



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)
FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 24 MAY 2011

CONTENTS

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

MOTIONS

BILLS (*Public*)

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS (*Written*)

*Members**Members***THE CABINET****(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)**

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities</i>
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment</i>
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development</i>
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	<i>Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping</i>
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	<i>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade</i>
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS	<i>Minister of Housing and Lands</i>
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	<i>Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare</i>
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha	<i>Minister of Tourism and Leisure</i>
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	<i>Minister of Education and Human Resources</i>
Hon. Satya Veryash Faugoo	<i>Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security</i>
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun	<i>Minister of Industry and Commerce</i>
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	<i>Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development</i>

Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	<i>Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology</i>
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	<i>Minister of Youth and Sports</i>
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	<i>Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands</i>
Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum	<i>Minister of Information and Communication Technology</i>
Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK	<i>Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues</i>
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	<i>Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms</i>
Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	<i>Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment</i>
Hon Yatindra Nath Varma	<i>Attorney General</i>
Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

*Members**Members*

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
<i>Deputy Chairman of Committees</i>	Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
<i>Deputy Clerk</i>	Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena
<i>Clerk Assistant</i>	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
<i>Chief Hansard Reporter and Sub-Editor</i>	Lam Shu On, Ms Clivie
<i>Senior Library Officer</i>	Pallen, Mr Noël
<i>Serjeant-at-Arms</i>	Munroop, Mr Kishore

MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 9 of 2011

Sitting of Tuesday 24 May 2011

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 11.30 a.m

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table -

Prime Minister's Office -

A.

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the following Bills -
 - (i) The Senior Citizens Council (Amendment) Bill (No. XI of 2011).
 - (ii) The Preliminary Inquiry (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XII of 2011).
- (b) The Representation of the People (Variation of Dates) Order 2011 (Government Notice No. 74 of 2011).

B. Ministry of Arts and Culture -

The Annual Report 2005-2006 of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**CWA - WATER SUPPLY**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the -
 - (i) reasons for the increase in water losses, since 2007;
 - (ii) sums spent yearly on pipes replacement, since 2005;
 - (iii) reasons for delays in the construction and rehabilitation of dams and drilling of new boreholes, and
 - (iv) status of the Mare Longue/Mare aux Vacoas Project;
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to the volume of treated wastewater discharged into the sea;
- (c) state the impact of deforestation on the supply thereof, and
- (d) state the remedial measures that will be taken.

The Ag. Prime Minister (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker Sir, I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for raising the water situation in the House and give an opportunity to provide information accordingly.

The House would like to know that, over the years, in fact, over the last 60 years, there has been a gradual decrease of around 11% in rainfall including the catchment area of Mare aux Vacoas reservoir. This year has been exceptional: Summer rainfall between November to mid-May has been deficient, and the Mare aux Vacoas region has recorded only around 60% of normal.

Our potable water supply depends 50% on boreholes and 20% on river off-take, both of which are subject to seasonal fluctuations, and the remaining 30% from stored water.

With regard to part (a)(i) of the question, the figures for water losses, strictly speaking, are not available as such. I am talking of water losses. We have figures for Non revenue water

which is a sum of technical losses and commercial losses, which includes illegal abstraction. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has mentioned it himself that, often, the figures mentioned are subject to a lot of scepticism about the apportionment and leaks. A study carried out by Severn Trent between 2004 and 2006 underlines the difficulties to establish the baseline data. The Severn Trent report states that it has not been able to identify any recognisable audit trail or validation process applied to the data gathered for Non revenue water purposes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning part (a)(i) of the question, in reply to PQ 1B/203 of 2010, I informed the House that the increase in the level of Non revenue water could be mainly due to the state of the water supply network which, in some regions, dates back to more than 100 years. Some 1,800 kms of network is made up of asbestos cement, cast iron and steel pipes, which have since long outlived their economic and technical life span. The cost of replacement of these inefficient pipelines is estimated at around Rs10 billion.

The level of Non revenue water, which was estimated at 44.4% in 2007 and is estimated to have reached 49% in 2010, could be due partly to an increase in the hours of supply, especially in 2009. Action has been initiated since last year for the replacement of pipelines in regions where the level of Non revenue water has become critical.

In the 2010 Budget, a provision of Rs640 m. was made to finance the first phase of the Action Plan to reduce Non revenue water . The pipelines being replaced are as follows -

- (i) Camp Fouquereaux-Alma
- (ii) Camp Thorel-Salazie
- (iii) Plaine des Papayes-Triolet
- (iv) Pierrefonds
- (v) Beemanic-Balisson
- (vi) Old pipelines in Port Louis
- (vii) Quartier Militaire-Mont Ida
- (viii) Mont Ida-Unité

Furthermore, under the ongoing Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project, some 185 kms of water pipes will be replaced. Phase II of the Action Plan to reduce Non revenue water will require an investment of Rs896 m.

As regards part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the CWA that the sum spent yearly on Rehabilitation and Water Distribution network are as follows -

<u>Financial Year</u>	<u>Sum (Rs M.)</u>
2005-2006	325
2006-2007	348
2007-2008	254
2008-2009	170
2009-2010	324
2011	900
TOTAL	2,321

Since 2005, some Rs2.5 billion have been provided for the rehabilitation of the network. In 2011, nearly Rs1 billion has been budgeted for the replacement of old water pipelines.

With regard to part (a)(iii) of the question on construction and rehabilitation of dams, studies for the safety analysis of dams were carried out for five dams of Mauritius and the Municipal Dyke from 1997 to 2000. Rehabilitation of three dams/dyke, the Mare aux Vacoas Dam, La Nicolière Dam and the Municipal Dyke at Pailles are already completed.

Consultancy services for the rehabilitation of La Ferme are currently under evaluation, and will be awarded soon. The rehabilitation process - I have already mentioned this in the House - has been delayed due to the presence of squatters downstream of the dam. The Ministry of Housing and Lands is working on the relocation of squatters.

In my reply to a recent Private Notice Question, I provided extensive information to the House on the implementation of the Bagatelle dam. I do not wish to go back again to what I said, except to say that, between 2000 and 2004, after a feasibility study, the site of the dam was changed and we had to start all over again, but I am glad to say that now it is going smoothly and

the contract for Bagatelle will be awarded shortly, and works are expected to start before the end of this year.

The dam is expected to be operational by the end of 2014.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to improve water supply in the south, the construction of a dam at Rivière des Anguilles is planned.

The consultancy services for the supervision of works for the Rivière des Anguilles dam are being evaluated at the level of the Central Procurement Board. Bids for the works contract will be launched early next year. The project which will be funded by the AFD will be completed by 2015.

Construction is being looked into by the Consultant carrying the Master Plan for the development of water resources. The inputs are awaited.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to previous PQs, I gave information to the House regarding boreholes. Some 73 boreholes were drilled between the period 1996 to 2000. This campaign identified major sources, including deep boreholes, to supplement potable water supply by some 40M m³ yearly. After this major ground water investigation campaign, other boreholes sites are being developed yearly at the rate of four to five boreholes, for both monitoring of aquifers and potable water supply.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to reiterate, once again, the explanation I gave recently that, during wet season, pumping tests for borehole cannot be carried out, and this was not carried out in 2009 because we did not have a dry season. In dry season, we do tests of boreholes, and 2009 was such a good year that it was not possible to carry out borehole tests. So, the tests were carried out in 2010.

In addition, private borehole licences were granted for industrial and agricultural purposes where CWA cannot meet the demand.

Presently, ground water resources are harnessed through 406 boreholes, 114 for potable water supply, 136 for industrial use, and 156 for irrigation.

As regards part (a) (iv) of the question, the feasibility for the transfer of water from Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas was considered for the first time in 2007. However, priority was given to the transfer of 10M m³ yearly of water from Rivière du Poste to Mare aux Vacoas, as

compared to about 2M m³ from Mare Longue. And this is one of the reasons why the Mare Longue/Mare aux Vacoas project was given as a second priority, the first priority being from Rivière du Poste to Mare aux Vacoas.

The contract for the transfer of water from Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas has been awarded as an emergency procurement to Sotravic Ltée on 04 May 2011. The contractor has physically mobilised on site on 20 May 2011, and the works are expected to be completed by September 2011. Upon completion of the works, around 20,000 m³ of water will be transferred from Mare Longue to La Marie Treatment Plant.

I would like to remind the House here, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, for the project of Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas, since October of last year, we have not released any water from Mare Longue in expectation that it might come in useful if the rainfall does not improve.

The decision to proceed with implementation of the project was taken in March 2011. Pursuant to this decision, my Ministry had a meeting with Médine Sugar Estate and other planters in the region, to ensure adequate water supply for irrigation from other sources such as La Ferme and St Martin treated effluent, to cater any shortfall from Mare Longue.

As from 25 March 2011, the Ministry had several meetings with the planters along the pipe route to acquire way leave. I personally chaired a meeting with the large planters, and obtained their support. As to date, most of the way leaves have been acquired by the CWA, and negotiations are ongoing with a few planters. The CWA, in consultation with the Ministry of Agro-Industry, will compensate the planters whose crops will be damaged during the pipe-laying works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as to part (b), treated effluents, out of the five treatment plants of the WMA, only St Martin and Grand Bay Sewerage Treatment plants treat effluents up to tertiary level, which may be used for irrigation. In the case of Grand Bay, on the advice of experts, the effluent is injected in boreholes to prevent sea water intrusion in land. Since January 2006, the Wastewater Management Authority and Irrigation Authority signed an agreement for the sale of treated effluents at 80cts/m³ with the La Ferme and Magenta Water Users Association, Mr Speaker, Sir, over the period 2006 to 2010; the effluents were being supplied for irrigation of sugar cane mixed with raw water on a ratio of 1:1. However, given that the price charged by the Wastewater Management Authority was 80cts per m³ for treated effluents, as compared to the

price of raw water supplied by the CWA - raw water, I repeat - at 1.5 cents per m³, the Association never made any payment, with an accumulated debt of Rs24 m. due to the WMA.

Since 2010, the Treatment Plant at St Martin was under repair, and the works were completed in March 2011. The WMA has now resumed release of treated effluents, about 25,000 m³ per day, for irrigation purposes at a nominal price of 7 cents per m³.

The use of the treated effluents for irrigation will result in the release of less water from La Ferme reservoir. The Association has also agreed to make optimal use of water resources from La Ferme and Mare Longue, in order to allow for a strategic storage at Mare Longue reservoir for transfer to the Mare aux Vacoas system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, part (c) - Impact of Deforestation on Water Supply. It is common knowledge that deforestation has an impact on climatic conditions, including water resources. I am informed by the Forestry Services that several measures have been taken to reverse the process of deforestation. The whole programme is being overseen by the Prime Minister himself who, on many occasions, have stated that, for every single tree felled down for development purposes, two trees should be planted. He gave the strong signal with the Vallée de Ferney project.

I am informed, Mr Speaker Sir, that some 47,185 hectares were under forest in 2005, as compared to 47,159 hectares in 2009. Around 47% of land under forest is State-owned.

Mr Speaker Sir, I now come to part (d) of the question. I wish to inform the House that the water situation is being closely monitored by the Water Resources Monitoring Committee at my Ministry. However, since November 2010, a Ministerial Committee chaired by me, and comprising the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, the Minister of Tourism and Leisure, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Mauritius Meteorological Services, the Irrigation Authority, the Joint Economic Council, MEXA and AHRIM, has been set up to examine the water supply situation and consider short and medium term measures to mobilise and save water.

A Technical Committee chaired by my Ministry, and comprising the same organisations, has been meeting regularly to ensure implementation of measures identified, and obtain the collaboration of the private sector.

I wish to stress here, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this meeting held every month and, sometimes more often, has yielded a very collaborative programme, from which we are going ahead with the Ministry of Agro-Industry and the Ministry of Tourism as well.

The measures being taken by the Central Water Authority: since October 2010, the following actions have been taken to ensure adequate water supply distribution, and mobilise additional water resources -

- (i) my Ministry enlisted the services of a Hydrogeological expert, who worked on the hydrogeology mapping in Mauritius from 1996 to 2002, Mr Loic Giorgi, to advise on the management of ground water, with a view to mobilising additional water resources. Based on his advice, additional boreholes, including deeper ones, have been drilled at Beaux Songes, and Petite Rivière. New sites for boreholes have also been identified at Bonne Veine, Beau Bois, and Plaisance regions;
- (ii) the Central Water Authority has, with the collaboration of the private sector and other organisations, mobilised additional water from rivers and boreholes in different parts of the island to improve water supply, namely -
 - (a) installation of a pump of higher capacity at La Cure Reservoir to supply a larger service zone in Vallée des Prêtres, and commissioning of a borehole at Beaux Songes;
 - (b) extension of a pipeline to feed Montagne Longue region, with improvements in Camp la Boue, Ruisseau Rose regions;
 - (c) putting into operation a connection from Ruisseau Jamblon, to increase water supply in Lallmatie region;
 - (d) tapping of water from La Nicolière Feeder Canal at Melrose and Mont Ida to compensate shortage from Piton du Milieu, and operation of a new borehole at Petite Retraite;
 - (e) tapping of water from Union Ducray to supplement flow to Souillac and Riambel, and putting into operation borehole provided by Rose Belle Sugar estate to improve water supply in the South;

- (f) use of new borehole at Minissy to improve water supply in Moka, Montagne Ory, Réduit and St Pierre, and
- (g) use of borehole at Tamarin River and borehole of Médine Sugar Estate, and use of boreholes of DBM and Soniawear.

Mr Speaker, Sir, without these measures, the water supply would have suffered considerably. The Central Water Authority has been making very serious efforts to mobilise additional water resources and to maintain a reasonable supply throughout the country.

The situation at Mare aux Vacoas is still critical, as the rainfall in the catchment area of the reservoir has remained deficient during the summer period, as I have already mentioned. Water supply in the Upper Plaines Wilhems and other regions supplied by Mare aux Vacoas is presently limited to once daily, that is, between 04.00 to 10.00 hours. The present level of storage represents about 100 days of normal supply.

Accordingly, release of water from this reservoir will have to be reduced gradually, so as to ensure supply until the next rainy season. Action has already been taken to reduce the normal release of 110,000 m³ daily to 80,000 m³ daily, and a further reduction to 70,000 m³/day will be applied shortly.

In order to address the problem of acute water shortage in Mare aux Vacoas, the following steps have been taken -

- (i) an expert from the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr Hernandez, visited Mauritius from 11 to 15 April to assess any possible dam leakage, if any, at Mare aux Vacoas reservoir. During his visit, samples were taken in the reservoir and downstream boreholes and water courses, to carry out isotopic analyses of Oxygen 18 and Deuterium to assess any leakage from the dam. Preliminary assessment of the expert indicates that there is no leakage from the dam. His final report is expected in June.
- (ii) The Water Resources Unit, the Central Water Authority, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Forestry Department will conduct site visits, to ensure that

there is no unauthorised abstraction from the feeder canals and rivers upstream of the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir;

(iii) The Central Water Authority has taken steps to mobilise additional water under emergency procedure, and I have a list of measures here, Mr Speaker, Sir; and I just run through them -

- pumping of water from Rivière Sèche (near La Marie);
- diversion of water from Rivière du Rempart to La Marie Treatment Plant;
- abstraction from River Bassin AZA Profonde, Verdun;
- diversion of water from Rivière du Poste into the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir;
- new borehole at Camp Auguste, St Pierre;
- use of borehole of Development Bank of Mauritius at Phoenix.

There is a long list, and I will go through them.

Mr Speaker: I will ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister to circulate the information.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will circulate the information.

Mr Speaker: Insofar as the measures are concerned.

The Ag. Prime Minister: What it shows, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that a tremendous effort has been taken at all quarters to have additional water supply during this critical period. The transfer of water from Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas is, as we say, a project to supplement and relieve the water resources from Mare aux Vacoas reservoir, and to enable the Central Water Authority to ensure the supply of water during the coming dry season. I had a meeting with the representatives of Médine Sugar Estate and other...

(Interruptions)

If you are aware of it, I will not go through it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order please! We are losing time for nothing.

The Ag. Prime Minister: There has been, Mr Speaker, Sir, a proposal to desilt the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir, and the expert opinion is that this is not advisable.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, the setting up of small dams. This has been a subject of much debate...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! The question is a fairly comprehensive one.

(Interruptions)

We have to allow the Ag. Prime Minister to answer the question. It is fairly long; let him answer. I will give some time.

(Interruptions)

Order! I don't want any comment. I will give the hon. Leader of the Opposition some more time, because this is a matter of national interest.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been much interest in the setting up of small dams, and this is being examined by consultants...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! If you are losing time, then I will not give additional time.

The Ag. Prime Minister: ...a master plan for water resources. Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, we are also envisaging a complete reform of the water sector. Following the visit of the Prime Minister to Singapore in September 2010, and the high level talks that he had with the Singapore authorities, we have approached the Singapore Public Utilities Board to assist us and to improve the management of the water services. Government has approved that the Singapore Public Utilities Board be appointed to develop an integrated water management framework in Mauritius, with a view to improving the management of our water resources, reducing water losses, achieving better planning to meet future demands and ensuring water supply on a 24/7 basis.

This consists in rationalising the presently fragmented water management structure and optimising our water resources.

Given the low water storage at Mare aux Vacoas affecting the water supply in the Plaines Wilhems region, the Central Water Authority is initiating a restricted bidding process to appoint a specialised private firm to address the problem of Non revenue water in the Upper Plaines Wilhems region. Firms with extensive experience in water management and addressing water loss problems will be invited to bid.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact remains that, over four short years, the amount of water losses moved from 44.7 in 2005 to 49.6 in 2009, that is, 5% over four years, mainly because we have been under spending on replacement of old pipes. The hon. Ag. Prime Minister said that a sum of Rs640 m. has been provided for pipes replacement in this 2010 Budget, which is behind us. Can I know how much has been spent?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the projects started in 2010; most of them have been spent, but there are still some projects which are ongoing. I will provide the figures.

Mr Bérenger: With regard to the Mont Ida Unité old pipes, the replacement works were to have been completed by May 2011, that is, this month. Are we on target?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will provide the information, but for sure there are always problems with way leaves or obtaining a permission, especially when it implies roadside works. A delay of one or two months will not surprise me, but I will consider that as acceptable.

Mr Bérenger: Will there be delays also in replacing pipes at Camp Thorel-Salazie, Plaine des Papayes-Triolet, Port Louis-Pierrefonds and Port Louis Centre?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The short answer is that we do not expect any delays, especially for Plaine des Papayes. I think that we will go ahead quite quickly.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the main reason that we are in this trouble is that we have not replaced old pipes as we should have. As far as rehabilitation and new dams are concerned, did I hear that the contract for Bagatelle has still not been awarded? Are we still discussing the Rs3.4 billion claimed by the contractor and the Rs3.1 billion estimate by the Government Ministry concerned?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I expect the award would take place this week or next week, but it is being awarded.

Mr Bérenger: But have we managed to bring the price down?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes.

Mr Bérenger: As far as Rivière des Anguilles is concerned, is the land survey completed? What will happen to the planters who are to be reallocated, and has funding been confirmed?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The funding will be from AFD; it will be confirmed, and they have taken a strong commitment for the funding.

Mr Bérenger: For the land surveys?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The land surveys are ongoing. We have no problem with Rivière des Anguilles, and exceptionally it is going on very well.

Mr Bérenger: The reallocation of planters?

The Ag. Prime Minister: We will address the issue as it comes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Only the hon. Leader of the Opposition is putting questions; you understand that! Keep Quiet!

The Ag. Prime Minister: I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we have a lot of experience in dealing with planters, and we will deal with them fairly.

Mr Bérenger: As far as Rivière du Poste diversion is concerned, the consultants were appointed in August 2010, and it was supposed to be completed by March 2011. Are we on target? Of course not!

The Ag. Prime Minister: The consultancy service is on target.

Mr Bérenger: It was supposed to be completed.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Not the work itself. We have spent Rs100 m. so far on it, and it is a project of Rs200 m.

Mr Bérenger: If I can move on to this Mare Longue/Mare aux Vacoas project. We wasted years, since we have been informed that it is in 2007 that the project emerged. Can I know whether another such project, that is, using Midlands Dam more for drinking water

purposes by having, for example, a treatment plant there is being considered? I know that these proposals have been made for a certain amount of time already. Are they being considered urgently?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The Midlands Dam is doing very well. The northern water supply is probably the best in the country at the moment.

Mr Bérenger: That is not the point. The point is water from Midlands Dam is being treated; a small amount thereof for the North, and a lot for irrigation. I understand proposals have been made for a much bigger treatment plant that would supply Plaines Wilhems and the Mare aux Vacoas system.

The Ag. Prime Minister: No, Midlands Dam does not supply Mare aux Vacoas system. The short answer is: the treatment plant capacity is being increased, and is being funded.

Mr Speaker: Yes, it is being increased.

Mr Bérenger: We are running out of time on the situation in general. We hear now that the Singapore experts are going to do this and that. Mr Speaker, Sir, the Water Resources Master Plan, the part relating to water was due by December 2010, and the part of that Water Resources Master Plan on water rights was due by March 2011. Where are we, as far as this Master Plan is concerned?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this Master Plan will be incorporated and discussed with the Singapore authorities.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have personally met the Legal Consultant, and he has come up with the difficulties concerning the project. This water right issue has been going on for years and years; for decades. We will be addressing it, and I will come to the House very soon to state what we are deciding. But this is one issue that we are addressing at the moment.

Mr Bérenger: I understand that a Water Resources Bill was sent to the State Law Office a long while ago. Can we know where matters stand?

The Ag. Prime Minister: It's stuck with the water rights issues.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I remind the hon. Ag. Prime Minister that, on 16 November last year, he stated -

“I agree we have to relook at the CWA. We are taking our responsibility; we are going to do it, and we are going to do it in a radical way”.

Will he agree that nothing of the sort has taken place? There is still no General Manager at the CWA, and it's business as usual.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I underlined the importance of the Singaporean team coming here. Cabinet has approved, and they are coming. We don't want to start something which we will have to change in a couple of months. So, let's wait. We have at the moment an Acting Chairman who is doing very well in terms of addressing the water issues, and I think everyone recognizes it.

Mr Bérenger: I listened carefully to the remedial measures that are being taken, but I did not hear the Ag. Prime Minister mentioning schools. Is he aware that, already, water has to be supplied by water tankers in quite a number of schools, and things are getting more and more difficult? Will special measures be taken? Otherwise, schools are going to close down before long.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, hospitals and schools have always had priority, and they are supplied, according to needs, by water tankers, and I can assure the House that these two will have priority.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in his answer, the Ag. Prime Minister talked about the Water Resources Unit monitoring the situation of water. Can the Ag. Prime Minister inform the House whether there is any coordination, and whether the Water Resources Unit is monitoring the works of the Wastewater Authority in Quatre Bornes? Because in Sodnac area, for example, people have trickles of water in their homes, but when they walk on the streets, water is gushing out; wastewater is damaging the pipes, and water is gushing out. Is there any coordination between the Water Resources Unit and the Wastewater Management works in Quatre Bornes?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The coordination is between the CWA and the Wastewater. We have a special unit do deal with this particular issue. This has given rise to a lot of problems in the past, and I hope that any complaints will be lodged accordingly.

Ms Deerpalsing: Just to follow up on this answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, can I appeal to the Ag. Prime Minister to have a street by street coordination? Because there is a lot of water being wasted by the Wastewater Management works.

The Ag. Prime Minister: The point is taken, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Put short questions, please. Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Ag. Prime Minister to confirm whether, with regard to the present water situation at the Mare aux Vacoas Reservoir, one of the main reasons is that there has been partial obstruction or, in certain cases, disappearance of feeder drains to the reservoir, by extensive works being carried out by excavators or lorries on plots of lands which have been allocated to political agents or activists in that area for agricultural purposes?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish the question was more basic than that. Added to the deficient rainfall, the real issue is what is happening to Mauritius in terms of water capture. IRS projects - not political agents; I am talking of big IRS projects - are influencing our groundwater system, and we have to be careful about how we plan it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, may I take this opportunity to clarify one point raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, which is about the water rights. At the moment, one of the difficulties is that we cannot obtain data in relation to water rights holders, and we have to introduce legislation. They are refusing to give data. So, we have to introduce legislation to make them give data.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, from what we have witnessed during the past years, and also through replies given by the hon. Ag. Prime Minister here and outside, one thing is clear: *avec les petites misères du peuple, les travaux...*

Mr Speaker: I have asked to put short questions because of time constraint, please.

Mr Bhagwan: Will the Ag. Prime Minister agree that the people of Mauritius have lost confidence in the way the CWA and Government have been handling this problem of water management?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of what the hon. Member has said, but I will say one thing. We do have to face the water situation over the next 20 years. The population is expanding; the demand is increasing; the economic activities are increasing, and we

are faced with water shortage from deficient rainfall. We have to take a non political, a non partisan approach to this issue.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have heard the Ag. Prime Minister mentioning the replacement of water pipes from Camp Fouquereaux to Alma. Can I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister where matters stand, and what is the tentative date of completion?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will provide this information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: From the remedial measures which have been enumerated by the hon. Ag. Prime Minister, I would have thought that Government would mention the advisability of legislating - and the Ag. Prime Minister just referred to that issue - or laying an obligation on the promoters of the hotels and the IRS to set up their own desalination plants. Anahita, Valriche, Tamarina...

Mr Speaker: There is no need to mention all this.

Mr Ganoo: Therefore, that would have saved the CWA so much of water! Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister then think about legislating or compelling these promoters to desalinate their own water?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The Ministry of Tourism is working on having clusters of desalination units. But I would like to stress on one point. The problem of water is often seasonal. We had a bad year in 1999, good years since, too much of water in 2008, and again a drought now. Part of the problem with the hotels is that, when there is water supply, they want to use a cheaper source. We have to legislate for them to use desalinated water and only desalinated water.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, at this critical juncture, the CWA needs strong and competent effective leadership. Can the Ag. Prime Minister explain why the delayed preparation of a Master Plan on use of water resources should be an obstacle to an open advertisement within CWA, nationally, internationally if need be, to obtain the best person to be appointed in a substantive capacity at the head of the CWA?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this reply will come within a month or so when the Singaporean team will come.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, je voudrais une petite confirmation. Nous avons entendu des membres du gouvernement à la radio proposant de pomper l'eau de Mare Longue pour envoyer à Mare aux Vacoas. J'aimerais savoir du Ag. *Prime Minister* d'où vient cette aberration, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger: Because we have wasted a lot of time, we are in the trouble we are in, and we are told that there is worse to come, Mr Speaker, Sir. In spite of that, we are still firefighting; running left, right and centre. Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister when will Mauritius have a holistic approach for this water problem and when will the CWA be reorganised in a radical way, as he himself said last November?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the reply is in the visit of the Prime Minister to Singapore and the arrival of the team in the days to come, and we will start on that.

Mr Speaker: Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order now!

The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/367, B/368 and B/370 have been withdrawn, and Parliamentary Question No. B/414 will be replied by Dr. the hon. Ag. Prime Minister! Hon. Mrs Ribot!

BEAUTY PARLOURS - ILLICIT ACTIVITIES

(No. B/365) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the beauty parlours, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof where illicit massage services were offered, since 2005 to date, indicating -

- (a) in each case, the number of -
 - (i) arrests effected in connection therewith, and

- (ii) persons prosecuted and the outcome thereof, and
- (b) if regular checks are carried out on the premises thereof to verify if no illicit activities are carried out thereat.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, following the coming into operation of the Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006, trades of Hairdresser, Tattoo Studio, Beauty Parlour, Beauty Saloon, Massage Parlour and Pets Beauty Parlour have been grouped and classified as Beauty Care Centre by local authorities. Licences pertaining to such trades are issued by the local authorities.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, during the period 2005 to 19 May 2011, 12 cases were established against beauty parlours for illicit activities carried out on these premises. 27 persons were arrested in these cases.

