



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 26 APRIL 2016

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Members

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

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 05 of 2016

Sitting of 26 April 2016

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. **Office of the Speaker** –

Declaration of Interest by the Honourable First Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac (**Mr M. Gobin**) in regard to Parliamentary Question B/320. (*In Original*)

B. **Prime Minister's Office** –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the following Bills (*In Original*) –

- (i) The National Women's Council Bill (No. V of 2016); and
- (ii) The National Wage Consultative Council Bill (No. VI of 2016).

C. **Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport** –

The Road Traffic (Bus Fares) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 99 of 2016)

D. **Ministry of Local Government** –

- (a) The District Council of Flacq (Market) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 96 of 2016)
- (b) The District Council of Flacq (Fair) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 97 of 2016)

E. **Ministry of Arts and Culture** –

The National Heritage Fund (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 98 of 2016)

F. **Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives** –

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Cooperative Development Fund for the years ended 31 December 2010, 31 December 2011 and 31 December 2012. (*In Original*)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CARGO HANDLING CORPORATION LTD - DUBAI PORTS WORLD – INTER-MINISTERIAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd., he will state –

- (a) the proposals of Dubai Ports World for its shareholding therein and for the management thereof, indicating if Government has reached a decision in relation thereto, and
- (b) how the dismissal of Alain Edouard, President of the Port Louis Maritime Employees Association (PLMEA), relates to the opposition of the Trade Union to the ‘privatisation’ of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd. through Dubai Ports World, indicating if the latter will be re-instated.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission I shall reply to the Private Notice Question together with Parliamentary Question B/305.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that in early June 2015, the Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayen, Chairman of DP World, together with a team of experts, effected a visit to Mauritius and had meetings, *inter alia*, with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the Minister of Housing and Lands and myself to elaborate on the avenues of co-operation.

In September 2015, a technical team from DP World carried out a prospection visit to Mauritius to discuss with stakeholders and to collect information. Working sessions were held with different stakeholders in Government and the private sector. The delegation also visited the Mauritius Container Terminal and the proposed logistics park.

DP World submitted its preliminary proposals on 30 November, followed by a visit of its technical team to Mauritius on 10 and 11 February of this year. Subsequently, on 25 February, DP World submitted more detailed proposals on the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and Port Operations as a basis for further discussions.

The proposal of DP World comprises three main aspects, namely -

- (i) The development and marketing of a state-of-the-art Special Economic Zone (SEZ) on 325 acres of Land at Riche Terre, through a Joint Venture with the

Government of Mauritius with a 99-year lease based on the Jebel Ali Free Zone model.

This would involve an initial investment of US\$23 million over the first six years, for the construction of industrial and business units, office premises as well as serviced plots. Thereafter, an additional investment of US\$37 million is expected bringing the total investment to the tune of US\$60 million. The SEZ will have the potential to attract US\$450 million of FDI and generate up to 8,000 jobs.

Madam Speaker, the second aspect of the proposal comprises a 40% shareholding in Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd with a Management Agreement whereby DP World would be responsible for management of Port Operations over a period of 30 years.

DP World is proposing to invest at the initial stage, some US\$25 m. in the Mauritius Container Terminal in terms of improvement of IT infrastructure and purchase of container handling equipment to enhance operational performance and increase the capacity of the Terminal to 1.3 million TEUs.

- (ii) The third aspect of the proposal concerns an investment of US\$500m. for the development of the Island Terminal by 2030, when the container traffic is expected to exceed 1.3 million TEUs.

The proposal of DP World could be interesting and innovative, insofar that, it is not solely based on increasing Container Transshipment Traffic at Port Louis, but more geared on increasing captive traffic to be generated from the development of the free port activities.

Madam Speaker, in addition, the port would be in a position to offer a range of other services to ships, including bunkering, ship chandling and ship repairs.

My Ministry has set up an Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee to examine the proposals and hold discussions with the DP World. The MPA has retained the services of Mr Marc Juhel, a retired World Bank Consultant in Port and Transport Advisory Services, to assist in the discussions.

Furthermore, on 28 March 2016, Messrs BDO Ltd have been appointed, following a tender exercise, to carry out a financial, legal and technical examination of the proposals. Their work is ongoing.

With a view to safeguarding the interest of the Nation, Government will seek guaranteed KPIs from DP World over the period of the Port/SEZ concessions, amongst others, in terms of -

- (i) volume of SEZ traffic generated;
- (ii) investment made by DPW at Riche Terre and amount of FDI/employment generated;
- (iii) transshipment/Freeport Container throughput;
- (iv) Port productivity and Port connectivity;
- (v) investment in Port operations and equipment;
- (vi) job creation, and
- (vii) other matters as may be determined.

Madam Speaker, there are important and potentially deal-breaking issues that need to be discussed and agreed before proceeding further. I wish to inform the House, in no uncertain terms, that as at now there is no decision and agreement. We are awaiting the report of the Consultants to make counter proposals to DP World which will be the basis for further discussions.

Madam Speaker, Government will ensure that, should the project go ahead, the employee's rights and pension benefits of Port workers will be fully safeguarded. I would like to reassure the House that the Government cares about the welfare of all employees of the Port.

Let me once more reassure the House that Government is committed to releasing full information and providing full disclosure on the project in due course as we are all dealing with public assets.

DP World is the third largest Port operator in the World with control of approximately 70 Terminals. They have a justified reputation for efficient Port operations and they have established relations with all the world's major shipping lines. They also operate approximately 20 free zones with the much largest being Jebel Ali Free Zone in Dubai.

Madam Speaker, the proposal of DP World, should it go ahead, will have the following the benefits -

- DP World's vision for Mauritius is to become a business hub for Southern and Eastern Africa. Mauritius will be the gateway to Africa;
- Mauritius will host multinationals companies looking to carry out value added activities and light manufacturing for export to SADC and Comesa countries;
- The Riche Terre Free Zone is envisioned to be the largest Free Zone in the Indian Ocean and will reinforce Mauritius's position as the investment Hotspot in the region;
- DP World through its subsidiary will bring its global experience in zone development management marketing and branding;
- SEZ success requires higher port connectivity than currently available;
- shipping lines require a productive reliable Port to justify a wider range of services;
- increased deep sea calls for the main shipping lines on the south–south routes between south Asian markets and south African markets;
- improved productivity will reduce the cost of shipping goods, increased trade and economic growth;
- DP World requires control of both, the Port and SEZ operations to make the project a success;
- international best practices will ensure that the SEZ can compete with potential other economic free zones that may arise or be constructed in the future;
- the Riche Terre Free Zone will be the focal point for local and foreign investment;
- the Riche Terre Free Zone will be developed and managed by DP World which has a unique integrated port and free port zone development capacity;
- Riche Terre Free Zone present an opportunity to replicate the highly successful Jebel Ali free zone;
- DP World has relevant experience in large scale logistics and industrial infrastructure, and
- enhanced connectivity linking Mauritius directly with key Southern and Eastern African markets;

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) of the question, as I have already indicated, nothing has yet been decided nor finalized in respect of DP World. Hence, the dismissal of Mr Alain Edouard is not related whatsoever with the DP World issue.

I wish to inform the House that Mr A. Edouard joined the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd (CHCL) on 18 April 1991 as Clerical Assistant and prior to his dismissal, he was employed with effect from 01 July 2014, as Ship to Shore Gantry Trainer. His responsibilities as Trainer were to monitor the performance of workers, also known as “*Portiqueurs*”.

Madam Speaker, as the House may be aware, we are today evolving in a very competitive market and competition from other Regional Ports is increasing. Following requests from Shipping Lines, with regard to the provision of services during the festive and end of year period, Management made the following working arrangement for 24 December and 31 December -

- (i) First shift – normal operation will be between 7.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., and
- (ii) Second shift – operation will be between 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m..

Madam Speaker, on 17 December all employees at the Mauritius Container Terminal (MCT), including Mr Edouard, were notified of the working arrangements .

In accordance with the concession agreement signed with the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA), the Port provides a round-the-clock service throughout the year, except on the following dates -

- 01 January;
- 02 January;
- 01 May, and
- 25 December.

On 04 January 2016, the Senior Terminal Manager reported that Mr Edouard had left his site of work on 31 December 2015 at 12 06 hours without authorisation in spite of having been detailed to work until 3.00 p.m.

Management viewed the matter with concern and on the same day, Mr Edouard was notified thereof and was informed that this may be considered as a serious breach of discipline and gross misconduct. He was requested to submit his written explanation.

On 11 January 2016, Management of CHCL received a reply from Mr Edouard. The explanations submitted by Mr Edouard were not to the satisfaction of Management.

Madam Speaker, on 12 January 2016, the Human Resource Manager informed Mr Edouard that Management was not satisfied. He was suspended from work and was called upon to appear and depone before an Independent Disciplinary Committee to show cause as to why, despite being detailed to work on the 1st shift, he had left his site of work without authorisation.

The Disciplinary Committee received all submissions and completed hearings by 22 March 2016. The Disciplinary Committee submitted its report on 24 March 2016 wherein it was concluded that, in light of the evidence adduced before it, the charge against Mr Edouard was proved.

Madam Speaker, accordingly, the Board took note of the findings of the Disciplinary Committee whereat Mr Edouard had been found guilty of the charge “leaving his site of work without authorisation”. The Board also noted that Mr Edouard had in the year 2015 been warned for misbehaviour and misconduct as follows -

- on 02 February 2015, he was warned for misbehavior in connection with an incident which occurred at the Multi-Purpose Terminal, whereby he had verbally molested another employee; the Head of Logistics. In respect of the said case, he was given a warning letter, and
- on 14 May 2015, he was given another warning letter and was warned for misconduct for failing to attend an operation meeting held on 05 March 2015 without informing or justifying his absence and leaving his place of work without authorisation on 05 March 2015.

In the light of the findings of the Disciplinary Committee, the Board concluded that Mr Edouard is guilty of misconduct and resolved that he be dismissed. Mr Edouard was conveyed of the Board decision on the same day.

Madam Speaker, as regards the reinstatement of Mr Alain Edouard, the Union representing the employees of Cargo Handling has formally requested a meeting with me to discuss, among other issues, the reinstatement of Mr Alain Edouard.

I will be meeting them on Thursday next to discuss and see if and when, and under what conditions the case of Mr Alain Edouard may be reviewed.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, these last days, we have had several statements - in the absence of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister - from the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd. For example, in *'L'Express'* of 28 March, it was said –

“On a reçu seulement une offre préliminaire.”

Then, the following day, it said -

“Il n’y a même pas un brouillon de contrat.”

And yet, I thank the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, because he has given us a good amount of details. Therefore, from what I have heard, am I right in saying that, in fact, DP World is asking for control of both the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd., that is, the Port, and of a Special Economic Zone in Mauritius and, therefore, they have proposed a 30-year contract with the Cargo Handling Corporation to manage the Port and a 99-year lease for land at Riche Terre, where Jin Fei is at present?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker, that is the situation. I have given the full chronology of events. The present situation is that we have more detailed proposals from DP World. They are not final proposals. We have not made counter proposals yet because we have appointed a consultant who, within the next few weeks, I gather, will submit its recommendations. But there is a proposal, and the proposal is a three-pronged project. The main thing is the Special Economic Zone, which is 325 *arpents*, and which will be the basis for investment by DP World and attracting this USD450 m. investment from other companies in state-of-the-art premises for use as a Logistics and Industrial Park.

They have asked that they get a 99-year lease, and I can see that is quite reasonable, because if we want quality infrastructure, people will not build quality expensive infrastructure over only a short-term lease. That is the first thing; the Special Economic Zone.

They made the point that they cannot operate a Special Economic Zone of that size and amplitude without having a properly efficient Port to operate traffic going into that SEZ. So, their proposal is now a 40%-share in Cargo Handling Ltd. coupled with a Management Contract. We do not have the details of the Management Contract yet. You can take it to resemble, maybe, Mauritius Telecom or something like that. We have not got details of that yet, but that is the second proposal.

The third aspect of the agreement is their famous Island Terminal, which will come online once container activity reaches 1.3 million TEUs per annum. We have 550,000 TEUs at the moment. So, you can see that it is more than doubling the number of TEUs, that is, when DP World proposes to invest a large sum, I think, USD 500 m., in the Island Terminal.

Mr Bérenger: It is confirmed, therefore, that they are requesting for the control of both the harbour and the Jin Fei, Riche Terre Special Economic Zone. At Jin Fei, I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister agree with the request that it will be a 99-year old lease. If I remember correctly, the land there is already leased to a Chinese company. So, what is going to happen? Is it going to be taken back from that Chinese company? Has that Chinese company been warned? What is their reaction? Or, as has been the case with certain others companies, will there be subleasing?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will respond, Madam Speaker, but Jin Fei is under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. I will give the information that I have. Jin Fei was originally much bigger. With the new Government coming into power, it was split into two; part of it remaining with the Chinese and the other part being taken back by Government. This is the 325 acres that we are talking about. That is now with Government, and that is what is being talked about for concession to DP World. We are not talking about the remainder, which is remaining with the Chinese.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the Deputy Prime Minister say that the Management Contract has not yet been finalised - the details thereof. But I read an interview which he gave to 'L'Express' very recently, on 12 April, where he said, and I quote –

“Il y aura des garde-fous. Si dans trois ans le projet ne progresse pas à notre satisfaction, nous pourrions revenir en arrière.”

Is it, therefore, intended that this clause will be in the Agreement between Dubai Ports World and the Government of Mauritius?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I did not respond about the 99-year lease. Obviously, we cannot expect someone, say, to build a 20-floor building without having sufficient time to recuperate his investment. That is the point of the 99-year lease.

As far as the Management Agreement is concerned, we do not have the details yet, but what we are interested in doing is inputting in the Agreement sufficient Key Performance Indicators to ensure that any representations that are made by DP World as to the future - and I did take that into my main answer - is, in fact, abided to. Now, what will be the penalty, if

ever any KPI that is agreed between the two parties is not respected, is also something which will be set in the Agreement.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister say that BDO again has been appointed as consultant, but I think I heard through a tender procedure. Can I know which other such consultancy firms reacted and how much BDO is going to be paid for that?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I answered a specific question. I understand though that they were the lowest and that they also submitted an excellent proposal. I think the other main firms also responded, but I can get that information.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I think the other main firms also responded, but I can get the information.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister say that concerning BDO, its work is ongoing. Am I not right in saying that, in fact, they submitted their report on the financial situation of the Cargo Handling Corporation on 15 April, that it is therefore already available?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Not on 15 April, I think, but they have submitted draft preliminary, not final, and we are discussing on the draft.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, I did not hear any reference to Singapore. Is Singapore Port Authority out of the picture completely, because I would wish to remind the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, if you will allow me, before I put my question, is that on 25 November 2015, the then Minister of Finance stated that the Singapore Port Authority would be involved. I quote –

« Les Singapouriens veilleront surtout à ce que les développements dans le port soient dans l'intérêt de Maurice. »

As if Singapore is going to come and watch over Dubai Ports World! Is there any development there? Is Singapore out of the picture completely?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, to respond to the earlier question, Ernst and Young and PWC were also part of the tender process, submitted their responses to attend their request. As far as Singapore Port Authority is concerned, I know they are not part of the discussions and we have, as I have mentioned, other Consultants that we are using.

Mr Bérenger: I can go on to the second part of my question. I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister say that there is no link at all between the dismissal of Mr Alain Edouard and

the possible coming into the harbour of Dubai Ports World, but will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister agree with me that the perception is already there? We know the reputation of Dubai Ports World across the world. They are very tough on trade unions and it is a strange coincidence that disciplinary action is taken just before they came, as if to create a mood and, specially that this trade union and this President have been actively canvassing, demonstrating against the coming - the privatisation, as they call it - of the harbour through the coming of the Dubai Ports World.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I stated clearly that the dismissal of Mr Alain Edouard was not in any way related to the Dubai Ports World, and I am not given to lying in the House and I maintain this. The second thing, Madam Speaker, I think Dubai Ports World operates in 65 countries; I think 70 ports overall. No point in scaremongering, Madam Speaker. The idea is to find a better future, more prosperity, better conditions for not only the existing Port workers, but all potential workers who may be interested in working either in the Port in the future and the Special Economic Zone and, indeed, in a large number of the related activities that would be coming up. Mr Edouard's case has been given to an Independent Disciplinary Committee, headed by a former Magistrate. I hope the hon. Leader of the Opposition is not putting into doubt the competence or the independence of that former Magistrate and this is the conclusion that has been taken. The Board has taken its decision. On a humanitarian basis, I can consider it again but, obviously, Madam Speaker, I must say this, Port workers are extremely well paid and that makes me very happy. Nothing more in life makes me happier than when employees are well paid and Mr Edouard, maybe, earns Rs170,000 as a Trainer. He should give the right example as a Trainer. You don't give a wrong example. And he was the only one having left his work! What would have happened if all of them had gone, followed the Trainer? That is the first thing. And second thing, Madam Speaker, with rights come responsibilities. You are well paid, we are all so happy, but, let's have decent productivity and decent work standards in the Port. The whole future of this country depends on our Port working up to the satisfaction. Whether Dubai Ports World comes or not, we still have to get our Port to work to international standards because there is competition all over.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, when I am listening to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, he gives the impression that the Disciplinary Board, chaired by a former Magistrate, in fact, I think it is by a Magistrate, but if a former Magistrate or Magistrate, independent, I agree. I am not challenging the Disciplinary Board. But the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is

giving the impression, maybe, without that intention, but the impression that the Disciplinary Board concluded and recommended the dismissal, which is not the case. They found that he has been guilty of leaving his site of work without authorisation and did not recommend the dismissal, and it is the Board, in a very messy way, that decided on the basis of that independent report to dismiss him, whereas dismissal was not recommended by the Disciplinary Board.

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is not a question of not recommended or not. The ambit of the Disciplinary Committee was to find whether the charges are proven. They found that the charges were proven. The decision as to what the disciplinary action would be taken was left to the Board and the Board took that decision. Now, Madam Speaker, let's be clear on one thing. The Board of Cargo Handling Corporation, if my memory serves me right, has three members from the Union. One of the few Boards in Mauritius that have three members from the Union and we have a particular active Union. So, to say it was messy and all that, that is not true. If you want to make a Board meeting messy, you make it messy. So, it does not hold water to say that the Board was messy. The decision was taken, and properly taken and anyway, Madam Speaker, the decision has been taken, as I already mentioned. We can look at it again and we will look at it again, but we will see what decision has been taken once we have met with the trade unions, but we are not taking any commitment at this stage.

Mr Bérenger: From what I have heard from the interview of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is that they would be given consideration to take him back after so many years of service in the harbour. Can I remind the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, therefore, that he, in '*Le Defi Quotidien*' of 01 April, and I am sure it was not a joke, he himself said: "*La question portant sur sa réintégration n'est pas à écarter. Il y a une bonne volonté. Je suis disposé à agir sur une base humanitaire.*"»

Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to confirm that he will also take into consideration expectations raised, because not only him, but the Chairperson of the Cargo Handling Corporation has also made public statement that the dismissal will be reconsidered and, therefore, expectations have been created.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it takes two to tango. So, in fact, we are going to look at the case of Mr Edouard, but let's hope that everybody comes to his senses at the same time and, I must say, Madam Speaker, I will never, ever put the interest of the country and the Port aside. This is my major concern. I don't know Mr Edouard

personally, I have nothing against him, but the interest of the Port, the efficiency of the Port, the interest of all the workers of the Port, the interest of Mauritius is paramount to this Government, Madam Speaker.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister mentioned for Cargo Handling it would be 40% shareholding of Dubai. But with respect to the Special Economic Zone, where there would be a joint venture, I understand, between Dubai Ports World and a Mauritius agency - I don't know whether it would be Cargo Handling or anyone else - may I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what would be the shareholding of that Mauritius Government entity in that special purpose vehicle and what would be the commitment given, financial or otherwise, by the Government to that special purpose vehicle?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, there would be a joint venture in practice because you cannot run a Special Economic Zone without the permits, without the business facilitation, etc. So, in practice there is a joint venture. Whether there will be a joint venture in terms of shareholding - this is what the hon. Member has asked - is another issue and is under discussion. It could be; some people think there ought to be some percentage of Government invested - because you have to invest to get shares - in the company, maybe part of the lease payments can be capitalised; future lease payments can be capitalised into a shareholding for the joint venture is still under discussion.

Mr Jhuboo: Still concerning the Special Economic Zone, being given that Government is introducing the BOT concept, why not consider for the Port, which is of strategic importance, a rather Build and Operate Transfer than a straight 99-year old lease?

The Deputy Prime Minister: For the 99-year lease it is not for the Port, it is for the SEZ. It is a straight lease for a concession. There is no need for a BOT. It is like everybody leases land everywhere for hotels or whatever. It is just a lease, but the lease could be turned into a concession because we need to put KPIs so that, in fact, penalties arise if the KPIs are not met. So, that is for the SEZ. I don't know, but maybe something in terms of BOT can be incorporated in there, but it is not as complicated as that because we are talking about a piece of land which happens every day in Mauritius when you lease land.

As far as the Board is concerned, that is another issue. We are talking about the DP World entering into the share capital of Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, with regard to the SEZ, especially when the hon. Deputy Prime Minister mentioned the creation of serviced plots, do we understand that the present Government is adopting the same policy as the previous Government, that is, allowing DP World to sublease land to third parties on terms and conditions to be decided by them?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, to the first part of the question, definitely, they will sublease because, in fact, we are talking about investment of US\$450 m. in SEZ, whereas in fact I mentioned, I think, that the DP World investment over the whole time would not amount to more than US\$60 m. So, definitely it is a sublease, but the question is as to what the terms and conditions are. This is the whole issue, there will be different incentives, maybe DP World may wish to have the highest rate, maybe we don't want to have the highest land rate because what is interesting to Government is the activity rather than a lease premium. So, this is something that we need to discuss with them and agree, but yes and no, to the hon. Member's question.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, I have listened with much interest to the forthcoming answers from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister. There have been some serious allegations made against the company known as DP World on the world arena, and if we are to limit ourselves let alone the United States of America where there are serious allegations for corruption and fraud against DP World, there are also serious allegations on the African Continent. Let us start with Senegal where recently in the Panama Papers, the son of the former President of Senegal has been accused of secret contracts of several millions of US Dollars that have been exchanged following a contract with DP World and also in Djibouti recently. So, in the light of all those scandals for corruption and in light of all those Ministerial visits to Dubai very, very recently - not the hon. Deputy Prime Minister - what does the Government propose to do to play the game of transparency since we have not at all seen any document whatsoever that establishes clearly in a transparent manner what exactly is going to be given away?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member, himself, said I was quite transparent at the start of his question. But, I must say, Madam Speaker, that firstly I am not aware of the USA, but I understand that as far as Djibouti is concerned, the High Court in London, in fact, was in favour of DP World.

As far as Senegal is concerned, I am told that with the World Bank involved, things have been sorted out. This is what I am told. Now, that may be what it is, we are here in Mauritius, we have the laws in Mauritius and DP World does not only operate in these countries, DP World operates in Australia, UK, France, etc. We, Madam Speaker, have taken the commitment - I have taken here formally - that everything will be disclosed, there will be full disclosure, including the contracts will be disclosed. Obviously, you cannot disclose once you are now discussing with the potential agreement, but everything will be done transparently and, Madam Speaker, I would like to assure the House that as far as I am concerned, also for my colleagues, nothing illegal, nothing untoward, nothing underhand will be done. What we have in mind if and when we deal with DP World is the utmost interest of the nation.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: My last question; I think I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister say that he will be meeting - and it is a very good thing - the Trade Union next Thursday. I take it that it is two days from...

The Deputy Prime Minister: Next Thursday.

Mr Bérenger: ...then if it is after 01 May, I was going to appeal to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, I think in the spirit of 01 May something should be done even before 01 May, but can I request from him that special consideration be given to the reintegration of that President of the Trade Union on the occasion of 01 May?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, on a lighter note, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition is not holding his own meeting on 01 May, he may wish to come to Vacoas and maybe there we will make some announcement.

Madam Speaker: Time is over! Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ No. B/286 in regard to Cannabis will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life. Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

BANKS - LICENCES - REVOCATION

(No. B/272) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in

regard to banking licences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the number thereof revoked since 1967 to date, indicating if the -

- (a) consideration of the capital adequacy ratio has been the prime reason for the revocations;
- (b) revocations have been made equally in the public interest under section 17 of the Banking Act, and
- (c) banks concerned therewith have been allowed time to redress the situation.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that, since 1967, the banking licences of the following five banks were revoked, namely -

- (a) Bank of Credit and Commerce International;
- (b) Mauritius Co-operative Central Bank Ltd;
- (c) Union International Bank Ltd;
- (d) Delphis Bank Ltd, and
- (e) Bramer Banking Corporation Ltd.

The House may wish to note that the Banking Act provides the reasons for the revocation of a banking licence. The Bank of Mauritius is empowered to revoke a banking licence under various circumstances as set out in Section 11(1) of the Banking Act 2004 and, in cases of urgency and public interest, under Section 17 of the Act. Failure to meet capital adequacy ratio is one of the reasons for the revocation of licence in the above cases, being in breach of a guideline issued by the Bank of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that all revocations of licences were made with the public interest in mind. In addition, the banks were given an opportunity, where applicable, to take corrective/remedial actions before revocation of their licences.

