



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2015

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GCSK, KCMG, QC)**

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

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

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 39 of 2015

Sitting of 10 November 2015

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENT

OBITUARY - MR MARIE JOSEPH EMMANUEL GUY OLLIVRY, QC, GOSK

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is with deep sadness and sorrow that we learned the demise recently of one of our distinguished former colleague who devoted his life and career to the service of the nation. I am referring to Mr Marie Joseph Emmanuel Guy Ollivry, QC, GOSK, who passed away on 03 November last at the age of 82 after a prolonged illness.

Mr Ollivry was born on 17 February 1933 at Quatre Bornes. After his primary schooling at the Loreto Convent of Quatre Bornes, he attended the St Esprit College for his secondary education. He then proceeded to study law in London and at the Faculty of Law in Paris. He was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn in 1957 and became an Associate of the London Institute of Taxation. Between 1962 and 1965, he worked as Legal Advisor to the President of the Republic of Cameroon. After his return in 1965, Mr Ollivry joined the then Crown Law Office.

He left the Crown Law Office in 1967 for private practice and in parallel to embark on a political career. He stood as a candidate for the 1967 general election in Constituency No. 21 - Rodrigues under the banner of the PMSD and was returned First Member for the said Constituency. On 14 June 1968, he was elected Deputy Chairman of Committees and held that post until 25 November 1969. In December 1969, Mr Ollivry was appointed Minister of Economic Planning and Development. He, however, resigned as Minister in November 1970 and founded his own party, the *Union Démocratique Mauricienne*, UDM. Consequently, he joined the Opposition bench in Parliament.

Mr Ollivry also served as Mayor of the Municipality of Curepipe in 1970.

He participated in the 1976 and 1982 general elections in Constituency No.1 – Grand River North West and in Constituency No. 17 – Curepipe and Midlands, respectively, under the banner of his party, but was not returned.

Mr Ollivry who was a specialist in Human Rights, Constitutional and Administrative Law, was appointed in 1993 by the Commonwealth Secretariat to advise in the drawing up of a new draft Constitution for the Seychelles.

Mr Ollivry was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1987 and regularly appeared before the Court of Appeal of Seychelles and the Privy Council. He was elected Chairman of the Bar Council twice. In May 2006, Mr Ollivry was appointed Chairman of the Law Reform Commission and was re-appointed to that post in May 2011 and held that position until his last breath.

In 1998, Mr Ollivry was elevated to the rank of Grand Officer of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean, GOSK, for his outstanding contribution in the legal profession in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, during his Parliamentary career, Mr Ollivry gained the appreciation of all the Members of the House and commanded respect through his deep sense of seriousness and his great intellectual ability. Mr Ollivry held strong views on many issues and was always motivated by lofty ideals and love for the country.

Through his contributions as a respected barrister and renowned constitutional lawyer, he has left his indelible mark in the fields of criminal and constitutional law in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, may I request you to direct the Clerk to convey the deep condolences of this Assembly to the bereaved family.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger): I join the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. In fact, all of us who have known late Guy Ollivry here in Mauritius or in Rodrigues or in the Seychelles will miss him. We have lost a brilliant lawyer, a Minister, but above all, we have lost a good man. Late Guy Ollivry was really a good man and did a lot of good things during his time on this earth.

Therefore, I join with the Rt. hon. Prime Minister in requesting you, Madam Speaker, to convey our deep condolences to his family and his children.

Madam Speaker: I associate myself with the tribute paid by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the memory of late Mr Marie Joseph Emmanuel Guy Ollivry, QC, GOSK, and direct the Clerk to convey the deep condolences of the Assembly to the bereaved family.

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development -

- (a) The National Accounts of Mauritius 2014 (Vol. 32).
- (b) The Digest of Demographic Statistics 2014 (Vol. 30).
- (c) The Investment Promotion (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2015. (Government Notice No. 216 of 2015)
- (d) The Public Procurement (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2015. (Government Notice No. 217 of 2015)

B. Ministry of Local Government –

- (a) The Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes (Fees for Classified Trades) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. (Government Notice No. 219 of 2015)
- (b) The Municipal Town Council of Quatre Bornes (Markets) (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2015. (Government Notice No.220 of 2015)

C. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade -

The African Reinsurance Corporation (Privileges and Immunities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. (Government Notice No. 215 of 2015)

D. Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection –

The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No.28) Regulations 2015. (Government Notice No. 218 of 2015)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

INDIA-MAURITIUS DOUBLE TAXATION AVOIDANCE CONVENTION

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the India-Mauritius Double Taxation Avoidance Convention, he will state if -

- (a) Cabinet was made aware on 03 July 2015 of the -
 - (i) details of the Draft Protocol presented on 16 June 2015 by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Mauritius to the hon. Minister of Finance of India, and
 - (ii) Minutes of the Joint Working Group Meeting signed on 01 July 2015 by the Financial Secretary of Mauritius, and
- (b) the hon. Prime Minister of India has agreed that there will be no revision of the main provisions of the said Convention, in particular, of Article 4 regarding Capital Gains.

The Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr S. Lutchmeenaraidoo):

Madam Speaker, I will reply to this PNQ put to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister.

The Mauritius-India Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) was signed in April 1983 and it came into force in June 1985.

So far, the DTAC has served the interests of both Mauritius and India where it has played an important role in foreign investment in India, Private Equity and Portfolio investment. These investments have been crucial to India to overhaul infrastructure and boost growth. It has helped to build a diversified economy in Mauritius that is more resilient to external forces and to attain middle income status. Increased reliance on the financial services sector has been an engine of growth whilst creating employment opportunities for young professionals.

However, the DTAC has been continuously subjected to attacks from various quarters in India with claims that its provisions were being misused, thus resulting in huge tax losses for India.

In order to address concerns expressed by the Indian side on possible misuse of the DTAC, a Joint Working Group (JWG) comprising senior officials from the concerned authorities of India and Mauritius was established in August 2006.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the JWG was set as follows -

- (i) To put in place adequate safeguards to prevent possible misuse of the India-Mauritius DTAC without prejudice to the economic interests of either country, and
- (ii) to strengthen the mechanism for the “Exchange of Information” under the India-Mauritius DTAC.

The Joint Working Group has held ten meetings between October 2006 and May 2014 without any positive outcome.

The discussions were inconclusive due largely to strongly conflicting views on the mandate of the Joint Working Group amongst other things.

Following the visit of the Prime Minister of India in March 2015, I led a ministerial delegation from 15 to 19 June to discuss various bilateral issues, including the DTAC between our two countries.

I then met with the hon. Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance, hon. Mrs Sushma Swaraj, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr Mishra, Personal Assistant to the Prime Minister of India. In our meeting, we reiterated the need to maintain the DTAC between our two countries and emphasised its importance for the survival of the Global Business Sector. We shared the qualms of India in preserving the integrity of the DTAC and conveyed our commitment in enforcing good governance in all sectors of our economy. We clarified our Government’s vision in developing substance in our financial services sector by moving from the traditional back office and treaty centric focus to more jurisdictional substance.

During the visit, the Mauritian delegation submitted a draft Protocol amending the DTAC for consideration by the Indian authorities.

Subsequently, the Indian Authorities agreed on the 11th Meeting of the Joint Working Group to be held in India on 29 and 30 June 2015 to resume discussions.

Accordingly, Cabinet was informed on 26 June 2015 that a delegation would proceed to India to discuss the DTAC.

As regards part (a) (i) of the question, there was no need for Cabinet to be informed on the details prior to the holding of discussions at the level of the Joint Working Group.

Concerning part (a) (ii) of the question, Cabinet was informed on 03 July 2015 that the Joint Working Group had discussions to resolve pending issues and that agreed Minutes of the discussions had been signed and a draft Protocol initialled by both parties.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that, during the last visit of the Prime Minister to India in the context of the India Africa Forum Summit, held in New Delhi on 29 October 2015, the issue of the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention was raised during a bilateral meeting with the Indian Prime Minister.

During the discussions, our Prime Minister recalled the statement made by his Excellency Mr Modi during his visit to Mauritius in the context of our National Day Celebrations. Mr Modi, and I quote, stated -

“We understand the importance of the offshore banking sector for your economy. We are conscious of its dependence on India. We will work together for our shared objective to avoid the abuse of our Double Taxation Avoidance Convention. I thank you for your support. But, I also assure you that we will do nothing to harm this vibrant sector of one of our closest strategic partners”.

Madam Speaker, during the same bilateral meeting, amongst other issues, our Prime Minister reiterated his appeal to the Indian Prime Minister to safeguard the interest of Mauritius and to see to it that nothing is done to put at stake the benefits derived by Mauritius under Article 13 of the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention with regard to Capital Gains Tax. Our Prime Minister also assured India that Mauritius will put in all necessary efforts and walk the extra mile to ensure that our reputation as a clean, proven and trusted jurisdiction is upheld at all costs.

In view of the bond of kinship between our two countries and the mutual respect that exists between the two Prime Ministers, Shri Narendra Modi reassured that India strongly values its relationship with Mauritius and that his Government will not do anything to harm the economic interest of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, there are, however, new developments concerning this sector at international level, which we cannot ignore in Mauritius.

- (i) On 08 October 2015, the OECD announced that the G20 Finance Ministers, including the Minister of Finance of India, have endorsed the final package of measures proposed by the OECD/G20 Base Erosion Profit Shifting (BEPS) project, including the development of a multilateral instrument for the harmonisation of tax treaties and the elimination of double non-taxation.
- (ii) Moreover, the General Anti Avoidance Rule (GAAR) under the amended India Income Tax Act will come into force in April 2017 and will address the issue of double non-taxation as well as treaty shopping.
- (iii) India has already started its own financial services centre, that is, the Gujrat International Financial Centre. All FDI to Mauritius is expected to be channelled to India through the GIFC.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, my question was addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister of Mauritius who has just met the Prime Minister of India and subsequently made statements on Tuesday the 3rd of this month, and it was widely reported in the press in India. I am, therefore, not putting questions to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, with regard to questions addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, the Table has been advised that P.Q. Nos. B/816 and B/822 have been withdrawn. Hon. Ameer Meea!

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION – COMPLAINTS

(No. B/810) 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 for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Equal Opportunities Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of complaints registered thereat, since the coming into operation thereof to date, indicating the outcome thereof in each case.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I shall reply to Parliamentary Question Nos. B/810 and B/818 together as they relate to the same issue.

I am informed by the Equal Opportunities Commission, that since its inception in April 2012, 1,433 complaints have been received in Mauritius and 67 in Rodrigues.

I am further informed of the following outcomes on these cases -

- (i) 95 cases have been conciliated and settled ;
- (ii) In 331 cases, there was no evidence of discrimination;
- (iii) Additional information is being sought in respect of 360 cases;
- (iv) 290 cases do not fall under the purview of the Commission;
- (v) 204 cases are under investigation;
- (vi) 6 cases have been referred to the Equal Opportunities Tribunal;
- (vii) 1 case has been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions;
- (viii) 13 cases fall under the purview of other Departments and have been referred thereto;
- (ix) 85 cases have been withdrawn by the complainants;
- (x) 29 cases are pending examination by the Commission, and
- (xi) 86 cases are time barred as per the Equal Opportunities Act.

Regarding the name of the complainants and the nature of the complaints, I am informed by the Commission that it cannot reveal this information without the consent of the former.

However, I am further informed by the Commission that when an investigation is opened by the Commission of its own motion and that the matter involves public interest issues, it may, in a spirit of transparency, inform the public at large of same.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, the Equal Opportunities Commission was set up to work toward the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities, and answering to a PQ in April 2015 from hon. Mrs Danielle Selvon, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister stated to the House, I quote –

“I am informed by the Attorney General’s Office that, in 2013 and 2014, the Chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission has made proposals to the Attorney General for amendments to be brought to the legislation for the Equal Opportunities Tribunal to entertain cases involving the PSC.”

To cut short, the reply was that, from the Prime Minister's Office at this time, it would not consider piecemeal approach, but rather a holistic approach to amend the legislation. So, my question to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is, whether the Government is considering favourably to amend the Equal Opportunities Commission to allow the Tribunal to enquire into matter regarding the PSC?

The Prime Minister: It is under study, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It has been reported that, yesterday, in a sitting before the Equal Opportunities Tribunal, the lawyer for the hon. Minister Gayan raised a point as to the partiality of the Equal Opportunities Commission. So, may I know from the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether this view is shared by the Members of his Government as well or is it an isolated opinion or it is just a joke from the hon. Minister?

The Prime Minister: I have not looked into it yet.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could the Rt. hon. Prime Minister tell us whether when a matter concerns an hon. Minister or any hon. Member of Government or any of the para-statal bodies, that it is a Government policy not to respond to the summons or invitations of the Equal Opportunities Commission and that is why it is still under study and will be under study for many years to come?

The Prime Minister: As long as it takes.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given that the post of the Chairman of the Equal opportunities Commission is a post that is appointed by advice of the Prime Minister in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition and it is supposed to be an independent position, the fact that the Chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission clearly was touting to be a candidate...

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order! He cannot attack a member of the Commission like this!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, sit down! Hon. Rutnah, if you look at both questions, the questions relate to complaints registered, the complainants. Please, reframe your question in relation to the two questions which have been asked.

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, I am asking in the light that the Equal Opportunities Commission deals with equal opportunities, whether the Chairman is still considered to be an independent person?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, we cannot in the National Assembly attack any member who is not present and cannot defend himself.

(Interruptions)

Next question! Hon. Ameer Meea!

PAY RESEARCH BUREAU REPORT – PUBLICATION

(No. B/811) 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 for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the forthcoming Report of the Pay Research Bureau, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bureau, information as to the expected date of publication thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the 2016 PRB Report was initially expected to be released in October 2015. However, the Director, PRB recently explained that the exercise for the preparation of the 2016 Report has been delayed due to several factors which were beyond the control of the Bureau.

The Report is now scheduled to be published in the first quarter of 2016. The Director, PRB has informed that the Bureau is striving to complete and publish the Report within the new time frame.

I would like to underline that despite the delay in the publication of the Report, its recommendations will still be made effective as from 01 January 2016.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether his Office has been aware that several Ministries and parastatal bodies have delayed considerably in giving their recommendations to the PRB and this is why there is a late, I would say, submission of the

report; whether his Office will direct all these Ministries to make diligence in submitting their submissions to the PRB?

The Prime Minister: I cannot answer for sure, but it may be one of the factors.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ganoo! No question! Next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

NATIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/812) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the weather conditions prevailing during the passage of a cyclone, he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of relevant legislation with a view to making it an offence for a person to venture outside and putting at risk his life and that of his rescuers.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in the Government Programme 2015-2019, it is clearly stated that, with a view to enhancing the safety and security of our citizens against natural disasters, Government will review and update the national multi-hazard early warning system and embark on innovative disaster management education, training and public awareness initiatives.

In this context, I am informed by the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management, that a draft National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill is currently under preparation.

I am further informed that the implications of the issue raised by the hon. Member are already being examined within the framework of this new piece of legislation.

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Rt. hon. Prime Minister. The question was raised in 2008 and recently - I call it recently - in 2011 by hon. Seeruttun and the answer was more or less on the same line as our Rt. hon. Prime Minister is saying. Will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister see to it that this time we come, within a short time delay, with this Bill?