With regard to part (b) of the question, in three cases, 12 persons were prosecuted and sentenced. Seven cases, in which nine persons are involved, are awaiting trial. The remaining two cases, involving six persons, are under inquiry.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that regular checks are carried out by the police on the premises of the beauty parlours. Between 2005 and 19 May 2011, 1,906 checks were carried out.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that the police is closely working with the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to look into the whole question of issue of licences, including the grant of work permits, as I am given to understand that there is a lot of expatriates working in spas and beauty parlours.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether it's not high time that regulations concerning the opening and closing hours of these so-called beauty care centres be reviewed, since many are open around the clock, causing a nuisance in the neighbourhood.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have said in the last part of my reply, this issue is being addressed, and we are seriously concerned about it.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would also like to know from the Ag. Prime Minister if more regular checks could not be carried out not only at night, but also during lunch hours, where, very often, students of secondary and tertiary institutions are found queuing up in front of those beauty care centres.

(Interruptions)

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware that checks are carried out at night only. My impression is that many of these people arrested were during the day, but we will take this into consideration.

Mr Ganoo: Does the hon. Ag. Prime Minister have the figures as regards the number of foreigners, expatriates or non-citizens who have been granted a licence to run these beauty parlours?

Mr Speaker: I will allow the question although it does not arise from the main question.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I do not have the number of licences, but I can tell you about the number of workers. There are 89 workers who are working in this sector and, for your information, 30 are from India and 31 from Indonesia. I will circulate the rest.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister whether Government would consider the possibility of removing the licence of those beauty care centres, especially those offering the services of brothels, instead of just imposing fines upon those found in those beauty care centres.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I entirely agree with that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

POLICE SERGEANT - EXAMINATION EXERCISE

(No. B/366) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the last examination for promotion to the rank of Police Sergeant, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the -

- (a) number of -
 - (i) graduates who participated therein and failed;

- (ii) Police Constables who passed the written examination but were not successful candidates, after screening by the Commissioner of Police;
- (b) checks carried out by the Commissioner of Police before selecting the successful candidates, and
- (c) recourse open to a Police Constable if unsatisfied with the result of the examination and the screening process.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions B/366 and B/369 together as they relate to the same issue.

As the House is aware, appointment and promotion in the Police force fall within the purview of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission. For promotion to the rank of Police Sergeant, all Police Corporals, woman Police Corporals, Police Constables and woman Police Constables having completed five years' service as Constable or woman Police Constable are eligible to sit for the competitive examination. It should be noted that being the holder of a degree is not a requirement to sit for the examination.

According to records available at the Police Department, some 116 police officers who took part in the last competitive examination for promotion to the rank of Police Sergeant were degree holders. Out of these, 18 were successful.

In regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a total of 274 police officers passed the last competitive examination for promotion to the rank of Police Sergeant. Upon completion of a verification exercise, 265 were offered appointment as temporary Police Sergeant on 18 May 2011. Nine were not appointed for the following reasons: unauthorised absence, dismissal from the Force, interdiction, serious disciplinary proceedings against them, and permanent transfer to ICAC.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that, following the results of the competitive examinations, prior to the completion of promotion exercise, the Commissioner of Police should be satisfied, as instructed by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission, that none of the officers who have passed the examination is under interdiction, is the subject of disciplinary proceedings, which are still pending for any serious offence, or is on unauthorised absence, and that there is no serious adverse report on any of them.

As for part (c) of the question, any police officer feeling unsatisfied with the result of the examination may seek redress before the Supreme Court by way of a judicial review.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether screening is done before or after the examination results are out?

The Ag. Prime Minister: As I have said in my reply, once the examination results are out, it is not a screening as such; it is verification that, having passed the examination, they should be promoted. It's not automatic. I have given the reasons why sometimes they are not promoted, and nine candidates out of the 274 were not promoted.

Mr Uteem: If verification happens after the results, why is it that it takes two years from the date of the examinations for the results to come out?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not sure about the time delay; I will ask the Commissioner of Police.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, would it not have been more elegant and ethically correct not to allow someone to write an examination, to let him make so much effort into writing an examination and then to tell him eventually that he does not qualify for a pass?

The Ag. Prime Minister: We can take it the other way round also. He may or may not pass. We must give him a chance to pass first, and then see whether he is suitable.

Mr Leopold: May I know from the Ag. Prime Minister whether, when the results are published, it is only a short list for those who passed or failed or it is published per score, on 50 or 100 obtained by the candidates, so that unsuccessful candidates may, at least, know that they will have to try a new attempt?

The Ag. Prime Minister: This is according to merit.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Acting Prime Minister say that the only recourse to an unsuccessful candidate is to go by way of judicial review before the Supreme Court. Will the Ag. Prime Minister communicate to the Commissioner of Police the possibility of making the examination and correction process more transparent, so that unsuccessful candidates can know why they failed and then decide whether to appeal or not?

Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll pass this on to the Commissioner of Police.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the Ag. Prime Minister whether Government is satisfied with the performance of the Examination Board in this case.

Mr Speaker: How can the Government be satisfied? This is a matter for the Commissioner of Police. The hon. Ag. Prime Minister must ask information from the Commissioner of Police. Hon. Baloomoody, next question!

CONSTITUTION - TERM “POPULATION GENERALE”

(No. B/367) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the term “*Population Generale*”, he will state if Government proposes to bring amendments to the First Schedule of the Constitution for either the deleting and replacement thereof by a more appropriate appellation or to delete reference thereto.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - CREOLE LANGUAGE

(No. B/368) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Creole Language, he will state if Government proposes to amend the existing legislation with a view to introducing the use thereof in the National Assembly and, if so, when.

(Withdrawn)

POLICE SERGEANT - PROMOTION EXERCISE

(No. B/369) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the promotion exercise from the grade of Police Constable to that of Police Sergeant, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the results of the competitive examinations have been proclaimed and, if so, indicate when they will be promoted.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/366)

POLICE OFFICERS - CORPORAL RANK - DEMOTION

(No. B/370) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Police officers in the rank of Corporal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if some of them have recently been demoted and, if so, the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

SUPREME COURT - BAJAN V/S THE STATE - JUDGMENT

(No. B/371) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, following the recent judgment of the Supreme Court, in the case of Bhajan v/s The State, he will state if it is proposed to amend the law with a view to allowing an accused party to appeal against his conviction when a court makes a Community Service Order.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, in 1994, the then Commissioner of Police introduced administratively the rank of Police Corporal within the regular Force...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: That question has been withdrawn. Now, we have come to PQ B/371. Others have been withdrawn.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, on 18 October 2010, the Supreme Court delivered judgment in the case of Bajan v/s The State to the effect that, as the law stands now, no appeal lies against a Community Service Order can be done.

A Community Service Order is made in accordance with the Community Service Order Act 2002, and the object of such an Order is to provide unpaid work...

Mr Speaker: We don't want the law to be spelt out. The question is whether it would consider giving a right of appeal to a person convicted and asked to do community service.

The Ag. Prime Minister: The reason for this is what follows, Mr Speaker, Sir. What follows is that the accused party must first consent to the Community Service Order and, in

doing so, arguably - and I say arguably- he has in a way waived his right of appeal. This is the whole argument.

Mr Speaker, Sir, although under our law, an accused party does not have a right of appeal against a Community Service Order, this does not mean that such an Order cannot be challenged. As a matter of fact, in the case of Bajan v/s The State, the appellant has applied for and has been granted leave to appeal against the judgment of the Supreme Court to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

The question of whether an appellant can appeal against his conviction when he is subject of a Community Service Order, therefore, remains to be determined by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. For these reasons, it would be premature, at this stage, to envisage any amendment to the law.

Mr Baloomoody: My question is simple. One can appeal against either conviction or sentence. The judgement makes it clear. As the law stands, if one is given a Committee Service Order, one cannot appeal against his conviction. My question is whether the Government is prepared to amend the law, because going to the Privy Council cost money, so that one who is convicted and sentenced to community service can, at least, appeal against his conviction only, not the sentence.

Mr Speaker: But I do not know what is the application that has been made to the Privy Council. If that is against the conviction, then we have to wait and see what will be the outcome. We have to wait. If the Privy Council allows the appeal and quash the conviction, then it is the end of the matter. The Supreme Court will be bound to follow the judgment of the Privy Council.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, if the Government chooses to amend the law, that gentleman does not have to go to the Privy Council.

Mr Speaker: If the Judicial Committee or Privy Council rejects the appeal, then the hon. Member can come with a question and ask Government for amendment of the law. Next question, hon. Nagalingum!

**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE, COOPERATIVES & CONSUMER
PROTECTION - EMPLOYEE - DEATH**

(No. B/372) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he has received representations from the Unions for an inquiry to be carried out in the circumstances of the recent death of a member of the staff of the Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection and, if so, will he state the actions taken in relation thereto.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Question B/372 together with Parliamentary Question B/414, as they relate to the same matter.

At the very outset, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to present my sincere condolences to the bereaved family of the officer who passed away on 13 May 2011.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the hon. Prime Minister has received a letter from a trade union. However, the letter does not contain any specific request for an enquiry.

I am also informed that, six days after the demise of the officer of the Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection, a member of his family reported a complaint at the Flacq Labour Office to the effect that her late father passed away on 13 May 2011 as a result of regular harassment at work by the Permanent Secretary.

Moreover, the relatives of the deceased officer called at the National Human Rights Commission to collect complaint forms, but they have not submitted yet the duly filled forms. No representations have been received at the Commission so far.

I am further informed that the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service has, on his part, gathered some preliminary information relating to this case.

If, in the light of the preliminary information, the Attorney General's Office advises that an offence against any law may have been committed, the Secretary to Cabinet may refer the matter to the Commissioner of Police for necessary action, pursuant to Regulation 32 of the Public Service Commission Regulations.

PORT AREA - DRUG TRAFFICKING

(No. B/373) Mr J. C Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether,

in regard to drug trafficking, through the Port Area, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, since 2005 to date, information as to the -

- (a) number of arrests effected in connection therewith and
- (b) value of the drugs seized

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, during the period 2005 to 19 May 2011, a total of 28 persons was arrested in cases of drug trafficking, of whom seven have already been sentenced. Of the remaining 21, six of them are awaiting trial, 11 are awaiting decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the cases of three persons are being enquired by ADSU, and no action has been advised by the Director of Public Prosecutions in respect of one person.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that, during the same period, a total amount of Rs87,022,966 of drugs was seized.

Mr Speaker, Sir, may I inform the House that a series of measures has been taken to crack down drug trafficking in the Port Area. These include -

- (i) movements of persons within the Port area are being monitored on CCTV system by ADSU officers;
- (ii) vessels are regularly boarded and searched in collaboration with National Coast Guard and Customs personnel;
- (iii) greater use is made of sniffer dogs. These dogs are deployed at the Seaport, Airport, Parcel Post and Courier Services;
- (iv) scanners are increasingly being used to identify suspicious materials in passengers' luggage, courier and cargo. These equipment have been installed at various strategic points, namely the Mauritius Container Terminal and the Aurélie Perrine Passenger Terminal;
- (v) the newly-installed Coastal Surveillance Radar System at Albion monitors movements of vessels, pleasure craft, yachts, private boats and pirogues in the western part of the island, including the port area;

- (vi) since August 2010, a national Customs Enforcement Network (nCEN) has been set up on a pilot basis, to facilitate the exchange and use of data by members of the World Customs Organisation in a timely, reliable and secure manner, and
- (vii) a Risk Management Section has been set up by the Customs Department for the collection, analysis and dissemination of intelligence, including drugs-related matters. Alert messages on significant drugs seizures are communicated to officers through the MRA Customs Intranet.

Mr Barbier: May I ask the Ag. Prime Minister, among the 28 persons arrested, how many are foreigners and Mauritians?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I do not have the information. I will provide it.

Mr Barbier: May I know whether the types of drugs that have been seized are mostly cannabis, drugs or otherwise?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, at the port, since 2005, the seized drugs are subutex, cannabis, hashish and heroin, and not surprisingly heroin takes the best part at 46 million and hashish at 36 million.

ROCHE BOIS DUMPING GROUND - SECURITY

(No. B/374) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to late R. B., whose body was recently found in the Roche Bois dumping ground, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof, and
- (b) the measures taken, if any, to improve security at the said dumping ground.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 12 May 2011, at 0805 hours, following a phone call from the Officer-in-Charge of the Roche Bois Transfer Station to the effect that a dead body was found lying on the concrete platform of the Station, the police proceeded to the scene. The dead body was later identified to be that of R.B. by the latter's mother.

An autopsy of the corpse was carried out on the same day at 12 30 hours by the Chief Police Medical Officer and revealed that death was caused by cranio-cerebral injuries.

The Major Crime Investigation Team, CID Metropolitan North, Scene of Crime Officers and Technical Unit attended to the case.

So far, the police have questioned six persons in connection with this case. Inquiry is still ongoing.

As regards part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands, which is responsible for the Transfer Station, that it is managed under a contract by Sotravic/CRSE. The firm provides private security services on a 24-hour basis, with one watchman during the day and two at night. The site has a concrete wall boundary of height ranging between 3.4 to 4 metres and barbed wire of 60 cm height fixed on top of the wall to prevent intrusion. There is also a metal gate at the entrance, which is opened at 0600 hrs and closed around 1800 hrs.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Roche Bois Police Station, the Divisional Support Unit and the Emergency Response Service provide regular mobile patrols in the region of Roche Bois, including the vicinity of a Transfer Station. Furthermore, a team from the Special Support Unit provides mobile patrols and conducts stop and search operations in the region of Roche Bois between 2200 hrs and 0200 a.m. on a daily basis.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Ag. Prime Minister might be aware that the dumping ground at Roche Bois is frequently overcrowded with people coming around, trying to recuperate things. He must also be aware that the security services are not provided with sufficient officers who can manage security on these dumps. May I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister to see to it that the police - I know that at times there is some patrol, but it is not sufficient - liaise with the security officers for a better security service at the dumping ground? Otherwise, such incident can occur again in the future.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I am not aware that the incident is related to the scavengers, but an effort to reduce the number of scavengers has ended up very badly as you know, and I will certainly look into the appeal that has been made.

BEL OMBRE POLICE STATION - POLICE OFFICERS - SHORTAGE

(No. B/375) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Bel Ombre Police Station, he will state if he has been informed of a shortage of Police officers and other supporting staff thereat and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if remedial measures will be taken and, if so, when.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Bel Ombre Police Station started its operation on 21 May 2008 and took over the policing jurisdiction of Baie du Cap Police Station. The police station also caters for an NCG post and a CID post.

I am also informed that the actual staff strength of the Bel Ombre Police Station is 28.

Having regard to the distribution of police officers in different parts of the island, it is considered that the Bel Ombre Police Station is adequately staffed.

I am further informed that both the CID and the NCG provide assistance and support to criminal investigation and seaward policing respectively. In addition, the ERS provides round-the-clock patrol throughout the Bel Ombre Police Station area.

Mrs Radegonde: May I ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister if he is aware that the division that serves the police station in Bel Ombre includes Beau Champ, Baie du Cap, Choisy, Le Rouleau, Chamarel, Dilo Pourri up to Le Morne? The staff consists of about 28 police officers serving the region, and is considered the same as when the police station was based in Baie du Cap. Nowadays, we have the hotel, and the ERS police patrol and the police station in Bel Ombre cannot do the ERS themselves, as they do not have bikes for police patrol.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Radegonde, you are making your question too long. The staff is inadequate for the region that is covered.

Mrs Radegonde: It is not adequate, yes.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have raised this issue, and I have been informed about the area which this station covers. It covers 52.5 square kilometres and includes a lot of the areas that have been mentioned, and some of the areas which have not mentioned

also, but the Commissioner of Police assures me that the distribution of police force is according to certain criteria which are met at their level.

Mrs Radegonde: May I still ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister to review the grade of the Police Station there, which is now in grade C, and to upgrade it to grade B, so that they have more staff to work in the regions where there is hotel development?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot ask to upgrade it to grade B. I can submit same, but upgrading depends on certain criteria, and if they fulfil the criteria they go to a grade.

Mr Speaker: Questions addressed to hon. Ministers. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/387 and B/396 have been withdrawn. Hon. Seetaram!

SUGAR MILLING COMPANIES - SECOND HAND EQUIPMENT

(No. B/376) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sugar milling companies involved in the production of energy, he will state if, in the past, his Ministry had given its agreement for the purchase, by any of them, of second hand equipment.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that five sugar milling companies are operating as independent power producers, out of which two have resorted to second hand equipment, namely CTDS, which signed a purchase of agreement with CEB on 15 October 2003, and Beau Champ which signed the purchase agreement in 1996.

Mr Seetaram: In relation to the second hand equipment, can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister inform the House what is the date of manufacture of that second hand boiler?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The first one was in 1985 and, for the second one, I don't have the date.

Mr Seetaram: How old was the boiler when it was operational and, if it was operational, for how long?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Which boiler are you referring to?

Mr Speaker: Which boiler?

Mr Seetaram: The second hand boiler; The Ag. Prime Minister mentioned CTDS.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Let him put the question

Mr Seetaram: For how long has it been operational and how old was it?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

The Ag. Prime Minister: The first one could have been around 20 years, and the second one around 10 years.

CHILDREN - SEXUAL ABUSE

(No. B/377) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to sexual abuse, she will state the number of children victims thereof referred to her Ministry, since 2000 to date, indicating the -

- (a) cases thereof in which commercial exploitation has been established, and
- (b) additional measures that will be taken to combat same.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker Sir, in regard to sexual abuse, the number of children victims thereof referred to my Ministry since 2000 till March 2011 is being tabled.

In regard to part (a) of the question, information as submitted by the Commissioner of Police is also being tabled.

As regards additional measures that will be taken to combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, the House may note that, in the normal course, psycho-social support is given to victims at the level of our six outstations and the Drop in Centre (Day Care) at Bell Village. These comprise the following -

- (i) First Aid as appropriate
- (ii) Medical/Gynaecological support
- (iii) Psychological follow up and counselling

- (iv) HIV/testing and support as appropriate
- (v) Home visits and Parental counselling
- (vi) Food support
- (viii) Study pack to encourage victims to go back to school, if enrolment is available, or arrangement is done with stakeholders for alternative skilling.

In addition, my Ministry has embarked on the construction of a Residential Care Centre to cater for victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children who cannot be returned to their family environment. It is to be noted that, pending the completion of the construction of a full-fledged Residential Dropping Centre at GRNW, to provide for rehabilitative and reinsertion needs of these victims, a building is being rented at Curepipe to accommodate same, and this Residential Care Centre will provide for the accommodation of some 15 girls victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children.

A full-fledged training programme for key partners working with children victims of violence, including commercial sexual exploitation of children, has been developed at the level of my Ministry. Some 100 officers from various Ministries such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Probation and After Care Service of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, the Police Department, officers of our Ministry, NGOs such as SOS Children's Village, CEDEM, *Mouvement d'Aide à la Maternité*, *Action Familiale*, Shelter Forest Side, MACOSS, *Terre de Paix*, also Save the Children, Caritas, local authorities and the Ombudsperson for Children's Office have already been trained. It is to be noted that this training programme is ongoing, and the next batch of social workers will be trained as from the end of July 2011.

In an attempt to intensify the campaign and to combat child violence, the IEC strategy is being revisited. Community Child Watch Committees in high risk areas are being set up across the island. At present, we have 20 Community Child Watch Committees already in operation, and furthermore my Ministry is planning to have one Community Child Watch Committee at the level of each of the 56 Social Welfare Centres, the 130 Community Centres and the 16 Women Centres. A 4-month training programme with the members of the Community Child Watch Committees has already been completed, and members of these Committees are now conversant

with issues related to sexual abuse. The Social Welfare Centres and Community Centres are also roped into the process to carry out aggressive IEC campaigns in commercial sexual abuse of children matters. The IEC materials in terms of leaflets and posters/stickers are being designed, and will be developed for dissemination purposes among adults and children at the level of our various structures such as also the District Child Protection Committees, the Community Child Watch Committees, the School Child Protection Clubs, *École des Parents* and the National Children's Council/clubs.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for her answer. Can the Minister inform the House if she intends to propose stronger child protection laws in a near future?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, actually, we are working through a series of workshops on the forthcoming Bill, which will be the Children Consolidated Bill. I am sure that the provisions concerning offences and penalties will be discussed, so that it becomes tougher still.

Dr. S. Boolell: Dans le concret, M. le président, est-ce que la ministre pourrait essayer d'élaborer un projet d'accompagnement scolaire, une action positive en faveur du rattrapage au niveau de l'éducation ? Car, bien souvent, ces victimes sont totalement en retard au niveau de l'éducation et sont appelées seulement à être prises en charge par un couvent.

Mrs Bappoo: I have just tried to explain in my answer that the victims are also being rehabilitated to go back to school, but I do agree with the hon. Member. If there should be a specific programme for them *pour le rattrapage*, this will certainly be worked out with the Ministry of Education. I suppose that, in the remedial programme, this will be taken care.

Mr Uteem: Out of the victims who have been referred to her Ministry, may I know from the hon. Minister how many were linked to abuses by parents or close relatives?

Mrs Bappoo: I need notice of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir.

STC - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - SULPHUR CONTENT

(No. B/378) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation -

(a) a breakdown of the quantity of each type thereof currently imported, and

- (b) obtain information as to -
- (i) the sulphur content in the diesel presently being imported, indicating the actions being taken to reduce the sulphur content thereof to comply with the *Maurice Ile Durable* initiative, and
 - (ii) if it is proposed to introduce the use of ethanol mix.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the State Trading Corporation is importing seven grades of petroleum products for the period August 2010 to July 2011 as follows -

1. Mogas (Essence): 110,000 metric tons
2. Gasoil (Diesel) 500 ppm sulphur: 250,000 metric tons
3. Gasoil (Marine Bunker) 2500 ppm sulphur: 100,000 metric tons
4. Jet A1: 270,000 metric tons
5. Fuel Oil 180 CST Catalytic Crack: 175,000 metric tons
6. Fuel Oil 180 CST Straight Run: 90,000 metric tons
7. Fuel Oil 380 CST Straight Run: 130,000 metric tons

As regards part (b)(i) of the question, I am informed that, as from August 2010, STC has shifted from Gasoil (diesel) with 2500 ppm sulphur content to Gasoil with 500 ppm sulphur content for inland consumption. Imports of 2,500 ppm sulphur content is destined solely for bunkering purposes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that discussions have started with the supplier, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd, for the supply of Gasoil with 50 ppm sulphur, in line with the *Maurice Ile Durable* project. In fact, the General Manager of STC came back from a mission to Mangalore yesterday. I am pleased to confirm that STC is expected to introduce this new grade of Gasoil as from early 2012. Timing of its introduction and gradual phasing-out of the 500 ppm will be finalised in consultation with all stakeholders concerned, particularly the motor industry operators who would need to adapt themselves accordingly.

As regards part (b)(ii) of the question, in line with the Long Term Energy Strategy 2009, STC is positioning itself to actively support and fully participate in the introduction and promotion of a mix of Mogas and Ethanol (E10) on the domestic market.

A Steering Committee at the level of the Prime Minister's Office is looking into the introduction of the ethanol mix.

Discussions have already started towards this initiative.

Mr Speaker: We will continue with the supplementary questions after lunch time. I'll suspend for one and a half hour.

At 1.00 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.33 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Bérenger: I have two supplementary questions, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. On the ethanol project, can I ask the hon. Minister whether, in fact, there is a proposal being examined to set up a company with shareholders, the Maurel Group, some other people in the sugar industry and STC and, if that is the case, will consideration be given for small planters, labourers, artisans and other employees of the sugar industry to be shareholders as well?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition. In fact, we are taking all this on board. We are now having discussions with the General Manager of the STC. We are asking all the stakeholders; they are coming very soon.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister is saying that discussions are ongoing. Can I ask him whether he is aware that time is of the essence in this case? Because the Maurel Group is under threat of liquidation, and if the liquidation goes ahead there is the danger that we will have missed for good the possibility of going practically into the ethanol project.

Mr Soodhun: I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition. In fact, other Ministries also are involved in this case, and we are looking into it. We are giving it priority as a matter of fact.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Can he inform the House if the engines of the old buses and commercial trucks are equipped for gasoil with 50 ppm sulphur?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, a Task Force Committee has been set up at the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. So, we'll need to have an adaptation time in order to introduce the 50 ppm.

Ms Anquetil: Can the hon. Minister inform the House if he will support the introduction of new vehicle emissions standards?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, we are having a meeting with all the big dealers and stakeholders, as I mentioned. We have to work out this for, at least, six months, before we can implement this ppm.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that there is going to be a new quality of gasoil that is going to be imported. May I know from the hon. Minister what would be the impact on the price mechanism of this new diesel? How much will it cost?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, it will have an impact on the price, and it will be very light. According to the information that we have, we can manage with that. In fact, we are working in order to implement this 50 ppm, which is badly needed just to avoid all those smokes and so on.

TOURISM SECTOR - STRATEGIC PLAN

(No. B/379) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the tourism sector, he will state if Government has developed a Strategic Plan with a view to attracting emerging markets and potential new ones and, if so, give details thereof.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, with a view to minimising the adverse effects of euro crisis and other occasionally arising external shocks such as the present volcanic ash from the Iceland volcano, my Ministry has re-focused its strategy towards putting increasing emphasis on developing non-euro markets in emerging economies such as China, India and Russia.

In fact, this is in line with the policy of the Government to rebalance tourism growth. My Ministry has successfully deployed strategies and tactical measures to consolidate growth from the emerging markets in the new economies such as India, China and Russia.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last year, 57 million Chinese travelled outbound, 40 million out of Russia and 50 million out of India. So, what are the measures we are taking? The measures include -

- (a) defining niche and opportunities;
- (b) aggressive advertising campaigns;
- (c) participation in road shows and fairs;
- (d) advertising in specialised magazines;
- (e) familiarisation and press trips, and
- (f) PR activities.

The House may wish to know that these campaigns are already yielding positive results, as can be noted from the tourism arrivals from these three countries. We have, in fact, registered considerable increase in tourism arrivals from India, China and Russia for the first four months of 2011 - it is 26% growth from India, 14% from Russia and 32% from China.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, insofar as the China market is concerned, I would like to inform the House that, in the context of the launch of the Air Mauritius flight in July to Shanghai via Kuala Lumpur, I personally led a very high level delegation comprising of more than 30 stakeholders to Beijing and Shanghai. We met with over 250 journalists, and all the main Chinese tour operators, about a hundred, came to our workshop. The strategy that we have developed for the Chinese market is to attract high yield visitors and to target niche markets. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been also highlighting the promotion of Mauritius in China, and presently CCTV Shanghai and ATV Hong Kong are already in Mauritius to be able to showcase Mauritius. Furthermore, we will adapt the Mauritian product - adding a cultural pillar with a world class show at the Citadel with shopping and wellness to attract the Chinese tourists. Another locomotive of growth for the Chinese markets is the fact that the Chinese are very interested on a multi-destination. That's why we have been able to promote the vanilla islands and the Indian Ocean concept, and a combined destination is a success in China. In fact, I met the Chinese Minister of Tourism, and we discussed the possibility of having a forum involving the SADC countries and the Indian Ocean countries, that is, about 20 countries, so as to make Mauritius the gateway to Africa.

