



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 05 APRIL 2016

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Members

THE CABINET**(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 of Finance and Economic Development, 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. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, GCSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Youth and Sports
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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
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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

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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

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 02 of 2016

Sitting of 05 April 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)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. **Prime Minister's Office** –

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (Repeal) Bill (No. III of 2016) (In Original)
- (b) The Annual Report 2014 of the Gambling Regulatory Authority.
- (c) The Digest of International Travel and Tourism Statistics 2014.
- (d) The Securities (Brokerage Fees for Exchange Traded Funds on Foreign Underlyings (Amendment) Rules 2016 (Government Notice No.42 of 2016).

B. **Ministry of Health and Quality of Life** –

The Annual Report 2014 of the Mauritius Institute of Health. (In Original)

C. **Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection** –

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 40 of 2016)
- (b) The Consumer Protection (Scrap Metal) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 41 of 2016)

D. **Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions** –

- (a) The Annual Report 2014 of the National Solidarity Fund.
- (b) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Pension Fund for the 18-month period ended 31 December 2010.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ROAD ACCIDENT - HON. T. HENRY - INQUIRY

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the road accident which has cost Mr S. A. his life, on Saturday last, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -
 - (i) the time at which -
 - A. the accident was reported, indicating the names of the Police Officers involved in relation thereto;
 - B. Mrs V. H. was arrested;
 - C. Mrs V. H. confessed that she had not been driving, and
 - D. Mrs V. H. was transferred to a clinic;
 - (ii) why hon. Joseph Hugo Thierry Henry, MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary, was not arrested, indicating if he refused to undergo an alcohol test, and
 - (iii) if there has been any political interference in the inquiry being carried out thereinto, and
- (b) state if hon. Joseph Hugo Thierry Henry has stepped down as Parliamentary Private Secretary.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I would like first of all to present my sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Mr Stephane André who lost his life in the road accident at Bois Marchand on Saturday last.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a)(i)A of the Private Notice Question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Sunday 03 April 2016, at about 00 15 hours, Mrs V. H. called the Police Information and Operation Room and informed that the car she was driving had met with an accident along the New Trunk Road, near the entrance of Arsenal.

Police Inspector Mootia along with Police Constables Jeewon, Emambux and Gokhool of Terre Rouge Police Station attended the case. The accident had occurred near the flyover along the new Trunk Road, Bois Marchand involving Government vehicle bearing Registration No. T1219, make BMW, allocated to hon. Thierry Henry, Parliamentary Private Secretary. Mrs V. H. stated that she was the driver of car T1219 and she was driving towards the North when suddenly an unknown male person crossed the road in front of her from the left side. At that time she was driving along the fast lane of the road when she knocked against the pedestrian. SAMU was called on the accident spot and the Medical Officer certified the death of the victim on the spot. The body was removed to SSR National Hospital.

In regard to part (a)(i)B of the question, Mrs V. H. was arrested at 02 24 hours on 03 April 2016.

In regard to part (a)(i)C of the question, Mrs V. H. confessed at 12 10 hours on 04 April 2016 that she had not been driving the car.

As for part (a)(i)D of the question, according to the Police, Mrs V. H. declared that she was not feeling well and was about to faint. She was consequently taken to SSRN Hospital at 03 00 hours on 03 April 2016. At her request, she was transferred to *Clinique du Nord* at 03 44 hours.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a)(ii) of the question, hon. Henry was not arrested because Mrs V. H. confessed to the Police that she was driving the car at the time of the accident.

However, given there was suspicion that hon. Henry could have been the driver, Police requested him to undergo an alcohol test which he refused on the ground that Mrs V.H. was driving the car.

At the material time, Police warned hon. Henry of the offence of refusing to undergo an alcohol test.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a)(iii) of the question, I have been told that there has been absolutely no political interference in the inquiry nor will I allow any.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a provisional charge of “obstructing a Police Officer in the

performance of his duties” has been lodged against Mrs V. H. Section 3(1)(a) of the Public Officers Protection Act reads as follows -

I quote -

“(1) Any person who, by force or violence, resists, opposes, molests, hinders or obstructs a -

(a) public officer in the performance of his duty;

shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 10,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months.”

Hon. Henry called at the Terre Rouge Police Station on Sunday 03 April 2016 at 16 10 hours accompanied by his lawyer and he confessed being the driver of car T1219 at the time of the accident. Hon. Henry was then detained at Pointe aux Cannoniers Police Station on a charge of “involuntary homicide by imprudence”.

He appeared before Pamplemousses District Court the following day and he was provisionally charged for “involuntary homicide by imprudence”. He was released on bail upon furnishing a surety of Rs50,000 and recognizance of Rs100,000.

Section 239 of the Criminal Code provides as follows -

I quote -

“(1) Any person who, by unskillfulness, imprudence, want of caution, negligence or non-observance of regulations, involuntarily commits homicide, or is the unwilling cause of homicide shall be punished by imprisonment and by a fine not exceeding 150,000 rupees.

(2) Where wounds or blows only have ensued, the punishment shall be a fine not exceeding 100,000 rupees and imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year.”

Since the inquiry is still ongoing and besides the fact that the pedestrian crossed the road in front of the car, there is no other evidence to the contrary, therefore the issue of requesting hon. Henry to step down does not arise.

I wish to state that an enquiry has been initiated by the Police which will establish all the relevant facts and it will be for the DPP and, eventually, the Court, in case of prosecution, to determine whether any criminal offence has been committed.

Madam Speaker, I reiterate that whoever errs, will be dealt with by the appropriate independent institutions so that justice and truth prevails. I wish to reassure the House that there will be no political interference and that the Police will carry out the inquiry in all independence, as it should be.

Mr Bérenger: Of course, I renew the expression of my sympathy to the family of the young deceased. If I can start with the Police, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister gave the names of those who turned up on the spot. Can I know who is in charge of the enquiry as a whole?

The Prime Minister: Well, I don't have the information here. I have the names of all the Police Officers who went there and no mention is made as to who is in charge of the enquiry.

Mr Bérenger: As far as the coming of the Police on the spot, can I know, because I did not hear the Rt. hon. Prime Minister say at what time the Police was on the spot, how much time went by? How long did it take the Police as from the phone call to be on the spot?

The Prime Minister: I understand as soon as the phone call was made, instructions were given to the Police to go on the spot and to enquire.

Mr Bérenger: How long it took?

The Prime Minister: I don't have the exact time, how many minutes elapsed.

Mr Bérenger: We heard how the PPS - I would wish I could say former PPS - Henry refused to undergo an alco test and what took place; we have just heard. Can I know the name of the Police Officer who decided not to arrest him, the Officer-in-Charge who decided not to arrest him?

The Prime Minister: Well, from what I have been given to understand is that Temporary Inspector Mootia, who was at the Head of the team that went there, naturally must have decided not to arrest hon. Henry because he refused to allow alcohol test to be effected and I can't see why he should be blamed, because if he was not driving, whether he was under influence of drink or not, it does not matter.

Mr Bérenger: I suppose that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister - I suppose - will agree with me that the whole purpose of that lying criminally to the Police, lying to say that it is his

spouse who was driving, getting away with it, not being arrested, allowed him to go away *de cuver son vin* for more than 20 hours and to come back later when he would have *cuvé son vin*, will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister agree with me that this is what took place?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

The Prime Minister: Well, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has misconceived things, what really happened. I have been told that as soon as the Police arrived there, it was the wife of hon. Henry who came forward herself, voluntarily and she said: "I was driving the car." Therefore, there was no question of hon. Henry telling the Police, at that time, that his wife was driving the car.

Mr Bérenger: May I remind the Rt. hon. Prime Minister that he, himself, said that the Police had strong suspicion that PPS Henry was lying and, therefore, it was when there was a suspicion, that they asked him to undergo an alco test. He has just said that!

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Mr Bérenger: Now, since there was suspicion, I would wish to know whether the Police took the trouble to check whether she was allowed, because this is a Government car under the responsibility of a PPS, as per regulations - because they had suspicion - to drive that car.

The Prime Minister: Whether she was allowed or not, that is another matter. But suspicion, is it enough to allow Police to arrest a person? Well, I say no!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: I am not surprised that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister said: "No". For some, if the provisional charge - hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, he would ask him to step down, but he has three provisional charges and he congratulates him! Can I know, Madam Speaker, how this went on; who came forward to say: "No, in fact, I was driving", meaning the spouse of the PPS? Do we have the time? I didn't hear the Rt. hon. Prime Minister give us the time, but how did this take place and who was the Police Officer in charge when that episode took place?

The Prime Minister: I have said that there was Inspector Mootia. I suppose he was the person to whom she must have come forward and said voluntarily that she was driving the car.

Mr Bérenger: Till the time when the spouse confessed that she had not been driving and the time when PPS Henry turned up at the Police station, what did the Police do? Did they try to find out where he was? Did they try to arrest him? What took place?

The Prime Minister: Well, I can't see the reasoning. Why should the Police try to arrest him? Unless they had evidence that he was driving and when there was evidence that he was driving, Police took action. So, what more do we want?

Mr Bérenger: No, the point in time when the spouse confessed and the point in time when he turned up at the Police, what happened during that period?

The Prime Minister: Well, the wife confessed some time in the morning and in the afternoon, he turned up and he confessed that he was driving.

Mr Bérenger: Shame! The Rt. hon. Prime Minister has told us that there has been no political interference. Can I know whether he checked whether any VVIPs, Ministers called on PPS Henry when he was under arrest?

The Prime Minister: I am not an enquiring officer.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet! Hon. Members, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, please don't get excited! The hon. Leader of the Opposition has asked a question, that's his right; the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is replying and that's his right too. Allow him to reply!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I know only what the Commissioner of Police has told me.

Mr Bérenger: I pointed out when hon. Dayal was asked to step down, that leaders from the MSM Party expressed their *solidarité* with him. Does he find it proper that in

Court, on Monday, some of his Ministers turned up in Court to show solidarity with that kind of behaviour?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I was not present there. I don't know who was there, who turned up, who turned out....

(Interruptions)

...who turned down! I don't know!

Mr Bérenger: You don't want to know. That is the truth! We heard what provisional charges have been laid against PPS Henry. Can we know why minor charges have been laid, but, in fact, PPS Henry and his spouse conspired to pervert the course of justice? Conspiracy! The Police is very strong at finding everybody guilty of conspiracy all over the place and arrest and in this case, it is so clear that there was a conspiracy between those two. Firstly, the spouse said she was driving. The other one refuses the alco test, then he goes away for long hours, then the story changes. Why not the charge of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Leader of the Opposition should have been the Chief Justice of this country.

(Interruptions)

For there to be conspiracy, there must be proof of an agreement between the two parties...

(Interruptions)

Where was the agreement? Where was the evidence that there was...

(Interruptions)

When Police arrived, the wife came forward and she said she was driving. Where is the evidence of a conspiracy in this case?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Question is being put, it is so obvious for anybody who wants to see that there was a conspiracy between PPS Henry and his wife; what she would say at first and what would be said later on and so on. It is absolutely clear, since you have asked! I find it shameful that we should get this kind of reply today.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Gayan, please!

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he has checked, and, if yes, if we can have the details of any previous conviction by PPS Henry?

The Prime Minister: Well, at this juncture, what has previous conviction to do! It is only when there is a case, when there is a conviction, it is only then that the previous conviction comes into play. So, why should I worry myself in finding whether there has been previous conviction or not?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: The question is not only what charge will finally be put by the DPP. The Police clearly are messing up the case by putting very minor charges. But as a Prime Minister - a case like that, Government property is damaged by the PPS who lies criminally, his spouse and himself, so it is not just a question of what charge will be put, how the case will go – doesn't he feel that he should be asked to step down? He is going to drive another car and kill somebody else! He should be asked to step down as PPS, pending the enquiry being completed and the case in Court.

The Prime Minister: I am really ashamed of the attitude of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

The Prime Minister: Because there is a car belonging to Government damaged, therefore, he should have been locked up. What nonsense!

(Interruptions)

What nonsense!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Yes. Hon. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As per my information, there were two other persons in the car. Will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister confirm same? I would also like to know whether these two persons were called to give a statement.

The Prime Minister: I know there were other persons in the car. I think there were about four in all, but whether the Police has so far taken any statement from the others or not, it is still inquiring into the case.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. After coming into power, this Government went at great length to prosecute the former Prime Minister for Roches Noires because there was agreement to pervert the course of justice. Today, we hear in this House that one PPS lied to the Police, his wife lied to the Police about the death of a person. So, will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister inform the House why this *deux poids deux mesures*, when it comes to one of their midst, there is no conspiracy charges, they are minor offences, and when it comes to the former Prime Minister, then there is a conspiracy charge?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhadain!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I have been passed on...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, please!

(Interruptions)

Please! The Rt. hon. Prime Minister is standing to reply to the question, please allow him to reply.

The Prime Minister: I have been given a list of the persons who were present. There were hon. Thierry Henry, Mrs Henry, Jacques Didier John Duval, Mrs Fiona Caroline Sinapen, Mrs Vicky Caroline Henry and also one Jean-François Moutia.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, since he has said himself that the inquiry is still on, why is it that the hon. PPS has been released only the next day since the inquiry is still on, especially in view of the fact - I wish to draw the attention of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to that - that the Police, since the beginning of this year, has taken a policy decision of keeping in detention those who are suspected of having committed voluntary homicide? I know of a case where a lady driver had been detained for 10 days when she was suspected of having committed the case of involuntary homicide. This is the practice of the policy of the Police now, why in such a case, compared to the lady who was detained for 10 days, who was not under the influence of alcohol and released before Bambous District Court - I have the cause number and I can give it to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister - hon. Henry was released only the next day when the inquiry was not over yet?

The Prime Minister: I don't know the circumstances in which the lady driver, mentioned by the hon. Member, was kept for 10 days. If she didn't do the needful, she didn't ask to be bailed out, it's not my problem. But, in this case, I see no justification why the person should have been kept in jail or in custody, and after all, bail was granted by the Court.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Without the Police objecting to bail, now he has the cheek to come and hide behind the Police! Madam Speaker, I'll conclude with one last question. It's clear what took place. It's clear that both PPS Henry and his wife lied so that he would not be arrested, he refused to undergo an alcotest, disappeared for long hours to *cover son vin* and then came back himself and his spouse to say that they had lied and to break the truth. The same PPS is on bail now even if the charges are minor compared to what we are talking about. Therefore, will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister tell the country whether he will reconsider and have the PPS, at least, step down, now that he is on bail, after having admitted to have lied criminally about this death of a young person in that road accident?

The Prime Minister: That they both lied, there is no doubt. But, is that enough, would that warrant the Police Officer to keep them in custody. I don't think so.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

The Prime Minister: But so far as I am concerned, asking the PPS to step down, I have said it, I am waiting for the inquiry. When there is a case, then I will ask him to step down, but so far, from what I know, from the evidence that there is, what I have been told by the Police is that the person negligently crossed the road in front of the car. So, if that is true and if that is established, I can't see how, for the homicide, hon. Henry can be blamed.

Madam Speaker: If there is no other question, hon. Members, since there is a question on the Order Paper concerning me personally, I would request the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question B/136 with regard to Ms Y. C., Director of the Independent Broadcasting Authority and addressed to the hon. Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation will now be replied by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, time permitting. Parliamentary Question B/90 with regard to the Land Research and Mediation Unit and addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will now be replied by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications. Hon. Jhugroo!

BANKS - SKIMMED/CLONED CARDS

(No. B/80) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the recent detected cases of skimmed/cloned cards, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, indicating the –

- (a) number of –
 - (i) banks and clients concerned therewith, and
 - (ii) arrests effected in connection therewith, if any –
- (b) total amount of money defrauded, and
- (c) preventive measures taken in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from January 2015 to 01 April 2016 one case involving cloned cards and two cases related to skimmed cards were reported to the Police.

In regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed that three banks are concerned with those cases. As far as the number of clients is concerned, I understand from the Commissioner of Police that the cases were reported by the banks and not the clients, and the banks have not disclosed information in relation to the clients as such information is of a confidential nature.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as for part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed that seven persons of foreign nationality were arrested in those cases.

Two of them have been sentenced to one year imprisonment for having breached section 10(a) of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act. Four others, who are provisionally charged for unauthorised interception of data under section 5(b) of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act, have been remanded to jail since 19 August 2015. After completion of the enquiry, the Police have submitted their case files to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice on 16 March 2016. The remaining one has also been provisionally charged for unauthorised interception of data under section 5 (b) of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act, and Police enquiry is still underway.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the accused persons were not able to defraud money.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, the Police have taken the following preventive measures -

- (i) foot and mobile patrols have been intensified near banking institutions;
- (ii) Field Intelligence Officers are keeping vigilance over Automated Teller Machines;
- (iii) the Passport and Immigration Officer is working closely with INTERPOL to track persons wanted for cybercrimes;
- (iv) Bank Managers have been advised to carry out daily viewing of CCTV footage captured near Automated Teller Machines, and
- (v) awareness campaigns are being conducted to sensitise people on the way they could mitigate the risks of their cards being wrongly used.

I have also been informed that banks on their parts have initiated the process of replacing the existing cards with chip-based safer cards and one of them has installed in its Automated Teller Machines, the Jitter technology which works as the anti-skimming device. I hope that other banks will follow suit.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister state whether the Police Department had taken up this matter with the relevant international agencies with regard to foreigners involved in the cloning of credit cards in Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: I think I have just stated in my answer that the Police is taking all steps, including having information from abroad, in order to deal with such matters.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

PORT LOUIS – CCTV STREET SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

(No. B/81) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if he is aware of the poor recordings during night-time of the Closed Circuit Television Street Surveillance System installed thereat, which result from the inadequate street lighting thereat and from the fact that the said CCTV Street Surveillance System is not equipped with infra-red cameras and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/358 on 01 September 2015, wherein I informed that, in regard to the CCTV Street Surveillance System in Port Louis, a new video management software had been commissioned by the Police on 15 December 2014. This new system comprises, *inter alia*, the installation of infra-red illuminators at strategic locations where poor images were reported at night.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 82 Full HD Low Light Fixed Cameras and 19 infra-red illuminators have been installed in November and December 2015 respectively, in regions of Port Louis where there was report of poor street lighting.

I am further informed that following representations made by the Police to the City Council of Port Louis regarding inadequate luminosity in certain places, a joint survey was carried out on 14 January 2016 by Officers of the Police Communication Branch and the City Council. Subsequently, 205 sites were identified for additional street lighting. I understand that the City Council of Port Louis has initiated procedures for the acquisition of 300 LED lamps to replace the conventional lanterns.

According to the Police, the 272 CCTV cameras installed in Port Louis are operational and the quality of their recording will be further improved following the installation of LED lamps.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: M. le président, est-ce que le Premier ministre est au courant que d'après un article du «Défi Plus» du samedi 13 février 2016, sur les 272 caméras mentionnées, il n'y a que 10% de ces caméras qui sont installées avec des infrarouges ce qui fait qu'avec une luminosité insuffisante le soir, ils n'arrivent pas à distinguer les visages des gens et que beaucoup de ces caméras sont installées à des places stratégiques telles que le bâtiment du Trésor, le bureau du Premier ministre, le Parlement, la Place D'armes là où il y a plusieurs banques ? Est-ce que le Premier ministre est au courant de cet état de lieu ?

The Prime Minister: I don't take into account whatever newspapers publish!

(Interruptions)

Mr Collendavelloo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I raise on a point of order because this is becoming a habit? Under the Standing Orders, one cannot quote a newspaper article or a press article to form the substance of a question. So, all these questions should be ruled out of order as soon as they are formulated. This is Standing Order 22.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister is right. According to Standing Orders 22 (1) (l) –

“a question shall not be asked whether statements in the press or of private individuals or unofficial bodies are accurate;”

However, I have to say that I have not fully heard the question of the hon. Member whether he has asked about this accurateness. If the House will allow me, later on to look at the transcript but, as a matter of practice it is out of order to ask whether a statement of the press is accurate.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member did not ask the hon. Prime Minister whether that press report was accurate. He said: what is the state of affairs?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, as I said, I will have a look at the recording. I have not heard fully the question of hon. Ameer Meea and I would give a ruling later on. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I go according to your ruling. But within the answer that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister just gave he himself said that there are 272 cameras that were installed in Port Louis. According to my information, these cameras do not have *infrarouge* and these cameras are being placed *at bâtiment Trésor, le Parlement, la Place D'armes, là où il y a plusieurs banques*. So, I am asking the Rt. hon. Prime Minister what is the state of affairs and what is he doing to remedy the situation?

The Prime Minister: I have stated to the House the information that has been passed on to me. I have not gone on the spot to enquire. It is not my job!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The subject of poor recordings will be enhanced, according to the reply of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, following the installation of LED lights. May I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister the time frame with which this will be done?

The Prime Minister: Well, I can't say the time frame, but I hope it should be done as soon as possible.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, a last supplementary!

Mr Jhugroo: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister confirm whether before purchasing these CCTV cameras there have been tender procedures and as there have been professionals dealing with this, so how come the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will know whether in the specifications there have been infra-red or not?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister care to answer?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am afraid I can't answer such questions.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

Mr Rutnah: On a point of order, by virtue of section 22 (n) of the Standing Orders, any matter arising within the jurisdiction of the Speaker cannot be questioned. If today we will allow this question to pursue it will be a dangerous precedent for the democracy!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

Allow me to answer!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah, I have listened to your point of order. There was no question put to me with regard to this.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: I have already said it, PQ No. B/82! The hon. Member is making us lose our time! There was another more important question.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

PORT LOUIS MARITIME & PORT LOUIS EAST - FLOOD-PRONE AREAS

(No. B/82) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Constituency No. 3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, he will state if the National Development Unit has carried out a survey to identify the flood-prone areas thereat at times of heavy rainfalls and, if so, indicate the areas concerned therewith and the preventive measures taken or that will be taken to avert the recurrence of floods thereat, if any.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reply I made to Parliamentary Question B/318 of 28 April 2015 still holds.