The Prime Minister: Well, I suppose those who are working on the legislation are doing their best.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

FANFARON HARBOUR, ROCHE BOIS & PLAINE VERTE – POLICE OFFICERS

(No. B/813) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Police Stations located at the Fanfaron Harbour, at Roche Bois and in Plaine Verte respectively, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Police Officers posted thereat, indicating if they are undermanned.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the number of Police Officers posted to the three Police Stations, namely Fanfaron Harbour, Roche Bois and Plaine Verte is 69, 56 and 60 respectively. I am further informed that those Police Stations are adequately staffed for policing purposes.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that the deployment of human resources in the different Police Stations is based on the size of population, crime incidence, the volume of commercial and social activities, and important and vulnerable installations in the station areas.

Mr Mohamed: Could I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, since he stated that they are ‘adequately’ and the word that he has chosen is ‘adequate’, for each of the Police Stations what would be the Force that is normally stipulated as being proper? I am not talking about an adequate or acceptable figure. What, according to the Commissioner of Police, is the figure that each Police Station referred to in the question has? Normally, there is a figure officially for that.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I am afraid I don’t have the information. The hon. Member should come with a specific question on that.

Mr Mohamed: I have two more questions. One question is – I will try to simplify. Normally, all Commissioners of Police, what they do is that each Station – because my question referred as to whether they are undermanned. Normally, what is the figure, according to the Police that would - according to him - say that it is manned? What is the minimum that is required for each Police Station? Each Police Station has a minimum figure and what would that figure be?

The Prime Minister: I have just explained the criteria to come to the conclusion that the number is adequate and the Commissioner of Police considers that the number is adequate. I am satisfied with that.

Mr Ameer Meea: The Plaine Verte Police Station is classified as a Class A Station according to its region, to the size and number of population, that is, 52,000 people. Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister if he is aware that there is no Chief Inspector at the Plaine Verte Station?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I am not aware.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, don't reply to the Prime Minister! Please!

(Interruptions)

Please!

(Interruptions)

Can I ask hon. Members to behave and not to make comments from a sitting position? I have said that I would not accept comments from a sitting position. If they have anything to say, then they should stand up and speak - for all Members.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, I am expecting a reply.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, please repeat your question! Can you please repeat?

Mr Ameer Meea: Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that there is no Chief Inspector at the Police Station of Plaine Verte? I think I have been very clear.

The Prime Minister: It happens sometimes that the post is empty, but if it is so, I am sure it will be filled in.

Mr Baloomoody: The Rt. hon. Prime Minister answered that he is satisfied with the quantity, but it is not a question of quantity, it is the quality of the Police that we need. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that in most of the Police Stations, especially when it comes to

the second shift, there is no Sergeant, no Inspector and no Chief Inspector? This is where there is a lacking in the Police Station. The middle management staff, we don't have in all the shifts.

The Prime Minister: Anyway, the question was about three Police Stations. The Commissioner is satisfied. They are being adequately served. If they are adequately served, I am satisfied.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Shakeel Mohamed, last question!

Mr Mohamed: Since the Rt. hon. Prime Minister is totally satisfied with what the Commissioner of Police has done, is he satisfied that recently certain dancing Police Officers were transferred to that particular...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, please sit down! Please sit down! The question relates to Roche Bois and Plaine Verte. Please restrict your...

Mr Mohamed: It is with regard to the dancing Police Officers that were transferred to Roche Bois, Plaine Verte, Fanfaron and Harbour Police. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister also satisfied that this is a way of putting discipline, of transferring people who have done wrong to my Constituency? Is he satisfied with that?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I don't think I should answer to that because it does not arise from the question that has been put.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

(Interruptions)

No comments, please! No comments!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, please refrain from making comments! And on this side also!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo! Order, hon. Jhugroo! Please, don't make provocative remarks! We are wasting the time of the House.

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order! The Rt. hon. Prime Minister has made a very serious comment here. From a sitting position, he said: "*Ale occupe Gorah Issac*". So, could he try to refrain from making such comments and withdraw what he said because this is attacking my person in a very unparliamentary manner and that is a dangerous man?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, I did not hear. I will have to check.

Mr Mohamed: Everyone heard it, you should!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I did not hear!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, how come you did not hear...

Madam Speaker: I did not hear!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: ...what the Rt. hon. Prime Minister said?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: You can't argue with me! Please, sit down! You can't argue with me! If I did not hear, I did not hear, and I have the right to say that I did not hear! You can't compel me to hear! I told you I'll have to check!

(Interruptions)

Please, sit down!

(Interruptions)

And no argument with me, please!

Mr Bérenger: Can I suggest you to go as usual to listen to the recording?

Madam Speaker: But I said that I did not hear! Hon. Rughoobur, next question!

ELECTIONS – OPINION POLLS

(No. B/814) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Opinion Polls in relation to the performance of candidates standing for elections and/or the elected members thereof, he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of legislation to provide for the -

- (a) compulsory disclosure of the methodology used for the conduct thereof prior to the publication of the results thereof;
- (b) appointment of a Commission on Opinion Polls to ensure compliance with the legislation in relation thereto, and
- (c) obligation to be issued with a licence in order to be allowed to conduct same.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is a current practice in advanced democracies that during the run-up of elections, opinion polls are conducted by various organisations and specialised agencies to gauge the intentions and moods of voters. Media coverage of such opinion polls is an integral part of the right to freedom of expression and information in a vibrant democracy.

The publication and reporting of the results of such opinion polls is a subject that arouses strong passions in the media, among political parties and the people. Often, controversies arise challenging the integrity of the opinion polls as a result of allegations that the exercise may involve malpractices, such as juggling with statistics and partisan manipulation of the results.

In some countries, the publication and reporting of opinion polls are altogether banned and in others, restrictions are imposed on the time frames ranging from 24 hours to several days and weeks before the election day.

Madam Speaker, the question of regulating opinion polls for the elections is a complex matter and needs serious reflections from all the stakeholders.

I wish to inform the House that, in the Government Programme 2015-2019, it has been mentioned that the Electoral Supervisory Commission will be given wider powers to control and sanction, *inter alia*, conflict of interests during election time, including such aspect as the conduct of opinion polls in a fair manner.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister has rightly been speaking about the controversies on opinion polls in the past. Only during the last general elections it has been the case where there has been huge disparity between what were the results of some polls...

Madam Speaker: Yes, please ask your question!

Mr Rughoobur: May I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister if he would consider the setting up of a Select Committee on this whole issue and come up with proposals to legislate this whole issue of opinion polls, whether it is for electoral purposes or for any purposes?

The Prime Minister: We will have to study and find out whether a Select Committee is necessary at this stage.

AFRICAN UNION OBSERVER MISSION & AFRICAN CHARTER ON DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ELECTIONS – REPORTS

(No. B/815) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the elections, he will state if he has taken cognizance of the Report of the African Union Observer Mission dated 12 December 2014 on the National Assembly Elections of 10 December 2014 and of the African Charter on Democracy, Good Governance and Elections and if so, indicate where matters stand as to the implementation of the recommendations contained therein in each case.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I have taken cognizance of the Report of the African Union Observation Mission and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, referred to by the hon. Member. The African Union Observation Mission has, in fact, noted with satisfaction that the General Elections of 10 December 2014 were held in satisfactory conditions of freedom and transparency. Furthermore, the Mission has congratulated the people of Mauritius and all political stakeholders for the maturity they demonstrated during the electoral process.

The Observation Mission has, however, made the following recommendations, *inter alia* -

- (i) a reform of our legal framework to ensure gender parity in the National Assembly in accordance with Article 29 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the SADC Protocol on Gender and

Development;

- (ii) amendment to be brought to our electoral law to ensure that counting takes place at the polling stations immediately after the closing of polls in order to conform with the international principles governing democratic elections;
- (iii) the reform of our legal framework to regulate the private funding of political parties and campaigns, and to consider the establishment of public financing of political parties;
- (iv) to include regulations for media coverage of electoral campaigns in the electoral legal framework to ensure equitable access by political parties and candidates to the public media;
- (v) to improve the voter control system by introducing indelible ink or another system that may be consensual among political parties, and
- (vi) to undertake a review of the delimitation of constituencies in order to have a more balanced and fairer representation of the national territory.

Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, in the Government Programme 2015-2019, the Government already stands committed to reform our electoral system to introduce a dose of proportional representation in the National Assembly and guarantee better women representation. The Government Programme also provides for the enactment of a Financing of Political Parties Act.

In my reply to the Private Notice Question on 20 October last, I informed that a Ministerial Committee will be set up to examine and make recommendations on electoral reform, as proposed in our Government Programme 2015-2019. The recommendations made by the African Union Observation Mission will be examined in the wider context of the proposed electoral reform.

Madam Speaker, insofar as the recommendation of the Observation Mission regarding the review of the delimitation of the Constituencies is concerned, as I stated in my reply to PQ B/371 on 01 September 2015, the last report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission on a Review of the Boundaries of the Republic of Mauritius was tabled in the National Assembly on 10 November 2009.

However, the National Assembly was dissolved on 31 March 2010 and there was no resolution brought in the National Assembly before its dissolution to approve or reject the recommendations of the 2009 report.

In view of the above and due to the fact that a new Housing and Population Census has been carried out in 2011, the Electoral Boundaries Commission will embark on a fresh exercise for a review of the boundaries of the Constituencies and present a new report subsequently.

Madam Speaker, in regard to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, most of its provisions relate to democratic institutions, specially electoral management bodies and democratic elections are already enshrined either in our Constitution or in our electoral legislation. The other issues contained in the Charter, such as funding of political parties, allocation of air-time, etc. will be addressed in the wider context of the electoral reform, as I have just stated.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the hon. Prime Minister for the reply. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister has been talking about the long list of recommendations, but among all the recommendations there is one with regard to the African Charter. Will the hon. Prime Minister enlighten the House as to whether Mauritius has ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and, if not, when will this be done?

The Prime Minister: I will have to find out.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: I did not quite get the reply of the Prime Minister, Madam.

(Interruptions)

Okay! Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. May I emphasise on this issue of ratification of this African Charter and may I propose to the hon. Prime Minister to please look into this possibility of ensuring - because this is the recommendation of the African Union - to include this African Charter in the school curriculum. In this whole process of reform that we are undergoing - the nine-year schooling - may I ask the hon. Prime Minister to please look into this whole issue of ensuring that gradually we ratify and then we include this curriculum in the schools because this is the recommendation of the African Union and they have proposed that this be done in the African Union Member States schools?

The Prime Minister: Well, we will look into it.

INVESTMENT PROJECTS FAST TRACK COMMITTEE

(No. B/816) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Investment Projects Fast Track Committee, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of major projects the implementation of which the Committee has facilitated, indicating in each case the – (a) nature thereof;

(b) value thereof, and

(c) scheduled completion date thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIAN NATIONALITY - MR F.M. P. - GRANT

(No. B/817) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to one Mr F. M. P., he will state if he has been granted –

(a) the Mauritian nationality and, if so, indicate when;

(i) the application for the granting thereof was submitted, and

(ii) it was granted, and

(b) a licence to set up a shark fishing activity in Rodrigues and, if so, indicate when.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Mr F. M. P. a French National born on 12 February 1940, came to Mauritius on 28 October 2009 on visit for 60 days. On 23 December 2009, he was issued a residence permit as a Retired Non-citizen. The residence permit was cancelled on 29 August 2012. On the same day, a Registration Certificate as Investor was issued to him by the Board of Investment and on 04 September 2012 he was issued with an Occupation Permit to stay in Mauritius as an investor.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that Mr F. M. P. applied for a Certificate of Naturalisation under section 9 of the Mauritius Citizenship Act on 21 November 2013 and he was granted the Mauritian citizenship on 08 July 2014.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that no licence to carry out shark fishing activity in Rodrigues has been issued to Mr F. M. P. He was one of the promoters of JS Fishing Ltd, a company which in June 2012, submitted a fishing project proposal to operate in the pelagic fishery targeting tuna and tuna like species.

A Letter of Intent valid for six months was issued to the company on 23 August 2012, by the then Ministry of Fisheries. However, the Letter of Intent lapsed as the company did not start its fishing operations within the approved period.

Mr Rutnah: Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House, from the information that he has gleaned, whether he is aware that at the time the application was being processed for naturalisation, Mr F. M. P. was charged with a criminal offence and that criminal offence was not disposed of by then at the Black River District Court?

The Prime Minister: Well, I cannot confirm what is being alleged. We will have to find out. If a specific question is put, we can get the information.

Madam Speaker: Yes, one last question!

Mr Rutnah: Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister see whether a copy of the application for naturalisation could be tabled to this House in order that we can ascertain the exact date of application because the information that I have is completely different to what has been answered in the House?

The Prime Minister: Well, if it is still available, I will do so.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION - COMPLAINTS

(No. B/818) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Equal Opportunities Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the name of the complainants and the nature of the complaints registered thereat, since the coming into operation thereof to date, indicating the outcome thereof in each case.

(Vide reply to PQ B/810)

Madam Speaker: Time is over! Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ

B/826, in regard to the exodus of foreign investment at the Stock Exchange of Mauritius and addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Financial Services. PQ B/865 has been withdrawn. Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

STATE LAND - LEASE

(No. B/823) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State land, he will state the number of applications which are presently being processed by his Ministry, district-wise, for the allocation of plots thereof to holders of building site leases for an amount of Rs2,000, indicating if consideration will be given for the expeditious processing thereof.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha):

Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will answer this question.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that as at 31 October 2015, the Ministry of Housing and Lands has received 10,535 applications for the sale of State land under the provision of the State Land Act, which was amended by the Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous) Provision Act of 2013. Under this provision, Madam Speaker, a person holding a building site lease over a portion of State land of an extent not exceeding 422.07 m², that is, 10 *perches*, who is willing to buy the portion of land may do so by private contract at the price of Rs2,000 with the approval of the Minister. Out of the 10,535 applications received, 6,801 cases have already been processed, out of which 1,928 cases have not been considered for various reasons including –

- (i) the plot is greater than 10 *perches*;
- (ii) the plot is situated within a distance of 81.21 metres from the high water mark, that is, State land on *pas géométriques*, or
- (iii) the site forms part of an ex-railway land or a defence land.

4,873 cases out of 6,801 cases processed have been found out to be in order and the lessees concerned have either be or are being informed by way of letter to contact a notary of their choice for the drawing up of the deed of sale.

The remaining 3,734 cases, Madam Speaker, out of the 10,535 applications received are presently being processed and are distributed district-wise as follows –

- Port Louis - 479 cases;
- Pamplemousses - 300 cases;

- Rivière du Rempart - 207 cases;
- Flacq - 299 cases;
- Grand Port - 1,140 cases;
- Savanne - 79 cases;
- Black River - 262 cases;
- Plaines Wilhems - 553 cases, and
- Moka - 415 cases.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that no time frame has been set for the processing of applications received at the Ministry. However, examination of applications and conveying of approvals, where appropriate, are being effected diligently and all steps are being taken to avoid any delay in the process.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, being given that there are several cases where the applicants are badly in need of their title deed, for example, for renovation works, construction works and given that they have to wait for their turn which takes long time, will the hon. Ag. Minister of Housing and Lands consider giving priority to those who are in need of their contracts in order not to jeopardise them whilst others who are not in need can wait for their turn?

Mr Bodha: I think it is a valuable contribution, Madam Speaker. I will raise the matter with the substantive Minister.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, I know that the hon. Minister is not the substantive Minister. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Rs2,000 includes notary fees and whether there is a panel of notaries to whom people are required to go in order to process these applications, and if so, can he table the list of notaries?