Yesterday, Air Mauritius announced a direct flight operational in Shanghai in February 2012, non-stop. We are thinking of a second flight non-stop for the golden week of October 2012. and if the market response is good, a flight to Beijing will be contemplated next year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the Indian market, the objective for 2011 for the Indian market has been to position Mauritius as a high end destination. So, we have been focussing on -

- (a) golf;
- (b) wedding and honeymoon, and
- (c) MICE markets.

The focus will be on the brand of the destination. We had the Mercedes brand, Benz Golf Trophy final recently. We had the HSBC Conference here, Kingfisher calendar was shot in Mauritius this year. The growth objective of 20% annually is being maintained for this year. Further, advertising campaigns in the emerging metro cities in India are being envisaged. Weddings have been also a big success, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Over the last months, we have had over ten weddings, and with groups ranging from 200 to 1,500 guests coming for each wedding. In fact, we are considering a direct flight daily to Mumbai.

Insofar as the Russian market is concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a direct flight with Transaero has already been introduced with a seat capacity of 300. Our objective in Russia is to attract high yield travellers with the Volvo fashion week. We are also concentrating on the kite surfing, golf and cultural events.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are pursuing our efforts to increase the visibility of Mauritius on these countries, and to fully tap the opportunities from the emerging markets and economies.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to the Chinese market, we are used to be told that just selling 'sun, sea and beaches' will not be enough. Is the hon. Minister aware that, with that kind of marketable items, the Maldives have now moved ahead of all European countries like France, Italy and Germany? There are more Chinese tourists coming to Maldives now than from any other country, including European. Does the hon. Minister agree with me that we should discreetly tap their experience? They have succeeded over the recent months.

We should, therefore, discreetly tap their experience, and maybe look at the possibility of selling joint Maldives/Mauritius destinations?

Mr Bodha: The hon. Leader of the Opposition is right. We have 116,000 Chinese going to the Maldives. They are the first outbound tourists to the Maldives. What they have done in the Maldives is that they have taken a few islands and built hotels which cater only for the Chinese with charter flights. I don't think that we can emulate that sort of strategy, but combining Maldives with Mauritius, Reunion Island, Madagascar is a very good idea.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House if he will explore potential markets such as Brazil, Latin America, United Arab Emirates and Eastern Europe?

Mr Bodha: Well, I think the possibility is there. Latin America, Argentina and Brazil are very strong economies today. In fact, we speak of the BRIC, and Brazil is in there. We should never forget that Argentina and Brazil are only four/five hours away from Johannesburg. In fact, they are closer to us than Europe. This is an interesting possibility. We will think in terms of promoting Mauritius from the UAE, for example, as well. The whole problem, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the air access. Once we have the air access, we can start the engine for growth.

Ms Anquetil: M. le président, le produit touristique actuel est plutôt conçu pour le marché européen. Est-ce que le ministre envisage de revoir le produit pour satisfaire la demande des autres marchés, tels que l'Inde et la Chine ?

Mr Bodha: Well, these two markets have very specific demands. For example, the Chinese would like to have dinner from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. and after 7 p.m. they want casinos, wellness and karaoke. What we have been trying to do with the hotel groups which came to Shanghai and Beijing is to see what can be done, and we can learn from the Maldivian experience. The hotels are adapting slightly, to see to it that the Chinese have a very interesting stay in Mauritius.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the items that we sell in the Mauritian package is the quality of our beaches and sea water. Is the hon. Minister aware that, during the

past years, there has been a degradation of our beaches? There is not only Ile aux Cerfs. If you go around Mauritius, there is not only erosion, but the way people behave...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has made his point.

Mr Bhagwan: Our beaches are going on a downward trend. Can the hon. Minister inform the House what action he intends to take?

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question arises not specifically from this question. But I have been in close consultation with my colleague from the Ministry of Environment, and we all agree that our beaches are the best assets of our industry, and we are closely monitoring the situation. In fact, we are going to have a meeting to address the whole issue of erosion, quality and embellishment of the beaches.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question from hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: M. le président, il y a eu un plan stratégique qui a été commandité en 2009, financé par la Commission européenne. Est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre si le plan annoncé est en phase avec le plan qui a été annoncé en 2009, qui couvre la période 2009 à 2015 ?

Mr Bodha: I think we are addressing a number of priorities, but the most important thing is that the tourism market has dramatically changed and, with what is happening in Europe and the United States, tourism is going eastward. In fact, China is not only going to become the first outbound tourist destination market - because we are contemplating the possibility of having a hundred million Chinese travelling by 2020 - but it has also become the first inbound with about 65 million; it is going to be ahead of France. I think what we are doing is trying to take the best from the report, but adapting ourselves to the reality of today.

TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/380) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the Tertiary Education Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to if the posts of Financial Controller and Head Finance Division, Head Research and Planning Division and Head Distance Education and Open Learning Division were

advertised as per the procedure laid down in the regulations in force and, if not, why not and indicate the terms and conditions on which the incumbents thereof have been employed.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that the posts of Financial Controller and Head Finance Division and Head Research and Planning Division were filled following a Board decision of 05 August 2010 to regularise the employment of two employees who had been working in an acting capacity for five years and four months, and twelve and a half years respectively in those positions.

The two Heads were initially appointed on a two-year contract with effect from 18 August 2010 and 24 August 2010 respectively, but were offered temporary appointment with effect from the same dates, further to advice obtained from the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms.

As regards the Head, Distance Education and Open Learning Division, I am informed that there is an application for Judicial Review before the Supreme Court. The matter, therefore, being *sub judice*, I cannot comment any further.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned a letter from the Ministry of Civil Service. May I ask him if he is referring to the same letter in which the Ministry refers to the appointment on a temporary basis of six months?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: Is it also exact to say that the Ministry of Civil Service clearly indicated that proper procedures have to be followed in this particular case?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, it is specified in the letter, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: Must I take it from the hon. Minister that procedures have been followed in regard to the appointment of these three officers?

Dr. Jeetah: With regard to procedures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did enquire, and it has been current practice at the Tertiary Education Commission for the Board to decide. Here, we have two employees who have been working in an acting capacity, one for five years and four months and another for twelve and a half years. So, they may have decided that these two were the best candidates.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that one officer has been acting for twelve and a half years and the other one five years. According to my information, the officer who had served for twelve years had been offered a contract of one year, which can be extended for a further year after evaluation. This was not the case for the other officer. Is it the case?

Dr. Jeetah: My information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that these two employees were in employment for five years and four months and twelve and a half years respectively.

Mrs Labelle: The conditions were not the same for these two officers. While one was being offered a contract of two years, the person who served for twelve years as acting officer was offered an appointment on a one-year contract with the possibility to extend this contract.

Dr. Jeetah: I don't have the information, but I can certainly lay it on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last week, Mr Speaker stated that whenever a Minister comes and informs the House ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the hon. Member taking a point of order?

Mr Baloomoody: I am just asking whether ...

The Deputy Speaker: He must put his question.

Mr Baloomoody: ... he has a copy of the case which is before the court. Last week, Mr Speaker gave a ruling that whenever a Minister comes and says that it is *sub judice*, he should lay a copy of the court proceedings before the House.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister used the word *sub judice*. He stated that he is not prepared at this time to give details about this particular appointment, because there is a case pending before court.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, last week, made it clear that, whenever the Minister does not want to answer a question and says that it is *sub judice*, it is for the Chair to decide whether it

is so and not for the Minister. This is why a copy of the proceedings has to be laid before the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, I think that you are right so far as the ruling of Mr Speaker is concerned.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I may seek advice from the State Law Office, and if they deem it fit for me to lay it on the Table, I shall certainly do so.

Mrs Labelle: I think I heard the Minister stating that the contract appointment was then being converted into a temporary one. If I have got the Minister right, may I ask him whether his approval was sought and given for the appointment as a temporary one?

Dr. Jeetah: Could you rephrase the question because I did not quite get it?

Mrs Labelle: I think that I heard the hon. Minister mentioning that, at first, these officers were offered a contract appointment, which afterwards, was converted into a temporary appointment. I am asking the hon. Minister whether his approval was sought as per the TEC Act, where the approval of the Minister must be received. Was his approval sought and given for this appointment on a temporary basis?

Dr. Jeetah: For the initial part, I can say yes. It was not approved by me, but by the Minister of Education and Human Resource. But I will have to check for the latter part.

Mrs Labelle: Which means that the Minister does not recall or does not know whether he has given his approval for the appointment on a temporary basis?

Dr. Jeetah: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we were in a period of transition. It is the Ministry of Education that dealt with this issue, and the files had to go from my Ministry to the Ministry of Education for approval. I will have to verify and give the information.

GOODLANDS BYPASS - CONTRACT

(No. B/381) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Goodlands bypass, he will state the -

- (a) name of the contractor;
- (b) contract value thereof;

- (c) starting date thereof;
- (d) completion date as per the contract, indicating if there has been any delay, and, if so, the reasons therefor, and
- (e) amount of money paid to the contractor, in excess of the contract value.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Road Development Authority awarded the contract for construction of the Goodlands bypass to Gamma Civic Ltd, for a contract value of Rs294,679,272.33 inclusive of VAT. Works on site started on 30 June 2009, and the contractual completion date was 29 June 2010. However, the project was finally completed on 15 March 2011. The delay was mainly due to the following reasons -

- (i) objection by a five ex-land owners to access site;
- (ii) challenge of legality of land acquisition by one ex-land owner;
- (iii) idle time in view of the start of sugar cane harvest season for cultivated lands, and
- (iv) objection made by Société Rouillard at the Supreme Court to enter land, due to the existence of an abandoned windmill and request made by the Société for a modification of the alignment.

The project was completed well within the contract value, and no additional money was paid to the contractor.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before signing a contract with a contractor, don't we need to have all the acquisition cleared out?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been Minister for so many years in this particular Ministry, and I know that once we start the acquisition procedure, concurrently we also start all the design and planning, and we also go to the Central Procurement Office. At times, there have been slight delays. Even after section 8 is published, the land owner has the right to go to the Supreme Court. Certain delays are caused and it is not only in this case, but in many other cases. Even as far as construction of schools is concerned, we had such problems.

VERDUN TERRE-ROUGE ROAD PROJECT - CONTRACT

(No. B/382) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Verdun Terre-Rouge Road project, he will state the -

- (a) name of the contractor;
- (b) contractual value thereof;
- (c) completion date as per the contract, indicating if there has been any delay, and, if so, the reasons therefor, and
- (d) amount of money paid to the contractor, in excess of the contract value and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Road Development Authority awarded the contract for the construction of Terre Rouge-Verdun Link Road to the Joint Venture COLAS (Madagascar)/COLAS (Maurice) Ltée for the contract value of Rs2,161,715,973.58, inclusive of VAT. Works on site started on 18 February 2010, and the contractual completion date is 11 October 2012. Works are progressing as per schedule; no additional money has been paid to the contractor.

REGIS CHAPERON STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL - STUDENTS - EXPULSION

(No. B/383) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the recent expulsion of two students of the Regis Chaperon State Secondary School, he will state the reasons therefor.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to reply to Parliamentary Questions B/383 and B/405 together as they relate to the same subject.

I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the primary sector, it is not the practice to expel any pupil from school.

As regards the secondary schools, in the private sector, the PSSA has been asked to gather the information sought, and I am informed that it is being compiled and will be laid as soon as possible in the Library of the Assembly.

As for the state secondary, two students have been expelled from Dr. Regis Chaperon State Secondary School on 19 April 2011 on ground of very serious misconduct. Both students aged 17 and 18 respectively were repeaters of Lower VI.

My Ministry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has been informed that these two students have a long history of repeated and very serious acts of indiscipline and unruly conduct, not only at

school but also outside school since 2007. They are reported to be of a violent disposition, and their acts of misbehaviour include abusive language, smoking, shirking classes, fighting, aggression, damaging property by band, assault on students at school. They also have police record for a number of offences committed both at school and outside, for instance in school buses.

The two students were involved in damaging an NTC bus, and were arrested by the police; a provisional charge of “Damaging property by Band” was lodged against them before the Rose Hill District Court on Monday 06 September 2010.

It is also worthwhile pointing out, as per report received, the two students were again involved on 03 September 2010 in a serious incident for assaulting an ex-student of Regis Chaperon SSS admitted to John Kennedy College. The case was referred to the police.

This incident triggered gang fight between students of Dr. Regis Chaperon State Secondary School and John Kennedy College on 3rd September 2010 and both students were reported to be gang leaders. Offences were charged against both students as per Police report.

The incidents continued in 2011 and culminated in another serious offence where, on 24 March 2011, both students entered a computer class with a group of students and, in the presence of the teacher, dragged another student outside to beat him. The teacher did his best to intervene with the help of another colleague. However, the two students did not heed.

When the parent of the victimized student came to school, there was a scuffle between the parent and the two students in the presence of the Rector.

All these incidents involving acts of serious indiscipline had reached alarming proportions and were beyond tolerable limits, and the situation called for immediate action, as other students were showing signs of emulating such behaviour.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to highlight that these students had been warned on several occasions and been subjected to rustication and detention and, as such, been given ample opportunity to amend. Their parents too had been informed regularly and warned of the consequences in case their wards persist in their bad ways. Police officers also talked to them as well as to their parents.

In addition, I have been informed that the School and the Educational Zone have made every effort to rehabilitate these two students, and the following actions were initiated in this regard -

- (i) they were referred to Educational Psychologist of the Zone and Educational Social Worker to provide counselling services and advice, and their parents were also convened for parental counselling;
- (ii) individual counselling on values, respect for others, responsibilities and positive behaviour were provided;
- (iii) two senior police officers sensitised a group of students, including the two students concerned, and talked to parents on delinquency and discipline. The two students attended the talks on two occasions;
- (iv) the case of the two students were on a number of occasions referred to *Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs* whenever they were caught in serious offences. The *Brigade* visited the school a number of times, and spoke to the students in the presence of the Rector;
- (v) the Rector of the school did personal counselling with the two students on various occasions and met with the parents, giving them feedback on a regular basis, and
- (vi) a letter of warning was issued prior to expulsion.

In spite of all the above initiatives, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was no progress, and the students continued to be involved in acts of serious indiscipline. Moreover, it was noted that the parents also were not showing the interest expected in what was being done in terms of counselling by a team, comprising an educational psychologist and an educational social worker.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the serious acts of misbehaviour committed by both students and taking into account the opportunities provided to them to change, but given their obstinacy and persistence, the school had no choice but to recommend their expulsion for the sake of maintaining discipline and ensuring smooth running of the school and in order to prevent the situation at school to deteriorate further. Even the PTA of the school made a strong plea on 25 March 2011 for the immediate expulsion of the two students on the grounds that students of the school were in an atmosphere of fear and terror.

Taking into account the history of repeated misbehaviour and the seriousness of the last incident on 24 March 2011, both the School Disciplinary Committee and the Zone Directorate 4 strongly recommended the expulsion of two students.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to send a strong signal to parents and the country at large that such behaviour would not be tolerated. On the other hand, it is our duty to protect disciplined students and to create an environment which is conducive to teaching and learning at school, and to instil positive behaviour.

I wish to inform the House that, following the expulsion of the students, they have not been left *dans le vide*. The *Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs* was requested to provide back-up support in terms of monitoring and follow-up to the two students. The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare was called upon to give psychological support and advice to them and to their families. The school has been requested to inform the President of the PTA of the exact circumstances leading to the expulsion.

At the level of my Ministry, we are in the process of setting up a cell with multidisciplinary team, comprising an educational psychologist, educational social worker, officers of the Career Guidance Service and pedagogues to provide dedicated assistance and career guidance to such students.

My Ministry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is closely monitoring the situation, in collaboration with relevant authorities, so that the best possible guidance can be given to the two students who have been expelled from school and to their families.

Mr Seetaram: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will simply ask the hon. Minister whether he can consider to introduce or to provide particular criteria, which would give an indication as to when or how incidents or cases might lead to expulsion of students.

Dr. Bunwaree: As I have said, we have tried all that was humanely possible. The students of this country must understand what the real meaning of school is. We are not going to tolerate such behaviour *outré mesure*.

Mr Obegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the two questions have been combined, I hope you will allow me a few questions. Being given that we are all in agreement in this House

with the hon. Minister that there is a need to protect the school community from student elements that can be very disruptive and a danger, will the hon. Minister confirm whether there are clear guidelines, a sort of protocol that is made available and circulated to all institutions in the country, both State and private, laying down procedures, ensuring protection of the school community, but also that the students concerned are given the right to a fair hearing, appeal etc? If that exists - I think not - will the hon. Minister lay a copy thereof on the Table of the Assembly? If not, will the hon. Minister see to it that, in a dialogue with the private sector, such a procedure is laid down for guidance in the future?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't think it does exist, as being mentioned by the hon. Member. It is a fact that guidelines are set to schools about discipline. In every secondary school essentially, there is a Disciplinary Committee. There is someone who heads that Committee and who looks after all these things. I must say that these two students themselves have come forward in public, and have expressed their regrets. Of course, as I also mentioned in my reply, we have not left them like that. They can no longer be accepted in the school - this is a decision that has been taken - but we are seeing what the best course of action is, because these two students are students of Lower Six, which means that they must have done more or less well at the School Certificate. So, we cannot leave them like that. But the strong message - I want it to be in the heads of parents and students - is that we are not going to tolerate such action.

Mr Obeegadoo: Precisely, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Minister has missed the point. From his long answer, it seems that the action which was taken was not only justified but long overdue. In fact, since the private sector right now has no guidance from the PSSA on this issue, as the hon. Minister is aware, my appeal to the hon. Minister is that some dialogue should take place with the private sector and common procedures clearly laid down for all rectors, institutions, to act in a timely and effective manner to protect the school community.

Dr. Bunwaree: For the private sector, I do agree. There is a work which is being done. In fact, part of the question concerns the private sector, and I have been given some information. There have been some cases of expulsion since the beginning of this year; three or four. I believe this number may not reflect the exact situation, and so I am waiting for that. But, of course, the guidelines are supposed to be for the private sector as well. We are going to look into the matter and take that point into consideration.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that these two students have a long history of repeated unruly conduct and violent disposition. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a record since when these students have started showing such behaviour and whether, at that particular point in time, any help was given to them?

Dr. Bunwaree: Everything appears in my reply. I think I mentioned that it was in 2007. All the efforts that have been put into force since then speak for themselves. I can't repeat the same thing. In fact, much has been done than what I have mentioned, but for the sake of the reply, I had to cut it short. Everything has been done to try to *récupérer ces enfants*; but, unfortunately!

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now that students are becoming more and more undisciplined in many schools, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Ministry should not consider having permanent counselling services or psychological support in those schools that are more difficult than others.

Dr. Bunwaree: We are contemplating it to be on a permanent basis but, of course, we need more means to be able to that. It would be ideal. For the time being, we have been able to identify a certain number of colleges where the problem is more acute, and we are concentrating there. Of course, it has to be on a permanent basis.

Mr Dayal: May I know from the hon. Minister how many psychologists we have for these State secondary schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: We have a dozen of psychologists at the level of the Ministry.

Mr Dayal: Does the hon. Minister consider it sufficient...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should come with a specific question on that issue of psychologist. I will allow two last questions; one from hon. Mrs Labelle and one from hon. Obeegadoo.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, true it is that the hon. Minister has mentioned several measures. He has also mentioned the support from educational psychologist and educational social worker. I have not heard the hon. Minister talking about clinical or behavioural psychologist. It is clear that these students were suffering from serious behavioural problems. Doesn't the hon. Minister think that the educational psychologist and the social

worker were appropriate references to send these students? The hon. Minister even talked about the help that was proposed to them afterwards, like the *Brigade des Mineurs* and so on. I have not heard anything about clinical or behavioural psychologist.

Dr. Bunwaree: Clinical psychologists are not available at the level of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. That is a weakness. We have made the request, and we hope to be able to get a few, but they do exist at the level of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and, in fact, whenever we need them, we seek the help of the Ministry and of my colleague to step in, and this has always been the case. On a regular basis, whenever we need the help of clinical psychologists, we knock at the door of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, but I have made the point at the level of the Government that we need to have clinical psychologists at the level of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources itself.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a supplementary question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that does not refer to psychological counselling, that does not refer to police repression, but refers to schooling and education. Being given that compulsory education up to the age of 16 means that the State has the duty to ensure that each and every child and young person is provided with schooling up to the age 16 - quite apart from this case, because here the children may have been more than 16 - and since with violence in schools there may now be the need increasingly to remove young persons from the school community before the age of 16, will the Minister consider, as in other countries where there is compulsory education, that alternative structures be created where such children and young people can be given the education and schooling up to age 16 plus, in addition, counselling as may be appropriate?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I fully agree with this. In these cases, the students were 17 and 18. I have mentioned it. In fact, that was the first criteria I considered when the file came to me. I would never have gone in the same direction if it were a child less than 16. I can assure the House about that in the present context of our country but, in this case, they were students aged 17 and 18. I fully agree with the hon. Member on the point that was raised.

SCHOOLS - STUDENTS - ABSENTEEISM - SMS SCHEME

(No. B/384) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Scheme whereby parents are informed of the absence of their children at school through SMS, he will state if he will now consider extending same to all schools.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the SMS-based System commonly known as the e-Register System, is a collaborative venture between my Ministry and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, with a view to curbing unjustified absences and truancy as well as continued lateness of some students to schools. The system has been introduced since 09 February 2011 on a pilot basis in 21 secondary schools. i.e. 17 State and four private aided schools, and in spite of some intermittent technical problems, mainly due to the internet bandwidth capacity, the system is working rather smoothly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the successful implementation of the project in the pilot schools, a decision has already been taken since early March 2011 to roll out the system to the 138 remaining secondary schools.

At this point in time, I am informed that 90 out of the 138 remaining schools have already confirmed their participation in the project. These include -

- (a) All the remaining 48 State Secondary Schools and the nine Mahatma Gandhi Secondary schools, and
- (b) 33 out of a total of 85 private aided secondary schools.

The other 48 private aided secondary schools are still being sensitised to join the system and in this connection, the following crucial steps have already been initiated by my Ministry -

- (a) sensitisation of the Rectors and the school staff on the importance of the project;
- (b) seeking of parental written consent by the school with a view to securing their collaboration;
- (c) training of the users, and
- (d) data collection and entry into the system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the rolling out of the system would also involve the upgrading of the technical capacity of the Government On-line Centre (GOC) as well as the transmission capacity of the SMS gateway hosted thereat. These technical issues are currently being looked at

by my Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and, once sorted out, the system would be implemented gradually over a period of two months in the 90 schools which have, so far, agreed to join the project.

It is expected that some 40 schools, I am told, would be connected to the e-Register System by the end of June 2011 and the remaining 50 by July 2011.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following a meeting held at my Ministry with the Rectors of the 21 pilot schools on Wednesday 18 May 2011, it has been confirmed that the system has had a positive impact on the rate of absenteeism and lateness. My Ministry will, therefore, sustain efforts being made in a bid to combat the issue of absenteeism and lateness with the help of the e-Register System.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a concluding remark, I would like to point out that the project has just taken off and in spite of technical problems, we have made considerable progress in implementing same, with also the consent of the majority of parents. Those who have, so far, not given their consent will continue to be sensitized. I am personally convinced that taking into consideration the positive aspects of such a system, they will review their position.

Mr Seetaram: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. As a matter of practice, if parents are made aware by SMS that, in fact, there has been absence or lateness by their respective children, can the hon. Minister or his Ministry consider finding a *modus operandi* for the parents to obtain release from their work to attend to the query?

Dr. Bunwaree: There is an immediate follow-up. Once the parent is informed, we don't just inform the parent and stay there. We try to contact the parent and see what can be done immediately. But to see whether the parents can get leave and so on, this will involve other institutions. I can assure the hon. Member in the House that everything is done to try to locate the child with the help of the parents.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that this peculiarly Mauritian SMS system is about detection for the purposes of repression, what about prevention? Will the hon. Minister tell us whether he wishes to look at the root cause of the problem? Has the Minister commissioned a study of the phenomenon of absenteeism in schools to look into the causes, as this is a phenomenon that affects more particularly State schools rather than private schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: We have conducted quite a few studies about that, and we have already framed some sort of concept of what is happening. But I feel we have to go deeper, because there is the question of societal behaviours and coming up of new development of the country that has to be roped in, and there is a unit that is working at the level of my Ministry. If the hon. Member has got any suggestion, it will be taken on board.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the rate of absenteeism goes up in an uncontrollable way during the third term. The fact that the scheme was brought in last year, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the rate of absenteeism went down during the third term.

Dr. Bunwaree: We have started this year in the month of February. So, we'll have to wait for the end of the year.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to put it to the Minister that there has been no independent study of absenteeism. If there is a problem of weak management in State Schools, an in-house study will not point in the right direction. Will the Minister, therefore, consider commissioning an independent study, possibly the University of Mauritius, to look at this problem, and produce a report that the Minister will lay before the House?

Dr. Bunwaree: We can look into that, but I think we have enough competence at the level of the Ministry to understand the problem. But we will take that also on Board.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Minister mentioned that several studies have been carried out regarding the problem of absenteeism. May we know from the hon. Minister who conducted these studies? Maybe, he has in mind some of the findings of the several studies he referred to!

Dr. Bunwaree: If the hon. Member puts a proper question, I will give a proper reply.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Since, it is the hon. Member's question, I will allow him a last one.

Mr Seetaram: Will the hon. Minister consider finding a way to tackle issues where parents do not participate in the scheme of SMS?

Dr. Bunwaree: This is a very relevant question, because a few questions have been put which are not relevant to the main question.

(Interruptions)

I think this is what we should do, and I appeal to hon. Members of this House to help because this project is a very good one - everyone is happy about it - instead of trying to rope in all sorts of things. I am prepared to reply, but they should put proper questions. This is an interesting question, and I must inform the hon. Member that, already, more than 82% of parents have given their collaboration to this project. But, in some cases - we have to be careful also - we have noticed that there could be the possibility of students trying to sign the consent paper themselves. We have to look into all this. I appeal to hon. Members and, through them, to all the parents of this country, to take their responsibility in this matter.

SCHOOLS - MAURITIAN SIGN LANGUAGE

(No. B/385) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the deaf and dumb persons, she will state -

- (a) if the sign language used on the MBC television is similar to the one taught in schools;
- (b) the secondary education prospects open to them, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for the advisability of -
 - (i) impressing upon the bus operators to fit the buses with warning lights for their benefit, and
 - (ii) setting up a scheme with a view to offering them batteries for their hearing aids and mobile phones free of charge.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Sign language used by the MBC is the Mauritian Sign Language (MSL), and it is similar to the one taught in schools.

However, at the beginning of this month, the attention of my Ministry was drawn by one NGO that a few additional signs need to be included in the MSL.

Professor Hookoomsing, Chairman of the Mauritian Sign Language Committee, has been informed accordingly and has been requested to address the issue with a view to making the

Mauritian Sign Language more comprehensive. It has also been decided to co-opt a representative of the NGO on the MSL Committee.

Regarding part (b), I would like to point out that a number of students with hearing impairment are already integrated in, at least, six mainstream secondary schools. These schools benefit from the services of supporting staff from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the logistic support of my Ministry in terms of hearing aids and counselling services. On the other hand, pre-vocational classes are run by the School for the Deaf at Beau Bassin and by the *Association des Parents des Déficients Auditifs* (APDA) at Curepipe.