Dr. Sorefan: With regard to the Bramer Bank, will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister inform the House if he gave instruction to the ex-Minister of Finance and Economic Development and the Governor of the Central Bank to give ample time to Bramer Bank to redress the financial situation and to my information, the Central Bank did opt to give facility up to April 30, 2015, but on 02 April the letter was sent, or probably verbally, to Bramer Bank, but on the same day, within six hours, whereas it was given one month facility to redress, the licence was revoked for Bramer Bank?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member is utterly wrong. The time that was given was not end of April, but 31 March and insofar as the other part of the question is concerned, I must inform the House that the matter is *sub judice* and I am not going to give any other information.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. With regard to the Bramer Banking Corporation matter, the latest US Human Rights Report qualifies the BAI Affair - it is publicly articulated now - as a political vendetta thereby tarnishing our image as an investment destination. So, may I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether anything is being done to repair this damage?

The Prime Minister: I don't care about what this organisation thinks. There is no political vendetta. Everybody knows how BAI was being operated, how money was being swindled. These organisations abroad, they give lessons to others, they must look after their own businesses.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

(Interruptions)

It is his question, hon. Mohamed! I give priority to the one asking the question first!

(Interruptions)

Sorry! Hon. Mohamed, I will decide on the number of questions to be asked!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mohamed, are you still challenging the authority of the Chair?

(Interruptions)

I am sorry.

(Interruptions)

You may, after I have sat down.

Mr Mohamed: I am not challenging. I am just saying I am not very pleased.

Madam Speaker: But the hon. Member cannot be pleased or not. It is for the Chair to decide on whom to give the floor. It is his question. I have decided to give him the floor.

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister said that the redress was given up to 30 March, but the Governor of the Central Bank, in an interview, said: “30 April 2015.” Well, that is what the Governor said in an interview. May we know about the capital adequacy ratio? The prime reason concerning Bramer was the capital ratio. Are we not facing the same situation with Rs5 billion public money injected in MauBank and that we are not going to face more capital injection, creating same problem as Bramer?

The Prime Minister: I have said the time limit was 31 March and I maintained that this is correct. I don’t know where the hon. Member gets his information from. Insofar as the other part is concerned, I have said I am not going to enter into any other matters that may reflect on Bramer Bank because the whole matter is *sub judice*.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: I have one question.

Madam Speaker: I have called you!

Mr Mohamed: That’s nice of you. Thank you very much.

(Interruptions)

I am sure...

(Interruptions)

Just one question....

Madam Speaker: Unless you are not hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Not at all. I am just so shocked.

(Interruptions)

I thank you. But I just wanted to have one question to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister on what he just said about the report; he said, if I am not mistaken or heard correctly, that he does not care about. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that the organisation that he says he does not care about is actually the Government of United States of America and not a NGO of any

sort, but the State Department report of the Government of the United States of America? Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister saying that he does not care about that report?

The Prime Minister: The United States is not governing the world.

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

BANKS & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS - LEGISLATION - AMENDMENT

(No. B/273) **Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the banks in which Government is a shareholder, he will state if he will consider introducing amendments to the existing legislation with a view to prevent the recurrence of the state of affairs that prevailed thereat regarding the toxic loans and the writing off of debts and, if so, indicate if provision will also be made for the –

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

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I wish to assure the House that we will not tolerate any malpractices in banks and financial institutions, whether or not, Government is a shareholder. We are determined to have a clean financial system and we are considering appropriate legislative amendments to plug any regulatory gaps as well as strengthening banking supervision.

A review exercise is currently being undertaken jointly with the IMF and the World Bank based on the recent report of the Financial Sector Assessment Programme (FSAP) on Mauritius.

Government will ensure that State-controlled banks operate as good corporate citizens in full compliance with the existing prudential guidelines and upholding the highest ethical standards. In this respect, the process for appointing Chairpersons, Directors and top management has been reviewed and will be improved further.

Furthermore, strong measures for recovery of the toxic loans are ongoing and police enquiries have already been initiated against the former CEO, General Manager and Finance Manager of the ex-Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank Ltd.

As regards the last part of the question, the Bank of Mauritius is finalizing the setting up of an Assets Management Company which will take over non-performing Loans from banks and launch vigorous measures for recouping the loans. This specialized institution will thereby assist to clean up clogged balance sheets, release capital ascribed as provisions on non-performing loans and address the adverse impact of such loans on the stability of the financial system.

Regarding the proposal to have amendments with retroactive effect to cover the past seven years, the advisability thereof will be considered in the legislative review exercise.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will agree with me on all the saga we had recently on loans and toxic loans, debts, BAI with SBM, Gooljaury and Samlo with MPCB. Will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister really consider urgently to come with full reform in our banking system especially in the setting up of –

- (a) an independent Commission of Banking;
- (b) introduction of a criminal sanction for reckless misconduct, and
- (c) a Parliamentary Commission on banking standards?

The Prime Minister: I don't think it is necessary to do all this. We are already taking measures and we are satisfied that this will meet the ends of what we are looking for.

REGISTRAR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT - SERVERS/IT SYSTEMS

(No. B/274) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Registrar General's Department, he will state if he has been apprised of the inconveniences caused to the members of the public when attending thereto for registration purposes, especially, when breakdowns occur in relation to the Servers/IT Systems and, if so, obtain from the Registrar General, information as to if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Registrar-General's Department has moved from a paper-based system involving voluminous books to an electronic system as from 30 June 2015.

The objective behind the introduction of the new computerised system is to provide stakeholders and the general public with an improved and more rapid service on a 24-7 basis through the provision of online services.

It is unfortunate that despite the preventive measures put in place at the Registrar-General's Department to prevent system failures, including a dedicated generator to cater for power cuts, there have been 6 downtimes in the system from 01 January 2016 to date. I am informed that one of the system downtime was for a full day while the other 5 have been remedied within 2 hours.

In accordance with the established protocol at the Registrar General's Department, all stakeholders within the premises are informed within 15 minutes of a downtime. If the situation is expected to exceed 2 hours, the general public is informed through the radio and an update is provided when normal service has been restored.

I am further informed that a full audit of the system, including the hardware was carried out and the main source of these problems was due to internet connectivity. Action has already been initiated to replace certain networking equipment to provide for a dedicated internet access. Works are expected to be completed by mid-May 2016.

I am also informed that, by the end of June 2016, with the implementation of the e-payment facilities, completion of all the steps for registration will be possible from office and home.

Mr Ameer Meea: There have been breakdowns in the server and in the IT system of the Registrar-General's Department which have been quite often, as mentioned by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. But in my question, it is also stipulated: what are the remedial measures that the Registrar General is taking so that to avoid undue delays? So, therefore, if I am allowed, can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to consider the parallel running of the system, that is, each time when there is a breakdown in the system, they return to the books that were being used before because there has been a case last week whereby erasure of inscription did not appear on the system and they had to go to the old books to approve what has been done by notaries and lawyers. So, therefore, can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to look into the matter?

The Prime Minister: We will convey that to the Registrar General.

Mr Uteem: In light of what the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has just mentioned - I don't know if he has the figures – can we know what is the amount that has been spent by the Government in this new IT system and in its maintenance?

The Prime Minister: Well, I don't have the figures. Come with a specific question, the hon. Member will be given the information.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Sesunkur!

NON-CITIZENS – PERMANENT RESIDENCE – APPLICATION

(No. B/275) Mr D. Sesunkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the investors, self-employed non-citizens and the retired non-citizens, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Passport and Immigration Office, information as to the number of applications received therefrom for the issue thereto of a permanent residence for a validity period of ten years, since January 2015 to date, category-wise, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) nationality thereof;
- (b) total investments brought in, and
- (c) outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Sections 5A and 9 of the Immigration Act provide for the grant of a permanent residence permit to non-citizens, including investors, self-employed and retired persons. This permit allows an eligible non-citizen to work and reside in Mauritius for a period of ten years. The main objective of Permanent Residence Scheme is to attract and retain foreign talent, know-how and investment. It also provides opportunity for high net-worth non-citizens to spend their retirement in Mauritius.

For the period January 2015 to 23 April 2016, the Prime Minister's Office has received 36 applications for permanent residence permit from foreign investors, self-employed non-citizens and retired non-citizens.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the information is as follows -

- (i) fourteen applications were received in respect of investors, out of whom seven are French nationals, three South Africans, one Belgian, two Indians and one Zimbabwean;
- (ii) one application was received in respect of a self-employed non-citizen of French nationality, and
- (iii) twenty-one applications were received in respect of retired non-citizens, out of whom 17 are French nationals, one German, one South African, one Dutch and one Swiss.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the successful investors should either have made a turnover of at least Rs15 m. annually for three years preceding the application for permanent residence permit, or should have transferred from abroad at least 500,000 US dollars for investment in a qualifying business activity. Furthermore, a self-employed non-citizen having held an occupation permit for three years immediately preceding the application and whose income exceeded Rs3 m. during each of the three years, qualifies for a permanent residence permit.

As regards a retired non-citizen, he should have held a residence permit for three years and transferred to Mauritius 40,000 US dollars annually during each of these three years to qualify for a permanent residence permit.

I am informed by the Board of Investment that the total investment brought in by non-citizens having obtained their permanent residence permit for the period 2015 to 2016 amounts to around Rs98 m. The breakdown is as follows -

- Investor: Rs39.6 m.;
- Retired non-citizen: Rs57.5 m.;
- Self-employed: Rs1.2 m.

In regard to part (c) of the question, the outcome of the 36 applications is as follows -

- (i) concerning the investors, ten applications from non-citizens who had previously been issued occupation permit for three years have already been approved, one application has been turned down, and three are still being processed;
- (ii) as regards self-employed non-citizens, the application has been received on 25 February 2016 and is being processed, and

- (iii) concerning the retired non-citizens, 13 applications have already been approved and the remaining eight applications are still being processed.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that each application for permanent residence permit is scrupulously examined and a due diligence is carried out by the Board of Investment and the Passport and Immigration Office before a permit is delivered.

EBENE – SICOM TOWER - OFFICE SPACE

(No. B/276) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the proposed transfer of offices of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to the State Insurance Company of Mauritius Tower at Ebene, he will state the –

- (a) departments/sections that will be housed thereat;
- (b) extent of office space being rented thereat, indicating the –
 - (i) duration, and
 - (ii) monthly rent payable therefor
- (c) expenditure incurred in terms of –
 - (i) partitioning;
 - (ii) office furniture and equipment, and
 - (iii) telephone and networking systems therefor, and
- (d) use that will be made of the offices at the Government Centre that are being vacated as a result thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development will not move to the SICOM Tower at Ebene.

The Ministry of Finance identified office space from Ground to 7th floor at the SICOM Tower, Ebene, covering an area of 88,504 square feet at a monthly rental fee of Rs34 per square foot, inclusive of VAT, syndic charges, amenities and parking facilities.

The monthly rental fee payable amounts to Rs3 m. for a period of ten years. Expenditure relating to partitioning works and office furniture amount to Rs4.4 m. and Rs4.5 m. respectively.

The telephone and networking system, with internet facilities as well as wireless network are being installed at a cost of Rs8.9 m.

I am informed that other Ministries have expressed their interest to occupy the available space at SICOM Tower and the matter is being considered.

Mr Ameer Meea: So, we understand that the move has been frozen and the Minister of Finance and Economic Development is not moving there. Therefore, can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister what about the rental? Since the decision has been taken, is the rental still being paid and the spaces there are not being occupied?

The Prime Minister: Well, I don't know whether the rental is still being paid.

(Interruptions)

Well, rental will start when other Ministries will move in.

MAUBANK – GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT

(No. B/277) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Maubank, he will –

- (a) state the amount of money invested therein by Government as at to date, and
- (b) obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to if the –
 - (i) capital adequacy ratio has been complied with, and
 - (ii) Bank of Mauritius has issued any directive as regards the ineligibility of the directors of the former Bramer Bank and the former MPCB Ltd., if any, to hold any post of responsibility thereat.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Government has invested an amount of Rs1.3 billion in MauBank Ltd on 13 January 2016. No further investment was subsequently made.

Last year, Government has invested an amount of Rs1.05 billion and Rs700 m. in the former Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank Ltd and the former National Commercial Bank Ltd, respectively.

As regards part (b) (i) of the question, commercial banks are required to submit to the Bank of Mauritius prudential returns on a quarterly basis.

I am informed that MauBank Ltd submitted on 21 April 2016 to the Bank of Mauritius its first quarterly prudential return on Capital Adequacy Ratio since its coming into operation on 04 January 2016. Its Capital Adequacy Ratio was above the required minimum of 10 per cent prescribed under section 20(2) of the Banking Act 2004.

With respect to part (b) (ii) of the question, pursuant to Section 46 of the Banking Act 2004, no person can be appointed or reappointed as a director of a financial institution falling under the purview of the Bank of Mauritius unless he or she meets the test of being a fit and proper person as outlined in a guideline issued by the Bank of Mauritius in this regard.

No director, who was on the last Board of ex-Bramer Bank, is presently on the Board of MauBank Ltd.

None of the directors, who were sitting on the Board of the former MPCB as at 31 December 2014, is presently sitting on the Board of MauBank Ltd.

I am informed that the question of the Bank of Mauritius not issuing any specific directive as regards the ineligibility of the directors of the former Bramer Bank and the former MPCB Ltd, does not arise in view of the fact that, the Bank of Mauritius has issued a Guideline on Fit and Proper Person Criteria applicable to all financial institutions falling under its purview.

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, lors de l'inauguration de la première succursale de la *MauBank* le 27 janvier 2016, le ministre des Finances à l'époque avait déclaré être en pourparlers avec un partenaire de Dubaï. Est-ce que je pourrais savoir de l'honorable Premier ministre où on en est avec la situation ?

The Prime Minister: Well, as far as I know, I am not on with the *pourparlers*.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister confirm to this House whether he is aware if money has been siphoned through the MauBank to a private account recently?

The Prime Minister: From MauBank to a private account?

(Interruptions)

External account! What does that mean?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Can the hon. Member give precision as to his question?

Dr. Sorefan: Will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister confirm to this House whether money from MauBank has been transferred to a foreign bank upon the instructions of a parliamentarian?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Well, hon. Member, if you want to be honourable, please, you have such information, go to the Police!

(Interruptions)

Make a complaint! Let them inquire!

(Interruptions)

Take your responsibility!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question!

FDI – AMOUNT

(No. B/278) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Foreign Direct Investments, he will state the aggregate amount thereof brought into Mauritius since January 2015 to date, indicating in respect of each entity concerned therewith, the –

- (a) country of origin thereof, and
- (b) sector benefitting therefrom.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, please don't interrupt the House!

The Prime Minister: ...that the Bank of Mauritius is carrying out a survey to collect data on Foreign Direct Investment for the year 2015 and the information will be available on completion of the survey.

However, I would like to emphasise that data pertaining to individual entities are treated as confidential and cannot be released. The data on gross direct investment flows are disseminated by the Bank of Mauritius in aggregated form by sector in line with the United Nations' International Standard of Industrial Classification.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that, in the monthly statistical bulletin of the Bank of Mauritius, they have stated that foreign direct investment for 2014 was USD441 m. and the forecast for 2015 will only be USD197 m., down by more than 55%?

The Prime Minister: Well, if that is so, what do you expect from me? We will do our best and try to remedy the situation as far as possible.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Well, this is precisely what I was referring to just now. It has to do with our international image, which has been tarnished because of certain things that have been happening in the country.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Mahomed: My specific question is as follows: the last Budget exercise made provision for the opening up of Board of Investment (BoI) antennas in certain key destinations like Paris and India. May we know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister where we are with this?

The Prime Minister: Well, we will go step by step. We have started; we have opened in Paris.

Mr Uteem: Reacting from what the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has just said, as Minister of Finance, we want to know precisely what he intends to do to attract foreign direct investment, which is down now by 55%, since his Government took office!

The Prime Minister: Well, let's wait when we have the figures for this year. Then, we can make comment.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, could the Rt. hon. Prime Minister look into the possibility of explaining this *débâcle* as far as the foreign direct investment is concerned ever since his Government is in power, whether it has nothing to do with the fact that the Board of Investment is being depleted of very able and efficient human resource and professionals and being siphoned off to other new departments opened up by the hon. Minister of Financial Services? Is that possible?

The Prime Minister: The *débâcle*, if there is, I would say, is more due to consequences of what had been done by the previous Government.

(Interruptions)

It does not date to yesterday.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

Let the Rt. hon. Prime Minister reply!

(Interruptions)

Time is over! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question ...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, when I am on my feet, you don't talk!

(Interruptions)

The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. B/329 in regard to Universities which had been set up in Mauritius and which had not been allowed to deliver diplomas, degrees to their students will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research.

The Table has also been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/294 and B/295 have been withdrawn. Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

AUTOCYCLES & MOTORCYCLES - DRIVING LEARNER'S LICENCE

(No. B/290) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the provisional driving learner's licence for autocycles and motorcycles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for the classification thereof according to the –

- (a) respective engine capacity thereof, and
- (b) age group of the potential holders thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, I am informed that section 4 of the Road Traffic Act already provides for the subdivision of a class of motor vehicles.

In view of the increasing number of road crashes involving motorcyclists, which represents 40% of the total number of fatal and serious injury accidents, the Ministry is initiating a series of measures to address this issue.

Accordingly, new regulations are being worked out for the purpose of granting provisional driving licence and to subdivide auto/motorcycles into the following categories according to their engine capacities –

Category	Engine Capacity	Age Group of Licence Holders
First Category	not exceeding 50 cc	17 to 18 years
Second Category	between 50 and 125 cc	18 to 21 years
Third Category	between 125 cc and 300 cc	21 years and above
Fourth Category	exceeding 300 cc	21 years and above

In addition, the regulations will also provide for –

- (i) the introduction of driving schools for auto/motorcycles and training of driving instructors for auto/motorcycles as well,
- (ii) a mandatory training in an approved driving school for all learner drivers of auto/motorcycles.

Sensitisation campaigns will also target auto/motorcyclists, as they are the most vulnerable road users.

Madam Speaker: Next question, Dr. Sorefan!

REGIONAL HOSPITALS - CEREBRAL VASCULAR ACCIDENTS - TREATMENT

(No. B/291) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the patients admitted in the Casualty Department of the Regional Hospitals with provisional diagnosis of cerebral vascular accidents, he will state the established treatment protocol therefor.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that all cases of cerebral vascular accidents are being looked after by Consultants/Specialists in Internal Medicine.

I am also informed that the existing established protocols are as follows -

Patients with provisional diagnosis of cerebral vascular accidents are seen on a fast track basis and are admitted to medical intensive care units, surgical intensive care units and high care or medical wards, depending upon the severity of the conditions. Immediate management and appropriate investigations are also done. CT scan and other investigations are carried out, and treatment is determined depending on the reports of the investigations.

Presently, when the case of stroke is due to aneurysm or arteriovenous malformation, the patient is sent overseas for aneurysm clipping and coil embolization or surgery.

Arrangements are being made for the procurement of appropriate equipment and training of staff so that, in future, we do not send patients overseas and such treatment will be available in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, in the first instance, a Stroke Unit will be set up at Victoria Hospital where two wards have been identified and are being renovated for this purpose. This Stroke Unit will be operational by December 2016. Subsequently, a Stroke Unit will be set up in each of the remaining four regional hospitals to provide thrombolysis treatment for specific cases.

Dr. Sorefan: The hon. Minister has mentioned CT scan is being done after the incidence. Will the hon. Minister inform the House what is the standard worldwide, is it within four hours of a patient attending casualty that a CT scan should be done and whether this is done in Mauritius?

Mr Gayan: I do not know what is the prevailing protocol in other countries, but, what I can say, Madam Speaker, is that the waiting time for any patient going to our hospitals is much less than in any other developed countries.

Dr. Sorefan: Do we have a CT scan at Jeetoo Hospital?

Mr Gayan: Well, if the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will reply to that.

Dr. Joomaye: I would like to ask the hon. Minister the number of qualified Neurologists that are actually in post in the public hospitals?

Mr Gayan: That also, I will need to have a substantive question, Madam Speaker.

Dr. Sorefan: Will the hon. Minister of Health confirm to this House whether at the casualty department, we have a specialist on duty during office hours and on call after office hours to look after those emergency cases?

Mr Gayan: Well, we have just introduced a shift system in all the Accidents and Emergency in all the hospitals. There are specialists or consultants on call. But I am also informed that there is one doctor who is actually undergoing training in neurology and stroke medicine at *Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève* in Switzerland. He is expected to be back by the end of the year by the time when the Stroke Unit will become operational.

Dr. Joomaye: I would like to ask the hon. Minister - since he has told us that we do not have equipment right now - whether he knows that actually in all our hospitals, like Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, Jeetoo Hospital and Victoria Hospital, we have CT scans and that it is possible technically for the doctors, interventional radiologists to perform cerebral angiography? I would like to know from his point of view why this is not being done right now.

Mr Gayan: Well, Madam Speaker, I am guided by what the doctors tell us to do. In all cases where operations cannot be performed in Mauritius, they have been sent overseas. This is why we are now changing the process so that we can have everything done locally. But each time I ask the question, why are we sending these patients overseas, the answer is that we do not have the equipment. So, we are getting the equipment now. We have got the doctors themselves to say what are the types of equipment that they will require so that they will not be able to come up with that excuse anymore.

NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY LTD. - ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

(No. B/292) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and

Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the National Insurance Company Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the –

- (a) total assets and liabilities thereof as at to date;
- (b) name of the external auditor thereof, indicating the, and
 - (i) date on which the last audit exercise thereof was carried out, and
 - (ii) fees paid thereto, and
- (c) where matters stand as to the proposed sale of the shares thereof to the,
 - (i) National Pensions Fund;
 - (ii) State Insurance Company of Mauritius Ltd., and
 - (iii) State Bank of Mauritius Ltd.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I refer the hon. Member to the response to PQ B/580 of 29 September 2015.

With regard to part (b), on 14 May 2015, National Insurance Company Ltd. invited proposals from five firms, namely –

- (i) Deloitte;
- (ii) Ernst & Young;
- (iii) Mazars;
- (iv) Baker Tilly, and
- (v) Moore Stephens.

At the deadline, only Baker Tilly had not responded. Evaluations of the offers received were conducted by a Bids Evaluation Committee and its recommendations were sent to the NIC Board for approval on 21 May 2015. By written resolution, Ernst & Young was appointed as Auditor and approval was also obtained from the Financial Services Commission in line with section 40(2) of the Insurance Act. The fees of the Auditors are of a commercial nature, which is determined by the Board of the NIC.

With regard to part (b) (i) of the question, the company was incorporated on 15 April 2015 and the first accounting period is for 15 months. Therefore, financial statements will be prepared for the period ending 30 June 2016, in line with section 216(3) of the Companies Act.

With regard to (b) (ii) of the question, I am informed that no fees have been paid to date to the Auditors.

With regard to part (c) of the question and its subparts, the current offer to acquire a percentage of the shareholding of the National Insurance Company Ltd. has been made to Sicom Ltd. and SBM Holdings. This offer is of a commercial nature and there is a non-disclosure agreement signed between the relevant parties, I am informed, Madam Speaker.

Moreover, in the case of SBM Holdings, it will have to comply with the provision included in the listing rules made by the Stock Exchange of Mauritius.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, again, there is the same opacity like the Heritage City in relation to this sale of shares. May I quote from PQ B/31 which I put this year, whereby the hon. Minister stated, and I quote –

“(...) NIC’s capital is being opened, QED Actuaries have worked on it, independent consultants, financial consultants, BDO have worked on it. We have asked for a further report from Deloitte which we are about to get, I think, today or tomorrow (...).”

So, clearly, there has been valuation of shares that has been done by those independent consultants. So, can I ask the hon. Minister if he really means good governance and transparency, will he table all these valuation so that we can assess the price of Rs5.6 billion that has been mentioned in the case of NIC, and whether it is of genuine nature or is it only wishful thinking and creative accounting?

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, a lot of words have been used by the hon. Member, like opacity, creative accounting and so on, which is completely unfounded and unfair.

Firstly, in relation to Heritage City, there is no opacity. The answer was given last week.

In relation to NIC, true it is that the share capital has been opened to SICOM and SBM Holdings. This has been done in all transparency and has been communicated to the House on numerous occasions. We said that when you look at the whole BAI affair, apart from the recovery of assets, we will have to create value. We talked about increasing the value of the insurance company and this has been done, Madam Speaker, through a lot of hard work by the Board and the management of the new NIC.

I can inform the House that the monthly recurring premium of NIC is Rs112 m., which is annually Rs1.3 billion now; increase in monthly recurring premium of Rs9.2 m. every month; total benefits paid to date, that is, life insurance which have matured, and people have been paid Rs600 m. since August to now. Operational cost of what was then BAI, which is now NIC, has been reduced, Madam Speaker, from Rs660 m. annually to Rs225 m. The expense ratio of that company has decreased from 36% to 11%, which is well within the industry norms. NIC has also been the recipient of the Africa Best Employer Brand Award 2015 in testimony of the bold business restructuring it has undergone since August 2015.

I am also informed, Madam Speaker, that NIC presently holds market leadership position with 38% of the market share of Life Insurance Policies in Mauritius and based on the number of enforced policies, whilst NIC General holds 11% market share ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No cross-talking!

Mr Bhadain: ... of the accident and health segment with its health insurance line of products. NIC is now also licenced to conduct general insurance business and the company intends to build on its existing client base and distribution channels to promote seven additional classes of business, including motor insurance, travel insurance, property insurance, liability guarantee, engineering and so on.

Madam Speaker, the company has value and the value is not only based on the assets which are there, in terms of a property and, in terms of other assets which are on its balance sheet. An insurance company is valued based on what it is going to generate as future income also, which is discounted to present value. The hon. Member should know that, he is an accountant.