Mr Bodha: I do not think that these Rs2,000 include the notary fees.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Minister explained that one of the reasons why thousands of cases are not being regularised is because the State land is on *Pas Géométriques*. According to law, it is not possible to sell *Pas Géométriques*, but this also applies to Cité houses, EDC houses, CHA houses which are on *Pas Géométriques* when Government decided to sell those plots of land to the occupiers. May I ask the hon. Minister - although he is not the substantive Minister - to liaise with his colleague so that, once for all, a solution is found in order to settle the cases of thousands and thousands of families who are occupying State land on *Pas*

Géométriques, and they can have their title deeds once for all. It entails perhaps legislating or even amending the Constitution, but I am sure, there must be a solution to this problem.

Mr Bodha: These are exceptional cases, Madam Speaker, and I will raise the matter with my colleague.

Dr. Sorefan: Will the hon. Ag. Minister of Housing consider setting up a dedicated unit at the Ministry of Housing to deal with these cases on a fast track basis? Because certain people can't get their contract to apply for a loan.

Mr Bodha: Madame la présidente, c'est vraiment un parcours de combattant, quand j'ai étudié le dossier. I think that it is a very valuable contribution that we have a fast track system to address a number of cases where there is need for urgent action.

CEMETERIES – SAFETY

(No. B/824) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the cemeteries, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal/District Councils, a list thereof, indicating the –

- (a) measures that are taken to ensure the safety, good environment and lighting thereat, and
- (b) amount of funds budgeted in respect of each cemetery.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, the information requested has been compiled. I am arranging, with your permission, for the information to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister satisfied with the management of the cemeteries falling under his Ministry's responsibility?

Dr. Husnoo: We have about 49 cemeteries and lot of work has been done since one year that I have been there. A lot of work has been done and a lot of work needs to be done as well. I am aware of that and the work is being done.

Mr Mahomed: On this issue of management, there is a real problem. Recently, there have been constituents of mine, in the region of Tranquebar, especially at the Christian cemeteries, the funeral goes there and then the digging starts taking place and this causes a lot

of embarrassment to the family. So, can the hon. Minister ensure that, henceforth, this is not the case?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes, Madam Speaker, I'll look into that. I know there has been some problem, but I will look into it.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware of the problem at *cimetière de Bois Marchand où l'herbe n'est pas taillée, il n'y a pas de gate, il n'y a pas de sécurité, et souvent les caveaux sont défoncés et les morts pillés. Est-ce que l'honorable ministre est au courant de tous ces problèmes au cimetière de Bois Marchand et qu'est-ce qu'il fait pour y remédier ?*

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, I am aware of this problem, as I said. Bois Marchand, as you know, is the biggest cemetery in Mauritius with, I think, about 70 acres of land. I have been told that there were only six people looking after that cemetery, which is not enough. I have been looking into that problem, I have discussed with the District Council of Pamplemousses and we are trying to sort out the problem. I know there are lots of problems there, but we are looking into it. We are trying to find a solution.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister to ask the Chief Executive of the Municipal Council of Port Louis to take disciplinary actions against the officers who are not doing their work, as just mentioned by hon. Members?

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

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, in my question, I asked for a list of cemeteries that fall under the Minister's responsibility. The hon. Minister just stated that there are 49. I don't know why he said that the information is being compiled and, even if it is being compiled, I want to know what is the time frame for me to have an answer.

Dr. Husnoo: I said that I have the information here. I am going to submit it. I am going to place it in the Library.

Mr Ramano: Question No. B/825, please.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance is not there. So, can we pass on to question No. B/826?

STOCK EXCHANGE OF MAURITIUS - FOREIGN INVESTMENT

(No. B/826) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the exodus of foreign investment at the Stock Exchange of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the quantum thereof over the past six months and the forecast for the next six months respectively, indicating the - (a) companies concerned therewith, and

(b) measures that will be taken to curb the tendency.

The Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms and Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr S. Bhadain): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I'll answer the question.

Madam Speaker, according to the recent report published by the Institute of International Finance (IIF), emerging markets and frontier markets are expected to experience net outflows of 540 billion dollars in 2015. In fact, Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Stock Exchange of Mauritius that emerging markets and most developing countries, including China and other BRICS countries, have experienced similar net divestment on their respective exchanges and the recent economic trends indicate a major shift of international asset allocation away from emerging and frontier markets in favour of developed markets.

I am also informed by the Stock Exchange of Mauritius that the quantum of net trading outflows for the period from 01 May 2015 to 31 October 2015 amount to around Rs2 billion.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, the four main companies which have recorded a net outflow of foreign investment are as follows –

- SBM Holdings Limited;
- MCB Group Limited;
- New Mauritius Hotels Limited;
- CIEL Limited, and
- the remaining is spread among about 63 companies which are listed on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, my Ministry has already taken bold measures as far back as March 2015 to pursue an internationalisation strategy of our capital market with a view to develop Mauritius into an attractive multi-currency capital

raising, listing, cross-listing and trading platform for local and international companies on both equity, bonds, debt, derivatives, Sukuk, commodities and Africa Indices offering.

To that effect, the Stock Exchange of Mauritius and my Ministry have already signed MoUs with the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, the National Stock Exchange of India, which are being implemented. Going forward, stocks traded under the National Stock Exchange of India and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange may be listed and traded in US dollars on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius. This initiative will undoubtedly increase the level of activity and trading of foreign investors on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius as well as attract international stockbrokers to operate in our jurisdiction.

Madam Speaker, these initiatives taken by Government will no doubt provide a sophisticated capital market offering that would also add to the substance of Mauritius as a financial services sector of international repute. As is already the case, Mauritius has shown more resilience in the net divestment as compared to other emerging markets.

Madam Speaker, cross-listing, Exchange Trade Fund listing with the Johannesburg Stock Exchange are already a reality today and my Ministry will spare no efforts to continue on the internationalisation strategy of our capital market.

Madam Speaker, I would also wish to inform the House that we have recently signed a MoU with Nasdaq Dubai with a view to setting up a new international stock exchange in Mauritius.

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre s'il peut confirmer que, pour l'année 2014/2015, l'exode des *foreign* capitaux était de l'ordre de 4.6 milliards?

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, the word 'exodus' is not correct. This is trading on a Stock Exchange; people buy and sell. The figure I have from the Stock Exchange of Mauritius is that, from 01 May 2015 to 31 October 2015, the net trading outflows was Rs2 billion.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, recently there was a confusion when dealing with shares on the stock market; short-term capital gains were being taxed. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether short-term capital gains are being taxed presently?

Mr Bhadain: I am not aware that this is the case, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Since the hon. Minister of Finance is here, can we come back to his question? Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Merci à l'honorable ministre d'être de retour. Question No. B/825 please!

SALE BY LEVY – COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY - FINDINGS

(No. B/825) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the victims of the Sale by Levy, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner for Borrowers, information as to the -

- (a) number of cases referred thereto, indicating the outcome thereof in each case, and
- (b) measures that are being envisaged following the findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Sale by Levy.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, I am sorry, I had to attend to urgent matters. With your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. B/825 and B/856 together as the issues raised therein are inter-related.

It is because of plight of victims of sale by levy that in the Government Programme 2015-2019 we took the commitment to bring relevant changes in the legislation to protect financially distressed people and review the overall procedure of Sale by Levy to prevent collusion between financial institutions, legal advisors and their agents.

It is in this perspective that in the Budget Speech this year and also as highlighted in the reply to PQ No. B/569 made by the then Acting Prime Minister on 29 September 2015, a Special Committee has already been set up to examine the Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Sale by Levy and expedite the implementation of its recommendations.

Madam Speaker, in fact, the Borrowers Protection Act (BPA) which was passed in 2007, *inter alia*, regulates credit agreements for a sum not exceeding Rs2 m. and provides for prudential measures to safeguard the interests of these borrowers. The Act does not cover victims of Sale by Levy prior to 2007 and those borrowers above Rs2 m.

In this respect, I wish to inform the House that in 2007 the National Solidarity Fund

Committee was set up to deal with Sale by Levy victims who could not be covered by the Borrowers Protection Act through a close end Fund with a maximum of Rs100 m. The aim of the Fund was to financially assist deserving families who had lost their only residence through Sale by Levy.

Furthermore, the Bank of Mauritius does not compile information on individuals facing difficulties to effect the repayment of their credits. Instead, the Bank of Mauritius, as part of its monitoring exercise, requires financial institutions to submit information on the total amount of credit facilities impaired.

With regard to part (a) of Question No. B/825, I am also informed that the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Borrowers has so far received 2,350 requests from borrowers whose credit agreement does not exceed Rs2 m. All these requests were considered to the satisfaction of borrowers and their debts duly rescheduled, except for five cases where banks have lodged an appeal before the Judge in Chambers.

Madam Speaker, the Special Committee set up to examine the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Sale by Levy has been requested to also –

- (i) consider any legislative amendment for providing moratorium to individuals who are genuinely facing difficulties to effect the repayment of their loans/credits/mortgages, and
- (ii) consider increasing the limit of Rs2 m. under the Borrowers Protection Act.

In addition, the Bank of Mauritius is working on a piece of legislation wherein an Asset Management Company will be set up to take over non-performing loans of financial institutions, especially where individuals have provided their residence as guarantee. This approach will prevent properties given guarantee from undergoing the process of Sale by levy.

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre si le gouvernement compte rendre public le rapport de la commission d'enquête sur le *Sale by Levy*?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: I will look into the request, Madam Speaker.

Mr Ameer Meea: In fact, I would have asked the hon. Minister the same question. The works of the Commission of Enquiry has ended more than one year, if I am not wrong.

Why is Government not tabling the Report? What is the reason why this Report is not made public?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Well, there should be no question of not tabling the Report, but my colleague, the hon. Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms now has set up a Special Committee to look into this Report and report back to Cabinet. So, until then, the Report will not be circulated.

Mr Fowdar: Madam Speaker, I understand that Government is looking into the matter of Sale by Levy, in particular, the hon. Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms but, in the meantime, can I make a humble request to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development to ask the State-owned companies and banks to be more humble and have a human approach when dealing with the defaulting clients until the matter is sorted out?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Yes, I agree with the hon. Member. In fact, Government is very much aware that, at times, undue Sale by Levy of properties has caused enormous prejudice to individuals. In fact, the Committee set up by my colleague is working on ways and means of ensuring a better protection for those who have given their house as guarantee. Therefore, we are very conscious of the issue and we are taking it up. And on a personal level, my colleague is also trying to ensure that when it comes to seizure and Sale by Levy, we try to intervene and help the process.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister Finance and Economic Development, in view of the fact that the question was answered last time by the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Collendavelloo, who was replacing him with regard to the Sale by Levy Fund of Rs100 m. which was set up and wherein only Rs15 m. was disbursed, may I refer the case of one Mrs Padiachy, who became the symbol of the victims of '*casseurs*' and merciless people, and this lady was stripped of all her wealth, she was ousted from her house and had to live under a small hut and for years she has been knocking at all doors?

May I ask the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development if he can ask the National Solidarity Fund Committee to look at this particular case with some sympathy so that a solution can be found to address the problem of this lady who has been suffering untold miseries in the hands of '*casseurs*'?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: I thank the hon. Member for the question. We are all very much aware of the incredible abuse that has taken place before. It is not only the few

'*tapeurs*' that try to control the Sale by Levy office, also I must say, in the process, there has been involvement of lawyers, of attorneys and others. My colleague is looking into the whole matter and will report back, but the question put by the hon. Member is a good one. We have dozens of dramatic cases like the one he has just mentioned. We will look into it.

As to the Rs100 m. which has been provided in the Budget, it concerns especially those victims before 2007. In fact, after 2007, the Borrowers Protection Act has taken over. So, there are not so many cases. There are a few cases prior to 2007 which need to be taken care of. If this lady is in this case, it will be done.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo! Next question!

PARIS - MAURITIUS EMBASSY- MR L.O. - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/827) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to Mr L. O., he will state the capacity in which the Embassy of Mauritius in Paris retained the services thereof, indicating the -

- (a) period thereof;
- (b) terms and conditions of appointment thereof, including the salaries and other fringe benefits drawn, and
- (c) official missions he undertook during his term of office, including the total amount of money paid out thereto in terms of air tickets, *per diem* allowances and other facilities extended thereto.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, I am informed that Mr L. O. was employed as Senior Trade Adviser at the Mauritius Embassy in Paris.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that he was employed on a contract basis for an initial period of three years with effect from 01 March 2006. His contract was subsequently renewed on a two yearly basis to expire on 28 February 2015. However, I am informed that he resigned on 16 January 2015.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that during his contract of employment, Mr L. O. drew a total salary and allowances amounting to Rs28,130,592 the details of which are as follows -

- Rs5,607,031 for the period 01 March 2006 to 30 June 2008;

- Rs16,115,470 for the period 01 July 2008 to 31 December 2012, in the wake of PRB Report 2008;
- Rs5,214,091 for the period 01 January 2013 to 15 January 2015 again in the wake of the PRB Report 2013;
- Rs1,194,000 as gratuity equivalent to two months' salary on completion of 12 months satisfactory service for the period 01 March 2007 to 28 February 2014.

In addition, Madam Speaker, Mr L. O. also benefitted from 21 working days annual leave and 21 working days sick leave.

With regard to part (c) of the question, according to records obtained from our Embassy in Paris, Mr L. O. undertook the following five official missions during his term of employment

-

- (i) February 2007: Sommet France-Afrique, in Cannes, France;
- (ii) December 2009: Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in Denmark;
- (iii) October 2012: - 14th Francophonie Summit, Kinshasa, in Democratic Republic of Congo;
- (iv) January 2013 and January 2014: Davos World Economic Forum in Switzerland.

According to the same records obtained from our Embassy in Paris, no payment in terms of air tickets or *per diem* allowances was effected to Mr L. O. for those five official missions, but the matter is still being looked into. The reason is because surprisingly, we have been informed by the Passport and Immigration Office that Mr L. O. has travelled to Mauritius on no less than 40 occasions during that period.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House - with regard to the number of times Mr Obadia visited Mauritius, 40 times - what was the purpose of his visits and who incurred the costs for the travel?

(Interruptions)

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, from information obtained from the Commissioner of Police, 36 times were for holidays and four times for business purposes.

(Interruptions)

I am informed, however, that expenses for his air tickets were, in no less than 30 cases, met from public funds and such benefits are nowhere to be found in his contract. But, as I said, Madam Speaker, the matter is still being looked into.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Minister in a position to inform the House where Mr Obadia stayed during his trips to Mauritius, who funded his stays and whether he was provided chauffeur-driven cars with VIPSU?

Mr Sinatambou: As I stated earlier, Madam Speaker, the matter is still being looked into. But the information which I have up to now is that 22 of Mr L. O's stays were at the Trou aux Biches Hotel, at the expense or courtesy of the Government of Mauritius. As to chauffeur-driven cars, I don't have the information at this stage.

Mr Jhugroo: From the reply of the hon. Minister, it is noted that some Rs28 m. was paid to Mr Obadia for his assignment as Senior Trade Adviser. Can the hon. Minister inform the House what actions have been undertaken by his Ministry following recommendations made by Mr Obadia in his reports?

Mr Sinatambou: In fact, Madam Speaker, no recommendation has been implemented by my Ministry for the simple reason that there are no recommendations at all in the eight annual reports filed by Mr L. O. The so-called reports, Madam Speaker, are, in fact, mere descriptions of activities carried out by Mr L. O. Each report consists of a maximum of three pages only. They are being compiled and I will be tabling them to the House.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House what is the academic qualification of Mr L. O?

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, he submitted a CV in 2006 at my Ministry. However, the information appears to be contradictory because we are first told that in 1994 he obtained a Government Diploma in Sports Education majoring in table tennis.

(Interruptions)

We are also told from his CV that from November 1991 to November 1994, he was the coach for youths and adults at the Levallois Sporting Club for table tennis. We are further told from his CV that from June 1994 to September 1994, he was the coach for the Asian Games at the University of Sports of Tokyo.

