their office on bicycle. Everyone can already anticipate looking at that. The previous Member asked that we should not get personal, otherwise I would have said about the car he drives. But never mind!

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** No!

**Mr Sinatambou:** One thing which I would like to add is also (a) some of the demagoguery in the proposals of *la rupture qu'il souhaiterait voir* and, in an event, one can rest assured, if positive measures are proposed to this Government, we have in the leadership of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, someone who is attentive and who will take them on board if

they are practical, if they are enforceable and if they are right for this country. And the previous orator, himself, said so about a few problems he mentioned to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister.

But there is another thing, which I think I should actually express in this August House. It is that, regardless of the demagoguery, there is one thing we ought not to do. I will not say that it was made consciously and wilfully, but, in any event, it resulted from my standpoint, in a misleading consequence.

The previous orator spoke of page 63 of the Supplement to the budget of this year and said that according to Statistics Mauritius, there had been only 70 recruits – he said 60, but when I looked at the figure, it is 70.

*(Interruptions)*

He said 60, but when I checked the figure, I mean it is just a calculation error, but according to the figure which appears at page 63, it is, in fact, 70. But he said 60. You are right!

*(Interruptions)*

I am not going to discuss on that! What I object to is that he failed, however, to add that just above that particular graph, there is another graph which shows that the value added to that sector has increased by nearly another Rs100 m.

*(Interruptions)*

Well, please have a look at page 63 and you will see!

*(Interruptions)*

Now, the point I am trying to make is that it is one thing to speak about statistics; it is another thing to make sure that we disclose the truth.

Now, in addition at page 63 of that supplement, the graphic about the 70 new employees is only about the seafood hub. It does not speak about fisheries. So, it does not speak about fisheries, it does not speak about cruise workers. All those other aspects will fall under the purview and the portfolio of the distinguished Minister. So, in that respect...

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, but you ought to say that there is more. It did appear to me and I am sure it must have appeared, especially to those members of the press sitting in the gallery, that the Minister had only managed to create 60 jobs, which is not a realistic thing to say.

Now, especially as the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East is saying, we should read the supplement. Exactly! When we read the supplement, we should not just concentrate on what we read to come and give a misleading impression to others who have not read it.

*(Interruptions)*

Especially. You mean as not a labourer.

Madam Speaker, I must say that I think I would not be doing justice to this Budget if I were to keep on trying to respond, to reply to the speech of the previous orator. I think I would be doing more justice to this Budget by speaking about the very Budget itself. Here, I believe that anyone who is sensible; who, while acknowledging that things are not and cannot ever be perfect, everyone should acknowledge that this Budget is worthy of congratulations. I, for one, would like, therefore, to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for what I consider to be an excellent piece of work. Because not only I so believe but also because there is much to comment in this excellent Budget which has been widely acclaimed by so many sectors of the population not only by me, not only by MPs on this side of the House - I will come to Members on the other side of the House -, but also by so many sectors of the population, whether it be by the common people, the private sector, the business community and even by the trade unions.

Here, Madam Speaker, if you would allow me to refer to some of the comments which were made by other Members of this House, especially those sitting on the other side of the House. I made it a point to read an extract of the *Defi Media Info* of 31 July 2016. What did I find in it? I found that no less than the Leader of the Opposition to take again what a few Members on this side of the House had said: the Leader of the Opposition found this Budget to be interesting. He went on to commend among others the fall in the price of cooking gas and the increase in the monthly allowance to those at the bottom of the scheme. To me, that is something very commendable, especially coming from someone who is known for his criticisms regarding this Government.

The next person who I normally know to be quite critical of Government action is no less than the Opposition Whip, respected Member of Parliament who, if I understand well,

has been here on his eighth mandate and I was very happy actually to know that in his speech he acknowledged the introduction of positive measures. I am quoting him. When he acknowledged the introduction of positive measures, he himself mentioned the introduction of innovative poverty eradication programmes, the decrease in the selling power price of household gas, several measures scheme to boost the SME sector and the merging of related parastatal organisations. What a compliment coming from the Opposition Whip! I believe that this is one of the best compliments that the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development could have got.