Now, on the basis of evaluation which has been conducted by the actuaries QED which has been looked at by the Accountants BDO, which has also been looked at, at Deloitte, there is, of course, an offer which has been made by NIC to SICOM and SBM Holdings to participate in the share capital. The Boards of those institutions are working. They have, of course, looked at all the figures which have been forwarded and they will make a decision accordingly and I see no reason as to why they should not invest in NIC like I have said before.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister has given us so much information about how many policies, assets and liabilities. What we are asking is only to table the valuation that has been done so that we can assess this Rs5.6 billion, whether it is genuine or not. Because the hon. Minister is saying that the companies have a forecast. The companies are not even one year born; we have companies which have been here for decades...

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member must ask his question.

Mr Ameer Meea: ... like the Swan Insurance Company which today is only valued at Rs2.9 billion and yet the hon. Minister...

Madam Speaker: So, what is your question, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: My question to the hon. Minister is that we insist, for the sake of good governance and transparency, to table all these valuation reports.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, he can insist as much as he wants; he has a grievance agenda; we have a governing agenda. A non-disclosure agreement has been signed and the hon. Member should know.

(Interruptions)

He should know...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhadain: He should know what a non-disclosure agreement means. SBM is listed on the Stock Exchange. What would happen if we were to go and table all this commercially sensitive information now when SBM Holdings has to take a decision and then, of course, it will have an impact on the share price under Stock Exchange?

Talking about SICOM, let me just give some further details as compared to how NIC is operating and other insurance companies are operating. I am told that the Chief Executive of SICOM has a monthly package, when you add it up, to Rs1 m. a month. When you look at NIC...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Bhadain: When you look at NIC, it is Rs200,000 package a month. Yet, NIC has got 140,000 life insurance policies as compared to 70,000 life insurance policies which are being handled by SICOM. So, as a sensible Government, as a responsible Government, we are taking the decisions we are taking in the interest of the people. We have been cheated and defrauded by the Labour Party under the BAI regime.

(Interruptions)

That is what is happening and the issue of political vendetta which was mentioned before – what political vendetta? Where is political vendetta? It is a Ponzi scheme, a fraudulent scheme which has been operated by the...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Come back to the reply!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

I have said order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, I am on my feet. I have said order! Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Fowdar, no! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am really impressed by how the hon. Minister believes in this company because last year, six months ago, he came here, he said exactly: “There are two international English insurers; they are here; they are doing their due diligence; they are going to put money in this superb or mutual”, he said.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! There is a hon. Member who is asking a question; you should not interrupt.

Mr Uteem: Six months later, everything that was said in this House by the same hon. Minister, six months later nothing has happened and today isn't that the case that because they are not able to get anyone to invest into NIC that they are putting pressure on NPF, SICOM and others to invest in that company?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: It is certainly not true, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Bhadain: The issue of NPF does not even arise. I have mentioned SICOM and SBM Holdings. Now, this is a clear example of how the Opposition can get everything wrong and I will state it now. An offer from Prudential plc UK has been received on 24 February 2016. The offer will lapse in 180 days on 22 August 2016.

(Interruptions)

When we say...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister Bhadain, please sit down!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Can you please remain silent! I have...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, let me tell you...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, please! I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

I have observed...

(Interruptions)

Please! I am on my feet! And when I am on my feet, you should remain silent! Hon. Members, I have observed that several times when I am on my feet and I am calling for order that you continue to discuss among yourselves, thus ignoring that I am on my feet. I am warning hon. Members of both sides of the House that it is an elementary rule of conduct that when the Speaker is on her feet, there should be silence in the House so that order can be restored.

(Interruptions)

Can we proceed now?

Mr Bhadain: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister just said...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, I have already said, next question!

Mr Ameer Meea: I have not yet finished.

Madam Speaker: I have said next question!

(Interruptions)

I have said no question. This is my ruling.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, please sit down! I have already ruled out that we should move to the next question. Please move to the next question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, with due respect. We are talking about public funds; this is important, pensioners' money. I have only...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, this question has been sufficiently canvassed both by the Opposition and the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

I have ruled out that you should move on to the next question.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please!

(Interruptions)

I am being very patient with you. Next question! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: This is very disgusting! PQ No. B/293!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister Bhadain, please calm down!

(Interruptions)

Can I ask...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please!

Mr Bérenger: The Minister stands up and threatens!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister Bhadain, did you threaten? Did you? If you did, then ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: Definitely not.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, sit down! If you did...

(Interruptions)

Order please!

(Interruptions)

You cannot say that he is a liar.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you cannot say that!

(Interruptions)

No! I am on my feet, I said.

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet! Would you continue?

(Interruptions)

I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours. Go on! I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

(Interruptions)

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.34 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please, be seated! Hon. Ameer Meea!

DEEP OCEAN WATER APPLICATION PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/293) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Deep Ocean Water Application Project, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof -

- (a) listing the buildings that will be connected thereto, and
- (b) indicating the -

- (i) cost thereof;
- (ii) name of the company implementing same, and
- (iii) expected date of coming into operation thereof.

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that a Deed of Concession between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and Urban Cooling Ltd was signed on the 23 December 2015, for the implementation of the Deep Ocean Water Application Project, which entails pumping deep cold sea water for air conditioning of residential, commercial and industrial facilities in Port Louis region, including the area stretching from Baie du Tombeau to Pointe aux Sables, through networks of insulated pipes.

I am informed that Urban Cooling Ltd is currently in the process of obtaining an Environmental Impact Assessment Licence, in compliance with section 21 (b) of the Maritime Zones Act.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that Urban Cooling Ltd has given its written commitment to the effect that any agreement with Government for the provision of the conditioning of buildings would be valid only as long as Government would occupy the respective buildings.

Madam Speaker, concerning part (b) of the question, I am further informed that Urban Cooling Ltd has already been notified that Government buildings, under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office, Ministries and Departments, will connect to the Deep Ocean Water Application Project on the condition that this will represent a saving to the Government.

The list of the Government buildings to be connected to the DOWA system has not yet been finalised.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (b) (iii) of the question, I am informed that DOWA system is expected to be operational in March 2018.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, in the question there is mention made to: indicating the cost thereof, (b)(i). I did not hear the hon. Minister give any answer to this specific one.

Mr Koonjoo: Regarding the cost of the project, a cost estimate on air conditioning incurred by the Government buildings in the region of Port Louis will be carried out by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport. UCL Ltd shall provide necessary technical details and expertise to the Ministry and obtain its approval for the connection to

DOWA air conditioning system with the existing air conditioning system of Government buildings. It is understood that for buildings already equipped with a chiller system of air conditioning no additional cost will be incurred for connection to DOWA since the two systems are compatible. MPI can be contacted for more details. This is what I have got.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you. The DOWA project dates back to 2013. In fact, it is part of the Maurice Ile Durable Policy, Strategy and Action Plan, paragraph 6.5.4. Now, in January 2014, a DOWA Advisory Council was set up; several meetings took place and a list of buildings was finalised. At that time...

Madam Speaker: No. The hon. Member should come with his question! Now that the hon. Member has explained, he should ask his question!

Mr Mahomed: Yes. At that time the project was sized at 44 megawatts worth of cooling and last year it dropped to...

Madam Speaker: Ask your question!

Mr Mahomed: I am coming to the question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Yes, but I have given the hon. Member sufficient leeway, he should ask his question!

Mr Mahomed: ...to 35 megawatts. How much is it today? In the face of several buildings are being moved out of Port Louis, Governmental buildings to the Heritage City, how much is it today? What is the amount of cold that you are working on?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I don't have the information. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I can give all the details, please.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: The question about the cost - we know what we are talking about: you go and pick this water deep down there, the pipe costs a fortune, it is a lot of money. So, the question was roughly what will be the cost of building all that system to bring that cold water to Port Louis, the rest will vary with the different buildings - but the cost of setting up the system to go and pump, carry it up to Port Louis?

Mr Koonjoo: I am sorry, Madam Speaker, but I don't have the exact cost of the project as such.

Mr Bérenger: Since the hon. Minister does not have a rough estimate of cost, do we know where the money, the funding thereof is going to come from at least?

Mr Koonjoo: This is a private company, Madam Speaker, so I don't have the details.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, I have specified clearly in the question about the cost. The hon. Minister has been given advance notice; he should have done his homework before coming here. He stated that, for further information we should contact the MPI, may we have a contact number, please?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, please, don't be ironical! No! Don't be ironical! For the good order of the work in the National Assembly here, please, don't be ironical. We are losing the time of the House. Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

(Interruptions)

Mr Koonjoo: The hon. Member can put questions to MPI, yes.

Dr. Joomaye: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister if the specialists for the protection of coral reefs of the Mauritius Oceanography Institute have been consulted before allocating this contract?

Mr Koonjoo: Yes, Madam Speaker. They have been consulted.

Mr Jhuboo: Madam Speaker, being given that the promoter has clearly indicated that a project would go ahead since Government buildings, public buildings would be connected, and now we know that part of these buildings are moving to Heritage City, can we assume that this project is not going ahead?

Mr Koonjoo: I said in my answer, Madam Speaker, that we will see to it that Government is making a profit, not a loss.

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Minister mentioned about Government buildings that already have chillers, these will be easily connected. But according to my information, there is only one Government building that has chiller air-conditioner and more so, it is not working. So, how the hon. Minister wants us to believe that this project would be worthy to the Government as there is only one chiller that is being used and even it is not working?

Mr Koonjoo: I don't have that answer, Madam Speaker. But I can say one thing to the House that the project has been taken up by this cooling company and I believe that they have done enough research and they have done the cost benefit analysis before coming to the Government to ask for the implementation of the project.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the promoters have been granted an EIA licence to see the impact on the water resources, but also on the inhabitants of Port Louis? Because I don't even know where they are going to put their pump, whether there will be noise pollution and any impact on the environment? So, have they been provided with an EIA licence?

Mr Koonjoo: I just said, Madam Speaker, and I can give some more information to the House. According to the UCL Limited, the next phase of the project is the following –

- (i) the conduct of a marine survey in the Port by September 2016, UCL informed that as ADB has now approved its loan for the offshore survey;
- (ii) application of the EIA licence, as requested by the hon. Member, by November 2016, and
- (iii) they will start construction working in the first quarter of 2017 and the operation of DOWA by March 2018.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Minister has told us that this is a private investment, a private project, but does the hon. Minister have any idea - because his Ministry must have contacted the company – about the total project value of this project? What is the amount which the company will be investing in order to realise this project?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I just answered that I don't have the exact sum that they are putting in this project, but I can assure the House one thing, that this project has been laying there for more than ten years. More than ten years with the last Government! And this Government within one year, we have been able to give all the clearances from our side and they are starting the project very soon.

SUGAR CANE INDUSTRY - HIGH LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE & LANDELL MILLS REPORT – RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. B/294) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, following the approval of the recommendations of the High Level Implementation Committee (HLIC) and of the Landell Mills Report on the sugar cane industry by Government, he will state –

- (a) the actions taken, if any, for the protection of the interests of the sugar cane planting community;
- (b) if he has received a request from the Alliance of Sugar Cane Planters Association to be furnished with a full set of measures finalized by the HLIC and, if so, indicate if it has been acceded to, and
- (c) where matters stand as to the proposed closure of weighbridges, indicating the number thereof which are presently in operation and the respective location thereof.

(Withdrawn)

TERRE ROUGE/VERDUN LINK ROAD - REHABILITATION WORKS

(No. B/295) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Terre Rouge/Verdun Link Road, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand as to rehabilitation works being carried out thereat, indicating the –

- (a) cost thereof, indicating the amount thereof paid as at to date, and
- (b) names of the consultants therefor, indicating the fees-
 - (i) payable thereto, and
 - (ii) paid as at to date
- (c) name of the contractor thereof, indicating the amount paid thereto as at to date, and
- (d) expected -
 - (i) completion date thereof, and
 - (ii) date of coming into operation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SIGNAL MOUNTAIN - JOGGING TRACK – UPGRADING WORKS

(No. B/296) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the Jogging Track at Signal Mountain, in Port Louis, he will state –

- (a) if urgent upgrading works will be carried out thereat;
- (b) if lighting facilities and additional parking space will be provided thereat;

- (c) if consideration will be given for the construction of public toilets thereat and, if so, indicate when will it be implemented, and
- (d) since when it is operational.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, I am informed that upgrading works at Signal Mountain Health Track were carried out in November 2015 and comprise, *inter alia*, the installation of wooden hand rails, construction of low masonry wall to contain soil erosion, painting and varnishing of metallic shelter and gate posts, replacement of basket bins and installation of indicative sign boards.

I am further informed that maintenance works are carried out regularly and upgrading works are normally scheduled every 12 or 18 months interval. The next survey, in respect of upgrading works, is scheduled for October 2016.

Madam Speaker, in respect of part (b) of the question, I am informed that prior to the launching of tenders for solar street lighting system, my Ministry was informed of potential hazards namely - rock falls, slopes, failure and flooding in the area surrounding the health track by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and the Landslide Management Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport.

The project has, therefore, been put on hold following a risk assessment report since October-November 2015. The Landslide Management Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport was requested to look into the issue.

The engineers of the Landslide Management Unit in collaboration with experts of the Japan International Corporation Agency known as JICA, have proposed to carried out consolidation on stabilisation work to ensure safety of persons making use of the health track. The implementation of these rehabilitation measures is estimated at around Rs50 m. In view of the expenditure involved, I would like to inform the House that the improvement works have been earmarked among the priority projects to be implemented.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) of the question, consideration would be given for the provision of additional parking facilities, the construction of toilet facilities and the lighting systems, once mitigating measures have been implemented in the area surrounding the health track.

With respect to part (d) of the question, I am informed that the Signal Mountain Health Track was already being used by joggers well before health track project was completed in August 2006.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister that pending this major rehabilitation work, that minor urgent rehabilitation be done? *Dans certains endroits, il y des affaissements* due to heavy rainfalls and hundreds of people are using this health track in the morning and in the afternoon. So, for safety reasons, can we know whether these urgent works can be carried out?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, in fact, I have taken this on board that due consideration be given so that this does not pose a risk to public safety, that is, to the people using the track. Lots of people in Port Louis, namely the region of Ward 4, are using this track and I have asked the officers to put a notice board there so that people can be careful while using it for the time being.

Mr Bhagwan: Since there are lots of problems concerning the parking zone, can the hon. Minister discuss with the Traffic Management Team or the Municipality of Port Louis so that the traffic arrangements - especially in the morning and also in the afternoon - be re-organised, like the road markings and so on, so that the delimitation of the parking zone could be well defined?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, I am taking good note of the propositions and I will see to it that we make all the necessary arrangements, even when there is heavy use of the health track. We can also arrange that all the vehicles do not use these roads at the same time.

Mr Mahomed: Madam Speaker, thank you. In reply to my PQ B/86 of last year, the then hon. Minister told us that the specifications had been finalised for the solar PV street lighting and now we learn that there is a problem of landslide. May we have a time frame from the hon. Minister for JICA to submit its report and the remedial work implemented because, at the moment, there is a dire need for lighting as people jog there at night.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, I have already taken on board that we should do that in speedy manners as I just said. It poses risk to the safety of users and I am aware of that. I will see to it that we do it as immediately as possible.

PORT LOUIS THEATRE - RENOVATION

(No. B/297) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the Port Louis Theatre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to –

- (a) where matters stand as to the renovation thereof, and
- (b) if he has received a request from the Ministry of Arts and Culture for the vesting thereof in his Ministry and, if so, indicate the
 - (i) reasons given by the said Ministry in support of the said request, and
 - (ii) if the request has been acceded to.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Municipal Council of Port Louis has approved the project for the renovation of the Port Louis Theatre and an amount of Rs79 m. has been earmarked for the phase 1 of the project.

The consultant is presently working on the bidding documents for the Phase I for the project. The draft bidding document, along with all the drawings, will then be submitted to the Central Procurement Board for vetting prior to invitation for bids.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that there has been no official request from the Ministry of Arts and Culture for the vesting of the Theatre in the Ministry.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Minister aware that the Minister of Arts and Culture has made public statements to the effect that his Ministry or himself wants to take possession of the Port Louis Theatre, which is a very wrong signal which the Ministry is sending to the Local Government? Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has discussed same with his colleague?

Dr. Husnoo: As I said, we had no official request about this.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister say whether he has discussed with the Municipality of Port Louis and, at least, give us a time frame when work is scheduled to start, according to the plan of the municipality?

Dr. Husnoo: The invitation for the bid is going to be launched in June 2016 - in a couple of months - and by the time the bid is evaluated and the contract is given, hopefully, by the end of the year, we will start the construction.

Mr Mahomed: Until such time, is the Theatre operational or the building is not practical?

Dr. Husnoo: As you know, it is actually not operational.

BELLE ROSE/OLLIER AVENUE MARKET FAIR – TRAFFIC CONGESTION

(No. B/298) **Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to Belle Rose/Ollier Avenue Market Fair, he will state if he is aware of the chaotic traffic situation prevailing thereat and in the vicinity thereof on Sunday mornings caused by the holding of the market fair thereat and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

The Vice-Prime Minister & Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, I am aware of the chaotic traffic situation prevailing along the Belle Rose/Ollier Avenue during the market fair on Sunday mornings.

As regards the measures taken, I am informed that the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has prohibited parking at the following places –

- (a) On both sides of the bus stops found near the market fair along Remy Ollier Avenue.
- (b) Near road junctions (Cnr Lees Ave/Ollier Avenue, Ithier Avenue /Ollier Avenue and Mareemootoo Avenue /Ollier Avenue).
- (c) Near pedestrian crossings and junction Ollier Avenue/Pasteur Avenue.

I am also informed that four loading bays will be introduced along Ithier Avenue, near the market, to address the problem caused by loading and unloading activities.

Furthermore, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit is taking necessary action to undertake all yellow road markings along Ollier Avenue with a view to preventing savage parking and thus ensuring traffic fluidity.

Mr Ramano: Le ministre n'est pas le *substantive Minister*. Est-ce que le ministre est d'accord à considérer la possibilité de décréter un *no-parking zone* de la rue Pasteur, où se trouve la mosquée, jusqu'à l'avenue Marimootoo ? Parce que la route est tellement exigüe, prévoir des parkings tout le long de ce chemin aggrave ce problème.

Mr Soodhun: I am going to inform my hon. colleague that the Traffic Management and the Road Safety Unit is also working seriously with the Municipality of Quatre Bornes to see to it that the wish of the hon. Member be taken into consideration.

Mr Ramano: Peut-être aussi, M. le ministre, d'assurer la présence policière les jours de foire d'une façon systématique, de 7 heures du matin jusqu'à midi au moins.

Mr Soodhun: Madam Speaker, I am going to refer the matter to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister who is in charge of the Police.

ROAD ACCIDENTS – RISK FACTORS

(No. B/299) Mr J. Leopold (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to road accidents which occur in mainland Mauritius, he will state the key risk factors which have been identified therefor, if any, indicating the actions taken by his Ministry to the address the issue.

The Vice-Prime Minister & Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has identified four key risk factors that contribute to road crashes as follows –

- (i) poor driver behaviour, including drink driving and over speeding;
- (ii) poor inter-visibility between road users;
- (iii) roadworthiness of motor vehicles, including motorcycles, and
- (iv) existence of accident prone areas due to non-compliance to posted speed limits.

Madam Speaker, road safety is an issue of national importance. Consequently, a series of bold measures have been taken by the Ministry with a view to reducing the number of road crashes. I am tabling a series of measures taken so far in this respect.

I am confident that, with all these measures enunciated, we will be able to respond to the aspirations of the Mauritian population by providing one of the safest road traffic systems in this region of the world.

ROAD ACCIDENTS – HOSPITALS – EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES

(No. B/300) Mr J. Leopold (Second Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to road accidents, he will state –

- (a) if his Ministry is involved in the prevention thereof and, if so, indicate how;
- (b) the common types of injuries associated therewith;
- (c) the number of persons who have become disabled as a result thereof, since 2015 to date, and
- (d) the measures being taken to improve the emergency response services of the public hospitals to cope with the increasing incidence thereof.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, my Ministry works in close collaboration with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping for the prevention of road accidents in Mauritius. In this context, a National Road Safety Strategy for Mauritius 2016-2025 is being elaborated by the MPI. In this plan, there is emphasis on the prevention of road accidents.

My Ministry is also represented on the National Road Safety Council set up under the aegis of the MPI. The Council's remit is to provide technical input and suggestions in view of the preparation of the National Road Safety Strategy 2016-2025.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the most common types of injuries associated with road accidents, which are referred to regional hospitals, are as follows –

- sprains, lacerations with external bleeding, fractures and amputations;
- internal bleeding;
- concussion and head injury;
- spinal injuries, and
- multiple injuries.

With regard to part (c) of the question, 2,338 persons involved in road traffic accidents were admitted to regional hospitals in 2015, and depending on the nature and gravity of the injuries sustained, their length of stay varied from one day to over three months. As some of these persons are still under treatment following injuries sustained in road traffic accidents as well as for other medical problems, no distinction is made between them and other patients following treatment at hospitals. In view thereof, it is difficult to have a specific data on the number of disabled persons and the degree of their disability.

With regard to part (d) of the question, I would like to inform the House that a series of measures are being adopted by the SAMU to improve response in emergency medical services as follows –

- the setting up of a Resuscitation Unit at the level of the Accident and Emergency Department in each regional hospital to enhance the provision of medical services in cases of vital emergencies;
- 25 medical staff have been selected to reinforce the SAMU team after appropriate training and 22 nurses have already been trained in emergency medicine;

- the country has been divided into five regions to enable SAMU to intervene more promptly to requests, thereby improving the response time for referral to casualties to the nearest regional hospital;
- the fleet of ambulances has been increased from 5 to 10, and upgrading of all non-SAMU ambulances has been effected. There will be a further increase in the Fleet planned for 2016-2017, and lastly
- a SAMU Emergency Preparedness Response Communication and Recovery Plan has been established to provide emergency medical services in cases of mass casualties and disasters.

Mr Leopold: With the increasing number of injuries caused by road traffic collision, I just want to ask the hon. Minister whether he considers the problem as a public health issue. My second question is whether his Ministry is considering airlifting patients to hospitals, because of road congestion.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, with regard to the first question, I would like to express the wish that we have fewer road accidents, so that there won't be that much of a problem in the hospital services. With regard to airlifting, I know all the fuss there is about helicopter use, but that is something that we can consider.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Joomaye: My question pertains to the services of the SAMU. The hon. Minister is certainly aware that in remote areas of more than 15 km from regional hospitals the delay of intervention of SAMU is sometimes very high and this can be very prejudicial to some people having road traffic accident. I would like to know if the hon. Minister would consider to have delocalised posting of SAMU vehicles, for example, at Souillac Hospital and Cantin Hospital at Tamarin in order to enable the delay of intervention to be decreased?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, we can certainly look into that, but I must say that SAMU deals with specific cases. For example, SAMU intervened in 1,066 cases of road traffic accidents out of the 1,706 cases which transited through the 114, which is the SAMU number. SAMU does not respond to every phone call. It asks certain questions and there is a protocol. It is only when they are satisfied that the intervention of SAMU is required that they go. But, ideally, of course, SAMU should be located within each part of the country, but, we are trying to improve the service as much as possible.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/308 and B/309 have been withdrawn. Next question, hon. Quirin!

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF BEAU BASSIN AND ROSE HILL – SPORTS
ACTIVITIES**

(No. B/301) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the financial year 2015-2016, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin and Rose Hill, information as to the –

- (a) quantum of the grants allocated to each –
 - (i) sports clubs performing at national level, and
 - (ii) each regional sports clubs and table a list thereof, and
- (b) overall budget allocated for sport activities.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I shall, with your permission, arrange for the information pertaining to the quantum of grants allocated by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill to each sports club performing at the national level for the financial year 2015 to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

As regards the grants for financial year 2016, I am informed by the Municipal Council that a policy decision has already been taken by its Welfare Committee and same will be ratified at its next Council Meeting scheduled on 28 April 2016.

As regards part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed that no grant is allocated to regional sports clubs. However, municipal and sports facilities are made available to them.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed that the overall budget allocated for the financial year 2015 from January to December 2015 was Rs3,130,000, whereas for the financial year 2016, that is, from January to June 2016, it is Rs1,550,000.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, j'ai bien compris que l'honorable ministre va déposer la liste des clubs de l'élites qui bénéficient d'une contribution financière de la municipalité. Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait des centaines, mais peut-être une dizaine tout au

plus. Il peut très bien, je pense, nous donner les noms de ces clubs et la somme que chaque club a reçu pour l'année financière 2015-2016.

Dr. Husnoo: As I have just mentioned, Madam Speaker, this is going to be placed in the Library. I don't have the answer.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As regards part (b) for the question, the question relates to overall budget for sports activities, meaning for the whole panoply of activities taking place at the Council. Now, there is a decision at the beginning of this year to transfer all football grounds from the Mauritius Sports Council to the Municipal Council of Port Louis and, at this moment in time, they are in a deplorable state and the Municipal Council...

Madam Speaker: Ask your question, hon. Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed:...says that there is no budget. In fact, they are quite frank in saying that there is no budget. Can there be a reallocation of funds to this budget so that things can be remedied as a matter of priority?

Dr. Husnoo: I think we are talking about Beau Bassin/Rose Hill.

(Interruptions)

Not Port Louis!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, peut-on savoir si effectivement - si j'ai bien compris la réponse du ministre - les petits clubs de quartier n'ont rien reçu comme contribution financière pour l'année financière de 2015-2016 ?

Dr. Husnoo: There are two different budgets, 2015 and 2016. As far as the policy is concerned - I have just mentioned it - the regional clubs don't get any grant, but they can get other facilities apart from direct grant every year.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin, next question!