On the other hand, we are told, according to his CV, that he would have started reading law at the University of Paris X during the same year, in 1994.

(Interruptions)

So, we don't know which is which. I can just table a copy of the CV for the House to take note.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, since the hon. Minister has made such a light-hearted note of the qualifications of Mr L. O.; is he aware or is he not that the same Mr L. O. has been elected in 2015 by a French journalist as the Best Director of Communication of le CAC 40? Is he also aware, in the same breath - since he talked at length about the CV of that gentleman - that between 2000 and 2005, he occupied the post of *Directeur Conseil au sein du Groupe Euro RSCG, Havas*? Is he aware that between 2005 and 2009, he has directed, at international level, institutions in the whole of Africa and the Gulf and India, and from 2009 onwards, he has been Adviser to the *President/Directeur Général* of Veolia, that is dealing, at the moment, with the Government of Mauritius?

Mr Sinatambou: I am aware.

Mr Mohamed: He seems to have blurred all of that out.

Mr Sinatambou: I am not blurring out.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Sit down! Allow the hon. Minister to reply!

Mr Sinatambou: With all due respect, first of all, I would like the hon. Member not to impute motives. I am not blurring out anything.

(Interruptions)

I am not!

Madam Speaker: No comments, please!

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, I would appreciate if in line with Standing Order 39, rule 13, the hon. Member would stop interrupting unless he has the right to.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, please proceed with your reply!

Mr Sinatambou: I cannot keep being interrupted, Madam Speaker! Every time I start speaking, the same hon. Member keeps interrupting.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Whenever I see that there are interruptions, I will take action. Please proceed with your reply!

Mr Sinatambou: Thank you. Now, first of all, Madam Speaker, I am not blurring out anything. But let me just state: Yes, I am aware that Mr L. O. was not only elected *meilleur directeur de la communication du CAC 40 pour l'édition 2015*, but he was also nominated for the same title for the year 2014. This is what, to me, is shocking and even scandalous. Mr L. O. was appointed as Senior Trade Adviser to promote the economic interests of Mauritius. The House will appreciate that this assignment, if carried out in a professional manner, is a demanding and challenging one, and also time-consuming. Therefore, it is surprising to note that at the same time he is employed as Senior Trade Adviser for the Government of Mauritius, earning a total amount of Rs28 m., he should be doing all those things that the hon. Member has just been mentioning. Because it is quite clear that he must have been working for at least one of the companies listed on the French Stock Exchange and I am very happy that the hon. Member mentioned Veolia because it means that while he was working for the Government of Mauritius, he was earning elsewhere and doing other things.

(Interruptions)

One can appreciate why the eight reports filed over eight years have nothing to say in them.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ B/867 and PQ B/868 have been withdrawn. I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

At 1.02 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

CIVIL SERVICE - FLEXI TIME – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/828) **Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the civil service, he will state if the introduction of flexi time thereat is being contemplated and, if so, indicate where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Madam Speaker, let me, at the very outset, inform the House that the flexible work arrangement system already existed in the Civil Service in line with PRB Report 2008 whereby officers can attend duty on flexible working hours between 8:30 a.m. and 9.15 a.m. and leave the office between 3.45 p.m. and 4 p.m. with a view to improving attendance at work, reduce absentees and/or lateness.

Madam Speaker, in fact, when I thought of introducing a flexi time in the Civil Service, I was not aware of flexible time that was in the PRB. The flexi time will contribute to bring a new dynamism to the Mauritian economy whereby activities will start earlier and continue till late. It will also help to reduce traffic jam during peak hours and reduce fuel costs for the whole economy. Gradually, it can also pave the way for a new lifestyle based on the 24/7 concept.

It is in this context that my Ministry, after consultation with federations of trade unions, has implemented on a pilot basis a new flexi time work arrangement system with effect from 01 October 2015 for one month.

Under this new system, officers can choose and agree with management to attend duty on any one of the three time slots which is called staggered hours, which is –

- 7:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.;
- 8.45 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- and 9.45 to 5 p.m.

Madam Speaker, the main objectives of the new system are to enable public officers to attend duty on time, on the basis of a chosen time slot; secondly, it is to enhance the work life balance of officers, whereby they will spend less time in travelling and traffic jam and have more time for leisure, sports and other activities. Thirdly, increase overall efficiency and effectiveness of the public service as officers will be operating at extended hours from 7:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Madam Speaker, at present, an evaluation of the pilot project is being carried out in order and we are still gathering information on the feedback from civil servants. First, we are assessing its impact on organisational effectiveness and work life balance of officers; secondly make an adjustment of the time slot where required and thirdly enable the Ministry to decide whether the system can be replicated across the Civil Service.

In the light of the evaluation exercise, a policy decision will be taken for the extension of the new system to other Ministries and departments after consultation with stakeholders concerned.

Furthermore, the National Transport Authority and the bus companies will also be consulted with a view to making necessary adjustments in the travel plan of buses so as to meet the requirement of the new flexible working arrangement system. Thank you.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether all Ministries, parastatal bodies and other governmental departments are equipped with an electronic attendance system?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: As to the information that I have heard, most of the Ministries and parastatal bodies are equipped with fingerprints attendance.

Mr Jhugroo: With the introduction of the flexi time on a pilot basis, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there has been a skeleton staff working during lunch time?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Thank you, hon. Jhugroo. In fact, this is the case. For the working time, there is no pause, in fact, because people go on lunch on different times; so there are always people working at the Ministry.

Mr Uteem: With this introduction of flexi time, is the Government considering extending the opening hours of Ministries and various public bodies which offer services to the public?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Thank you very much hon. Uteem. In fact, this is my idea, it is to spread it all across even in the private sectors, everywhere in Mauritius. This is how we will have a society where people do not leave at the same time. This is why we find Port Louis like a ghost sign at night because people always work in the same slot. Thank you.

Mr Jhugroo: I was coming with the same supplementary question. Will the hon.

Minister, after the pilot basis, give a priority to introduce the system to the Fitness Centre, the National Transport Authority, the Registrar of Companies, the Social Security Offices at the earliest possible?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Thank you hon. Jhugroo.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please don't interrupt, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: I have already partly answered to the question because my idea is to spread it all across the Civil Service and to private sectors. We have already had representations from different Ministries that came forward and asked the Ministry of Civil Service to make a plea to introduce it as fast as possible.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister is talking about public services. May I know whether we will have this system in the Judiciary as well where there was a talk, at a certain time, of having a morning shift and an afternoon shift?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Thank you hon. Baloomoody. I have not looked into that.

(Interruptions)

I will look what is the way to implement it in the Judiciary. Thank you.

Mr Rughoobur: In its annual report, the Bank of Mauritius emphasised on the need to look into this whole issue of productivity. Will the hon. Minister, please, ensure that this proposal is taken on board and there is emphasis on this issue of productivity as well?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: I will look into it. Thank you very much.

MAURITIUS TELECOM – VEHICLES - SALES

(No. B/829) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Mauritius Telecom, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, a list of the vehicles thereof which were sold over the period July 2005 to December 2014, indicating in each case the –

- (a) names of the purchasers thereof;
- (b) reasons for the sale thereof;
- (c) procedures followed therefor, and

(d) selling price thereof.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mauritius Telecom that it is the policy of the company to dispose of vehicles which are no longer suitable for the purposes of the company or vehicles which are unserviceable by tender to the highest bidders.

Madam Speaker, the question asked also relates to transactions between a company governed by the Companies Act and other parties and it is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to ensure that the policy and processes set up in the company have been complied with.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether BAI has purchased vehicles from Mauritius Telecom?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, the question is with regard to Mauritius Telecom. Is the hon. Member asking whether BAI has purchased from Mauritius Telecom?

Mr Jhugroo: This is my question. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether BAI has purchased vehicles from Mauritius Telecom? Can we know the number of vehicles? What amount? And can the Minister confirm whether the said vehicles have been rented again to Mauritius Telecom and can we know the amount of money paid to BAI?

Mr Bhadain: Well, from what the hon. Member has mentioned, it would seem to be a sale and leaseback transaction. It could well be the case, I don't have the information, but I will certainly look into that.

COMMISSION NATIONALE DU SPORT FEMININ - ADMINISTRATIVE **SECRETARY**

(No. B/830) **Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the post of Administrative Secretary at the *Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to –

(a) the name of the incumbent thereof, indicating the –

(i) qualifications held, and

(ii) terms and conditions of appointment thereof, including the salary and other benefits drawn, and

(b) if the post was advertised and, if so, indicate –

- (i) when, and
- (ii) the number of applications received therefor and, if not, why not, and
- (iii) mode of recruitment thereof.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the *Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin (CNSF)* that the post of Administrative Secretary at the level of the Commission is held by one Mrs V. B.

I am further informed that Mrs V. B. was employed on a contractual basis for a period of two years as from 01 June 2009 and drawing a salary of Rs12,000 per month.

The contract was renewed for a further period of two years as from 01 June 2011 and she was drawing a salary of Rs12,500. It was then increased by the PRB to Rs15,000. No contract was issued for period 01 June 2013 to 31 May 2014, but she was drawing a salary of Rs15,590 plus compensation.

The contract was further renewed for a further period of two years as from 01 June 2014 and the salary was increased to Rs17,880 plus compensation. Then there was a Board decision to increase her salary by Rs2,000 as from August 2014. So, she ended up drawing a salary of Rs19,880 plus compensation.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the post was not advertised and decision to enlist her services was taken by the then Board of the Commission.

As regards the modes of recruitment, as already stated, appointment has been made on a contractual basis.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether the said lady is the sister of the former Minister of Youth and Sports?

Mr Sawmynaden: I have heard of it, but I need to check the family tree!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano, next question!

LAND SURVEYORS COUNCIL – SETTING UP

(No. B/831) 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 Council, he will state if it has been set up and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when, and
- (b) the composition thereof.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Minister of Housing and Lands. Who is replying?

(Interruptions)

Who is replying to question No. B/831 for the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands?

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha): Well, I don't have a precise answer because from what I have been given it is that the Council has not yet been set up and the Vice-Prime Minister is considering the possibility of contacting the surveyors and the professionals in order to come forward with the composition of the new Council.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Madame la présidente, ma requête au ministre est de considérer l'urgence de la situation parce que c'est un secteur où le braconnage est en train de tuer la profession. Donc, ma requête est de considérer dans l'urgence la constitution de ce *Land Surveyors Council*.

Mr Bodha: I will give it a certificate of urgency and request my colleague to take the matter as soon as possible.

Mr Ramano: Suivant l'adoption du *Cadastral Survey Act* en 2011, c'était clair que le *Land Surveyors Council* allait suivre parce qu'il y a pas mal de recommandations dans le *Cadastral Survey Act* où il est question de discipline et de *fees* à être imposés mais sans un *proper Land Surveyors Council* ce sera impossible de procéder d'une façon professionnelle.

Mr Bodha: I will do that, Madam Speaker.

NINE-YEAR SCHOOLING - MIXED SCHOOLS - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/832) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the mixed schools component, inherent to the NineYear Schooling that will be implemented as from 2015, she will state the measures, if any, being taken to address the problems faced in relation to the introduction thereof in the recent past, as was the case in respect of the former Junior Secondary Schools.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I wish at the very outset to draw the attention of the House that the Nine-Year Schooling project is to be implemented as from 2017 and the introduction of the mixed schooling component in the academies is due for 2021.

There were initially in the 70s junior technical schools with Forms I to III classes and then, these were converted to junior secondary schools having classes running up to Form III with subsequent extension to Form V. The junior secondary schools admitted students on a co-ed basis. I am advised that there is no record of any problem arising in these institutions as a result of this co-ed set up. However, later, these schools were converted into State Secondary Schools running classes up to Form VI and they were single sex schools.

As far as the academies are concerned, they are due to operate as from 2021 and necessary infrastructural adjustments will be carried out and adequate resources provided to ensure the pupils evolve in an environment adapted for and conducive to learning.

It is to be noted that while academies would be co-ed institutions, other schools may continue to operate on a single sex basis as they do today with no imposition upon them. Parents wishing to admit their children in single sex schools would still be in a position to exercise this choice.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Mahomed: Thank you. Later on Sir Rampersad Neerunjun in Ebène which was also a mixed school ceased to operate. Would the hon. Minister be able to shed some light on that one as well?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, things have changed since 1986. We are almost 30 years after and I think the society has evolved and students will be able to manage without any problem in a co-ed set up. In my answer to the last Parliamentary Question No. B/549 on mixed schooling, I had informed the House of the many advantages of having

schools operating on a co-ed basis. There are actually many private secondary schools such as the MGI and the MGSS operating in a coeducational setup and the performance of the students is really good. We have no problems as far as academic performance or discipline is concerned in these schools.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I know from the hon. Minister whether it will be compulsory for all the schools to have co-ed or there will be discretion to allow single sex schools and whether she has had consultations with religious organisations which run these schools and which have shown resistance to having mixed schooling?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, as I have just said, Madam Speaker, schools operating as single sex schools will continue to operate as such. We are only talking about academies. I have not had any consultation with religious bodies on that particular issue, but I have had consultations with all the stakeholders involved in the education sector and they are all very much for the setup that is being proposed. And, as I have just stated, there are schools which will remain single sex schools and which will continue to operate as such.

TRANQUEBAR – CREMATION STREET & CROWN LAND TOOREE - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/833) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for water fountains to be placed in Tranquebar for the benefit of the squatters thereat who are not currently connected to the Central Water Authority network therefor to palliate the currently irregular/insufficient supply thereof from the water trucks, as a temporary measure.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Central Water Authority that currently there are 20 households living as squatters at Cremation Street and about 40 at Crown Land Tooree. I suppose it will mean State land Tooree.

I understand that following strong representations made by hon. Mrs R. Jadoo-Jaunbocus, MP for the area, the Central Water Authority is now in the process of installing public standpipes at Crown Land Tooree. It has also upgraded the service main pipe to ensure adequate pressure in that area.

In addition, the CWA is providing water tanker service on the basis of two trips three times a week.

Mr Mahomed: I hope I have not missed a part of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister's answer, but by when would this water supply be operational? Because the tracks do break down every now and then and the people are left without water supply for a long time. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister when this facility, that is, the fountain or the pipe that he is referring to will be installed?

Mr Collendavelloo: There are two trips water tankers thrice weekly, that is, two trips three times a week. Now, they are in the process of installing this. This will involve the extension of existing service main over a length of 100 metres for both sites. The laying of the pipes and installation of standpipes are scheduled to be completed by 15 November 2015. Add a couple of months to be sure.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister mentioned Cremation and Crown Land Tory. In fact, there is another place in Tranquebar which has the same fate, namely Camp Mana - Crown Land Mana - where the Ring Road will pass. Some of the households will be displaced, but not all of them. So, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to also cover the area of Camp Mana when looking into the rescheduling of tankers?

Mr Collendavelloo: I will certainly convey that information to CWA.

VEHICLES - SMOKE METERS - CONTRAVENTIONS

(No. B/834) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the smoke meters procured in 2013 for the carrying out of the Survey on Vehicular Emissions and Capacity Building on Emission Testing by his Ministry, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the *Police de l'Environnement*, information as to the –

- (a) frequency at which same are being used;
- (b) places where same are mostly used;
- (c) number of contraventions booked following the use thereof, since January 2015 to date, and
- (d) measures being undertaken to reduce the number of polluting vehicles.