Now, this being said, I must add that I welcome the same type of tone which was adopted by the immediate neighbour of the Opposition Whip. Hon. Baloomoody, earlier, found, and I believe rightly, that the Budget contains good measures and I especially welcome the measure. It was not this '*narien pa bon*' syndrome which I mentioned earlier, which I think this year has been the sole prerogative of the Labour representative seated there. And I will come to that later with one exception; the one exception is, unfortunately, hon. Ameer Meea. I believe it is unfortunate that hon. Ameer Meea, the Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East - I was shocked - was telling us that things were being decided in this Government *afin de mieux traficoter avec les biens publics*. Is hon. Ameer Meea saying that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister who leads Cabinet, who leads this House is taking decisions *afin de mieux traficoter avec les biens publics*? That, I think, is shameful. As much as I welcome constructive criticisms, I think we took them well from hon. Baloomoody who did very well perhaps, except for one or two *dérapages*.

As we say no one is perfect. So, that should reply to the sitting comments of the First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East. He says "When did you *faner* and we blamed you?" No. If we *faner*, we will assume. What we are saying is don't be mistaken to try and compare us to the filth that you left over nine years. So, for the Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East who is talking *de mieux traficoter avec les biens publics*, he should go and see to his left, not opposite, us here. Because where and when were *les biens de l'État* being *traficoted* with? I would not be here, and I am sure the Rt. hon. Prime Minister would never condone that and say something else, which is why I, unfortunately, have to condemn the approach of the Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East. He spoke about *un héritage macabre*. Did he see what their partner had been doing? Did he note what that partner of 2014, with whom they were partnering...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea! You had the opportunity to talk. You had the opportunity to intervene.

**Mr Sinatambou:** Yes. I am proud to say. I was a Minister in the Government where I never condoned Dufry or Frydu. I never condoned *maîtresse* getting billions. I never condoned big buildings being given to friends. All those things happened when I was not a Minister. You can go and check.

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, I can say that.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Rutnah!

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Sinatambou:** My last comment about hon. Ameer Meea, and I am saying that in all friendship, I think that he should refrain from trying to make those types of formulations, saying that *avant nou ti pe vende reve, aster nou pe donne reve cadeau*. No, we are a serious Government, we mean well for this country, we are working very hard, and we hope that we get the results that will take this country out of the hell that others put it in.

(*Interruptions*)

Yes!

So, I think I have replied to the Members of the Opposition sitting on the left hand side here. Now, I would like just to say a few things very quickly, Madam Speaker, about the distinguished hon. Members of the Labour Party. I think I have said enough regarding the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East...

(*Interruptions*)

Let me go to the Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central. I must say, Madam Speaker, I think all of us here have known him to be a fairly nice guy, looking very moderate, well measured. But I could not understand how he could say that what we have stated, what we want to do, what this Budget is about is scarcely a can of beans! If this is what we see amounts to, then he should be called Mr Bean henceforth, because I object to our debates being...

**Madam Speaker:** Oh no! Hon. Minister, please withdraw this word!

**Mr Sinatambou:** Yes, I withdraw that. He is such a nice guy. I am sorry. But I beg to disagree that what we have stated scarcely amounts to a can of beans. And I will say that his immediate neighbour was also, as far as I am concerned, as bad, because the hon. Third Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien would have us believe that there is only one good thing about this Budget. Incredibly, what is it? It is blinding the people! You can see why, when I speak about the Labour Party on the Budget, at least, is the '*narien pas bon*' syndrome.

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, or *tout pas bon*!

(*Interruptions*)

Now, why am I saying that? I am saying that, Madam Speaker, because - and here I will perhaps hasten to add that I propose to deal with that aspect of my speech in five minutes and then go to my Ministry. Now, why I disagree with this '*narien pas bon*' syndrome is because of all those results that this Government can be proud of. Despite the difficulties, despite the omissions, whatever be our failures, we have, however, been able to do a number of things of which we can be very proud!