For financial year 2015-2016, the National Development Unit has awarded 3 Works Orders on 05 February 2016 for drain projects for a total amount of Rs13.7 m. The locations are as follows -

- (i) Desbouchers Street, Roche Bois;
- (ii) Imam Bocus Sobdar (Ex Corps de Garde) Street, Plaine Verte, and
- (iii) Mario Flore Street, Roche Bois.

These projects were initiated on the basis of complaints received from the inhabitants and surveys effected by NDU technical officers. The implementation of these three projects has started in March 2016 and is expected to be completed by June 2016.

Furthermore, the NDU is also shortly awarding Consultancy contracts for the study, design and supervision of drain projects at -

- (a) Oscar Grandcourt from Route des Pamplemousses to A. R. Nawab Street, Plaine Verte, and
- (b) Jardin Despaux from Route des Pamplemousses to Canal Bathurst, Plaine Verte.

In addition, further drain projects are to be initiated in the regions of Cité Martial, St François, Camp Yoloff, Roche Bois and Plaine Verte as from July 2016.

All these NDU drain projects will hopefully alleviate flood problems in Constituency No. 3.

Mr Rutnah: Now, I rise properly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on the point that I made earlier on that by virtue of section 22(n) of the Standing Orders, this question cannot be asked, and if we allow this question today, it will set a dangerous precedent....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea! Hon. Baloomoody! A question has been asked to me. Are you the Speaker of this House? Let me answer! Hon. Rutnah, the Speaker has accepted and has allowed for this question to be put on the Order Paper. It has, therefore, been allowed ...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea!

MADAM SPEAKER – OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. B/83) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to each of the overseas missions undertaken by Madam Speaker since her election to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain a list thereof, indicating in each case the –

- (a) countries visited and composition of the delegation;
- (b) purpose and duration thereof, and
- (c) total amount of money spent in terms of air tickets, per diem and other allowances.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member should know that there is a separation of powers between the Executive and the Legislature.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo! I will not tolerate any interruptions! Hon. Ameer Meea has asked a question. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister rose to answer the question. If you are not interested with the answer and if you are going to interrupt proceedings, we will move on to the next question. Rt. hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Well, the hon. Member should know that there is a separation of powers between the Executive and the Legislature. This question raises an issue which falls squarely under the control of the Legislature, which, in our constitutional set up, is independent from the Executive. Moreover, the Legislature and the Executive are subjects of different chapters of our Constitution.

Having said so, it is a well-known constitutional principle that the office of the Speaker is independent. I have neither control nor responsibility on overseas missions, and the decision to accept or refuse an invitation to attend a conference rests solely with the Speaker acting in her own wisdom, and taking into consideration different factors. The Executive has nothing to do and cannot interfere in the decision of the Speaker in the exercise of her duties. Therefore, my interference in matters under the control of the Speaker would be against the principle of separation of powers as enshrined in our Constitution. To this end, it is worth referring to what obtains in the UK House of Commons and the Lok Sabha.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No interruptions, please!

The Prime Minister: In the House of Commons, questions dealing with matters under the jurisdiction of the Speaker must be taken in private with the Speaker. In the Lok Sabha, questions on matters which come under the administrative control of the Speaker are disallowed.

In the present case, the House may wish to know that the Speaker has used her discretion, despite the provision of our Standing Orders, to allow the Question.

Mr Ameer Meea: Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that this matter is in line with budgeting? We have voted this figure in this Parliament and we are talking about public funds. This Government has stressed about good governance and now we are covering the Speaker by not giving this figure.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, if you want to ...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, I am standing up! If you are going to question the Speaker's conduct, you may do so with a substantive motion. I will disallow any further question which relates to this.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with due respect, I did not do that. I am just asking that we are using public funds for it. We are just scrutinising what has been voted in the Budget. This is my point. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that the Speaker has travelled 11 times and five times she has brought her spouse with her....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, I disallow this question!

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he should have taken it with the Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

MAUBANK – LOANS RECOVERY

(No. B/84) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the toxic loans of the former Mauritius Post Co-operative Bank, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the MauBank, information as to where matters stand as to the recovery thereof, especially, those granted to Mr R. G., indicating the total amount thereof recovered as at to date.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by MauBank Ltd that a dedicated team has been set up to take all necessary steps for the speedy recovery of the long outstanding loans at the bank.

Those measures include debt restructuring, appointment of Receiver Managers/Consultants, forced sale of assets and other appropriate legal actions.

I am informed by MauBank Ltd that, as at 01 April 2016, out of Rs1.7 billion of toxic loans, some Rs337 m. has been recovered and recovery actions are still underway.

As regards the request for information concerning the account of Mr R. G., I have been advised that it will not be legally in order to disclose information on individual bank accounts.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he will direct these MauBank people to make no favour to anybody specially to Mr R. G. concerning the recovery of a toxic loan as said by Mr 'Razor' here?

The Prime Minister: As I said, the process is still on. Of course, whoever owes money to the bank, that money must be recovered. There should be no exception.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, as at to date, how much money the Government has injected in MauBank to recover all these toxic assets?

The Prime Minister: I need a specific question for that.

Mr Bhagwan: May I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether Mr R. G. has benefitted from any special favour through any Minister or Mr 'Razor', who is not here - special razor - for having loans with other banks to pay the MauBank?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister make special enquiry with regard to interference of Mr 'Razor' in all the accounts of Mr R. G?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I disallow this question. Hon. Bhagwan, next question!

The Prime Minister: I'll become an enquiring officer!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Okip Razoir!*

(Interruptions)

Gueter pas koze are moi toi hein !

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Are moi pas roder papa!* PQ No. B/85.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, allow the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to reply! Have some respect!

MBC - DIRECTOR GENERAL - POST

(No. B/85) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the post of Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the date on which the vacancy therefor occurred, indicating, since then -

- (a) the name of the person who has been acting as Officer-in-Charge of the Corporation and the additional remuneration paid thereto therefor, if any, and
- (b) if procedures for the filling of the vacancy therefor have been initiated and, if so, indicate when and where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQs No. B/85 and No. B/86 at the same time, as they both relate to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation.

Sir, in regard to PQ No. B/85, I am informed by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the post of Director-General of the Corporation is vacant since 24 August 2015.

In regard to part (a) of the question, Mrs S.F.C.K.S., Team Leader, Finance and Marketing, was acting as Officer in Charge of the MBC in the absence of a Director.

With the approval of the MBC Board, Mrs S.F.C.K.S. was drawing a monthly allowance of Rs50,000 for shouldering additional responsibilities at the level of Director.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Corporation that the vacancy of the post of Director-General was advertised in the local press and on the website of the MBC between 28 August 2015 and 04 September 2015. The closing date for the submission of applications was 10 September 2015.

In response to the advertisement, 20 candidates submitted their applications for the post of Director General.

I am further informed by the Corporation that the Board did not proceed with the filling of the vacancy as none of the candidates met the required profile.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to PQ No. B/86, I am informed by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the Report of Mr R.J. on the Investigation into the Financial Situation at the MBC was submitted in two parts, namely –

- (i) investigation into the payment of a golden handshake compensation to the then Director-General, Mr D.C., and
- (ii) the Findings, Analysis and Recommendations on -
 - (a) the causes of the deteriorating financial situation and any case of mismanagement and financial malpractice since 2010;
 - (b) the recruitment made since 2010, and
 - (c) the procurements made and contracts entered into since 2010.

The second part of Mr R.J.'s Report has shed light on the mismanagement of the Corporation by the former Director-General who had the blessing of the then Prime Minister and the previous MBC Board which condoned all his doings.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the contract of employment of the Team Leader, Finance and Marketing has been terminated today, and my Office has already arranged for the temporary posting of Mr Dharamraj Paligadu, Director, Economic and Finance, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, to perform the duties of Officer in Charge of the Corporation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to reiterate that the reconstitution of the MBC Board, as well as the filling of the vacancy for the post of Director-General of the Corporation will be done very shortly.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister if we can have the name and status of the Chairperson of the MBC at present chairing the Board of the MBC and whether there is any non-civil servant present on the Board of the MBC today?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have just been informed about Mr A. Fokeer, Permanent Secretary. I suppose he is the Chairman of the Board.

Mr Bérenger: I would like to know whether there is any private sector, private people or they are all civil servants.

The Prime Minister: There is no private sector appointed yet.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I have two supplementary questions. Being given that there is no Director-General - we will have a new one and this is good news. That lady was in connivance with Mr Hitler then; Mr Callikan alias Hitler - can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, on a day to day basis, his Senior Advisor, Mr Beekharry, is giving directives to the MBC/TV for the preparation of news? I give one example. Yesterday's prime time news, everybody in Mauritius was interested with what will happen with the case of Mr 'Razor', Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo. That judgment of Justice Caunhye was deliberately omitted in all the news of the MBC/TV - 7.00, 7.30 and even 8 o'clock. Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister at least inform the House whether there were directives given by a Senior Advisor not to give news on the judgment of Justice Caunhye?

The Prime Minister: That is not correct.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just a point of clarity. Is that a fact that, as at present, the Chairperson and Officer in Charge of the MBC are public officers, namely Mr Fokeer and Mr Paligadu respectively? Is that correct?

The Prime Minister: Mr Fokeer is a public officer; he is Permanent Secretary!

Mr Mahomed: Mr Paligadu as well.

The Prime Minister: I think both of them.

Mrs Selvon: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the Rt. hon. Prime Minister state the reasons why, since independence to date, the MBC has never been truly independent from the Government of the day, especially regarding the news reporting?

The Prime Minister: I think Members on the other side are in a better position to answer this.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, I will allow you a last supplementary. Very quick, because time is running out.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he will give assurance to the House that his Senior Adviser, Mr Beekharry, won't interfere in the day to day affairs of the MBC/TV?

(Interruptions)

Ki to problem? Let the Rt. hon. Prime Minister reply!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, I have allowed you a question though time has run out because you had asked me earlier. Don't waste the time of the House! Thank you. Rt. hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: I have no information that he is interfering.

MBC – FINANCE DEPARTMENT - REPORT

(No. B/86) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the actions taken following the submission of the Report of Mr R. J. in relation thereto, especially regarding the issue of mismanagement in the Finance Department thereof, including if any action has been initiated against the Head of the said department and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/85)

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Time is over! Hon. Members, PQ No. B/88 has been withdrawn as well as PQ No. B/136.

MAHEBOURG & PLAINE MAGNIEN - DRAINS

(No. B/104) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, he will state if any survey has been carried out of the drains which have been covered by the sugar estates during the mechanization process and which have become the causes of floods during heavy rainfalls and, if so, indicate the findings and recommendations thereof.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that my Ministry has not been involved in any survey nor is in the presence of any reports on drains which may have been covered by the sugar estates during the mechanisation process or which might have been the causes of flooding during heavy rainfalls.

I am also informed that based on areas affected by flooding during heavy rainfall of February 2016, we have only the regions of Gros Billot and Rose Belle as nearest places reported to have encountered flooding.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Will the hon. Minister take up the matter with the relevant sugar estates pertaining to the flood prone areas like Mare Tabac, Plein Bois and Trois Boutiques which are mainly due to the mechanisation process which have eliminated the natural drains?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is proposed to convene sugar estates concerned to a meeting on Monday, 11 April 2016.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, next question!

PUBLIC BEACHES - TOILETS - CLEANING & MAINTENANCE

(No. B/105) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the public beaches, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Beach Authority, a list of the contract for the cleaning and maintenance of toilets thereat, indicating in each case the

-

(a) name of the contractor therefor;

- (b) period of contract thereof;
- (c) cost thereof, and
- (d) procedures followed for the allocation thereof.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that contracts for the cleaning and maintenance of public beaches, including cleaning and maintenance of toilet blocks are awarded by my Ministry and the services provided by the cleaning contractors are supervised by the Beach Authority.

With regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, I am tabling the requested information.

As for part (d) of the question, all contracts awarded by my Ministry are on the basis of competitive bidding exercises and procedures followed are in accordance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act 2008 and directives issued by the Procurement Policy Office.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Minister aware that some public toilets found on the beaches of Le Morne, Flic-en-Flac and Blue Bay are not properly maintained, rendering this inappropriate for public use, and also is there any supervision on behalf of officers of the Beach Authority?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: As far as I am concerned, I am not aware of this but I will look into the matter surely.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. From the reply of the hon. Minister, it sounded to me that the contract covers the beach, including toilets. Is that correct, maintenance for the beach including toilets? So, that being the case, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether maintenance of trees also forms part of that contract? To rest my case, there were replacement of filao trees which were falling down by coconut trees and these same coconut trees - several figures have been mentioned, millions and so forth - are now also dying out. So, what action is being taken if that falls under their contract?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: As far as I am informed, the contracts are different on different beaches. Sometimes the contracts are only for the cleaning and maintenance of the

toilets and some are often for the cleaning of the beaches and refuse collections. So, we have to look into it and see who has got the responsibility to do these actions.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, last supplementary!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister ask the Beach Authority to make provision for two tanks; one on the first floor and one on the ground, equipped with a water pump in each public toilet found on beaches so as to cater for a regular water supply, because we have a very big problem in the western part of the country where we do not have a proper water supply?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I welcome the hon. Member for the proposals and I will see if we can do a better service in the future.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question! Hon. Ameer Meea!

PORT LOUIS – HAWKERS - RELOCATION

(No. B/106) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the relocation of the hawkers operating in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to where matters stand.

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made on 01 September 2015 to Parliamentary Question B/374 regarding the relocation of hawkers in Port Louis. As the House will recall, I stated that the Ministry of Public infrastructure and Land Transport is working on the redevelopment of Victoria and Immigration Square Bus Stations, with provisions to accommodate hawkers. The project at Victoria Bus Station will start in a few months' time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the meantime, I am informed that the City Council of Port Louis has published a press notice on 05, 06 and 07 January 2016 inviting hawkers to register themselves at the Council to operate at the two sites identified, namely, at Decaen Market/Fair and Transportation Centre Fair, that is, Immigration Square, for their temporary relocation. A total of 1,094 and 1,144 applications were received for the 606 spaces available at Decaen market fair and 357 spaces available at Transportation Centre respectively. A screening of the 2,238 applications received was conducted taking into consideration the following criteria set by the Council for selection -

- Firstly, applicant should not pay a trade fee except as seller of foodstuff and non-foodstuff (mobile) except on public beaches, commonly known as 'Hawkers Licence' and 'Distributor of general merchandise';
- Secondly, applicant should not be a stallholder in any market or fair, and
- Thirdly applicant should be on the survey conducted by the Council in October 2015.

I am informed that following the screening exercise, 582 applications were found eligible for Decaen market fair and 501 applications for the transportation centre fair, making a total of 1,083 eligible applications. Subsequently on 18 January 2016, a drawing of lots was effected in the presence of the Supreme Court ushers, auditors, municipal ushers, police officers and members of the press. 582 spaces were allocated for Decaen market fair and 357 spaces for transportation centre and the remaining 144 eligible applications for the transportation centre fair have been put on a waiting list due to unavailability of spaces thereat.

A total of 937 letters of award for both sites have been issued to those successful applicants inviting them to sign an acceptance letter with the Council. As at date, 438 acceptance letters have been signed for Decaen market fair and 306 acceptance letters for transportation centre. 18 and 10 undelivered letters of award for these two sites have returned to the Council.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Council has decided to house the 144 remaining eligible applicants at Decaen market fair at other sites identified, behind the post office and Monneron fair and the allocated spaces of those who did not turn up to sign their acceptance letters, would be allocated to those found on the waiting list.

According to the work plan...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, sorry to interrupt you. Will it be much longer?

Dr. Husnoo: No. One last sentence. According to the work plan established by the Council, the temporary relocation of those hawkers shall be effective this month itself.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. As soon as he assumed office, the hon. Minister stated to the House that this is one of his main priorities, that is, the relocation of the hawkers. He said that he needed a year for that to be possible and now, we

have been made aware that it is the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport who will be in charge of the relocation in a ...

The Deputy Speaker: Please come...

Mr Ameer Meea: ...dream project on *la gare du Nord* and *la gare du Sud*. So, my question to the hon. Minister is: what is the time frame are we looking at *pour que ces gens-là peuvent être* relocated *durablement*?

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member asked the same question in September last year...

(Interruptions)

...and I told him...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Wait for the answer!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: Let me answer, please!

(Interruptions)

Let me answer, please! Can I answer!

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member has asked his question; he must give me the time to answer!

(Interruptions)

Okay. Anyway, as I just mentioned, the hon. Member asked the same question and I told him, at that time, I was going to do the project, but then we changed. Now, with my colleague, we are doing it together. That is what I told him in September. It is not one year yet and in a few months' time, the project is going to start.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: In a few months' time!

(Interruptions)

You want me to give you which month!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Husnoo!

Dr. Husnoo: To tell you Monday. Tuesday as well.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Husnoo!

(Interruptions)

No, crosstalking!

(Interruptions)

You address the Chair! Hon. Mahomed!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My question pertains to....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, have some respect for hon. Mahomed! He listened to your question, listen to him!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you. My question pertains specifically to the exercise, the expression of interest that was conducted by the Municipal Council of Port Louis in January this year. What kind of due diligence has been exercised by the Council in order to distinguish between seasonal and full-time hawkers? Because often there are complaints that such and such hawkers are not real hawkers to the detriment of the real ones.

Dr. Husnoo: As I mentioned earlier, there are three factors that were taken into consideration. There are some hawkers who have been working in the Council of Port Louis from 2004 and who are paying the Council fee. They were taken on board. We were taking those people who are not stallholders in any market fair in the City of Port Louis and those

people who were on the survey in October 2015. So, different criteria were taken into consideration for those people who are going to be allocated the stalls.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, next question!

MEDICAL & HEALTH OFFICER - RECRUITS

(No. B/107) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the posts of Medical and Health Officer/Senior Medical and Health Officer, he will –

- (a) give a list of the new recruits, indicating in each case, the -
 - (i) date of registration thereof with the Medical Council of Mauritius, and
 - (ii) posting thereof, and
- (b) state the number -
 - (i) of vacant posts as at to date, indicating the number thereof that will be filled, and
 - (ii) thereof forecasted to be recruited in the years 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following a selection exercise carried out by the Public Service Commission in 2015, 136 Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers have been recruited on 21 March 2016.

I am tabling the list of the 136 newly recruited Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers indicating their respective dates of registration with the Medical Council of Mauritius and their posting.

With regard to part (b) (i) of the question, there is, as at date, no vacant post in the grade of Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers on the establishment of my Ministry. However, in case of any vacancy arising, same will be reported to the Public Service Commission.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, I wish to inform the House that with the expansion of existing services and introduction of new services and taking into consideration, the attrition rate, around 125 Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers would be recruited annually from 2017 to 2019.

I also wish to inform the House that following the recruitment of the 136 doctors, a shift system has been successfully implemented in the Accident and Emergency Department of the five regional hospitals.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Out of the new recruits this year, can the hon. Minister give us the number who did not accept the post and how the vacant posts will be filled? Will it go through the PSC for a new interview or will it be from the waiting list after the interview done recently?

Mr Gayan: Well, from the information I have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, out of the 136 doctors, 101 have accepted the offer of appointment; 30 have requested for less than two months' delay and this request has been acceded to; 1 requested for more than two months' delay to enable him to complete post-graduate course and a case will be made to the PSC with our recommendation that this is not acceptable; 2 have not accepted and 2 had not responded. So, a case will be made to the PSC to withdraw the appointment of these 2.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Prior to the recruitment by the PSC, the Ministry had offered contractual employment to a number of Medical Practitioners. So, may I know from the hon. Minister, after the recruitment by the PSC, whether any of those people who were offered contractual temporary position, are still on contractual basis or have their contracts been terminated?

Mr Gayan: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, those who are recruited on a month-to-month basis are still working on the same basis because we have about 85 Medical and Health Officers who are on study leave without pay in other countries to follow post-graduate courses and we need to have these doctors to provide the service.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Joomaye.

Dr. Joomaye: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, from the list of those appointed on a contractual basis in November 2015, how many of them have been appointed on a permanent basis this time?

Mr Gayan: From the information I have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it looks like about 17 or 18.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leopold!

Mr Leopold: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I just want to ask the hon. Minister for how long the new recruits have been out of practice and whether he has a programme for refreshment course, and whether all the doctors are going on shift directly after recruitment.

Mr Gayan: My understanding is that it is only in the Accident and Emergency Department that the shift system is operational. But I take it that all the doctors who have been interviewed and selected by the PSC are up to the standard. I have no other information on that.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, last supplementary on this question!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you. If I heard the hon. Minister right, for the years 2017, 2018 and 2019, every year there will be a recruitment of about 125 doctors. Can the hon. Minister inform the House as to how many new doctors will join the market - an unemployed market, if I can say so - in the years to come? Has he got any idea?

Mr Gayan: Well, I don't have any exact number, but I am in the process of carrying out an audit with all the countries where other students are studying so that, at least, we have a picture of what the future will look like in the medical field, but that audit exercise is ongoing.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, next question!

REGIONAL HOSPITALS – YARDS & PARKING AREAS - STRAY DOGS

(No. B/108) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the regional hospitals, he will state if he is aware of the –

- (a) absence of adequate lighting systems in the yards and parking areas thereof or, in cases where they exist, that many of them are defective, and
- (b) presence of stray dogs thereat representing hazards and inconveniences to one and all, especially at night and, if so, indicate if urgent remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the policy of my Ministry is to ensure that there is adequate lighting system in both the yards and the parking areas in all the hospitals. I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is considering regulating parking areas in hospitals since some people are using the hospital parking slots to keep their vehicles and they go to work by bus.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the position in respect of lighting in the yards and parking areas in the regional hospitals is as follows -

- (i) **Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital**

I am informed that there is adequate lighting in the yard and in the parking areas.

(ii) Flacq Hospital

In spite of the fact that the hospital yards and parking areas are lit at night, the hospital authority has envisaged the installation of additional lighting for improved visibility.