FOOTBALL - FOREIGN PLAYERS - WORK PERMIT

(No. B/302) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to football, he will give a list of the foreign players who have been issued with work permits and who are performing in the National Football Leagues since January 2015 to date, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) respective club in which the foreign player is performing;
- (b) date of arrival in Mauritius thereof, and
- (c) nationality thereof.

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, according to the records available at my Ministry, 39 work permits have been issued to foreign players who are performing in the National Football Leagues, that is, the Premier League, First Division and Second Division Championship since 2015 to date.

I am tabling the information requested for.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, peut-on savoir du ministre s'il existe des règlements par rapport aux recrutements des joueurs étrangers et, si c'est le cas, de bien vouloir nous dire lesquels ?

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, all football clubs desirous of recruiting foreign players should be affiliated with the Mauritius Football Association and are allowed to recruit a maximum of five foreign players. I would also add that at a meeting of Cabinet held on 18 January 2008 Cabinet had agreed to local football clubs recruiting a maximum of five foreign players so as to enhance the performance level of local teams. However, in the same vein, a policy of allowing for the recruitment of only two foreign players for other collective sports was maintained.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire, en ce qui concerne le recrutement de ces joueurs étrangers, si cela se fait par le club demandeur ou bien par l'intermédiaire d'agents recruteurs ?

Mr Callichurn: Le club demandeur.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES 2019 – MAURITIUS HOSTING

(No. B/303) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the preparations for the holding of the Indian Ocean Island Games in Mauritius in 2019, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the two-pronged approach is being adopted with regard to the preparation for the holding of the Indian Ocean Island Games in Mauritius in 2019.

On the one hand, an organising committee (*Comité d'Organisation des Jeux des Iles (COJI)*) which has been set up and duly registered with the Registrar of Association will be responsible for the overall organisation of the games. 12 subcommittees have been appointed to assist the *COJI* in its tasks.

On the other hand, a *Comité de Suivi* comprising representatives of the Mauritius Olympic Committee, *Club Maurice*, Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports, the Sports Medical Unit as well as senior officials of my Ministry has also been set up. This Committee will be responsible to monitor closely the preparation of athletes of different sports.

Both *COJI* and the *Comité de Suivi* as well as the different subcommittees are already working in full swing in close collaboration with all stakeholders, including the National Sports Federation concerned.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, vu l'état déplorable dans lequel se trouve bon nombre d'infrastructures sportives dans l'île, de ce fait le ministre peut-il nous dire quels sont ses projets en terme de rénovation d'infrastructures existantes mais aussi en terme de nouvelles infrastructures pour les jeux de 2019 ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Le Comité de Suivi et le *COJI* sont en train de faire une évaluation de toutes les infrastructures afin de voir que tout soit aux normes au niveau international pour qu'on puisse accueillir les jeux. Concernant des nouveaux projets, le Comité de Suivi soumettra son rapport bientôt.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Merci Madame. Les jeux des îles est un moment privilégié pour les peuples de l'Océan Indien mais aussi un grand évènement sportif. On pourrait savoir du ministre pourquoi une discipline, le tennis en l'occurrence, qui a été introduite en 1979, n'a

pas été retenue par le Comité Olympique ? Est ce qu'on est en train d'assister à un règlement de compte entre la Fédération et le Comité Olympique ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Non, en fin de compte c'est le CIJ qui prend la liste des disciplines. Ils ont arrêté une liste de disciplines mais tout n'est pas encore définitif, il y a une représentation de la Fédération du tennis. Si c'est le cas le CIJ va l'étudier, et pourquoi pas ?

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, si j'ai bien compris la réponse de l'honorable ministre des Sports, la liste des disciplines qui seront au programme pour les jeux de 2019, n'est pas finalisée encore. Donc, il est bon de savoir - d'après mes informations - que le choix des disciplines revient au pays organisateur, c'est-à-dire, à l'État, au gouvernement. C'est le ministère des Sports qui choisit les disciplines à être programmées pour les jeux. Donc, je demanderai à l'honorable ministre de prendre en considération le fait que le *handball* est une discipline pratiquée par bon nombre de jeunes et de s'assurer que le *handball* figure au programme des jeux.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madame la présidente, c'est le CIJ, en fin de compte, qui organise les jeux et qui met toutes les réglementations en place. De toute façon, la liste n'est pas encore définitive; il y a des représentations de tous les pays pour inclure une discipline et ce n'est pas encore final. On attend.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether a new *Village des Jeux* va être construite avec les hébergements et tous les accessoires entourant les Villages des Jeux?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, we have many different options regarding *les Villages des Jeux*. On veut avoir des Villages des Jeux vraiment de bon standard pour les athlètes surtout que ce sera le 10^{ème} Jeux des Iles. Il y a plusieurs propositions. Je suis en train de voir avec les ministères des infrastructures publiques, des terres et de la *good governance for Heritage City*. Il y a d'autres propositions encore qui ont été amenées devant le COJI. On est en train de faire une étude et de là quand j'aurai une décision finale, j'informerai la Chambre.

MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL – CLIPS & LOGOS - CONTRACT

(No. B/304) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Sports Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to if it has awarded a contract to one Mr N. K. for the production of clips and for the vectorisation and animation of logos for the National Sports Award held in January 2016 and, if so, give details thereof.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mauritius Sports Council that the contract for the production of clips for vectorisation and animation of logos for the National Sports Award held in January 2016 was awarded to ANK Video Production.

Regarding the second part of the question, I wish to inform the House that, at this stage, I cannot give any detail on the award of the contract as the matter is subject to an inquiry by the ICAC.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, est-ce que l'honorable ministre est en train de dire qu'il ne peut pas informer la Chambre s'il y a eu un exercice d'appel d'offres avant que le contrat soit alloué à Monsieur N. K.?

Mr Sawmynaden: As I mentioned, there is an inquiry by ICAC and I won't give any further comment on that.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House and also the country whether his Adviser on public relation matters, who is a member of the Sports Council, has been involved in that particular case and subject to inquiry by ICAC?

Mr Sawmynaden: He is a member of the Board, but I do not know whether there is any inquiry or he has been involved in any case like that.

Mr Uteem: Has the Mauritius Sports Council conducted an inquiry to find out whether there has been any *maldonne* in this case and taken any action against anyone who may be involved?

Mr Sawmynaden: At the moment, ICAC is inquiring. So, we will wait for the inquiry from ICAC.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire s'il avait demandé à Monsieur N. K. d'étouffer cette affaire alors que ce dernier était venu le rencontrer pour dénoncer son *PRO* pour tentative de corruption ? Est-ce que l'honorable ministre peut nous répondre ?

Mr Sawmynaden: I will say I will not comment further. There is an inquiry going on.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, last time, I asked a question, PQ B/911, on 17 November 2015 concerning this Adviser, Mr R. M. I asked the Minister whether that person was on bail; he had a Police case: assault against the Police. The Minister informed the House –

“The information is wrong. That person is not on bail.”

I can state to the House that the hon. Minister misguided the House. That person is on bail. The case is actually being taken at Court. So, misleading the House on such an important matter is very, very serious. I will come later on with a Motion as stated in the Standing Orders. Can the hon. Minister, at least, through the Rt. hon. Prime Minister see that that person be sacked as he is not fit to be an Adviser in Government?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, can I understand that you are coming with a Motion soon on this issue?

Mr Bhagwan: I am coming with a Motion. I am asking whether he is still an Adviser, that habitual criminal.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr Sawmynaden: At the moment, he is still in post and his contract is expiring in ten days' time.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister says that ICAC is conducting an inquiry. There has been a recording that has circulated on the website all over the place which purports to have a conversation, which purports to involve the hon. Minister. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has been interrogated in connection with this case, and if he has not, whether he is prepared to go and help and collaborate with the Police and ICAC fully on this matter?

Mr Sawmynaden: As I mentioned, there is an inquiry being carried out. If tomorrow they call me, I will answer.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: If I heard the hon. Minister correctly, he stated that his contract is being terminated in some weeks. Can he inform the House whether that person is still active as a member of the Mauritius Sports Council, whether he is acting within the Ministry and have access to files?

Mr Sawmynaden: As I told you, he is still a member of the Mauritius Sports Council and so far, until his contract is expired, I cannot answer any question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: I will ask one question to the hon. Minister. From what hon. Bhagwan has said, there was this issue about, at one point in time, the hon. Minister saying

that his Adviser was not on bail. If I put the question again and that is the question that I am putting: does the hon. Minister want to correct his initial answer or does he maintain his initial answer?

Mr Sawmynaden: This is the information that I had at this time. Until now, I cannot say whether he is on bail or not.

PORT - DUBAI PORTS WORLD - CONTRACT

(No. B/305) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the proposed signature of a contract with Dubai Ports World for port operations, he will state where matters stand.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

PAS GÉOMÉTRIQUES - LEASE

(No. B/306) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to *Pas Géométriques*, he will state, since January 2015 to date, the number of –

- (a) new leases thereof that have been awarded, and
- (b) existing leases that have been renewed, indicating in respect of the above, in each case, the -
 - (i) name of the lessee thereof;
 - (ii) location thereof, and
 - (iii) extent and value thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, since January 2015 till date, 81 new leases have been approved and awarded. During this same period, 68 existing leases have been renewed.

With respect to parts (a) and (b) (i), (ii) & (iii), I am tabling a copy of the list of the 81 new leases and 68 existing leases that have been renewed, together with the name of the lessee, the location, the extent and the rental.

The House will note that I have also included in the list the purpose and period of the lease.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what is the procedure and time period for the renewal of lease and the application of new lease? How are these treated at the level of his Ministry and what is the time frame for doing that?

Mr Soodhun: The procedure has been well set up on the website of the Ministry and it is for the public to go and find out this. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I am ready to give all the information.

Mr Jhugroo: As the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is well aware, we had cases in the past at the NHDC, where minors have acquired directly or indirectly immovable properties ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Wait, I am coming with the question.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please! I am just reminding you that this question is in regard to *Pas Géométriques*. Your question will relate to *Pas Géométriques*.

Mr Jhugroo: As you know, we had minors before who acquired NHDC in State land. So, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister assure the House that in the case of State land, no lease has been granted or transferred to minors, and if this is so, can he give details thereon?

(Interruptions)

Mr Soodhun: Concerning the NHDC, I will ask the hon. Member to come with a substantive question, whereas for the State land, Madam Speaker, I am given to understand that under the existing legislation, minors are not eligible to hold a lease. However, I have been informed of a case where a company which is a Trustee of a Trust, has acquired the leasehold rights in a *campement* site lease wherein all the beneficiaries of the Trust are minors. The Trustee...

(Interruptions)

Let me finish! The Trustee Company has a sole shareholder who is also the protector of the Trust. The *campement* site lease, which is of an extent of 634 square metres at Quatre Coco

'pieds dans l'eau', has been acquired at the price of Rs14 m. in February 2013. I am informed that the sole shareholder of this company is one, the person named Muhammad Reza Cassam Uteem and the minors are the children of Reza Uteem and their children to be. In the light...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Soodhun! Please ...

(Interruptions)

Order please! Order! Hon. Soodhun, just please refrain from giving names. Usually we give the initials.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Soodhun, please!

(Interruptions)

Refrain from giving names, please give the initials.

(Interruptions)

Mr Soodhun: The case is like this in the question and let me inform: in the light of the various apparent breaches of the laws and established procedures in this matter, I am proposing to refer the case to the Good Governance for complete review.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I am really sorry ...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Order please, I am on my feet! Order! Hon. Leader of the Opposition I heard you saying that *zot aranzet avec* the Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Did you mention the Speaker?

(Interruptions)

But did you say that they have *aranzer avec le* Speaker? Because I don't want to be a party to this...

(Interruptions)

This is ...

(Interruptions)

I am asking you whether you said it. You have to tell me whether you said it or not.

(Interruptions)

I want to know from you whether ...

(Interruptions)

I am asking you because it is very dangerous if you say that *zot ine aranzet*. That is why I am asking you whether you said it. If you say that you did not mingle the Speaker...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition ...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition you have mine now

(Interruptions)

Wait, I have said several times that you should mind your tone when you talk to me. Don't get excited when you talk to me.

(Interruptions)

Don't get excited when you talk to me. I will not accept that.

(Interruptions)

Are you challenging my authority, hon. Leader of the Opposition?

(Interruptions)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, I am on my feet! Hon. Shakeel Mohamed I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, I have said that when I am on my feet the House has to be silent. I have said that several times.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the procedure for a *Pas Géométriques* to be changed from residential to industrial lease. What is the procedure at your Ministry because we are coming back with something like this?

Mr Soodhun: You have to go and apply and when you apply there is a Committee and there is...

(Interruptions)

You go and you have it.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order please!

(Interruptions)

Order I said.

(Interruptions)

Order, I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

Should I leave you!

(Interruptions)

Should I leave you to decide and do cross-talking ...

(Interruptions)

I said order! Now, the hon. Member has asked his question; the hon. Minister has replied already. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to know how come on 06 February 2015, after the election, one *Société* Mohamed Umeir Ibne Showkut whose...

(Interruptions)

... *actionnaire* is your son.

Mr Soodhun: My son.

Mr Uteem: On 06 February 2015, he applies for a new industrial lease, 60 years. Not even four months later, in May 2015 this is approved. So, I want to know what influence has the hon. Minister done in facilitating this.

Mr Soodhun: Madam Speaker, the fact that I am Minister and I am going to give all about the *Compagnie de Culture de Tabac Ltée* and the *Société* Mohamed Umeeir Ibne Showkut. On 18 November 2008, the company *Culture de Tabac Ltée* signed a *campement* site lease agreement for the period of 31.10.2008 to 30.10.2068 and in consideration to an annual of Rs193,068 and a premium amounting to Rs5,800,001 m.

On 16.12.2010, the *Société Culture de Tabac Ltée* applied for the excision of 1,782 square metres in favour of *Société* Mohamed Umeeir Ibne Showkut. On 10 February 2011, when I was not Minister at all, the excision was approved and the *Société* was informed that subject to the submission of a notarial deed witnessing the excision, a 60-year industrial lease will be drawn in favour of *Société* Mohamed Umeeir Ibne Showkut.

On 15 February 2011, the letter of intent was issued by the Ministry - I was not Minister - to the effect that an industrial lease was of period of 60 years will be granted to the company upon the submission of a notarial deed. I give guarantee, if anybody has any proof, to go to Central CID, to go to ICAC; if I, as a Minister of Housing, have intervened on that. I accept to pay the price and I am going to resign. I give you my guarantee, if anybody can prove that I have been involved I am going to resign. I give my word and you go and tell that...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Soodhun! Calm down!

(Interruptions)

Calm down!

(Interruptions)

Don't get excited. Order please!

(Interruptions)

Order, order!

(Interruptions)

Can we have some order in the House!

(Interruptions)

Please, I am appealing to both sides of the House not to get excited and not to get carried away by the debates.

(Interruptions)

We have to be careful in what we say and there is an orderly way of proceeding.

(Interruptions)

Order, I have said! Next question! Hon. Uteem!

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS BOARD - TRAINING COURSES

(No. B/307) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the type of training courses offered to the disabled persons, indicating the number of –

- (a) disabled persons enrolled therefor, and
- (b) trainers thereof, indicating their respective qualifications.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board is set up under the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act 1996.

Under section 4 of the Act, the functions of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board include the operation and promotion of schemes and projects for the training and employment of persons with disabilities.

Accordingly, a number of training courses are dispensed by the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board or by other institutions in collaboration with the Board. From January 2015 to date, a total of 158 persons with disabilities have been or are being offered training in courses such as Basic IT, CV Writing, Housekeeping and Henna Application dispensed by the TEDPB in collaboration with other institutions.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that, for example, for 2015, 20 persons with disabilities have been trained in office and communication skills, 37 in Basic IT Skills, 1 in Housekeeping, 16 in CV Writing, Interview and Confidence Building and 5 in Henna Applications. In addition, 20 persons have started a course in Basic Literacy and

Numeracy in October 2015 to end in June 2016. 27 new trainees have also started their course in Basic IT Skills. Over and above these training courses, the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board is, itself, presently providing training courses to 18 persons with disabilities at its Centre in Calebasse and 14 at its Centre in Rose Belle.

With a view to enabling persons with disabilities to acquire working experience and becoming employable, the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board also funds and operates a Skill Government Programme. There are 14 persons with disabilities under this programme. In March this year, a new Skills Development Programme has been introduced by the TEDPB whereby the latter and the receiving institution share the cost. Under this programme, four persons with disabilities have started on-the-job training which is being provided in collaboration with BDO International Financial Services and the Loïs Lagesse Trust Fund.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am tabling the information.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, answering to PQ No. B/353 last year, the hon. Minister stated that the number of persons with disabilities registered with the Board is 2,436 and now we hear that there is between 20 to 27 people who are trained by the Board. So, may I know from the hon. Minister what is being done to encourage people with disabilities to be trained so that they can get an employment more easily?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: We are providing them with structured training and, at the same time, we have set up a Committee on employers which has launched a massive sensitisation campaign. The Committee meets non-compliant employers to give them an insight of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act and, at the same time, see to it that the quota of 3% is being respected. So, we are also working towards urging employers to provide employment to them.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister mentioned that she is tabling the information (b) about the trainers, but is she aware that many of the trainers who are actually providing training at the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board today do not have sufficient qualification, they are not properly trained and the courses that are being run are totally mismatched with the market demand.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The courses dispensed at TEDPB do not warrant the recruitment of degree holders because the courses which are being dispensed are in jewellery,

in embroidery, in henna applications. If the trainees need high-level traineeships, then they are sent to appropriate institutions.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister is aware probably that there is a special training called Skills Development Training Programme that is run by the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board and this training provides for financial assistance to the attendees. So, may I know from the hon. Minister what are the criteria for eligibility into that Skills Development Training Programme?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, as rightly said, the trainees are under the Skills Development Programme. They are being paid a stipend of Rs6,000. There was no criteria before. Now we have same criteria for eligibility such as age limit, proof of literacy, able and willing to work, etc.

(Interruptions)

Well, they will have to be registered with the TEDPB.

Dr. Joomaye: Madam Speaker, as the hon. Minister is surely well aware that the number of persons with very severe impaired vision is on an increase due to diabetes, I would like to know how many braille trainers are employed currently by the Ministry or is it only trainers from the Lois Lagesse Trust Fund who are giving this service?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions does not employ people. People with impaired vision are being trained at the TEDPB by trainers from the Lois Lagesse Trust Fund.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/332 and B/337 have been withdrawn! Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM - COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

(No. B/308) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Light Rail Transit System Project, he will state if the decision of Government not to proceed with the implementation thereof for economic reasons was based on a long term cost benefit analysis and, if so, indicate when same was carried out and by whom.

(Withdrawn)

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM PROJECT - LAND EARMARKED

(No. B/309) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Light Rail Transit System Project, he will state if a Committee has been set up to look into the aspect of the land earmarked therefor and, if so, indicate -

- (a) when the said Committee was set up;
- (b) the Chairperson thereof, and
- (c) the terms of reference thereof.

(Withdrawn)

EBENE CYBER CITY – BUILDINGS - PURCHASE

(No. B/310) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the purchase of buildings by Government in the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited in the Ebene Cyber City, since July 2005 to date, he will state the number and respective names thereof, indicating in each case -

- (a) the extent of space available thereat;
- (b) the purchase price thereof;
- (c) the names of the previous owners thereof, and
- (d) if the Valuation Office had carried out a prior assessment of the said building and, if so, table copy of the valuation report in relation thereto.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, since July 2005 to date, Government, as such, has purchased no building in the Ebene Cyber City.

However, during that period, three Government or Government controlled agencies have purchased four buildings in all. Two buildings were purchased by the National Pension Fund, one by the Financial Services Commission and one by SICOM.

As regards parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, with your permission, I shall be tabling the relevant information with respect to these four buildings.

Moreover, I am informed by the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd that two out of ten floors in a building, on a plot of land of one acre, have been sold to the Human Resource

Development Council (HRDC) by the previous owner, namely, *Société Civile Immobilière D'attribution* Nundun Gopee Tower.

With regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed that the services of a private professional valuer were retained for the purchase of the two buildings by the National Pension Fund. Thereafter, the Valuation Department was consulted regarding the rental to be claimed by the National Pension Fund for those two buildings.

With regard to the building purchased by the Financial Services Commission, I am informed that a representative of the Valuation Department formed part of the Evaluation Committee which evaluated the bids that were received through the Central Procurement Board.

As regards the building purchased by SICOM, I am informed that the company appoints its own consultant for property projects.

BATELAGE ROAD, SOUILLAC - MUDSLIDES

(No. B/311) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to Batelage Road, in Souillac, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand as to the works being carried out to prevent the recurrence of mudslides thereat.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No comments!

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that following a localised slope failure that occurred at Batelage, Souillac, in the early morning of 23 December 2015, the Land Management Unit (LMU) of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, in collaboration with the Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA) submitted a preliminary plan for counter measures in respect of slope stabilisation.

Madam Speaker, furthermore the LMU and experts from JICA together with a delegation from Korean Expressway Cooperation (KEC), have studied the problem and have recommended a detailed geo-technical investigation of the concerned segment of the road prior to proposing any permanent solution. In this connection, the RDA is currently preparing

the Request For Proposal (RFP) for the enlistment of specialised contractors for the geo-technical investigation which is expected to be launched in mid May 2016.

GRAND BOIS - MEDICLINIC

(No. B/312) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to Grand Bois, he will state if his Ministry proposes to construct a mediclinic thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, the answer is no.

With regard to the second part of the question, I will request the hon. Member to refer to the reply I made to PQ No. 928 on 17 November 2015.

Dr. Joomaye: Madam Speaker. I would like to appeal to the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life to reconsider his decision because there is real need in that region for a mediclinic. It is highly densely populated, especially in the period of Maha Shivaratri when the pilgrims walk down from Grand Bassin, the first Medical Centre is the Rose Belle Hospital. So, there is real need for a mediclinic in Grand Bois.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ramano!

Mr Gayan: Can I reply to this question? Well, Madam Speaker, I am afraid that it will not be possible to accede to the request of the hon. Member because for mediclinics, if I go according to the established norms, the normal annual attendance should be over 100,000 whereas at the place where we are talking about the annual attendance is 36,000. So, it does not meet the norms that are established.

BROWN SEQUARD HOSPITAL – SYNTHETIC DRUG ADDICTS

(No. B/313) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Brown Sequared Hospital, he will state the number of patients who are presently admitted thereto and undergoing treatment following consumption of/addiction to synthetic drugs, indicating the –

- (a) respective age thereof, and
- (b) number of staff attending thereto.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I am informed that there is no patient at present who is admitted and undergoing treatment at the Brown Sequared Hospital following consumption or addiction to synthetic drugs.

Mr Ramano: Est-ce que je peux savoir, sur un *month-to-month basis*, le nombre de patients qui sont admis là-bas pour ces cas de drogue?

Mr Gayan: I have the annual number for 2015, Madam Speaker. It is 49 at the BSH and about 70 in the other regional hospitals.

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux savoir du l'honorable ministre l'âge des patients qui sont admis pour des cas de *synthetic drugs*?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, for the year 2015, it would appear that the age group for 18 years was 18; age group 18 to 30 was 19; 30 to 40 was 8, and over 40 was 3. The numbers that I have given are with regard to the males. For the females, it was hardly any; one or two.

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, valeur du jour, il n'existe aucune infrastructure séparée en ce qui concerne les patients qui sont traités pour les cas de *synthetic drugs*. Ils sont internés ensemble avec ceux qui sont déjà là-bas pour les troubles mentaux. Est-ce qu'il y a cette possibilité de séparer complètement ces deux types de patients ?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I think that the very complex cases are admitted to the BSH, but otherwise they go to the regional hospitals.

PAILLES - BONNEFIN ROAD - BUS SERVICE

(No. B/314) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to Bonnefin Road, in Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for the advisability of providing a new bus route to service same.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, I am informed that, on 10 December 2012, a request was received at the National Transport Authority from the residents of Bonnefin Road, Pailles, for a new bus route. The request was not entertained on safety grounds, on the advice of the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit as follows -

- (i) Buses would not have to accede to Bonnefin Road from the Motorway 1. The junction of Bonnefin Road with the Motorway is of very poor geometry and buses would encounter difficulties to manoeuvre both when entering Bonnefin Road as well as when emerging from it on the Motorway.

- (ii) When entering the junction of the Bonnefin Road from the Motorway, buses would have to encroach completely on the opposite lane of traffic on Bonnefin Road. This might create hazardous situations as buses would occupy the opposite lane and would conflict with vehicles coming in the opposite direction along the road.
- (iii) Buses would not be able to enter Bonnefin Road in the event that vehicles are waiting at the junction to emerge on the Motorway, as they would not have sufficient space to manoeuvre. This would require buses to wait on the Motorway for the junction to be cleared, and this situation could give rise to serious traffic and safety problems.

Mr Armance: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister consider extending the existing bus route from Guibies through DWC lane to serve the Bonnefin region? It is on the opposite side of Bonnefin Road.

Mr Soodhun: I am going to convey the request to the substantive Minister.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - PLAYGROUNDS & FOOTBALL PITCHES - RENOVATION

(No. B/315) **Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the children playgrounds and football pitches, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis

—

- (a) a list thereof which are vested in the said Council, indicating if any renovation project is being envisaged in respect thereof, and
- (b) information as to if the maintenance and cleaning thereof are carried out at regular intervals.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I shall, with your permission, arrange for the list of children playgrounds and football pitches, which are vested in the Municipal Council of Port Louis, to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

I am further informed that a project for the renovation and upgrading, as well as fixing of new children's play equipment in the children's playgrounds mentioned in the list, which is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly, is under way. Tenders have already

been launched for same and contracts are being signed. The renovation works, as well as fixing of new equipment, will start shortly.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that maintenance works are carried out as and when required, whereas cleaning works are carried out regularly.