Mr Dayal: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am advised that smoke meters were procured by my Ministry in 2011 and not in 2013. These smoke meters are being used on a weekly basis.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the smoke meters are mostly used at –

- (i) Sorèze;
- (ii) Pamplermouses, near Droopnath Ramful SSS;
- (iii) Bonne Mère, near Kalimaye;
- (iv) Alma, Quartier Militaire;
- (v) St Jean, Quatre Bornes;
- (vi) Bambous;
- (vii) Forest Side;
- (viii) LaPeyre Hill, Nouvelle France, and any other area from where complaints are received.

With regard to part (c) of the question, 65 contraventions had been established against vehicles emitting smoke above permissible limit during the period September 2015 to date. Here, I wish to inform Members of the House that there is evidence emanating from prosecution offices, spelling out that already 3,701 prosecutions have been undertaken and the District Courts have fined contraveners for having motorcycles with modified silencers causing excessive noise. These contraventions were established through hearing and checking of modification of silencers. I would like to inform the House of the following –

- (i) the smoke meters could not be used for the period January 2015 to August 2015, as the sole supplier of the equipment was not in a position to calibrate same since its certified engineer had left its company;
- (ii) with much difficulty, we have been able to find another company to calibrate the smoke meters, and
- (iii) even though the smoke meters could not be used from January to August 2015, the *Police de l'Environnement*, by visual inspection, issued 1,006 Police Form 71 to drivers, to cause their vehicles emitting black smoke to be examined at the NTA.

With regard to part (d) of the question, in order to reduce the number of polluting vehicles, the following measures are being undertaken by *la Police de l'Environnement* –

- (i) presently, we are importing diesel with sulphur content less than 50 ppm. My Ministry is having consultation with all stakeholders to look into the implications to import diesel with sulphur content of 10 to 15 ppm as from the next contract agreement;
- (ii) drivers and owners of diesel-driven vehicles are continuously being sensitised through the media (radio talks) to carry out regular maintenance on their vehicles to avoid being contravened. Additionally, my Ministry is undertaking an aggressive awareness campaign on eco driving which, amongst others, will help to make energy efficient use of vehicles, thereby reducing vehicular emissions, and
- (iii) furthermore, I wish to inform the House that the Road Traffic (Control of Vehicle Emissions) Regulations 2002 was amended to increase the penalty from Rs1,000 to Rs10,000.

Mr Mahomed: Madam Speaker, I cannot possibly comment on the visual inspections because ...

(Interruptions)

And laser as well. Hon. Baloomoody raised a very good legal point last week. Vehicles emit for two reasons: either they are poorly serviced or they are overloaded. One place to catch smoky vehicles is on slopes. I can give an example. At the roundabout of Réduit, vehicles are very smoky. I am quite astonished by the hon. Minister's...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, ask your question!

Mr Mahomed: Is the hon. Minister willing to put smoke meters at locations up slopes, so that more vehicles can be caught? Because all of them emit up slopes.

Mr Dayal: Madam Speaker, these factors are taken into consideration.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister just stated the measures that are being undertaken to reduce the number of polluting vehicles. He stated something about importing diesel of less than 50 ppm. So, is it his Ministry, which is importing this new diesel, type or is it the Ministry of Commerce which is doing it?

Mr Dayal: It goes without saying that, in this Government, we work in close collaboration with all Ministries.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any concerted action with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure? It is a well-known fact that when vehicles go to the fitness centre for regular check-up, the examination is not well performed and they come out with smoke instead of reducing smoke. So, can the hon. Minister state whether there is any concerted action with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to see to it that the examination at the fitness centre is being carried out in a professional and well-balanced manner?

Mr Dayal: Affirmative! We do collaborate. As a matter of fact, our Government is *l'Alliance du peuple* and, at the same time, as Ministers, we collaborate fully.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any collaboration between his Ministry and the CNT? Because it is a known fact that most of the buses of CNT are the ones which commit more pollution.

Mr Dayal: As a matter of fact, *la Police de l'Environnement* operates in consultation with all parties, because at the end of the day, when we observe emission at a level which is not permissible and the frequency of contraventions, we do apprise all concerned and there is no exception.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister likes using the word 'proactive' very often in his interventions. Could he just tell us, as far as the element of being proactive is concerned, whether he has asked the police or getting police officers to use their nose or their eyes to identify smoke quantity? He has talked about figures of how many people have been contravened. But, out of all those contraventions that amount to thousands, from January 2015 to date, how many of those contraventions have ended up in court where people have been found guilty, how many convictions have been established or has it simply been just a simple nasal exercise and nothing else?

Mr Dayal: I am proactive. I knew somebody is going to ask this question and I will be tabling the information for successful prosecutions. Here, I have in mind the figures which are to the tune of 3701.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Mahomed!

(Interruptions)

Order please! No comments!

STUDENTS & EDUCATORS -TABLET PC – DISTRIBUTION

(No. B/835) Mr. O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the procurement of 23,400 digital tablets intended for distribution in 2014 to the then Form IV students who are now in Form V and to the Educators respectively, she will state where matters stand.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, first of all, I wish to inform the House that tablet PCs have not yet been delivered by the contractor. It is intended to distribute, ultimately, the tablet PCs to the 2014 cohort of Form IV students next year.

Following a procurement exercise, which was started in September 2014 through the Central Procurement Board for the procurement of 23,400 tablets for Form IV students and Educators of 2014, the contract was awarded to Data Communications Ltd on 06 May 2015. As per the terms of the contract, which was signed on the 12 June 2015, delivery of the tablets was due to start on 07 September 2015 at latest.

However, DCL made a first delivery of 24 tablets in unsealed boxes only on 11 September 2015. It is to be highlighted that on the 16 September the attention of the DCL was drawn to the fact that these tablets were not delivered in sealed boxes as per the contractual delivery schedule. On 01 October 2015, DCL provided a delivery schedule whereby it has proposed to deliver the tablets from 15 November 2015 to 30 November 2015.

The Ministry has reported the matter to the Procurement Policy Office and has sought the legal advice from the State Law Office on same. The latter has advised that as regards the first delivery which occurred on 01 September, the Ministry should notify DCL that it is in breach of the contract and that the contract may be terminated if DCL fails to deliver the tablets within the period specified in the contract. My Ministry has notified DCL accordingly.

Mr Mohamed: Since this deals with the tablets, and here I am not in any way going to play party politics because even during the previous Government which I form part of, there was a serious issue of having internet coverage or internet service in schools. I have also been informed, recently, that this situation is simply the same, whereby, many schools still do not have Wi-Fi coverage of such an extent that allows the students to use the tablets. What

does the hon. Minister, therefore, intend to do in order to try to correct the situation that existed from before?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, the Wi-Fi connection is being dealt with at the level of the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation. I have been informed that the contract has been signed recently for 300 spot sites for Wi-Fi.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I heard the hon. Minister mentioning that following the advice from the State Law Office, the contractor would be notified that the Government can terminate the agreement. My question is whether the Government will terminate and if it does not terminate, will it, at least, ask for penalty fees, damages to be paid for late delivery?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Madam Speaker, I've just mentioned that the Ministry is taking the steps, has already notified the company and will, in fact, terminate the contract if the tablet PCs are not provided within the time scheduled.

(Interruptions)

Obviously, the penalty fees as well! I have been informed that the company was asked to provide the bank guarantee and the bank guarantee has expired, but the company has been asked to extend it further till December.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether it is the first time that Data Communications Ltd is providing services for tablets or it delivered in the past?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I don't have the information.

ROADS - DECONGESTION PROGRAMME

(No. B/836) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Decongestion Programme, he will state -

- (a) who designed the architectural concept therefor;
- (b) if bids have been launched therefor and, if so, when and, if not, why not;
- (c) the quantum of the payments claimed and paid out therefor in relation to the projects implemented thereunder, and
- (d) if it is the policy of his Ministry to have recourse to architects in respect of road works.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that the Road Decongestion Programme, as a Public Private Partnership venture, was initiated in the year 2008. In this regard, SPP Project Solutions Limited of South Africa, later renamed as J Maynard, was appointed in March 2009. Following the decision of the then Government in June 2014, to reduce the scope of the RDP-PPP Project, J Maynard was appointed to work on the assignment. However, the Master Plan for decongestion was finally presented to this Government in April 2015 taking into consideration the new definition being proposed for the City of Port Louis (Port Louis vision 2030), smart cities and technopoles.

Madam Speaker, no architectural concepts have been designed so far. Only the artistic impressions of the different components of the project were shown as part of the presentation by the Transaction Advisor.

Madam Speaker, as I mentioned to the House in my reply to PQ B/625 on 06 October 2015, decongestion measures for the city of Port Louis comprise several other components, namely -

- Traffic Management Scheme;
- Relocation of hawkers;
- Relocation of the administrative centre;
- Delocalisation of public offices to the Highlands City, and
- Conversion of certain streets in the city centre into pedestrian zones.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the RDA that following an invitation to bid in 2010, PLAN consortium was selected as the Preferred Bidder and Group Five Strabag as the Reserve Bidder in 2012. However, the contract was not awarded by the then Government since the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development raised concerns on the financial implications in view of the prevailing economic environment and Government's commitment and priorities.

Madam Speaker, concerning part (c) of the question, I am informed by the RDA that no payment has been effected in relation to works. However, a total amount of USD5, 566, 647 have been paid for transaction advisory services, so far.

As far as part (d) is concerned, I am informed that it is not the policy of my Ministry to have recourse to architects in respect of road works. However, for major and complex structures such as bridges, flyovers and grade separators the consultant is requested to provide

the services of an architect/landscape architect to propose aesthetic structures, as part of the assignment.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister has mentioned the art work which is, to me, small architectural concept, we saw a few weeks ago on TV, on internet. How much did that cost? Was that free to the Ministry? If it is so, is the Ministry allowed to take free art work from individuals or companies?

Mr Bodha: No. It was the artistic design of the project. That is all. It was the project for which consultancy fees have been paid.

Mr Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister has listed several means by which his Ministry is proposing to reduce congestion in the country when the well-known one is to reduce the number of cars on the roads, this is very basic, actually. What is the policy of Government on the importation of cars on a small island like Mauritius going forward?

Mr Bodha: That is another big question, Madam Speaker. It is a policy question, but I think one of the best ways to reduce the number of cars is to have a better land transport system which is sophisticated, effective and cost-effective. We all know that the car is a symbol of status and at the same time, in many cases, it is the ambition of every family to have it. So, I don't think that we can take some precise measures to reduce the car population. This has been done in Singapore, but we are not Singapore.

But I think the best thing would be to provide for a better land transport system to encourage people to commute in buses rather than by cars.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister just informed the House that USD 5 m. were paid for advisory works. Can we know to whom, to which company this amount has been paid?

Mr Bodha: Well, this was paid to the company Maynard and it was not paid by this Government. We have not paid any cent so far.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: On the same issue of the transaction adviser, USD 5.5 m. had been paid. Have we finished with this contractor and we are embarking with a new consultant? Is that a money loss for this Government?

Mr Bodha: The money has been paid. Some of the work has been done. From the information that I have been given, there is an amount not paid so far. It was an amount of USD 113,855 for option analysis and Rs516,372 for project management, but we have decided to ask for deliverables to be able to see whether we should pay this amount or not, because, in fact, the project as designed initially is not going ahead.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Gobin!

LA FLORA JUNCTION - THIRD LANE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/837) **Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the junction at La Flora, he will state if consideration will be given for the construction of a third lane and/or bypass to ease the flow of traffic at the traffic lights situated thereat.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU) that users of the road do face difficulties near the traffic lights at La Flora, in particular, those proceeding to Souillac along the route A3, Savanne Road.

I am further informed that the construction of a third lane is technically a solution. The third lane would start on the left just after the bridge towards the south and the design of the layout is being prepared by the TMRSU. However, there are two major issues that will have to be addressed -

- land acquisition, and
- availability of funds.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Mohamed!

WORKERS (FOREIGN) - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/838) **Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the recruitment of foreign workers, he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of proposed amendments to the existing legislation in relation thereto to prohibit the agents thereof to charge the said workers for their services, in line with the decision/approval of Government therefor, in December 2014.

Mr Callichurn: Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I made to PQ B/30 on 10 February 2015, where I had proposed the setting up of a High-Level Committee under the aegis of my Ministry to look into issues relating to employment of

foreign workers in general, including the review of the existing regulations, the streamlining of procedures, as well as the proper operation of recruitment agencies in line with the new policy orientation of this Government.

The High-Level Committee has already been set up in April 2015 and has already submitted its recommendations, *inter alia*, with regard to the fees charged by private recruiting agencies. I am currently examining same.

I reassure the House that I am well-intended to put in place a robust framework for curtailing any form of abuse in relation to the charging of fees from workers. It is to be pointed out that it has been the practice in the past for recruiting agents to charge fees from workers and this has been ongoing for a very long time.

Madam Speaker, I am adopting a realistic and cautious approach. We can only monitor and apply the provisions of the law to the extent that these transactions occur on the Mauritian soil, whereas, in practice, most of the dubious dealings occur in the country of origin of the workers. Therefore, any amendment to the legislation will require collaboration of source countries.

Madam Speaker, following the ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006, a draft Recruitment of Workers Regulations presiding, among others, abolition of payment of fees by workers have been submitted to the State Law Office for drafting.

Therefore, as indicated, consideration is already being given for the introduction of proposed amendments to the existing legislation in relation thereto to prohibit agents to charge the aforementioned workers of their services.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Minister for his very straightforward answer. There is one issue which I would like to ask the hon. Minister. It is ever since 28 November of last year, the hon. Minister could see and any members of the public can see that Cabinet - according to the website of the Cabinet Office - had approved the decision of the former Government to amend the recruitment of workers' regulations that already provide for recruitment agencies to charge a certain percentage of the salary of workers. This is allowed by law, but it had approved a decision - I was then, I had taken a paper to Cabinet - to make it illegal for the recruiting agencies to charge anything whatsoever so that it be totally free in line with what is provided for called the IRIS methodology which is, in fact, the International Recruitment Integrity System as propounded by the International Organisation for Migration based in Geneva. Could the hon. Minister, therefore, tell us whether this paper that was prepared by the high-level committee, whether it also includes the

same vision, that is, that recruitment agencies should not charge anything from workers and to do that in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration to address the concerns that the hon. Minister rightly pointed out about the problems arising in other countries?

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

Mr Callichurn: Perhaps the hon. Member would like to know that the Private Employment Agencies Convention 1997 No. 181 has not yet been ratified by Mauritius. Article 7 provides that private employment agencies shall not charge directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or costs to workers. Therefore, I am working towards it. I am working to be in line with the Convention.

Mr Mohamed: Is the hon. Minister aware and could he consider the possibility of contacting the International Organisation for Migration that had ever since 2013, in actual fact, organised the launch of the system which I just referred to which is called IRIS and IRIS stands for International Recruitment Integrity System and it was the Ministry of Labour and myself that launched it in Geneva whereby they can help internationally to address the issue which is raised by the hon. Minister - as I said again, rightly so, that it is not necessarily in Mauritius that the problem occurs, but outside of Mauritius? Could he consider, therefore, the possibility of working closely together with the IOM in order to ensure that this project that was launched can be spearheaded by the Government of Mauritius and by the hon. Minister himself?

Mr Callichurn: I welcome the hon. Member's suggestions. I will surely work with them.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Mohamed!

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA - *CHANCELLERIE*
***DÉTACHÉE* – SETTING UP**

(No. B/839) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the interest expressed by the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria for the setting-up of a diplomatic mission in the Republic of Mauritius, he will state if any decision has been taken in relation thereto and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that Mauritius and Algeria established diplomatic relations on 12 February 1976 and we have maintained cordial and friendly relations with that country since then. The current Ambassador of Algeria, His

Excellency Mr Mokaddem Bafdal, who is based in Madagascar, is accredited to Mauritius. He presented his credentials to the President of the Republic of Mauritius on 05 May 2015 as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the Republic of Mauritius.