The first one, when we think about all those criticisms that were levelled against that proposal to provide Rs5,000 pension to 240,000 Mauritians, what did we not hear? Impossible! You know how hon. Ameer Meea would have said it: *pe vend reve!* But we did it! We did it, Madam Speaker! And what we spent was Rs4.7 billion on those 240,000 Mauritians receiving pensions. And not only is that a measure which will have to continue, but just for this Budget, an additional amount of Rs748.4 m., nearly Rs800 m., will have to be added to the Rs4.7 billion to provide for the increase of just the Rs250 in basic pension. So, already we can see Rs5.5 billion being spent again for those who are in need or who have reached retirement age.

Let's look at the salary compensation which was given in the last Budget.

(*Interruptions*)

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Rutnay, this is the last warning I am giving you!

(*Interruptions*)

This is the last warning I am giving you! Please have some decency and decorum in the House!

**Mr Sinatambou:** Now, if we look at the salary compensation of last year, it was an additional amount of Rs4.3 billion which was put in the hands of Mauritian families, and the new salary compensation, which ought to be paid for this year, of Rs250, benefited private sector employees by another Rs1.6 billion. I am not here speaking of the salary review brought by the PRB, which costs another Rs3 billion.

So, all those proponents of the '*narien pas bon*' syndrome, please wake up and stop misleading this population! I get nearly angry when I hear comments which actually mislead the Mauritian population that nothing is good in this country...

*(Interruptions)*

That no one is good in this Government, when, in fact, we are working so hard!

Let me give you a few more examples. In the Budget Speech of the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, what we come to know is that we will give another chance to those in need, to those who fail SC and HSC exams. When you look at the figure, however, it looks to be quite a small figure. It is Rs10 m. But what we must understand is that that figure of Rs10 m. must be added to the continuous measure of Rs310 m. which we are using to subsidise the fees for all people taking SC and HSC.

Maybe, lastly, for me to be given some time to go to my Ministry, Madam Speaker, the last point I will raise, especially because it gives us regarding this aspect of my speech, concerns the construction and completion of 1,900 housing units for those who actually fall within the definition of absolute poverty. The figure is 1,900 units. The amount is Rs1 billion. But, two improvements. First of all, the surface area of each house is increased by more than 50 per cent. From 31 square meters, we will now build houses which will be of at least 50 square meters for those who fall in the realm of absolute poverty, plus they will be no more be in corrugated iron sheets. Poor people have the right to own concrete houses. So, for the '*narien pas bon*' syndrome sufferers...

*(Interruptions)*

I hope we are giving you the right recipe to get better! I must say, Madam Speaker, there are so many measures which I could mention, but then there are other speakers after me who can

always, I am sure, take them and explain them to this House, especially for those who do not seem to have seen them yet.

Allow me, however, Madam Speaker, to go to my Ministry because as stated by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development in his fourth strategy, in this Budget, this country has to move towards a fully-fledged digital society. The first measure which he announced was the training of 1,000 young people in the ICT sector. I must say 1,000 people in the ICT sector is on the low side, but the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development owes no apology for that. This is what we are going to subsidise through the National Skills Development Programme.

The sector, however, itself, should create more employment. I heard the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East speaking about the skills gap between academic achievements and employability. How we are doing that here in the IT sector? My Ministry is actually collaborating with world leaders: IBM, through its Middle East Africa (MEA) University, to bring its course delivery centre here to train people; through Oracle, to set up a centre of excellence; through Huawei, which is going to provide two laboratories: one to the University of Mauritius and one to the University of Technology. We are confident that this is the way to actually solve the disparity between academic achievements and employability in the ICT sector.

This allows me perhaps to touch on another aspect, the BPO sector. Business Process Outsourcing is a big segment of the ICT sector. In 2014, the BPO sector was worth globally \$304 billion. This time, I would like to answer to those who speak about Ministers being *pigeons voyageurs*. Do they think that by sitting in Mauritius, the ICT sector is going to be able to get the actual infrastructure, the actual investors to come here? Let me tell you how to make it happen. Not later than the end of last month, I went to China where I met the Canadian Minister of Science, Innovation and Economic Development. Why did I need to meet him? Because -

- (a) He will not come here. He has got other things to do, and
- (b) Canada actually controls a 37% market share of the BPO market.