Mr Armance: I have been told that several children's playgrounds in the constituency have no owners. Unfortunately, they are in a very bad condition and are neither under the maintenance nor the management of the Municipality. Will the hon. Minister consider looking into this?

Dr. Husnoo: The work is being done. We are going to submit the list and the work, as you see, is being done.

Mr Ameer Meea: In relation to the renovation project which is being envisaged, is the *Stade Mamade Elahee*, which is found in Cité Martial, Port Louis, also on the list?

Dr. Husnoo: With regard to the Mamade Elahee Stadium, it is being taken care by NDU.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, in relation to children's playground in Vallée Pitot, is the hon. Minister aware that, for now one month, the Police have put padlock in the children's playground? If he is not aware, can he look into the matter and talk to the Municipal Council of Port Louis so that same can be re-opened and children can start using the playground again?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes, Madam Speaker, I will look into that.

PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR'S COUNCIL – SETTING UP

(No. B/316) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the land surveyors, he will state if his Ministry is proposing to set up a Land Surveyor's Council therefor and, if so, when.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, my Ministry will set up a Professional Land Surveyor's Council under the Professional Land Surveyor's Council Act 2014, which caters for the regulation of the profession of Land Surveyors.

Section 52 of the Act makes provision for the Act to come into operation on a date to be fixed by Proclamation or on different dates for the coming into operation of different sections of the Act.

The Professional Land Surveyor's Council will act as a mechanism to ensure that there is a more professional approach in the handling of land issues by Land Surveyors, in accordance with the Cadastral Survey Act 2011. This Act will provide for standards and procedures to carry out land survey in the context of the island-wide cadastre.

In order to prevent malpractices in the use of Parcel Identification Number in survey reports and memoranda of survey, I have approved, early this year, that other sections of the Cadastral Survey Act 2011 be proclaimed together with the preparation of new Regulations, as a result of which new work processes will be developed.

Thereafter, the Professional Land Surveyor's Council will be set up to regulate and control the profession, ensuring that land surveys are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Cadastral Survey Act and Regulations and promote advancement in the field of land surveying, while at the same time preventing fraudulent land transaction.

A team has been constituted to work out all implications involved for the eventual proclamation of the relevant sections of the Professional Land Surveyor's Council Act, which will be proclaimed after consultation with the State Law Office.

It is expected that the Regulations establishing the Council will be finalised by the end of this year.

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux connaître la composition de ce comité qui a été constitué?

Mr Soodhun: I don't have it with me. The hon. Member can come with a substantive question. It is not yet set up.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Would the hon. Vice-Prime Minister be able to enlighten us about who is currently certifying land surveyors? Because my understanding is that, as the Council is supposed to be set up, land surveyors are no longer required to be sworn land surveyors, as previously required by the Land Surveyors Act.

Mr Soodhun: There has been a last question raised by hon. Ramano. We are looking at it because it has been a complete mess. We are coming with this anyway.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Council will have jurisdiction on Government Land Surveyors also?

Mr Soodhun: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

CEB - METER READERS – RECRUITMENT

(No. B/317) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Meter Readers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the number thereof recruited district-wise since January 2016 to date, indicating the procedure followed for the recruitment thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the CEB that there has been no recruitment of Meter Readers since January 2016.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Shakeel Mohamed! Do you have got another question on this question?

Mr Mohamed: Well, I'll come with a substantive question for the other month then.

Madam Speaker: Okay! So, next question, then!

Mr Mohamed: If the hon. Vice-Prime Minister wishes, if he has other recruitments from January 2016 onwards, I will be very grateful.

Mr Collendavelloo: I have recruitments, because I foresaw that it was probably a mistake on the hon. Member's part. So, I have brought from 2001 to 2015....

(Interruptions)

I shall just table it and then you will have a look at it.

Mr Mohamed: With regard to recruitment exercise that was carried out in 2015, maybe it was a mistake; instead of '16', it should have read '15'. Could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm whether 66 people were recruited as Meter Readers by the Central Electricity Board in 2015?

Mr Collendavelloo: Of course, it does not arise out of the question. So, I need my paper. For 2015, it's 71. I will give the hon. Member the districts. This is what he is interested in.

Black River	:	0
Flacq	:	0
Grand Port	:	2
Moka	:	2
Pamplemousses	:	5
Plaines Wilhems	:	43
Port Louis	:	6
Rivière du Rempart	:	4
Savanne	:	4
Rodrigues	:	5
Total		71

Let's just say that, over the years, Plaines Wilhems is the majority from which Meter Readers are recruited. Black River, we see almost nil, except in one or two years. There is a great disparity district by district. I have asked CEB now to see what can be done about it, but I'll put in the list so that the hon. Member can compare. I agree that there is something to be done about it.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

HOSPITALS – HEALTH CARE ASSISTANTS – RECRUITMENT

(No. B/318) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Health Care Assistants, he will state the number thereof recruited district-wise since January 2016 to date, indicating the procedure followed for the recruitment thereof.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I am going to give the information being requested district-wise.

With regard to the other part, under delegated powers of the Public Service Commission to my Ministry, recruitment of Health Care Assistants is done firstly from in-service officers of my Ministry and, secondly, from the list of candidates who were registered with the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations, Employment in Training.

Madam Speaker, the procedures followed for the recruitment exercise are as follows –

Internal recruitment

- Issue of an internal circular, inviting applications from in-service officers of my Ministry;
- Interview of qualified candidates by a Selection Board;
- Public Service Commission is apprised of the report of Selection Board, and
- PSC makes the offer of appointment.

External recruitment

- Interview of qualified candidates from the list obtained from the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training;
- Public Service Commission is apprised of the report of the Selection Board and after receipt of all the clearances, the offer of appointment is made to the selected candidates.

With regard to the district-wise recruitment –

Black River	:	9
Flacq	:	31
Grand Port	:	23
Moka	:	23
Pamplemousses	:	26
Plaines Wilhems		
(Upper & Lower)	:	64
Port Louis	:	15
Rivière du Rempart	:	29

Savanne : 16

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, could the hon. Minister just confirm following the information he has given us, that with regard to the recruitment of Health Care Assistants, the fact that the list of those who were recruited that has been publicised in several press organs, how does he explain that a majority of those who have been recruited are as helpers and cleaners have come from two constituencies only, Constituencies No. 19 and No. 20? Is there a possible explanation with regard to that?

Mr Gayan: Well, I think the hon. Member is confused. The question is raised with regard to Health Care Assistants and the question is with attendants or something else. It is not the same thing at all.

Mr Mohamed: With regard to Health Care Assistants, could the hon. Minister tell us how many come from Constituencies No. 19 and No. 20?

Mr Gayan: Well, if the hon. Member were to ask a substantive question, I'll certainly give the answer. The question was only on districts.

Mr Mohamed: Is the hon. Minister tabling the list of those for us to be able to verify and then come with a substantive question?

Mr Gayan: Well, I did not say I am going to table any list, but if there is a substantive question, we will certainly consider it.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Minister consider to table a list of all those recruited since July 2005 till 14 December 2014 and the number recruited from Constituencies No. 3 and No. 5?

Mr Gayan: If there is a substantive question, we will certainly do that.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

CEB – LEGAL ADVISERS - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/319) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the legal advisers whose services have been retained by the Central Electricity Board since January 2015 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to the –

- (a) mode of selection thereof, and

(b) terms and conditions on which their services have been retained.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that, in April 2015, it retained the services of Mr Sheffick Sookia, Attorney at Law and, in June 2015, the services of Mr Ravindra Chetty, Senior Counsel, to be its legal advisers. They were selected by the General Manager after consultation with the Chairman.

Mr Sookia is in receipt of a monthly retainer of Rs40,000 while Mr Chetty's retainer amounts to Rs34,783.

In consideration of this retainer, the legal advisers are at hand to provide routine legal advice to management. They are also debarred from acting in any matter which may conflict with CEB's interests. Over and above routine legal advice, the legal advisers are paid legal fees on a case to case basis.

Mr Mohamed: Among those who are well-known Attorney-at-Law and Barristers and well-respected, are there any other lawyers who are acting for the CEB, not necessary on a retainer, but on an *ad hoc* basis?

Mr Collendavelloo: Yes, I will give the names. I understand the question is 2015 to date.

Mr Mohamed: Yes.

Mr Collendavelloo: Thank you. Between January 2015 to date, there is a sum of Rs5,428,774 which has been paid in various amounts to Attorneys –

- Sewraj,
- Ragavoodoo,
- Y. Bissessur,
- Jankee,
- André Robert,
- Guy Rivalland, Senior Attorney,
- Rungasamy,
- Counsel Unuth,
- Subash Lallah,
- Yousouf Mohamed, SC,
- Zakeer Mohamed,

- Jamsheed Peeroo,
- S. Garrim,
- S. Ramsagur,
- Riesling – I thought Riesling was an Alsatian wine, but it is Riesling Legal Services,
- Mr D. Basset S.C.;
- Mr Murday;
- Mr Mitilesh Lallah;
- Mr Yusuf Aboo Bakar S.C.;
- Mr Dhanjee;
- Mr Colunday;
- Mr Namdarkhan;
- Mr Jahangeer;
- Mrs Urmila Boolell;

(Interruptions)

There is also a sum of £75,743 which was paid to a foreign law firm. Let me just say one thing - I am not sure it is in order for me to disclose the amount which each of these law practitioners have received because of the Data Protection Act. I have asked the Solicitor General for advice if there is additional information whether it is in order for me to disclose it. But, I am disclosing global amounts.

Further, these counsels were not necessarily retained as from January 2015. Some of them were retained from years past, as we know it is the practice, they put in their bill and they are paid.

On an average, I have asked CEB to compute it. Between June 2010 and December 2014, legal fees for CEB averaged some Rs5 m. per year. So, it is roughly the same amount that is being paid year by year allowing for inflation.

We must also state that counsels who are retained are normally retained on instruction of instructing Solicitor and not of the CEB. It is the choice of the Solicitor and they come to an engagement as to the amount of fees which they will claim for their case.

Lastly, last comment, surprisingly, when we go through the amounts, it is not true that senior counsels claim necessarily more fees than junior counsels, when we go through it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister since January 2015, has there been any exercise to recruit an in-house legal adviser for the CEB, and, if yes, what has been the outcome up to now?

Mr Collendavelloo: Well, yes, that is a completely different question. I have been asked about legal advisers, for in-house; please, come with a substantive question and I shall be happy to oblige.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House if he can table - if he has not got the answer now - who are the legal advisers who have been recruited since July 2005 until December 2014? What were the procedures for recruitment and, if there have also been *ad hoc*, as mentioned by my hon. friend, who are those legal advisers who have been recruited *ad hoc* and what amount has been paid to each of them? Table it!

Mr Collendavelloo: Let me just settle one thing on procedure, I have asked and I have been told that from time immemorial it is always the General Manager who decides after consultation with the Chairman, whoever is the General Manager and whoever is the Chairman. It does not go through the Board. It does not go through any sort of process.

Mr Jhugroo: You know who was the Chairman before!

Mr Collendavelloo: Yes. Now, we are not going to question the propriety of such and such legal adviser. We are going to see the facts as they are. With regard to the list, I have not worked it out and I have not gone into it but, if the hon. Member comes with a substantive question I am sure we can try and work out the details. Let me make one reservation, I again stress that I do not think it is in order for me to disclose the amount of fees which have been paid to individual lawyers from whatever political background they may be. I don't think this is correct.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Gobin!

Mr Gobin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Question No. B/320! I wish to say it for the record, Madam Speaker, that I have disclosed my interest in this question which concerns the legal profession and I am a member of the Bar Council.

INTERNATIONAL LAW FIRMS - LEGAL SERVICES ADVISORY LICENCE

(No. B/320) **Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Attorney-General whether, there is a policy decision to establish a separate licensing regime for foreign firms to operate in Mauritius and, if so, will he state if –

- (a) consultations have started with all the stakeholders concerned therewith, including the Judiciary and the Council of Vocational and Legal Education;
- (b) the proposed regime will operate outside the ambit of the Law Practitioners Act and, if so, indicate the proposed terms and conditions thereof;
- (c) the foreign law firms will be authorized to set up and operate on their own or joint venture with law practitioners in Mauritius, and
- (d) the cardinal principle of international reciprocity will be respected and, if not, why not.

Mr Yerrigadoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, consultations are not envisaged as of yet inasmuch as the setting up of a new regime would not concern the Judiciary or the Council for Vocational and Legal Education.

With regard to part (b) of the question, however, the Law Practitioners Act (LPA) will have to be amended so that a new regime may operate outside the Act. The forthcoming global legal services advisory licence will enable flagship international law firms which are mostly solicitors firms to set up in Mauritius to provide legal advisory services on business transactions. The new licence will be administered and delivered by the Financial Services Commission. The new regime is going to complement the Law Practitioners Act in providing a more conducive environment for these flagships to be domiciled in Mauritius without being held down by specific corporate structures or on the activities with respect to what is permissible under the Law Practitioners Act.

With regard to part (c) of the question, Madam Speaker, any such foreign law firm may be authorised to operate on its own but subject to strict regulatory supervision, including under the Law Practitioners Act.

With regard to part (d) of the question, the issue of reciprocity does not arise. I am informed that Mauritius has not yet given any commitment in relation to Liberalization of Trade in Legal Services also known as (TiSA).

Madam Speaker: Hon. Gobin, any question? You don't have. Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There already exists a regime right now under the Law Practitioners Act for foreign law firms which want to practice foreign law or Mauritian law as well. So, may I know from the hon. Attorney General now that there is going to be a special licence issued by the Financial Services Commission, are we going to have two systems, one by the FSC and one under the Law Practitioners Act?

Mr Yerrigadoo: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for the question. What is being envisaged under the new licence is a different kind of business altogether. It is not going to impact on the traditional law firms which we have in Mauritius which are already catered for under the LPA whereby they can set up by joint venture with local Mauritian partners or what else. We are envisaging more in terms of LLP's structuring in order to structure the transactions of their clients, same is readily available in London, in South Africa near to us. We see in it more as an opportunity to beef up our offer, the financial services sector. But, as and when we are going to come with proposals for the law, of course, this House will be kept informed, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Since the hon. Attorney General has just answered that Mauritius has not in any way committed itself as regards the services issue at the level of the World Trade Organisation I gather, and in spite of that we are already showing that we are opening our jurisdiction to foreign law firms even further through the proposals of Government through the hon. Attorney General, could he, therefore, not consider the question for looking at the services chapter at the level of the WTO once again as far as legal services are concerned, even a carve-out is all possible at the level of the WTO and therefore reciprocity is of utmost importance because otherwise we would have our feet stamped upon and we will have to just bear it and not do anything about it?

Mr Yerrigadoo: Again, I thank the hon. Member. My learned friend the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and myself have already stressed the importance of reciprocity. My learned friend will be aware of the fight of India, for instance, in that sphere. But, what we are looking at is more a type of global business, but one thing the hon. Member can rest assured, when we would be drafting legislation we would have particular attention to enable young Mauritian practitioners to have the exposure required because what we envisage is technology transfer but also capacity building. We would see to it in consultation with these foreign law firms when they do come in that they can capacity build with our people so that

even if they are not working on the local jurisdiction *per se*, they could give exposure so that Mauritian professionals can beef up services and perhaps be posted not only in those Mauritius offices but in Geneva, Paris, London, in the US. My learned friend will also be aware that in America, for instance, these days there is a great debate about this whole legal services aspect. So, it is more in terms of the jurisdiction benefiting from it and getting Mauritius in another category so that we can beef up global business altogether in a spirit of getting Mauritius as an international financial centre of repute, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ganoo, last question!

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Attorney General has told us now that the law will be amended so that there will be two different regimes. Can the hon. Attorney General inform the House whether the law will be specifically amended to dissuade or prevent these foreign firms to operate in areas of law which our local firms are operating? What is the guarantee that this will be done?

Mr Yerrigadoo: The LPA will have to be amended because, at any rate, when you are engaged in advisory services on the local soil of Mauritius, you are giving legal services, so to speak *per se*, in the technical sense of the term. Of course, the licence given to each and every of these firms will be very limited in the specific fill-in structuring transactions, but it will be coming to this House. It is an interesting debate, but we are looking at it more on a global business perceptive.

Madam Speaker: I will allow one last question from hon. Teeluckdharry!

Mr Teeluckdharry: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Attorney General inform the House whether there is any principle of reciprocity between the countries of origin of those firms, that is, can our local firms or Chambers open their Chambers in those countries?

Mr Yerrigadoo: That is a big debate. That is what hon. Mohamed just said. Reciprocity is a big debate at the level of WTO, but what we can do is when we are getting law firms to come in their licence, to try to rope in as maximum, Mauritian professionals, so that they get the required exposure to bring Mauritius on the next level. That is the ambit of it.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that P.Q. Nos. B/323, B/324 and B/325 have been withdrawn. Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

FORT GEORGE - GAS TURBINE UNITS

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me to make a statement on the status of the prequalification document in respect of the two proposed Gas Turbine Units of 35-40 MW at Fort George which I am laying on the Table of the Assembly.

In May 2015, the World Bank recommended the procurement of gas turbines to run initially on diesel and I quote –

“in the amount the currently applied planning methodology indicates is needed (2×36 megawatts [MW])”

It is in line with these recommendations that CEB is now considering installing two heavy duty industrial gas turbines, configured in open cycle mode, each rated between 35-40 MW.

The House will note that the prequalification document just tabled does not state that “one of the mandatory conditions in the tender for prequalification” is that, I quote -

“The bidder should have experience in similar tropical island...”

In a reply to a query from one bidder, the CEB responded, *inter alia*, that, I quote –

“The applicant shall demonstrate experience of at least one gas turbine installation having unit size of 30 MW or more in a typical - and not tropical island states.”

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister Bhadain!

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION CONGRESS
2016**

The Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms (Mr S. Bhadain): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to make a statement on the ICCA Congress 2016 and Good Governance.

Madam Speaker, in a fortnight, Mauritius will host the 23rd Congress of the International Council of Commercial Arbitration (ICCA), more specifically from the 08 to 11 May.

ICCA is the most prominent international arbitration organisation in the world. It federates international arbitration institutions and practitioners, without itself administering arbitral proceedings.

The ICCA Congress is a high-level event which takes place every two years, and brings together all the major public, private and multilateral actors in the field of international arbitration. Given its importance, it is commonly referred to as the “Olympic Games of international arbitration”.

Madam Speaker, in its 50 years of history, this is the first time that the Congress is being held in Africa. It is a matter of pride that Mauritius has been retained to host this international event which will, for the first time in our history, bring to our shores arbitrators, lawyers, scholars and researchers of world repute, including Law Lords, Ministers, Attorney Generals and Chief Justices. So far, some 800 international delegates from 71 countries have confirmed their participation.

Madam Speaker, besides the distinguished participants, I have already mentioned, the House would be delighted to note that we have been able to secure the presence of His Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki Moon at this Congress. Mr Ban Ki Moon will deliver his keynote address on Monday 09 May 2016 at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre at Pailles.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry and the Host Committee responsible for the organisation of this Congress are not sparing any effort to make it not only a historical event, but also an instrument to uphold the image and position of Mauritius on the international scene.

Madam Speaker, the Nobel Peace Laureate, Dr. Mohammad El Baradei, former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency has also confirmed his attendance. Dr. Mohammad El Baradei will deliver his keynote address on Sunday 08 May at the opening of the Congress at l'Aventure du Sucre.

Madam Speaker, the presence of those two eminent dignitaries at the ICCA Congress is not only an evidence of the importance of the event, but also a significant milestone in our constant effort to promote the image of our country. Madam Speaker, this is the first visit of a UN Secretary General to our country and a Nobel Peace Laureate, together.

Madam Speaker, the theme of the Congress - 'International Arbitration and the Rule of Law: Contribution and Conformity' - is particularly apt to allow our part of the world to start having its voice heard and acted upon.

The theme of the ICCA 2016 Congress is very pertinent and relevant to the concerns of Mauritian society.

Madam Speaker, the 23rd ICCA Congress is a unique opportunity to foster more exchanges between Governments, and between Governments and private sector actors in the field of international arbitration.

It is also, of course, an opportunity to showcase our international arbitration project. As this House will be aware, my newly created Ministry took over supervision and implementation of this project in order to make the most of the obvious synergies with our financial services industry. Mauritius is today perceived as the foremost and most reliable seat for international arbitration in Africa, as the first cases start to come through our international arbitration centre, the LCIA-MIAC, and to the Mauritius office of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Madam Speaker, I further wish to inform the House that LCIA-MIAC has last year won the prestigious Global Arbitration Review award for up-and-coming regional arbitral institution. This success is also the result of the contribution made by our Judiciary.

Madam Speaker, furthermore, having led the path in the field of investment arbitration, and having hosted the signature ceremony of the UNCITRAL, Mauritius Convention on Transparency in treaty-based investor-State arbitration in March 2015, we are stepping up our diplomatic efforts with our African neighbours to take over the chairmanship of UNCITRAL at its next session. Government is also finalising the plans for a state-of-the-art arbitration hearing centre, which will be up and running by the end of this year.

Madam Speaker, the ICCA Congress will not only be a platform to promote arbitration as an alternative to dispute resolution, but also to launch Mauritius as a hub for international arbitration. It must be recalled that this international event becomes a logical sequence to the launching of Mauritius by the Financial Services Promotion Agency and my Ministry as an International Financial Centre earlier last month in the presence of the Lord Mayor of the City of London. Hon. Members will appreciate the nexus between arbitration and financial services and the need for expeditious dispute resolution which is the hallmark of arbitration.

Madam Speaker, arbitration as opposed to decisions of the court is no doubt an area which would elicit interest of proponents of an expeditious delivery of legal services. This Congress would thus be a solid platform to further promote arbitration as an instrument for the resolution of litigations.

The House will also note that in the field of international arbitration, we were the first State Party to ratify the United Nations Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration a few months back on 05 June 2015.

This Convention which is now known as the ‘Mauritius Convention on Transparency’ demonstrates our determination to introduce openness and accountability in the field of Investor-State arbitration and our commitment to uphold democratic participation, good governance and the rule of law.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to share with the House the outcome of my recent meeting, with the Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Indeed, the Commonwealth Secretariat has been highly impressed by the initiatives put in place in Mauritius to strengthen good governance. In a recent correspondence, the Deputy Secretary-General, Dr. Mrs Josephine Ojiambo has informed us as follows –

“We have been impressed by the initiatives that your country has put in place to strengthen good governance, which we discussed when you visited Marlborough House last month. As you will recall, at that meeting, I indicated our interest in exploring opportunities for other Commonwealth Member States to learn from the successes, valuable lessons and initiatives taken by Mauritius”.

Madam Speaker, the recognition of the Commonwealth Secretariat to our commitment and approach to promoting and enhancing good governance is yet another key

milestone for us. This recognition reinforces the position of Mauritius as the leader in Good Governance initiatives in Africa and also among the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) countries. The House will recall that at the last conference of the State Parties to the UN Convention Against Corruption in St Petersburg, a resolution was voted on 05 November 2015 to make Mauritius a dedicated platform for anti-corruption reforms for SIDS countries.

Madam Speaker, all our efforts are meant to showcase Mauritius in terms of good governance practices and consolidate our position as a transparent international arbitration hub.

Thank you for your attention.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

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

- (a) The National Women's Council Bill (No. V of 2016)
- (b) The National Wage Consultative Council Bill (No. VI of 2016)

Second Reading

THE FIREARMS (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. IV of 2016)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I move that the Firearms (Amendment) Bill (No. IV of 2016) be read a second time.

The main objects of the Bill are to domesticate the Arms Trade Treaty to which Mauritius has acceded to in July 2015, and to strengthen the provisions of the existing legislation on firearms so as to enable the Police Force to have a better control on the movement of firearms in the country and those in transit. The objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty are to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade of conventional arms and their unauthorised use, including the commissioning of terrorist acts and acts of piracy, through the control of the export, import, transit, trans-shipment and brokering of these arms.

While existing national and regional controls are important, they are not enough to stop the irresponsible transfers of arms and ammunition between countries. Inadequate

controls of arms transfers in many countries have led to widespread availability and misuse of weapons.

The Arms Trade Treaty is expected to transform the way global arms trade operates. It will set new standards and enshrine, in international law, strict controls on the arms trade which has been poorly regulated for a very long time. It will no longer be acceptable for arms to be transferred to regimes that will use them to harm innocent people and violate human rights.

Under the Treaty, before any arms transfer takes place, the supplier Government must assess associated risks of the deal against strict criteria, including whether the arms might be used for human rights violations, war crimes or the commissioning of other unlawful acts. If there is a substantial risk of this happening, the deal will not be authorized by the seller.

The implementation of the Treaty by Member States will definitely create a new international norm that will shape the way all States view arms transfer. All countries, even those that have not signed the Treaty, will be measured against this norm, and to a certain extent will be held accountable for any misuse of the arms.

Madam Speaker, in the local context, the domestication of the Treaty through this Bill will enhance the national control system on the export, import and transit activities related to conventional arms.

The country's legal framework to combat terrorism and piracy will be strengthened making our extended territorial water and EEZ safer areas at a time when Mauritius is developing its ocean economy and is aspiring to become a petroleum hub in the Indian Ocean region.

The Bill is also an opportunity to further consolidate certain provisions of the Firearms Act 2006 so as to enhance the control and inspection of firearms held by private parties and in transit in the country, whilst at the same time taking into account the need to keep procedures as simple as possible so as to maintain the country as an attractive destination for ease of doing business.