(iii) Victoria Hospital

I am informed that since October 2015, the Energy Services Division of the MPI and Land Transport has been upgrading the existing yard lightings. At present, the hospital yards and parking areas are adequately lit. Moreover, a sum of Rs800,000 will be earmarked in the next budget to cater for the additional upgrading works and further improvement in the lighting system.

(iv) Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital

I am informed that the yards and parking areas are adequately lit as 22 led flood lights have been installed on the premises of that hospital. Installation of additional yard lightings would be carried out by the end of this month.

I am also informed that a new parking area project to provide for parking space for 160 vehicles is presently being implemented. The new parking area is expected to be completed in June this year.

(iv) SSRN Hospital

I am informed that the yard lightings have been recently upgraded with the installation of 95 flood lights and this has greatly improved the visibility. Additional flood lights will be considered as part of phase II of the project “Upgrading of Electrical Installations” at the hospital. Moreover, installation of boundary lighting system will also be considered in the project “Construction of boundary wall at SSRN Hospital”.

My Ministry is seriously considering the use of renewable energy for the lighting of hospital premises.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that, at present, stray dogs are found, unfortunately, in nearly all the regional hospitals. They are a real nuisance. My Ministry has requested the Mauritius Society for Animal

Welfare (MSAW), which is responsible for the control of stray dogs and cats, to provide its services to our health institutions against a monthly payment of Rs100,000.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Joomaye: Thank you. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether in each regional hospital there is a Pest Control Unit or is this service being contracted to the private?

Mr Gayan: Well, I don't have a specific answer to that particular question, but if a substantive question is asked, I will answer it.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Regarding lightings of the regional hospitals, I heard the hon. Minister say as per information. I would really invite the hon. Minister to have a site visit because in doctors' areas, they have to walk, in certain places, in a dark region at night. A hospital, say the Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, is a brand new hospital, but inside it's terrible, the parking area with the stray dogs creating havoc. Will the hon. Minister really go and have a look because the information that he is getting is only 50% the real truth?

Mr Gayan: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to rely on my officers and this is what I have been informed, but should I happen to go by regional hospitals, I will certainly pay a visit.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Is the hon. Minister aware that with the number of staff working at Victoria Hospital and the number of cars belonging to these staff, most of the parking are really full and there is no parking left for patients or relatives coming to the hospital?

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say that the issue of parking is a difficult issue. I am arranging for parking bays to be available in all hospitals so that anybody coming with a patient is allowed to park in the parking bay, alight the patient and then go and look for parking elsewhere. But, unfortunately, it would appear that some of the parking slots in our hospitals are being used by people who are not authorised to do that and we need to have some form of regulation like in other countries. Parking is not free in other countries. Medical care is free, but parking is not free.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The fact that the extent of infrastructure that there is in the Ministry of Health, may I request the hon. Minister to please look into the possibility of ensuring that there is a full Staff and Maintenance Unit that can cater for the maintenance of the infrastructure of the Ministry?

Mr Gayan: Well, there are Maintenance Units in all the hospitals, but, for the major works, we have to go to the MPI and this can take some time. As far as possible, the needful is done whenever there is any difficult situation.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, one short question!

Dr. Sorefan: Keep getting the last question, but for my question, I should, at least, get two supplementaries, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. According to my information...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, let me just clarify this matter. The discretion of allowing supplementary questions rests with the Speaker. I don't have to give supplementary questions and I am giving you two supplementary questions even though time is running. So, please be quick.

Dr. Sorefan: Yes. Regarding stray dogs, I think I heard the hon. Minister mention a certain amount. Will that be to pay the MSAW to look after the stray dogs? Because they don't come and work at night, they have to be paid these people. Is that what the hon. Minister meant when he mentioned there is a certain sum?

Mr Gayan: Well, unfortunately, we do not have many Bodies that can really control the stray dogs. But it is interesting for the House to know that, for example, in the year 2012, 59 dogs and 11 cats were caught at SSRN Hospital. But then, when you look at the amount of money being spent, it looks like about Rs5,000 is spent on catching one dog. But it has to be done.

The Deputy Speaker: I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

At 1.01 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.35 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

BUSES – HYDRAULIC STEPS

(No. B/109) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the high floor buses, he will state if he will consider rendering it mandatory for the steps thereof to be replaced by hydraulic steps so as to ease access thereto, especially, for the elderly and the handicapped persons when travelling and, if not, why not, and if so, indicate if consideration will further be given for the subsidization and exemption of duties and of the Value Added Tax on the importation of hydraulic steps.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mechanical Engineering Division of my Ministry that the present design of the bus chassis and body structure of high floor buses does not allow the replacement of the existing steps by hydraulic ones for the following reasons -

- (i) provision of the hydraulic steps at the entrance door in its present position is not possible because of engine placement and other accessories in all front engine buses. Moreover, the doors and steps cannot be further widened;
- (ii) the configuration of the steps leading to the gangway is not aligned for wheelchair access;
- (iii) the gangway width which is 38 cm does not allow for wheelchair movement inside the bus;
- (iv) safety anchorage points will have to be provided in each bus to keep the wheelchair steady when the bus is in motion, and
- (v) provision of an area to accommodate wheelchairs will require the space presently occupied by 6 seats.

Should such facilities be provided, it would involve displacing the entrance door to the middle part of the bus body, as well as, the fitting of electro hydraulic motors and associated mechanism for the operation of the hydraulic steps. This would require extensive structural modifications to the bus body and the cost thereof is estimated to be around Rs400,000 per bus. For the whole fleet of around 2000 existing buses the cost would amount to around Rs800 m.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the cost of a fully built semi-low floor bus equipped with hydraulic steps at the exit door including wheelchair area and anchorage points is around Rs4 m.

Madam Speaker, Government is committed to promote an inclusive society where the specific needs of the elderly and disabled persons are taken care of. In this respect, even if the cost of a fully built semi-low floor bus is quite high, my Ministry will consider the possibility to procure a certain number of such buses fitted with hydraulic steps to improve mobility and enable easy access to buses for our elderly and disabled citizens. In this context, my Ministry will discuss with major operators to include a certain number of such buses within their fleets. Financial incentives for acquisition of buses equipped with hydraulic steps are being considered under the Bus Modernisation Programme where Government, since last year, is already subsidising the purchase of new semi-low floor buses to the tune of Rs1 m. per bus and granting exemption of VAT.

Moreover, consideration will also be given to the possibility of adjusting the height of boarding platforms at bus shelters and bus terminals in order to ease access of wheelchairs to buses offering public transport. This concept will be introduced at the design and upgrading of the bus terminals at Victoria Square and the New Transport Centre at Immigration Square.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you. I thank the hon. Minister for all the actions that will be taken. But in the beginning, he has said bus chassis, I am sure he will agree with me that most of them are lorry chassis and that is why we are having problems today. May we know from the hon. Minister how many high-floor buses we have got, that is, at the NTC and private and when these buses will be off the road approximately?

Mr Bodha: Well, we have a fleet of about 2000 buses and half of the fleet is more than 10 years. So, what we are doing, in fact, is trying to renew the fleet and the renewal rate is only 4 percent. As the hon. Member is aware, the individual operators are against the semi-low floor buses. So, what we are doing is, first of all, trying to renew the fleet of the NTC with 500 buses starting this year. In fact, the hundred buses are going to be delivered in April 2016 and every year we will have hundred buses. On Thursday I am, in fact, launching 10 semi-low floor buses for Triolet Bus Service Co. Ltd. So, gradually we are going towards the semi-low floor bus and I think the most interesting thing will be when these individual operators will be convinced that, in fact, we need semi-low floor buses.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am sure the hon. Minister is aware that since he himself has stated that those chassis are lorry chassis, there are many other countries in the world where accidents have been caused because those buses are, in fact, lorry chassis and many countries have banned them purely and simply, not waiting for operators to realise. Can the hon. Minister, therefore, consider the possibility of literally coming up with a phase-out plan, in other words, a controlled banning process of those lorry chassis because they are a danger to members of the public?

Mr Bodha: Well, Madam Speaker, the Government of the hon. Member did ban. In fact, we have banned the lorry/bus high-floor chassis because there is a law saying that, now, all buses should be semi-low floor. I totally agree with him that what we should have is a phase-out plan which we are implementing at the level of the NTC. We will have, now, to convince the individual operators to do same. In fact, the other companies are already doing it and I said that this week Triolet Bus Service Co. Ltd. is going to launch ten new semi-low floor buses on a smart line.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Minister where matters stand regarding the Rs1 m. subsidy to private bus owners to change their fleet? There were objections, are they still maintaining the objection?

Mr Bodha: The subsidy is maintained, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Mauritius is party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which requires the Government to take steps to enable mobility of people with disabilities. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he would consider at least introducing a quota for all bus companies to have a certain number of buses which are equipped to cater for people with disabilities?

Mr Bodha: I think that this is a very interesting suggestion. The subsidy is still there. Today, a semi-low floor bus costs about Rs3 m., a high-floor bus costs about Rs2 m., the hydraulic bus will cost Rs4 m. So, I think we will have to talk to the Minister of Finance and Economic Development to see whether we can have this facility and I totally agree with the hon. Member as regards a quota. Those buses, in fact, could also be used at certain times

during the day, for example, between 10 and 3 o'clock just to encourage our elderly and the disabled to take those buses the more so as the elderly have a free transport system.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question pertains to semi-low floor buses. At times, when there is resurfacing of roads, the drains get deeper because we don't resurface the drains. Will that not be a problem going forward?

Mr Bodha: Concerning semi-low floor buses, we have decided that on a national basis we are going to apply this rule of semi-low floor buses, but the RDA and the TMRSU, in fact, examine each route to see. There are going to be a certain number of routes where because of the alignment of the road, because of the condition of the road or because of maybe the curves of the road, we will not impose the semi-low floor bus.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House where matters stand concerning dedicated school buses and whether there is an estimated number of buses which have been earmarked by the CNT and other companies?

Mr Bodha: As regards the PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, some time back when we had the incident in the South, we increased the number of school buses by 60 to reduce the ratio per bus. But what is interesting now is that the CNT - the fact that we are going to have hundred new buses - will be able to provide better buses. We are also considering the possibility of seeing to it that we have a lesser ratio so that the students are more comfortable in the buses.

Madam Speaker: Last question on this, hon Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: The hon. Minister said that the CNT is replacing the old buses by low line buses mainly from China. Those buses at the rear are very high so they are shifting the problem of engine from the front and going at the back. Will the hon. Minister consider Leyland from Poland, which is producing a low line bus with a flat floor for increasing the capacity of carrying whereas with the China bus, we have problem with the capacity of carrying passengers?

Mr Bodha: I agree with the hon. Member. We have to move towards the low floor bus.

ROAD DECONGESTION PROGRAMME – SOUTH LINK ROAD

(No. B/110) **Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Road Decongestion Programme, he will state if a study has recently been carried out in relation thereto and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the name of the consultants therefor and the cost thereof;
- (b) the total estimated cost thereof, and
- (c) if the south link road through the Ferney Valley will be reconsidered in view of the limited road capacity existing between the east and the south of the country.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the RDA that there has not been any study carried out recently in regard to the Road Decongestion Programme (RDP). However, in April 2009, the RDA appointed SPP Project Solutions Ltd of South Africa, later renamed as J Maynard, as Transaction Adviser to carry out a feasibility study in relation to the Road Decongestion Programme under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. The cost of the consultancy was 5.799 m.

In November 2015, following my participation in the World Road Congress, held in Korea, I had side meetings with my counterpart and representatives of the Korea Expressway Corporation (KEC), that is, the equivalent of the RDA in Mauritius.

During the meetings, I requested that the Korean authorities visit Mauritius and technically reassess the Road Decongestion Programme. Subsequently, a Korean delegation effected a visit to Mauritius from 28 November to 03 December 2015 and on 29 February 2016, they have submitted a mission report on the following projects –

- Construction of Phoenix interchange;
- Construction of the A1/M1 link road with the bridge from Coromandel to Sorèze;
- Construction of Ring Road Phase II, that is, the tunnel inside *Montagne des Signaux*, and
- Construction of Ring Road Phase III, that is, from the outlet of the tunnel to connect with M1 at Quay D.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am further informed that in June 2014, the then Government decided to review the scope of the project which was then valued at Rs30.5 billion.

In March 2015, this Government - when we came in Government - the Transaction Adviser presented to my Ministry the different options of the revised Road Decongestion Programme which were, upon the request of my Ministry, further amended to propose the optimal solution to relieve the traffic congestion around Port Louis and their estimated cost of this Road Decongestion Programme was revised downwards to Rs15 billion in May 2015.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that the South link road through the Ferney Valley, known as the South Eastern Highway Project, did not form part of the RDP.

I am informed that the then Government did not go ahead with the project due to protests from environmentalists.

Madam Speaker, following the cancellation of the link between Ferney and Kewal Nagar passing through the Grand Port mountain range *via* the Ferney Valley, the RDA launched a consultancy service for the upgrading of the existing coastal road B28 from Mahebourg to Bel Air over a length of 31 km costing Rs1.3 billion comprising the following –

- (i) widening and strengthening of the existing road to 6-7 meters depending on availability of space;
- (ii) realignment of existing road in certain sections wherever possible like Bambous Virieux, Grand Sable and Deux Frères;
- (iii) provision of footpaths and drains and safety measures, and
- (iv) improvement of hydraulic structures such as culverts and bridges.

Mr Sesungkur: Thank you for this detailed answer. My interest is precisely concerning the link road between the South and the East. The main point here is ...

Madam Speaker: Ask your question, hon. Sesungkur!

Mr Sesungkur: I am coming to it, Madam Speaker. The main point is the distance between the Airport and the East although Government is making an effort to ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Sesungkur, please don't make a statement. Put it in the form of your question.

Mr Sesungkur: When the then Government decided to stop the Ferney project, I understand that this was for an ecological reason. Can I know from the Minister if, in the initial plan that was made, the ecological factor was not taken into consideration? So, this is what the inhabitants of the East are asking: how come that there was an initial project which was there and then suddenly Government came with a sudden decision to stop everything? Since 2005 they are awaiting for that project.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Sesungkur, I think you have made your point.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, what I would like to say is that there was an EIA as regards that road, but there was a national outcry and the Government then decided to preserve the ecosystem, not to go ahead with highway. Then the former Minister came with the possibility of having consultancy services to go for the road which exists, make it a better road and the project is a very ambitious one because, in fact, it relates to 31 kilometres and Rs1.3 billion. So, that's where we are.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister gave us how much it will cost. I am not sure it is feasible to rehabilitate this road all along the coast, 31 kilometres, I hear. What I want to know is: has this Government taken the decision to go ahead with that project concerning the coastal road?

Mr Bodha: No decision has been taken yet on this. What has been done, in fact, is we have launched, under a consultancy, for the upgrading of the existing coastal road, but no decision has been taken as regards the implementation of the project.

Dr. Sorefan: The hon. Minister has mentioned all these projects to the tune of Rs15 billion, which I think is a burden to the Government right now financially. Will this project or part of this project be on a BOT with South Korea?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I can assure the House, as my colleague would say, the issue of toll has never been addressed.

ROAD DECONGESTION PROGRAMME - PROJECTS

(No. B/113) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Road Decongestion Programme, he will state the –

(a) number of projects falling thereunder;

(b) the costs thereof, and

(c) how it will be financed.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the RDA that the number of projects falling under the Road Decongestion Programme (RDP) will consist of the following –

- (i) the A1/M1 link road, that is, the bridge over the Grand River North West, from Coromandel to Sorèze;
- (ii) the construction of grade separated interchange at Pont Fer/Jumbo/Valentina Roundabouts, that is, all the three roundabouts connecting with the Terre Rouge/Verdun;
- (iii) the Ring Road Phase 2, which is the tunnel inside *Montagne des Signaux*,
- (iv) Rind Road Phase 3, which is the connection from the outlet of the tunnel *via* Vallée Pitot and then connecting with the M1 at Quay D.
- (v) The final alignment is being reviewed to ensure that there is no displacement of the squatters and no social disturbances.
- (vi) It also involves - this has been added - the construction of a grade separated junctions along the Motorway M1 at Decaen and Immigration Square, so that we don't enter Port Louis at Place d'Armes. Coming from the South, we will enter at Victoria Square and, coming from the North, we will connect at Immigration Square.

The project was subsequently included in the RDP to provide an alternative access from the South to the City Centre. Provision has consequently been made in the National Budget 2015-2016 for an amount of Rs50 m. to start works, including the consultancy.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, the estimated cost of the projects falling under the RDP was estimated at Rs15 billion.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) of the question, different modes of financing are being envisaged, and necessary provisions will be made in the Budget as and when required.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, can I know from the hon. Minister whether, when considering the mode of financing, it is envisaged to have toll roads - paying roads - to finance the construction of these roads?

Mr Bodha: I can assure the House that, in fact, when Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo was the Minister of Finance, we had a meeting, and it was staggered over six years in the Capital Budget with Rs2.5 billion, and the issue of toll was never addressed.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, could the hon. Minister tell us or tell the House how he does reconcile the move of going for Heritage City and emptying Port Louis in the process? Therefore, why go ahead with all those projects with regard to the ring road or road decongestion for Port Louis when Port Louis is being emptied of all its people by this Heritage City?

Mr Bodha: I answered this question, Madam Speaker. So far, the thinking has been to have about half a million people moving from Upper Plaines Wilhems to Port Louis. Everything was on that corridor. The fact that we have a Heritage City, it changes the center of gravity to some extent as regards to infrastructure. We have a triangle. But Heritage City caters for 1,400 *places*; the population to be added. The other thing is that moving a few Ministries would not change the fact that Port Louis will remain that dynamic city. In fact, with the development at the Port, with the development at the bus terminals - the hon. Deputy Prime Minister will agree with me; we have discussed this matter. We have only 300,000 tourists coming to Port Louis out of 1.2 million - the idea is to bring 600,000 of those tourists to Port Louis, offering Port Louis as a cultural attraction. I think that Port Louis by Light has shown that if you organise life in Port Louis, we can make this city what it has always been and become a vibrant city, being the port of the region, being a cultural city, being the financial city. It is not because a few Ministries and the Parliament are going to Heritage City that the political decision making process will not remain in Port Louis. All the banks are going to be here.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister - I have put the question to the former Minister, and I am putting it to the present Minister - whether the full decongestion programme is supported by a study and, if yes, when was the study carried out and by which consultant? If there is a study, I would like to know whether that study has been updated to take into consideration the present road parameters.

Mr Bodha: Well, the whole decongestion programme was based on the study by Maynard when they came with this decongestion programme. In fact, I have just asked Luxconsult to update that study, so that it fits in the new decongestion programme.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, we heard the hon. Minister talk about the Rs15 billion that it will cost. May I know from the hon. Minister, since he took office, since 2015 to date, what is the amount that has been spent by the RDA, by his Ministry on road descongestion programme?

Mr Bodha: Not much has been spent. We have just paid some consultancy to Maynard and then we have paid some consultancy for Luxconsult for the study on transport.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem.

WORKERS (FOREIGN) - WORK PERMITS

(No. B/114) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the foreign workers, he will state, since December 2014 to date, the number of –

- (a) work permits issued thereto, and
- (b) applications received for the renewal of the work permits thereto.

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, I am informed that 11,537 new work permits have been issued by my Ministry in respect of foreign workers since 01 December 2014 to date, and 14,620 applications have been received for the renewal of work permit for the same period.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister why has his Ministry taken so long to revise the criteria for allocation of work permit, so much so that one of the leading textile manufacturers has threatened to move its operation outside Mauritius?

Mr Callichurn: Representations were made only recently, and we took prompt action to remediate the situation.

Mr Uteem: In regard to the criteria laid down in the Cabinet decision of 04 March 2016, which will guide your Ministry in allocating, approving application for work permit, there is now a recommendation for the ratio of local to foreign workers to be reviewed to 1:1. I understand that the ratio currently is 2:1. May I know from the hon. Minister why this has been reduced and what would be the impact on the unemployed in Mauritius?

Mr Callichurn: Well, Madam Speaker, the ratio was 3:1 and then it was reviewed to 2:1 and, after representation from the operators of the manufacturing sector, we decided to review the ratio to 1:1. This is because we have been made to understand that Mauritians do

not want to work in the textile-manufacturing sector specifically. That is why we took the wise decision to review the ratio.

Mr Uteem: With regard to the criteria for the duration of stay of foreign workers being extended to eight years, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the criteria will also be extended to priests and other workers in the religious sector who come for employment in Mauritius? Will this category of people also now be able to get an eight-year work permit?

Mr Callichurn: The decision taken by Cabinet was with regard to textile-manufacturing sector only.

WATER SUPPLY - DISTRIBUTION

(No. B/115) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the measures being taken, if any, to address the issue of the perturbed distribution thereof at times of heavy rainfall or lack thereof, in the light of the implementation of the smart cities projects, the promised economic miracle and the consequential high income economy that is expected to follow.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, with regard to disruptions during heavy rainfall, I am informed by the CWA that two out of its six water treatment plants located at Rivière du Poste and Mont Blanc, which derive water from rivers, are affected by high turbidity during heavy rainfalls. Works for the upgrading of these plants will start by January 2017. The same problem which existed at Pailles Treatment Plant, which supplies the region of Port Louis, has now been resolved since November 2015 with the installation of new filters, which are called rapid gravity filters.

As regards the disruption of water supply due to deficient rainfall, the CWA mobilises water through operation of standby boreholes, abstraction of water from rivers and provision of water tanker services in affected areas.

I also wish to inform the House that the Bagatelle Dam is expected to be completed by the end of 2016 and will be an additional source of water.

It is also planned to upgrade La Ferme and La Nicolière Dams.

Concurrently, the CWA plans to construct new treatment plants at Bagatelle, Rivière des Anguilles, La Ferme and Pont Lardier at Deep River Beau Champ and to upgrade La Nicolière and Piton du Milieu Treatment Plants.