In September 2014, the Algerian Government informed Mauritius of its decision to open a "*Chancellerie D tach e*" in Mauritius with the objective of further consolidating bilateral relations with Mauritius. The proposed "*Chancellerie D tach e*", deemed to be at the level of a Vice-Consulate, was to operate under the jurisdiction of the Algerian Embassy in Antananarivo, Madagascar, and was to be headed by a full-fledged Algerian diplomat.

However, on 04 June of this year, following the visit of the Algerian Ambassador to Mauritius for the presentation of his letters of credence, the Embassy of Algeria indicated that the Algerian authorities had decided to harmonise the official designation of their foreign missions in line with the provisions of the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations and that the official appellation of its proposed "*Chancellerie D tach e*" would henceforth be "Diplomatic Mission of Algeria" and would be headed by a "*Charg  d'Affaires ad interim*".

I wish to inform the House that the request of the Algerian Government to establish a Resident Diplomatic Mission in Mauritius is being favourably considered.

My Ministry is seeking all the necessary clearances and the Algerian Government has been informed through the diplomatic channel that its request is under consideration.

Mr Mohamed: I thank the hon. Minister for his very straightforward answer. I, myself, met with His Excellency, the Ambassador of Algeria based in Madagascar some time last year, before he had even presented *ses lettres de cr ance* to the Head of State of Mauritius this year, and I had made him the request of moving away from the issue of having an attached level of consulate situation under the aegis of the Embassy of Algeria in Madagascar and to open a full-fledged Embassy in Mauritius. I am informed, through my contacts, that there has been a request at the very beginning of the year and waiting for the response, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister would recall, that there was this request that they wanted to accelerate matters because, in the meantime, while waiting for the Mauritian counterpart answer, they have already opened 14 other Embassies worldwide.

Madam Speaker: Okay, so what is your question?

Mr Mohamed: So, could the hon. Minister look into the possibility of accelerating process which has consensus on all parts of the House?

Mr Sinatambou: Now, the information which the hon. Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East has is totally inaccurate because, first of all, the request for the *Chancellerie détachée* is dated September 2014. At a time when you were all having your *koz kozé* and were not dealing with the affairs of this country. Now, the so-called request from the Algerian Ambassador was made, I repeat it, on the 04 of June of this year. So, from June to now, as I stated, the request of the Algerian Government is being favourably considered by Government. My Ministry is seeking all the necessary clearances and the Algerian Government has been informed through the diplomatic channel. It means that this Government has started processing the request as dated from 04 June of this year, and I think three months for the setting up of a diplomatic mission is not long in the field of diplomacy.

Madam Speaker: Okay, yes!

Mr Mohamed: Because Algeria is a friendly State, I do not want to embarrass anyone on this particular issue following the information that I have, which is not what the hon. Minister is stating. Now let us not play politics about that. What can I ask the hon. Minister, whatever be the case and if he wants to win the day by his argument, let him win the day...

Madam Speaker: No. Please, ask your question! Don't make comments!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: My point is: by when does the hon. Minister believe - which is a good work he is doing, maybe he is happy with that - that this excellent work of responding very rapidly to the Algerian authorities could be completed for him to, at least, be happy that he has done excellent work by opening this Embassy?

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, it is not a question of winning the day. It is a question of being accurate. We have had diplomatic relationships for nearly 40 years with Algeria, meaning from 1976 and the request of the Algerian Government is now dated June 2015. So, three months, I hope by any standard would be accepted as being good work. I don't even need it to be excellent, but what I can assure the House is that this Government will act promptly and we will see the results in due course.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, next question! Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, next question!

WORLD BANK GROUP - DOING BUSINESS REPORT - MAURITIUS

(No. B/840) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Report of the World Bank Group on Doing Business in Mauritius in relation to construction permits, he will state the measures that will be taken to streamline the processes therefor.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, in the 2016 Doing Business Report published by the World Bank Group on 28 October 2015, Mauritius is ranked 32nd among 189 countries in the world, and has maintained its first position in Africa. The top ranked countries in world are Singapore, followed by New Zealand and Denmark.

Dealing with construction permits is one of the 10 indicators of the Doing Business Report. This indicator considers all procedures, time and cost to obtain a construction permit including connections to utilities. As from this year, a building quality control index has been added to the assessment of the indicator.

Mauritius is currently ranked 35th out of 189 countries in this indicator which represents a major leap from the 117th position in last year's report.

The improvement of Mauritius in the construction permits indicator is mainly attributed to the ongoing streamlining of processes such as the reduced time taken to get connections from Waste Water Management Authority and improved regulations relating to quality control. Previously it was taking six to nine months to be connected to the Waste Water Management Authority network. This timeframe has been reduced to up to three months by increasing the number of registered contractors qualified to carry out the connection works.

Furthermore, in the new Building Quality Control Index, Mauritius scored 13 out of a maximum of 15 due to the quality control and safety mechanism put in place in the construction sector.

To further improve our ranking on all indicators, a High Powered Committee has been set up under my Chairmanship for relevant action. The Committee focused on the construction permits in the first instance and the following measures are being implemented -

First, an online platform to submit applications for all Buildings and Land Use Permits (BLP) has been developed and is operational since July 2015. This system

will significantly decrease the time taken to process a BLP while allowing the Ministry of Local Government to monitor the whole process from application to approval.

Second, action is being taken to integrate the plan approval or clearance by other public bodies such as CEB, CWA, WMA with a Building and Land Use Permit (BLP) online system. Once the application for BLP is submitted and complies with all existing planning policy guidelines (PPG), the public utilities will have five working days to provide their stand through the online system, after which the silent agreement principle will apply.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: The new measures which have been announced by the hon. Minister, could he, please, inform the House whether they are already in place or will there need to be any changes brought about to our legislation in order to implement those new excellent measures and good news that he has just announced?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Those two measures announced form part of the improvement in the index for construction. It forms part of a global index on which we worked and whereby we have taken the commitment, quite an ambitious one, that in three to four years, Mauritius will be in the top 15 countries in the world for the ease of doing business. That is huge! It implies major reforms in the system itself. It implies that the e-Government system will be improved a lot more. I hope that, within the next three to four years, whether it will be for building permit, whether it will be for EIA, whether it will be for *morcellement* permit; all will be online with the possibility that, in the case where civil servants do not act in time given, the silent agreement principle will be applied. So, I think we are on the right track for this.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Mohamed: In fact, what I wanted to try to get, Madam Speaker, is the following, I mean, those ideas as enunciated and explained by the hon. Minister are quite marvellous ideas. Undoubtedly! What I would like to get at is the hon. Minister has stated that, within the next four years or so, we would start seeing the fruits of those excellent ideas. So, do I gather, therefore, and that is the question, that we will have to wait another four years on average for us to be able to see the implementation of those excellent ideas or are those ideas already working, and if at all, when do we expect any legislation to come and be brought to

this House to take into consideration the legality and the principle of applying online with the silent agreement, etc. What time frame are we talking about? I hope not four years!

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Well, I am speaking of an ongoing improvement which means that the Committee which is working on it, is already taking measures. But, ultimately, within five years, Mauritius should be in a position to form part of the 15 best in terms of ease of doing business. Now, we don't have to wait four years, naturally. It is an ongoing process. We are improving gradually and the online system, especially, is being improved quite fast.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister also, in his project of improving matters, to consider also the case when applications are rejected, for example, when the application for the BLU permit is rejected, the law provides that the applicant can now appeal before the Tribunal. So, this is another *étape* in the whole process. Can he see to it also that this process is shortened as much as possible so that the applicant is allowed to go as fast as possible to the Tribunal which gives its ruling as fast as possible?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, I take note of the proposal.

Mr Mohamed: May I humbly suggest or could the hon. Minister consider the possibility, in the working progress ideas that he has brought forward, to implement another issue which is when you have other organisations, for instance, the Waste Water Authority, the Central Water Authority, the Central Electricity Board and other organisations, very often, if one of them happens not to be present, you have a situation where the Committee cannot, therefore, pronounce itself and give a decision with regard to the application. Could it be, therefore, considered that with using new technology, that everything turns out to be paperless in the sense that people can take their decision and not have to come to this Committee, but can take a decision using an online system, give their views, upload their documents and comments so that things could go faster with a totally paperless system, as has been set up ever since last year at the Ministry of Labour?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: The system should be understood in a very simple way. We are reducing the intervention of human beings in the decision of making process. When we speak about improving the ease of doing business, we are, in fact, speaking of corruption. We are speaking of ways and means by which things are differed, of people who have got the decision of taking power in their hands, use it to make money, and the only way to reduce this level of corruption, is to ensure that the decision making process is done automatically, is done not by men, but by machine and, ultimately, reducing the intervention of officers,

human beings to the strict minimum. This is the approach we are following which will imply, therefore, that with this work, it means also that the level of corruption in the country will ease down considerably the next four years.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ B/861, B/863 and B/874 have been withdrawn. Hon. Bhagwan!

BUILD MAURITIUS FUND – FUNDS ACCRUED

(No. B/841) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Build Mauritius Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, for the period January 2014 to August 2015, information as to the total amount of funds which had accrued therein since the setting up thereof to date, indicating the –

- (a) amount of funds disbursed therefrom for the implementation of projects earmarked thereunder, including to improve water supply, and
- (b) total outstanding amount of funds available therein as at to date

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: I wish to inform the House that the Build Mauritius Fund was set up in December 2013 as a Special Fund under the Finance and Audit Act. From its setting up to 31 October 2015, a total amount of some Rs6.2 billion has been credited to the Fund.

In respect of part (a) of the question, I am informed that a total amount of Rs1.9 billion has been disbursed from the Fund during the same period to finance the implementation of projects including Rs1 billion for the water sector.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the balance available in the fund as at 31 October 2015 stood at some Rs4 billion.

BRITISH AMERICAN INSURANCE – LOANS

(No. B/842) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms, Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the British American Insurance and conglomerates, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the special administrator appointed therefor, information as to the quantum of the loans which they had contracted with the banks having been written off, indicating the steps taken to recoup same, if any.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member will note that section 64 subsection (3) of the Banking Act prohibits the disclosure of such information and BAI Co. (Mtius) Ltd. and its related entities are under special administration by virtue of section 110 of the Insurance Act.

There is also some confusion in the question, I believe, which basically is asking for information as to the quantum of loans which BAI had contracted with the banks having been written off, indicating the steps taken by the Special Administrators to recoup same, if any. If the banks have written off loans which BAI had undertaken, then there is nothing to recoup by the Special Administrators.

Dr. Sorefan: Is the hon. Minister aware that an unsecured loan to the tune of Rs845 m. has been granted advance by Mr T. R. who was the Chairman and Chairman of BAI International Holdings and by Mr S. who is the Chief Executive of a bank and who was the Chief Staff of ex-Bramer Bank and there was *un complot* to give Rs845 m. unsecured loan? Is the hon. Minister going to investigate in this because we know about Navin Rs40 m. saga where two officers are being taken to task? Will the hon. Minister investigate and take these two officers of that bank who granted Rs845 m. unsecured loan? I will live 10 times, born, die, born, die and born...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan:...I will never make Rs845 m.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, please, don't make comments! You have asked your question, don't make comments, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, that would not be a case of unexplained wealth, it will be an unexplained life. Madam Speaker, I take very seriously what the hon. Member has just mentioned, but the question itself is wrongly formulated, because the question he is asking as to whether the Special Administrators will recoup the amount which has been written off from the banks, but the banks if they have written off that amount, then there is nothing for the Special Administrator of BAI to recoup. In fact, it is in the advantage of BAI that it has been written off and the Special Administrator. However, what has been mentioned by the hon. Member is a very serious issue and I will certainly look into that, Madam Speaker.

Mr Uteem: I don't know if that would fall under the aegis of the Special Administrators because now we have a Receiver appointed for Bramer Bank. But, being given that this question is about BAI and its conglomerates which would include Bramer Bank in receivership, may I know from the hon. Minister if he is prepared to table a list of all loans that have been written off by Bramer Bank in receivership since it has come into receivership?

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member is right. What has happened in effect is that the Central Bank has appointed a Receiver Manager for Bramer Bank, but then the Special Administrator has been appointed under section 120 of the Insurance Act for BAI. Now, it so happens that because Bramer Bank does not have a banking licence anymore, then its status is reduced to a normal company and it becomes a related entity or company of the insurance company which is under special administratorship. So, I have raised the matter with the Governor of the Central Bank and I very much believe that it is the Special Administrator who has to look into that matter by law and once this issue is resolved, if there is a list which is made available to me, I will certainly make that available.

Dr. Sorefan: Is the hon. Minister aware of the Interim Report of SBM Holdings which is public, where mention is made that to the tune of R1.08 billion has been written off and what I have said Rs845 m. form part of that R1.08 billion that has been written off? Will the Minister look into it?

Mr Bhadain: Again, Madam Speaker, we have to look at the jurisdiction of issues here. The SBM will be regulated by the Central Bank of Mauritius and the banking sector does not fall under my portfolio. However, good governance does and if, indeed, there is such abuse, then this is certainly going to be looked into by the Ministry of Good Governance.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Gobin!

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU HOSPITAL - MASTER V. J. – ALLEGED MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE

(No. B/843) Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to a case of alleged medical negligence having purportedly occurred in the course of a surgery on master V. J., son of one Mr O. J., residing at Allée Jacques, in Grand Bois, on or about 31 December 2013 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, in Rose Belle, he will state where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I am informed that minor patient V. J., 8 years old, attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital on 30 December 2013 at around 22.00 hours with a history of bad fall with injury to the left hand.

An x-ray was performed immediately and showed supracondylar fracture on the left humerus. The patient was kept fasting and surgery was performed on 31 December 2013. The patient was followed up in ward from 30 December 2013 to 29 January 2014 by the treating doctors.

The patient's relative signed the Discharge against Medical Advice (DAMA) on 29 January 2014 and took the patient from the hospital, apparently to a private clinic.

Following a complaint made on 20 April 2014 by the father of the minor patient, an internal enquiry was initiated at the level of the hospital and a report was submitted to my Ministry on 02 June 2014. Subsequently, an in-depth enquiry was conducted on 28 November 2014 to look into any alleged case of medical negligence.

The Enquiry Committee concluded that appropriate treatment was provided to the patient, but also noted that there was no proper communication among the treating doctors after the operation.

Madam Speaker, in the light of the report, my Ministry has administered a written warning to the three treating doctors under Regulation 42 (3) of the PSC Regulations.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that the patient's relatives were convened by the Acting Regional Health Director of the hospital on 27 October 2015 and they were informed that all necessary treatment was given to the patient at the time.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Gobin!

Mr Gobin: With your permission, Madam Speaker, is the hon. Minister aware that, following the surgery, this child has almost lost the use of his left hand? I have taken good note of the answer of the hon. Minister, but what is being proposed now as treatment for this child, whether here or abroad, so that remedial action can be taken? It is fine that warning was issued to the three treating doctors under Regulation 42 of the PSC Regulations, but what about the child, if I may say victim? What is being contemplated for him?

Mr Gayan: I understand, Madam Speaker, that it was a very bad fall and it happened on 30 December. But, according to the file that I have, all treatment was given to that young child. Unfortunately, it is true that he has lost the use of his left forearm, but I understand that

a further operation was carried out after some serious complication was found out on 02 or 03 January.