Regarding part (c) (i), I wish to inform the House that the Road Traffic Regulations 2010 provide for buses to be equipped with either a bell or a warning light to stop the bus.

As such, the provision of warning light is optional at this stage. My Ministry is proposing to liaise with the National Transport Authority for the amendment of the relevant regulations, so that all public buses be equipped with both a bell and a warning light to stop the bus. This is already the case in some buses in some companies in Mauritius.

As for part (c) (ii), I wish to inform the House that my Ministry already provides hearing aids fitted with batteries free of charge on request.

However, with regard to the provision of subsequent batteries free of charge, the Ministry does not consider this to be a practical option.

I also wish to inform the House that, following a request from an NGO, namely '*Les Enfants du Silence*', and considering that a mobile phone is, in fact, a useful communication tool, my Ministry has contacted local suppliers for the supply of same at a reduced price to persons with hearing impairment.

Some local suppliers have responded positively and are presently studying this possibility.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for her answer. Concerning the sign language, the MBC/TV does use the Mauritian Sign Language, whereas it seems, according to information, that at school, what is being taught is the American Sign Language. Could the hon. Minister kindly see to it that the sign language be standardised?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to ask the hon. Member to refer to what I have just said. I have just mentioned that the Mauritian Sign Language, which has been prepared by the Mauritius Sign Language Committee, is being taught in schools and, as I have mentioned, there is one particular NGO which has approached the Ministry and has drawn our attention to the fact that a few signs are missing from the Mauritian Sign Language, and the needful is being done by the Sign Language Committee so as to make it more comprehensive.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as secondary education is concerned - I am not referring only to the deaf children, I am referring to the deaf and dumb together - not much is being done to integrate them in the standard system of our education.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House may already be aware, Mauritius has ratified the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, and one of the main points put forward was to have an integrated system of education. But we do agree that we are still lagging behind, because we don't have the proper infrastructure and the logistics that are required for complete integration of our students within the mainstream education sector. However, we still have special schools. Referring to deaf and dumb, the term 'deaf and dumb' is very rarely used, because of the negative connotations. So, we use the term 'deaf', and it is true to say that most of the deaf students have a problem of speech. So, we talk about speech impairment, and we do not normally use the term 'deaf' and dumb for that particular reason.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for the lesson, and I just make an appeal again that a kind of special school be set up for those deaf students.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are two schools in Mauritius: the School for the Deaf, which also includes students with speech impairment and APDA at Curepipe where also you have both students with deafness and speech impairment in the same establishment.

QUARTIER MILITAIRE - SWIMMING POOL - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/386) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a swimming pool in Quartier Militaire, as announced in the Budget Speech of 2008/2009, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the project “Construction of a Swimming Pool at Quartier Militaire” was announced in the Budget Speech 2008/2009 and was to be funded under the Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF).

My Ministry, with the assistance of the Public Infrastructure Division of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping had undertaken a geotechnical study through a specialist contractor in September last year, and the report of the geotechnical investigation for the site vested in the Ministry of Youth and Sports was received on 19 November 2010.

However, in the Budget 2011, no provision of funds has been made for financing of the project under the LIF, and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has informed my Ministry that the LIF will have a nil closing balance at the end of December 2011 and not to embark on new projects.

My Ministry is of the view that, in case the Ministry of Youth and Sports is willing to implement the project, it may request the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to make funds available for the implementation of the project.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister what is the outcome of the geotechnical study carried out in the year 2011?

Mr Aimée: I don't have the information. What I know from my file is that the contractor of geotechnical investigation was Geoconsul Ltd.

VEGETABLES - PESTICIDES - TESTING

(No. B/387) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the vegetables sold on the market, he will state if his Ministry has set up a unit to analyse the content of pesticides therein and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) number of persons employed and their respective qualifications;
- (b) methods used to -
 - (i) collect the vegetables for testing, and
 - (ii) carry out the tests;

- (c) number of times vegetables were collected for testing over the past year;
- (d) number of cases where vegetables were found to be unfit for consumption and the remedial actions taken, and
- (e) mechanism put in place to ensure that the vegetables put for sale on the market are free from harmful pesticides.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS NATIONAL LOTTERY - SELLING OUTLETS - FEES

(No. B/388) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mauritius National Lottery, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from each local authority, information as to the amount of fees collected in terms of trade licences from the selling outlets, indicating the names and addresses thereof.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am informed that there is no specific generic for sellers of lotteries under the 8th Schedule of the Business Facilitation Act 2006. However, the trade fees for such activity are paid under the classified trade of “Seller of newspaper/magazines/lotteries in kiosque” under the same Act.

The information pertaining to the fees collected by the Local authorities under the classified trade of “Seller of newspaper/magazines/lotteries in *kiosque*” will be laid on the Table just now.

LES SALINES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (NEOTOWN) - SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/389) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Les Salines Development Project (Neotown Project), he will state if a Social Impact Assessment has been carried out and, if not, why not.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is no prerequisite for any social impact assessment as such prior to the granting of land leases. However, the promoter needs to consider

the social implications of his project when undertaking his EIA or other studies, along with the studies of other types of impact including socio-economic, traffic and environmental impacts.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to assure the hon. Member that my Ministry leaves no stone unturned, when granting planning clearance, to ascertain that social amenities will be provided by the Les Salines Development Limited to cater for the needs of the public. Further, in strict accordance with Article 22 of the Lease Agreement, the promoter is mandatorily required to make a contribution of Rs25m. per hotel, for the purpose of community development, to the Tourism Fund upon the issue of the planning clearance for the construction of any hotel.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Neotown Project will certainly bring lots of benefit to the country and the population. The most important socio-economic impact of the proposed development will be expected in the creation of numerous direct and indirect employment opportunities for our people. The Downtown Syndrome from which the city of Port Louis currently suffers beyond office hours and during weekends will be overcome as the project will offer various leisure and entertainment facilities. Walkways, a marina garden, shopping and leisure activities will be created, thus providing Mauritians with a modern and enjoyable living environment in the Port Louis area. The marina garden will also and certainly provide Mauritians especially residents of neighbouring localities such as Roche Bois, Cité Vallijee, Vallée Pitot, Tranquebar, Cassis, Pointe aux Sables, Pailles, Cité La Cure and Plaine Verte with a major outdoor recreational space in a waterfront setting.

Further, the development at Les Salines will make Port Louis the city of choice for locals and business travellers, and a meaningful tourist destination.

Mr Guimbeau: Est ce que le ministre peut indiquer à la Chambre s'il y a aussi des constructions de villas dans le projet de Neotown ?

The Deputy Speaker: This question is about the social impact assessment, not about the project itself.

Mr Guimbeau: Est-ce que le ministre peut dire à la Chambre s'il y a eu des doléances de la part des habitants de la région des Salines? Si oui, est-ce qu'il peut dire les raisons et quelles mesures compte-t-il prendre ?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should come with a specific question on that. This is about social impact assessment.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has informed the House of the numerous facilities which the promoter has said to give to Mauritius. Can the hon. Minister inform the House or give us a time frame when the '*premier bloc pou poser*', when the first *coup de pioche*?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, not the *premier bloc*; we must have *pilotis* first, and then we will build it up.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, it will be done in phases on modern form of construction.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just informed the House that there will be numerous job creations. Can I ask the hon. Minister how many jobs will be created during the construction phase and after the project being completed?

Dr. Kasenally: Obviously, during the construction phases there will be work force for the construction workers. Once the constructions are finished, then there will be multiplying effects, that is, people working in hotels, people who have businesses. I cannot at this junction give a time frame but, by the end of the project in 2010, it will be about 10,000. I have mentioned it. If the hon. Member had listened to my answer, he would have known it.

MAURITIUS NATIONAL LOTTERY - ADVERTISING

(No. B/390) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius National Lottery, he will state if consideration will be given for amendments to be brought to the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act with a view to restricting the advertising of the loto by the Mauritius National Lottery.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, part XV of the GRA Act sets out the legal framework for

the operations of the Mauritius National Lottery including the duties and obligations of the operator.

Among those obligations, the operator of the Mauritius National Lottery has, under section 62 sub-paragraph (b) and 63 sub-paragraph (e) of the GRA Act to market, promote and advertise the National Lottery.

Section 156 of the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act makes provision for the manner in which advertisement (including for the Mauritius National Lottery) is to be conducted, namely that -

- (i) It is not likely to be misleading to readers, viewer or listeners;
- (ii) It does not invite participation to any form of gambling, and
- (iii) It makes mention of age restriction for participation in any particular gambling activity, including play lottery games and that credit betting is not allowed.

Section 100 of the Act enables the Board to impose restrictions on advertising whenever it is deemed necessary.

There are, therefore, provisions in the GRA Act, enabling the GRA Board to limit advertisement in any form of gambling activity, and I am advised that there is no need for amending the law with a view to restricting advertising of the lotto by the Mauritius National Lottery.

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, je ne comprends pas. L'alcool, la cigarette...

The Deputy Speaker: No, please. We are not dealing with *l'alcool* or *cigarette*. We are dealing with lotto.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Put your question.

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, je voudrais faire ressortir que, tout comme ces deux fléaux - l'alcool et la cigarette - le jeu de hasard est aussi un fléau dangereux pour la société. Comment se fait-il que dans le cas de l'alcool et la cigarette, la pub est interdite, dans certains jeux de hasard, la pub est contrôlée et, dans le cas du loto, il n'y a absolument pas de contrôle? Je voudrais avoir une réponse du ministre.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister has answered that there is a certain control in the law, and the GRA makes provision for that...

(Interruptions)

This is what he stated. Yes, hon. Obeegadoo.

Mr Obeegadoo: Let me reformulate the question. The present hon. Minister of Finance has himself said that there has been an explosion in terms of gambling, a dramatic increase in terms of publicity and advertisement for gambling in our country, that it has now got out of hands and he mentioned initiatives to try and get things under control. Now, the question says: is there not a need to amend the legislation to further control and restrict gambling advertisement as it is now affecting all people, including the young people of our country?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said in the past that there has been, in fact, a number of gambling activities that have been given licences to operate in the country, and everybody would recall that in the Budget that I presented, Government has decided to take a number of measures initially, in order to see to it that, first of all, this number of licences is not propagated, that is, we froze the licences, and that we were looking at ways and means of countering the effects of impulsive gambling. I had announced that there was a study that was being conducted by a consultant. With regard to advertising, I have requested, in fact, the GRA to look with the stakeholders into the matter to see, to it how we can control this issue of advertising. Therefore, the matter is being looked into, and we hope that they will come with a number of recommendations that the GRA would afterwards be able to apply.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is a lawyer. The point is to revisit section 156; the section of the law relating to advertisement. The law, in fact, is ambiguous. The law says that no person shall publish an advertisement relating to gambling, lotteries and so on, which is likely to be misleading to readers, viewers or listeners. We must just delete that bit 'which is likely to be misleading to readers etc'. Let's amend the law; let's clarify the situation. This is what we are asking, because the operators are capitalising on those few words 'which is likely to be misleading to readers'. So, if we delete those few words, nobody will be allowed to publish any advertisement for gambling, lottery, etc.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question is about restricting the advertising of lotto. We are talking about one particular case.

(Interruptions)

I have replied! When a hon. Member puts a question, he better listens to the reply. In fact, they have set up a committee, comprising of the stakeholders, to look into the whole issue of advertisement. So, let them look into the matter, and then come up with recommendations.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question!

Mr Guimbeau: I am coming back to the letter I laid on the Table of the Assembly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I am not aware of any letter.

Mr Guimbeau: *C'est une lettre de la GRA adressée à certains opérateurs des jeux de hasard, où ils se servent de la section 100*, that is, 'not to broadcast and to be broadcast any advertising relating to the activities between 6.00 p.m and 8.00 p.m.'. Here, there is restriction to some parties, whilst others have got no restriction. I am asking the hon. Minister whether he will come with an amendment, like hon. Ganoo just stated, so that everybody is treated the same.

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Member had tabled this letter. I don't know whether it is the same letter that he is tabling today, but I will refer to the one that he had tabled before. First of all, I am a bit puzzled because the letter is not dated. There is only the year - 2009. I have asked the GRA to check on this letter. Secondly, the National Lottery came into operation in November 2009, and if ever this letter was issued, it was done before. Therefore, that is the reason why I have asked the committee to look into this issue with regard to the National Lottery.

Mr Guimbeau: Vu la situation alarmante concernant les jeux de hasard, M. le président, est-ce que le gouvernement, le ministre va venir de l'avant avec un observatoire des jeux indépendant, afin de contrôler cet abus...

The Deputy Speaker: This is about advertising.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what the hon. Member of the Opposition is saying is contradictory. Now they are talking about *observatoire*. There is a regulator; GRA is

the regulator. Now they want to put up an *observatoire*. So, I don't know which is which! But I believe...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, the Minister is answering!

(Interruptions)

No, it has been answered! Do not argue, please! Next question!

(Interruptions)

Next question, hon. Uteem!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Let us listen to the hon. Minister, please!

BETAMAX LTD - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - TRANSPORTATION

(No. B/391) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the contract with Betamax Ltd. for the transport of petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if the Corporation has -

- (a) received any technical advice concerning the suitability of the vessel proposed by Betamax Ltd., and
- (b) sought and obtained legal advice from the State Law Office before the signature of the contract.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that a technical opinion on the vessel proposed by Betamax Ltd was received from Bent Nielsen, a Director of ST Shipping, which was at that time the supplier of freight services to STC for Black Oils.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some of the weaknesses identified by ST Shipping in that opinion concerned *inter alia* -

- (1) the capacity of the vessel;
- (2) the number of grades that could be segregated on the vessel;

- (3) the high risk of contamination of products, and
- (4) the risk of loading some products at high temperature in tanks adjacent to those containing Mogas, Jet and Gasoil.

All the issues raised above are, of course, of major concern, and were then discussed at length with Betamax Ltd. The latter then submitted four different reports confirming the suitability of the vessel to carry different grades of products safely.

I wish to inform the House that the new vessel since named - "M.T. Red Eagle" is now ready and operational since last week.

As this is a major event, I had requested the STC to liaise with MRPL with a view to ascertain that the shift to the new mode of transport of our petroleum products takes place in the best conditions. Representative of SGS Mauritius and India participated in the meetings in Mangalore over the weekend prior to and after the loading and sailing of the new vessel.

I wish to inform the House that the "Red Eagle" left Mangalore on Saturday 21 May 2011 with seven different grades of products, totalling around 57,300 metric tons. We expect the vessel to arrive in Port Louis around 28 May 2011.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, despite all the care taken so far, I feel it is my duty to inform the House that the risk of contamination of products, as mentioned by Bent Nielsen, remains a matter of concern.

As you will be aware, transport of black oils and white oils on the same tanker is not common practice. It does present a number of risks. I am informed that these risks have been fully addressed by the promoters.

Nevertheless, MRPL, the supplier, and STC, the buyer, want to monitor the operations very closely, especially in terms of maintenance of the required quality standards of each of the products to be transported and the safety of personnel and public.

I have discussed with the General Manager of the STC, who spent the last weekend with MRPL, and expect a complete report after the arrival of the vessel by end of this week and the unloading of products carried in the first trip.

I also view with much concern other risks that have been identified by Mr Nielsen, including the logistics of the vessel.

In this context, I am proposing to meet the representatives of Betamax Ltd and all other relevant stakeholders, to review the situation after the first trip of the new vessel and look into all implications, and discuss all possible alternatives that may be offered to give us more comfort on the security issues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, I have been informed by the STC that the reply is in the affirmative.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of all these serious concerns, which are now being raised by the hon. Minister - and we understand that the advice from Mr Nielsen was received before the contract was signed - will he inform the House why the government has gone ahead and signed the contract with Betamax Ltd?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned, we had the Nielsen report, but Betamax Ltd. has submitted four reports from international independent consulting firms - if the hon. Member wants, I can give the names -

- (a) GeoChem Far East PTE Ltd
- (b) American Bureau of Shipping
- (c) Det Norske Veritas
- (d) Lloyds

These reports are international and, according to the reports, they give positive opinion on the suitability of the vessels. This is what Government takes on.

Mr Uteem: We have heard the report from Betamax Ltd. But has there been any report or any concern expressed by Mangalore, which is going to be the one which will be uploading the petroleum? We know that when black oil - we are talking about 160° oil - is being placed next to white oil, the risk of explosion is extremely high.

Mr Soodhun: I am sure that the Mangalore Oil Refinery, which is the biggest one in India, has taken cognizance of all the reports and also the plans of the vessels.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the date on which that report from Nielsen - I don't have the exact appellation of the entity concerned - was received, and the date on which the four reports from Betamax Ltd. were received?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, I am going to circulate it.

Mr Bérenger: From what I understand, there was a very critical report from Nielsen or whatever name the entity carries. Then, there was a reaction from Betamax Ltd. They produced four reports. Were those four reports submitted to the critical examination of the initiator, that is, Nielsen?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, all the four reports have been circulated. If the Leader of the Opposition wants, I can give the details of the reports.

Mr Bérenger: Did we have a reaction from Nielsen?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, Nielsen did not visit the vessels. It only gets the reports. It was only based on the report sent by the STC, on the basis of the file submitted. They have never visited the vessels, and they have been supplying all the four reports to Nielsen.

Mr Bérenger: My question is: has there been a reaction? If those four reports from Betamax Ltd. have been submitted to Nielsen, has there been a reaction from Nielsen or, in fact, were those four reports not submitted to Nielsen?

Mr Soodhun: They have submitted, but there was no reaction from Bent Nielsen.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: In view of these new serious concerns that have come to light, which have caused the Minister to review the whole situation, is it not advisable for the Minister to see to it that we review the very terms and conditions of the whole contract again?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, the concern is the contamination and not the contract. Let me also inform the House - I am just giving all the information as a matter of transparency - that we have double insured the vessel. The owner of the vessel has his own insurance, and the STC has another. We have also insured. There is a double insurance for the contamination to make sure that we are not going to lose money on that.

Mr Uteem: One of the main concerns is not just the contamination. The capacity of the vessel, 64,000 metric tonnes, is not sufficient to carry both white oil and back oil, which are

required every month in Mauritius. Because of this lack of capacity, how are we going to transport the remainder of the oil, and is that not going to cost us more? Because we may have to go on the spot.

Mr Soodhun: In fact, I thank the hon. Member for giving me this opportunity to clarify. We are having another vessel, not the one from Betamax Ltd. We have asked Betamax Ltd. in case, as you have just mentioned. It is true that we might not have what we were expecting. The STC has asked not for 64,000 metric tonnes, as I mentioned, but 57,300 metric tonnes, because of storage problem. Now, we are just looking about the storage and, in fact, if need be, Betamax Ltd. is agreeable to put another vessel in order to satisfy our demand.

Mr Bérenger: What request has been made to Betamax Ltd this time? Is it for Betamax Ltd. supposedly to build, to have another vessel or to hire? What is the proposal?

Mr Soodhun: It is going to hire. Let me explain. Betamax Ltd is with a Singaporean company. Betamax Ltd has 85% of the shares, and the Singaporean company holds 15%. The company which is linked with the Singaporean company has more than 100 vessels. So, Betamax Ltd is in a position to provide us with vessels at any time if there is any request from the STC.

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, le ministre a parlé de produits contaminés. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous indiquer la valeur des produits contaminés en termes de roupies?

The Deputy Speaker: No, he didn't mention contaminated, but the risk.

(Interruptions)

Please, order!

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister has just informed the House that, *comme précaution additionnelle*, la STC has taken another insurance. This is what he has just stated. Can the Minister inform the House what amount will be spent in terms of this additional insurance? Will VAT be passed onto the consumers of Mauritius?

Mr Soodhun: This is a very good question. I have to thank the hon. Member. In fact, the owner of the vessel has his own insurance. As we have had a bad experience of contamination, we have introduced our own insurance just to guarantee...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, we have understood what the hon. Minister has just stated, that is, a second insurance has been taken. What the consumers want to know is how much that would cost. Would that cost be transferred to the consumers of Mauritius?

Mr Soodhun: No. In fact, we have taken the decision, as I mentioned, that it will include all the costs.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister mentioning that legal advice was sought from the State Law Office. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the final form of the contract that was signed was cleared, vetted and approved by the State Law Office?

Mr Soodhun: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the advice of the SLO was that the agreement is legally in order.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions No. B/399, B/408, B/409, B/410, B/415 and B/416 have been withdrawn! Next question hon. Li Kwong Wing!

DBM - DEPOSIT-TAKING INSTITUTION

(No. B/392) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to -

- (a) if the DBM Ltd. is operating as a deposit-taking institution, outside the purview of the Bank of Mauritius, indicating the amount of deposits placed therein as at to-date by the National Pension Fund, the SICOM Ltd., Government bodies, and individual savers;
- (b) the amount of non-performing loan portfolio and total loan portfolio as at date;
- (c) the amount of operating loss during the year ended June 2010 and the period July 2010 to April 2011, and

- (d) the measures taken for the restructuring of the DBM Ltd. into a Development Finance Agency.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the Banking Act 2004, the Development Bank of Mauritius does not fall under the supervisory and regulatory purview of the Bank of Mauritius and, therefore, does not need a deposit taking licence issued by the bank.

I am informed by the DBM that the total amount raised from fixed deposit placements is 3.5 billion rupees. However the DBM is not in a position to disclose information concerning the accounts of its customers since this would be in breach of the secrecy and confidentiality principles that bind itself with its customers.

As regards part (b) of the question, I have been informed by the DBM Ltd that as per its audited accounts for the year ended 30 June 2010, non-performing loan portfolio amounted to Rs0.4 billion out of a total loan portfolio of Rs4.1 billion.

In regard to part (c) of the question, latest available information based on audited accounts for the period 30 June 2010 shows that an operating loss of Rs16.1 million has been incurred. However, DBM has changed its accounting period to 31 December to align with Government fiscal calendar and will, therefore, prepare accounts on an eighteen months basis covering July 2010 to December 2011. As such, information for period July 2010 to April 2011 is, therefore, not available.

As regards part (d) of the question, I have announced in the 2011 Budget Speech that DBM will be transformed into a Development Finance Agency to support more effectively SMEs. To this end, a Steering Committee comprising representatives of my Ministry, DBM Management and the Office of Public Sector Governance has already been set to oversee the process of transforming the DBM into a DFA.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Will the hon. Minister confirm that this is a unique case in Mauritius, that the DBM is an institution that is taking deposits, but is regulated neither by the Central Bank nor by the Financial Services Commission?

Mr Jugnauth: If it is a unique case it is a unique case.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: In this unique situation, is it, therefore, not dangerous that the Minister is carrying on business as usual, especially when there has been a tremendous financial crisis and everywhere there is a call for new regulation, especially when he has been in office for more than a year now and the Governor of the Central Bank has been criticising and denouncing what he calls ‘shadow banking’, where institutions are regulated neither by the Central Bank nor the FSC?

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Member is not paying attention to what I have just replied at part (d) of his own question. We are not carrying on business as usual. We are going to transform the DBM into a DFA. Therefore, as I have said, there is a Steering Committee that has been put in place, which is working on the process.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the Development Finance Agency will be regulated by either the Central Bank or by the Financial Commission?

Mr Jugnauth: We are looking into that aspect also, as far as a regulator is concerned.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether, on 28 December last, on the eve of the signature of that famous contract between Government and the owners of Med Point Clinic, the DBM...

The Deputy Speaker: No, no, we are not concerned; we are concerned now with the...

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question was...

The Deputy Speaker: No, please!

Mr Bhagwan: I have not yet finished my question.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, I am sorry, hon. Leader of the Opposition. The hon. Member was talking about a date which was not out of the reply, and I did not understand what was the date he was mentioning. I am sorry!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: He was going to mention the Development of Bank of Mauritius.

Mr Jugnauth: DBM on outstanding loans.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I rephrase my question?

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Bhagwan: On non-performing loans, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he has been made aware or he is aware that, on 28 December 2010, on the eve of the signature for the sale between Government and the owners of the clinic - because Government has purchased the Med Point Clinic - an amount of Rs24 m. had been written off by the DBM in favour of the promoters of the clinic which took that loan in 1993?

The Deputy Speaker: No, this is a specific question. The hon. Member should come with a specific question. Yes, hon. Li Kwong Wing, please.

(Interruptions)

This one is a general question on DBM Ltd. The hon. Member should come with a specific question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the persistent losses that are being made year after year by the DBM...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Yes, hon. Li Kwong Wing.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: We have heard that the DBM has made losses of Rs60 m. last year, and a year on year persistent losses are being made. Can we know how these losses are being financed?

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Member has asked for losses that have been made up to the period of 30 June 2010. I have replied Rs16.1 m. I don't have the figures for the previous years. Of course, I can seek the information from DBM and circulate those figures, but as far as the running of the DBM is concerned, like in the previous years, they have taken the different losses into consideration - if ever there have been other losses - in order to finance the activity of the bank.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: I said, Sir, that there have been losses. So, how have these losses been financed? If it is being financed from the Government Budget, then is not Government

throwing bad money into a bottomless pit? Because it is continuing to make losses and it is borrowing Rs3.5 billion savings from the public, out of which we have SICOM and National Pensions Fund, where there is hard-earned money from the workers being deposited at DBM.

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Member has just said himself that, in the past years, there have been losses. The losses do not date back from yesterday or today. They date back, in fact, to years and years. I remember the MMM were in the Government. So, it is not something new that we are discovering. We are tackling the problem; we cannot allow an institution to operate on a year on year with losses. That is why we have decided to transform the DBM into a DFA.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that the hon. vice-Prime Minister is talking about public funds going to an institution which is not regulated at all, would he consider setting up a detailed inquiry into all the cases where non-performing loans have been written off by the bank?

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Member probably will be surprised. But, anyway, we are looking into this aspect and, if need be, of course, we will set up. I would like to correct one thing that the hon. Member is saying, namely that it is not regulated at all. That does not mean that there is no control at all. That means that there are audited accounts, that the figures have to be presented and, of course, we look into all these figures.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that for quite some time many of the SMEs, small businesses which took money from the DBM are being brought to justice, there are cases of sale by levy and they are being harassed for Rs100,000/Rs200,000? I just mentioned a case of Rs24 m. Can the hon. Minister of Finance, at least, see to it that people who have been in business - honest business - and which has not worked because of financial crisis do not have their house, cars gone on sale, while *gros requin pe sappe dans filet*?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, the hon. Member has made his point.

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Member can come with a specific question with regard to SMEs. This is about DBM being regulated by the Bank of Mauritius; this is a different matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question from hon. Li Kwong Wing.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, owing to the fact that there are persistent losses at the bank...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! I cannot hear the question.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Given that the bank is making persistent losses and given the fact that the bank is also writing off arrears of debt, like in the case of Med Point Clinic, which has just been mentioned, to the tune of Rs24 m., and is regulated by the Central Bank, is not the DBM depleting its resources and, therefore, should not the Government take a decision to ask the DBM to stop taking any deposit from the public, or else that Government should provide a blanket guarantee to all the deposits that have been made at the DBM?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not aware about what the hon. member has just said, about writing off arrears and so on. But I can say that it is specifically because of that situation that the DBM was making losses and, therefore, the purpose of the DBM is to help the SMEs. That is the very reason why we are transforming this DBM into a DFA.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the restructure of the DBM, can we know whether the measures for the restructure provide for a guarantee that no employees will lose their job?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: It is premature at this stage, because now they are trying to restructure.