With the implementation of these projects and the abstraction of water from new boreholes, it is expected that an additional volume of about 200,000 m³ per day will be available by 2030 to meet the future development needs.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: In the last PNQ on petroleum pricing mechanism, we were informed that in January 2015 the Build Mauritius Fund, contribution to it was increased by 300% precisely, for financing works related to water distribution network so as to provide a more regular water supply to the population. We were also talking about 24-hour water supply, smart water distribution, so to speak. So, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, a time indication when water supply will be enhanced so as we get more regular water supply, if not 24-hour water distribution?

Mr Collendavelloo: We hope that with the new strategy for water, we will be able within two years to enhance the water distribution system in Mauritius, but all depends on many matters such as procurement procedures, especially funding, we have the Build Mauritius Fund. I don't want to spend money, as I have said, uselessly. We want to have a good project leadership in order to use the money from the Build Mauritius Fund judiciously. So, it is difficult for me to give a timeline as such. With the World Bank Report coming in May, we will see a bit clearer in all this.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

UTILITY REGULATORY AUTHORITY - OPERATIONAL

(No. B/116) **Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Utility Regulatory Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to when the -

- (a) Board thereof will be appointed, and
- (b) Authority will become operational.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavello): Madam Speaker, the Utility Regulatory Authority Act was voted in 2004 and was amended and proclaimed in 2008.

In spite of costly international advertisement to identify a person with the necessary experience to act as Chairperson of the Authority, the previous Government did not consider it expedient to appoint the Board of the Utility Regulatory Authority.

This Government has taken the commitment to make the Authority operational.

In view of the critical and determining role of this institution in the Utility Sector, I am considering the appointment of members with utmost caution. I will soon be consulting the Rt. hon. Prime Minister on the membership of the Board and I hope that the Authority would become operational within the next few months.

Mr Mahomed: My question stems on the fact that last year during his presentation of the MARENA Bill, the hon. Minister mentioned the following against the backdrop why there was a delay in the past, like he just did -

“I have to inform the House that I am taking the necessary steps to appoint the Board of the URA (Utility Regulatory Authority) which should be operational early next year.”

That is, early 2016, and now the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is saying a few months later.

(Interruptions)

Are you sure? To me, early is January.

(Interruptions)

Mr Collendavello: Well, of course, I entirely agree. It is not a joking matter, because that is very important and I entirely agree with the hon. Member that we were already late last year and the year before last and the year before last year. But let us just see what are the qualifications to be a Chairperson. He must be the holder of a University Degree, no less than five years proven professional academic or managerial experience in connection with the provision of any utility service. So, five years as a Manager of Electricity Sector, for instance, and then he must not have had an interest in the utility sector two years before his appointment, which makes it very restricted. For the Commissioner, he must be a holder of a University Degree. He must have experience in relation to electricity or water or wastewater,

but then he should not have been a Director or a shareholder of any of these sectors for the last two years.

If I am unable to find a proper composition, let's say within the next weeks or so, I will consult the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, then I shall ask him to consider altering the law to make it more flexible.

(Interruptions)

Yes, unfortunately, the IBA was quicker than I.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, from what we understand from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether it be qualification or experience, it is very restrictive. So, let us amend the legislation. We have been with that piece of legislation since 2004 until today and we have not been able to find *l'oiseau rare, comme on dit*. Let us all put our heads together and amend the legislation once and for all.

Madam Speaker: Will the Vice-Prime Minister reply to this or not?

Mr Collendavelloo: This is not a question.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to remember also the question of this Authority becoming operational does not depend only on finding the Chairman of the Board or the Director with all the qualifications that he has just listed, which is in the law. There is another important matter for this body to become operational. According to the law which we passed in 2004, the law says: 'subject to the relevant Utility Legislation, the Authority may...', and so on and so forth. So, therefore, there must have been the relevant utility legislation, the sector specific legislation, and that is why in the original Act you will see - I am sure the hon. Vice-Prime Minister knows - the Electricity Act was already in the Schedule.

So, for it to become operational in the water sector, we must have a new Water Act or a water legislation or whatever name it will be called and we have to review the Electricity Act if we are not happy with the contents of the Act which was passed during the

MMM/MSM Government. So, these relevant utility regulations must first be passed for the whole Authority to become operational in addition to finding the rare birds.

Mr Collendavelloo: Now, this is a debate. I am prepared to debate, of course, but I don't think that is the forum to do so. I take the points. They are perfectly valid points, of course.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

FOOTBALL – FRENCH COACH - CONTRACT

(No. B/117) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the nomination of the French Coach, Alain Happe as *Directeur Technique Nationale de Football*, he will -

- (a) state the terms and conditions of the contract of employment thereof, indicating the *cahier des charges* therefor, and
- (b) table copy of his -
 - (i) project for local football, and
 - (ii) *curriculum vitae*.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that Mr Alain Happe, the DTN, is not employed by my Ministry. He is, in fact, employed on contract by the Mauritius Football Association (MFA) and I did try to get information from them and I am informed by his employer that the information asked for is privileged and cannot be released.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, je trouve cela aberrant qu'un ministre du gouvernement actuel sollicite la *MFA* pour des informations nécessaires au fonctionnement des écoles de foot, du centre national de football, etc., et que la *MFA* ne puisse pas remettre ces informations au ministre. Et ma question est la suivante: est-ce que le ministre a les informations suivantes, est-ce que la nomination de M. Happe comme *DTN* s'est faite avec l'accord de l'actuel ministre de la jeunesse et des sports, et si oui, est-ce que M. Happe a déjà exercé comme *DTN* dans un autre pays avant de venir à Maurice?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. Member himself always says that we should not interfere in the matters of the federation. This is the case.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question! Hon. Quirin!

SPORTS BILL - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/118) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Sports Act, he will state when the proposed amendments thereto will be introduced, following the Cabinet decision of 19 February 2016 in relation thereto, indicating if a draft copy of the proposed amendments will be circulated in the meantime.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I have to inform the House that Cabinet's approval has been obtained on 19 February 2016 for drafting instructions for a new Sports Bill to be issued to the State Law Office.

A tentative draft Bill has been worked out and submitted to the State Law Office and the matter is still at the level of that Office.

The hon. Member may rest assured that once the draft Bill has been finalised, same will be circulated to all stakeholders.

Mr Quirin: Donc, Madame la présidente, dois-je comprendre que jusqu'à présent le *draft* qui a été préparé par le ministère de la jeunesse et des sports n'a pas été circulé même au niveau des fédérations et du COM?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madame la présidente, on a écouté tous les *stakeholders*, parmi même les recommandations de l'honorable Quirin. Je lui ai même demandé à maintes reprises, il m'en a envoyé. Tout le monde m'en a envoyé. On a travaillé là-dessus. Maintenant, le *draft copy is with the State Law Office. Once it is finalised at this level, definitely it will be circulated among all stakeholders for their opinions.*

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin, next question!

MORCELLEMENT HERMITAGE, COROMANDEL - REHABILITATION WORKS

(No. B/119) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the proposed rehabilitation works to be carried out at Morcellement Hermitage, in Coromandel, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will reply to this question.

In reply to Parliamentary Question B/998, the House was apprised that the JICA, from Japan Expert Team, in collaboration with the Landslide Management Unit of my Ministry, had carried out structural investigation for suspected ground movement and risk of rock falls at Morcellement Hermitage, Coromandel. The Expert Team had recommended a series of remedial measures, as follows -

- (i) removal of all unstable soil and pile of boulders that may affect the houses in the vicinity;
- (ii) the protection of all exposed bases of existing boundary walls against erosion and slope failure, and
- (iii) the profiling of the platforms to its safe slope that will not cause any ground movement when exposed to adverse climatic conditions.

The following measures have already been taken to ensure the safety and security of the inhabitants -

- (i) the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has caused hoarding to be fixed to protect the private properties from falling rocks and boulders;
- (ii) a trench has been dug along the public roads to divert surface run-off water away from the nearby residences;
- (iii) appropriate signs have been affixed along the roads to warn inhabitants and other people of the potential risks;
- (iv) A flushing exercise to diffuse the accumulated rock dust along the escarpment of the river bank was carried out in April 2015 by the Special Mobile Force. Further flushing could not be carried out due to roots of dense vegetation;
- (v) some 300 tonnes of rock dust have been removed from the escarpment on the river in October 2015, with the assistance of United Basalts Products Ltd, and

- (vi) regular simulation exercises and community policing activities are being conducted to sensitise the residents and ensure their preparedness in case of any eventual landslide.

Madam Speaker, the Landslide Management Unit has also prepared the design of countermeasure works for the whole area. These will comprise erection of protective walls, cross drains and cut off drains.

However, as these works will require acquisition of privately owned land, the Ministry of Housing and Lands was requested to carry out a survey to identify the owners and proceed with the acquisition procedures. I am informed that the searches on land ownership and acquisition procedure are on.

The rehabilitation works will start as soon as the acquisition of land will be completed.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, malgré toutes les informations fournies par l'honorable ministre, il est bon qu'il sache qu'en période de grosses pluies, les habitants de la région sont sur le qui-vive et je ne le souhaite pas mais si à l'avenir il y a un cyclone, les choses pourraient en effet se détériorer et c'est pour cela que j'aimerais qu'il nous dise combien de temps cela va prendre. Est-ce qu'il y a un budget qui a été voté? Parce que je sais qu'il y a un rapport des experts japonais qui a été soumis au gouvernement. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir combien de temps cela va prendre pour mettre en pratique ce plan et comme il vient de le confirmer lui-même, il y a aussi un plan de réhabilitation qui est fait. Donc, les choses peuvent évoluer s'il y a un budget qui est débloqué rapidement afin de soulager les habitants dans cette situation d'insécurité.

Mr Bodha: I totally agree, Madam Speaker, the urgency and the concern of the hon. Member. In fact, the site has been classified as level 4, very high landslide prone area. The design, from what I have here, by the Landslide Management Unit, has already been completed. You have Phase I at the cost of Rs13 m. and Phase II at the cost of Rs6.3 m. I will discuss with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands so that we can expedite matters and then we can, most probably, use some of the budget that has been allocated to urgent works for landslides and drains.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether within this study carried out by the Japan Expert, it was recommended to stop giving permits for building

construction in order to avoid cases of landslide? Can he also inform the House whether this has been implemented and whether immediate action has been taken against this unscrupulous promoter, Mr Beerjeeraz, who is an HC, I can say, in illegal construction or is the Ministry contemplating to take action against him?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, the proposed countermeasures also said that the area could not sustain any further developments and for any further developments, appropriate EIA certificate will have to be sought from the Ministry of Environment. So, I believe that the Ministry of Environment is doing what has to be done.

As regards Mr Beerjeeraz, there was a case in Court and, in fact, what happened, from the information I have here, is that the Counsel for the Municipal Council was not in Court and they lost the case. From what I have here is that they are taking all the necessary measures to see to it that the rules of safety are respected.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he intends to make a site visit and look on the opposite side where you have Sunray and the Neetoo Industries? From what we can see on the other side of the road, there is an imminent case of landslide where you can see rocks coming out from behind Neetoo Industries and also Sunray. Can urgent action be taken in order to prevent *un désastre* ?

Mr Bodha: In view of the concern of the hon. Members of the Constituency, I would be very keen to do a site visit together with my colleague from the Ministry of Environment. We will do it together.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Gobin, next question!

BASIC INVALIDITY PENSION – ELIGIBILITY

(No. B/120) Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to pensions/social benefits, she will state the procedure that her Ministry has to follow before disallowing the claim of a person who is already benefitting therefrom, indicating if the beneficiary thereof is –

- (a) medically examined prior to her Ministry deciding to disallow the claim and, if not, why not, and

- (b) afforded an opportunity to make representations prior to her Ministry deciding to disallow the claim and, if not, why not.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, I presume that the hon. Member is referring to Basic Invalidity Pension, for which a medical assessment is required to determine eligibility of an applicant. As a matter of fact, if the applicant suffers from a disability which is not less than 60% and likely to last for a period of not less than one year, he qualifies for the Basic Invalidity Pension.

Concerning part (a) of the question, I have to inform the House that payment of Basic Invalidity Pension is discontinued when the period for which the benefit was granted by the Medical Board lapses. At the time of the assessment to determine an application, the Medical Board establishes whether the incapacity is permanent and if it is not permanent whether the applicant must be medically re-boarded or not.

If the incapacity is not permanent and if no re-boarding has been recommended, payment of the Basic Invalidity Pension is discontinued at the expiry of the benefit period. However, a notice is sent to the beneficiaries three months before the expiry. They are therein informed that in case they consider that they still suffer from an incapacity of not less than 60%, they can make a fresh application for the said pension. This is subject to a new medical certificate being produced.

In case re-boarding has been recommended, the case is processed within 3 months before the expiry of the benefit period for the beneficiary to be re-boarded.

As for part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that all those who have been boarded or re-boarded and found not to be suffering from the required disability level, are issued with a notice stating the outcome of the medical assessment. They are given a right to appeal, at no cost, against the decision of the Medical Board.

The appeal must be filed to the Medical Tribunal within a period of one month of the date of the disallowance notice. In case they do not appeal, they may make a fresh application for the benefit after six months or earlier in the event there is aggravation of the medical condition of the person supported by a medical certificate. In case an appeal is favourably determined, the pension is reinstated.

I also wish to highlight that those who do not qualify for Basic Invalidity Pension can apply for Social Aid Benefit which is means-tested.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Gobin!

Mr Gobin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have heard the hon. Minister stating that the notice that is sent to the beneficiary is sent, at least, three months before the disallowance. Unfortunately, I don't have the documentation right now with me, but I know of cases where that delay of three months is not being respected. May I impress upon the hon. Minister to ensure that, at least, the notice of three months is respected in case of disallowance of benefits?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I take on board the query of my learned friend. I will look into the matter. One thing should be clear; I have given proper instructions with regard to re-boarding. A notice has to be sent to the beneficiary three months before the expiry period of payment.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Joomaye: May I know if there is any standardised process or guideline in the evaluation of incapacity by the Board of Doctors.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, the doctors are guided by the Sixth Schedule of the National Pensions Act and the medical guidelines which have been prepared by specialists of the Ministry of Health. So, they are guided by both.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Gobin!

Mr Gobin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Regarding part (b) of my question and by comparison with part (a) where there is a notice of three months being given whereas the opportunity to make any representation for part (b), there is no such period. Can the hon. Minister consider, at least, giving an opportunity before the disallowance as opposed to disallowing the allowance and then giving a right of appeal to the beneficiary?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Okay, I will look into the matter.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister to consider amending the Schedule because as it is now there is a lot of confusion as to the amount of incapacity and if the hon. Minister has the figures with her as to the number of people whose incapacity benefit has been terminated last year?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Regarding the first part of your question, I am working with the State Law Office to see if we have to revisit the Sixth Schedule of the National

Pensions Act. With regard to the second part, unfortunately, I don't have the figure. Kindly do come with another appropriate question.

Madam Speaker: Next Question, hon. Gobin!

MEDICAL OFFICER - DOMICILIARY VISITS – BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/121) Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the domiciliary visits, she will state the eligibility criteria prescribed therefor, indicating if persons –

- (a) who are bedridden but below 75 years of age are eligible thereto and, if not, why not, and
- (b) with severe disabilities, irrespective of age, are eligible thereto and, if not, why not.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, my Ministry currently administers a scheme which provides for a free monthly domiciliary visit by a medical officer, to three categories of beneficiaries, namely -

- (i) upon application to children with severe disabilities or who are bed-ridden and who are between 0 and 18 years old;
- (ii) upon application to elderly persons above 75 years old but below 90 years old who are severely disabled or bed-ridden and are in receipt of a Carer allowance, and
- (iii) elderly persons above 90 years old.

I wish to point out that no application is required for those above 90 years old.

I have to inform the House that when combining the three categories of beneficiaries I have referred to, this makes a coverage of 6,466 domiciliary visits monthly, broken down as follows -

- (i) 75 for children;
- (ii) 3,154 for elderly persons aged between 75 and 90, and
- (iii) 3,237 for elderly persons aged 90 and above.

Those visits are effected by doctors employed by my Ministry on a sessional basis.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Gobin!

Mr Gobin: Madam Speaker, after hearing the reply of the hon. Minister, the category of 18 to 75, I think they are in a vacuum. What are the measures being contemplated for those between 18 and 75, more particularly persons with disabilities.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes. Good question! So, we share common interests on that issue. In fact, it is true that domiciliary visits are currently not provided to persons between 18 and 75. This is a matter of serious concern. I am of opinion that, irrespective of age, persons with severe disabilities and bedridden should be granted the domiciliary visits. So, I am presently working with the Ministry of Finance to see to it that we extend this service to persons who are in need.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ B/130 and B/131 have been withdrawn. Next Question, hon. Ganoo!

STC & BETAMAX LTD – CONTRACT

(No. B/122) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the transportation of petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to the date of termination of the contract therefor between the Corporation and Betamax Ltd., indicating if –

- (a) the prior advice of the State Law Office was sought and obtained therefor;
- (b) Government has been apprised of any indemnities that would be payable to Betamax Ltd. as a result thereof;
- (c) there is a possibility to renegotiate the price therefor to reflect the market conditions, and
- (d) an arbitrator/mediator has been appointed therefor and, if so, indicate the –
 - (i) profile thereof, and
 - (ii) current status of the arbitration/mediation.

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I am advised by the State Trading Corporation, that is, the STC, that Betamax Ltd. has lodged an arbitration against STC under the Singapore International Arbitration Centre, that is, the SIAC Rules as provided for under the contract between the STC and Betamax Ltd.

The arbitration is ongoing. No information can be disclosed so as not to cause any prejudice to the arbitration proceedings as per the Confidentiality Clause of the SIAC Rules.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Ganoo: I understand the stand of the Minister, but can the hon. Minister reply, at least, to part (a) of the question, that is, whether advice was tendered?

Mr Gungah: Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I can't give more information, as I said, because of the Confidentiality Clause.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister who is representing the STC or the Government of Mauritius before the arbitration process?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I want to give the information, but I cannot and I am sure the hon. Member will appreciate that.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister what are the points that have been taken before this arbitration process started. This contract between STC and Betamax was a contract which is flawed at its root, that is, *ab initio*, that is, this is a contract which could have been fraudulently entered to because the procurement legislation in our country was not respected before signing this contract? Was this point taken before the arbitrator?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I said that because of the Confidentiality Clause, I won't be able to disclose any information.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I can understand confidentiality as regards the content and the defence of the Government. What we are asking here is: who is representing the Government of Mauritius and how much this is costing taxpayers? That has nothing to do with the content of our defence. We ought to know in this Parliament who is representing the Government and how much is being paid to these legal advisers?

Mr Gungah: Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, I won't be able to give the information.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Selvon!

HANDICAPPED PERSONS – EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/123) **Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in

regard to the qualified handicapped persons, she will state the policy of her Ministry for the employment thereof in her Ministry, indicating the -

- (a) number thereof –
 - (i) presently employed thereat;
 - (ii) having been laid off since December 2014 to date, and
- (b) percentage thereof represented on the establishment of her Ministry.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, the employment of persons to hold or act in any office in the public service, including my Ministry, is under the responsibility of the Public Service Commission by virtue of section 89 of the Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius. By an instrument of delegation of powers by the Commission, Ministries and Departments can, however, carry out certain recruitment exercises.

As regards part (a) (i) of the question, I wish to inform the House that there are two public officers with disabilities on the establishment of my Ministry, of whom, one is a General Worker and the other an Office Care Attendant. They have been recruited by my Ministry and the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms respectively, under delegated powers.

Regarding part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed that no public officer with disabilities has been laid off by my Ministry since December 2014 to date.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is not possible for me to give a percentage as there is no such data collection in my Ministry; and I believe in the Civil Service as a whole, which would indicate whether an officer has a disability or not. Besides, there could certainly be quite a few serving officers who suffer from some form of a disability but who have never officially declared or do not want to declare their disability for one reason or the other.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister just mentioned that nobody has been sacked in her Ministry and we know that a few weeks ago one Mr A. M. of Pailles was sacked and he has been working there for seven years consecutively on a contract renewable each year. Can the hon. Minister confirm that and then I will have another question?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, this question is about employment. Mr A. M. was not employed. He was under the Skill Development Programme at the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board. So, he was not employed by our Ministry.

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, but, the question is whether priority will be given to these persons who have been on placement! He has been there for seven years and up to now he has not been employed on a permanent basis and, in fact, he has been transferred to another centre in Rose Hill where he is worst off. He is getting less money than what he was getting before.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, one should understand that traineeship or placement is offered to disabled persons. We have presently 14 disabled persons in traineeship. So, we have to make room to train other disabled persons. If we continue keeping those who are still there, we will not be in a position to have other disabled persons in traineeship.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ramful!

LOCAL AUTHORITIES - MEMBERS & STAFF – OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. B/124) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Chief Executive Officers, Chairpersons and Council Members and members of the staff of the local authorities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the overseas missions that they have undertaken in the course of the current financial year, indicating in each case, the -

(a) costs thereof, and

(b) particulars thereof.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, the information requested is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as it is ready.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: May I know from the hon. Minister whether each and every overseas mission is approved by the hon. Minister and, if so, what are the criteria that are used for the approval of those missions?

Dr. Husnoo: Usually, we see how relevant the missions are and then we approve them basically.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Dr. Joomaye!

PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS - REGISTRATION

(No. B/125) **Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the implementation of the new policy for the registration of drugs with his Ministry, he will state where matters stand, indicating the fees applicable therefor.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I am replying to Parliamentary Questions B/125 and B/127 together.

Regulations have been made, Madam Speaker, as per Government Notice No. 47 of 2016 to set out the procedures for the implementation of the charging of fees for locally manufactured and imported pharmaceutical products as from 01 April.

With regard to the fees applicable, I am tabling an extract of the Government Notice which specifies different rates applicable for the processing, registration, renewal and change in characteristics of locally and imported manufactured pharmaceutical products.

Madam Speaker, since 2013, the Pharmacy Board only registers combination preparations which have been proven through clinical trials to be effective and safe. With the implementation of the new registration procedures as from 01 April 2016, it is ensured that stringent conditions are met before pharmaceutical products are registered. Moreover, at renewal of registration of pharmaceutical products, strict adherence to established criteria is being ensured.