In this context several amendments are being proposed to the existing Act, among others -

- (a) to empower a Police Officer, not below the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police, to carry out checks at the places of firearm licence holders to allow the Police to ensure that firearm licensees are complying with the conditions attached to their licence, and

- (b) to review the rate of storage fees for firearms in transit downwards, from Rs200 to Rs100 per day during the prescribed period and from Rs400 to Rs200 per day in the eventuality the prescribed delay, as provided for in the Second Schedule of the Act, for keeping any firearm in transit is exceeded. This measure follows the various representations received from relevant stakeholders, but does not compromise security issues.

Madam Speaker, let me now highlight some of the amendments that are being proposed to the Firearms Act -

- (i) Section 3 of the Act currently provides that no person shall deal in prohibited arms. It is proposed to amend it so as to exempt officers of the disciplined forces from this prohibition to enable them to use a wider range of firearms for training purposes, with the authorisation of the Commissioner of Police.
- (ii) It is proposed to amend section 8 of the Act so as to make provision for the storage of firearms and ammunitions in such a manner as may be prescribed by regulations, and to empower the Police to inspect, at the time of an application for a firearm licence or employee permit, the places where the firearms and ammunitions will be stored. Presently, the safekeeping of firearms is not prescribed.
- (iii) Under section 12 of the Act, the control and inspections of the firearms and ammunitions in the possession of licence holders are done only once, at the time the licences are being issued. The Police considers the lack of periodic control of the firearms as a shortcoming in the law which should be amended. It is therefore proposed to introduce, under this section, a new subsection (2A) so that, over and above the yearly renewal process of the licence, a Police Officer, not below the rank of an Assistant Superintendent of Police, may enter and inspect the place where firearms and ammunitions are stored by a firearm licensee.
- (iv) Sections 20 and 21 of the Act will be amended so as to make it an offence for import and export licence holders who do not keep a record of every firearm and ammunitions under that licence. These sections will also empower the Commissioner of Police not to issue an import or export permit in respect of any firearm or ammunition if he has reasonable doubts that they will be used for unlawful purposes.

- (v) Section 21A of the Act will also be amended to enable the Commissioner of Police to request for any information or document from any person on board of a ship or aircraft, within the territorial waters of Mauritius, if he has reasonable grounds to believe that the ship or aircraft is carrying any firearm or ammunition in violation of the obligations of Mauritius under the international law.
- (vi) Section 22 of the Act will be amended so as to increase the safekeeping of any firearm or ammunition in transit at the Police Armoury from 90 days, as provided for in the Second Schedule, to 2 years, for practical reasons, as from Police experience, the 90 days storage period has been found to be inadequate in many cases. However, if the firearm or ammunition remains unclaimed for a period of one year after the expiry of the two years, same could be disposed of by the Commissioner of Police.
- (vii) One of the main obligations of a State Party under Article 12 of the Treaty is to keep national records of the conventional weapons which it has exported, transferred to its territory as the final destination, or authorised to transit, for a minimum of 10 years. Section 23 of the Act is, therefore, being amended to create a database within the Central Firearms Register of the Police Force so as to have updated information on firearms and ammunitions in transit in Mauritius, at any point in time.
- (viii) Additionally, under new section 23A, every person who is required to keep a record pursuant to the Act will, from now on, have to do so for a minimum of 10 years.

Madam Speaker, as mentioned earlier, the rates to be paid for firearms in transit will be revised downward following representations made by licence holders.

The Second Schedule in the Act is accordingly being amended not only to increase the prescribed storage period of firearms in transit, from 90 days to two years, but also to decrease the fees payable per day for each firearm, from Rs200 to Rs100 and from Rs400 to Rs200 per day for a period of one year after the expiry of two years.

Madam Speaker, I wish to conclude by saying that the Treaty, among others, was lying in the drawers for a long time, and I personally instructed that Mauritius accedes to it as a matter of priority and this was done by my Government in July 2015.

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

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

(Interruptions)

(4.34 p.m.)

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Madam Speaker, the facts, according to a report published last year by Amnesty International, 875 million small arms and light weapons are estimated to be in circulation worldwide. Between 700,000 and 900,000 small arms are produced annually; twelve billion bullets are produced every year. It is estimated that the value of arms trade is \$100 billion annually.

Now, the killer facts. Globally, it is estimated that armed violence kills around half a million people every year. In the Democratic Republic of Congo alone, it is estimated that more than five million people have died since 1998 as an indirect result of armed conflict, over 80% of all casualties are civilians, 90% of these are caused by small arms.

Madam Speaker, today, weapons of mass destruction are not the nuclear weapons, they are not the atomic bomb. They are the Kalashnikovs, they are the bazookas, they are the portable missiles, lethal weapons that are easy to transport, lethal weapons that are easy to smuggle, lethal weapons that are easy to fall in the wrong hands, and lethal weapons so easy to use that, today, they are manned by children; children getting younger and younger, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, it is the civilian population that ends up paying the price of conflicts, not only in terms of casualties, but also in respect of long-term impact resulting from the collapse of government services. Armed conflicts, overburdened healthcare systems disrupt education for millions of children, and armed conflicts come with a massive economic cost.

According to Nobel Prize Winner Joseph Stiglitz, the estimates of the economic cost for the US alone on its War on Terror would be \$1 trillion. Billions of dollars are spent by the United Nations, the African Union and others in peacekeeping missions. According to Oxfam, it is estimated that armed violence costs Africa \$18 billion every year. Conflicts in countries like Burundi have cost the government an annual economic loss of 37% of their GDP. Money that is spent on arms could and should have been spent on education, healthcare, social security, on developmental projects.

Madam Speaker, corruption is a major problem in arms trade. The unregulated trade in arms conducted by corrupt individuals or companies leads to the diversion of weapons into the illicit market to dangerous end users. Corruption in the defence industry is estimated to cost \$20 billion per year. The United States Department of Commerce estimates that corruption in arms trade accounts for approximately 50% of all corrupt transactions globally, despite the fact that the value of arms traded annually does not exceed 1% of global trade.

Madam Speaker, armed conflicts also result in displacement of entire communities. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2014, there were almost 60 million refugees and internally displaced people. Most of them are from Syria, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia. This mass movement of people has a huge monetary cost. The annual cost of this displacement, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, has now reached over \$100 billion. Today, dealing with refugees fleeing armed conflicts has become one of the most politically sensitive issues facing developed nations in Europe.

Madam Speaker, I have the privilege of being part of the Committee on Cooperation, International Relations and Conflict Resolution of the Pan-African Parliament. At every session, we discuss various conflicts that are taking place in Africa. We try to find solutions to prevent and resolve armed conflicts among Member States. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the African Continent is the single continent with the highest number of armed conflicts; Somalia with the Al-Shabaab, Sudan with Darfur, South Sudan with ethnic conflicts, Nigeria with Boko Haram, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Mali. It would seem that each time we try to reach some compromise, some settlement, a new armed conflict erupts elsewhere in Africa.

Hon. Armance, hon. Ms Sewocksingh, hon. Mrs Selvon and hon. Quirin will recall that, during my last intervention at the Plenary Session of the Pan-African Parliament, I stated that, in order to resolve armed conflicts on the Continent, we needed to attack the root of the problem, and the root of the problem is financing of conflicts and arm trafficking. Without money, there is no war; without arm, there is no war.

On the finance side, Mauritius has always endeavoured not to be used as a jurisdiction for financing of arms trafficking. I am not saying that Mauritius has not been used for financing arms conflict. You will always find people who are naive enough or greedy enough to allow themselves to be engulfed into this arms trafficking business. But we have always

been cooperative, always been transparent and we have the necessary legal framework already. We have signed and ratified international convention and we regularly accede to exchange of information whenever there is allegation of Mauritius being used in arms trafficking.

So much, Madam Speaker, for the financing of arms trafficking; what about the arms trafficking itself? One would have imagined, it should have been easy to control arms trafficking because it is not difficult to identify the arms' used. Once you identify the arms, it is not difficult to identify the manufacturer and once you have identified the manufacturer, you can easily go and resolve the arms trafficking. But unfortunately, this is not the case, Madam Speaker. As I pointed out earlier, arms' trade today is 100 billion dollars business. So, there are lot of lobbies at stake.

One should not also forget, Madam Speaker, that almost 80% of the world's weapons are manufactured by six countries, namely China, France, Germany, Russia, UK and the USA. And five of these six producers sit on as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. So, it was not an easy task, Madam Speaker, to agree on a multilateral treaty that would regulate international trade in conventional weapons.

Madam Speaker, the initiative of Arms Trade Treaty can be traced back to a group of Nobel Peace Prize laureates as far back as the 1990s. The movement was spearheaded by Costa Rican former President and Nobel Prize winner, Óscar Arias. In 2006, United Nations passed a resolution, seeking members' views on the feasibility of adopting a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standard for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapon. Just to illustrate how difficult it was to get that resolution, the United States refused to sign that resolution in 2006. After more than a decade of negotiations and lobbying, the Arms Trade Treaty was finally adopted on 02 April 2013 at the United Nations General Assembly. The resolution was passed in a sweeping victory. 155 nations voted in favour; 22 abstained and only 3 countries opposed the treaty, namely Iran, Syria and North Korea. The treaty came into force on 24 December 2014, on the date of the fifth year ratification. Mauritius, as rightly pointed out by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, became acceded to the treaty on 23 July 2015.

The Arms Trade Treaty basically, Madam Speaker, prevents State parties from transferring any conventional arms if it has knowledge that the arms would be used in the

commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, attacks against civilians and state parties are required to regulate the import and export of conventional arms as well as arms brokers.

The Bill, before the House, Madam Speaker, is precisely to implement the provisions of the Arms Treaty through an amendment to the Firearms Act. I have listened carefully to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, and I totally congratulate him for the laudable initiative that he took when he took office to ratify this treaty, but I don't know who has been advising the Government on this project because, in my humble opinion, Madam Speaker, the proper procedure would not be to amend the Firearms Act but to come forward with a legislation which would be specific to the Arms Treaty. And I will explain why.

The Firearms Act, Madam Speaker, today covers only firearms. It is primarily concerned with the licensing of firearms for domestic purposes, be it for use of firearms, be it for security purposes or for gaming, for hunting like my good friend hon. Yerrigadoo knows. We have a local law for this. The Arms Treaty goes beyond that. For example, if I take a simple definition in the Arms Treaty, it does not deal only with firearms, it also covers battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large calibre artillery system, combat aircrafts – my good friend, hon. Dayal, will appreciate - attack helicopters, warships, missiles and missile launchers and not just small arms, not just firearms. So, for me, today, to amend only the firearms is not to give full effect to the treaty because we are tackling only one of the many different types of weapons that has been ratified under the treaty. We are not dealing, today, with helicopters, aircrafts, tankers, etc. And where I find it difficult to understand is that anyone who is familiar with this treaty, anyone who has done any research would have known that there is a model law that has been prepared by an ONG called Small Arms Survey, a Swiss based group, which works with the New Zealand Government in developing a model law, and I quote –

“(...) to assist in identifying and translating Arms Trade Treaty commitments into national legislation.”

It is a very comprehensive text and, more importantly, it has commentaries under each object, each clause which would have helped in interpreting the law if ever there is a dispute. And why is it important that we follow the model law? It is precisely to avoid any regulatory arbitrage, to prevent warlords from choosing Mauritius for regulatory arbitrage because they can find a loophole in Mauritius if we did not ratify and reflect fully the texts. So, today, we

are amending the firearms only, but I hope that consideration will be given, subsequently, to come with a full-fledged law which would cover the whole of the treaty, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I would end by quoting His Holiness Pope Francis. Pope Francis when he addressed the US Congress in September last year stated the following, and I quote

—

"Being at the service of dialogue and peace also means being truly determined to minimise and, in the long term, to end the many armed conflicts throughout the world. Here, we have to ask ourselves: Why are deadly weapons being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering on individuals and society? Sadly, the answer, as we all know, is simply for money: money that is drenched in blood, often innocent blood. In the face of this shameful and culpable silence, it is our duty to confront the problem and to stop the arms trade."

Today, Madam Speaker, we are answering the call of his Holiness and we are bringing our little contribution to an armed conflict.

Thank you.

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

At 4.50 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.24 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Firstly, may I start by congratulating the hon. Prime Minister for bringing this interesting Bill into this House today.

It is a very important day in the history of Mauritius insofar as the regulations of firearms are concerned and not only ordinary firearms - when I say ordinary, I mean to say light firearms - but also firearms which are used in order to oppress people in conflict zone.

The implementation of the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty was long overdue in Mauritius and elsewhere within the African Continent. Mauritius became a member State by virtue of accession on 23 July of last year and, in doing so, we have, today, sent a strong signal to the international community that Mauritius cares about what is happening elsewhere.

The Arms Trade Treaty means that every State that has signed up, must now obey strict rules on international arm transfers. This will at last help to stem the flow of weapons that fuel bloody conflicts, atrocities and state pressing around the world.

The Treaty's rules are simple. If a country knows that the arms about to be sold will be used for genocide, for crime against humanity or war crimes, then they must stop the transfer.

Every day thousands of people are killed, injured or forced to flee their homes because of violence and armed conflicts. The majority of casualties - as my very able friend, hon. Reza Uteem said – in armed conflicts are civilians. Weapons such as missiles destroy hospitals, homes, market and transport system, pushing survivors into poverty. People's lives are destroyed. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is estimated that more than 5 million people die indirectly because of armed conflicts since 1998. For every person who is killed in armed conflicts and armed violence, many more are injured, tortured, abused or kidnapped at gunpoint.

Now, against this background at an international level, let us look at what is the position of our island. I will refer to an article from the Inter Press Services on: "Investigation Exposes Arms Trafficking Network in Mauritius". It is an article written by Carlota Cortes and it starts as follows –

"An investigation by the Conflict Awareness Project has exposed an active arms trading network of associates of former trafficker Viktor Bout that involves companies from the United States, South Africa and the United Kingdom, among other countries.

All are cross-linked in a complex system with its centre in the island of Mauritius.

The traffickers' ultimate goal was to access countries such as Iran, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and possibly Syria, researchers say."

And, the former United Nations Arms Investigator Kathi Lynn Austin was able to track down the illicit activities of this network led by two main actors who once were Bout's top lieutenants: Sergey Denisenko and Andrei Kosolapov. Many actors involved in this network had a connection with Viktor Bout and are back in the game of shipping arms to war zones.

This time around the illicit activities took place in Mauritius, an island situated on Africa's south east coast. It is a strategic spot due to its location as a gateway between Africa,

Asia and the Middle East and thanks to tax incentives, drop-box addresses and offshore banking. The Denisenko-Kosolapov network tried to obtain an Air Operation Certificate from the Mauritius Government, which is required for planes to take off. For that purpose they sought a partnership with a local aviation company with a pre-existing certificate so they could quickly start working. So, this is the reputation of Mauritius and this morning we were hearing from the Opposition side a little bit of comments about human rights during the Prime Minister's Question Time in relation to Bramer banking question!

What is being done today is to bring a law into our domestic law from international law and to make it human right compliant in order to save human rights and the cause of the basis of humanity. And, in doing so what the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has proposed in this Bill today by virtue of amending sections 21 and 22 of the 1996 Act is that there will be and there is going to be strict control against importers and exporters who believe or who think that they are going to use our island as a platform to trade arms for the purpose of committing genocide, crimes against humanity and crimes against people who cannot defend themselves in countries like Syria, Sudan, Iran, Democratic Republic of Congo and elsewhere.

Trade details are often shrouded in secrecy, but the value of the international trade in conventional weapons is estimated to be around USD100 billion. Only States can control the trade by granting or refusing licences and only States can prohibit certain inhumane types of arms and impose arms embargoes and suspension and this is what is happening by virtue of this amendment today. What is going to happen is that the Commissioner of Police will decide and before making the decision whether to grant a licence, he is going to be empowered to carry out necessary investigation and competency test before giving licences. And, we should not forget that certain countries should assume their responsibility insofar as arms trade is concerned.

Certain Governments, unfortunately, have not lived up to their obligation and I am sad to say so. I am sad to say that countries like China, for example, have supplied ammunition and small arms to Sudan where they are used by security forces of Malaysia in Darfur region as well as to South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. France has supplied arms to Libya under al-Gaddafi, Egypt, Israel and Chad, and Syria between 2005 and 2009. Ten percent of all Russian arms exports are believed to go to Syria, making it Syria's largest arms supplier. It has also supplied helicopter gunships to Sudan and is said to be a major exporter of military equipment to Egypt. The United Kingdom has supplied arms to countries with high risk behaviour when it comes to human rights abuses such as in Sri

Lanka. The United States of America has supplied arms to more than 170 countries. It has restricted arms transfers to Myanmar, China, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe but has not taken the same precaution against Iraq, Israel, Sri Lanka, Bahrain, Egypt and Yemen.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was important for our small island nation to set the record and to send the signal, and the right signal to the international community that Mauritius cannot be used as that platform for arms trade. I was earlier on listening very intently to my friend, hon. Uteem, who was proposing that there should be a new regime, a new law in its entirety to deal with other kinds of armoury, but, perhaps, at this stage, it is not necessary because we already have provisions in our law.

In the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2002, there are strict restrictions and severe penalties for persons furnishing terrorists, terrorist organisations and other individual, groups, undertakings and entities associated with such goods.

- Regulation 9 provides that no person shall, directly or indirectly, export, sell, supply or ship any arms, weapons, ammunitions, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, spare parts and related material to any listed terrorist.
- Regulation 10 provides that no owner or master of a Mauritius ship and no operator of an aircraft registered in Mauritius shall, directly or indirectly, carry or cause or permit to be carried any arms, weapons, ammunitions, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, spare parts and related materials for any listed terrorist.
- Regulation 11 provides that no person shall directly or indirectly provide any listed terrorist with technical advice, assistance or training related to military activities.
- Regulation 12 says that it is an offence to contravene these Regulations.

So, there we are and what the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has done today in this House is very important to bring back respect to our country from what we were when the Press article was published in relation to Investigation Exposes Arms Trafficking Network in Mauritius, clearly accusing our nation, our island, our people of being involved or being facilitating arms trade in the world.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in relation to the amendments that have been proposed, section 22 which deals with the number of days – 90 days – was indeed inadequate for the

purpose of carrying out the necessary task that was required and the two-year period is very welcome for the purpose of this Act.

In general, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a legislation that will have the unanimity of this House today. Again, I thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for having brought this legislation to combat the trafficking of arm domestically and on an international level.

Thank you.

(5.42 p.m.)

Mr R. Dayal (First Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like, at the very outset, to commend the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs for seeing right the very concept of the Arms Trade Treaty and I have a copy with me. I am referring to article 14 where enforcement is mentioned. I would like to read that –

“Each state party shall take appropriate measures to enforce national laws and regulations that implement the provision of this treaty.”

That sums it all. Therefore, there was no need for a separate law as such because the Firearms Act, through our embassies, makes sure that there is the end-user certificate for any arms and ammunitions and any military hard and software that come to Mauritius, go through a process of accountability until it reaches Mauritius into the hands of the competent authorities. So, therefore, that addresses the remark made by hon. Uteem.

I would like now to refer to the Firearms (Amendment) Bill (No. IV of 2016) because it is a clear indication of the political will of this Government to amend the Firearms Act with a view to implement provision of the Arms Trade Treaty to which Mauritius is a signatory. The proposed amendments amply demonstrate the commitment of the present Government to prevent and curb down illicit trade of arms. These amendments also espouse the object and purpose of the Arms Trade Treaty, that is, -

- (i) to establish the highest common international standards for regulating or improving the regulation of international trade in conventional arms that can destabilise our democracy and cripple the rule of law, and prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms;
- (ii) prevent the diversion more than ever in the fast changing security environment with illicit movement of arms and ammunitions in the region.

It is important to highlight that the purpose of the said treaty is to contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability, reduce human suffering and promote cooperation, transparency and responsible actions by States parties in the international trade in conventional arms; the more so, in the volatile environment of the African and Indian Ocean region, and in the wake of evolving terrorism and cross-border crimes. It is but fitting to note that international trade of arms comprise of export, import, transit, transshipment and brokering.

The proposed amendments, and more precisely sections 20, 21 and 21(a), aim at addressing issues with regard to import, export, permit and transit of firearms and ammunitions. The abovementioned sections of the Firearms Act gives power to the Commissioner of Police not to issue an import or export permit as well as authority for transit of firearms and ammunition in the event there is any violation of obligation of Mauritius and the measures adopted by the United Nations Security Council contravene the other international obligations of Mauritius or he has reasonable grounds to believe that the Firearms and Ammunition may be used in the commission of genocide, crime against humanity or war crimes are intended to undermine peace and security as is evident in Africa. This, against the very spirit of the Geneva Convention of 1949, which we adhered to and we equally signed its Additional Protocols.

As an independent country anchored in peace and stability where democratic principles and values are firmly anchored, we are duty bound to draw lessons from the past with a view to better shape the future. We have the famous case of Silver Gate which led to the illegal entry of firearms. The 'Piou Piou' case at Médine where three innocent persons sadly lost their lives and equally the same number in Gorah Issac case, *Escadron de la mort*, gang violence among the drug mafia leading to firing of live rounds at Line Barracks, Port Louis. The discovery of considerable amount of ammunitions, some 2,700 live rounds in raffia bags at Pierrefonds, Bambous, some three years back and which, in some way, coincided with an earlier report of Ms Kathleen Austin, concerning arms trafficking transiting through Mauritius. There are a series of other cases involving firearms which led to mounting of operation such as 'Operation Sunrise' and an amnesty under Sir Anerood Jugnauth - and I was Commissioner of Police then - for unregistered arms and ammunitions. I must say here that we managed to get about 17 such arms and ammunitions which were not registered. From a regional security perspective, we have all seen the Westgate attack in Kenya, terrorist threats by extremists groups like Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, whereupon

trafficking is very often linked with drug trafficking and also interconnected with terrorist financing.

More so, as we are presently in a Commission of Inquiry on Drugs and it is more than ever pertinent to take action in all fronts, we are equally not immune to threats posed by Somali pirates because Mauritius has far flung territories in the Indian Ocean. We all have a moral and legal obligation to shape a better future where peace and security prevails in its fullest extent and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is paving the way.

We no longer want situations to arise when an MLA or any other citizen will need to make someone hide in a foreign country following a case of murder. I am here referring to the late Mr Toorab Bissessur, who had to seek refuge in Madagascar. There is a pressing need to also consider providing necessary protection to witnesses such as Ms Kathleen Austin to come to Mauritius and give necessary evidence with a view to detect cases of arms trafficking linked to organised crime and money laundering.

Crime has no frontier and criminals are more than ever active in cross-border crimes, taking advantage of inherent weak links in local and international legislations, dictating proper law enforcement. We have done that with the amendment of the Explosive Act in 1991 when I was the Commanding Officer, and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister was the Prime Minister of this country. Bound to impose strict control of arms trade and we are not getting bomb blast like in other countries since then. Trade, whilst mitigating risk of weapon trafficking, Police is the right arm of democracy and a citadel of peace and stability to enable the sustainable development that we all crave for at national level.

The proposed amendment provides the Commissioner of Police with the necessary legal framework in connection with the issue and renewal of firearm licence but, more importantly, the issue of import and export permit as well as authority for the transit of firearms and ammunition. This is where we have a thorny issue. The power of the Commissioner of Police proposed under section 21A (3) at page 8 is applicable –

“(...) within the territorial sea of Mauritius, or an aircraft in Mauritius is carrying any firearm and ammunition (...)”.

This is a clear evidence of the political will of this Government to maintain strict control over any possible carrying of any firearm and ammunition within our territorial waters, which are in violation of section 21A (3) (a), (b), (c). Effective and efficient enforcement of this provision will necessitate the close collaboration between the Mauritius

Police Force, the Civil Aviation, the Port Authority, the National Coast Guard as well as exchange of information between friendly countries.

Section (2) (a) makes provision for the Commissioner of Police to issue guidelines. Here, I am making a humble proposition for the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister of Rodrigues and National Development Unit, as a matter of policy, to kindly consider and request the Commissioner of Police to include in the guidelines the necessity for a sanitized bay for ships transiting and carrying firearms on-board in our harbours.

Such measure will allow for better control by police and minimise any possible risk of unlawful removal of firearms. There is also a need to review the procedures for destruction of firearms, so that there is greater transparency and accountability. Just like drugs, it should be done in public, in the presence of stakeholders in national security to show transparent good governance. And the reason is very simple. It's because we have seen many pieces of firearms in certain areas of Mauritius, more precisely in the area of Beau Bassin.

To conclude, I seize the opportunity to thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for taking the bold and courageous initiative to sign the Arms Trade Treaty and coming forward, in a timely manner, with this amendment, which paves the way for a safe and secure Mauritius whilst at the same time contributing to regional and international peace and stability.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am done. Thank you for your attention.

(5.53 p.m.)

Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to be very brief. Arms' trafficking is a very serious issue. It involves our national security; it involves the security of the region. I have to say right from the outset that it is a positive step in the right direction that this Government has taken the initiative to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty. It is also a positive step today that Government is coming with this Bill before the House.

However, I have to say one thing. When I look - and I will take it from where hon. Uteem left - at the objective of the Bill, the Explanatory Memorandum reads as follows –

“The main object of this Bill is to amend the Firearms Act so as to implement the provisions of the Arms Trade Treaty to which Mauritius is a signatory.”

This, unfortunately, does not reflect the truth, because when we look at what we have signed, when we look at the provisions of the Treaty, the provisions are much wider than what is being provided in the Bill. Let me take Article 1 of the Treaty. Article 1 provides for the object and purpose, and this is where, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Dayal and hon. Rutnah, unfortunately, got it wrong.