Mr Jugnauth: But I have just said.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQs No. B/402, B/403 and B/406 have been withdrawn.

FOREIGN DEBTS, GRANTS & DIRECT INVESTMENTS

(No. 1B/393) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to foreign debts, grants and direct investments, he will -

- (a) give a breakdown, since May 2010 to date, of the -
 - (i) foreign grants received and programmed to be received by the

public sector;

(ii) total amount of external loans raised and programmed to be raised by Government, indicating the total amount thereof disbursed as at to date and the balance yet to be disbursed, and

(iii) amount of Foreign Direct Investment received, and

(b) state if Government proposes to continue having recourse to external borrowings.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information requested in part (a) of the question.

Concerning Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), a record of Rs13.98 billion, that is, nearly Rs14 billion, has been registered in 2010 despite the unfavourable international economic environment. This record level of FDI speaks volumes of the policies and efforts that have been put in since this Government has assumed office to attract foreign investments. Figures for the first quarter of 2011 will be released by the Bank of Mauritius next month.

With regard to part (b), whether Government will continue to have recourse to external debt will depend to a significant extent on the availability of forex on the local market and the cost of borrowing on the local market, compared with borrowing from external sources.

In my Budget Speech last year, I articulated the long term vision of Government for the development of the country. This, *inter alia*, requires heavy investment over the next five years in roads, improvement of water supply, extension of power plants, improvement of port, airport infrastructure, sanitation and so on.

Our strategy will, therefore, be to have recourse to project loans for meeting the foreign exchange components of major projects and budget support loans for the foreign exchange components of medium size projects, as long as borrowing in foreign currency from external sources turn out to be cheaper than borrowing same on the local market, and as long as the risks involved are sustainable. Currently, it is cheaper to borrow from external sources than on the domestic market. Moreover, our debt service ratio is currently around 3%, while the general international benchmark is 10%. This suggests that Mauritius has significant scope for increasing the share of external debt in its overall debt portfolio.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister confirm whether the inflow of foreign funds are not creating excess liquidity in the banking system at a time when the Central Bank is having all the difficulties to absorb and reduce its excess liquidity, which is causing inflation and speculation?

Mr Jugnauth: As I said, we should be happy to have record level of FDI but, as far as excess liquidity is concerned, it will be also for the Central Bank to come up with monetary policies in order to see to it that the market is stable.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House what is the rupee counterpart of the foreign liabilities of the Government at the Central Bank?

Mr Jugnauth: I will request this information to be provided, and I will table it.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister, therefore, inform the House that the Central Bank is keeping deposits worth Rs10.7 billion as a rupee counterpart to the foreign loans? Can he inform us what is the rate of interest that is received from the Central Bank from these Rs10.7 billion which are being kept there by Government?

Mr Jugnauth: I will seek the information from the Central Bank and table it.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been any change in the definition of Foreign Direct Investment? My precise point is: does the present definition of Foreign Direct Investment include investments made on the Stock Exchange and, if yes, since when is the definition of Foreign Direct Investment includes investments on the Stock Exchange?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not aware whether there has been a change in the definition of FDI, but, of course, I can look into it and table the information.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the interest rate earned at the Central Bank by Government on its deposits is less than half percent. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how much is the cost of all the external loans raised by the Government?

Mr Jugnauth: I can provide the figures of the external loans and how much it is also costing us. I have said that I am, in fact, tabling a copy of these details at the National Assembly.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the answer has been given by the Deputy Prime Minister last time on the question of Bagatelle Dam, where he said that foreign finance costs on average 4% per year. What is the logic of Government borrowing external loans at 4% per year on average, and keeping Rs10 billion in demand deposit at the Central Bank, which is earning even less than half per cent? Is not this a case of an incompetent management of our foreign currency loans?

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Member should realise that we cannot deplete also our reserves; we have to keep equilibrium. There is a need to keep a reasonable amount of reserves for our own use and in terms of projects. I have just replied that we will need to borrow, so that we can finance very important and big projects for the country.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the outstanding external loans of the Government of Mauritius is Rs25 billion, out of which Rs10 billion is left as idle cash at the Bank of Mauritius. That's why there is excess liquidity, and that is what is fuelling speculation. We risk having a situation like in Thailand and Indonesia, where you are borrowing a lot of foreign currency and it is fuelling speculation and inflation, and then the Thai baht crashed. That is the point I am trying to make.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member made his point and the hon. Minister responded. We move to the next question.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - BOOTS - PURCHASE

(No. B/394) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the recent purchase of boots and the purchase thereof in 2006 by the Municipal Council of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, in each case, information as to the -

- (a) names of the bidders, indicating their respective bids;
- (b) names of the successful bidders, and
- (c) cost of each pair thereof.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there are three committees that are involved in the procurement of goods and services in the local authorities, namely -

- (i) the Opening Committee;
- (ii) the Bid Evaluation Committee, and
- (iii) the Departmental Tender Committee

The three committees are composed exclusively of officers, and no elected member sits on these committees.

The decisions of these committees are only mentioned for information at the level of the quarterly meetings of the councils.

With regard to this specific question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, upon the request of the Chief Executive of the Municipal Council of Port Louis, the matter is being investigated into by ICAC and, as such, I do not wish to make a reply to the question, as this may cause prejudice to the outcome of the ongoing investigation.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question states the names of bidders, their respective bids and the successful bidders. Though there is an investigation carried out by the ICAC, I think the hon. Minister can inform the House who are the bidders and who is the successful bidder?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I won't disclose any information pertaining to that particular case, because it is at ICAC. I will wait till the outcome.

Mr Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister whether elected members of the Council are involved in the process of bidding, tender and procedure?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, this has been answered.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, please allow me to insist that we can know the names of the bidders and the successful bidder even though there is an investigation at the ICAC.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, the hon. Minister replied, and he is not willing to give. We have to take stock of what he stated.

Mr Bérenger: What the Minister said is that the Chief Executive has referred the matter to ICAC. We want to know from the Minister whether ICAC informed that it is carrying out an inquiry.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said that the Chief Executive informed ICAC. But that's before the question. Nobody knows. Today...

(Interruptions)

It is like that. When a matter is before ICAC or before the Court, I am not prepared to disclose any information.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that there has been an *entrave* to the Public Procurement Act, whereby the contract has been signed in August 2009 and the funds earmarked in January 2011, and that the law stipulates that procedures contrary to that must be followed?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not have the know-how to know whether there is an *entrave* or not. I think it is to the ICAC or to a court of justice to decide upon that. I am not a legal man.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over! I will allow only one last question from hon. Lesjongard.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Minister to confirm whether, when the specifications were prepared for those boots, they were related to working boots or dancing boots made out of crocodile skin?

(Interruptions)

Mr Aimée: I am not prepared to answer this question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been informed that PQ B/401 has been withdrawn. Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph 2 of Standing Order 10.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER

CITÉ PITOT - REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have got two short statements to make to this House. With your permission, I wish to make a statement on the redevelopment project at Cité Pitot. Searches carried out at the Registrar General's Office reveal that the land was purchased from different owners during the period 1929 to 1930, but not donated by Mr Pitot. However, the legal transactions were done before a notary, and were accepted by the Board *des Commissaires de la Ville de Curepipe*, of which Mr Emile Pitot was a member.

There have been several previous attempts in the past for the Municipal Council to develop the land into a commercial area. For example, at its meeting of 08 July 2001, the Strategic Planning Committee of the Municipal Council of Curepipe took the decision to finalise conditions regarding the lease of the municipal land, including Cité Pitot, to prospective promoters. At its meeting of 03 April 2003, the Health Committee of the Council unanimously decided to go forward with the demolition of the houses.

At its meeting of 14 May 2003, the General Purpose Committee, under the chairmanship of the then Mayor, Mr Gerard Colin, approved the launching of a tender exercise for the redevelopment of Cité Pitot into a commercial area.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however, if the Municipal Council decides to go ahead with the development of the site into a commercial area, I will impress upon the Council to give due consideration first to rehouse the tenants. No development shall be entertained until and unless the rehousing of the tenants takes place satisfactorily.

PLAZA THEATRE - RENOVATION

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a second statement on the project for the renovation of the Plaza, in order to dispel all confusion on the issue.

I already indicated in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/38 on 22 March 2011 that the works related to Phase I of the project, consisting of provision of new roof coverings and other ancillary works at a total cost of Rs87 m., have already been carried out with the financial assistance of Central government.

As regards Phases II and III, which will comprise the renovation of the *façades, salle des fêtes* and the theatre at the total estimated cost of Rs457 m., the question of funding is being considered at the level of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

In as far as the financial assistance from the *Association Internationale des Maires Francophones* is concerned, I wish to emphasise that the contribution agreed by the latter was merely 40,000 Euros, that is, Rs1.6 m.

I wish to assure the House that all the documents had been forwarded by the Council in time to the AIMF. The Council addressed a letter on 09 June 2009 to AIMF requesting for the relevant documents for the finalisation of the agreement, which have not been provided up to now. The Council forwarded on 02 July 2009 a copy of the contract awarded to the contractor for the roof works to the AIMF.

Further, on 16 November 2010, at the request of AIMF, an original claim, together with details of bank account numbers were also submitted. However, in spite of the fact that the Council has fulfilled all requirements, AIMF confirmed on 16 December 2010 that the financial contribution had been cancelled.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(4.27 p.m.)

PUBLIC BILLS*First Reading*

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

- (i) *The Senior Citizens Council (Amendment) Bill (No. XI of 2011)*
- (ii) *The Preliminary Inquiry (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XII of 2011)*

MOTION**CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT ORDERS 2011**

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (Mr A. K. Gungah): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to move that the two motions standing in my name and relating to the Civil Establishment Orders 2011 be taken together namely -

- (a) *“That this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment Order 2011 made by the President of the Republic on 10 May 2011 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 17 May 2011 be approved.”*
- (b) *“That this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order 2011 made by the President of the Republic on 10 May 2011 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 17 May 2011 be approved.”*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, section 3(1) of the Civil Establishment Act 1981, as subsequently amended, stipulates that the President may by Order -

- (a) establish offices in the Public Service of Mauritius;
- (b) determine the number of persons who may be appointed to such offices, and
- (c) determine the emoluments to be attached to such offices.

The Civil Establishment Order 2011 is a consolidated Order reflecting the changes on the approved establishments of Ministries and Departments for the financial year 2011.

The Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order 2011 is a consolidated Order reflecting changes on the approved establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

The Civil Establishment Order 2011 and the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order 2011 are, therefore, now submitted for approval by the National Assembly.

With these words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I commend the two motions to the House.

Dr. Bunwaree rose and seconded.

The motions were, on question put, agreed to.

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

At 4.31 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.05 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE AAPRAVASI GHAT TRUST FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL

(NO. VIII OF 2011)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Choonee): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I move that the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. VIII of 2011) be read a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Aapravasi Ghat was listed as a national monument in 1987. In December 2001, legislation was passed to set up the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund with the main objectives of promoting the Aapravasi Ghat as a national, regional and international memorial site. Subsequently, the Aapravasi Ghat was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List on 16 July 2006. Shortly afterwards, in August 2006, amendments were brought to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act, to make provision for the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to manage more fully the World Heritage Site.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in January, 2005, when the Nomination Dossier of the Aapravasi Ghat was submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, a preliminary management plan was submitted. The final management plan was submitted in June 2006. However, while the management plan covered extensively the conservation, protection, management and promotion of the core zone, that is, the Aapravasi Ghat, it described the buffer zones and provided an outline of actions for their protection.

According to the operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, a buffer zone is an area surrounding a World Heritage property, which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions on its use and development, to give an added layer of protection to the property. Therefore, in the Nomination Dossier, two buffer zones were proposed, based on their proximity to the Aapravasi Ghat and their historical and functional links with the site.

The area covered by the buffer zones is shown on the plan at Part C of the First Schedule. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is need to provide an adequate management framework to the buffer zones. After the nomination of the Aapravasi Ghat as a World Heritage property, my Ministry, in collaboration with other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Municipal Council of Port Louis, the State Law Office and the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, worked out a Planning Policy Guidance to be issued under the Planning and Development Act to manage and control development in the buffer zones. In so doing, we took into account the numerous facets of the area, that is, the most historical urban heritage area that remains in Mauritius, the Central Business District of Port Louis, and part of our unique port.

Given the specificities of the buffer zones, the preparation of the Planning Policy Guidance presented numerous challenges. Concerned stakeholders, including owners, occupiers and operators were consulted at various stages of the preparation of the Planning Policy Guidance. The exercise started in 2007. Twelve versions of the Planning Policy Guidance have been worked out, and the final one was approved by Government on 28 January 2011. The Planning Policy Guidance will be issued by the Minister of Housing and Lands and come into force, once the amendments to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act and the Local Government Act will have been passed.

The main objective of the Planning Policy Guidance-Aapravasi Ghat will be to protect the outstanding universal value of the Aapravasi Ghat and the cultural significance of the buffer zones.

However, issuing the Planning Policy Guidance will not suffice. Several mechanisms are provided for the efficient implementation of the Planning Policy Guidance. Three mechanisms have been identified and are under preparation by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, with the

assistance of foreign experts in urban planning, heritage preservation and sustainable development.

The first one is the Heritage Management Plan, which will address all relevant issues in the buffer zones. The second one is the conservation manual, which will guide developers and owners in the conservation of graded buildings, alteration of existing buildings and erection of new ones.

The third one is the Development Plan. While focusing on the need to preserve the buffer zones, much attention has been paid on the need to develop the area. The implementation of the Development Plan will unleash the enormous potential of the buffer zones. Emphasis will be laid on a cultural perspective that will revitalise the area, attracting tourists and Mauritians in great number, as is the case for Caudan now. Consultations are being held with property owners in the preparation of the Development Plan.

Mr Speaker, Sir, heritage and development are compatible. However, it is the type of development that matters; we should aim at sustainable development which takes into account our heritage and historic fabric. Thus, height restrictions have to be incorporated in the Planning Policy Guidance for the buffer zones of the Aapravasi Ghat. However, a special clause has been added to the Planning Policy Guidance, whereby a developer has the possibility to alter the prescriptions in the Planning Policy Guidance, provided he demonstrates, through a Heritage Impact Assessment and a Visual Impact Assessment, that the proposed development will not negatively impact on the World Heritage Property.

The task of assessing proposals for development in the buffer zones will devolve upon a Technical Committee to be set up in the Municipal Council of Port Louis, under the new section 97A of the Local Government Act. Any proponent, not satisfied with the decision of the Municipal Council of Port Louis, may resort to the Right of Appeal provided under the Town and Country Planning Act 1954.

Mr Speaker, Sir, prior to the issue of the Planning Policy Guidance and its coming into force, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act and the Local Government Act need to be amended. For convenience sake, consequential amendments to the Local Government Act are being brought in the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now elaborate on other amendments proposed -

Section 2 of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act is being amended to define and delineate the Aapravasi Ghat and the buffer zones; the latter will be given legal status, which will allow the application of the Planning Policy Guidance to the area. Sections 4 and 6 will provide for the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to manage sites related to indentured labour, other than the Aapravasi Ghat.

In August 2010, while assessing the first State of Conservation Report for the Aapravasi Ghat and its buffer zones, the World Heritage Committee had urged Mauritius to halt any demolition in the buffer zones. Thus, a new section 17A of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act and amendments to section 98 of the Local Government Act will provide for the requirement of a permit before the demolition of any building in the buffer zones.

As explained earlier, in view of the specificities of the buffer zones, subsection 7 (A) (b) of section 98 of the Local Government Act will be amended, so that the time limit specified (i.e. two weeks or ten working days) for the issue of a Building and Land Use Permit will be waived for applications relating to development in the buffer zones of the Aapravasi Ghat.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund has, over the years, achieved a high degree of capacity building in various disciplines. Moreover, its officers have been provided with formal training in fields such as Heritage Management, Museology and Oral History.

I am confident, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, within the new framework, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, together with the Municipality of Port Louis, will rise to the expectations, and control and monitor development in the buffer zones of the Aapravasi Ghat, as required by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure has already embarked on the marketing of Mauritius as a “cultural tourism” destination. With proper and sustainable development, the buffer zones of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property can become one of the major attractions for cultural tourism in the island, not only for foreign, but also for local tourists. The Development Plan will guide developers and potential investors in that direction.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has set the pace through the acquisition of the Cerné Docks, found adjacent to the Aapravasi Ghat, for the putting up of the Beekrumsing Ramlallah

Interpretation Centre, which is expected to be operational by the end of this year. The Beekrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre will comprise a permanent display area to present the Outstanding Universal Value of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site and raise awareness on the history of the Aapravasi Ghat.

Further, the National Arts Gallery will be set up in one of the oldest buildings of the island, namely the Military Hospital, found in Buffer Zone 1 of the Aapravasi Ghat.

With these words Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend the Bill to the House.

The vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

(5.17 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger): M. le président, l'histoire de Maurice c'est avant tout l'esclavage et l'engagement ; la résistance à l'esclavage et à l'engagement, et le combat pour l'abolition de l'esclavage et de l'engagement.

In the past, we had made on the first of February a public holiday, and I am proud that, in 2001, at the request of the then Prime Minister, I chaired a committee of historians and other professionals, and we came to the conclusion that, just as the first of February is a public holiday, in reference to *l'esclavage*, the second of November should also be a public holiday. I am very proud, Mr Speaker, Sir, of what we achieved between 2000 and 2005 in regard to the Aapravasi Ghat, but also Le Morne.

In the case of Aapravasi Ghat, as the Minister acknowledged a bit earlier on, we voted the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act in 2001, and the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund started a fantastic work that it has done since 2001. It concentrated, with officials from Government, on preparing and submitting the claim for the Aapravasi Ghat to become a UNESCO heritage site in January 2005; the work continued after we were no longer in government in 2005. The heritage claim was approved in July 2006.

All this to say that, during those years, we laid the foundation for what followed later on, and one thing makes me particularly happy these days. Every time I have travelled to India, including in my capacity as Prime Minister of Mauritius in 2003, I have tried to visit Calcutta. I wanted to go to the places in Calcutta harbour where the indentured labourers left India to reach

here the Aapravasi Ghat and, before the Aapravasi Ghat, different places in Port Louis harbour. Unfortunately, I never managed to make it. It's only now that the Government of India has decided, just as here, in Mauritius, we have set up the Aapravasi Ghat Fund and given the means for that historical site to become what it has become, to do the same in certain areas of Calcutta harbour. I hope that I will be able to visit those areas in a near future.

We have set up Le Morne Trust Fund in 2004. We started work on, again, the file to be submitted to UNESCO for Le Morne to be inscribed on the UNESCO Heritage Sites, and it was subsequently approved. Why I mentioned both Trusts is because, as I said at the beginning of my intervention, slavery and indentured labour lie at the core of the history of our country.

I am also proud to have been the first Prime Minister - the present one did the same a few years back - to go on top of Le Morne Mountain. It was to me very emotional. When you know the history of Mauritius and when you know where to look for Madagascar from the top of Le Morne Mountain, you have that feeling that, by extending your arm, you can touch Madagascar. We have achieved something great, and cheap politics should not be made out of that. We have achieved something very great in having both the Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Mountain; to me, it's not a mountain; it is a cathedral, it is a monument and it's not just a mountain. We have achieved something very great in having these two sites inscribed on the UNESCO Heritage List. I am a bit worried that I did not hear the hon. Minister refer to that. There is the process of getting sites listed, but there is also the danger of sites that have been put on the list being delisted. We already have cases where due care has not been taken to develop the historical site, to protect it, to enrich it, with the result that there are already sites that have been withdrawn from the list, that have been delisted. One case is not far from here. Neighbouring Oman has had a heritage site delisted. There is a danger list before the delisting takes place. Unfortunately, - the last time I checked - there must have been, at least, 25 sites that have been put by UNESCO on the danger list and that will be delisted if the required measures are not taken. I am sad to note that one of the sites on the danger list is the beautiful forest in nearby Madagascar. So, we have to be very careful.

Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, *on ne peut pas refaire le passé*. We can't revisit the past. Why do I say that? It is because a lot of damage has been done to the Aapravasi Ghat, because in those days the people in charge of *la destinée du pays n'accordaient pas la même importance*

à l'Aapravasi Ghat *ou au* Morne. So, a lot of damage has been done in the past when the motorway was constructed - the northern motorway - but also, when that part of the harbour was developed. As I said, we can't revisit the past, but we have to take care of the future, Mr Speaker, Sir.

In the case of Le Morne, I know that there are problems pending; there are still land issues pending. So, I expect that Government will also be very careful in the handling of Le Morne Heritage Fund. We must see to it that not only Aapravasi Ghat, but Le Morne is not put on the danger list of UNESCO. On the contrary, as we are doing today, we must pass new legislation; take new measures to further entrench those two historic sites on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Mr Speaker, Sir.

So, we are for the amendments before the House today, and I hope that the required amendments in the case of Le Morne Trust Fund Act come before this House in the near future. Probably, in the future, we will have to bring further amendments to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act. We will be always ready to collaborate in that direction, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, a word of caution; as presently constituted, the Municipality of Port Louis cannot be trusted. You had an example just today *avec les bottes de la princesse - prince plutôt* - earlier on, Mr Speaker, Sir. As presently constituted, the Municipality of Port Louis cannot be trusted. It is given certain responsibilities, certain powers under this piece of legislation. I hope that the present members of the Port Louis Municipal Council won't be around for much longer, but that's another issue. I put my trust in the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to be over watchful, over careful, and to keep an eye permanently on how the Municipality of Port Louis will assume the responsibilities that this piece of legislation will put on their shoulders.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are happy to join the Government in the case of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, and we hope that the same care and the same kind of measures will be taken in the case of Le Morne also.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.27 p.m.)

Mrs M. Martin (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Mr Speaker, Sir, just last week, the debate on the Speaking Unions had been initiated and was going

on, and had it not been, I suppose, for the urgency of the matter that concerns us today, the Speaking Union Bills would undoubtedly have continued. But, if the Speaking Union Bills constitute what we might call intangible heritage, one might construe that the Aapravasi Ghat is something else. It is definitely heritage, but more tangible heritage; because a tangible heritage, Mr Speaker, Sir, is one that can be physically touched and seen with one's eyes and, right now, this amendment is an effort to preserve and protect this tangible heritage which has been on the heritage list of the UNESCO since 2006.

As of 2010, the UNESCO had named 911 sites - had listed them - 704 are cultural sites, 180 are natural sites, 27 are constituted of mixed properties, all in 151 State parties. Mauritius is fortunate to have two cultural sites - tangible cultural heritage sites - inscribed on the world heritage list of UNESCO. These are, as you know, Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne. Definitely, measures need to be put in place for the preservation and promotion of these two sites. The Bill which concerns us today, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (Amendment) Bill, is of crucial importance, because the Aapravasi Ghat is a structure which is, in some sort, a legacy from our ancestors.

It is of historical, cultural, touristic value and, as well, it has a strategic location in the history of the world mainly because it was a gateway, whereby our ancestors coming from Indian origin, African origin and Chinese origin have gone through in order to settle in Mauritius. Its history may not be a joyous one, but it has given rise afterwards to what we call the nation of Mauritius, and that has to be recognised.

I was talking earlier of the strategic location of the Aapravasi. Indeed, it is situated in a strategic area, Port Louis, our capital, the central nervous system of economic and political life. Port Louis itself has a diverse and rich history, a cultural history, historical history, political history, economic history. It is a zone in itself for National Heritage, a zone which has to conjugate with the imperatives of modern development, and in order to do that, in order to be in equilibrium with the imperatives of modern life and the imperative of keeping the legacy for the future generations, there is one measure that can be implemented. True, it is not a complete solution to any problem that might crop up, but is an effort towards the preservation of this memorial infrastructure.

One of these measures is, therefore, the establishment of a buffer zone for the Aapravasi Ghat because, as explained in the Memorandum of this Amendment Bill, the buffer zones for the Aapravasi will enable the control of development in the region surrounding this location and this monument. Of course, it is necessary to protect and control the development for the building itself, as well as the excavation areas around it that can be revealed and where works have already started. These works are ongoing, and if we just go on the site or if we go even on the website that the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund has established, we can see that a great deal of work is being done in order to promote a wholesome understanding of the whole of the port area and the role which the port area has had during the 19th century.

The analysis of ancient maps and drawings of Trou Fanfaron area in the past centuries have allowed archaeologists to assume that an old dock had an intensive use as a disembarking point for people going to the immigration depot. This as well shows that we have a rich history surrounding the Aapravasi Ghat. Already, excavation works are revealing bits and pieces of British and French period in Mauritius. Walls have been exposed, artefacts discovered, and all these are indeed invaluable wealth for the present and future generations.

This buffer zone, Mr Speaker, Sir, protects this memory, and this memory is one of living testimony of the landing point of many of our forefathers. Yet, a buffer zone, according to the World Heritage Operational Guidelines of 2005 - some may be surprised to know - is not compulsory. It only provides an additional layer of protection to a World Heritage property. In the most current version of the operational guidelines, the inclusion of the buffer zone into a nomination of the site to the World Heritage list is strongly recommended, but not mandatory.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, the gesture of this Government to implement the buffer zone is all the more commendable. It shows the willpower; it shows the will and determination of this Government to protect and give additional protection to our tangible heritage. Here is a step that will enable the zone around the Aapravasi Ghat to be controlled. There is a step that will enable the people of Mauritius and the people of the world to be able to enjoy and learn more about the Aapravasi Ghat when they come to visit it, and as well it will help the future generations in order to be able to know the history and to live that history while going there. Because when you go to the Aapravasi Ghat, Mr Speaker, Sir, you almost feel the presence of our forefathers there; you almost feel the suffering that has taken place there. I think it is an experience that has been lived

by many of us, and even the tourists or the personalities who have visited the Aapravasi Ghat have spoken of this feeling there. The souls of the ancestors are still there, and this is part of a tangible but as well intangible heritage that needs to be preserved at all costs.

You know, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are normally six criteria for a Cultural Heritage site to be listed as a World Heritage by the UNESCO, among which it has to exhibit an important interchange of human values over a span of time within a cultural area of the world on development in architecture or technology, monumental art, town planning or landscape design. It has to bear a unique or exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared. It has to be as well an outstanding example of a type of building or landscape, which illustrate a significant stage in human history, and it also has to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas or with beliefs, with artistic and literally works of outstanding universal significance. The Aapravasi Ghat is one such monument, and this is why this Government today is putting all the efforts possible in order to protect this heritage.