Madam Speaker, following the ban of 344 fixed dose combination products in India, my Ministry carried out a survey that revealed that two fixed dose combinations, namely, Salbutamol plus Bromhexine and Menthol with two brands Ascoril and Vifex cough syrups, Terbutaline, and some other complicated names, with two products Bro-Zedex and Zedex cough syrups had been approved by the Pharmacy Board well before 2013. At that time, the Pharmacy Board acted on the best evidence available. No adverse effect of these drugs has been reported to my Ministry so far. Pending the decision of the High Court of India the Pharmacy Board is keeping these products under review.

Let me reassure the House, Madam Speaker, that the ban in India is not due to any adverse reporting on these medications, but rather due to an administrative measure being

given that the fixed dose combinations on the banned list have not been approved by the Central Drug Regulatory Authority of India.

Furthermore, these cough syrups are not available in public health institutions in Mauritius. We are also seriously considering setting up a National Medicine Regulatory Authority when the new Pharmacy Bill will come before the House.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Joomaye: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what measures he will take to control the consequent increase in price of drugs that will happen following the registration and application of a fee?

Mr Gayan: Well, Madam Speaker, I am given to understand that there won't be any significant increase in the price of medicines.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Joomaye: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister aware that by registering...

Madam Speaker: No, sorry, I have already ordered the next question!

PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS - QUALITY CONTROL

(No. B/126) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the quality control of pharmaceutical products dispensed and/or used in public hospitals, he will state -

- (a) how same is carried out;
- (b) the frequency thereof, indicating the date of the last exercise therefor;
- (c) the laboratory where the qualitative and quantitative tests thereof are performed,
and
- (d) the actions taken in case of non-conformity.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that quality assurance starts right from the beginning of the procurement exercise. Public procurement is facilitated through a tendering process and only WHO prequalified products or those marketed in countries with stringent regulatory authority are considered as eligible products. Wholesalers and manufacturers are also screened to ensure their legality,

credibility and integrity. After inspection, at the port of entry, the medicines procured are brought to the Central Supplies Division of my Ministry.

Furthermore, each consignment of medicines received at the Central Supplies Division is compulsorily accompanied by a Batch Analysis Certificate from the Quality Control Department of the manufacturer certifying that the products have passed all the quality tests.

Over and above, random sampling is carried out on different classes of drugs received at the Central Supplies Division. Each year, different molecules are sent for analysis. This is in line with best international practice.

As for part (b) of the question, Madam Speaker, samples are sent three times a year for analysis. The first batch of 15 items was sent for analysis on 08 March 2016.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that samples are sent for analysis to the Government Analyst Division, Réduit which is an arm of my Ministry.

If the standards for certain molecules are not available at the Government Analyst Division and in the case of an emergency, samples are sent to a private accredited laboratory in Mauritius.

With regard to part (d) of the question, in case of non-conformity to the British Pharmacopoeia and the United States Pharmacopoeia standards, products are recalled from all Government health institutions and distribution and dispensing of those medicines are stopped forthwith. In addition, the supplier indemnifies the Ministry for the affected quantity of drugs unused. The supplier is also reported to the Procurement Policy Office for poor performance. Thereafter, the Procurement Policy Office (PPO) would start the process of disqualification under the Public Procurement (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 at the request of the Ministry for a limited time. And, where the Director of the PPO considers that there are grounds for disqualifications, he shall issue the supplier a notice for proposed disqualification.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Joomaye: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if he is satisfied that random sampling for control of drugs dispensed at the public hospitals are done only three times a year?

Mr Gayan: Well, ideally we should have testing for all medicines, but it is not possible for the number of medicines that we have. But, apart from the random sampling there are tests and certificates which accompany the medicines. So, I believe that the process is well developed to ensure that the quality of pharmaceutical products is not impaired.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister has mentioned suppliers in the answer. In the Ministry, do we have a list of suppliers of drugs who are fully registered in their own countries?

Mr Gayan: I am not sure I got the question. The suppliers of drugs registered in which country?

Dr. Sorefan: Do we have a list of suppliers at the Ministry and are those people registered in their own country?

Mr Gayan: Well, my understanding is that the suppliers are local ones, but the manufacturers are based in some other countries. We try to ensure, at the Ministry, that the manufacturer procures all the certificates for quality control and the supplier has to submit same to the Ministry. I must also say that it has happened that sometimes the suppliers do not comply strictly with the terms of the tender documents and, in such cases, that particular supply is rejected.

Dr. Joomaye: I would like to know from the hon. Minister if he is contemplating to set up a quality control specialised drug laboratory for Mauritius on the model of the Mauritius Standards Bureau?

Mr Gayan: I have said, Madam Speaker, that we are in the process of setting up a regulatory authority for the control of quality of all medicines on the same line as in India or the US or it is going to come in the New Pharmacy Bill.

COUGH SYRUPS - BANNING

(No. B/127) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, following the banning of cough syrups containing salbutamol and other drugs in India and since many of these medications are available on the local market, he will state the measures being taken by his Ministry in relation thereto.

(Vide reply to PQ B/125)

EMPLOYEES – LAID OFF – LABOUR LAWS

(No. B/128) **Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to job losses, he will state the number thereof since January 2015 to date, indicating if consideration will be given for the labour laws to be amended to better protect the employees from being laid off without appropriate notice and compensation and, if so, when.

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, for period January 2015 to March 2016, 12,961 cases of job losses were registered at the level of my Ministry out of which 3,913 jobs were lost for economic reasons and 9,048 for other reasons such as poor performance, misconduct and end of determinate contract.

Madam Speaker, as regards the second part of the question, the House may wish to know that my Ministry has already embarked on a major review of the Employment Rights Act and the Employment Relations Act in line with the decision of Government to better protect the fundamental rights of the workers. In this context, I have set up a Technical Committee which has conducted consultations with both workers' and employers' organisations.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister who are the members of that Technical Committee and how many consultations there have been with the workers and the trade unions?

Mr Callichurn: There have been several consultations. I cannot tell the exact number of meetings they had, but several consultations have already taken place.

Mr Baloomoody: What about the composition?

Mr Callichurn: The committee comprises of workers union, my Ministry and employers federations.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister just mentioned that a Technical Committee has been set up. May we know the composition?

Mr Callichurn: Unfortunately, I do not have the list and information at hand at the moment.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House - because during one of his last answer that he gave to the House concerning the reintroduction of severance allowance to be

paid at normal rates, he said he would review the legislation and consider the possibility of introducing it anew in our labour legislation - when will this be done?

Mr Callichurn: This proposition is being taken on board in the exercise of the review of the labour legislation.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, this is a fundamental question, it will impact not only on the welfare of the workers, but on the economy itself. It is a fundamental issue. The hon. Minister tells us that he has set up a Technical Committee which has had consultations, but he cannot remember - fine - the composition of that committee. Can we, at least, know the name and status of the Chairperson of that very important Technical Committee?

Mr Callichurn: The Technical Committee is being chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry.

Mr Ramful: I received observations, especially from the union, as to the need of setting up an Independent Disciplinary Committee. Is this one issue which would be considered with the amendment?

Mr Callichurn: Yes, indeed it will be considered.

Mr Uteem: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is a time frame when this Committee has to come up with its final report?

Mr Callichurn: Well, as soon as possible, I suggest.

Mr Baloomoody: I was going to ask the same question. The hon. Minister just said that there have been several meetings. Are there going to be more meetings with the unions or have the consultations been over and we are waiting for the Committee's report?

Mr Callichurn: Consultations are still ongoing and I am expecting recommendations soon.

PAILLES - SEWERAGE NETWORK PROJECT

(No. B/129) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the implementation of the sewerage network project in the region of Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the expected completion date thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavello): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that the contract for the phase I of the project which consists of the construction of trunk sewers and pumping station was awarded on 23 September 2015. The works are expected to be completed by May 2017.

Regarding phase 2 of the project, which consists of construction of lateral sewers, about 3,000 house connections and replacement of CWA pipes, an Expression of Interest for the supervision of the works contract was launched on 24 February 2016 and proposals received are being evaluated.

I am informed by the Authority, that a prequalification exercise to shortlist contractors for the works will be launched by the Central Procurement Board. It is expected that works will start by January 2017 and be completed in 30 months.

Mr Armance: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm that the contractor will resurface the road once the excavation and connection are completed? Is it part of the scope of the contractor?

Mr Collendavello: This is normally part of all the contracts, but let me just check. Although, I do not have the precise information on file, I can tell the House that normally in these contracts there is always a clause for retarring of the road after the excavation.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House what are the financial implications of this project?

Mr Collendavello: The phase I of the project is financed by a loan from funding agencies to the tune of USD10 m. The contract has been awarded to Sotravic Ltd in September 2015 for the sum of Rs250 m. inclusive of VAT. That is for Phase 1. For phase II, we are, of course, awaiting the procurement exercise before we can have figures.

Mr Baloomoody: In the previous reply, more or less the same question, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister said that we are looking for funds for Phase II. May I know whether funds are available for phase II?

Mr Collendavello: For the moment, what I can say is that this part of the project will be funded by Government. This is how matters stand now. We will see the liquidity situation, as time goes by, but we have Government spending which has been earmarked for it.

Mr Armance: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister let us know, after completion of phase II, if the whole region of Pailles will be connected?

Mr Collendavelloo: Ultimately, the whole region of Pailles will be connected.

CONGOMAH & LES MARIANNES - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/130) Mr G. Oree (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the severe and prolonged water problems faced by the inhabitants of Congomah and Les Mariannes in Constituency No. 4, Port Louis North and Montagne Longue, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if remedial measures have been taken in relation thereto and, if so, indicate where matters stand and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

LONG MOUNTAIN HOSPITAL – PHARMACY – OPENING HOURS

(No. B/131) Mr G. Oree (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Long Mountain Hospital, he will state if he will consider the advisability of –

- (a) extending the opening hours of the pharmacy found thereat beyond 2000 hours, as was the case in the past and, if not, why not, and
- (b) reviewing the conditions thereat to allow the operation thereof as a full- fledged hospital.

(Withdrawn)

FLIC-EN-FLAC – ST PATRICK CLINIC - OPERATION

(No. B/132) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the St Patrick Clinic of Flic-en-Flac, he will state the –

- (a) date of coming into operation thereof;
- (b) date on which the application for the issue of an Environment Impact Assessment Licence in relation thereto was received at his Ministry, indicating the date of issue thereof;

- (c) distance of the;
 - (i) building housing same to the nearest residence, and
 - (ii) stand-by generator, indicating if it is compliant with the recommendations and regulations applicable therefor in each case.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a), I wish to inform the House that the St Patrick Clinic of Flic-en-Flac came into operation in January 2014.

With regard to part (b), the application for an EIA licence by LP Health Care Ltd to convert the existing St Patrick's outpatient clinic into a 10-bedded facility with necessary amenities to operate a full-fledged private hospital was received on 26 May 2011. The EIA licence was issued on 03 October 2011.

Madam Speaker, as for part (c) (i), this private hospital is located within a ground +2 building, and the hospital is accommodated within the ground floor and part of the first floor. The remaining part of the building is used as residential apartments.

As for part (c) (ii), the standby generator is housed within a concrete enclosure with corrugated iron sheet roof, and the distance to the surrounding residence is around 18 metres. I wish to inform the House that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, which is the enforcing agency for noise, has undertaken a noise monitoring on 30 October 2015 at 10.20 hours. The noise measurement revealed a level of 72 decibel, which is above the permissible limit of 60 decibel, as per the Environment Protection (Standards for Noise) Regulations 1997, for daytime. My Ministry requested the clinic to have recourse to sound proofing of the generator as a remedial measure.

On 04 November 2015 and 26 January 2016, noise measurements were undertaken anew by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, which revealed that the noise levels were still above limits despite soundproofing of the generator room.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has served a Programme Notice on LP Health Care Ltd for noise emanating from the standby generator during operation, as the noise level was above permissible limit. The matter is being monitored closely by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and my Ministry.

The proponent has indicated that the standby generator is used only when there is a power failure on the grid, for instance, the generator has operated four times for a total duration of one hour since January 2016.

I would like also to inform the House that, as to date, no complaints associated with noise has been received at the level of my Ministry and the Ministry of Health and Quality Life with respect to the clinic.

Mr Barbier: Madam Speaker, I did not hear the hon. Minister mention the date of operation of the clinic. According to my information, the clinic was operating a long while before having the EIA certificate. Will the hon. Minister confirm this state of affairs?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, as far as I am concerned, I have no information that they were operating before the EIA was issued to them.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister aware that this building, in the original permit, was for the ground floor to be commercial and the rest of the floor residential? And then, all of a sudden, like my friend has said, they came with a clinic and were functioning without EIA. Is the hon. Minister aware that we have a big problem of parking at the site where the clinic is? Because the residents on the third floor are complaining about parking.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, as I have said, as far as I am concerned, I have no information that there has been any complaint up to now. But I am taking on board what the hon. Member is saying, and I will see to it.

Dr. Joomaye: Madam Speaker, according to my information, this clinic is operating an X-ray Department within a residential complex. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if the EIA Committee has taken into account the effects of scattered rays on the environment and on the people living in that building.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, I have no information about X-rays or whatever kind of apparatus they are using in the clinic with me.

Mr Barbier: The hon. Minister is not receiving complaints, but we do receive complaints as Members of this Parliament. Part (a) of my question concerns the date of coming into operation thereof. So, may I insist upon the hon. Minister to see whether he has the date of coming into operation in his file?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: It is to be noted that, in September 2010, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life granted a licence to the clinic to operate as an outpatient with general consultation and observation wards. Thereafter, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life issued a second licence to the clinic to operate as a private hospital in November 2010.

Mr Barbier: Being given that now it is clear that the clinic was operating long before getting the EIA permit, will this new Government look into it to know what were the reasons for this state of things, for the Ministry of Health to give a licence to operate prior the clinic having its EIA licence? Will Government establish this state of affairs and take appropriate measures now to correct all these wrongdoings which have been ongoing there?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, I would like the hon. Member's question to be addressed to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life because as far as the EIA is concerned, as I said, the date of application was on 26 May 2011. I cannot reply and I cannot know if they were operating before that.

Dr. Joomaye: Following the information given here, I would like to know from the hon. Minister if he will now ask the Radiation Protection Authority to do a due diligence on the equipment being used in that clinic.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: I will look into it.

NELSON MANDELA CENTRE FOR AFRICAN CULTURE - VACANCIES

(No. B/133) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of vacancies existing thereat, indicating if same have been advertised and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when, and
- (b) the closing dates for submission of applications therefor.

Mr Baboo: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture that there are currently five existing vacancies. The posts were advertised in three different newspapers during the first week of March 2016.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, the closing date for the submission of applications was Monday 21 March 2016 at 3.30 p.m.

Mr Barbier: Could the hon. Minister confirm that there was a lot of trouble at this Centre about the closing date and whether he is aware for which reasons?

Mr Baboo: Sorry, I am not aware.

FISHERS - FISHING CARD

(No. B/134) **Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the fishers, he will state the number thereof who are -

- (a) in possession of a valid fishing card, and
- (b) not professionally active.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I am tabling a list of 1,994 fishers who hold a valid fisherman's card, out of which 78 are not professionally active. For those 78, I can give the breakdown. 32 fishers are on sick leave and receiving social aid. Their fisherman's cards have been retained and they are not receiving bad weather allowance. Three fishers are in jail. Their fisherman's cards have been retained and they are not receiving bad weather allowance.

Eight fishers have been lost at sea, awaiting Police report to delete their names from register. One fisher is untraceable. The fisherman's card is not being stamped and the fisher is not receiving bad weather allowance. The fisherman's card will be cancelled after six months if the fisher does not report to the respective fisheries posts.

Two fishers have proceeded abroad. The fisherman's card is not being stamped and the fisher is not receiving bad weather allowance. The fisherman's card will be cancelled after six months if the fishers do not report to their respective fisheries posts and last, 32 fishers are not fishing. Their cases are being closely monitored with a view to withdrawing their fisherman's card.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: Madam Speaker, adding to what the hon. Minister just said, there are lots of fishermen who have the fisherman's card but they are not active anymore, they are doing other things. This is the case in my Constituency and I will take only one example at Bain des Dames where we have, maybe, one-third of those who have the fisherman's card who are actually professionally active. While we have other new fishermen who are active - the hon. Minister has got a list - and they are asking for a fisherman's card but, unfortunately, they are waiting for years now. Being given all these information we just have, is it not high time now for the Ministry to act upon it and make justice to those who are actually waiting for a fisherman's card for so long?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No comments, please!

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, this question was raised last year and I said that we have got about 150 fisherman's cards with the Ministry and that we have started an exercise. A monitoring exercise is on-going for the issue of new fisherman's card for off lagoon fishing. The monitoring exercise is expected to be completed by mid-April, this month. Those who are found to be eligible for a fisherman's card will have to undergo a medical examination and, thereafter, if found medically fit to fish, follow a training course to be dispensed by my Ministry.

INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY- DIRECTOR - POST

(No. B/136) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to Ms Y. C., Director of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to the -

- (a) post she occupied immediately prior to her appointment thereat, indicating the date on which she resigned therefrom, and
- (b) date on which she submitted her application therefor, and
- (c) number of applicants who applied for the said post, indicating their respective qualifications.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

(4.07 p.m.)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**ELECTORAL REFORMS - MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE**

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, in January 2016 a Ministerial Committee on Electoral Reforms was set up under my chairmanship.

The mandate of the Committee includes -

- (i) proportional representation and guaranteeing better women representation;
- (ii) mandatory declaration of community;
- (iii) anti-defection measures;
- (iv) widening of powers of the Electoral Supervisory Commission;
- (v) the Financing of Political Parties, and
- (vi) amendments to the Electoral System in Rodrigues.

The Ministerial Committee has met on four occasions so far and, in the first instance, considered the issue of financing of political parties. I submitted its recommendations which have been approved by Government on Friday 01 April 2016. These recommendations pertain to -

- Accountability and transparency
- Sources of funding
- Expenditure limits.

In view of the fact that such reforms touch the very core of our electoral system and democratic principles, I wish to inform the House that arrangements have been made for copies of the proposals to be circulated to each hon. Member of the National Assembly and tabled.

The House may also wish to know that the Ministerial Committee will next address the issue of widening of powers of the Electoral Supervisory Commission.

Thank you.

(4.08 p.m.)

WATER SECTOR - REFORM – WORLD BANK ASSISTANCE

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I am making a statement on the Study on the Reform of the water supply system currently undertaken by the World Bank.

In my reply to my Parliamentary Question Nos. B/29 and B/46 on Tuesday last, I informed the House that Government has sought the assistance of the World Bank to advise on the reform of the water sector.

In the course of the supplementary questions, the hon. Leader of the Opposition requested that the Terms of Reference be circulated and wished to know the composition of the World Bank expert delegation.

I am tabling the Terms of Reference. The names of the persons composing the World Bank team is also included in the paper that I am tabling except that we need to add the name of Jalakam Solutions Private Ltd. India as Engineering/operation consultants and BLC Chambers as a local legal consultant on focussed legal due diligence.

Thank you.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (Repeal) Bill (No. III of 2016) was read a first time.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 4.10 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.52 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Second Reading

THE NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT BILL

(No. II of 2016)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management (Mr A.

Wong Yen Cheong): Madam Speaker, I move that the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill (No. II of 2016) be read a second time.

The main object of this Bill is to provide a legal framework for the prevention and reduction of the risk of disasters, mitigation of the adverse impacts of disasters, disaster preparedness, effective response to disasters and management of post-disaster activities including recovery and rehabilitation for the Republic of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, climate change is one of the most daunting challenges in the world, in particular Small Island Developing States and countries in Africa are facing. According to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2014), the world's climate is unequivocally heading on a dangerous pathway causing irreversible adverse impacts on the economy, ecosystems, lives and livelihoods of peoples.

Madam Speaker, climate change is already manifesting itself through a number of extreme climate related disasters globally, affecting millions of people in the most vulnerable countries. According to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO, 2015), for the period 2005 to 2014, 83% of recorded disasters, 39% of recorded deaths, 95% of the recorded total affected population, and 70% of the recorded total damages were linked to natural hazards related to weather, water and climate. In addition, the impacts of disasters on economies and societies have become major obstacles that are seriously impeding our efforts to achieving a sustainable socio-economic development.

With more than 200 million people affected every year, disaster losses continue to rise with grave consequences for the survival, livelihood and dignity of people, especially the poor. Vulnerable groups including young children, pregnant and nursing women, unaccompanied children, widows, elderly people without family support, disabled persons are most at risk.

Over the past years, the Republic of Mauritius has been witnessing severe weather events and natural disaster such as cyclones, storms and tidal surges, tsunamis, floods and flash floods, landslides, torrential rains and earthquakes. This vulnerability is further increased by climate change and rapid urbanisation. In fact, according to the latest World Risk Report (2015), Mauritius is ranked as the 13th country with the highest disaster risk and ranked 7th on the list of countries most exposed to natural hazards.

Madam Speaker, as far as our country is concerned, disaster management had in the recent past been carried out on an *ad hoc* basis within an administrative setup. Following the

flash floods of March 2013 where 11 of our citizens lost their lives, a number of decisions were taken and implemented with a view to improving disaster management. These include the setting up of –

- (i) a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council to oversee disaster management in Mauritius and the outer Islands;
- (ii) a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre to act as the main institution for the State of Mauritius for the planning, organising, coordinating and monitoring of disaster risk reduction and management activities at all levels;
- (iii) a Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee in the Municipal City Council and the Municipal Town Councils and the District Councils to manage disaster risk reduction in the respective localities;
- (iv) a Rodrigues Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council to assist in the preparedness response, rehabilitation and recovery operations before, during and after the occurrence of a disaster of an emergency in Rodrigues, and
- (v) a Rodrigues Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre to be responsible for the planning, coordinating and monitoring of disaster risk reduction and management activities in Rodrigues.

Madam Speaker, risk reduction and management is no longer an option. In our endeavour to better manage disasters in the Republic of Mauritius, our country participated in the Sendai World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Japan in March 2015. The goal of the Sendai Framework is to “prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience”.