This is what we have signed, this is what we have agreed to implement in our domestic law. We have agreed to “establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating or improving the regulation of the international trade in conventional arms.” We have agreed to “prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion.” This is what we have agreed. This is the undertaking we have given at international level to implement in our domestic law. When we look at Article 2, where the definition of conventional arms is given, it includes several categories, and hon. Uteem has made reference to the various categories. They include battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large-calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warship, missiles and missile launchers, and small arms and light weapons.

Unfortunately, the definition of firearms, as it stands in our law, would only include small arms, not conventional weapons. Not only that! We have also undertaken to include in our domestic legislation ammunitions that are defined in the Treaty as to include missiles and other ammunitions that are released, that are discharged from those conventional arms. Unfortunately, the Act as it stands, the Firearms Act, does not provide for conventional arms and the wider definition of ammunitions and munitions.

As rightly stated by hon. Uteem, we have two options. Either we come before this House with a new Bill that would cover all these conventional arms, and not only conventional arms, but parts and components as well. People being involved with the export and import of parts and components of those conventional arms should also be included in the definition.

The law as it stands, if we apply the provisions of what is being proposed today, a vessel transiting through our territorial waters, someone being involved in the export or import of conventional arms or components, someone being involved in ammunitions like missiles, for example, would not be covered by the law, unfortunately. So, this is the point that I wanted to make as regards the objective and the scope of the Bill.

I have two suggestions to make. It relates to clause 11, which proposes to amend section 23. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under Section 23 provision is made for the setting up of a central firearm register so that we have a national list that would include records of all firearms that are being used in our country and clause 11 (6) to include in that register a database for the Vessels in Transit Transporting Firearms and Ammunitions. May I suggest to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to consider also the inclusion in that database for private security service providers, those employing bouncers, etc. They also are entitled under the law to apply for firearms certificates and they are, very often, given that licence. They are also in possession of firearms, I believe, and it is good that we should also have a record of the firearms that are in their possession.

There is a second proposition that I wanted to make which is in relation to the penalty. Section 46 deals with the sanction and penalties and, in the event there is a breach of the Act, the court is only empowered to impose a fine or imprisonment. Now, I believe that we should, if we are serious with this matter, also empower our courts to cancel or suspend import or export licences in appropriate circumstances, and I will request the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to take these two suggestions into consideration.

Therefore, to conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the amendments that are being proposed today, although, as I have said, they are welcome, they are positive steps but, unfortunately, they do not fulfil the international obligations that we have taken to regulate the trade of conventional arms. I suggest that Government should come before this House as soon as possible with an appropriate Bill.

Thank you.

(6.03 p.m.)

The Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr E. Sinatambou): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the outset, like previous orators before me, I would like to commend the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for coming forward with this legislation because it actually brings Mauritius into line with its international law obligations.

The Arms Trade Treaty was actually the result of the UN Conference on the subject matter which had its final meeting between 18 and 20 March 2013.

Now, I will share, indeed, the views of the previous orator when he says that Mauritius and the Government have taken a step in the right direction. But I will certainly

disagree when he then says that there are shortcomings, and my reasons for saying so is by referring to the treaty itself.

Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the previous orator has referred us to Article 2 of the Convention speaking about the definition of conventional arms. True it is that conventional arms are defined in such a way as to include battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, combat aircrafts, attack helicopters and so on, but it should surely be clear to everyone in this House that this is not the type of arms which actually enter Mauritius. I mean, would we need to bring a legislation to control the export or import of combat aircraft or of attack helicopters? With all due respect, I must disagree, and I believe that common sense should actually hold the day, and that it is the case that the Firearms (Amendment) Bill, which is before this House, and which is amending the Firearms Act of 2006, is well formulated and tackles the problem in the right way.

Incidentally, I would like to take this opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to go back to the dates I was just referring to. Indeed, the final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, I said earlier, took place between 18 and 20 March. The Treaty itself was approved for adoption by the UN General Assembly on 28 March and under Article 21 of that Treaty it was open for signature by all States from 03 June 2013 until its entry into force, and those who are wise today, to come and give lessons, were in power yesterday but had no time to actually do what was needed to safeguard the interest of this country to fight against the international scourge which is arms trade and arms trafficking; and it had to take the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, here, to ensure that Mauritius accedes to that Treaty in July 2015.

So, from my perspective, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other side of the House should actually be congratulating Government for, in fact, doing that which they failed to do from 2013 until their demise at the general elections.

May I also take this opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to refer to what one of the previous orators, the Third Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart had said and, with all due respect, that refers to the names, I think, the infamous names today of Mr Andrei Kosolapov and Mr Sergei Denisenko. Why am I referring to these? Because, sometimes, those who claim to be whiter than white, those who claim to be so candid, those who keep attacking this side of the House have so much to hide themselves.

I will now refer to what I saw in a Parliamentary Question on the issue of arms trade/arms trafficking dated 15 November 2012 and, at that time, the now hon. Leader of the

Opposition, who was then also the Leader of the Opposition, as he has been for so many years, decided to query the then Prime Minister about cases of arms trafficking by foreign nationals.

That happened in 2012; the Arms Trade Treaty is signed in March 2013 and they have been negotiating the alliances for the elections of 2014 and we then learned that, not only are those people - those individuals I just mentioned - involved in arms trafficking, but we also learned that they actually are involved in some very serious money laundering transactions. We learned from that Private Notice Question that a number of banks have actually failed to adhere to the Guidance Notes on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism. And all this happened during 2013! It started in November 2012, the Treaty is passed in March 2013, the infamous coalition is in April 2014. And throughout all this time, we have heard no more about the failure of three banks to actually fulfil their legal prerequisites, their legal obligations regarding fraudulent use of money, regarding arms trafficking. So, it is my respectful submission before this House that we should be very careful. Far too often, as we say, “they look at the straw in our eyes but they don’t see the *poutre* which is in theirs”.

(Interruptions)

The log, thank you, Sir.

I think there is one thing also, which I would like to mention, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This morning while we were having the Private Notice Question, I was - I won’t say amused; I could have been amused, if I was actually ironical or cynical - rather bemused because I heard the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East speaking about scandals in Senegal and Djibouti about lack of transparency and corruption. And yet, when we look at this Private Notice Question regarding Andrei Kosolapov and Sergey Denisenko, relatives of Members of this House who give us lesson every session of Parliament, were actually involved. So much for transparency...

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order. The hon. Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, said: “relatives of a Member of this House were involved”. Now, there need not be any effort on his part to mention who is this hon. Member but when he says that “relatives are involved”, those are people who are not here. No tribunal has ever established that any relative of any Member is involved and as far as this report that he is referring to, is concerned, it is *sub judice* because there are three matters pending before the Supreme Court that have been

entered against Mrs Kathi Lynn Austin. So, if the hon. Minister wants to pursue on that, I would invite you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to tell him to hold back because this whole matter *is sub judice*, just as the same matter, the same words used by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister this morning and the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports when he said: “matters were *sub judice*”. Please!

The Deputy Speaker: Well, hon. Member, your point of order comprises three questions. In my opinion, the hon. Minister is allowed to refer, even if he uses the word ‘relative’ to state his opinion. It is related to the debate today. However, it is...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mohamed, let me finish my line of thought! So, I don’t think there is any problem with him saying ‘relative’ . However, it is out of order to give names of people outside of this Assembly who cannot defend themselves and to abuse this power that we have here, the freedom of speech.

Secondly, with regard to the matter which is *sub judice*, I thank you for bringing this to my attention and you are indeed correct it shouldn’t be debated upon.

Mr Sinatambou: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. You will please observe, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that I mentioned no person...

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order again! You just ruled, he is still arguing with you.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, he is not arguing, he has just started his sentence. Let him finish his point!

(Interruptions)

I haven’t even listened to what he has said, hon. Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mohamed, I have not heard what he has said. Don’t jump on the gun!

(Interruptions)

Mr Sinatambou: I am, in fact, continuing my speech with all due respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

If I may be allowed to continue my speech, I hope that people now understand how I or anyone else on this side of the House feels when we are unjustly attacked right, left and centre, not only in this House, but outside this House in the Press.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mohamed, we had enough shouting this morning. Hon. Minister, please come back to the Bill.

(Interruptions)

You have made your point. I have let you make your point. Now, please come back to the Bill!

(Interruptions)

Mr Sinatambou: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I may be allowed to continue with my speech before this House. You will see that whenever I am mentioning about the Arms Trade Treaty, about the amendments being brought before this house, I am making it a point not to give names of any Member, of any relatives, knowing that whoever is concerned, will recognise themselves as opposed to...

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: He keeps on making those backhanded attacks without even having the courage to, basically, say what he wants to say. Is he going to continue being hypocritical in his manner?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mohamed, I don't see why I should stop him from stating his opinion, to be quite frank!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he cannot cast imputations on the reputation and honour of people in this august Assembly. He cannot do it!

(Interruptions)

And when he says...

(Interruptions)

When he says: "I have not mentioned names" ...

(Interruptions)

...that does not in any way absolve him of the responsibility.

(Interruptions)

He said: "An hon. Member of Parliament"!

(Interruptions)

Come on!

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, I haven't heard the last part.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: He cannot simply absolve himself of the responsibility by saying 'I am not mentioning names'. If he says a Member of this Assembly, he is, therefore, attacking any Member of this Assembly, and that is itself *condamnable*. He cannot do that.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Sinatambou, will you please continue without having to *polémiser*...

(Interruptions)

...with this any longer and move on to the next point? If you would do this House a favour!

(Interruptions)

Mr Sinatambou: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I think the point has been made. Maybe I should also say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are two sayings.

(Interruptions)

One says: '*qui s'excuse s'accuse*'. The other says: '*qui se sent morveux se mouche*.'

(Interruptions)

Here, why I am saying this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is because at no time am I inventing anything. I made it a point to go and verify the Private Notice Question of the then and now hon. Leader of the Opposition dated 15 November 2012, and at page 8 of that Hansardised version, which, as far as I know, according to the Standing Orders of this House, is the

official version. I do read about lawyers Y. M. and Z. M. having been involved with those two Russian nationals against whom - I read now at page 1-

“(...) there are cases of arms trafficking.”

However, I must stress, because I think I have struck a sore point here. Time after time, myself against myself, and my family, my wife and my children, allegations have been made...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, this is not relevant to the Bill!

Mr Sinatambou: No, but, at least, some people can now see how it pinches when you are unjustly accused. Here, there is nothing that I invented. It is all there and incidentally, while all this was happening, the Arms Trade Treaty was actually adopted at the United Nations. That was in 2013. Yet, at no time did the then - how do I call them - infamous coalition which was busy *koze-kozé*, find time to actually do the needful regarding this piece of legislation.

(Interruptions)

Closing was the better thing to do, they felt.

Let me now, however, Mr Deputy Speaker, say that I think and believe that we ought to be proud that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has given instructions for the Attorney General to come up with the Bill and for Government to come before this House to get it passed. If we, actually, look at Articles of the Treaty, we will find that the main obligations of the State parties are to establish and maintain an effective national control system. Here, the scope of the Treaty is all encompassing to the extent that it involves export, import, transit, transshipment and brokery and this not only for all those categories of arms which fall within the definition of conventional arms, but also for munitions and ammunitions.

It must also be borne in mind, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I am informed accordingly, and which is why I am so critical of the conduct of the now Opposition about this issue of the Arms Trade Treaty is because several international and regional institutions such as the European Commission, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the African Union have, on many occasions, reiterated their call to all countries, including Mauritius, to adopt the Treaty as a means of preventing unauthorised non-State actors to have access to those conventional weapons for their use in illicit activities such as terrorism and piracy. Despite those calls, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it had to take the Rt. hon. Prime Minister

to make sure that Mauritius accedes to this Treaty in July 2015 and for us to, now, have those amendments brought and passed before this House today.

I would like to conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and this time, with all due respect, to the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, I will refer to him specifically because this morning, this time, I was neither amused nor bemused, this time I felt...

(Interruptions)

No, no. I felt insulted as a citizen of this country when he said that he has got no confidence in the Police. That was in the course of Parliamentary Question B/277. I believe and you can see why I made my statement about unjust attacks on people, on this side of the House because, on that side of the House, is where they take the latitude of the immunity in the House to make accusations of that type with impunity. What type of country would we have if those, who had actually held office as Members of Government, who were Ministers, now come and say openly and publicly: "I have no confidence in the Police", when we are speaking of a serious matter. Look at this Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! We are speaking of a Bill to ensure that there is no arm trafficking in this country, that people with whom some here have been associated, cannot get involved into such activities. We know that the custodian of all the measures, which are going to be taken under this Bill which seeks to amend the Fire Arms Act of 2006, is the Commissioner of Police. I think it is just simply shameful.

With these words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will just say that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister must be commended. Rt. hon. Prime Minister, thank you for being here and thank you for coming up with this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, Madam Speaker will now resume the seat as Chair.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Rt. hon. Prime Minister!

(6.28 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I thank all the Members who have taken part in the debate on this Bill. I also thank them because, despite some reserves from two Members on the other side that we should have come with a new legislation instead of

amending the law as it is today, they all are, at least, for this Bill so that there is unanimity in this House and I am very thankful for that.

Now, insofar as the fear that there is a possibility of fighting aircrafts coming in Mauritius and transiting, well, warships coming to Mauritius, tanks coming to Mauritius! Well, who will ever think of that happening here?

(Interruptions)

No, but that we are going to inspect and see.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem, I am sorry! You had the opportunity to intervene on this Bill. Now, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister listened to you when you intervened. I think it would only be fair that you listen to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister without interrupting him.

The Prime Minister: If warships are going across the ocean, you think we can go, inspect them and arrest people there? Well, let us be practical!

Some Members, from this other side, have already answered that we have other laws, for example, Anti-Terrorism Act, Explosives Act. All these together, we are going to act and apply all these laws. Therefore, I don't see any reason why we should have come with a new law when we can do it by amending the present law. This is our opinion! This is my opinion!

Madam Speaker, I must say that Government will be ruthless in combatting arms trafficking and trade. The amendments we will be voting today will consolidate the security of our citizens and visitors. As I said, at the beginning, it will allow Mauritius to meet its international obligations as regards the Agreement on the Firearms Treaty.

As suggested by hon. Ramful, I have to add that Central Firearms Index also have data on all firearms, including those in the possession of private security service providers. Provisions have been made that any breach of the Firearms Act will lead to the cancellation of the licence. So, there should be no fear entertained as regards that.

Madam Speaker, I am convinced that the accession of Mauritius in the Arms Trade Treaty and the amendments to the Firearms Act will have a positive impact on the country. It will not only help us to increase our visibility as a safe haven for doing business and for tourism, but it will also give the Police an important tool to have a better control on the movement of arms within the country and those which are in transit.

I don't think I should take more time of this House to enter into some of the details that were put forward by the other side. I think what we are doing right now is sufficient and, if need be in the future, if we have to come with other amendments, we will certainly do so to meet the exigencies of the time.

Madam Speaker, I shall at Committee Stage, be moving for minor amendments as circulated. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

THE FIREARMS (AMENDMENT) BILL

(NO. IV OF 2016)

Clauses 1 to 7 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 8 (Section 21 of principal Act amended)

Motion made and question proposed: "that the clause stands part of the Bill."

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, I move for the following amendment in clause 8 -

“(a) in subclause (b), in the proposed new subsection (2)(b), by inserting, after the word “working”, the word “days”;

(b) in subclause (d), in the proposed new subsection (6), by deleting the word “import” and replacing it by the word “export””

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 9 to 17 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Madam Speaker in the Chair, Madam Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Firearms (Amendment) Bill (No. IV of 2016) was read a third time and passed.

(6.37 p.m.)

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 03 May 2016 at 11.30 a.m.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTERS RAISED**EAU BONNE, BAMBOUS – LAND ACQUISITION**

Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to raise an issue addressed to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands with regard to land acquisition at Eau Bonne in Bambous for the rehabilitation of La Ferme Dam and it concerns mainly four families, the Dookhy family, the Buruth family, the Rayapen family and the Fortune family. I would like to refer particularly to the Fortune family.

Government wishes to acquire a portion of 800 *toises*, a quarter of an *arpent*, on which there are various buildings of around 4,000 square feet. The Government Valuer has proposed the figure of Rs3 m. and if we look at the market price of the region of Bambous, the land itself is worth Rs2 m. and if Mr Fortune wishes to reconstruct his building, a building of 4,000 square feet, it will cost at least Rs3 m. So, we are talking of a figure of Rs5 m. instead of Rs3 m. that is being proposed to Mr Fortune and the others. So, could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister see to it that these persons, namely the four families mentioned get, at least, a fair compensation from Government?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, what has been mentioned by the hon. Member is exact, but we have already

referred the case to the Board of Assessment. We are awaiting the result and then we are going to communicate.

QUATRE BORNES - FARQUHAR AVENUE - ACCESS

Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): My concern is addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport. Actually, in old Quatre Bornes, we have a few roads that have been made one-way while they were two-way traffic roads. This particularly concerns Farquhar Avenue where we have the office of the Vice-President of Mauritius. It used to be a two-way traffic and the Vice-President used to get access to the Victoria Road and to the centre of Quatre Bornes very easily. Now, because of the one-way traffic, the VIPSU officer with the Vice President has to turn right and go inside Quatre Bornes to get access which is a long way to the main road. Normally, we see the President and the Vice-President accompanied by VIPSU officers clearing the way for them to go faster, but with this one-way, I see that the one-way system is making the Vice-President take a long way to get access to the main road.

Could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands refer this matter to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport so that the matter can be cleared for the Vice-President to have faster access to the main road?

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, I am certainly going to pass the message to the substantive Minister and I am sure that he is going to liaise with the RDA and the Municipality to come out with a reasonable solution.

TROU D'EAU DOUCE - COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Madam Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of the House by addressing the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life about the fact that the villagers of Trou d'Eau Douce are right now being deprived of their community centre which is being used as an area health centre by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life February since 2014.

The actual health centre has been left in a state of disrepair. It is not safe for the villagers and definitely not beautiful at all for a tourist village like Trou d'Eau Douce where we have hotels, bungalows and a reference like Ile aux Cerfs.

We all know that this region is visited by many tourists and local people every day. Pulling down the actual Health Centre and combining it with another neighbouring plot belonging to the State will enable the construction of a new building, which can be used as an Area Health Centre. It will also be an opportunity to create more parking for the benefit of needy patients. It is to be noted that the previous Government hired a building for a dispensary during a period of five years while it would have been more appropriate constructing a new building for that purpose. The hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Mr Anil Kumarsingh Gayan, is aware of this situation, and was previously addressed.

At this stage, I humbly request the hon. Minister to take urgent actions regarding the erection of a new building in the village of Trou d'Eau Douce to house an Area Health Centre for the welfare of the inhabitants.

Thank you.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr A. Gayan): Madam Speaker, the hon. Member is right about the state of the Trou d'Eau Douce building. In fact, that building has to be pulled down. It ought to have been pulled down but, unfortunately, the space that we need is not sufficient to put a Community Health Centre. There is a plot of land which is adjacent to that old building but, from my information, it is vested in the Ministry of Energy, which has given it to the Mauritius Post. I am in consultation with my colleagues to see whether that land can be released for us to be able to put up the structure. But it is an ongoing project, and we will give priority to it.

DR. JEETOO HOSPITAL - INCINERATOR

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Madam Speaker, there is an issue which I would like to raise and which concerns the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life.

It is, unfortunately, an issue which I have raised several times before by way of PQs and at Adjournment time. It concerns the incinerator at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital. The last time this issue was addressed was during the Committee of Supply, last year, on 16 April 2015. The hon. Minister stated that what he had in mind was to have a separate incinerator for the whole medical wastes, and that there have been visits to Reunion Island and they were going to do a feasibility study.

So, I would humbly ask the hon. Minister to look into the matter, because we still have black smokes, and this is creating a lot of inconvenience for users and inhabitants in the region of Dr. Jeetoo Hospital.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr A. Gayan): Madam Speaker, in fact, we have just been informed that there is a plot of land now available. We will be having possibly a BOT for the incinerator which will be used not only by all regional hospitals, but also by all clinics, to make it worthwhile for the investors to come. So, now, at least, we are moving forward.

LES SALINES - SIR ROBERT EDWARD HART GARDEN

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Madam Speaker, if I may address my request to the hon. Minister of Local Government and ask him if he could use his good offices with regard to the Sir Robert Edward Hart garden at Les Salines, commonly known as *Jardin La Saline*.

In fact, there are three main issues –

- (i) the garden is not properly maintained. For security reasons, especially, there are certain corners of the garden where there are high grasses and high trees;
- (ii) the light at the bowling ground where they play *pétanque* - there were lights before, but then it was removed - has not been installed yet, and
- (iii) the road leading to the garden is in an impracticable situation. People have to leave their cars at Reserve Street to go to the garden and this is causing considerable prejudice, especially to old people and parents with young children.

So, I would ask the hon. Minister if he could intervene vis-à-vis the Municipality of Port Louis. Thank you.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. A. Husnoo): Madam Speaker, with regard to the road, in fact, I have already discussed with my colleague, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, who is looking after the NDU projects, to sort out the issue about the roads. I appreciate. I know it is in a very pitiful state. We have already discussed about the road. So, we are going to try to take care of that. I already discussed with him.

As far as the garden and the lighting are concerned, I am going to ask the Municipality of Port Louis to look into that.

FLIC-EN-FLAC - PUBLIC BEACH – TUCK SHOPS

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River): Madam Speaker, I would like to raise an issue regarding the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management.

At Flic-en-Flac, during the course of the past years, food sellers have erected structures on the public beach. They have constructed their tuck shops, their *tabagies* in a very disorderly manner *et qui n'est pas joli à voir*. These people have been operating for long, long years, without a licence or permit, and this has been creating a lot of problems. They have even constructed. There is a problem of hygiene. In fact, my colleague, hon. Jhuboo, and I met the *forces vives* of Flic-en-Flac some days ago, and we are today the *porte-parole* of the *forces vives* of Flic-en-Flac.

I am just asking the hon. Minister to look into this issue because it is an environmental issue primarily; the conditions in which the food is being sold. These people are earning their living. We realised that it is difficult to make them vacate these premises, but the proposal of the *forces vives* is to ask the hon. Minister whether a food court cannot be constructed in a specific area somewhere, along the public beach, *dans un coin quelque part*, so that if members of the public want to avail themselves of these facilities, they can go to these food shops, which should be placed somewhere else from where these operators are operating today.

So, I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he could look into the matter and propose a win-win situation for these operators, for the public who come to the public beach and also for the inhabitants of Flic-en-Flac.

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management (Mr A. Wong Yen Cheong): Madame la présidente, je remercie l'honorable Ganoo de venir avec ces demandes très pertinentes. Effectivement, comme vous le savez, le gouvernement a la volonté de mettre de l'ordre en ce qu'il s'agit des marchands ambulants, en ce qu'il s'agit de nos plages. Les espaces publics aujourd'hui sont accaparés par certaines personnes. Ces même personnes qui n'ont même pas de permis vont saisir la justice pour avoir des

injonctions, et ils savent très bien que le temps que cela va traîner, ils pourront rester autant qu'ils veulent.

Je remercie de voir qu'il y a une volonté ici, avec les membres de l'opposition, de venir travailler dans le même sens, afin d'assainir la situation dans le pays, parce qu'il ne s'agit pas, comme certaines personnes, de faire de la démagogie politicienne pour les prochaines élections. C'est une question de bien-être du pays. Il est temps de mettre de l'ordre dans le pays, et je remercie l'honorable Ganoo. Nous avons les mêmes idées. Ces personnes doivent gagner leur vie, nous sommes certains. Il ne faut pas enlever ce qu'ils ont. Mais il faut proposer des choses avec des réglementations très strictes, afin que tout le monde puisse jouir de l'espace public.

Je vous remercie.

LAW AND ORDER - CID NORTH, PORT LOUIS

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montague Longue): Madam Speaker, the issue I am raising is in relation to the CID North of Port Louis. So, it relates to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. What happens is that the CID North faces a lot of challenges in this area of Port Louis, in terms of theft, larceny, and several issues in terms of law and order. Since very long, it has been undermanned and recently there have been Police Officers being posted on a temporary basis.

So, my request to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is to see to it with the Commissioner of Police that these officers be placed on a permanent basis, so that the CID North can carry on with their job.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I will certainly do so. I will pass the message to the Commissioner of Police, but I think we must recruit more Police Officers. With the number that we have, we can't meet all the exigencies of the moment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MILITARY ROAD – SQUATTERS - RELOCATION

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East): Madam Speaker, I wanted to raise an important issue which was going to be addressed this time to the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Housing and Lands, hon. Soodhun. It is with regard to a matter, which he will recall, Madam Speaker, I raised following a question by

another Member on the fate of thirteen inhabitants of a State land at Military Road, Plaine Verte.

The Vice-Prime Minister will recall, at one point in time last year, when I had asked him whether he would see to it that those thirteen poor families obtain a plot of State land somewhere in the vicinity where they were living and some place that had already been identified by the Ministry of Housing and Lands. He had, Madam Speaker, agreed, and I thank him for that. He had said that he would help them to obtain the very same plot that was identified. Following that, the hon. Minister, as he would confirm I am sure, visited the squatters and he went for a site visit and, in the presence of all those thirteen inhabitants, mainly women of a certain age. He went to see the plot of land that had been identified and he promised that they would try to ensure that they obtain that very same plot of land because most of them were already paying rent for that plot of land that was identified. All of them were also in possession of a document whereby they had received a letter from the Ministry where they had been offered that plot of land for Rs2,000, which is a very good decision.