Similarly, I have been able, in the course of my travels, to meet the Indian State Minister of Finance for Maharashtra. Why is that important? It is because India controls 47% of the BPO market in the world. As opposed to finding nothing good from the Government, from the Ministers, from the decisions we take, would it not be such a good thing if we work

together to try and convince either Canada or India or both to collaborate with Mauritius, so that we could get just 1% of the market share?

We are already in the sector, we are already seen as a good place from which to work, but 1% of the market share, Madam Speaker, would mean \$3.04 billion. That means we have increased our GDP by nearly 25%. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister would be able already to say, 'Hey, the second economic miracle is nearly there.' How would we convince them, the Canadian and Indian Ministers, that their private sector could use Mauritius as a springboard to other markets which they have not tapped? It is by having, in this country, highly reputable private sector companies dealing in BPO. I am so happy, because not later than two months ago, I went to the launch of a new company called SD Worx. SD Worx was a name unknown to me. I believe it would be a name also unknown to many of those who are here. But, surprise, surprise! SD Worx is Europe's second largest provider of payroll and HR outsourcing services. And guess what, Madam Speaker! It has got a yearly turnover of 400 m. euros. SD Worx now employs 275 people in Mauritius. So, we can actually use that as the arguments to convince our Indian and Canadian counterparts that Mauritius can really be the springboard to markets to which they do not have access.

I here have in mind, especially the French-speaking market for India and the African market for Canada. If someone does not believe me about SD Worx, I actually was the chief guest, less than a month ago, to the branding of the group called the DSO Group. I have never heard of them. I believe probably no one has here. But the DSO Group has actually bought two companies from Mauritius. It is involved in debt collection in France. It has decided to buy two companies here, to do it from here. Those two companies were employing 200 people. DSO Group has already recruited another 50. They are hoping to reach 400 employees by December, and they would like to reach 1,000 employees in a near future. This is how we need to get it done.

If a third and last example were needed, let us take Ceridian. Ceridian, I think, most of us know, because it has been here for 15 years. Ceridian is a Global Human Capital Management company. It operates in 50 countries. It offers cloud-based Global Human Capital Management solutions. What is good about Ceridian, in addition to SD Worx and DSO Group, is that Ceridian has a \$900 m. turnover every year. So, that is the type of companies which are coming to this country or which have been in the country and which we

should use in order to actually make sure that we reach the targets in terms of generation of wealth or creation of employment, of GDP growth.

Maybe I should say something about another measure, which was quite striking and quite new to me, which was the introduction of 3D printing. To tell you frankly, Madam Speaker, maybe you might not know, but I have got no IT background. So, I did not know what 3D printing is about. I had to find out. 3D printing, I understand, is a process of making 3-dimensional solid objects from a digital file. On the screen, you build the house, but when you print it, the house appears in three dimensions. It is impressive. But do you know what, Madam Speaker? 3D printing is a global industry worth around \$11.5 trillion every year.

Now, \$11.5 trillion every year. So, if one per cent of the BPO sector could bring \$3.04 billion to this country, 0.05% of the 3D printing sector would bring more than \$5 billion to this country. \$5.7 billion to be exact! That would bring an increase - I checked - of about 46% to our GDP.

*(Interruptions)*

Arithmetic is good enough! So, just to tell you, Madam Speaker, I find it highly objectionable, not only as a Minister of this Government, not only as an elected Member of this country, but as a citizen of the country. I am of the view that “Yes, please, highlight our errors, but mention the good thing that we do!” This is what is lacking. The ‘*narien pas bon*’ syndrome is doing tremendous damage to the tissue, to the very soul of national building of this country.

*(Interruptions)*

Please, if it is part of an agenda, gentlemen on the other side of the House, if for some unfortunate reasons, it were part of an agenda, “Please, throw that agenda to the bin. Come with a fresh one which has got better motives, and we will be happier.”

I will speak about another measure which, I believe, Madam Speaker, is worth mentioning. It is called the information highway. As the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port East was saying about the public sector, as opposed to reforming when there is no time. Time is for other things. The information highway is going to bring efficiency to the public sector. What is it about? It is that when someone goes to the Civil

Status Office, when someone needs a birth certificate, he has to go to the Civil Status Office, give his name, his address, his ID card, and so many other details. The same person, when he gets his birth certificate, needs a passport. He goes to the Passport Office; he needs to bring his act of birth, his act of marriage, he has to give his address, he brings his ID card. And then, after getting the passport, he needs to go and get a pension from the Social Security Ministry. And, there again, guess what, Madam Speaker! He needs to show his act of birth, act of marriage, ID card, proof of address. It is not the making of the Minister. I hope you won't say that! It is the system.