Mr Speaker, Sir, en avril 2008, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund had conducted une étude dans la zone tampon, et c'est intéressant de pouvoir le préciser parce que l'étude dans la zone tampon visait les habitants de la région, et il est bon de noter combien les personnes dans la région sont intéressées par rapport à leur patrimoine. 80% des personnes interrogées, M. le président, étaient favorables déjà aux mesures destinées à réglementer le développement dans la zone tampon ; 87% soutenaient à l'époque l'idée de développer le tourisme culturel dans la zone tampon ; donc reconnaissaient le potentiel culturel et touristique, et bien sûr économique de cette zone, et 85% se disaient en faveur de la préservation des valeurs culturelles et historiques de la zone tampon. Parce que si nous considérons Port Louis en général, M. le président, nous savons qu'il y a des bâtiments, des monuments nationaux, et c'est une zone disons historique en elle-même, et l'Aapravasi Ghat dans cette région est le bijou donné à l'humanité dans cette zone tampon. Poursuivant cette étude, 58,5% estimaient que la zone devait être développée. C'est pour vous dire, M. le président, que tout développement n'était pas exclu de la zone tampon. Mais ce qui intéressait et ce qui préoccupait à l'époque les habitants de la région - et qui je suis pratiquement sûre est toujours la préoccupation actuelle - c'était de préserver la valeur culturelle de cette zone, la valeur culturelle des structures se trouvant dans cette zone et aussi de développer en même temps cette région. C'est pour cela, M. le président, que ce projet de loi, cet

amendement est crucial, parce qu'il permettra au gouvernement de contrôler le développement fait dans la zone tampon, parce que la revalorisation du patrimoine dans les villes, notamment la revalorisation de la zone tampon et par le biais de cela de l'Aapravasi Ghat, amènera une hausse dans les activités touristiques, amènera aussi une réhabilitation des anciens bâtiments. Nous avons entendu le ministre tout à l'heure qui parlait de l'utilisation qui sera faite du dépôt d'immigration pour abriter les archives de Maurice. Autre fait très important, ce projet de loi permettra également le développement d'un environnement économique durable, M. le président. Non seulement la zone tampon contribuera également au prestige de l'image de la ville, mais elle sera aussi une aide, une contribution à la renommée internationale du pays parce que, M. le président, l'Aapravasi Ghat, de par son statut au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO, est devenu maintenant l'héritage mondial, est devenu maintenant *what we call a legacy to mankind, and it is our duty, and we have to use our utmost means towards this goal, meaning to be able to protect that heritage site.*

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.42 p.m.)

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Mr Speaker, Sir, the main object of this piece of legislation in front of us today is to amend the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Bill, in order to enable the Trust Fund to control development within the buffer zones of the Aapravasi Ghat.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are giving means today to that Trust Fund to protect that World Heritage Site. Those buffer zones, Mr Speaker, Sir, are defined in the First Schedule of the Bill, and the hon. Minister has clearly stated in his speech that we had defined the core zone at the time our country had submitted the *dossier* for Aapravasi Ghat for its inscription, but it is later that we started work on the buffer zones. Today, like I said, in the First Schedule of the Bill, we have clearly defined the coordinates of those buffer zones, that is, buffer zone one and buffer zone two, and also there is a plan of those buffer zones.

The boundaries, Mr Speaker, Sir, of the World Heritage Site should be clearly defined and, as I said, in the First Schedule, we have the coordinates of those zones and also the site plan, but, unfortunately, with regard to the site plan, I think we should have been more explicit. When one looks at the definition of the boundaries of the site plan with regard to the coordinates, one

finds that it is clearly specified, but only in the northern and eastern part of the buffer zone, whereas for the western part of that zone, which goes up to the port area and which includes high risk installation like fuel or petroleum storage tanks and power plants, it has not clearly been indicated whether they fall within or outside the buffer zone.

The core zone of Aapravasi Ghat, which is of an extent of 1670 square metres, is the physical structure of the site. Buffer zone one, which is of an extent of 5.52 hectares, extends from the dual carriageway, that is, the M2 motorway up to Trou Fanfaron, and goes on the western side of Port Louis up till, I believe, where we have the Quay D and other infrastructure, whereas the second buffer zone, which is bigger in size, that is, 24.6 hectares, also in the eastern corner, is clearly defined, because it is stated that it goes to Royal Road and Arsenal Street but, again here, the western boundaries are not clearly defined.

It is stated that, in order to give the means to that Trust to be able to control development within those buffer zones, we are going to amend the Local Government Act. I don't know whether it is 1989 or 2003, because the hon. Minister has not stated. It is the Local Government Act of 2003. Before elaborating on these clauses, Mr Speaker, Sir, let us give a definition of those heritage sites. Those sites can be cultural, natural or a mix of both, that is, cultural and natural, and buffer zones are areas created to enhance the protection of the conservation area. As at to date, there are some 911 World Heritage Sites located within 151 State parties, 704 of which are cultural, 180 natural sites, and 27 are mixed properties. These sites naturally include the Aapravasi Ghat and Le Morne Brabant.

We should be proud, Mr Speaker, Sir, as Mauritians, of these two World Heritage Sites. Et quand on a l'occasion de le dire, M. le président, il faut rendre à César ce qui appartient à César. Le *Leader* de l'opposition, dans son intervention, l'a signalé. C'est un gouvernement MMM/MSM, entre 2000 à 2005, qui avait donné les pleins pouvoirs au *Leader* de l'opposition de l'époque de présider un comité, afin d'honorer la mémoire de nos ancêtres, et c'est ce comité qui avait recommandé à ce que le 01 février et le 02 novembre soient décrétés jours fériés dans notre pays, et c'est ce même comité qui avait mis en route ce grand chantier pour l'inscription du Aapravasi Ghat et du Morne Brabant comme patrimoine mondial, M. le président.

We are talking of buffer zones; we are also defining those buffer zones, giving an indication of the extent of those buffer zones. It is good to know that the world largest heritage

area on earth is the Great Barrier Reef of Australia with an area of 348,000 square km, bigger than the UK, Holland, and Switzerland combined together. The smallest World Heritage Area is the Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc, found in the eastern part of Moravia. It takes only two minutes to visit that site, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think earlier on somebody had stated that the exact definition of a buffer zone within a World Heritage Site is an area surrounding the nominated property, where important views and other areas or attributes are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection.

Buffer zones form an integral part of the operational guidelines together with other modules that make the management plan. It was stated that, when we submitted the dossier, it was along with a management plan, which comprised of legislative, regulatory, contractual measures for protection of boundaries. Buffer zones were supposed to be submitted at the time, but we had submitted only the core zone, management system associated with the sites and the sustainable use of the site.

Management plan is an integrated planning of the site. It describes an Action Plan, which lays down the goals and measures for the protection, conservation, use and development of World Heritage Sites. Buffer zones can also be defined as an instrument of protection of a World Heritage Site. This concept of protection of national heritage site by buffer zones was introduced in UNESCO operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. But development outside the buffer zones should also be looked into, as it definitely has an impact on the landscape and panorama of the site.

This is an important consideration, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a buffer zone has two dimensional characters only and, in certain cases, it has proved insufficient means of protection. For example, concerning development outside the protected zone which will affect the panorama of the heritage site, I have in mind, Mr Speaker, Sir, a mega development that is going to take place, that is, the Neotown, with high-rise buildings of 40 storeys, or for that matter can be the Dream Bridge also. I suggest to the Minister that, for such mega projects, the views of the technical committee should be sought at the time the building and development permit for that project will be examined by the Municipality of Port Louis. Why? It has been proved that construction, especially of high-rise buildings outside the actual World Heritage area or adjacent to the buffer zone, can severely detract or even destroy the quality of a World Heritage Site.

Such huge developments can pose a real threat to the visual integrity of a Heritage Sites. It is better that, well in advance, at the time of conception of that development, views, like I said earlier, of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund or of the Municipality of Port Louis, are sought in order to exercise a better control. Even within the buffer zones, drastic measures will have to be taken not to harm, but rather to protect the qualities of that Heritage Site. I especially have in mind the building housing the Post Office, the ex-DWC, or even part of the Port Louis market. They are in such a deplorable state, and I believe action should be taken.

With regard to demolition of old buildings, the Minister has given us the guarantee that amendments will be brought in order to protect those old buildings, and I draw the attention of the House to the fact that we are all aware of the fate of the ex-Merchant Navy Club. A question was put in this House but, unfortunately - I think hon. Dr. Bunwaree replied to that question - we could not save that building, and I understand from hon. Barbier that a modern building is now under construction there.

If I have raised this issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is because that we should not forget the visual relationship that exists between the Aapravasi Ghat and those old buildings. This relationship is completely destroyed or lost when these buildings disappear or are replaced by new high-rise buildings. A question that we should all ask ourselves is: what would be, for example, the appreciation of that Heritage Site by our coming generation if the site is surrounded by only new buildings? Maybe, a solution to these problems - because we cannot prevent development - is to preserve the facade of those old buildings. In doing so, we can also preserve their authenticity, and allow development to be carried out behind those old facades, Mr Speaker, Sir.

At this junction, I am tempted to say what has now become a very famous saying in our country: although in Reunion Island, Mr Speaker, Sir, they do not have the cars that we have here in Mauritius, they have such a legislation to protect their historical monuments. Maybe, we should copy on their legislation in order to allow Government to come forward with a piece of legislation that will help us, first of all, to protect those old buildings and to preserve their visual integrity. We should all agree that it is going to be a very difficult and complex task to implement those planning policy guidelines, to be defined eventually, and to allow certain development within the buffer zone. There is going to be constant pressure on that technical

committee to be set up and, at times, it could be very unbearable for those sitting on that committee.

With the price of square metre for office space in Port Louis and especially within that buffer zone that we have defined, that committee will have to be very careful. A World Heritage Site has both social and spatial dimensions. Like I have said earlier, development around the site can impact on the integrity of the site, but also on its authenticity. Construction activities, investment pressure, traffic problems are causes that can destroy the integrity and authenticity of that site. Like the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said, I think we should have an in-depth look of that committee. It is stated that this committee will be chaired by somebody representing - if I get it right -

“The officer in charge of the Planning Department of the Municipal Council of Port Louis or his representative, as chairperson;”

I would, maybe, suggest that, like in other cases, since we are talking of the World Heritage Site, to have a high level committee to look into those cases of development within the buffer zone and, maybe, in the list of representatives, to include also somebody from the civil society.

With regard to the planning guidelines, the Bill makes mention of the Planning and Development Act of 2004, again, through the piece of legislation voted by the MMM/MSM Government, but which has not been totally proclaimed. Only part of that legislation has been proclaimed. I remember the former Minister of Housing and Lands who had intervened - I cannot recollect when - had stated that Government will review the Planning and Development Act of 2004 and come up with a new piece of legislation. We are working on two pieces of legislation, that is, the Planning and Development Act of 2004, which has not been fully implemented, and also the Local Government Act of 2003, which again has not been fully implemented. I think, at some point in time, especially regarding the Planning and Development Act, government should let us know whether that legislation will be fully implemented or government will come forward with a new piece of legislation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I am going to conclude my speech. But before concluding, I think we all agree on the importance of such a legislation, which will allow us to protect a World Heritage Site that we cherish a lot.

Thank you.

(6.04 p.m.)

Mrs B. Juggoo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Mr Speaker, Sir, the amendment proposed to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act comes at an opportune time. Since UNESCO decreed Le Morne Heritage and the Aapravasi Ghat as a World Heritage, the Aapravasi Ghat, the monument, with its social history duly recognised, has assumed an unprecedented importance, with spill overs on related sites.

Infrastructural development in the mid-20th century has resulted in the survival only the partial remains of the three stone buildings from the entire Aapravasi Ghat complex. These are now protected as a National Monument under the Mauritian National Heritage legislation. Prior to 1986, we failed to appreciate the historical dimension and universal importance of this site, as a result of which some buildings were demolished to make place for other developments - which others have mentioned - and other commercial buildings.

It is precisely such factors that appear to have inspired the decision makers and those closely involved with the management of the Trust Fund, to ensure that further components or buildings in the vicinity, as prescribed by the coordinates, are not lost to the future generation through oversight, in the name of commercial development or other urbanised encroachment. It is absolutely critical that we do not repeat the mistakes which were done in the past.

I would like to, first of all, thank the Minister of Arts and Culture, hon. Choonee, for addressing this issue in time. In the name of development, too often we lose sight of our heritage. This historical, economic, developmental, architectural or cultural dimension of a building is often played down. It is fitting too, to recognise the good work done towards the restoration of this site.

Although much publicised recently, the essence Aapravasi Ghat often goes unnoticed and we lose a part of ourselves, which the amendments are implicitly seeking to preserve. Allow me, therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, to dwell on some of its universal importance of great historical value, which is also a source of justification for the proposed amendment. The Aapravasi Ghat is a building complex conceived to host contracted labour workforce from India, in the aftermath of

the abolition of slavery in 1834, when freed African slave workers refused to supply their labour at the then going price.

In response to a difficult economic context of acute shortage of competitive labour, the British Empire conceived of a plan called ‘The Great Experiment’, to replace the former enslaved Africans with labourers from other parts of the world. The Indian indentured labour system as part of ‘The Great Experiment’ explains an important factor for the universality of the site, since it reflects an economic and administrative system which other colonial powers copied, albeit with less pomp. From 1849 to 1923, half a million Indian indentured labourers passed through the Immigration Depot, to be eventually transported to plantations through the British Empire. Mauritius served as a depot to distribute engaged workers to other islands or even Australia for that matter. It is thus imperative, Mr Speaker, Sir, to protect as much of the vicinity of this site as possible for whatever remains. Never in the history of any other country and in such short time has such a large scale migration of the labourers occurred. The Immigration Depot has, thus, become an important reference point in the history and cultural identity of Mauritius, which explains its universality.

This site was, therefore, an integral part of a broader policy and economic plan, to ensure constant supply of a key commodity to an expanding empire: the supply of labour, which could eventually contribute to one of the biggest Diaspora, the Indian Diaspora, in a short time. Mauritius has been exploited to serve specific needs, and ended up leaving an indelible mark on the societies of many former British colonies.

The indentured system is not a reflection solely of the immigrants from India, but equally from other parts of the world, which transcends...

Mr Speaker: I think the hon. Member will force me to intervene at this stage. We are not debating about the history of indentured labourers. We are debating about the Aapravasi Ghat and the buffer zone. You can make passing remarks, I am not going to prevent you; but if you go deep down the history of indentured labourers, we will never finish.

Mrs Juggoo: Aapravasi Ghat suggests interfacing, which factually reflects the structure position between the land and the sea, and symbolically marked a transition between the old life and the new life for the arriving indentured labourers. It is a sort of abstract implications, reflecting both history and socioeconomic folklore, and mirroring the transition between old

civilization and new civilization that we need to preserve and bequeath as a legacy to our children. It is in such a context that we need to view the amendment, which provides for a buffer zone presumably to prevent unnecessary encroachment.

As I stated above, the demolition of some of the buildings sadly enough represented lost history. A nation who does not know its history loses its greatness and sense of identity, and is like a ship without a rudder. Too often reported, history reproduces one side of the coin, depending on what story one wants to narrate. A monument by contrast is the living memory of what actually happens. Therefore, this new insertion in the legislation is most welcomed. The Technical Committee, comprehensive as it is, can be made to represent a stronger fortress for the preservation of our historical heritage and a part of Port Louis, which has dominated Mauritian life for generations. I believe provision on the Technical Committee should also be made, like others have said, an NGO connected with architectural or environmental studies, and one from the academic world with the architecture, economy and environment studies.

The Principal Act is amended to include related sites, which, therefore, protects Port Louis from further unwarranted encroachment, a very positive step and a laudable initiative of the Minister. The other amendment relates to the ministerial prerogative to make regulations after consultation with the Board. Here, it would be imperative that members of the Board be nominated more on factors of meritocracy, knowledge, both technical and artistic, to ensure that we are able to preserve the legacy created by our forebears.

I would like again to thank the hon. Minister for not forgetting our dear late Bikram Singh Ramlallah. I am glad that he was associated from the beginning with the Aapravasi Ghat, and we are not forgetting him.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(6.13 p.m.)

Mrs P. Bholah (First Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart): Mr Speaker, Sir, the amendments proposed to the existing Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act and the Local Government Act through this Bill comes at the right time, when the Aapravasi Ghat, our national heritage, is being given an international dimension after having been declared a World Heritage Site in July 2006. In fact, the whole process of creating awareness and maintaining the memory of this

Immigration Depot was started by late Bikram Singh Ramlallah. He supported its maintenance through an annual *yaj* on the location to remember the forefathers of many of us here, in this august Assembly. This movement led to the setting up of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund by the Government, which recruited people for the establishment and promotion of the site as a national, regional and international memorial site. For this, we owe late Bikram Singh Ramlallah our tribute. My sincere congratulations also go to those dedicated people who made tremendous efforts in bringing up all archaeological findings, who wrote various reports to substantiate the recommendation and nomination of the Aapravasi Ghat to be listed as one of the World Heritage Sites, and thanks to the unflinching support of our Prime Minister, Dr. the hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, towards the listing of the site as World Heritage Site in 2006.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is now the guardian of such a piece of treasure, and has the responsibility to take care for such a legacy by creating awareness of its importance and significance. The amendments being proposed by the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture - my congratulations to hon. Mookhesswar Choonee and his Ministry - at section 2 of the Principal Act, relates to the setting up of a legal buffer zone, which was not there at the time of its enlistment as a World Heritage Site. The longitude and latitude coordinates of the buffer zones bring the Act in line with the modern electronic way of locating places, in what I would call the Google World Map.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Aapravasi Ghat is the most important surviving manifestation of the indentured labour system from the 19th and 20th centuries. Therefore, it is part of our responsibility towards our future generations that we take certain commitments to conserve, restore and maintain the Aapravasi Ghat property, more so to attract foreign and local visitors. The setting out of planning policy guidance with regard to any development in the buffer zone is very crucial in controlling the type and size of any development that any individual or society or corporate body may intend to set up. This guidance shall not be only for further development, but also for any changes or demolition that may be carried out within the limits of the buffer zones.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as new developments are concerned, it is vital -

first, not to obstruct the visibility of the Aapravasi Ghat monument from any angle nor to obstruct the passage where our forefathers laid their first steps before being brought to the

inner part of the country, which was destined to become what is now known as Mauritius, the paradise island;

secondly, not to erect or construct any building or structure on the way to this Site, as delimited by the buffer zones shown on the maps, and

thirdly, where development is permitted, it is important not to allow any such construction that will not be in harmony with the architecture and landscape of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the amendment to the Local Government Act is also being proposed for the setting up of a Technical Committee at the Municipality of Port Louis for the implementation of the planning policy guidance. It is necessary that each member of this Technical Committee has at heart the values that the Aapravasi Ghat represents for Mauritius as a World Heritage Site, whether he is from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and National Development Unit, the National Heritage Trust Fund, the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development or from any of those Departments having their membership in this committee. Each member of the committee shall need to have a thorough knowledge of the planning guidance for the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site for the protection of the vestige, which remains the remembrance of the arrival of our ancestors through this Immigration Depot. We may all remember that this place is known as *'Immigration'*.

The committee will scrutinize each application for a development in the permitted buffer zone, in accordance with the established norms, namely that of architecture, which will have to harmonise with the existing architectural values of the Aapravasi Ghat, that the design and quality of material to be used so as to match the landscape and the stone steps which received the first footing of our forefathers, and that the location and distance of any new development so as not to obstruct the site from any angle, be it from the seaward side or from the city side.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is imperative that all prospective developers within the buffer zones of the Aapravasi Ghat property undertake a cultural impact assessment and a visual impact assessment in line with the planning policy guidelines, in order to sustain the historical value of the memorial site and, therefore, enhance the prospects of cultural tourism in our country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with these remarks, I make a plea that the amendment Bill be agreed upon by this House.

Thank you.

(6.20 p.m.)

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Speaker, Sir, as stated by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and my colleague, hon. Lesjongard, on this side of the House, we support this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with this amendment, we are climbing up a new step in terms of taking further commitments of this generation to preserve this site and, thus, fully expressing our *devoir de mémoire*. I would not be long on the site itself. The site is definitely an important tangible testimony of the people of Mauritius. After its closure, I gather that the site was converted into offices for the Ministry of Social Security. At a period of time, in the Second World War, the War Department used that site. In 1950, again according to records, the Public Assistance Department was established at the Aapravasi Ghat as the Immigration Records Office, where all records were kept. In 1960, with the cyclone Carol, the site suffered major damages and even the Archives Department had to be transferred to safer places.

Mr Speaker, Sir, only few structures have survived to this day, since much of the site was destroyed, as stated by hon. Bérenger, when the motorway was constructed. In 1987, the historical importance of the Immigration Depot was recognised by the Government, and it was declared a national monument after its renovation in 1996.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it was as from year 2000 that a new impetus was given to the whole project of Aapravasi Ghat. I was very lucky to form part of the several committees as the then Minister of Environment, to have a new thinking of what to be done with the Aapravasi Ghat. The then Government set up two Ministerial Committees, which were chaired by the then Deputy Prime Minister, who is now the Leader of the Opposition. The first one composed of historians and was chaired, as I said, by the present Leader of the Opposition, to suggest how best Mauritius could commemorate the arrival of the indentured labourers and the end of the indentured labour system. It was that committee which recommended that 02 November be proclaimed a public holiday in memory of the arrival of the first indentured labourers, who came

to Mauritius on that date in 1834 on board the 'Atlas'. Government also approved this recommendation and that of 01 February for the abolition of slavery. Mr Speaker, Sir, 02 November, 01 February and 12 March have become the three most important dates for the commemoration of our Mauritian history.

The second Ministerial Committee, also chaired by hon. Bérenger, was entrusted with the responsibility of charting the roadmap for the development of this historical site while preserving its authenticity. As from February 2001 up to the presentation of the Bill in the House, we met for around 15 times, with all the relevant staff of the MGI and of the different Ministries, to thrash out all the related issues. The final outcome was the adoption of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund Act in 2001. This led to the implementation of a project to excavate, conserve and restore the Aapravasi Ghat site. There were conservation professionals who came from India, from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). Through our bilateral relation with the Government of India, we had the support of these professionals to come and supervise the restoration and conservation of the site. We are very thankful to them. The conservation project's goal is to restore the site to its original condition by using the same kind of materials and construction methods used when the structure was built in the mid of the 19th century.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it was not an easy task, and several Ministries were involved. We must be proud of this achievement. All this, Sir, followed in the trend and paved the way for the submission of our dossier to UNESCO for the Aapravasi Ghat to be nominated as a World Heritage Site, which makes all of us proud. The unique peopling history of our country was thus recognised through this inscription.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am a bit worried. It is a site which we have to preserve. This morning, Sir, I have laid on the Table of the Assembly some photographs which I had taken; it is surrounded by eyesores. I will come into the technical details, and I am tabling for the Minister because his officers do not have time to go and see what is happening around the site. On the site itself at the Aapravasi Ghat, we have VVIPs coming. I am sure that we will be having the President of Singapore coming; we had the President from the Republic of India. All our dignitaries who come to Mauritius go and visit this site. When you see the state of the traffic centre opposite, it is a shame to Mauritius itself! The site is badly maintained, and is an eyesore. We are receiving guests on the other side of the road, and we see what is happening on the

opposite, next to the post office building! I think that, while at the same time we are making speeches, amending the legislation, we have to see on the site, not only the building of the Aapravasi Ghat but also all the surroundings of this site and the way that it is. We have made lots of efforts to preserve the site as it is and come with further investment as far as the preservation is concerned, but the surroundings *laisse à désirer, et cela fait honte à l'île Maurice surtout lorsque nous avons des étrangers qui viennent.*

M. le président, je voudrais venir sur certains points techniques. I understand that the Trust Fund has to strictly adhere to the operational guidelines of the UNESCO for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. One of the guidelines refers, understandably, to the setting up of buffer zones, as stated by several Members before me, around the site. According to the UNESCO website, the area of the Aapravasi Ghat is 0.16 hectare, and the buffer zone is 29 hectares. The objective of this amendment to the Trust Fund Act is to enable the control of development in the buffer zones. The amendment refers to an extent of 5.52 hectares in zone 1, and an extent of 24.6 hectares in zone 2, that is, a total of 30.12 hectares.

I have not seen, unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, the recommendations of the UNESCO in regard to the control of development in the buffer zone and the *cahier des charges*. What I understand is that development in the buffer zone will be governed specifically by Planning Policy Guidances PPG 6 - Urban Heritage Area - buffer zones of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property. This document, Mr Speaker, Sir, as I understand, has not yet been gazetted and is not yet available for consultation. This is what I gathered from the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Mr Speaker, Sir, nobody can be against when we are talking about a World Heritage Site, about the creation of a buffer zone, but we must know what it is about, what kind of demolition, development, what will be permitted and what won't be permitted, and what are the properties which are likely to be affected. The amendment provides, as stated before by certain hon. Members, the hon. Leader of Opposition and my friend, hon. Lesjongard, that all the applications for development or for whatever future development will have to go to the Technical Committee chaired by the Planning Department of the Municipality of Port Louis, which is the only member of the local authority; the other members being five from the Ministries, and there is no precision with regard to the status. We know - we have been in government - how, sometimes, the Chief

Executive or Permanent Secretary delegate their officers. I think that, for such an important Technical Committee, we have to specify the status. Without downgrading an administrative officer, a clerical officer, a PS can delegate any officer to that committee. The hon. Minister must come and put it in the legislation. It should be a high-ranking officer of technical background, having knowledge in environment matters or other technical matters.

Concerning the Mauritius Ports Authority, there also, it should not be anybody and, for God sake, not the Chairperson of the Mauritius Ports Authority! We know whom I am talking about! As it is, he may be interested to go and sit in that committee. Also, we have the persons of the National Heritage Trust and Aapravasi Trust Fund. This is where the Minister must come and bring amendments to the committee. It is important to know the status of those who are sitting on that committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have also to be careful, as I have stated, on the composition of the Technical Committee which is expected to submit its recommendations to the Permit and Business Monitoring Committee of the local authority. If the Technical Committee does its work, makes its recommendations in such a way that it is not within the objectives of the preservation of the site, then the Monitoring Committee of the local authority can sanction that wrong decision.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to realise that almost half of the proposed buffer zone do represent the core of the central business district of the capital; some 12 hectares of priceless land from Place d'Armes to Arsenal Street, that is, including Sir William Newton, Louis Pasteur and the Central Market area, the heart of Port Louis. According to real estate experts - not the Chief Government Valuer - the price of land in this region is not less than half a million per metre square. One can just imagine the pressure on these scarce lands. There should, therefore, be clear and transparent guidelines on what is permitted, in order to avoid any mishandling on eventual applications for development. I don't know whether these guidelines will cause any prejudice to the existing owners or whether this will entail the payment of any compensation whatsoever. We must have experts sitting on this Monitoring Committee of the local authority.

My last point, Mr Speaker, Sir, relates to the danger coming from the seafront. I have stated the eyesores and the problems on land. According to the report prepared by the Second

National Communication of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations Frameworks Convention of Climate Change, I quote -

“On the basis of reconstructed tide gauge data for the period 1950-2001 and complementary Topex and all the data, the cumulative sea level in the SWIO has risen on average by 7.8 cm at Port Louis and 6.7 cm at Rodrigues.”

There has been that sea level rise.

“Analysis of datasets from the tide gauge sited at Port Louis indicates an average rise of 3.2 cm over the 1988-2007 period. Thus, the rate of rise of the past 20 years since 1988 exceeds that observed since 1950.”

This is the point about the sea level rise. What is happening on the other side of the site is also a matter of concern, and should be taken care not only by the Technical Committee but also by the people sitting on the Board of the National Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund. We are talking about climate change. We are having water scarcity. We don't know what might happen. I am not saying Tsunami, but anything can happen with the problem of climate change, due to the sea level rise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure there is unanimity in the House on what we are being asked to vote today. But the hon. Minister has the responsibility to see to it that we put the right person in the right place, that this Technical Committee be chaired by competent, honest people. Also the hon. Minister of Local Government has his responsibility, as we are talking about local government, the Municipality of Port Louis. His Ministry should see to it at the level of the Municipality of Port Louis that we have the right person, the right technicians, and honest people dealing with the recommendation.