Parties to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted in the Third World Conference in March 2015 in Sendai, Japan, have been called upon to introduce a legal framework for strengthening governance in view of better managing disaster risk. Various countries have already in place such legal frameworks based on which this Bill has been developed.

This Bill provides for the necessary legal framework to work towards the goal set under the Sendai Framework. I will now highlight the main provisions of the Bill -

- (i) a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council which shall, *inter alia*, oversee the implementation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy, Strategic Framework and Plan. The National Council shall also lay down national guidelines for disaster risk reduction and management at all levels. To enable the Council to discharge its role effectively, the latter will have well defined functions as well as powers. Among others, the National Council may require any Ministry, Government department, Local Authority or any other body to provide such information in such manner and within such time as it may determine and as well as cause any Ministry, Government department, Local Authority or any other body to provide their facilities and resources for the protection and preservation of life and property in disaster risk reduction and management.
- (ii) a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre which shall be a department within the Ministry. The National Centre shall act as the main institution in Mauritius for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of disaster risk reduction and management activities. The centre shall be headed by a Director-General who shall be a public officer. The latter will be legally empowered by this Act to discharge his/her functions most effectively in the interest of public safety.
- (iii) Provision has been made for the setting up of a National Crisis Committee which is a leaner body as opposed to the National Council so as to allow for decisive and timely actions before, during and after a disaster to save life and protect property. Here, I would like to emphasise that the National Crisis Committee may, after consultation with the Prime Minister, issue orders directing any person to remain indoor or evacuate their premises or any public place as well as not to venture near rivers, canals, water courses, cliffs, at sea, beaches or on islets on safety and security grounds. The National Crisis Committee will also have the power to declare a localised area a disaster or potential disaster area and cause the evacuation and restrict access thereat.

- (iv) a National Emergency Operations Command, known as NEOC, which shall, in the event of a disaster, be activated to coordinate and monitor all response and recovery activities. The National Emergency Operations Command shall be a multi-agency, including members from the public and private sectors and it shall report to the National Crisis Committee. The Commissioner of Police shall head the National Emergency Operations Command and lead disaster response operations as may be appropriate in the circumstances. The National Emergency Operations Command shall have such powers as may be necessary to discharge its functions most effectively and may, in the interest of public safety -
- (a) cause to be closed or diverted any public road which represents a potential risk to road users;
 - (b) cause the evacuation, either voluntarily or by using such force as may be necessary, of persons who are at risk;
 - (c) cause public facilities such as emergency shelters, educational institutions, stadiums, gymnasiums, parking spaces or any other public place to be used for the purpose of sheltering displaced persons or storage of emergency supplies;
 - (d) direct the closure of any underground facilities, subways, underpasses or such other places or facilities as may be necessary, and
 - (e) cause to be deployed such resources that may be required in the circumstances.
- (v) a specialised unit within the Special Mobile Force, to be known as the Disaster Response Unit shall provide assistance in disaster response operations. It will consist of well-trained personnel for prompt intervention to assist victims and families in the event of natural disasters.
- (vi) Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee at the level of local authorities. These local committees under the guidance of the National Centre will among others -

- (a) prepare and implement, in accordance with any guidelines laid down by the National Council, the Local Plan to be approved by the National Centre;
 - (b) promote and implement disaster risk reduction and management education and public awareness programmes;
 - (c) build capacity, acquire resources and coordinate disaster risk reduction and management activities, and
 - (d) conduct trainings, drills and simulation exercises involving the local communities.
- (vii) the appointment of a Local Disaster Management Coordinator for each local authority;
- (viii) a Local Emergency Operations Command to lead disaster response operations for that specific local authority, in the event of a disaster. The Local Emergency Operations Command shall report to the National Emergency Operations Command and within the purview of a local authority concerned, exercise the same powers of the National Emergency Operations Command.
- (ix) Madam Speaker, as far as Rodrigues is concerned, provision has been made in the Bill for the setting up of a similar structure which will consist of -
- (a) a Rodrigues Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council with the Chief Commissioner as Chairperson;
 - (b) a Rodrigues Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre which shall be under the responsibility of the Chief Commissioner's Office;
 - (c) a Rodrigues Crisis Committee with the Island Chief Executive as Chairperson, and
 - (d) a Rodrigues Emergency Operations Command similar to our National Emergency Operations Command, which shall in the event of a disaster, be activated to coordinate and monitor all response and recovery activities, and
- (x) for Agalega and the outer Islands, provision has been made under the legislation for Disaster Management Coordinators for Agalega and Cargados

Carajos which shall be under the administrative control of the General Manager of the OIDC. The latter shall, in consultation with the National Centre, lead all disaster response operations in Agalega and Cargados Carajos. With the activation of the National Emergency Operations Command, disaster response operations will be led by the National Emergency Operations Command with the assistance of the General Manager and the National Centre.

Madam Speaker, this Bill also makes provision for the declaration of a state of disaster in situations which call for exceptional measures to protect life and property. For that purpose, the Prime Minister may, depending on circumstances prevailing at his discretion, or after consultation with the Chairperson of the National Crisis Committee and as the case may be, declare a state of disaster in the Republic of Mauritius. The Prime Minister may arrange for issue of necessary directives for the mobilisation of human and material resources with a view to facilitating emergency relief and response as well as post disaster recovery and reconstruction in the national interest. Such directives may also include any other vital measures necessary to prevent the escalation of a disaster or alleviate, contain and minimise the impact of the disaster.

Madam Speaker, in case it is beyond our national capacity to deal with a disaster or an emergency situation, provision has been made in this Bill for the Prime Minister to request for international relief assistance from friendly countries or international institutions to expedite rehabilitation and reconstruction and attenuate sufferings until the situation gets back to normal.

Madam Speaker, we have witnessed on various occasions that citizens act irresponsibly during disasters exposing themselves unnecessarily to risk and danger whereby frittering the resources of response agencies. It has been observed that the acts and behaviours of such persons prevent authorities from discharging their duties effectively and diligently. For this very reason, provisions have been made at paragraph 42 in the legislation for penalties for any offence constituting an impediment or hurdle in coping with disaster.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight that my Ministry has already come up with a National Disasters Scheme which is a working document which complements this Bill. The National Disasters Scheme defines roles, responsibilities and actions of all relevant stakeholders before, during and after disasters.

Madam Speaker, let me conclude by stating that with climate change, our country is prone to natural calamities and disasters. We find today countries such as the United Kingdom, Japan, France, South Africa, India, Philippines and Malaysia. It is high time that we have a comprehensive legislation to cope with disaster risk. There is pressing need to do things in a well-coordinated and organised manner. It is also critical to vest all officers with the appropriate legal powers so that they discharge their duties diligently. This is presently what this Bill will address, keeping in line with international best practices as spelt out in the Sendai Framework.

Madam Speaker, this Bill will go a long way towards building the resilience of our nation and is therefore of national interest.

With these words, I commend the Bill to the House.

Thank you.

Mr Callichurn rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan.

(5.10 p.m.)

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Madam Speaker, at the time we are discussing the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill, a very important Bill, the population will note that, at the same time, there is disaster within Government.

(Interruptions)

Disaster! We are talking about disaster for...

Madam Speaker: Yes, but hon. Bhagwan, come straight to the Bill. This has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr Bhagwan: I am coming to the Bill, Madam. It's national disaster. When we are introducing this Bill...

(Interruptions)

Hey, écoutez! Pas fer moi vine koz lor la. I am talking...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, no crosstalking! Please address the Chair and concentrate yourself...

(Interruptions)

...concentrate yourself on the Bill.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: At the time we are discussing this Bill, Madam Speaker, we have to note that the former Minister of Environment, who has been involved in the preparation of this Bill, has provoked himself a national disaster. I won't go into the details. The whole population knows it. And now he is followed by – the country will take note that there is another disaster - Mr Goldfinger, the Minister of External Affairs. Another disaster!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, may I kindly request you ...

Mr Bhagwan: I am coming to the Bill.

Madam Speaker: Please! May I kindly request you not to make these sorts of remarks which are outside the precinct of this Bill? You have asked to talk on the Bill, please come straight to the Bill.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, these are the worries of the population. The worries of the population that, at the time we are discussing this National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill, the population has the right to know what is happening. It's a Parliament, it's a whole Government, it is us, here, who are being asked to vote this very important Bill, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill. And what's happening? Who are those MPs who will be asked to talk on this Bill, to intervene, to vote the Bill and this is what the population is asking.

Madam Speaker, while we are busy discussing this very important Bill, what are the public officers saying outside: '*Le vrai désastre est le PRB*'. Economic Operators say: '*le vrai désastre c'est le décollage économique.*'

Madam Speaker: No! Excuse me, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: What the PRB has to do with this Bill? You are a seasoned politician, you know very well what are the Rules of the Assembly. You are intervening on a Bill and you have got the Explanatory Memorandum. I am sure you must have gone thoroughly through the Bill. If you could please, I appeal to you, make your comments on the Bill.

Mr Bhagwan: ...the population realise about disaster.

(Interruptions)

There are so many disasters.

La morale de l'histoire est que ces petits et grands désastres de tous les jours semblent préoccuper davantage la population.

(Interruptions)

I won't go into the details of that. Don't you see the moral of the population when you talk about disaster?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, now, I will come to the Bill itself.

(Interruptions)

The Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) aims to reduce the damage caused by natural hazards - what we are witnessing is man-made hazard - like earthquakes, floods, droughts and cyclones, through an ethic of prevention. The aim of this Bill is to save lives and properties of our citizens, so, this is why we welcome the presentation of this Bill, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, since the deadly flash flood of 30 March, the people of this land is praying for never ever to face this kind of tragedy again. We have all witnessed what happened. Madam Speaker, just last week, a Remembrance Day Ceremony was held and we have all witnessed how sometimes memory fades but the suffering of close relatives and friends does not. The parents of those who lost their lives were there and it was very hard to witness their feelings.

The then Government, following the flash flood, Madam Speaker, did take this national tragedy as a wake-up call and initiated the process for a DRR policy formulation with the help of the UNDP. In fact, this Bill is the logical outcome of this process where many technicians, many persons, especially the Head of the Special Mobile Force, Commandant Servansingh, have contributed a lot for the preparation of this Bill.

Madam Speaker, disasters unfortunately occur all over the planet. They leave despair and grief behind. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Madam Speaker, there were 346 reported disasters in 2015, 22,773 people dead, 98.6 million people were affected by those disasters and some 66.5 billion US dollars of

economic damages. The top five most disaster hit countries were China, USA, India, Philippines and Indonesia.

Because disasters occur regularly all over the planet, the UN System rightly took the decision to organise World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, focusing on disaster and climate change risk management in the context of sustainable development.

The World Conference has been convened three times, Madam Speaker, with each edition to date having been hosted by Japan: - and here, in Mauritius, we benefit from the assistance of the Japanese Government - in Yokohama in 1994; in Kobe in 2005 and in Sendai in 2015.

Madam Speaker, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 is the successor instrument of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005–2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. The HFA was conceived to give further impetus to the global work under the International Framework for Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction of 1989, and the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action, adopted in 1994 and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction of 1999 were passed.

In spite of all these international efforts, according to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Report 2015-2030 and I quote, Madam Speaker –

“Over the same 10-year time frame, however, disasters have continued to exact a heavy toll and, as a result the well-being and safety of persons, communities and countries as a whole have been affected. Over 700 thousand people have lost their lives, (...)”

In disasters -

“(...) over 1.4 million were injured and approximately 23 million were made homeless as a result of disasters. Overall, more than 1.5 billion people were affected by disasters in various ways. Women, children and people in vulnerable situations disproportionately affected. The total economic loss was more than \$1.3 trillion. In addition, between 2008 and 2012, 144 million people were displaced by disasters. Disasters, many of which are exacerbated by climate change (...)”

which is one of the most important issues these days –

“(...) and increasing in frequency and intensity, significantly impede progress towards sustainable development. Evidence indicates that exposure of persons and assets in all countries has increased faster than vulnerability has decreased, thus generating new risk and a steady rise in disasters losses with a significant economic, social, health, cultural and environmental impact in the short, medium and long term, especially at the local and community level.”

This is why it is good that in this Bill there are committees which have been set up for local and for the community. Undoubtedly lessons have been learned from the Hyogo Framework for Action; gaps and future challenges have been identified.

The Sendai Framework, the last one, is built on elements which ensure continuity with the work done by States and other stakeholders under the HFA and introduces a number of innovations.

Many commentators, Madam Speaker, have identified the most significant shifts as a strong emphasis on disaster risk management as opposed to disaster management, the definition of seven global targets, the reduction of disaster risk as an expected outcome, a goal focused on preventing new risk, reducing existing risk and strengthening resilience, as well as a set of guiding principles, including primary responsibility of States to prevent and reduce disaster risk, all-of-society and all-of-State institutions engagement.

In addition, Madam Speaker, the scope of disaster risk reduction has been broadened significantly to focus on both natural and man-made hazards and related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks. Health resilience is strongly promoted throughout.

The Sendai Framework also articulates the following: the need for improved understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of exposure, vulnerability and hazard characteristics; the strengthening of disaster risk governance, including national platforms; accountability for disaster risk management; preparedness to “Build Back Better” - following disaster -; recognition of stakeholders and their roles; mobilisation of risk-sensitive investment to avoid the creation of new risk; resilience of health infrastructure, cultural heritage and work-places; strengthening of international cooperation.

The seven global targets of the Sendai Framework, Madam Speaker, are –

- (a) substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower the average per 100,000 global mortality rate in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015;
- (b) substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030;
- (c) reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030;
- (d) substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services;
- (e) substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020;

This is why we are being called upon to vote this legislation.

- (f) substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation for the present framework by 2030, and
- (g) substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to people by 2030.

Taking into account the experience gained through the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, and in pursuance of the expected outcome and goal, there is a need for focused action within and across sectors by States at local, national, regional and global levels in the following four priorities areas –

- Priority 1: Understanding of disaster risk;
- Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk;
- Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and
- Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

This is how it is seen at the international level. I have to give some light to what is happening at the level of UNDP at the international level.

Coming to our Republic of Mauritius, Madam Speaker, what are the disaster risks that we have to face in Mauritius? Until the deadly flash flood, the only disaster risks which all Mauritians are well aware are cyclones. Now, the situation is dramatically different. First,

on the climate change front, studies on Climatic Risk Analysis have confirmed that the average temperature in the Republic of Mauritius shows an increasing trend of about 0.15 Celsius per decade, compared to 1961-90, the average temperature increased by 0.74 - 1.2 Celsius.

The precipitation on the other hand shows a decreasing trend over the period from 1905 to 2007. The reduction in precipitations amounts to 57 millimetres per decade.

The 4th Assessment Report (AR4) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assumes that the temperature in the Indian Ocean region will increase of about 2.1 degrees centigrade by 2080 to 2099, compared to the 1980 to 1999 scenario. The average temperature on Mauritius Island is expected to increase of 1-2 degrees centigrade by 2070.

As a result of the climate change, the intensity and frequency of extreme precipitation events are likely to increase even if the total annual precipitation remains constant or increases slightly as indicated by the results of the climate risk analysis for the Republic of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, the synthesis report 2012 has revealed and I quote –

“significant exposure to flood hazard of different intensity.”

On Mauritius Island, some 5.70 km² of built-up land and 19.30 km² of agricultural land are exposed to flood hazard. This is in the official report. This can affect 2.4-3 km of motorway, 18-29 km of main roads and 68-109 km of secondary roads. According to official report, Madam Speaker, on Rodrigues Island, the extension of built-up and agricultural land prone to flood hazard amounts to 0.4 km² and 0.5-0.6 km² respectively.

Madam Speaker, the total critically exposed area ranges from 25 to 110 km² on Mauritius Island. They are: Port Louis area, Rivière du Poste, Flacq, Rivière Sèche Bassins; Rivière du Rempart West to GRNW; Citrons Basin and some other areas around the country, and some lowlands location in Mauritius like Rivière du Poste where water can accumulate during heavy precipitation.

On Rodrigues Island, according to the report again, the most flooded affected areas are near rivers' mouths. High risk arises when urban areas are located exactly near rivers' mouths. Settlements located higher in the mountains are exposed to lower hazards.

Coming to coastal inundation, Madam Speaker, the inundation risk assessment identified coastal sites prone to inundation hazards on Mauritius Island. These areas are according to official report –

- between Pointe aux Cannoniers and Cap Malheureux;
- between Mon Choisy and Baie de l’Arsenal;
- between Cap Malheureux and Poudre d’Or;
- from Baie du Tombeau to Grande Rivière;
- from Flic en Flac to Petite Rivière Noire;
- in Pointe aux Roches, Pomponnette, Riambel and Mahebourg, and
- at Trou d’Eau Douce, Poste de Flacq and Roches Noires.

These are the areas which can be affected from the official report.

Madam Speaker, the northern area of the Mauritius Island is highly exposed to coastal risk, especially the zone between Pointe aux Cannoniers and Cap Malheureux where there are wide inundated areas. High coastal risk appears for Port Louis area also. In total, Madam Speaker, some 12.2 km² of built-up land and around 11.8 km² of expansion areas are exposed to high or very high hazard of inundation on Mauritius Island. Same applies for around 60 to 80 km of primary roads.

The exposure is relatively lower on Rodrigues Island, with some 0.56 km² in built-up areas. Considering the sea level rise increases scenarios (from 2.5 to 6 mm), the population exposed to inundation ranges from 22,800 to 63,400 people in Mauritius, while in Rodrigues exposed population ranges from 800 to 1,800 people.

With regard to landslide risk, the total amount of economic value for element exposed at has also been estimated to about Rs7 billion, for both Mauritius and Rodrigues islands. In terms of comprehensive risk-exposed areas, there are also hotels, residences and public buildings.

Madam Speaker, the only available Digital Elevation Model (DEM) for Agalega and St Brandon islands, which forms part of the Republic of Mauritius, has a horizontal resolution of 90m and a vertical resolution of 1m; this coarse resolution, together with the complete absence of data about land use and susceptibility, poses substantial limits to a comprehensive analysis of exposure of risk in these islands. We already have a rather good idea of the risks involved and now we have to enhance our preparedness.

Madam Speaker, there is no such thing called natural disaster. We have natural hazards which turn into disaster when we are unprepared to cope with them. I understand that the primary purpose of this Bill is precisely to upgrade the level of preparedness of the country so that we can save lives and property.

The Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy should be implemented along with the following key objectives –

- (i) defining the DRR strategic framework of action as envisaged by the Hyogo-Sendai Framework for Action;
- (ii) building a strong institutional basis for DRR;
- (iii) integrate the DRR into national planning policies with the help of the Ministry of Housing and Lands;
- (iv) enable and support DRR through improved national legislation, and
- (v) empower relevant stakeholders and local communities.

Madam Speaker, while working on this Bill, I realised that without an ethic of prevention and a culture of preparedness, this Bill won't be saving lives. We need to create new synergies between the public and private sectors to enhance national capacities in terms of technical governance. The Minister of Infrastructure, himself, acknowledged that the design of roundabouts are bad. How can you expect to build resilience if our engineers lack expertise?

In Mauritius, we do not yet have a culture of maintenance, and it is everywhere. We can build nice infrastructure, which are spoiled rapidly due to lack of proper and regular maintenance. Building safer and more resilient infrastructure is the first step, and we also need efficient and reliable warning systems.²

Everytime we have torrential rains, there is a lot of confusion regarding meteorological buildings and the closing of educational institutions. We have witnessed in the past such problems, and this cannot be allowed to continue.

We need to provide the human and technical resources to the meteorological station, so that they can perform efficiently. We are still waiting for the installation of the weather radar at Trou aux Cerfs, which will enhance quality of forecast. Mauritius also needs a fully automated early warning system for incoming surges, tidal surges and swell waves. The implementation of this EWS will enable the early and safe evacuation of coastal communities

in Mauritius like Bambous Virieux and other areas, as well as Rodrigues and Agaléga. We all realise the extreme vulnerability of Agaléga in the event of a storm surge or swell waves, which are expected to be more severe through sea level rise and climate change.

Madam Speaker, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience is of prime importance. The implementation cost for planning activities for the two planning cycles, 2013-2018 first cycle and 2019-2025 second cycle, will not be less than Rs5 billion according to experts. It is almost useless to prepare all these plans to get this Bill through and keep all these plans locked in filing cabinets. We have to provide funds for the effective and timely implementation of the risk reduction strategy.

That's why, Madam Speaker, taking all this into account - we are creating the Council - the Council, accordingly, should have been under the Prime Minister's Office like the National Environment Commission chaired by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister can give guidelines and meet the Committee even on a half-yearly basis with the representatives of all the different Ministries and other sectors. We don't also see in the Bill the representatives of the airport authorities and those of the Ministry of Information.

With regard to an operational aspect of the Bill, I would like to highlight the issue of protection of properties after evacuation of persons at risk. Madam Speaker, you will agree with me that that can give rise to quite a few problems before, during and after an evacuation. It is mentioned in the Bill that the Director can make evacuation during cyclonic periods. In spite of all our national efforts, we need to enhance international cooperation with other countries and international organisations for an effective implementation of the present framework by 2030. By hosting the SIDS (Small Island Developing States) Summit in 2005, Mauritius had opened a wide avenue of international cooperation, especially for building resilience of vulnerable countries but, unfortunately, petty politics killed this laudable initiative.

Within the Mauritius Declaration Framework, our country would have benefitted a lot to overcome some of its inherent vulnerabilities. Madam Speaker, before leaving the floor, I wish to remind the House that real preparedness is not about what you have to do on a day to day basis, but rather on how much you don't have to do on D-day.

It is not the number of police vehicles on the road, the number of JCBs digging trenches on that day or the helicopter going everywhere. The battle is won well before through a real ethic of prevention, and the mission starts now. As far as we are concerned,

we wish well to the hon. Minister and hope that he has sufficient funds, and also that the appointment of the Director not be made on a policy *de petit copain*, that the right person be appointed, because this will be a very, very important job, with the lives of our people in his own hands.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr Baboo: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Gungah rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 12 April 2016 at 11.30 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun) rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTER RAISED

(5.39 p.m.)