The system requires duplication of procedures, and the information highway will solve this problem. Once you have your data in a central population database, the law has been amended to make sure that any other organisation in the public sector, which needs the data, can access it. No more need to trouble the citizen about "bring this, bring that and the other", and when you bring them, they say, "no, you missed that one, go back home and bring it another day."

*(Interruptions)*

Everything will be done through the information highway. That is something which, I think, is going to bring great efficiency in the Public Service without going into the extremes which were suggested by the distinguished hon. Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East.

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, it is good! The hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development drew my attention to one thing I omitted to say: that there has to be a driving licence to go on the information highway. Yes, because otherwise, you might hear a former boyfriend getting the new address of his previous girlfriend through the information highway.

*(Interruptions)*

I don't need the information highway to do that. But what we have decided to put in the information highway is a login portal, that is, each and every citizen should have the right to log into the portal to know who actually sought information about him or her. So, in that login portal, I will know whether the Police or the Social Security or the MRA or the FIU,

whichever be the body which is allowed to use it. So, that is actually what we are going to do, and I think this is a wonderful measure which is going to be of great use to the country.

Madam Speaker, hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development also mentioned that the country needs dedicated Chief Information Officers. This is something which is really necessary, because we have embarked onto what is called the digitisation of the public sector. Therefore, they are a member of E-Government projects. The latest one was mentioned by the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life, hon. Gayan. Let us take his example, E-health.

There is something which is really unfortunate and, maybe, this is the *rupture* which the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East was speaking about; this brings efficiency in the public sector. Most people who go to hospital will tell you that if they have gone to hospital ten times in a year, they will have been given a new hospital card eight times. There is never any record which can be used to just tell you who you are, what you were here for. So, what we shall now do, as a pilot project, at Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, we will actually have the whole of the Registry system digitised. When you come in, everything is digitised, so that next time you come, when we look at your name, we know when you came, etc. No need to give a new card again, again and again.

The next step is, once you get your card normally, you go to meet the doctor in casualty, who is going to investigate your problem. Now, if the doctor who works from 09.00 to 01.00 p.m. has to see 300 patients for that half a day, it means, in arithmetic terms, he has 45 seconds per patient. So, as the person is coming in, the doctor is already writing the prescription, which is why they say, very often, that you only get Panadol in hospitals. Because the doctor, in fact, physically and humanly, has so little time to dedicate to that patient. So, now what we are going to do, as there is going to be a seamless system, as a name and the particulars of the patient are being entered into the computer at registry at casualty, the same information is available for the doctor in his consultation room, on his PC. Immediately, the same information, in a seamless manner, will be available for the nursing management people, if they have to give a bandage, a suture or whatever. They have all the information, as whatever is entered at casualty, in the consultation room, is immediately appearing in the nursing management office.

Fourthly - the hon. Chief Whip will be happy - the same information is seamlessly available in the pharmacy. So, as a doctor gives the prescription in his consultation room, it

already appears in the pharmacy. No one has to queue for hours. The pharmacist can already prepare the medicine to give to the patient. I have proposed, I must say, to the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life to have a fifth one, which is laboratory because the laboratories of hospitals take a lot of time. So, we are trying to have those E-Government facilities being put, and to make sure this happens, we need Chief Information Officers who are dedicated to the projects. This is disruptive technology. We are going to change the way the hospitals have been working for decades.

*(Interruptions)*

We will have to train them. That is why we are, first of all, appointing Chief Information Officers who are dedicated people in IT, who will be there to supervise things and to make sure that relevant training is given the way it has to be given and to those to whom it has to be given. This allows me, however, to say something very important about potential problems which are as follows, Madam Speaker.