I am not aware whether there has been any request for further treatment to be funded either by the hospital here or by an institution overseas. But I must also maintain, Madam Speaker, that the child was taken away from the hospital against medical advice by the parents.

Mr Gobin: One more question, Madam Speaker. Fortunately, if I may say, the DAMA was signed because we can see that the result of the enquiry has been that warning was issued. Can the hon. Minister at least give an indication whether there would be agreement in principle to offer the necessary Government funding for treatment abroad if such is a course of action which can be contemplated?

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, there is a protocol to be followed whenever overseas treatment is contemplated. But, if the protocol is complied with and there is justification to send this child, obviously, the needful will be done. But the protocol has to be followed.

Mr Jhugroo: After the enquiry, it was found that there was no communication. But is not 'no communication' in itself a medical negligence?

Mr Gayan: Well, what I understand, Madam Speaker, is that since it was the New Year's festivity, there was lack of communication between the surgeon and the doctor and this is why warning was given. But, as far as the treatment was concerned, the treatment was the appropriate one.

Mr Gobin: Can the hon. Minister give us the assurance that the parents of the child will, at the very least, be communicated with a report, including the treatment that was given to the child? Because the parents are completely in the dark as to what happened at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital in this case.

Mr Gayan: Madam Speaker, I understand that the Enquiry Panel was made up of the Acting Regional Health Director, a Consultant in Charge Orthopaedics, a second Consultant in Charge Orthopaedics, the Regional Nursing Director and also an Assistant Permanent Secretary, and that Committee found that the treatment that was given was the appropriate one.

With regard to the treatment (collateral matters), that was the reason why a warning was issued. Well, at least, that is what I have.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Gobin!

TRADE FAIRS - ORGANISATION

(No. B/844) Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the holding and or organization of trade fairs in Mauritius, he will state if consideration will be given for a temporary suspension or a ban thereof with, as objective, to allow the stimulation of the business of the licensed local traders.

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, my Ministry has received numerous representations from local traders, namely the *Front commun des commerçants* and the Shop Owners Association regarding the frequent holding of trade fairs across the island, which affects their business activities by creating unfair competition leading to an unequal level playing field. Same has also led to the closure of some local businesses while others have had to lay off employees. The foreign participants in these fairs tend to offer low quality products and do not provide after sales service to the detriment of the consumers.

This state of affairs has been recurring since quite some time. The relevant regulations were reviewed in December 2013 to address the situation. Prior to January 2014, fees were payable according to the duration, the number of participants and the location of the trade fair and exhibition.

With the Consumer Protection (Events) Regulations 2013, as from January 2014, fees payable were increased significantly and payable according to the type of event, the duration and the category of participants in such events. Moreover, bodies such as cooperative societies and small and medium enterprises were exempted from payment of fees in connection with the organisation of events.

However, this did not produce the expected results. The situation has deteriorated since most of the organisers of these fairs have registered themselves as SMEs so as to be exempted from the payment of the prescribed fees.

Thus, with a view to protecting the duly licensed local traders, on 23 October 2015, the Government has decided to take a series of measures regarding the organisation of trade fairs.

Firstly, there will be a ban on the organisation of trade fairs proposing for sale products which are readily available in shops such as textiles, garments, utensils, furniture, fancy jewellery, handicrafts, pharmaceuticals and food.

Secondly, the provision for SMEs to be exempted from the payment of fees will be removed from the Regulations to avoid evasion from the payment of fees.

Thirdly, besides the standard conditions appearing in the current regulations, new conditions will be introduced to ensure a proper control and monitoring.

Madam Speaker, I am confident that these measures, especially the ban of the *pêle-mêle* trade fairs will give a boost to the business of the duly licensed local traders and allow the public to be provided with good quality, safe and secure products at reasonable prices.

Mr Gobin: If I understand correctly, there are two types of measures –

- (i) ban, and
- (ii) amendments to be brought to the regulations.

Can I confirm from the hon. Minister whether the ban would be applicable immediately? The second part of my question is with regard to the amendments of the regulations, for instance, for the non-payment of the fees of SMEs to be removed, when can we expect the regulations to be gazetted?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, as per existing regulations, no authorisation is given for the holding of events in the months of November and December, for example. So, these are applicable right now. As far as the regulations are concerned, they will be ready by the end of this month.

MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL - NATIONAL FEDERATIONS - FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

(No. B/845) 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 changed its policy in respect of the financial assistance given to the national federations and, if so, give details thereof.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mauritius Sports Council that financial assistance is provided to National Sports Federations to enable them to meet expenses incurred in relation to -

- (i) payment of affiliation fees to their respective International Federations;
- (ii) payment of salary/allowance to their Administrative Clerk;

- (iii) stationeries and petty stores, and
- (iv) payment of coaching fees.

I am further informed that the newly set up Board has, after consultation with my Ministry, decided to review the quantum of the financial assistance granted to the Federations with effect from 01 October 2015. This decision has been taken to prevent duplication of refund of expenses as it was noted that financial assistance granted in respect of expenses incurred for the payment of coaching fees and office incidentals were also being met by my Ministry.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire si cette décision qui a été prise est en raison du fait que le *MSC* a trop de travail et trop de responsabilités?

Mr Sawmynaden: As mentioned, this measure has been taken because there was duplication of fees. Stationeries and payment of coaching fees were met by my Ministry and also met by the *MSC*. So, to prevent this to happen, we have decided to have it under one roof.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous donner la garantie que ce changement dans le paiement des *coaching fees* principalement, n'est pas une démarche pour réduire les allocations des fédérations?

Mr Sawmynaden: As far as I am aware, there is no reduction. It is just to prevent duplication of fees.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

FOOTBALL – CLUB M – COACHES

(No. B/846) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Mr A. H. and Mr J. T., coaches of the Club M, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Football Association, in each case, information as to the terms and conditions of the contract thereof, including the –

- (a) duration thereof;
- (b) monthly salary and other benefits drawn, and
- (c) conditions of work and responsibilities thereof.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the MFA that Messrs A. H. and J. T. have been appointed as co-coaches of the Men's National Team after the IOIG 2015. They have been working together since mid-August 2015.

After the departure of D.S. at the end of May 2015, Mr. A. H. agreed to take over the responsibilities of the National Football Coach. A two-year contract has been offered to him with a monthly salary of Rs200,000, including accommodation and transport expenses. He is also in charge of the Women's National Football Team.

Mr J. T. was called upon to act as co-National Coach of the Men's Team along with Mr A. H. following the departure of the previous Coaches.

Mr J. T. accepted this responsibility free of charge. I am informed that only travelling expenses are granted to him to attend training sessions and matches.

The responsibilities of Messrs A. H. and J. T. are to work in close partnership for the benefit and the promotion of the Club M.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, peut-on savoir – à part les responsabilités que le ministre vient de citer - quels sont les projets et objectifs réels des deux entraîneurs pour permettre au Club M de remonter dans le classement de FIFA? Dois-je rappeler à la Chambre que Maurice a perdu cinq places dans le dernier classement de la FIFA ?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, as you know, football went down because toutes les écoles de formation étaient fermées pendant bon nombre d'années. Les écoles de formation sont maintenant ouvertes à nouveau et ces deux coaches, en collaboration avec les autres coaches qui sont en place, vont permettre la formation des jeunes dès leur plus jeune âge afin de refaire l'équipe du Club M.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, le ministre est en train de confirmer que les deux entraîneurs vont s'occuper aussi de la formation. Est-ce qu'ils le font déjà ou bien ce sera dans un proche avenir?

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, c'est sûr que ces deux personnes ne peuvent pas être partout en même temps. Ils vont prêter assistance aux entraîneurs qui sont déjà existants. Ils sont là pour aider et on va tout mettre en place afin d'aider ces jeunes à vraiment monter en termes de technique.

Madam Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that P,Q, B/852 has been withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 17 November 2015 at 11.30 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo) rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTERS RAISED

(3.59 p.m.)

- (i) **POUDRE D'OR FOOTBALL GROUND**
- (ii) **TROIS BRAS - YOUTH CENTRE - CONSTRUCTION**
- (iii) **VALE - FOOTBALL GROUND - CLOAKROOM**

Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to take the time of the House.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur, can I just interrupt you to ask you to be brief? We have a list of those who want to intervene.

Mr Rughoobur: Madam Speaker, there have been several complaints - it is a request to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister - received from members of my Constituency, No. 6. There are three projects where works have remained unfinished since January –

- (i) Poudre d'Or Football Ground;
- (ii) Construction of a Youth Centre at Trois Bras, Petit Raffray, and
- (iii) Construction of a cloak room at Vale Football Ground.

May I please request the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to liaise with the NDU and to look into this issue so that the projects are completed at the earliest?

Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Well, since the hon. Member is asking that we should look into the projects so that they are executed, in fact, they are already on and we will do our best to execute them as fast as possible.

COURTS - FORMER EMPLOYEES - COMPENSATION

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central):

Madam Speaker, I would like to raise an issue which concerns the hon. Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and it relates to the former employees of Courts.

Following a meeting on 23 September 2015 between the hon. Minister and the Trade Unionist, Mr Chuttoo, it was widely reported in the press that there has been an agreement that the former employees of Courts - who lost their jobs - will be getting one month compensation per year of service.

I have been informed now that these people have received only 15 days per year of service. So, I would make an appeal to the hon. Minister if he can take up the matter with the Special Administrators and the Financial Services Commission, so that these people be given the full one month as promised.

The Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms (Mr S. Bhadain): We will certainly do that. Madam Speaker. I was not aware that 15 days only have been paid, but I will certainly look into that and we will hold on to our promise.

SCHOOLS – CLEANERS - SALARY

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Madam Speaker, the issue I would raise today concerns the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research - if I can catch her attention. It relates to the workers employed through sub-contractors or Parent Teachers Association.

A similar PQ was put by hon. Baloomoody in September 2015 and it has not yet been replied. I have a similar case in my Constituency whereby people working as cleaners in the schools were being employed - the case I am referring to - by new Cleaning Company Ltd. and their salary was Rs5,000 per month.

Now that there is a new company, Mauriclean Ltd., it is giving these people Rs2,000 per month and they are supposed to start work at 7.30 a.m. for secondary schools and 8.00 a.m. for primary schools. These people are finding it very hard to work for Rs2,000 per month on a daily basis. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister to look into the matter and do the necessary so as to ease these people who are head of families?

The Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Madam Speaker, it seems, from what I have gathered, that these people are working with the company. I'll look into the matter and see how we can talk to the companies, but it is a contract between the workers and the company.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU HOSPITAL – CASUALTY & X-RAY DEPARTMENTS - COMPLAINTS

Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Madam Speaker, I have two issues: one for the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and one for the Ministry of Local Government.

As regards the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, I have received various complaints from the constituents of my Constituency concerning the service that is being provided at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, in particular, the waiting time and the Casualty Department as well as the X-ray Department. Can I request the hon. Minister to kindly look into the matter and effect a visit, if need be?

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member said he had two issues; what is the second one?

PLAINE MAGNIEN CEMETERY - INCINERATOR

Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Madam Speaker, my second issue concerns the incinerator at Plaine Magnien Cemetery.

The project has long been completed, but then the incinerator is still not operational. Can I request the hon. Minister to look into the matter? Thank you.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr A. Gayan): Madam Speaker, I will certainly look into the issues raised regarding the hospital at Rose Belle, but I must say that we have established an electronic ticketing system where the waiting time should normally be rationalised, but I will certainly look into that.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. A. Husnoo): Madam Speaker, for the problem at Plaine Magnien, I will look into it and inform the House.

LE MORNE – FOOTBALL GROUND

Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River): Madam Speaker, I had a question to the hon. Minister of Local Government at the last session concerning Le

Morne football ground, as it is actually located one and a half miles outside the Village Council area.

The hon. Minister, in his answer, stated that Government is contemplating the idea of constructing another football ground at La Prairie which is also outside the village, approximately one and a half miles away. Could the hon. Minister consider compulsory acquisition of land since at the back of the village there are private lands? Thank you.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. A. Husnood): Yes. That's what I was told by the Chief Executive of Black River, but, obviously, I will have a look at it again and see whether we can get a plot of land nearer.

MALAKOFF/CRIMEA STREETS, PORT LOUIS - DRAIN

Mr C. Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Madam Speaker, I have a request for the hon. Minister of Local Government with regard to a public health issue in my Constituency, more precisely regarding a drain located at Malakoff and Crimea Streets in Constituency No. 2, Port Louis.

Since late, there have been lots of complaints forthcoming to me with regard to the drain being blocked for several reasons; accumulation of waste is one of them and this leads to a serious public health issue for the dwelling units located along this drain. So, my request is for the hon. Minister to kindly look into the ways and means to have the drain at Malakoff and Crimea Streets clean up for the sake of public health.

The Minister of Local Government (Dr. A. Husnood): Yes, Madam Speaker, I'll definitely look into that problem.

ALLÉE TAMARIN, ROCHE BOIS – CENTRE DE JEUNESSE - ACCESS

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Madam Speaker, I have got two particular issues and the coincidence is that they are addressed to the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports and the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, both of them are seated next to one another.

Now, the first one concerning the Minister of Youth and Sports, if I could obtain his assistance and help with regard to the *Centre de Jeunesse* that is in Allée Tamarin in Roche Bois. Usually, inhabitants had access to that centre in order to organise *les fêtes de fin d'année*. But, unfortunately, inhabitants of Allée Tamarin have made an application recently and thinking that they would be allowed to organise *les fêtes de fin d'année* have been turned

down by *des préposés* of that *Centre de Jeunesse* without being given any explanation whatsoever.

So, I would request, therefore, the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports, if he could use his good offices to kindly allow people in the locality to have access to that facility for *les fêtes de fin d'année*, particularly for children of the kindergarden of the locality.

QUARTIER SHELL, ROCHE BOIS – POLICE OFFICER

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Madam Speaker, the second issue would be with regard to the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport.

On the highway, separating Quay D roundabout, there is a gas station next to Quartier Shell, Roche Bois and what separates the highway, Madam Speaker, is now - until recently, there has been a chain that has been put there. So, people, in the morning, be it school children, whenever they are not on holidays, be it workers, whenever they need to go across the highway to take a bus or come back from work and go on the other side of the highway, they do not have the facility of a Police Officer there at peak hours or even in the afternoon after office hours.

I humbly request, therefore, if the hon. Minister could use his good offices to try to ask the Police to remove the chain that is there because it is causing a lot of danger, and I am sure he would liaise with the hon. Prime Minister who would do the needful, and also try to get a Police Officer to be present there in order to direct traffic to help the people to go from Quartier Shell, from the bus stop that is on the other side of the highway, opposite the gas station, in order to avoid road traffic accidents, for children as well as for adults. Thank you.

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): Madam Speaker, I will definitely look into the matter with my Director of Youth Affairs. I don't know what is the new policy and if there is anything, I will inform the hon. Member.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha): I will also look into the matter, Madam Speaker.

BELLE ÉTOILE ROAD, RIVER SIDE LANE, TEMPLE ROAD & SARAN VILLA LANE – ROAD TARRING

Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Madame la présidente, ma requête cet après-midi s'adresse au ministre des Utilités publiques qui,

malheureusement, n'est pas dans la Chambre actuellement mais néanmoins, je vais élaborer sur mon point.

Des travaux, Madame le présidente, ont été effectués par la CWA à Belle Étoile dans la circonscription No. 20 depuis plusieurs semaines déjà et le réasphaltage n'a toujours pas été effectué, causant donc, comme vous le devinez, de gros inconvénients aux habitants de la région.