This is what I had to say, Mr Speaker, Sir. We wish good luck to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund. We hope that we proceed further. The Aapravasi Ghat, like Le Morne, which is our *fierté nationale*, should further progress. *C'est notre image au niveau international.*

Je fais un appel au ministre - s'il veut se faire accompagner par la MBC - d'aller voir ce qui se passe à l'extérieur du site d'Aapravasi Ghat.

Merci beaucoup, M. le président.

(6.38 p.m.)

Mr M. Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I would like to thank hon. Members on both sides of the House for their positive comments on the amendment being brought to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund.

I have taken note of almost all the points raised, and definitely we will consider the points that have been put forward. However, I would like just to clarify certain points concerning what the hon. Leader of Opposition said about Calcutta, the danger list and delisting of our sites. We have been lucky, Mr Speaker, Sir, that Mauritius has set the right example.

The Aapravasi Ghat was considered very positively by the World Heritage Centre and by the committee that sits there. They have congratulated Mauritius for being on time with all the requirements that were expected from the World Heritage Centre. The hon. Leader of the Opposition is right when he says that we have had some of our friendly neighbours who went through very hard times. Some of them not only have had the World Heritage Sites endangered, but delisted, and I understand that the former Minister, hon. Lesjongard, mentioned how many endangered World Sites are running that risk.

Concerning Calcutta, I am very happy to learn that the Leader of the Opposition was very keen to go Calcutta, but he has never seen the site. It is good, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I point out that my former position allowed me to deal with the Indian Government personally. I was in a position where I told the Indians straightaway that if the port of arrival can be declared a World Heritage Site, what about the port of departure. I kept the pressure up, and not only me. I had the support of some other High Commissioners and Ambassadors of Fiji, Trinidad, Tobago, Surinam and Guyana. We kept the pressure up. Those days, the 'Culture Department' was under the purview of the Prime Minister of India. The strong man there was the Secretary of Culture, and luckily he was from Calcutta. He was so emotionally moved when I informed him about the port of departure. Luckily, the Indian Government, through the Ministry of Overseas and Indian Affairs and, of course, the Minister now responsible for culture, looked into the matter. And, today, we have a monument erected; that was unveiled on 10 January this year by the Indian Government. This confirms that they recognise that the port is the site from where indentured labourers departed. The particular site of the Mauritian indentured labourers is the Bhawanipur Depot - Bhawanipur Depot is now considered to be the site from where our ancestors departed, and definitely some more development will follow on that site. That's about

the Calcutta and Bhawanipur Depot. As far as what hon. Lesjongard pointed out about no western boundary in all that I have defined about the coordinates of the site, the western boundary is the sea. So, I go according to what is provided to us, because we cannot define exactly the points on the western boundary. Further, a point was raised when mention was made that the Neotown building will be a 40-storeyed building, and it is in the port area. That is very true, but it is outside the buffer zone; very much out of the buffer zone. Actually, I believe that Neotown would give a bird's eye view proper to the World Heritage Site. That would give us the best view, and even the harbour bridge will again be away from the buffer zones and, in no way, will these developments affect either the core zone or the buffer zones we have defined by law.

Mr Speaker, Sir, mention was also made about a member of public, a member of the civil society to sit on the Technical Committee. The moment we call it a Technical Committee it is a committee of experts. Definitely, we need to have faith, trust in the different Ministries, the heads of different departments, Permanent Secretaries who will delegate their members to those committees. The fact that I have somebody from the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, the National Heritage Trust Fund, I believe they have the capacity, the technical know-how to come and sit and judge. But, however, if an *ad hoc* Committee has to be put up, I don't find any problem with the Technical Committee coming up with an *ad hoc* Committee with the civil society being represented.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to some of the points raised by hon. Bhagwan, I will just like to say that a management plan is being prepared to develop the area. Further mention was made that it was not gazetted; definitely, it cannot be gazetted until and unless we bring in the amendments through this legislation. Once the amendments are brought, the PPG will be issued and, of course, it will be gazetted. Further, he mentioned about the Technical Committee and Council Members, and here again I would like to point out that we trust the officers, and I rely on the good faith and the knowledge of the members of the committee for the work to go on in the most professional and transparent manner.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would just like to conclude by saying that the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site is strategically located. Being adjacent to the Caudan Port Louis Waterfront and at the centre of the City of Port Louis, where the buffer zones are situated, right in the middle of the

city centre itself, this part of Port Louis can be transformed to attract and provide entertainment to Mauritians as well as tourists, not only during day time, but also at night.

Mr Speaker: The Minister has already said that in the Second Reading.

Mr Choonee: The actions taken by Mauritius to preserve and protect the Aapravasi Ghat and its buffer zones will be considered at the 35th meeting of the World Heritage Committee Meeting scheduled to be held in Paris from 19 to 29 June 2011. The World Heritage Committee will be apprised of the passing of this legislation well before the meeting, so that it may take an informed decision on the Aapravasi Ghat.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property belongs not only to Mauritius, but to humanity at large. We are, therefore, duty bound to preserve and protect this prestigious site and its buffer zones for posterity.

Our efforts to preserve the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property and its buffer zones will transform this part of Port Louis in a lively cultural hub and a high tourist destination of which all Mauritians will be proud.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend this Bill to the House, and I thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. VIII of 2011) was considered and agreed to.

On resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. VIII of 2011) was read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Ag. Prime Minister: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 31 May 2011 at 11.30 a.m.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTER RAISED**CITE LA CURE INHABITANTS - RELOCATION - KARO KALIPTIS**

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank you for allowing me to raise a specific matter at adjournment. This specific matter concerns the Minister of Housing and Lands, and is in regard to the relocation of the inhabitants of Cité la Cure, behind the NHDC complex, to Karo Kaliptis, Batterie Cassée.

It concerns some 39 families, and the issue has been raised in this House through several PQs, which have been addressed to the Minister of Housing and Lands. These families are very poor; some of them are single women with under aged children and living in difficult conditions, and they mostly belong to the Creole community. They were allocated a plot of land by the Government; some of them in 2004, others in 2005 and 2006, after having been squatters in different regions of Port Louis. The approval granted was to expire in 2060, with an annual rental fixed at Rs300 for period ending 2010 and a 50% increase for each and every subsequent 10-year period, subject to some special conditions. Amongst the conditions laid down, they had to pay a survey fee of Rs600, and to vacate the State land they were occupying as squatters. A drawing of lots was carried out, and the families started occupying their respective lots.

The first batch of families received their letters granting the lease on 01 April 2004, a second batch on 31 August 2005 and so on. Those who obtained their leases in 2004 proceeded to the concerned Utilities to make applications for electricity and water supply, and subsequently were connected to the electricity and water networks. For the second batch, they filed in their applications in August 2005. Until today, these families have been staying without water and electricity supply, and they do not know the reason for this refusal. I had put a first question to

the then Minister of Housing and Lands in 2006 concerning the situation of those families and, in his reply, he had stated, and I quote -

“I am advised that the issue of the provision of services was not addressed at that material time. The services included electricity, water, wastewater disposal. Since it took over in July 2005, this government, in line with its prime commitment of putting people first, reviewed with sympathy the case of the regularised squatters with a view to seriously looking - in consultation with the concerned service-providers namely CEB, CWA and WMA - into the provision of such services. The caring search for those services will inevitably need to take into consideration all infrastructural costs, and the ready availability of funds.”

After that, several questions followed on the same issue. My first question to the hon. Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is: why, back in 2005, those families, for the least, *en bonne et due forme*, were refused to be connected to the electricity and water networks? On 25 April 2008, all those families received a letter from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, informing them of their relocation to another plot of land situated at Batterie Cassée, without mentioning that it was Karo Kaliptis, the reason for this relocation being that the land where they are is prone to flooding, as it is near Rivière Lataniers. Maybe, we should ask when the Ministry came to know that the plots are close to Rivière Lataniers and prone to flooding.

One of the conditions laid down in the letter addressed to them in August 2005 was that they had to pay Rs600 for the site to be surveyed. If they were granted that lease, it means that they had paid the Rs600 for the survey to be carried out. So, we should all come to the conclusion that officers of that Ministry did carry out a thorough survey in 2005 before land allocation was done.

Then, my second question to the hon. Minister is: why is it that it was only in 2008 that the Ministry found out that the plots were close to Rivière Lataniers, that is, three years later, when they had been submitted in August 2005? In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the lots concerning those families are far from the river.

Concerning the first letter sent to those families and dated 25 April 2008, no action was taken by government. Replying to a question put by hon. Mrs Perraud in this House, addressed

to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, this is the reply which was given, and I quote -

“Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that government has approved the relocation of 39 families presently living at Cité La Cure to a new site at Batterie Cassée, out of whom only 21 responded to the drawing of lots regarding their relocation. However, as the relocation process has taken longer because of the court case regarding the ownership of the site, the CEB is considering the supply of electricity to them on humanitarian grounds pending their relocation. I am informed that the CEB has met the families to discuss about an arrangement for the extension of electricity to them. Works will be completed within the coming months.”

Until today, Mr Speaker, Sir, they have not been connected to the CEB network, although hon. Xavier Duval promised them, during a visit there on 17 December 2010, that they would get electricity supply before Christmas. These families are still in the dark, and we cannot accept that.

My third question is: why did Government promise to those families that they will get their electricity supply? *Le comble, M. le président*, is that one of the children there has - through drawing of lots - obtained a laptop from the Ministry of Social Integration, and there is no electricity at his place. On the eve of the General Elections of 2010, some fortunate families living adjacent to the 39 families were relocated on another plot of land on the other side of the road, which I consider as flood prone, and just a few days before the General Elections, they were supplied with electricity. Can we imagine such a situation of discrimination? As the saying goes, some of equal but some are more equal than others. Two years have passed by since government has written to them regarding their relocation. On 25 April 2011, they received another letter, informing them that they are going to be relocated and, this time, government mentions Karo Kaliptis, Batterie Cassée, Roche Bois.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how many of us have ever been inside that area called Karo Kaliptis? It is a no man's land. Not even the police can go there. There is no waste collection; that area smells; it is a hideout for criminals and drug peddlers. We had done a marvellous job when we were in power. We had moved out some 150 families who were living in that area. Now, government wants to relocate those families there. This is not possible. I have met those

families, and they are scared to move there; scared for their security and the security of their children. I do not follow what government wants to achieve by that relocation. Even the *Forces Vives* of Batterie Cassée do not want those families to settle there. They want that place to have sports facilities, as promised by government.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Lesjongard: In that letter of April 2011, government has attached new conditions for their relocation. The rent has been increased to Rs400. A survey fee will have to be paid again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Government is asking those families to dismantle their CIS houses. It seems that officers of that Ministry have not been there for quite some time. Do you know that some of those poor families have built small concrete houses?

My last question to the Minister is: will you pay compensation for those concrete houses if ever those families have to be relocated, as no mention of that is made in your letter?

These families are against their relocation and have decided not to move. They have already notified the Ministry of Housing and Lands. This is a case which seems to have been treated *avec beaucoup de légèreté* at the level of the Ministry of Housing and Lands. These families feel that they have been discriminated. Through this specific matter, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will appeal and urge government to take care in dealing with this problem, and find an acceptable solution by all parties.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sorry to say that the hon. Member is not telling what the facts are. He has been creating troubles there, because he has been telling them...

(Interruptions)

These people have written long letters saying that they have been informed...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, please! Please!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. The Minister is imputing motives. I have been very clear in what I have said.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister must not impute motives.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I met these people because they had written letters. They did not want to move and were misled by I don't know whom that government was moving people from the bank of River Lataniers to take them to Karo Kaliptis, in order to have other people from other parts of Port Louis to go there. These people were genuine people; they had written to the Prime Minister and to me. I arranged for a meeting twice, but they did not come. I insisted on that, and eventually they came; they were marvellous people, and they didn't realise the danger they were facing. Of course, in 2005, we didn't know that we were going to have so much flooding.

Following the flooding during cyclone Lola, there was a committee, presided by Judge Domah, and they were advised by technical people to move people from this region, because they went and visited it everywhere. It was the duty of government to move these people there, because we didn't want to have another flood and people being carried away, because then we would be blamed for killing people. This government is not prepared to sacrifice people. It is under these conditions that the government and Cabinet took decision to move these people. Eventually, I met these people, and there was a pastor who came with them. In fact, they thanked government when I received them. They were totally misled; they didn't realise that. Maybe, some people are scared to go to Batterie Cassée. Some people even went and claimed the land that they said belonged to them. We had to go to the State Law Office because *nous sommes dans un État de droit*, and the State Law Office eventually gave us green-light to take this land. We had 35 lots and, as I said, 39 were granted in August 2005, but at the time when this was done, they didn't realise that the land was flood-prone.

A recent survey carried out at Cité La Cure has revealed that only 18 out of the 39 families are in occupation of their lots. According to information gathered on site, the remaining 21 families are living at their relatives' places. The survey also revealed that all the families are of low income group and, therefore, are quite poor. The 18 families on site have corrugated iron sheet houses and are not connected to electricity for the obvious reason that we could not allow to give them at that time because of the danger. It is also to be noted that 10 of the 18 families

received assistance from the then Trust Fund for Social Integration, now the National Empowerment Foundation.

In April 2011, letters of intent were issued to 35 families, allocating a building site lease to each of them on the site of Karo Kaliptis, Batterie Cassée. The remaining four families will receive their letters shortly.

On 18 May, the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment had been apprised of the grant of the building site leases to the five families - and they were with me when I met all of them - with all the facilities provided in a safe and secure place, and they will not be subjected to flooding.

This government is investing heavily, especially for the poor people in this country. We are not going to do politicking on the head of these poor people; we are going to do what we have to do, and we will do it in a proper way without resorting to mere politicking.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since my name has been mentioned, I would like just to make a point clearer to the hon. Member, if I may.

The Deputy Speaker: In fact, the matter was addressed to the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands, but if the hon. Minister wishes to make a point of personal explanation, this is another matter.

Mr Duval: If there is no objection, I can bring some light to what has been said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: On a point of personal explanation.

Mr Duval: Yes, thank you. Mr Deputy Speaker, in fact, I am very proud of what we have done in the region of Cité La Cure, and if we take that particular region, very next door to the site mentioned...

The Deputy Speaker: Please! If the hon. Minister wants to make a point of personal explanation, it is all right, but the matter has been raised to the Minister of Housing and Lands and he has replied to it.

Mr Duval: All right! It is the same.

At 7.07 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 31 May 2011 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ENTERPRISES - PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES - EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/395) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the project with the object of encouraging enterprises to employ persons with physical disabilities, she will state the number of enterprises which have employed these persons, as at to date, indicating the -

- (a) number thereof having been employed, and
- (b) types of jobs that these persons have secured.

Reply: Since the beginning of my mandate, I placed the issue of training and employment of persons with disabilities as one of my priorities.

As a first step, a MoU was signed on 28 July 2010 between the MEF and the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, thereby the MEF agreed to provide training to persons with disabilities with a view to enhancing their employment prospects. On that occasion, a Guide for Employers on the recruitment of persons with disabilities was launched.

In August 2010, a workshop was held with Parastatal Bodies and government companies to stress the need for these organisations to set the example by recruiting persons with disabilities in their workforce, as stipulated in the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act.

In November last, my Ministry organised an *Espace Rencontre* between employers and persons with disabilities. Some 50 enterprises attended the function.

As a result of this initiative, 50 persons with disabilities have been recruited in a panoply of jobs, such as telephonists/receptionists, data entry operators, customer service agents in call centres, accounts officers, bank clerks, graphic designer, sales assistants, software engineer, hospitality workers, factory workers and unskilled workers.

It must be underlined that the response from Parastatal Bodies and government companies has been in general more positive than that of private enterprises.

Subsequently, my Ministry has set up a joint committee with the MEF to amend the provisions of the TEDPB Act 1996, so as to ensure strict compliance with section 13, which imposes obligation on employers to employ persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, the National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (NCRD) will soon be launching a training programme in Mauritian Sign Language (MSL) for the benefit of staff of companies who have shown an interest in the recruitment of persons with hearing impairment.

It is a fact that the initiatives mentioned will further enhance the prospects of employment of disabled on the labour market.

CANE DEMOCRATISATION FUND - SETTING UP

(No. B/396) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the project for the setting up of the Cane Democratisation Fund, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY - MR D. W. - FOREIGN CONSULTANT

(No. B/397) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Foreign Consultant, Mr D. W., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to -

- (a) if the Authority is still retaining his services and, if not, the reasons why he has left;
- (b) when his services were retained and in what capacity, and
- (c) if he has taken cognizance of the fact that Mr D. W. has recently denounced any case of malpractice or corruption at the Authority to any international donor or authority.

Reply: I am advised that Mr G. D. of Belgian nationality was appointed Project Director on a three year contract ending on 20 August 2010. His contract was renewed for a period of six

months ending 20 February 2011, and since then he has been on a month to month contract up till 26 April 2011.

With respect to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the WMA Board, acting in accordance with the powers vested in it by the Wastewater Management Authority Act, terminated the contract of employment on 26 April 2011 with immediate effect. The ground of the termination was breach of the confidentiality and loyalty clause of his contract.

As regard part (c), I am not aware whether Mr Dewit has denounced any case of malpractice or corruption at the Authority to any international donor agency or authority.

SURROGACY AND IN-VITRO FERTILISATION - LEGISLATION

(No. B/398) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to surrogacy and in-vitro fertilisation, she will state if Government proposes to come up with any legislation to govern same.

Reply: The House will recall that, in my reply to PQ/B 177 on 12 April 2011, I stated that a draft Bill on In-Vitro Fertilisation was under preparation. However, given that it is a very sensitive issue having moral and ethical implications, I also said that there will be wide consultations on this piece of legislation before it is presented to Parliament.

VICTORIA HOSPITAL - RADIOTHERAPY/CANCER UNIT

(No. B/399) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Radiotherapy/Cancer Unit at the Victoria Hospital, she will state if there is any project for the upgrading of the inpatient and outpatient facilities in connection therewith and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY - CANTEEN

(No. B/400) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the University of Technology, he will state if he has taken cognizance of the representations made concerning the canteen in relation to the hygiene conditions prevailing thereat and of the food prices and, if so, the actions taken, if any.

Reply: I am informed that, following representations made by students of the University of Technology, Mauritius on hygienic conditions at the canteen, the Health Inspectorate of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life inspected the canteen in 2009, 2010 and 2011. The last two visits were made on 08 December 2010 and 09 May 2011 on the request of the University of Technology, Mauritius.

Following the visits of the Health Inspectorate in October and December 2010, recommendations for improvement have been made to the caterer and improvements made.

The report of the visit made on 09 May 2011 is awaited, and I have requested the University of Technology, Mauritius, to monitor the situation closely to bring further improvements.

As regards food prices, I am informed that no representations have been received.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE - PROJECT PLAN COMMITTEE

(No. B/401) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Project Plan Committee, he will state -

- (a) when it was set up;
- (b) the terms of reference thereof;
- (c) the composition thereof;
- (d) the projects which have been considered and recommended, in the second half of 2010, mainly in relation to the construction of new buildings and the acquisition of existing buildings, indicating in each case -
 - (i) when decision was taken, and
 - (ii) the budget amount recommended, and
- (e) if the acquisition of the Med Point Clinic was channelled through the Committee, prior to the purchase thereof and, if so -
 - (i) when, and
 - (ii) table minutes of the Committee in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS SWIMMING FEDERATION - RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. B/402) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritian swimmers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Swimming Federation, information as to the -

- (a) last ranking thereof on the International Pointing System (IPS), and
- (b) recommendations made by the Technical Committee of the federation concerning their participation in the forthcoming World Championship to be held in Shanghai, giving a list of the selected ones therefor and their respective IPS ranking.

(Withdrawn)

MINISTRY OF YOUTH & SPORTS - SPORTS COACHES

(No. B/403) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the sports coaches of his Ministry, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case -

- (a) their date of appointment;
- (b) the sport discipline to which they are attached, and
- (c) their respective job description.

(Withdrawn)

GAMBLING REGULATORY AUTHORITY - ELECTRONIC MONITORING SYSTEM & HORSE RACING SOFTWARE

(No. B/404) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the electronic monitoring system and a horse racing software for the Gambling Regulatory Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to -

- (a) the name of the consultancy firm which prepared the specifications and the amount paid for services provided;
- (b) if a letter of award was issued to ABA Software Ltd. And, if so, indicate the date thereof;
- (c) if compensation has been paid to the Consultant and ABA Software Ltd., and
- (d) if ABA Software submitted its bid as a consortium, and the name of its local partner or representative.

Reply: I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority as follows -

Following a tendering exercise the services of Pricewaterhouse Coopers Ltd were retained as Project Consultant in connection with the Standard Horse Racing Bookmakers software linked to a Central Electronic Monitoring System project at an agreed price of Rs4 m. A total amount of Rs3.2 m. has been paid for services provided.

No "letter of award" has been issued to ABA Software Ltd.

The payment of compensation to ABA Software Ltd did not therefore arise. As regards the Consultant, on termination of his contract, an amount of Rs600,000 was settled after negotiations.

ABA Software Ltd is a one person private company incorporated in Mauritius which entered into a joint venture agreement with A Bet A Technology Ltd, a company incorporated in England and whose office is at Lenten Street, Alton, Hampshire, England.

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS - EXPELLED STUDENTS

(No. B/405) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the primary and secondary schools, he will state if any student thereof has been expelled therefrom, since the beginning of the academic year and, if so, will he give the reasons therefor, in each case.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/383)

GAMBLING REGULATORY AUTHORITY - NATIONAL LOTTERY - LICENCE

(No. B/406) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the National Lottery, he will, for the, benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the number of games that its present licence authorises it to operate, indicating the -

- (a) games which it is presently operating, and
- (b) revenue generated by each game, on a monthly basis, since their coming into operation to date.

(Withdrawn)

**PUBLIC BEACHES - COLPORTEURS/CANVASSEURS/BEACH HAWKERS -
ACTIVITIES**

(No. B/407) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to *colporteurs/canvasseurs*/beach hawkers presently operating on the public beaches and in front of the hotels, he will state if Government proposes to amend the legislation in relation to their activities, including making specific provision for the respective activities of the *colporteurs* selling excursions/tours to tourists and of the boat owners.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the activities of *colporteurs*/beach hawkers on public beaches are governed by the Beach Authority.

Insofar as beach hawkers, whose activities are specific to hawking in front of hotels are concerned, my Ministry has recently engaged in discussions with AHRIM in order to provide them with the necessary amenities such as fixed structures, in order to enable them to carry out their activities in the best possible conditions. Moreover, discussions are also ongoing to provide them with appropriate training, in order to enable them to be more professional in their dealings with tourists.

As regards canvassers, I am made to understand that the hon. Member is referring to canvassers who act as liaison between the tourists and the pleasure craft owners against payment of a fee. There are presently around 300 operating around the island.

However, over the years, a number of complaints have been received from tourists with respect to their conduct and behaviour, which is often qualified as unprofessional by tourists themselves. They harass tourists and even exploit the service providers. For example, money is taken in advance from tourists for excursions and the canvassers, thereafter, never turn up to arrange for the excursions. Furthermore, it has also been reported that some canvassers charge tourists exorbitant prices for the tours and excursions but however, pay a minimum fee to the service providers.

I would like to point out that the canvassers have not been issued with a licence. They were, however, given an 'attestation' to carry out their activities. The 'attestations' have not been renewed on expiry.

In view of the representations which we have received regarding the activities of the canvassers, my Ministry is presently contemplating the possibility of abolishing such activities and offering those who are already carrying out this activity an alternative trading permit to carry out a tourism-related activity such as beach hawker, pleasure craft owner or tour operator licence.

The House will recall that, in the reply I made to PQ No. B/250 and PQ No. B/256 on 19 April 2011, I stated that canvassers on Ile aux Cerfs will be offered the possibility of carrying out an alternative activity so that they can earn their living. Their requests for a licence are currently being processed. This measure is presently being extended to other canvassers across the island and, if need be, appropriate amendments will be brought to the relevant legislation.

Meanwhile, the National Coast Guard and the hotel owners have been requested to let them continue their operations pending the finalisation of their applications.

RICHE TERRE - SEWERAGE NETWORK

(No. B/408) Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the region of Riche Terre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to if there is any sewerage network project therefor.

(Withdrawn)

CRÈVE COEUR - BUS TERMINAL

(No. B/409) Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a bus terminal at Crève Coeur, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

LONG MOUNTAIN VILLAGE HALL - ACTIVITIES

(No. B/410) Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Long Mountain Village Hall, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart District Council, information as to -

- (a) the activities that have been held thereat, since 2008 to date;
- (b) if the conditions of the building and of the equipment thereat are up to the standard and, if not, the remedial measures that will be taken.

(Withdrawn)

MUNICIPAL COUNCILS - AUDITS

(No. B/411) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Audit Squad of his Ministry, he will state if it has carried out regular audits of the different funds of the Municipal Councils of Curepipe, Vacoas/Phoenix, Quatre Bornes, Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and Port Louis, since 2005 to-date and, if so, the outcome thereof, in each case.

Reply: There is an Audit Squad in my Ministry which was set up to look into matters pertaining only to auditing of the various departments of the Ministry. Each local authority has its own internal audit system, and the reports are made available regularly to the National Audit Office for scrutiny.

Given that the financial accounts of all local authorities are duly audited by the National Audit Office, I do not see the need for yet another organisation to audit these accounts, as this will entail a duplication and wastage of resources.

CITE CIRCONSTANCE, ST PIERRE - DRAIN

(No. B/412) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether his Ministry has received representations from the inhabitants of Cité Circonstance, St Pierre, in regard to the overflow of the drain commonly known as “Canal Ravin” at every rainfall, thus causing water to penetrate in almost all the houses found along the drain and if so, will he state the remedial measures that have been taken, if any.

Reply: I am informed that the “*Groupe Actif Circonstance*” of St. Pierre sent a petition dated 28 Mars 2011 informing of the problem of flooding due to overflow of “Canal Ravin”.

Due consideration is being given to the request.

FLIC EN FLAC - ST PATRICK CLINIC - EIA LICENCE

(No. B/413) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the St Patrick Clinic at Flic en Flac, he will state if the Clinic has submitted an application for an Environment Impact Assessment licence and, if so, where matters stand.

Reply: My Ministry has not received any application for an EIA licence in the name of St Patrick Clinic at Flic en Flac.

MR P. S. - EX-ACTING REGISTRAR OF THE CO-OPERATIVES

(No. B/414) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to late Mr P. S., the ex-Acting Registrar of the Co-operatives, he will state if he has received representations with regard to the conditions in which late Mr P. S., was performing his duties and if the latter had reported any case of harassment against him to his Ministry and, if so, if inquiries have been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/372)

ANJALAY COOPEN & GERMAIN COMARMOND STADIA - INCIDENTS

(No. B/415) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the incidents that occurred in the Anjalay Coopen and the Germain Comarmond stadia recently, he will state if -

- (a) inquiries have been carried out thereinto, indicating the actions taken, if any, and
- (b) the stadia meet the security norms and, if not, the remedial measures that will be taken.

(Withdrawn)

TROU VIRÉ ISLET - FOOD HAWKERS - ECOLOGICAL IMPACT

(No. B/416) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Trou Viré islet, he will state if, following the decision to relocate the food hawkers from the Ile aux Cerfs thereto, his Ministry has carried out any assessment regarding the ecological impact thereof on the islet and on the marine, eco-system around the islet, indicating if the mangroves found around the islet will have to be uprooted in favour of any development thereof.