As soon as you get successful - and God allows that we shall be successful because I believe that we deserve to be successful if these are the measures that have been announced by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development. They are bold, they are daring and they are excellent, and they deserve to succeed. But if we succeed, there is one problem. It will attract a specific breed of nasty people called cyber criminals. So, as we build the system, we have to make sure that we actually get stronger in cyber security and in the fight against cybercrime.

*(Interruptions)*

For the financial year 2015/2016, there were 225 cyber security incidents which were reported, but, fortunately, solved. However, what we have had to do is we are already members of a number of international organisations which allow us, therefore, to get help to tackle problems, allow health to know what are the new viruses, what are the new ways in which cyber criminals attack. We also made it a point to join a programme called the Glacy Programme, which is under the Council of Europe, which concerns the Budapest Convention against cybercrime and the protection of personal data. Now, under that programme, we actually get help and cooperation to make sure.

So, you will see, Madam Speaker, there are so many good things that are happening and which, therefore, deserve attention, which deserve to be looked at from a positive point of view.

To end, Madam Speaker, I would like to find just a piece of paper which I had been using, which, I think, needs to be said before I stop.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Sinatambou:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr Sinatambou:** In fact, Madam Speaker, were it not for time constraints, I would have been so happy to keep enlightening the House about all the measures announced by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for the welfare of this country to ensure that we actually get that second economic miracle. What I will do, however, I will finish on two notes. For all those who will not have been convinced by what I said, at least, regarding the IT sector, for which I am grateful to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to entrust me responsibility for, I will say this: there are six indices concerning the IT sector which were most important for countries.

The first one is the e-government index. It tells us the level of achievement of the country in the field of e-government. Mauritius is first in Africa on that index.

The next one is the global innovation index, which indeed measures innovation. Mauritius is first in Africa.

The third one is the world economic forum network readiness index. Mauritius is first in Africa.

The fourth one is called the A.T. Kearney Global Service Location Index, which measures the opportunity of using a country as an offshore business location. Mauritius is first in Africa.

The fifth one is called the ICT development index which a UN index. Mauritius is first in Africa, and the last one, the global cyber security index, measures – as the word says – cyber security. Not only are we first in Africa, we have got the ninth best score in the world out of 105 countries.

*(Interruptions)*

And to conclude, Madam Speaker, there is one thing I will say. When the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development was reading his Budget, all our eyes were focussed on him and on what he was saying, but I have seen, myself, the pride of the Rt. hon.

Prime Minister after the speech of the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development. I can say that the hon. Minister made his father proud of him.

*(Interruptions)*

And I, for one, found that to be one of the most fulfilling moments of the Budget 2016/2017.

Thank you, Madam.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

**Mr Jugnauth rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly.*

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I move for the adjournment of the House to Friday 12 August 2016 at 3.00 p.m.

**Mr Jugnauth rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Madam Speaker:** The House stands adjourned.

#### **MATTERS RAISED**

(7.50 p.m.)

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Uteem!

#### **APOLLO HOSPITAL - SALE**

**Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to raise an issue, which is addressed to the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, but also concerns the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training.

On Tuesday, answering my PQ on the purchase of Apollo Hospital by Omega Ark, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development stated that Omega Ark had undertaken to take all the employees on board under the same terms and conditions. Unfortunately, he did not table a copy of the agreement for confidentiality reasons, and this has raised a lot of

confusion now in the minds of the staff of Apollo Hospital because there are, at least, four companies involved. There is British American Hospital Enterprise Ltd; there is Apollo Bramwell Nursing School Ltd., which does the training of the staff; there is Bramer Catering Ltd, which does all the food preparation and distribution, and there is Metropolis Bramser, which is a joint venture with Metropolis India, which runs the lab and does all the analysis.

Not all employees have received their contracts. For those who have received contracts, there have been changes. For example, they are not entitled to pension rights; some of them don't even get a return bus fare, which is contrary to the Employment Rights Act. But, worse, Madam Speaker, I have received a letter which was issued on 09 August 2016, where the Special Administrator of Apollo Bramwell Nursing School is writing to one of the staff and saying –

“We regret to inform you that your employment with Apollo Bramwell Nursing School Co. Ltd. is being terminated with immediate effect. This decision has been taken on pure economic grounds.”