PORT LOUIS – GOVERNMENT OFFICES - DELOCALISATION

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Madame la présidente, le mercredi 2 mars 2016, le Conseil des ministres a pris la décision d'aller de l'avant avec la construction d'une nouvelle ville au coût de R 28.5 milliards. Pour ne pas alarmer une bonne partie de la population, surtout les port-louisiens, le gouvernement ne fait mention que d'une ville administrative. En réalité, Ebène deviendra la capitale administrative et législative du pays en y délocalisant l'Assemblée nationale, le bureau du Premier ministre, des ministères, le *State Law Office*, entre autres.

Ainsi, Port Louis, ne sera que la capitale officielle. Un point c'est tout. Elle est vouée à une crise sociale. D'ailleurs, le numéro trois du gouvernement, l'honorable Soodhun, a concédé dimanche, dans une fonction à Vacoas, que Port-Louis est en danger. Je le cite –

« Nous devons ...

(Interruptions)

Je le cite...

(Interruptions)

Lisez le journal 'Défi Quotidien' d'hier. Je vous cite –

(Interruptions)

«Nous devons sauver Port-Louis ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Je vous cite -

« Nous devons sauver Port-Louis en faisant tout pour que la capitale reste une ville vivante et touristique. »

En ajoutant -

« Il faut sauver aussi Le Caudan. »

Ces mots ont été prononcés par lui à Vacoas.

(Interruptions)

C'est clair que ce gouvernement est parfaitement conscient qu'en délocalisant ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, please! Don't go into controversies. If you have something specific to address, please speak about that. Don't go into controversial issues.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, I am not inventing anything. These words were said by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister. Maybe, he has not heard himself. It was said on Radio Plus. I heard it!

(Interruptions)

I heard it!

(Interruptions)

I am not lying!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, I have asked you...

(Interruptions)

No crosstalking, please! I am on my feet! Hon. Ameer Meea, please sit down! You've got something specific to address at adjournment time. Please do so without getting into controversial issues.

Mr Ameer Meea: *But I am not lying. This was said, and I heard it.* J'ai mentionné plus haut que Port-Louis est destiné à devenir une ville morte, comme je l'ai prévenu depuis le mois de janvier. Ce qui me pousse à dire que c'est un crime prémédité contre les port-louisien et les habitants des régions avoisinantes, d'autant plus que le plan de délocalisation du gouvernement déclenchera un effet domino. Les unes après les autres, les grosses et moyennes entreprises vont bouger vers Heritage City pour être le plus près possible du centre administratif du pays. Sans l'ombre d'un doute, Port-Louis ne sera plus la principale source d'emplois directs et surtout indirects du pays. La grosse majorité des petits commerces n'auront pas leur raison d'être, ce qui fait que bon nombre de port-louisien qui travaillaient ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Ameer Meea: ... pour leur propre compte seront sans emploi. Certes, la décision du gouvernement va appauvrir la majorité des 150,000 habitants de Port-Louis.

Ce n'est pas un port modernisé qui pourra compenser l'ampleur des pertes d'emplois. D'ailleurs, les récents chiffres officiels démontrent que le chômage est en constance hausse. C'est un héritage macabre que laissera ce gouvernement en fin de compte.

En proposant de délocaliser l'Assemblée nationale, les ministères, la Cour suprême, le *Prime Minister's Office*, tous ces symboles qui font de Port Louis sa raison d'être, qu'est-ce qui fait en contrepartie. L'ancien ministre des Finances en compagnie du ministre des Infrastructures publiques, le ministre des Collectivités locales, Monsieur Gaëtan Siew avaient brandi l'investissement de R 52 milliards pour transformer Port Louis en un *smart city*. Mais, Madame la présidente, par qui, par le secteur privé !

Alors, c'est le secteur privé qui va investir R 52 milliards dans le *smart city* à Port Louis. On peut se demander quelle est cette firme privée qui investira des milliards de roupies dans Port Louis à un moment où l'Assemblée nationale, le bureau du Premier ministre et

plusieurs autres ministères vont s'installer à Heritage City. Il faut vraiment prendre des gens pour des demeurés. Ce n'est que du bluff ! Plus grave, c'est une arnaque contre les Portlouisiens. Comment peut-on faire de tels investissements et en même temps vider la capitale ? Quel retour sur l'investissement peut attendre le secteur privé ? On cherche à jeter de la poudre aux yeux des Portlouisiens afin de mieux traficoter avec les biens publics, les joyaux historiques du patrimoine pour faire de la place au méga projet du Heritage et aménager des *vested interests*.

Le gouvernement laisse croire que les 300 000 m² des bureaux vides seront transformés en 8,000 unités résidentielles. Cela a été dit par les honorables ministres qui avaient fait la conférence de presse par rapport à Port Louis. D'où sortiront ces 8,000 familles, Madame la présidente? Si Port Louis n'est plus la ville administrative de Port Louis, qui pourra acheter un logement de R 6 millions dans une ville morte, voire dans le Newton Tower, dans le Chancery House, dans le Emmanuel Anquetil Building? Est-ce que l'hôtel du gouvernement, le Treasury Building seront transformés en hôtels ou en musées ? Il faut nous expliquer comment les régions périphériques de la capitale, telles que Plaine Verte, Vallée Pitot, Roche Bois, Cité la Cure, Cassis, Tranquebar, ainsi de suite, vont en tirer profit? Comment les gens des faubourgs vont être parties prenantes de ces développements fonciers? Comment des appartements au coût de R 6 à 10 millions vont les intéresser? Comment les emplois vont être créés par milliers? C'est encore des rêves qu'on veut vendre. Avant les élections, l'Alliance Lepep vendait des rêves, maintenant ils les offrent en cadeau !

On vient d'annoncer la deuxième phase du *ring road* à coût de R 5 milliards pour décongestionner Port Louis. À quoi sert-il d'investir autant d'argent dans un tel projet alors que Port Louis ne sera plus le centre administratif du pays ? N'est-ce pas un gaspillage d'argent ? D'autre part, le gouvernement a signé un contrat avec une compagnie privée en vue d'utiliser l'eau provenant des fonds marins pour refroidir les bâtiments de la capitale. À quoi sert-il d'avoir un tel projet si on vide de la capitale? Qu'est-ce qu'on doit refroidir? Peut-être le port !

Madame la présidente, durant la dernière campagne électorale, l'Alliance Lepep avait critiqué...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Ameer Meea: L'Alliance Lepep avait critiqué le projet métro léger. Comme quoi ce n'était pas une priorité et que c'était du gaspillage des fonds publics. Le projet métro léger aurait créé des emplois et un développement durable et aurait bénéficié à toute la population, et surtout aurait hissé l'île Maurice à un autre niveau de développement.

D'ailleurs, ce n'est pas moi qui le dis, dans un entretien du 29 février 2016 le Docteur Vasant Jogoo dans les Défi Quotidien à une question, dans le manifeste électoral du Mouvement Socialiste Militant qui dit que l'aménagement du territoire sera le pivot du développement durable. Il répond exactement, je cite -

«Je me demande si les dirigeants ont lu et compris cette partie du programme. Manifestement, à l'intérieur de mon parti - parce qu'il est membre du MSM - il y a certains qui ne sont pas sensibles aux préoccupations nationales. Je dois admettre qu'après 14 mois au pouvoir, le MSM n'a toujours pas compris ce qu'il a vendu à la population. »

À une autre question -

« Est-ce que vous avez parlé au dirigeant? »

Il répond –

« Bien sûr ».

Et dire que cette somme colossale qui sera investie dans Heritage City aurait bien pu être utilisée dans des projets de développement économique qui d'une part consolidera notre économie et d'autre part, créé des emplois durables.

Ce gouvernement pêche dangereusement de par son incohérence et manque de vision. Le gouvernement Lepep est résolu à tuer Port Louis et par extension, les citoyens, avec son projet de construire une nouvelle ville administrative à Heritage City pour que Sir Anerood Jugnauth puisse laisser un héritage, telles sont les paroles du ministre de la bonne gouvernance.

(Interruptions)

Taler Vishnu pou occupe toi la! Alle lire l'affidavit la!

Comme quoi, c'est la priorité...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, don't make remarks!

Mr Ameer Meea: Comme quoi c'est la priorité nationale où l'affaire de lance du mirage du deuxième miracle économique ! C'est grave que le culte de la personnalité soit privilégié au détriment de l'intérêt de la nation. Au lieu de rétrograder...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Au lieu de rétrograder la cité de Port Louis qui regorge des souvenirs et des symboles au niveau d'une simple ville portuaire, on devrait penser à toutes ces promesses faites à l'électorat urbain lors de la campagne électorale. Les gens pataugent toujours dans les eaux nauséabondes avec des matières fécales lors des pluies torrentielles. Les centres de refuge sont pris d'assaut à la moindre alerte. Les gens sont toujours en quête d'emploi. Les jeunes se morfondent dans l'oisiveté faute d'une politique de loisir sain, digne de ce nom. La classe moyenne s'appauvrit davantage.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Ameer Meea: Tout cela est devenu soudain le cadet des soucis de nos gouvernants. Que représente une capitale sans son Parlement? Sauf sans le bureau du Premier ministre, sans centre administratif, pour tuer la capitale il n'y a pas mille façons. On n'a qu'à lui priver des rôles qu'elle a toujours assumés, on a qu'à lui ôter son âme. Est-ce par vengeance politique pour avoir fait élire quelques députés de l'Opposition? C'est un fait indéniable que dans presque tous les pays du monde le Parlement se trouve dans leur capitale. L'État est déjà propriétaire de l'Assemblée nationale et du bâtiment du Trésor qui loge le *Prime Minister's Office*. Même le ministre des Finances est logé au *Government House*. Ces bâtiments historiques ont été rénovés à grands frais, y compris le bâtiment du Trésor, le Parlement à plus de R 500 millions et avec raison, il y a quelques années de cela. En faisant...

(Interruptions)

En faisant ce déménagement qui ne s'impose pas, le pays contracte une dette que les générations futures auront à rembourser. Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire du Parlement et du bâtiment du Trésor ? Peut-être un musée ! L'hôtel du gouvernement va être transformé en quoi? L'hôtel du gouvernement sera peut-être transformé en un hôtel tout court ! Avec ce projet on s'attaque à des symboles historiques. Pourquoi les grandes nations entretiennent-

elles avec fierté les bâtiments qui symbolisent leurs histoires nationales? Parce que les lieux et bâtiments symboliques de la nation ne sont pas que des objets ! En tant que témoin de la naissance de la nation, ils sont investis d'une puissance de représentation. Ce sont des symboles majeurs au cœur de la capitale du pays et qui lui procuraient son identité, son fierté. Le déplacement des lieux de l'exercice du pouvoir et de l'État-nation tels que le Parlement et le siège du gouvernement constituerait une atteinte profonde et irrémédiable à la nationale mauricienne. Et là, Madame la présidente, dans une interview du *Business Mag*, L'architecte Gaëtan Siew avait suggéré que dans plusieurs autres villes dans le monde il y a eu la création des nouvelles villes. Il avait notamment cité le Brasilia au Brésil, Canberra en Australie, Cape Town en Sud-Afrique. Mais, Madame la présidente, en Brésil, il y a 200 millions d'habitants avec une superficie de 8.5 millions de kilomètres carrés et l'Australie en elle-même...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: ...est un continent et l'Afrique du Sud a une superficie d'un million de kilomètres carrés avec 53 millions d'habitants. Ce n'est pas comparable. A l'île Maurice, on est que 2000 kilomètres carrés et 1.3 millions d'habitants. *We must compare like with like.* Il n'y a aucune comparaison. Dans ces pays-là, il y avait raison pour faire une autre ville. Il y avait des aspects, des facteurs socio-économiques...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, can I just stop you because you know we have got only 30 minutes for adjournment time. If your speech is too long, you won't give ample time to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to reply. We have got only up to 6.10 p.m. So, would you wind up, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, I have only two minutes left. Mostly I have 15 minutes.

Madam Speaker: Yes, but you will have to wind up because we have got only 30 minutes for adjournment time and we are ending at 6.10 p.m. So, I think it is only fair that the hon. Prime Minister also has ample time to reply to you. So, wind up, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, I am almost done. I will need only two minutes. Il y avait des facteurs socio-économiques tels que le climat extrême, les conditions sismiques,

l'environnement naturel, les mains d'œuvres et plusieurs autres facteurs. Et d'après ce même magazine, je cite –

« Avec la délocalisation (...) ».

Madam Speaker: I am sorry. I'll have to interrupt the hon. Member now.

(Interruptions)

It's already 5.55 p.m. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister will need ample time to reply.

(Interruptions)

I am sorry. But in half an hour, I don't think the Rt. hon. Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

Because you have to be fair to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister also!

(Interruptions)

You have asked time; you have been given ample time. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister needs time also to reply. It is already 6.00 p.m. We have got only ten minutes.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, I need only one minute.

Madam Speaker: Sorry, I have given my ruling!

Mr Ameer Meea: Donc, en conclusion...

Madam Speaker: I have already given my ruling.

(Interruptions)

The floor is yours Rt. hon. Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: We have 30 minutes. I told you I need only one minute.

Madam Speaker: No, you don't have 30 minutes for yourself! You have taken most of the 30 minutes for you. So, please sit down!

(Interruptions)

Sit down when I speak! Now it is for the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to reply.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. Member for his intervention...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Excuse me! But the hon. Member can't say whether I am fair or I am unfair. I am doing my job!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: ...because it gives me the opportunity to put forward the whole situation in its right perspective.

In my Economic Mission Statement, I announced that an important component of our innovation strategy is to transform Mauritius into a SMART island, an evolution of the Cyber Island I envisioned in 2001, which would make us a model for innovation in this part of the world.

Our aim is to embed the use of technology in the day to day life of every Mauritian. This would imply that Government services, businesses, lifestyle as well as our physical infrastructures would be centered around digital infrastructure.

In the Government Programme 2015-2019, I had announced that a new strategic land use planning framework will be developed to achieve major social and development objectives. In this context, my Government will revisit and unlock several investment projects that have been stuck in the pipeline for too long. Highlands City was one of the three major projects which had not been able to lift off under the Labour regime.

The House may recall that in 2001, under the Illovo deal, Government acquired the plot of land to an extent of 3000 acres in Highlands for a specific purpose of creating a new City. It was not meant to be kept under cane cultivation forever. Unfortunately, the previous Government has failed in its attempts to execute the Highlands City Project in spite of significant resources spent on Master Planning.

This year, Government will be embarking on mega projects involving Heritage City and Smart Cities.

These will be designed with 4 key focus objectives, namely: ecological sustainability; economic competitiveness; digital connectivity; with an improved quality of life within the "Live, Work and Play" concept.

The 'Heritage City' is one of the first components of the integrated development of the 3000 acres of land acquired in Highlands. Government has decided that the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms would be responsible for the development of the 'Heritage City' Project on a plot of land of 336 acres (141 Hectares) out of the said 3000 acres.

In this context, Government has approved the setting up of Heritage City Co. Ltd, a wholly owned State corporation, for the implementation of this project.

The 'Heritage City' site is situated opposite Ebène Cybercity, at Minissy, on the left of Bagatelle Dam. The Master Plan has been conceptualised and the 'Heritage City' will be an 'ellipse shape' symbolising the unity of public and private dimensions, with an International Convention Centre placed at the fulcrum of the ellipse, joining the public buildings and the commercial half.

The 'Heritage City' represents the synthesis of the civic world and the commercial domain, public spirit and local community. It will unify a complex mix of uses, people and institutions and involve the construction of a new iconic Parliament Building; Prime Minister's Office; six (6) Government office buildings with high-end ICT and E-Governance infrastructure and data centres; a new International Convention Centre; mixed-use retail and commercial centres, and affordable mid-scale, upper-scale apartments, town-homes and villas.

The objective of my Government is to create an integrated development for the current and future working generation in a 'Live, Work and Play' environment that serves a range of people including: students; young professionals; public officials; families with children; retired persons and high net worth investors in Mauritius.

The project value for the construction of the new Parliament Building; Prime Minister's Office; Government buildings; Civic and Cultural Arts facilities; the Pedestrian Spine, and infrastructure for the whole site is estimated at USD 375 million (*approximately Rs13.1 billion*) which will be financed through the issue of cumulative redeemable preference shares issued by Heritage City Co. Ltd at a defined coupon rate and a syndicated loan with a consortium of leading local banks in Mauritius. It is worthy to note that the capital expenditure of this project is not being financed from the Consolidated Fund, as has been wrongly reported in certain quarters.

The New International Convention Centre will in addition cost around USD 50 million which will be financed through an existing line of credit currently available.

With regard to the private, residential and commercial phase of the project, this will be executed under the “*Vente en Etat Future d’Achèvement*” (VEFA) model and will include mid-scale apartments; upper scale apartments; town-homes; villas; two hotels, and mix-use retail facilities.

The overall impact on economic growth as a result of the implementation of the ‘Heritage City’ project is expected to be: 0.2% in 2016; 0.8% in 2017; 0.9% in 2018; 0.4% in 2019 and 0.3% in 2020.

Concerning Port Louis, the Opposition and certain quarters have been peddling untruths to the effect that the whole public administration would be leaving Port Louis and the Supreme Court and the Judiciary will also move out of Port Louis, thus turning Port Louis into a ghost city. Nothing could be further away from the truth.

I wish to reiterate to the House what I said on previous occasions that Port Louis will remain the Capital City of Mauritius. In fact, Port Louis will be a more lively, vibrant and dynamic City. Instead of being just a business centre, which stops at 5 p.m., Port Louis will be also enhanced into a buoyant touristic and cultural destination.

With the execution of the ‘Heritage City’ project, it is estimated that not more than 2,500 civil servants currently working in Port Louis is expected to relocate to the new Government Buildings in Heritage City.

In fact, if this relocation is not effected, Port Louis will be completely overcrowded and congested by 2020. We can also imagine what Port Louis would have been like today, if I did not have the vision to create the Ebene Cybercity 15 years ago.

Any reduction of activities due to the relocation of some Government offices from Port Louis City centre to Heritage City will be more than offset by the additional business and economic opportunities arising from new commercial, leisure, cultural and touristic activities and events we are now going to create for Port Louis, our capital city.

I also wish to emphasise that the social and economic impact of ‘Heritage City’, will be further addressed as part of the EIA process which is underway and for which consultants have been appointed.

Furthermore, an Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee will be responsible to chart the development and implementation of the Port Louis 2030 Master Plan. This Steering Committee will have wide consultations with all stakeholders.

And, I must, before ending, state emphatically that nothing will stop us going ahead with the Heritage City.

At 6.10 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising adjourned to Tuesday 12 April 2016 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ICTA – LEGAL ADVISORS – APPOINTMENT

(No. B/87) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Information Communications Technology Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the names of the legal advisors whose services are presently retained thereat, indicating in each case the –
 - (i) date of appointment thereof;
 - (ii) fees payable thereto, and
 - (iii) amount claimed and paid thereto as at to date, and
- (b) if the services of Mr K. T. as legal adviser has been retained thereat and, if so, indicate the –
 - (i) period concerned therewith, and
 - (ii) total amount of fees paid therefor.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Officer-in-Charge of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority that the Authority is currently retaining the services of Mr Roshan Rajroop, Attorney at Law. He is providing his services to the Authority since 01 July 2015.

For the period 01 July 2015 to 31 January 2016, an amount of Rs473,750 has been paid to Mr Rajroop for legal services. The total amount of legal fees claimed and not yet paid to Mr Rajroop by the ICTA amount to Rs609,000.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Officer-in-Charge of ICTA that the Authority retained the services of Mr T. from 22 May 2015 to 21 March 2016. The total amount of fees claimed and paid to Mr T. for that period amount to Rs3,314,895.

BANKS – TOXIC LOANS

(No. B/88) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the banks in which Government is a shareholder, he will state if he will consider introducing amendments to the existing legislation with a view to prevent the recurrence of the state of affairs that prevailed thereat regarding the toxic loans and the writing off of debts and, if so, indicate if provision will also be made for the –

- (a) possibility of recouping the loans, and
- (b) said amendments to have retroactive effect over the past seven years.

(Withdrawn)

MEDIA TRUST – BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(No. B/89) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Media Trust, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the date of appointment of the Board of Trustees thereof, indicating -

- (a) the composition thereof;
- (b) the number of meetings held to date;
- (c) if it has presented a report on the evaluation of the profession of journalists,
and
- (d) if new regulations will be proposed therefor.

Reply: At the very outset, let me point out that the Media Trust was inactive since 2006.

In my reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/316 on 28 April 2015, I informed the House that the Board of the Media Trust was being reconstituted.

The Board of Trustees of the Media Trust for the Years 2015-2016 was reconstituted on 24 June 2015 and the Trust is fully operational.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the composition of the Board of Trustees is as follows -

Mr Lindsay Rivière, an experienced media professional, is the Chairperson of the Board.

The other Members are -

- (a) Mr Oodaye Prakash Seebaluck, Assistant Director, Government Information Service;
- (b) Mr Vikraj Ramkhelawon, Analyst, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development;
- (c) Mr Louis Jacques Gabriel Maunick, representative of the Electronic Media;
- (d) Ms Michaella Seblin, Editor-in-Chief, 5 Plus, representative of the Press;
- (e) Mr Rabin Bhujun, Editor-in-Chief, ION NEWS, representative of the Press;
- (f) Mr Jean-Luc Emile, Journalist, Defi Media, representative of the Press, and
- (g) Mr Patrick Sylvano St Pierre, Journalist, L'Express, representative of the Press.

The Chairperson and the representatives of both the print and electronic media are serving on the Media Trust Board on a voluntary basis. Hence, no fee is being paid to them even though they are entitled to it.

Concerning part (b) of the question, as at date, the Board has held sixteen meetings.