Unfortunately, ever since then, they have been moved to another area altogether which is Pointe aux Sables. The hon. Minister is aware that he has received letters explaining their plight. They are very old people with children, pensioners, handicaps who are receiving help financially from people of the locality and certain *sociétés* and Madrassas of the locality. So, moving those very old people who know no other area than this one to an area like Pointe aux Sables, whilst I thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for having made the effort, I also invite him, Madam Speaker, to recognise the difficulty that they will face being so far away, where all those people in the locality helping them financially would have difficulties continuing to help. The Mosque of the vicinity that was helping them financially would not be able to continue the same help.

So, in those special circumstances, I pray that following the correspondence received on 23 April, if he could please consider rehousing those inhabitants, where he himself had promised, apart following his site visit, because they were very relieved after the hon. Vice-Prime Minister went to that site and made their hearts feel great. So, if he could please look into that in the name of a very difficult situation that they are facing.

Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun):
Madam Speaker, in fact, it is true to say that there are certain families for whom my Ministry

identified a plot of land near Canal Anglais, as the hon. Member is certainly aware. Unfortunately, according to the Ministry of Environment, we cannot allocate this land due to certain hazards, of flood and so on and also because of the ring road.

But I agree; we are looking at Vallée des Prêtes where we are trying to see where we can buy land and then can transfer them. I am doing my best to see how we can help. For the time being, as we have already mentioned, we have to evacuate all the squatters from Port Louis. We have temporarily sent them at Pointe aux Sables. In fact, I am doing my best to see where we can have some place. As you are aware, those at Vallée Pitot also had to be moved, but we have been able to give them *in situ*. I am doing my best to see how we can help.

Thank you.

At 6.57 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 03 May 2016 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

RODRIGUES – DEBRIS FOUND – INQUIRY

(No. B/279) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the debris found in the vicinity of Rodrigues Island, he will state if it is now confirmed that same belongs to the Malaysian Airlines MH 370.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 30 March 2016, debris suspected to emanate from the missing Malaysian Airline aircraft MH 370 were picked up by a French national at Var Brulée in Rodrigues. The debris were transferred to the National Coast Guard Headquarters in Mauritius for safekeeping.

On 04 April 2016, Police informed both the Australian Transport Safety Bureau which is responsible for search in the southern part of the Indian Ocean, and the Malaysian Investigation Team for MH 370 of the debris found. Subsequently, on 07 April, two Malaysian experts came to Mauritius to examine the debris.

I am further informed that on 08 and 11 April 2016, whilst the Malaysian experts were in Mauritius, other debris which had been found at Trou D'Argent and Anse Ally in

Rodrigues, were handed over to Police by two individuals. These debris were despatched to Mauritius.

All the debris were examined by the experts. Two sets thereof were secured and taken along for further examination in Malaysia by the experts who left on 11 April 2016.

I am informed that there has been no further communication from the Malaysian authorities on the matter as at date.

AIRPORT & PORT – DRUG SEIZURE

(No. B/280) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to drug trafficking, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the types of drugs seized at the airport and the port, respectively, since January 2016 to date, indicating the total commercial value thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the types of drugs seized at the airport and port between January 2016 to April 2016 together with the total commercial value are as follows –

- (i) two cases of importation of Heroin and Cannabis have been reported at the airport for an estimated total commercial value of Rs1.97 m, and
- (ii) 10 cases of importation of Heroin, Cannabis, Hashish and Synthetic Drugs at the port for an estimated total commercial value of Rs51.29 m.

HAUTE RIVE VILLAGE – MORCELLEMENT – BIDS

(No. B/281) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to an invitation for bids for the development of a proposed *morcellement* at Haute Rive Village, in Rivière du Rempart, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Employees Real Estate Investment Trust, information as to why one of the mandatory conditions to bid is fixed at one project of similar nature of a minimum of Rs100 m.

Reply: I am informed that the Employees Real Estate Investment Trust does not belong to Government and, therefore, I cannot provide the information requested.

**PORT LOUIS WEST & GRANDE RIVIÈRE NORTH WEST – NDU
PROJECTS**

(No. B/282) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Constituency No. 1, Port Louis West and Grande Rivière North West, he will state the –

- (a) projects implemented by the National Development Unit thereat since December 2014 in respect of which works –
 - (i) have been completed, and
 - (ii) are in progress, and
- (b) preventive measures taken to avert the recurrence of floods thereat.

Reply: I am tabling the list of projects which the National Development Unit (NDU) has embarked upon in Constituency No.1 as well as a status report thereon.

As regards, part (b) of the question, the NDU in consultation with the Parliamentary Private Secretary for the region and other stakeholders is endeavouring to construct drains in various localities where same are warranted. The preventive measures will hopefully alleviate the plight of the inhabitants.

CITE JUNCTION, PAILLES – AMPHITHEATRE – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/283) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the construction of an amphitheatre at Cité Junction, Pailles, by the National Development Unit, he will state where matters.

Reply: I am informed by the National Development Unit that the amphitheatre at Cité Junction, Pailles, has been constructed by the ENL Foundation, on a strip of land previously vested in the NDU, which was later transferred to the Ministry of Local Government.

I am given to understand that the project is completed and the handing over to the Municipal Council of Port Louis is being arranged by the Ministry of Local Government with the ENL Foundation.

JIN FEI ECONOMIC ZONE PROJECT – PLANTERS – COMPENSATION

(No. B/284) Mr K. Teeluckdharry (Second Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Jin Fei Economic Zone Project in Riche Terre, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, indicating if the 106 planters have been allocated land for the relocation of the plantations thereof or have received any compensation from the State therefor.

Reply: The House is aware that the Government has, in January 2015, recovered 500 *arpents* of State Land previously leased to the Mauritius Jin Fei Economic Trade and Cooperation Zone Co. Ltd. in September 2009.

As at to date, 325 *arpents* are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and Government has leased 75 *arpents* to Mauritius Jin Fei and is committed also to lease 100 *arpents* to a subsidiary of Mauritius Jin Fei.

In December 2015, Mauritius Jin Fei submitted a Master Plan. The company was issued a Letter of Comfort on 05 January 2016 by the Board of Investment. On the 175 *arpents*, Mauritius Jin Fei has proposed developments in two phases –

Phase 1 will consist of an integrated commercial district, a wedding theme square, a business hotel, educational and training facilities, and a business club with an estimated investment of some MUR 5 billion.

Phase 2 will comprise a manufacturing and an enterprise headquarter zone, an international convention and exhibition centre, office spaces and residential units with an estimated investment of some MUR 10 billion.

I am informed that construction works are scheduled to start in the third quarter of 2016.

With regard to the ex-Jin Fei planters, I am informed that the 106 sugar cane planters have received compensation of Rs210,000 per *arpent*, aggregating to Rs54 m. paid by the then Government in February 2008. They have also each received 10 perches of land for residential purpose at Khoyratty in September 2014. I am informed that there is apparently no problem relating to these 106 planters.

Regarding the 121 vegetables planters they are also being provided with 10 perches of land for residential purposes at Khoyratty and Mon Gout respectively.

CYBERCITY (SECOND) – SETTING UP

(No. B/285) Mr K. Teeluckdharry (Second Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the project of the setting up of a second Cybercity, which was to be financed by the Government of India, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: Government is presently implementing a Technopole Project in Rivière du Rempart and one in Rose Belle. It is also envisaged to construct two other Technopoles, one in the East and the other in the West. In these circumstances, the setting-up of a second Cybercity will be considered at a later stage.

CANNABIS & OPIUM-BASED MEDICATION

(No. B/286) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to cannabis, he will state if he –

- (a) proposes to engage dialogue with citizens, religious groups like the Rastafari, the Ayurvedic and traditional medicine practitioners and medical practitioners for the liberalization thereof in line with what obtains in many countries, including in Canada and in Uruguay and
- (b) is aware that cannabis-based and opium-based medicines are imported into Mauritius and that a cannabis-based medical product was recently imported by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for Ayurvedic treatment.

Reply (Minister of Health and Quality of Life): With regard to part (a) of the question, I am not proposing to hold any consultation in respect of Cannabis.

With regard to part (b) of the question, no Cannabis-based medication has been imported in Mauritius. However, for allopathic purposes, medication such as Pethidine and Morphine, with an opium-based component, are imported and are used as painkillers in post-operative and cancer treatment.

With regard to Ayurvedic treatment, no medication with Cannabis component is being imported as from 2014. Prior to that, deactivated Cannabis herbs were used with other ingredients in the ratio of 1:20 for the compounding of three Ayurvedic drugs.

OFFENSIVE WEAPONS – SALE

(No. B/287) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the offences committed by making use of offensive weapons, he will state if he will consider introducing legislation to make the selling of any type of offensive weapons to any person under the age of 18 an offence with a view to curb the incidence of minors involved therein.

Reply: Section 233A and 233B of the Criminal Code regulate the sale of offensive weapons. While section 233A prohibits the sale of offensive instrument to any person in the open, that is, on a street, in a fair or any open space, section 233B of the Criminal Code prohibits the sale of offensive instrument to any person under the age of 12.

There are other provisions of the Criminal Code which provide for offences in respect of the possession or use of offensive weapons in other circumstances, for example, while taking part in an unlawful gathering and riots, cases of larceny and looting.

Moreover, section 9 of the Public Gathering Act provides for offences of possession of an offensive weapon without lawful authority at a public gathering and section 13D of the Police Act also prohibits the possession of an offensive weapon during curfews.

The Commissioner of Police has informed that from January 2014 to 22 April 2016, 21 cases of use of offensive weapons by persons under the age of 18 have been reported. I will request him to examine the advisability and justification of introducing any appropriate piece of legislation.

MORCELLEMENT GUIBIES, PAILLES – ROAD RESURFACING

(No. B/288) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the road linking Anse Courtois Street to Morcellement Guibies, Pailles,

he will state if the National Development Unit will give priority consideration for the resurfacing thereof in view of the very bad state thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the National Development Unit that resurfacing of the road linking Anse Courtois Street to Morcellement Guibies, Pailles, cannot presently be effected on a priority basis given that major sewerage works are scheduled in that locality.

Consideration will be given to the resurfacing of the road as soon as it becomes possible.

STERLING HOUSE – OFFICE SPACE – RENT

(No. B/289) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the National Development Unit, he will state –

- (a) the amount of rent payable for office space therefor, in Sterling House, in Port Louis, over the past five years, indicating the cost per square foot, and
- (b) if the transfer of the offices thereof is being envisaged and, if so, indicate –
 - (i) the cost per square foot of the new office space and if the service charges are included therein;
 - (ii) if tender procedures were carried out therefor and, if so, indicate the names of the bidders and the respective bid value thereof, and
 - (iii) the estimated cost of the transfer, including the cost of new installations therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the National Development Unit (NDU) that it has rented office accommodation at Sterling House, Port Louis, since December 1996 to accommodate its staff as well as the Parliamentary Private Secretaries (PPSs). Presently, the NDU is housed on 5 storeys of Sterling House and same covers a floor area of 24,088 square feet.

The total rent payable for same is Rs746,094 monthly, inclusive of service charge and VAT. The rate being paid per square foot in respect of the different levels differs given that the NDU did not rent all office spaces at the same time. However, the average cost per square foot is Rs31, inclusive of service charge and VAT.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the transfer of the offices of the NDU to new premises is indeed being envisaged. The reasons for same are –

- (a) various complaints received from the PPSs regarding the state of their offices;
- (b) health and safety issues;
- (c) the need for the NDU to have all its services under one single roof as currently its Procurement and Supply Section is based at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building;
- (d) the need for additional office space to cater for staff, and
- (e) the provision of additional parking space.

I am informed that tender procedures for the procurement of office space were launched on 22 May 2015 through Open Advertised Bidding (OAB) method and it was a two stage bidding process, namely, technical evaluation and financial evaluation. At the closure of the submission of bids, seven bids were received. The names of the bidders are –

- (a) Excelsior United Development Companies Ltd (EUDCOS);
- (b) Societé P. Jhugroo Frères;
- (c) Pierre Mont Co Ltd;
- (d) Henessy Court Ltd;
- (e) Mascareignes Sterling Co Ltd;
- (f) Orland Ltd, and
- (g) IKS Cargo Ltd.

However, out of these seven bids, two were rejected by the Departmental Bid Committee (DBC) as they did not meet the pre-requisite requirements as spelt out in the bid document, that is, they were not within the radius or localities specified in the bid document or they did not comply with the submission of mandatory documents.

The Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC) constituted, thereafter, for the evaluation of the five remaining bids found that only the proposal submitted by Orland Ltd was technically substantially responsive and consequently, recommended same for financial evaluation. The offer of Orland Ltd was Rs76.76 per square foot, inclusive of service charge and VAT.

The views of the Director, Valuation & Real Estate Consultancy Services, Valuation Department was sought on that bid and subsequently, negotiation was held and the acceptable

rate of Rs58.65 per square foot, inclusive of service charge and of VAT was reached. This new rate was recommended by the Valuation Department.

As regards part (iii) of the question, I am informed that the Lessor of the new premises is providing fit outs, air conditioning, floor finishes, mechanical & electrical services and integrated communication. As such, expenses to be incurred by the NDU for shifting to the new premises will be restricted to –

- (i) transfer of the PABX system, telephone lines, Wi-Fi facilities, and
- (ii) purchase and fixing of new blinds.

The exact cost thereof is not known as relevant quotations are being sought. The estimated costs of same is not likely to exceed Rs1 m. and funds are available.

NHDC – HOUSING UNITS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/322) Mr K. Teeluckdharry (Second Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the social housing programmes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company and other entities, information as to the number of social housing units that –

- (a) have been constructed and delivered since 2015 to date,
- (b) will be constructed and delivered in Constituency No. 5, Pamplemousses and Triolet in 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively.

Reply: I am informed by the National Housing Development Co. Ltd (NHDC) that 21 social housing units have been constructed in 2015 at d'Epinay in Constituency Number 5, Pamplemousses and Triolet. The housing units have been allocated to the eligible beneficiaries in July 2015.

Moreover, I am informed that 61 housing units are under construction at Pointe aux Piments and will be ready for allocation by June 2016.

I also wish to inform the House that my Ministry has allocated, in February 2016, 41 serviced lots at Solitude to eligible applicants. These serviced lots were ready for allocation since 2013 but have remained in an abandoned state since then. The NHDC has had to disburse some Rs600,000 in 2016 to clean the site prior to allocation.

As regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that a total of 57 social housing units are presently under construction in Constituency Number 5; 44 in Calebasses and 13 in Baie du Tombeau. The 57 housing units will be delivered in March 2017.

As for social housing units to be constructed and delivered in 2018 and 2019, my Ministry has identified two other sites of the respective extents of 6A26P and 3A86P at Calebasses for the construction of some 152 housing units of duplex-type and of an area of about 50 square metres each.

My Ministry is also proposing, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, to carry out a rehousing programme for some 150 families living in deplorable conditions at Longère Blanc and Longère Tole in Baie du Tombeau. The exercise would start in financial year 2016/2017 and is expected to be completed in 2019 in view of the complexity of the works due to the fact that the families are residing on the site.

PUBLIC OFFICERS - CAR PURCHASE – DUTY EXEMPTION

(No. B/323) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to recommendation 5 at paragraph 18.2.20 (II) contained in Volume 1 of the Pay Research Bureau Report 2016, he will state if he will consider the possibility of extending the grant of 70 per cent duty exemption on a car of engine capacity of up to 1400 cc to all public officers who reckon at least 25 years' service and who have never benefitted from same irrespective of their salary and grade.

(Withdrawn)

MAHEBOURG – STREET LIGHTING SYSTEM

(No. B/324) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to Mahebourg, he will state if he is aware of the lack of several street lanterns in the street lighting system found on the main road thereof and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for a review of the said lighting system and installation of additional street lanterns thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not?

(Withdrawn)

AIRPORTS OF MAURITIUS LIMITED - RECRUITMENT & TENDERING PROCEDURES

(No. B/325) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms

whether, in regard to the various alleged malpractices which occurred at the Airports of Mauritius Limited in relation to the recruitment and tendering procedures in relation to which Mr S. P., former Chief Executive Officer of AML, is allegedly involved, he will state if his Ministry has carried out inquiries thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

CITÉ ST AUBIN - SUGAR CAMPS - PHASING OUT

(No. B/326) Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the phasing out of the sugar camp at Cité St. Aubin, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: In regard to the phasing out of the sugar camp at Cité St. Aubin, I am informed that the remaining 40 camp dwellers will be relocated at sites which are adjacent to the existing VRS employees' sites, as follows -

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| • St. Aubin | 13 beneficiaries |
| • Rivière des Anguilles | 10 beneficiaries |
| • Lady Barkly, Souillac | 17 beneficiaries |

For the St. Aubin site, all infrastructural works have been completed since 2015. According to the phasing out of sugar camps scheme, the beneficiaries have to effect a nominal payment. The 13 beneficiaries have been requested to effect payment for the nominal price of Rs3,500 per perche for the land, Rs5,025 representing Notary Fees and Rs500 representing payment to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the Parcel Identification Number. Out of the 13 beneficiaries, five have already paid for the land.

For the site at Rivière des Anguilles, the ten beneficiaries have been requested to effect the relevant payment to enable the company to proceed with the preparation of the title deeds.

The site at Lady Barkly in Souillac concerns 17 beneficiaries. The title deeds will be prepared once the Morcellement Permit is issued by the Morcellement Board.

The Ministry and the MCIA are closely following up on the matter. The phasing out of sugar camps is expected to be completed by September this year.

**CEB - ST LOUIS POWER STATION - ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

(No. B/327) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, following the publication of the Environmental and Social Management Plan Summary in 2014, he will state the concerns and advice provided by the African Development Bank's Energy, Environment and Climate Change Department in relation to the social and environmental risks posed by the St Louis Power Station Redevelopment, in Port Louis, indicating if his Ministry will ensure the implementation by the Central Electricity Board –

- (a) of the environmental protection measures recommended therein, indicating if some of them will not be implemented and, if not why not, and
- (b) and local residents of a joint committee to foster permanent dialogue in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that -

- (i) the Energy, Environment and Climate Change Department of the African Development Bank has not expressed any concerns on environmental issues relating to the redevelopment of the St Louis Power Station;
- (ii) the Environment and Social Management Plan was prepared by CEB's consultant as a mandatory requisite of the loan application to AFDB, and
- (iii) the Bank has already approved the loan after examining all the mandatory requirements related to the loan application.

I wish to further inform the House that the project obtained an EIA on 1 August 2013 and that the Environment and Social Management Plan forms part of the works contract between CEB and the contractor. The contract was also vetted by the AFDB.

CEB will as a responsible organisation ensure that the Environment and Social Management Plan and the conditions of the EIA Licence are fully complied with.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by that the CEB officials have been holding consultation meetings with the local residents, including the President of Mouvement Civique of Camp Chapelon and has informed them that they may visit the construction site, if they make a request to CEB.

FISHERMEN – CARDS – ISSUE & STAMPING

(No. B/328) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the fishermen of Port Louis, he will state -

- (a) the number of fishermen's permits issued, region-wise, since December 2014 to date, indicating the number of requests therefor which have been turned down, indicating in each case, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) if he is aware of their complaints to the effect that officers of his Ministry are often not in post to stamp their cards when they return from fishing expeditions and, if so, if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

Reply: Regarding part (a) of the question, I am informed that no fishermen permits, commonly known as fisherman cards, have been issued to fishermen in Port Louis since December 2014. There are 41 applications from Bain des Dames, Grand River North West and Roche Bois as at date and no request has been turned down.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am aware of the problems faced by fishermen concerning the stamping of their cards at Fisheries Posts. In order to eliminate undue hardships on fishermen who would call at the Fisheries Posts to stamp their cards, a decision has been taken by my Ministry last to allow fishermen cards to be stamped and signed after sunset at Pointe aux Sables.

The problem of stamping of cards was further compounded by shortage of staff in Fisheries Posts. Staff shortages in Fisheries Posts have been a persistent problem.

However, with a view to alleviating the problem, my Ministry has, in 2015, recruited 15 Fisheries Protection Service officers to serve in Fisheries Posts. Some 26 additional such officers would be recruited this year.

UNIVERSITIES - DIPLOMAS/DEGREES - DELIVERY

(No. B/329) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the recent cases of universities which had been set up in Mauritius and which had not been allowed to deliver diplomas/degrees to their students, he will state in each case, the present status thereof and whether a solution has been reached regarding delivery of the said qualifications to the students thereof.

Reply (Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research): I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that there are no

recent cases as such of universities set up in Mauritius and which have not been allowed to deliver diplomas/degrees.

I presume the hon. Member may be referring to the D.Y. Patil Medical College, running postgraduate courses in medicine and whose students were not registered by the Medical Council of Mauritius. The Medical Council had then drawn the attention of the authorities on certain shortcomings with regard to the courses run by D.Y. Patil Medical College. These students could not get registered by the Medical Council and they were therefore unable to practice as Specialists.

When we took office after the elections, an inter-ministerial committee comprising my ministry, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Attorney General's Office was set up to look into the matter and to come forward with a solution. A decision was taken to invite the Imperial College, London to carry out an assessment in respect of the Doctors who could not get registered as Specialists by the Medical Council.

The team from Imperial College and local Clinicians from the Ministry of Health recorded certain shortcomings in the clinical competencies. A top-up medical programme was proposed and designed by the Imperial College, London. The programme includes clinical training and supervision to be run by the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM). As for the clinical supervision, it will be carried out by the Specialists of the Ministry of Health.

We have thus managed to come forward with a solution to this issue.

I am advised that the registration of students for the top-up programme is scheduled for Wednesday 27 April 2016 at the UTM and the course is due to start on Friday 29 April 2016 for students wishing to enrol for the course.

Upon successful completion of the programme, the process leading to the registration of the students as Specialists would have to be completed as per requirements of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Medical Council.

INFANT MORTALITY

(No. B/330) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to infant mortality, he will state the latest figures available therefor, indicating the remedial measures being taken by his Ministry to curb the incidence thereof.

Reply: In my reply to P.Q. No. B/464, of September 2015, I informed the House that the forecast for Infant Mortality Rate for 2015 was 12.6 for the Island of Mauritius and 14.3 for Rodrigues.

I wish to inform the House that figures for the year 2015 for the Island of Mauritius are 13.7 and 11.7 for Rodrigues.

These figures confirm that there is a declining trend and that the strategies implemented by my Ministry to curb the incidence are effective.

Since November 2015, a Neonatal ICU is operational at J. Nehru Hospital. Further remedial measures proposed and being implemented by my Ministry to curb down Infant Mortality Rate are set out as below -

- Opening of a National Neonatal ICU at Victoria Hospital in January 2017 to cater for all complicated cases of the whole island. The bed capacity at the National Neonatal ICU will be increased from 6 to 16.
- Upgrading of the Neonatal ICU of SSRN to increase the bed capacity from 5 to 7.
- Opening of a Neonatal ICU at Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital and Flacq Hospital.
- Training of Medical Health Officers and nurses in Neonatal ICU care which is due to start in May 2016.
- A multi-disciplinary team approach has been adopted. A Respiratory Therapist will be attached to each of the neonatal units of all the regional hospitals and will provide assistance under the Supervision of the Head of Neonatal Services.
- A Paediatric Intensive Care Unit will be opened shortly at J. Nehru Hospital to cater for critically ill children of age above one month and also to provide a more specialised service.

The other remedial measures being taken to reduce Infant Mortality Rate are the vaccination of babies and young children with Rotavirus and Pneumococcal vaccines. The Rotavirus vaccine was introduced in our hospitals since March 2015 to the tune of Rs 10.5 million annually. The Pneumococcal vaccine was introduced in the hospitals in March 2016 at a cost of Rs33 m. annually.

As regards Rodrigues Island, a team from my Ministry comprising a Consultant Gynaecologist and Obstetrics and a Consultant-in-charge Paediatrics carried out an audit in November 2015 on infant and under five mortality on the island. They made several recommendations in order to reduce Infant Mortality Rate. These recommendations have

been referred to Departmental Head, Health and Sports, Rodrigues Regional Assembly for necessary actions.

HOSPITALS - BED OCCUPANCY

(No. B/331) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital, the Queen Victoria Hospital and the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital, he will state the average monthly bed occupancy in the respective medical and surgical departments thereof.

Reply: I am tabling the average monthly bed occupancy in the respective medical and surgical departments for the Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, the Queen Victoria Hospital and the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital.

PRB REPORT 2016 - ERRORS, OMISSIONS AND ANOMALIES COMMITTEE

(No. B/332) Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the Pay Research Bureau Report 2016, he will state if –

- (a) Government will set up an Errors, Omissions and Anomalies Committee and, if so, indicate when and the terms of reference thereof and, if not, why not, and
- (b) if the Option Forms have been issued to the employees governed by the said Report and, if so, indicate when or Government proposes to await the publication of the EOAC Report, if any, prior to requiring the filling and submission thereof.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/334) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of an across the board National Minimum Wage, he will state where matters stand, including if a timeframe for the implementation thereof has been set.

Reply: Cabinet approval has been obtained for the introduction into the National Assembly of the National Wage Consultative Council (2016) Bill.

The proposed Council will, within a period of 12 months, make recommendations to Government regarding a national minimum wage to be introduced for both the private and public sectors.

CAMP DE MASQUE - COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

(No. B/337) Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a Community Health Centre at Camp de Masque, he will state if a new site has been earmarked therefor and, if so, indicate the location thereof and, if not, indicate the actions taken, if any, to remedy the chaotic situation prevailing thereat.

(Withdrawn)