So, now this is creating a problem among all the staff because if the Special Administrator is now going to say, “We are terminating on economic grounds”, it means that they won't have much in terms of compensation. So, I would want to....

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, it is signed by the Special Administrator. So, I would humbly request the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, together with his colleague, the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training, to look into the matter to ensure that, as promised, Omega Ark will be taking on board all the staff, all the various people employed at Apollo Hospital.

**The Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Madam Speaker, following, in fact, last Tuesday's question to which I answered, I thereupon asked the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry to seek information with regard to the reemployment of the staff at the Omega Ark.

In fact, I have been given a report. If I had notice, I would have come up with all the information available to me. But, I can recall that there are a number of employees who have already signed a new contract of employment. I was told that they were being given not less favourable terms and conditions of employment. I was also told that because there were, in

certain cases, I'll say, some amendments, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training had been requested to intervene and had given advice in order to see to it that whatever new terms or added terms and conditions that were put, they would not be inconsistent with the employment law.

Therefore, I need to find out if, as the hon. Member is saying, there are cases where new contracts have been offered to some employees, what are the changes that are being proposed and whether they are in line with the employment laws of Mauritius. But I can assure the hon. Member that I will again look into the matter and see to it that, first of all, the interests of the employees are being safeguarded.

I must also add that I had received a letter from the trade unions; I can't recall which one...

*(Interruptions)*

...CTSP, and I have also requested, therefore, the Permanent Secretary to look into all the aspects that they have mentioned in that letter.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

(7.55 p.m.)

#### **MEDICAL STUDENTS – PRE-REGISTRATION EXAMS**

**Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Tonight I will address the issue to the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life. It is in relation to a medical student who has successfully passed her exams of doctor. Her name is Miss Nawsheen Dustagheer. She studied four years in Mauritius and two years in Bordeaux, France.

As the House is aware, a six years degree of MBBS is almost worthless without being a registered doctor in one's own country. So, to become a registered doctor, one has to do 18 months of pre-registration training by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

For Miss Dustagheer's case, she came back in June 2015 and she applied directly for this pre-registration. Unfortunately, at the University of Mauritius, they were very slow in the processing of her document because, as I stated earlier, she studied four years at the

University of Mauritius and she could not retrieve her certificates, thus, she was being penalised by this slow administration because the intake was in October 2015.

I am given to understand that, normally, we have two intakes in a year, but last year there were three intakes, namely in March, May and October 2015. So, clearly since she has been back in June 2015, up to now it has been more than a year she is waiting. She comes from a modest family. She has got a scholarship; she went to the University of Mauritius and some charitable institution paid her studies to finish her exams in Bordeaux. Right now, she is in severe financial distress, and I believe there are other students as well in the same case.

So, the problem they are having also is that there is no communication between the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and these students. They are just being told to wait; so, they are on a standby mode. Also, in the past, when they were being informed it was just two or three days before to report to duty. I don't think it should be the way forward. I will kindly ask the hon. Minister to look into this case specifically and also in all the pending cases.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr A. Gayan):** Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. Member is aware that, in the Budget that we are debating in the House, there is a provision with regard to pre-Reg doctors and one of the conditions for pre-Reg doctors to be allowed to proceed to do their pre-Reg is an entry exam, which everybody will have to sit. We are waiting for the Budget to be over because there will be provisions in the law to provide for the entry exams and this is why it is taking some time. But it is going to happen. She will have the chance to apply and sit for the exam before pre-Reg.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(7.59 p.m.)

#### **FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE –OUTBREAK**

**Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The issue I wanted to raise will be of concern to the hon. Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security and would or may be of concern to the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life. We have been favoured with a long and detailed answer given by Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security with regard to the foot-and-mouth issue in Mauritius and the measures that have been implemented by his Ministry

through his leadership in order to try to ensure that this does not turn out to be a national catastrophe, which it almost is.

I have had information that the Mauritius Meat Producers Association have made a formal request to the authorities that two areas, Vallée des Prêtres and Richelieu, be quarantined as areas because the practice has been, as in the United Kingdom and other countries where the foot-and-mouth disease has existed, that they have quarantined not only where the animals are found, but the whole zone around it and that all people, all vehicles, all equipment entering those zones must be sanitised, disinfected and that the clothes that are worn should not be carried out from within those areas and outside those areas because it would be sufficient for the virus to be carried on clothes to contaminate other animals.