(Withdrawn)

BRANCH ROAD, PETIT VERGER - SPEED BREAKERS & DRAIN

(No. B/417) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the road leading from the Cooperatives Store to the School Road at Petit Verger Branch Road, he will state if he will consider the advisability of -

- (a) putting up speed breakers thereat, and
- (b) covering the existing drain with slabs along same, for the safety of the school children and of other pedestrians.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is not in presence of any request from the inhabitants of the locality to put up speed breakers on the road leading from Cooperatives Store to the School Road at Petit Verger Branch Road. Nonetheless, I have requested the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit to carry out a survey with a view to assessing whether speed breakers can be put up in that locality.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the covering of the existing shallow drain with slabs will, of course, segregate pedestrians in general and most particularly students from vehicular traffic. It will no doubt improve safety of pedestrians.

The Moka Flacq District Council has indicated that it cannot implement the project, which will cost around Rs1.5m. I have requested the National Development Unit to consider the project.

INFANT MORTALITY RATE

(No. B/418) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to child survival and early childhood well-being, she will state if her Ministry has surveyed recent trends of the -

- (a) infant mortality rate;
- (b) under 5 mortality rate;
- (c) infants with low weight at birth, and
- (d) percentage of children suffering from stunting and, if so, indicate the new measures, if any, that are being envisaged for the improvement thereof.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that my Ministry constantly monitors infant mortality rate and under 5 mortality rate to keep track of their trends. A general decreasing trend in these health indicators has been observed since 1999. The infant mortality rate was 15.8 in 2000, and then over the past three years, it has decreased from 14.3 in 2008 to 13.3 in 2009 and to 12.4 in 2010. Under 5 mortality rate was 17.9 in 2000, and has also decreased from 16.4 in 2008 to 16.2 in 2009 and to 14.6 in 2010.

Regarding low birth weight, it was observed from data available at the Ministry that there was an increase in the prevalence of low birth weight from 13% in 2000 to 15% in 2008. Subsequently, a study of quantitative and qualitative nature of live born babies was conducted by my Ministry in 2009 to investigate into the causes of low birth weight. The report of the study was published in April 2011, and it has revealed that the risk factors of low birth weight are, among others, the educational and occupational status of mothers, total family income, previous low birth weight babies and pre-term deliveries of mothers, and alcohol consumption.

As regards stunting, which is caused by chronic malnutrition, I wish to point out that this is no longer a major issue in Mauritius, as explained in the reply I made to PQ IB/109 on 22 June 2010. So far, two surveys have been carried out in 1985 and 1995, and these surveys have revealed that -

- the prevalence of severe stunting among 0-5 years old children was 8.9% in 1985 and 2.5% in 1995;
- the prevalence of moderate stunting in the same group of children was 12.6% in 1985 and 7.1% in 1995.

A National Surveillance System was put in place after the 1985 survey by the Nutrition Unit of my Ministry to monitor the growth of children under 5 years. Routine data from the National Surveillance System shows prevalence rates for 2010 of underweight children of -

- (i) 0 -11 months - 0.1%
- (ii) 12-23 months - 0.1%
- (iii) 24-59 months - 0.2%

With regard to new measures which have been taken to improve child survival and early childhood well-being, these comprise amongst others -

- (a) reinforcement of the health education of pregnant women and would-be mothers and their families in health centres on all aspects of better pregnancy management;
- (b) extension of echography facilities in all Area Health Centres, Medi-Clinics and Community Hospitals as well as in Rodrigues, to ensure that all pregnant women attending antenatal care undergo echography to ensure safe pregnancy;
- (c) ongoing sensitisation campaigns to encourage pregnant women to attend antenatal clinics as soon as they are aware of their pregnancy, so as to enable the early detection and management of any medical problem;
- (d) extension of neonatal intensive care units is being planned, and
- (e) vaccination against seasonal flu has been introduced in the age group of 6 months to 2 years.

(No. A/143) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)

asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the employees on contract, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to the total number thereof presently employed by the MBC/television, gradewise, indicating -

- (a) their respective addresses and the salaries drawn, and
- (b) the names of those who have been transferred on the permanent establishment, since March 2011 to date, giving details of their present post and conditions of employment.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is as follows as regards part (a) -

Total number of employees currently serving on contract at the MBC: 126

N	GRADE	SALARIES (Rs)
1.	Adviser- Radio & TV Programme and Production (Oriental Section)	42,500 + ER
2.	Adviser, Security Services	31,000 + ER
3.	Assistant Clerical Officer	9,400 + ER
4.	Assistant Engineer (Electrical)	24,000 + ER
5.	Assistant Financial Operations Officer (3)	12,300 + ER to 12,900 + ER
6.	Assistant Marketing and Sales Officer	16,000 + ER
7.	Audio Visual Officer (4)	13,000 + ER to 22,600 + ER
8.	Broadcast Operator (7)	13,500 + ER to 22,600 + ER

N	GRADE	SALARIES (Rs)
9.	Carpenter	8,600 + ER
10.	Clerk/ WPO (6)	10,200 + ER to 10,700 + ER
11.	Confidential Secretary	26,400 + ER
12.	Consultant, Radio Department (General Section)	42,500 + ER
13.	Coordinator - Radio Services (Oriental Section)	42,500 + ER
14.	Decors Conceptor/ Designer (3)	12,600 + ER to 24,800 + ER
15.	Deputy Director General	80,000 + ER
16.	Director General	115,000 + ER
17.	Director of News	70,000 + ER
18.	Driver/ Handyworker (13)	9,400 + ER to 9,600 + ER
19.	Electrician (2)	9,600 + ER
20.	General Worker – Cleaning Services (13)	6,425 + ER to 7,000 + ER
21.	IT Support Officer (3)	15,500 + ER
22.	Make Up Officer	11,200 + ER
23.	Marketing and Sales Officer (6)	10,000 + ER to

N	GRADE	SALARIES (Rs)
		18,400 + ER
24.	Music Programmer	20,800 + ER
25.	News Editor (2)	24,800 + ER
26.	News Re-writer	25,000 + ER
27.	News Reporter/ Presenter (17)	20,200 + ER to 22,600 + ER
28.	News Research Officer	42,500 + ER
29.	News/ Programmes Presenter	35,000 + ER
30.	Preview Officer (2)	15,500 + ER to 16,000 + ER
31.	Producer/ Programme Presenter (3)	21,400 + ER to 32,500 + ER
32.	Producer/Presenter (Radio & TV Programmes) (2)	20,200 + ER
33.	Production Assistant (3)	22,000 + ER
34.	Production Assistant (Rodrigues)	19,000 + ER
35.	Programmes Presenter (Rodrigues) (2)	17,800 + ER to 19,000 + ER
36.	Public Relations Coordinator	30,000 + ER
37.	Radio & TV Programmes Presenter	22,600 + ER
38.	Radio & TV Sports Presenter/ Conceptor	40,000 + ER

N	GRADE	SALARIES (Rs)
39.	Receptionist/ Telephone Operator (2)	9,200 + ER to 9,400 + ER
40.	Resource Person-Performance Management & Human Resource Development	42,500 + ER
41.	Safety and Health Officer	29,000 + ER
42.	Security Officer (8)	8,600 + ER
43.	Team Leader, Finance & Marketing	70,000 + ER
44.	Team Leader, Human Resource & Corporate Services	70,000 + ER

As regards part (b), none of the above contract officers has been transferred on the permanent establishment since March 2011 to date. It would not be proper to give their addresses.

MBC - JOURNALISTS - RECRUITMENT

(No. A/144) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the journalists, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to the number thereof recruited thereat, over the past three years, giving details of their terms and conditions of employment.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is as follows -

NO. OF JOURNALISTS	TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT
-----------------------	------------------------------------

15	Employment on a Freelance basis followed by appointment on contract. Terms and conditions of employment are in accordance with the provisions of the PRB Report 2008.
1	Appointment on contract. Terms and conditions of employment are in accordance with the provisions of the PRB Report 2008.
1	Freelance full-time on a month-to-month basis.
Total: 17	

ALBION VILLAGE – EXCESS SPEEDING

(No. A/145) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Albion Village, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if excess speeding has been noted thereat and, if so, if consideration will be given for additional control to be exercised thereat with a view to avoiding accidents and to ensure the security of the public and in particular the school children.

Reply: Since January this year, 116 contraventions have been established for excess speeding in the region of Albion.

It should be noted that the number of road accidents in the region of Albion has dropped from 42 in 2005 to 35 in 2010. From January 2011 to date, a total of 12 road accidents were reported in the region. None of these accidents were serious or fatal.

In order to ensure the security of the public and, in particular, school children in the region of Albion, a series of measures has been taken as follows -

- (i) six speed breakers and eleven speed limit signposts have been installed;

- (ii) a Police Officer is posted to regulate traffic duties at the two schools - one primary and one pre-primary - daily from 0800 hrs to 0900 hrs and 1430 hrs to 1530 hrs;
- (iii) regular foot and mobile patrols, road blocks and vehicle checks are undertaken to deter reckless and dangerous driving, and
- (iv) regular sensitization programmes are conducted in the schools and in the community on road safety issues.

The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit is closely monitoring the situation and if need be, additional road safety measures will be taken for the region.

RODRIGUES – ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

(No. A/146) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to road traffic accidents, in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, for the past five years, information as to -

- (a) the number thereof, on a yearly basis indicating the number of fatal ones;
- (b) if there are sufficient road markings, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for the
 - (i) posting of Police Officers in accident prone regions, and
 - (ii) sensitization programmes to be organised at community and school levels.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is as follows -

- (a) the number of road accidents, including fatal ones in Rodrigues between 2006 and 20 May 2011 -

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF ROAD ACCIDENTS REPORTED TO THE POLICE	NUMBER OF FATAL ROAD ACCIDENTS
2006	191	4
2007	174	3
2008	171	NIL
2009	157	6
2010	131	5
2011	61	2
(as at 20 May)		
Total	885	20

- (b) there are sufficient road markings on the main roads. The Commission for Public Infrastructure has already initiated action for road markings where they are not visible;
- (c) (i) given the topography of Rodrigues with its roads bending on edges of steep hills, it is imperative for drivers to exercise extra care and precaution when driving at these dangerous spots. It would not be possible to deploy Police officers in each of these locations. However, the Police carries out regular patrols at strategic points to deter reckless, careless, negligent and dangerous driving. Speed checks as well as alcohol breath tests are also effected, and
- (ii) in order to ensure compliance to traffic regulations and to enhance road courtesy, the Police organises regular lectures and talks in schools, in Youth Centres and Community Centres. Community Policing fora are also carried out throughout the island. Police Officers also participate in radio and TV programmes.

From 2010 to 20 May 2011, 14 lectures have been delivered to about 1500 students and 27 community policing fora have been carried out throughout the island.

The Police also intends to organise a Security Week this year.

RODRIGUES – FOREIGNERS – RESIDENTIAL PERMIT

(No. A/147) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to foreigners, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport and Immigration Office, information, as at to date, as to -

- (a) the number thereof residing in Rodrigues with a valid residential permit, and
- (b) if suspected cases thereof residing without a residential permit thereat have been detected, indicating, in each case, their respective nationalities.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that as at 20 May 2011, there were 32 foreigners residing in Rodrigues with a valid residence permit.

As regards part (b) of the question, two French nationals who have been staying in Rodrigues have failed to leave the country on the expiry of their respective visitor's/residence permit. They are being looked for by the Tracking Team of the Passport and Immigration Office.

MILITARY ROAD & ROUTE DES PAMPLEMOUSSES, PORT LOUIS – TRAFFIC CONGESTION

(No. A/148) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs & External Communications whether, in regard to the Military Road and Route des Pamplemousses, Port Louis, in the vicinity of the Ibrahim Abdullah Market Fair, he will state if traffic congestion is caused thereat during fair days, especially on Saturdays, as a result of vehicles parking in a disorderly manner and on double-yellow lines and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if consideration will be given for the posting of Police Officers thereat.

Reply: The Ibrahim Abdullah Market Fair which is found in vicinity of the Military Road and Pamplemousses Road, Port Louis, is held on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The Commissioner of Police has informed me that there is no traffic congestion on Tuesdays and Thursdays. However, on Saturdays, the road traffic is rather congested, with the increasing number of visitors at the market fair and also due to an increased number of vehicles using these roads to proceed to Champ de Mars on horse racing days.

There are double yellow lines at Military Road junction and Pamplémousses Road in both directions and towards Plaine Verte. In front of the Ibrahim Abdullah Market Fair, there is a single yellow line for embarkation and disembarkation on any day. Certain adjacent streets have been classified one-way to ensure a free traffic.

In order to regulate traffic in the vicinity of the market fair, two Police Officers are posted there on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 0600 hours to 1400 hours. On Saturdays, four Police Officers are in post there.

The market fair has at present a parking space for 52 vehicles, together with additional space along Military Road for parking of motorcycles. However, the existing parking space is currently being used by vendors. As a result, vehicles are not being parked inside the market fair premises.

To remedy the situation, the Municipal Council of Port Louis has identified a plot of land situated near the MSPCA compound for conversion into a parking space. In this connection, action has been initiated for the vesting of the land into the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands.

VERDUN-TERRE ROUGE ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECT – COMPULSORY LAND ACQUISITION

(No. A/149) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Verdun Terre Rouge Road Construction project, he will state the number of private lands which have been compulsorily acquired, indicating the number of cases thereof which have been referred to court and which are still pending and in all the other cases, if payments have been effected and, if not, why not.

Reply: The requested information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as the exercise is completed.

HAZARDOUS WASTE STORAGE FACILITY - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/150) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the project for the

treatment of hazardous waste, he will state where matters stand, indicating if the hazardous landfill is operational.

Reply: I am advised that the country generates around 420,000 tonnes of solid wastes annually, and it is estimated that around 8,000 tonnes of hazardous wastes are produced per year. At present, solid hazardous wastes are disposed in specialised cells at the Mare Chicose Landfill. These cells have been constructed on a double synthetic lined system, over which a high grade reinforced concrete structure is built to contain the hazardous wastes.

Following the recommendations of a previous consultant to set up a waste complex, including an Interim Storage Facility for Hazardous Wastes, my Ministry had embarked on a project for the setting up of such a hazardous waste facility at La Chaumière. The consultancy services and the implementation of the project itself were to be financed through a loan from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (ABEDA). However, this project has been shelved for the time being, in view of the fact that my Ministry is exploring the possibility of optimizing the new La Chaumière Transfer Station site to store hazardous wastes, prior to shipment.

In this context, my Ministry has solicited and obtained the support of the Africa Institute, which is a Regional Centre responsible for providing support to parties of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes. The Institute has agreed to provide Mauritius with a grant of 300,000 Rands to conduct a study, covering the following -

- (a) National Inventory of Hazardous Waste Generation in Mauritius
- (b) Sustainable Management Options for Hazardous Wastes in Mauritius
- (c) Technical Guidelines for Segregation, Labelling, Storage and Packing for Exportation of Hazardous Wastes
- (d) Requirements for the Construction of a Hazardous Waste Storage Facility in Mauritius.

Consultations are underway with the University of Mauritius for the conduct of the study, the outputs of which will be used in the planning of storage, exportation and treatment of hazardous wastes.

NYON STREET, PORT LOUIS - MEDI CLINIC - OPERATION

(No. A/151) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Medical Clinic in Nyon Street, Port Louis, she will state when it will be operational, indicating the reasons for the delay in it becoming operational and the actions taken against those responsible therefor.

Reply: I am informed that although the construction of a Medi Clinic at Nyon Street, Port Louis has been completed, there are a series of snags which have yet to be attended to by the building Contractor, Keep Clean Ltd, before the Medi Clinic can be made operational.

As such, it is not expected that the Medi Clinic will be operational before the next three to four months.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping has been requested to submit a report on the Performance of the Contractor. Thereafter, the Public Procurement Office and the Central Procurement Board will be informed accordingly

TRANQUEBAR, PORT LOUIS - CROWN LAND TORY – ROADS TARRING

(No. A/152) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Crown Land Tory in Tranquebar, Port Louis, he will state if he has received representations from the inhabitants thereof for the tarring of the roads thereat and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given thereto.

Reply: Further to representations made by inhabitants of Crown Land Tory in Tranquebar with regard to tarring of roads, my Ministry has been informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that due consideration is being given to the request of the inhabitants.

REAL ESTATE SCHEME - PROJECTS

(No. A/153) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Real Estate Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, a list of the projects approved by the Board, indicating, in each case the -

- (a) name of the promoters;

- (b) location and extent of the land;
- (c) number of villas and apartments proposed, and the area of built up area proposed;
- (d) number of projects;
 - (i) started;
 - (ii) completed, and
 - (iii) not yet started, indicating the reasons therefor
- (e) number of villas and apartments sold, indicating the total amount of investment made, categorized into foreign direct investment and local financing, and
- (f) amount of Government revenue collected from the projects.

Reply: The requested information is being tabled.

FOOTBALL MATCHING - BETTING - LICENCE

(No. A/154) **Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Gambling Regulatory Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to -

- (a) the conditions of the licence pertaining to fix odd betting on overseas football matches issued to each licensee and the dates on which these conditions of licence were communicated to the respective licensees in 2010, and
- (b) if a new set of conditions of licence has been issued to certain licensees only and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Reply: The conditions of license pertaining to fixed odd betting on overseas football matches were issued to eight out of ten licensees in 2010 is at annex.

As regards the dates on which conditions of license (as at annex) were communicated in 2010 to the respective licensees, they are as follows -

SN	COMPANY	Date of issue of conditions in 2010

1	Automatic Systems Limited	07.06.10
2	Globalsports Limited	02.06.10
3	Play on Line Limited	03.06.10
4	Stevenhills Limited	26.05.10
5	Booksystem Limited	27.09.10
6	Silversports Limited	03.11.10
7	Bosco & Company Limited	12.08.10
8	Value Plus Limited	02.12.10

The set of conditions of license was the same in 2008 and 2009. However, the GRA decided in June 2010 to add two new conditions. These are as follows -

1. “The Gambling Regulatory Authority reserves the right to -
 - (a) Direct the relocation of your premises to such area as it may determine, and
 - (b) Limit the number of renewal of license in future in conformity with any applicable law.
2. You should not accept bets from minors.”

As from June 2010, all football bookmaker companies were issued with the new set of conditions of license at the time of renewal, except Peerless Ltd and Empowering People Ltd. In the case of these two companies, their licenses were renewed on 14 July 2010 and 13 August 2010 respectively, although the persons effecting payment of license fees on behalf of these two companies were not in a position to acknowledge receipt of the new conditions of license.

I am further informed by the GRA that these two companies were suspended, along with three others, namely Booksystems Ltd, Bosco Co. Ltd and Value Plus Ltd, with effect from 21

February 2011, for non compliance with one condition of license requiring payment of any unclaimed funds to the National Solidarity Fund within seven days after the prescribed delay of 45 days from the date of the official result of the matches.

MARMARA CLUB/INDIAN RESORTS HOTEL - BARBECUE STAND

(No. A/155) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether he has taken cognizance of the complaints made by tourist operators following the operation of a barbecue stand in front of the Marmara Club/Indian Resorts Hotel by a private operator and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if any permit has been issued to that effect by his Ministry/the Tourism Authority to the private operator or to the hotel concerned.

Reply: I am informed that no permit has been delivered by the Tourism Authority with regard to the operation of a barbecue stand in front of Indian Resorts Hotels.

I am further informed that the Beach Authority has issued a verbal authorisation to the hotel in order to operate a stand for *grillade* on the beach.

QUATRE BORNES - MUSLIM CEMETERY - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/156) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the construction of a Muslim cemetery in the town of Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to the -

- (a) location of the site identified and the extent thereof;
- (b) budget earmarked therefor, and
- (c) date of its coming into operation.

Reply: I am informed that a plot of land of the total extent of 84,417 m² situated at Trois Mamelles has been vested by the Ministry of Housing and Lands in both the Municipal Councils of Quatre Bornes and Vacoas-Phoenix for the setting up of a cemetery, which will make provision for Muslim, Christian and Hindu sections.

I am further informed that the relevant estimates, procedures for construction and management of the cemetery are still being worked out jointly by these Councils.

CUREPIPE - MALHERBES STREET - EMTTEL GENERATOR

(No. A/157) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, he will state if he has been informed of the inconveniences and interferences caused by an Emtel generator at the Malherbes Street, Curepipe and, if so, indicate the measures that will be taken to reduce noise and radio/television wave interferences.

Reply: I understand that the hon. Member is referring to the Emtel base station situated at Malherbes Street, Curepipe.

I am informed by the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Authority that, on 03 September 2008, it had received a copy of a petition addressed to the Municipal Council of Curepipe regarding the installation of a generator at Malherbes Street, Curepipe.

However, on 20 October 2009, the ICT Authority received a request from Mrs J. Bocquée, an inhabitant of Malherbes Street, Curepipe, to carry out a survey regarding an antenna installed by Emtel Ltd near her residence. Subsequently, the ICT Authority carried out inspections on 12 November 2009 and 23 February 2010, and took measurements on the maximum level of Electromagnetic Field (EMF) emitted by an Emtel base station situated on the rooftop of a building located at 10, Malherbes Street, Curepipe.

The measurements were taken in accordance with an *in-situ* measurement protocol, which is established by the ICT Authority and is based on international standards, particularly, the International Electro-technical Commission (IEC) Standards. The results obtained from both inspections have shown that the maximum level of EMF emission from the Emtel base station did not exceed the safe limits for the general public, as recommended by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). The ICNIRP is a body of independent scientific experts who investigate on the possible adverse effects of exposure to non-ionizing radiation. The ICNIRP, in conjunction with the World Health Organisation (WHO), developed the ICNIRP Exposure Guidelines which define the general public reference levels.

In the light of the results obtained from the inspections carried out, the ICT Authority concluded that the installation inspected at Malherbes Street, Curepipe is safe for the general public.

I am further informed by the ICT Authority that it has not received any complaint so far, in relation to interference on radio and/or television at Malherbes Street, Curepipe. Should any person make a complaint in that respect to the ICT Authority, the latter will carry out investigation in line with established procedures.

As regards the issue of noise pollution at Malherbes Street, Curepipe, I shall cause the matter to be referred to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for further investigation.

BIGARA CEMETERY - EXTENSION

(No. A/158) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the request for land extension for the Muslim cemetery at the Bigara Cemetery, in Curepipe, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that a plot of land of the extent of 46208m² adjoining the existing Bigara Cemetery had been vested in the Council in November 2003 for the extension of the cemetery.

Due to budgetary constraint, the works for the extension of the Bigara Cemetery are being carried out in phases as follows -

- (i) The First Phase
 - (a) Extension of the existing cemetery of an extent of 18100 m².
 - (b) The land has been fenced.
- (ii) After apportionment of the land by the Council for various sections, a Muslim Section will also be incorporated in this extended part of the cemetery upon completion of the remaining works which comprise of -
 - (a) construction of alleys and drains;
 - (b) provision of lightings, and

(c) water points.

I am informed by the Council that the works will be undertaken as and when funds will be available.

CUREPIPE, MIDLANDS & DUBREUIL - POVERTY - STUDY

(No. A/159) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the region of Curepipe, Midlands and Dubreuil, he will state if a study has been carried out on the prevalence of poverty thereat and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof, and, if not, if consideration will be given for its commissioning.

Reply: The NEF has, since August 2010, embarked upon a survey to update its data on the prevalence of absolute poverty on an island wide basis.

Data available therefrom for the districts of Plaines Wilhems and Moka indicates that there are some 249 households living below the poverty line in the regions of Curepipe, Midlands and Dubreuil.

RESIDENCE JOACHIM, FOREST SIDE - SPORTS & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

(No. A/160) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Cité Joachim, Forest Side, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to the sports and recreational activities available thereat for the inhabitants thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that a municipal complex is available at Residence Joachim, whereat indoor and outdoor activities such as table tennis, karate, street football, home economic and yoga classes are held for the benefit of the inhabitants of that region. The centre is also used by senior citizens, women's associations and sports clubs as a meeting place.

I am further informed that a children's playground and a *Pétanque* court also exist at Residence Joachim.

CHEBEL HOUSING ESTATE - FENCING

(No. A/161) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Chebel NHDC Housing Estate, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to if consideration will be given for the fencing thereof, as obtained in the other NHDC Housing Estates, to ensure the security of the residents thereof.

Reply: As per information obtained from the NHDC Ltd., there is no project for fencing of the Chebel Housing Estate for the time being.

The implementation of such a project will involve the construction of a boundary wall, provision of security post(s) as well as control of access within the housing estate. This will necessitate the collaboration of the residents in setting up a syndic to ensure that the infrastructure is well managed and maintained.

As the NHDC is in the process of recruiting an expert in syndic, the advisability of calling upon the services of the expert to assist the residents in setting up a syndic will be explored.

MAURITIUS-RODRIGUES ROUTE - FREIGHT

(No. A/162) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to freight on the Mauritius-Rodrigues route, he will state if Government proposes to review the recent 30% increase thereof to alleviate the economic burden on the Rodriguan population.

Reply: The review of the recent increase in freight on the Rodrigues and Mauritius Route is not on the agenda, taking into consideration the following factors that have influenced the decision for the increase -

- (i) fuel prices on the world market being on the rise, and the volatility of these prices have a direct incidence on many operations and activities of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd (MSCL);
- (ii) bunker costs on the Rodrigues Route had increased considerably from Rs18,28m. in financial year 2004/05 to Rs39.09m. for the financial year 2009/2010;

- (iii) fixed and regulated passenger and cargo tariffs on Rodrigues Route that are four and two times respectively below the market rates;
- (iv) transportation of livestock bringing little revenue and adding to high maintenance/replacement cost of an annual average of Rs7.5m for corroded steel. MSC incurs additional costs related to transportation of livestock. These include cleaning and maintenance of hatches to prevent corrosion of steel and compensation to importers in case of death of livestock. MSCL incurs around Rs2m. on maintenance cost related to the transportation of livestock from Rodrigues. The company also has to bear extra costs due to the inadequate and obsolete infrastructure for loading and unloading of livestock;
- (v) MSCL does not perceive any revenue on the transport of empty containers. Since Mauritius imports little from Rodrigues, 70% of containers return empty and, therefore, represent a significant loss for the company. The average proportion of empty containers from Reunion and Madagascar is 50% and 24% respectively, and
- (vi) transportation of hazardous and petroleum products, thereby limiting the number of passengers per voyage as per maritime regulations, thus foregoing an annual estimated revenue of Rs4.5m.

The freight rates on this route are 2.5 times below the market rate prevailing on the international routes.

According to the Central Statistics Office, the increase of 30% would have negligible effect on cost of living in Rodrigues. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has recommended a compensation mechanism to alleviate the burden of the low income earners in Rodrigues.

And, effectively, the Income Support Allowance has been increased to Rs246 per member of family as from March 2011.

RODRIGUES - FOOD SECURITY FUND - PROJECTS

(No. A/163) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Food Security Fund, he will, for the

benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information, as to the amount of money disbursed, as at to-date for Rodrigues, indicating the on-going and completed projects and in each case, indicate the -

- (a) project value;
- (b) projects contracted out;
- (c) name of the bidders and respective bids value;
- (d) name of the successful bidder, and
- (e) method of procurement used.

Reply: The requested information is being compiled and will be laid in the Library of the National Assembly.

IRS & RES - PROJECTS

(No. A/164) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to projects under the Integrated Resorts Scheme and the Real Estate Schemes, he will give a list of the promoters who were issued with permits, in each case, since 2000 to 2005, indicating those who abandoned the project thereafter.

Reply: The requested information is being tabled.