In regard to part (c) of the question, let me recall that, by virtue of section 4 of the Media Trust Act, the Trust has been set up to, *inter alia*, cater for the training needs of the local media. As such, the Media Trust constantly monitors the standards and training needs of the profession. It is not a Regulatory Body and it is not within its mandate to formally evaluate the profession of Journalists and to submit written report thereon.

In regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed by the Media Trust that new regulations are not necessary to further its current objectives and mission.

LAND RESEARCH AND MEDIATION UNIT – SETTING UP

(No. B/90) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Land Research and Mediation Unit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the -

- (a) date of the setting up thereof;
- (b) composition thereof, and
- (c) number of inquiries carried out on land transactions as at to date, indicating in each case, the outcome thereof.

Reply (Deputy Prime Minister): I shall reply to part (a) and (b) of the question together.

I wish to refer the hon. Member to the Statement I made at the sitting of 17 November 2015 whereat I informed the House of the setting of the Land Research and Mediation Unit with effect from 16 November 2015 and comprising of -

- Mr Mahmad Rehan Mandary, former Deputy Chief Surveyor, Head of the Unit;
- Mrs How Man Youn Koo Yuk Cheong - retired Deputy Registrar, Registrar General's Office;
- Mr Hunchun Gunesh – Attorney on a part-time basis, and
- Mr Ahmade Akhtar Andoo, Land Surveyor, seconded by the Ministry of Housing and Lands on a part-time basis.

I am informed by the Head of the Land Research and Mediation Unit that there are 424 cases of land dispute which have been referred to the Unit where inquiries have been/ are being carried out. Out of these cases -

- 69 cases have been found to be non-land issues and have been set aside.
- 95 cases have been set aside after investigations.
- 32 have been assisted to build up their case and advised to contact a legal advisor to seek redress in the Supreme Court.
- 11 cases are pending before the Supreme Court and in 1 case a judgement has been delivered where the case has been dismissed.

- In 8 cases the dispute has been resolved.
- In the remaining cases investigations and searches are ongoing.

I am tabling a summary of the cases examined by the Unit.

I would also like to inform the House that this whole exercise is proving to be a tedious task as most of the cases of land dispute date to more than 100 years back. The land searches involve careful examination and interpretation of title deeds and plans. The Unit has first to interview the complainants and gather as much information from them and thereafter carry out intensive searches in different land register kept in different format by different organisations such as the Registrar General's Office, the National Archives, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, Municipal Councils and the Sugar Insurance Fund Board. After having examined and verified the various transactions involved, the Unit is required to trace back all the heirs of the ancestors and draw up the genealogical tree. It is to be noted that during the French period, land records were kept at the National Archives and when the British took over the island the land transactions were effected and archived at the Registrar General's Office.

As the House will note this exercise is very complex which is time consuming and requires a lot of resources. My Ministry is already incurring a recurrent monthly expenditure amounting to more than Rs300,000 for the functioning of the Unit, which clearly demonstrates the will of this Government to bring some relief to those who have been dispossessed of their properties and to give them the necessary advice and assistance in their quest to recovering back their land.

However, towards the end of the year, I shall review the situation and determine whether the Land Research and Mediation Unit should be continued into 2017

BANK OF MAURITIUS – NET PROFIT & DIVIDEND

(No. B/91) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Bank of Mauritius, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the amount of
 - (i) net profit made, and

- (ii) dividend paid to Government since 2012, indicating the estimates thereof for the year 2015-2016, and
- (b) state –
 - (i) how the change, if any, in the net profit made and the dividend paid to Government since 2012 would impact the current budget.

Reply: With regard to part (a)(i) of the question, I am informed that for the financial years ending June 2012 and 2013, the Bank of Mauritius realised net profits of Rs395 m. and Rs70 m., respectively.

For the years ended June 2014 and 2015, the Central Bank incurred net losses of Rs218 m. and Rs284 m., respectively.

For the current financial year, it is expected that the Bank of Mauritius will continue to make a loss.

With regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, in accordance with section 11(3) of Bank of Mauritius Act, an amount of Rs336 m. and Rs60 m. for financial years 2012 and 2013 were transferred as dividends to the Consolidated Fund respectively.

For financial years 2014 and 2015, no dividend has been paid in view of the losses.

As regards part (b) of the question, there has been a negative impact on the Budget since there has been a shortfall of some Rs336 m. as dividend receipt from the Bank of Mauritius compared to the year 2012.

HELICOPTERS – HON. MINISTERS – COST

(No. B/92) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the helicopters, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of times hon. Ministers have made use thereof since December 2014 to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) name of the hon. Minister;
- (b) purpose thereof, and
- (c) cost thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since December 2014 to 01 April 2016, Police helicopters had been used on eight occasions as follows -

- (a) (i) on 30 April 2015, hon. J. R. Dayal, then Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management effected an aerial survey at Roches Noires following environmental concerns raised by inhabitants in connection with the Smart City Project and also to assess the environmental impact of an application for the extension of the Azuri IRS Villa Complex. The cost of the trip amounted to Rs46,575;
- (ii) Hon. Dayal also used the Police helicopter on 10 February 2016, in his capacity as Chairperson of the National Disaster Crisis Committee, to assess the flooding island-wide following the heavy rainfall. It was free of charge as it was considered a case of national security;
- (b) on 30 July 2015, hon. A. Wong Yen Cheong, Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, used the helicopter for an official visit of a Senegalese delegation. The cost amounted to Rs37,375;
- (c) (i) on 26 August 2015, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism and External Communications and hon. S. Baboo, Minister of Arts and Culture accompanied H.E. the President of Ghana who was on a State Visit to Mauritius. The costs were waived.
- (ii) Hon. Duval also used the helicopter on 12 January 2016 to effect a visit to Round Island for the shooting of a reportage on Mauritius. The cost amounted to Rs92,000;
- (d) on 01 October 2015, hon. M. Seerattun, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security effected a site visit to Gabriel Island and the cost was Rs164,833;
- (e) on 25 October 2015, hon. S. Soodhun, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Housing and Lands and hon. S. Bhadain, Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, accompanied the Minister of Finance of Saudi Arabia who was on an official visit. The costs were waived because of the foreign guest, and

- (f) on 29 January 2016, hon. E. Sinatambou, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, effected a trip in the context of the reactive monitoring mission of Le Morne. The cost amounted to Rs53,666.

ICTA – OFFENCES

(No. B/93) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the offences under the Information Communication and Technology Act, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof since December 2014 to date, indicating the number of –

- (a) arrests effected in connection therewith, and
- (b) convictions secured in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 01 December 2014 to 31 March 2016, 1,315 cases have been reported to the Police relating to offences committed under the Information and Communication Technologies Act. The offences include the use of abusive language on mobile phones, harassment, sending indecent messages and causing annoyance, amongst others.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that so far -

- (i) 49 persons have been arrested in connection with these cases and 4 of them have already been convicted;
- (ii) 208 cases have been disposed by Police, and
- (iii) 1,107 cases are still under investigation.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – MAURITIAN CREOLE LANGUAGE

(No. B/94) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposition for the introduction of the Mauritian Creole language in the course of the proceedings and debates of the National Assembly, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The proposal for the introduction of the Mauritian Creole language in the course of the proceedings and debates of the National Assembly has been the subject of several Parliamentary Questions in the past.

As the House is aware, section 49 of the Constitution provides that the official language of the Assembly shall be English, but any Member may address the Chair in French.

Standing Order 5 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly provides that the proceedings and debates of the Assembly shall be in English language, but a Member may address the Assembly in French.

As already indicated in reply to previous Parliamentary Questions on this subject matter, there are a number of issues that would need to be addressed before contemplating the formal use of the Mauritian Creole language in the National Assembly.

As far as I am concerned, I will never accept to introduce Creole language in the National Assembly.

TERRORISM - LEGISLATION

(No. B/95) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to counter-terrorism, he will state if measures have been taken at national level to avert against terrorist threats and attacks from the Daesch organisation, indicating –

- (a) if there exists any agreement for information sharing and mutual help with friendly countries in relation thereto;
- (b) if the existing legislation in relation thereto requires to be toughened in the wake of the rise of the Daesch organisation, and
- (c) the number of Mauritian nationals presumed to have joined the said organisation as at to date.

Reply: It is an undeniable fact that terrorism remains a global security challenge that threatens and violates the basic precepts of democracy. It constitutes a threat not only to peace and security, but also to the economic development and social harmony of a country. Recent terrorist attacks have demonstrated that no country is immune from the threat of terrorism.

Mauritius is no exception given our strategic position in the Indian Ocean coupled with being a well-known tourist destination with open and direct air and maritime access to many countries. Hence, there is need to constantly reinforce measures to reduce our vulnerability while at the same time, increase our ability to respond effectively during period of heightened alert.

Since I took office as Prime Minister in December 2014, I have constantly laid stress on the importance of enhancing security of the nation, inasmuch, the Government Programme 2015-2019, has highlighted that my Government is fully committed to guaranteeing security and law and order to the citizens of the country and foreigners as well.

I can assure the hon. Member and the House at large that my Government is leaving no stone unturned to combat terrorism.

However, as the question of the hon. Member relates to State Security, it will not be appropriate to divulge the measures being taken.

In regard to part (b) of the question, consideration is being given to amend the Prevention of Terrorism Act so as to reinforce the legal framework against terrorism and related matters.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that according to our intelligence agencies, the presence of Mauritian citizens in the war zones of the ISIS has been reported. However, it would not be proper for the time being to give the number with exactitude as confirmation from the concerned authorities is still being awaited.

SMART CITY PROJECTS – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/96) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the implementation of the thirteen employment rich megaprojects, including eight smart cities on 7,000 acres of land with expected private investment of MUR 120 billion, as announced in the 2015-2016 Budget Speech, he will, in each case, state where matters stand.

Reply: The information requested is being tabled.

BOULOUX DROP IN CENTRE - METHADONE BENEFICIARRIES

(No. B/97) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and

Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to methadone distribution, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the local residents of Douglas Street, Cassis, in Port Louis and the parents of schoolchildren thereat and in the vicinity thereof have reported cases of alleged misbehaviour of the groups of people who assemble thereat to receive methadone and have requested for the regular presence of police officers thereat to ensure the safety and security of the said residents and schoolchildren and, if so, indicate the measures taken in relation thereto if any, and if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there have been no cases of alleged misbehaviours of methadone beneficiaries of Bouloux Drop In Centre reported to the Police by residents of Douglas Street, Cassis or from parents of children attending Seeneevassen Government School.

However, I am informed that the Secretary of the Forces Vives Les Salines has in a letter dated on 05 February 2016 addressed to the Commissioner of Police and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life complained of inconveniences caused by methadone beneficiaries of Bouloux Drop In Centre to residents of Les Salines.

I am further informed by Police that following the complaint, a meeting was held with representatives of Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, Police Department and the Forces Vives Les Salines. The latter made a proposal for the shifting of the methadone distribution from Bouloux Drop In Centre to Bain des Dames Police Station. This request was not acceded to because of the lack of space at the Police Station.

In order to ensure safety and security of the inhabitants in that area, Police has reinforced its presence during methadone distribution at Bouloux Drop In Centre. The measures taken include the following -

- (i) foot and mobile patrols by the personnel of the Bain des Dames Police Station, Divisional Support Unit and Emergency Response Service;
- (ii) deployment of Central Investigation Division team to prevent and detect illegal activities, and
- (iii) discreet surveillance and regular patrol by ADSU team with a view to identifying any suspicious and irregular activities.

GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIUS – LEGAL ADVISERS – APPOINTMENT

(No. B/98) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the legal advisers whose services have been retained by Government since December 2014 to date, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) date of appointment thereof, and
- (b) terms and conditions of contract thereof.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being tabled.

MINISTERS – CODE OF CONDUCT

(No. B/99) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Ministers, he will state if he proposes to introduce a code of conduct therefor, as is the case in most OECD countries, following the recent cases of corruption related inquiries initiated by the Independent Commission against Corruption in respect of two of them.

Reply: The elaboration of a Code of Conduct for Ministers is indeed being envisaged in line with our commitment to demonstrate exemplary governance in the management of public affairs and achieve meaningful change.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE COMMISSION – MR R. R. – POLICE
INQUIRY**

(No. B/100) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Mr R. R., member of the Local Government Service Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand regarding the police inquiries initiated against him, indicating if the latter is presently on bail in respect of any one of them and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that inquiries have been initiated in 16 cases in which Mr R. R. is involved as a suspect.

In all 16 cases, Mr R. R. was arrested on provisional charge for the offence of 'swindling' and was released on bail. In 13 cases, after having furnished a surety of Rs15,000 and entering into a recognisance of debt of Rs100,000, he was ordered by Court to report to Rose Belle Police Station on every Wednesday at any time between 06.00 hours to 18.00 hours.

In the remaining three cases, he has furnished a surety of Rs10,000 and entered into a recognisance of Rs100,000; and has also paid an amount of Rs400 as costs.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that as at date, the provisional charge in six cases have been struck out by Court and as such Mr R.R. is still on bail in respect of 10 cases.

The Commissioner of Police has further informed that enquiry has been completed in 15 cases and will soon be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice. In one case, enquiry is still ongoing.

I have been made to understand that the said Mr R. R is no longer a member of the Local Government Service Commission since 31 March 2016.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - FUNCTIONS

(No. B/101) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, following the remarks made by the learned Judges in their judgment in the Supreme Court case of the Director of Public Prosecutions v Jugdawoo & Ors 2016, in particular, for the need to have in place an effective law enforcement agency for the prevention, investigation and punishment of violation of human rights, he will state the measures, if any, he proposes to take in relation thereto.

Reply: Government has already put in place the necessary legal and institutional framework to safeguard the human rights of both our citizens and non-citizens living in the country.

The National Human Rights Commission which operates under the Protection of Human Rights Act provides for the protection and promotion of human rights in Mauritius. The Act was amended in 2012 so as to broaden the role of the Commission by setting up a

Human Rights Division, a Police Complaints Division and a National Preventive Mechanism Division, within the Commission.

The functions of the Human Rights Division include the promotion of human rights and the harmonisation of national legislation and practices with international human rights instruments.

As regards the Police Complaints Division it has been empowered to investigate into complaints made against Police Officers, other than allegations of corruption and money laundering. The Division can also investigate into the death of a person occurring in Police custody or as a result of Police action and can advise on ways in which any Police misconduct may be addressed.

The National Prevention Mechanism Division has been set up to give effect to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which Mauritius is a Party. The Division has as main functions -

- (i) the sensitisation of Prison Officers on the need for a human rights approach towards detainees;
- (ii) to assess prisons' facilities and make recommendations thereon, and
- (iii) to conduct thorough investigations into allegations of violence against detainees.

I am, however, advised that it would be against established practice, as advocated by the Paris Principles to which we adhere, for national human rights institutions or any other human rights agency to be mandated to punish human rights violations. There are other existing mechanisms such as the Judiciary or the Disciplined Forces Service Commission which are empowered by law to consider inflicting punishments.

I also wish to inform the House that my Office has already initiated the required action for the setting up of an Independent Police Complaints Commission to be chaired by a former Judge of the Supreme Court with a view to further ensuring that the human rights of our citizens are respected, as announced in the Government Programme 2015-2019. The draft Bill for its setting up is being finalised and will soon be introduced in the National Assembly.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE – BUDGETARY PROVISIONS

(No. B/102) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and

Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the budgetary provisions for the fiscal year 2015-2016, he will state –

- (a) the amount thereof spent –
 - (i) for capital expenditure in absolute terms and both as a ratio of Gross Domestic Products and of total expenditure, and
 - (ii) to date by each Ministry and
- (b) if the total amount thereof is expected to be spent by the end of the said fiscal year.

Reply: With regard to part (a)(i) of the question, the total amount spent for capital expenditure during the period 01 July 2015 to 31 March 2016 stood at Rs6.6 billion. This represents 1.6% of the estimated GDP and 41% of the total capital expenditure for fiscal year 2015-2016.

In respect of part (a) (ii) of the question, the information on the amount spent on capital expenditure by each Ministry and Department is being tabled.

Concerning part (b) of the question, there is indication that, as in previous years, there would be some under-spending of around 10 percent in the capital budget mainly due to implementation delays regarding certain projects. The updated revised estimates for capital expenditure will be available and published in the 2016-2017 Budget documents.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL – INTRODUCTION

(No. B/103) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW &Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of a Freedom of Information Bill to promote transparency and accountability in public administration, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: In my reply to Parliamentary Question B/475 on 15 September 2015, I informed the House that, although many jurisdictions have adopted a Freedom of Information Act, the nature and scope of such a legislation is still evolving and that once the necessary groundworks are completed, my Office will give drafting instructions to the Attorney-General's Office to proceed with the preparation of the Bill.

As publicly announced on 22 January 2016, drafting instructions have already been given to the Attorney-General's Office to proceed with the preparation of the Bill.

I am informed by the Attorney-General's Office that the drafting exercise is in progress.

I wish to reiterate that all stakeholders will be consulted prior to the introduction of the Bill in the National Assembly.

CAMP LA PAILLE, BAMBOUS – INHABITANTS - RELOCATION

(No. B/111) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the squatters of Camp La Paille, in Bambous, and the proposed relocation thereof in the region of Beau Songes, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: In the context of the rehabilitation of the La Ferme Dam Project by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, 72 families living at Camp La Paille in Bambous need to be relocated.

Following an exercise carried out in 2011, these families were to be relocated as follows -

- 17 to a site at Camp Le Vieux, and
- 55 to a plot of State Land at Bambous behind the Black River District Council

In the same Year 2011, my Ministry issued letters of intent for the grant of a building site lease to the 72 beneficiaries out of whom 42 have already signed their lease agreement.

Subsequently, it was found that development of the two sites at Camp Le Vieux and Bambous would have involved high infrastructural costs and I am informed that in November 2014, it was decided not to go ahead with the project. Nevertheless despite the fact that infrastructural facilities had not been provided, 14 families have started construction or have completed construction of their housing units on the site at Bambous.

The remaining 58 families will be relocated over a plot of land of an extent of 5A23P at Beau Songes, acquired from Medine Ltd under the Government-MSPA Agreement.

My Ministry has initiated necessary action for the provision of infrastructure facilities on the site at Beau Songes.

BLACK RIVER - DOLPHIN & WHALE WATCHING

(No. B/112) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to dolphin watch in the region of Black River, he will state if his Ministry proposes to review the regulations in relation thereto.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the Tourism Authority (Dolphin and Whale Watching) Regulations were promulgated in November 2012 to regulate the Dolphin and Whale Watching activities, minimise disturbance to cetaceans and ensure safety and security of all stakeholders involved therein. However, the implementation of the regulations met with strong resistance from the Federation of Pleasure craft operators as the prescribed fees were felt to be exorbitant.

Accordingly, my Ministry has, after consultation with the Federation of Pleasure craft operators, amended the regulations on 01 December 2015 to reduce the licence fee from Rs10,000 to a token amount of Rs500 per annum.

The Tourism Authority (Dolphin and Whale Watching) Regulations 2012 make provision for, *inter alia* -

- (i) Issuance of a Tourist Enterprise Licence for Dolphin and Whale Watching and Dolphin and Whale Watching with Swimming;
- (ii) Regulated hours of swimming with dolphins;
- (iii) Requirement of the skipper to hold a certificate in dolphin and whale watching;
- (iv) Compliance with a Code of Conduct;
- (v) Use of safety and security equipment;
- (vi) Recruitment of a life saver, and
- (vii) Labelling of the craft to facilitate enforcement.

However, I am informed by the Tourism Authority that no applications for a Tourist Enterprise Licence (TEL) for Dolphin and Whale Watching and Dolphin and Whale Watching with Swimming, have been received so far.

I am also informed that the Chairman and Members of the Board of the Tourism Authority, along with officials of the Tourism Authority, effected a site visit on 16 January 2016 from Wolmar, Flic-en-Flac to Pointe Moyenne which is located between Albion and Flic-en-Flac to make an assessment of the situation. Following the site visit, the Board of the Tourism Authority proposed that the region stretching from Pointe Moyenne to Tamarin, be declared as a Dolphin and Whale Park.

The proposed park will be a demarcated zone of a width of 200 metres seawards from the barrier reefs, where a speed limit of five knots will be introduced. The zone will be solely

restricted to dolphin and whale watching and swimming with dolphin, as nautical activities, and all stakeholders will have to abide by a strict code of conduct.

This proposal is currently being examined at the level of my Ministry. It is expected that a new regulation will be introduced so as to -

- (i) exercise better control over the pleasure craft operators engaged in dolphin and whale watching activities;
- (ii) protect the dolphins and whales, and
- (iii) ensure that swimming with dolphins and dolphin and whale watching activities are carried out in a responsible, orderly, safe and sustainable manner.

BRUNIKEL BRIDGE (NEW) - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/135) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Brunikel bridge, lying between Roche Bois and Tombeau Bay, he will state if consideration will be given for the widening thereof to ease out traffic thereat.

Reply: I am informed that the RDA is already aware of the current state of Bruniquel Bridge which is, in fact, a very old bridge (the year of construction of the bridge is unknown) crossing Latanier River and lying between Roche Bois and Baie du Tombeau located in the district of Pamplemousses along the classified Road B29.

The bridge is situated between two very sharp bends resulting in poor visibility in both directions. Moreover, there are no dedicated walkways along this stretch of the road and the mixture of pedestrians, motorized and non-motorized traffic using the same space constitutes a potential road safety hazard.

I am further informed that, during a site visit conducted by the RDA in January 2015, it had been observed that the bridge has suffered considerable deterioration.

In view of the existing road safety problems posed by the conditions of the bridge, the RDA would not recommend its widening. Instead, the highway authority is seriously envisaging the construction of a new bridge parallel to the existing one with an improved alignment.

For that matter, Request for Proposals for Consultancy Services for the design and preparation of the tender document for the project is being proposed by the RDA in the

2016/2017 budget. Construction works are being, however, planned for implementation in Financial Year 2017/2018 as the project will entail land acquisition.

Pending the construction of the new bridge, I have requested the Commissioner of Police, the RDA and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit to regulate the traffic situation along the bridge and to identify short term measures to safeguard road safety.