So, the deer in Mauritius are at risk and also all the other four-legged animals, cattle and herds in Mauritius are at risk. My request, therefore, is that if the hon. Minister could look into this request of the Mauritius Meat Producers Association because they have made that request and, unfortunately, it has not been implemented as yet. As we speak today, there are no quarantined geographical zones as such and, therefore, we stand today on the brink of a total disaster with regard to the foot-and-mouth disease because, as we have seen in other countries, we have the benefit of experience now, when it starts somewhere, it is difficult to stop it unless drastic, herculean measures are implemented.

We are on the brink of a total breakdown and meltdown of this sector. That is why my humble request is that if the hon. Minister could please look into it, for us not to have a repeat situation where cattle is allowed to be disembarked, when the Minister, himself, knows that his services have asked that it should not be sent to Mauritius. But, still, in spite of that, it was sent and allowed to be disembarked into Mauritius. Cattle from Mauritius should not, first of all, have gone there without going through quarantine. Because this is also the information I have. It left Mauritius and went to Rodrigues and did not go through quarantine in Rodrigues. So, this is my request.

**The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Seeruttun):** Madam Speaker, let me just reiterate to the House again that we, at the level of the Ministry, at the level of the Department of the Veterinary Services, have been taking all the necessary precautions to ensure that this disease does not spread all over the island. There were two sites which we localised, where there had been the outbreak of that particular disease. One was at the Richelieu quarantine site of the Ministry, where there was a consignment from

Rodrigues that came on 01 August that was taken in charge by the officers of my Ministry to, in fact, isolate those cattle, and then we proceeded with the culling of all the cattle that came in that consignment.

There was one consignment that came on 15 July whereby at the time when it arrived, no one was made aware of that disease that had been detected in Rodrigues. Those who imported the animals had taken them to their different farms. We had been able to localise all the animals that were sent to the different farms, and we identified 19 farms where they had been sent. Of those 19 farms, we had put in place different teams to supervise and ensure that the diseases are not affecting those animals. In only one farm, we discovered that the disease was manifested, and that was in Vallée des Prêtres.

As soon as we were made aware of that, we secured that area within a radius of 3 km. But we must also be aware of the fact that here, in Mauritius, we do not have farms like we have in other countries, that is, secured farms. We see the cattle grazing on the slope of the mountains, i.e. in open fields. That's why we have as at to date proceeded with the culling of the animals in two farms in that area. We have located 60 farms in the regions of Vallée des Prêtres, Cité La Cure and the surrounding regions. When we talk about farms, we are talking about some having maybe two animals and some farms with more.

We have also come up with the number of different animals that they have in each farm and we are looking about their state of health. So, the question of whether we have isolated the area, I must say that we have people there who are in contact almost every day with those farmers to see to it that there is no spread of that disease elsewhere.

With regard to the protective measures, the vehicles that go there are being sprayed for disinfection. The officers of my Ministry who go in the different farms go there with protective clothing. Once they get out of one farm, they destroy the whole clothing that they have on them so that they do not take that virus with them and go elsewhere.

With regard to the Mauritius Meat Producers Association, we have set up a Crisis Committee. They form part of that Committee, where they can express their views and concerns. We are addressing their concerns and the views that they are expressing. So, we are taking all the measures that we feel that are necessary to contain that disease, and we do not want it to go to other parts of the island. Rest assured that we are taking all the necessary precautions. I am also glad to inform the House that we have got the results of the test that

we sent abroad to confirm the strains of the virus. It is confirmed that it is from strains known as SAT 1, SAT 2 and SAT 3, which originated from South Africa. We had already ordered 10,000 vaccines, which are coming tomorrow. We are going straightaway to proceed with the vaccination campaign in Mauritius and in Rodrigues.

The hon. Member may rest assured that we are doing everything that we can in our capacity to ensure that this problem is contained and not spread all over the island.

*At 8.07 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 12 August 2015 at 3.00 p.m.*