Les rues qui sont dans un état exécrable sont Belle Étoile Road, River Side Lane, Temple Road et Saran Villa Lane en particulier. Je considère que c'est la moindre des choses que la CWA s'assure que les routes sont réasphaltées aussitôt que les travaux sont terminés.

De ce fait, je fais un appel au ministre ou - même s'il n'est pas là - à un de ses collègues, afin qu'il y ait un suivi par rapport à ce problème et, bien sûr, donner satisfaction aux habitants de la région.

Je vous remercie.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Allow the hon. Minister to reply!

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha): I will raise the matter with my colleague.

BASSIN – FOOTBALL GROUND

Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): My question will go to the hon. Minister of Local Government or to the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports.

After having listened to my hon. friend Jhuboo with regard to a second football ground at Le Morne with only 800 inhabitants, can I ask the hon. Minister concerned, if we can have a second playground for Bassin which has got a population of above 8000 people because their football ground is very far from where they live.

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): I will definitely look into the matter and hope that the kids there will be able to play football as well.

At 4.10 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 17 November 2015 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
SOCIAL MEDIA – COMPLAINTS OF ABUSE

(No. B/819) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the social media, he will for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of –

- (a) staff permanently dedicated to deal with offences in relation thereto, and
- (b) complaints of abuse and antisocial behaviour originating therefrom dealt with since 2009 to date.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police, that the Cybercrime Unit of the Police Department is the Unit responsible to investigate into complaints of abuse on the social media, in breach of the Information and Communication Technologies Act 2001.

The Unit is staffed with 16 Police Officers working under the direct supervision of an Assistant Commissioner of Police. In addition, there are seven Police Officers from the IT Unit of the Police Department who provide technical support to the Cybercrime Unit.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police, that since 2009 up to 04 November 2015, 548 complaints of abuse on social media have been reported to the Police and 86 persons have been arrested and released on bail. Out of the 548 reported cases –

- in 2 cases two persons have been sentenced by Court to pay fines;
- in 2 other cases warning has been given to the accused by the Commissioner of Police upon the advice of the DPP;
- in 3 cases the advice of the DPP is being awaited;
- 311 cases are still under enquiry by the Police, and
- 230 cases have been classified due to insufficient evidence or the accused are unknown.

As regards anti-social behaviour resulting from abuse on social media, no complaint has been recorded at the level of the Police Department.

BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH
AFFAIRS – DIEGO GARCIA – STATEMENT

(No. B/820) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for

Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether he is aware that the British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Hon. James Duddridge, stated in the UK House of Commons, on 04 September 2014, that there is no lease of Diego Garcia to the United States of America under which a rent is charged and that the use of the British Indian Ocean Territory, including Diego Garcia, is regulated by a series of bilateral agreements between the UK and the US covering a period of 50 years and, if so, indicate if he or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has sought any clarification from or expressed any reaction to the UK Government in relation thereto.

Reply: I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions B/820 and B/821 together as they relate to the same subject.

If the hon. Member is referring to the Chagos Archipelago, let me remind her that Mauritius does not recognise the so-called “British Indian Ocean Territory”.

Having said so, I wish to reassure the hon. Member that every opportunity is taken by my Government to assert the sovereign rights of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago.

**BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND
COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS – UK HOUSE OF COMMONS –
STATEMENT ON DIEGO GARCIA**

(No. B/821) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the statement made by the British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Hon. James Duddridge, in the UK House of Commons to the effect that there is no lease of Diego Garcia to the United States of America under which a rent is charged and that the use of the British Indian Ocean Territory, including Diego Garcia, is regulated by a series of bilateral agreements between the UK and the US, he will state if he will seek from the UK Government information as to the –

- (a) true nature of the said bilateral agreements, and
- (b) sum of money being paid by the US to the UK, if any, in exchange of the use of Diego Garcia as a military and nuclear base.

(Vide to PQ No. B/820)

CRIMINAL CASES – SURETIES – REFUND

(No. B/822) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the individuals who have

deposited money as sureties for suspects in criminal cases, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Master and Registrar, information as to the number thereof who have not been refunded same as at to date, in spite of the fact that the said criminal cases are over, indicating the reasons therefor in each case.

(Withdrawn)

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF BEAU BASSIN-ROSE HILL - HOUSEHOLD
BINS - DISTRIBUTION**

(No. B/847) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the distribution of household bins, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill, information as to -

- (a) the date of purchase thereof;
- (b) the total cost thereof, and
- (c) if the distribution exercise is now completed and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed that a decision was taken on 04 March 2015 by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill to purchase a total of 30,000 plastic refuse bins with lid to be provided to the inhabitants of the town. Subsequently following a bidding exercise, a contract was signed on 05 May 2015 with the selected supplier and according to the terms of the contract, the bins were delivered within a delay of three months after signature of the contract.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the total cost of the 30,000 plastic refuse bins was Rs9,660,000 inclusive of VAT and other charges.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the distribution exercise could not be undertaken by the Council in view of the Municipal Elections held on 14 June 2015 according to legal advice obtained. However, I am informed that the distribution exercise was initiated after taking office by the present Council and as at date a total of 10,093 refuse bins have already been distributed to households in different regions of the town.

I am further informed that the distribution exercise is still ongoing and is expected to be completed by the end of December 2015.

BLUE ECONOMY - JOB CREATION

(No. B/848) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Blue Economy, he will state if a Blue Growth Study has been conducted to -

- (a) assess the impact thereof on growth and job creation potential and the dynamics for research and development to deliver technology improvements and innovations, and
- (b) identify marine and maritime resources and the potential of each activity thereof.

Reply: This Government is fully aware of the vast potential of our Maritime Zone of 2.3 million square kilometres. In this connection, Government, in its Programme 2015-2019, commits itself to -

“making the ocean economy an important industry to sustain economic diversification, job creation and wealth generation”.

My Ministry was set up only in December 2014. However, several sectoral studies and surveys have previously been carried out in the areas of ocean economy, *inter-alia*, by the Mauritius Research Council, the Board of Investment and the University of Mauritius.

These studies show that our Maritime Zone abounds in marine resources and offers considerable opportunities for Mauritius to develop its ocean economy.

Along this line, Government has pooled all ocean activities under one roof and further in June 2015, set up the National Ocean Council, which is the main driving force for identifying and realising ocean-related projects of this Ministry.

Furthermore, within the National Ocean Council, seven distinct clusters have been created namely -

- (a) Business Facilitation;
- (b) Port & Shipping Development;
- (c) Regulatory Framework and Institution Building;
- (d) Fisheries & Aquaculture;
- (e) Seabed Exploration, DOWA, Minerals, Renewable Energy, Marine Research;
- (f) Capacity Building, Employment and Training Development, and
- (g) Environment Protection, Governance & Sustainable Development.

Within the next six months, each cluster will carry out a SWOT analysis '*afin de faire un constat de la présente situation*'; to identify, recommend projects and action plans and oversee their implementation to promote national wealth and employment creation.

Side by side, my Ministry is exploring possibilities of technical assistance and cooperation from friendly countries like India, UK, Germany, Australia and China.

I am confident that with the current initiatives underway, considerable progress will be made in the next few years towards meeting the stated objectives of this Government as announced in the Government Programme 2015-2019 and the Economic Mission Statement.

PROCUREMENT POLICY OFFICE - CONTRACTORS & CONSULTANTS - PAYMENT

(No. B/850) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the construction industry, he will state if Government will consider the introduction of a Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Bill with, as objective, to safeguard the interests of the contractors, of the subcontractors and of the consultants thereof for the timely payment in respect of the goods and services provided.

Reply: I am informed by the Procurement Policy Office that the Public Procurement Act 2006 already makes provision to safeguard the interests of contractors and consultants for the timely payment in respect of goods, works and services provided.

I am also informed that in order to ensure compliance with these provisions, the Standard Bidding Documents for goods, works and services, issued by the Procurement Policy Office, incorporate payment terms in the respective General Conditions of Contract for each type of procurement.

In accordance with the abovementioned provisions, procurement entities have to effect payment for the supply of goods, services and works within a pre-determined timeframe, following fulfilment of the contractor's obligations under the contract and subject to acceptance of the Public Body. In case payments are unduly delayed, the contractors and consultants are entitled to payment of interest at the legal rates or at rates defined in the contract.

I am also informed that some contractors have indeed made representations to the Construction Industry Development Board to the effect that some of the conditions of

contract being imposed upon them for executing works or providing goods or services, appear to be onerous and unfair. The CIDB is presently in the process of consultation with relevant stakeholders in order to look into the possibility of reviewing these contractual provisions. Consequently, the issue will be taken up with the Procurement Policy Office and the State Law Office with a view to bringing appropriate amendments to the existing legislation and the Standard Bidding Documents, wherever required. However, if the desirable amendments cannot be included within the present conditions of contract, on account of existing legal constraints, then appropriate new legislation may be considered to regulate payment issues to safeguard the interests of contractors, subcontractors and consultants.

GOODLANDS - FIRE STATION - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/851) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a fire station at Goodlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fire Rescue Services, information as to –

- (a) if a plot of land has already been identified and vested with his Ministry therefor;
- (b) if the design works thereof have been completed and, if not, why not, and
- (c) the expected start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: I am informed that a plot of land of the extent of one Arpent near the Goodlands football stadium with access onto Goodlands Mapou Road, had been vested in the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service since year 2003 for the construction of a Fire Station.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service was projecting to construct three Fire Stations simultaneously namely at Rose Belle, Montagne Blanche and Goodlands and the Architect Section of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport had proposed that the design for the Rose Belle Fire Station be finalised and used as a typical one for the other two Fire Stations with a view to saving time in the preparation of preliminary design.

I am informed that the design for Rose Belle Fire Station has been finalised and could be used for Goodlands and Montagne Blanche Fire Stations.

The construction of Goodlands Fire Station is scheduled for implementation in financial year 2016/17 and is expected to be completed in financial year 2017/18.

A provision of Rs60 m. has been made for the project in the Public Sector Investment Programme.

STATE LAND - LEASE

(No. B/852) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State land, he will state the names of the beneficiaries of new leases therefor granted since January 2015 to date, indicating in each case, the - (a) terms and conditions of the lease, and (b) purpose of the lease.

(Withdrawn)

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS BOARD - EMPLOYERS - NON-COMPLIANCE

(No. B/853) 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 number of -

- (a) disabled who are registered therewith, and
- (b) reported cases of employers for non-compliance with the statutory obligation for the employment of the disabled, since 2010 to date, indicating in each case, the actions taken in relation thereto, if any.

Reply: I am informed by the Training and Employment of the Disabled Persons Board (TEDPB) that the number of persons with disabilities registered with the Board to date is 2,436.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to point out that prior to October 2012 the TEDPB did not keep records of employers having not less than 35 employees on an annual basis. Therefore, I am unfortunately not in a position to provide the House with the exact number of non-compliant employers for the period 2010 up to end of September 2012. However, out of 436 employers registered from October 2012 to date, 32 employers have been found to be fully compliant, 283 employers have been found to be fully non-compliant with the legal quota of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act 1996 while 121 employers have been found to be partly compliant being given that they have recruited persons with disabilities, but without meeting the quota of 3%.

In an attempt to deal with the issue of non-compliance and following the amendment to the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act in 2012, the Board has conducted several sensitisation campaigns in order to educate and sensitise companies and parastatal bodies on the significance of employing disabled persons and to contribute in removing barriers or prejudices with regard to the employment of these persons.

A sub-committee was set up in August 2013 to carry out the sensitisation meetings. It sensitizes non-compliant employers twice monthly. A moratorium period of one to three months is usually given to them for compliance. To assess a list of disabled persons from the register is provided to them in their recruitment exercise. 158 companies including 17 parastatal bodies and state-owned companies have been sensitised as at date by this committee.

Those employers who persist in not complying with the legal requirements despite sensitization campaigns are referred to the Board which in turn refers the cases to a Hearing Committee which was set up in November 2012 following amendment of the Act in July 2012. Eighteen private companies and ten parastatal bodies have been referred to the Hearing Committee as at date. I am given to understand that during the hearing process before the Hearing Committee, a moratorium is given to encourage the non-compliant employers to comply with the law. The list of disabled persons from the register is again provided to them to help them in their recruitment exercise.

During the period 2013 to date, 276 persons with disabilities have been recruited by private companies and 23 have been recruited by parastatal bodies and state-owned companies. In 2015 the TEDPB has also channelled four young graduates to be considered by the FSC under the young graduate scheme.

The TEDPB in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Security will soon introduce a Skill Development Scheme for persons with disabilities seeking employment with a view to providing them with on-the-job training for a period of six months in private companies and parastatal bodies so as to enable them to gain work exposure and thereby facilitating their integration in the world of employment. This is to encourage on one hand employers to learn how to promote an appropriate working environment for persons with disabilities and on the other hand to provide these employees with adequate experience.

SAHRAWI ARAB DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC - DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

(No. B/854) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

whether, in regard to the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, he will state if consideration will be given to re-establishing diplomatic relationships therewith and, if not, why not.

Reply: Mauritius recognised the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic as a sovereign State on 01 July 1982 as one of the first decisions taken by the first Government of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. Mauritius established diplomatic relations with the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in 1983 and two Ambassadors from the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic have been accredited to Mauritius in October 2006 and January 2009 respectively.

On 08 January 2014, a Communiqué was issued by the office of the former Prime Minister, stating that Mauritius has decided to withdraw recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic as a State. Surprisingly there is no file either at the Prime Minister's Office or at my Ministry on the process of de-recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. Nor is there any record to indicate that the matter may have been raised in Cabinet. It is only by way of a Press Communiqué that the alleged decision was recorded. I am tabling a photocopy of this press Communiqué.

No official reason was given for the decision of withdrawal of recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in the said communiqué. However, in a reply given to Parliamentary Question B/133 in April 2014, on the withdrawal of recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that the decision to withdraw recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic as a State was motivated by the belief that this recognition does not help in the settlement of the issue of the self-determination of the Sahrawi people. The former Government was of the opinion that the decision of recognising a territory as a State ahead of the conclusion of a process under the aegis of the United Nations was not fully justified and therefore was deemed premature, and this, surprisingly, after more than 30 years of recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic as a State by Mauritius.

Since its coming into office, this Government has been studying the situation and the House may be pleased to note that Government has decided to consider anew the recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. An informed decision will be taken with regard to our stand on this issue.

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES - WATER TANKERS/LORRIES - PURCHASE

(No. B/855) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the purchase of water tankers/lorries by the Fire and Rescue Services, he will state if the inquiry to be initiated at his request has been carried out following allegations of malversation in the exercise thereof, and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and the actions taken in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed that the bid for the five water tenders was carried out following a procurement exercise carried out by the Central Procurement Board in 2010 and that no inquiry was warranted.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS – LOANS - MORATORIUM

(No. B/856) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the financial institutions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of individuals who are facing difficulties to effect the repayment of the loans/credits/ mortgages contracted therewith and who have requested a rescheduling thereof, since 2008 to date, indicating if, in the light thereof, he will consider introducing proposed amendments to the existing legislation in relation thereto to provide for the banks to allow a moratorium to those who are genuinely in need thereof.

(Vide reply to P.Q. No. B/825)

POINTE AUX SABLES – BUS SERVICE

(No. B/858) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to Pointe aux Sables and to the vicinity thereof, he will state if consideration is being given for a new bus route for the linking thereof with the main towns, including Rose Hill and Quatre Bornes.

Reply: I am informed that at present a bus route, Number 51 exists between Pointe aux Sables and Port Louis and is served by the Triolet Bus Service Ltd. However, there is no direct bus service between Pointe aux Sables and the towns of Rose-Hill and Quatre-Bornes. The passengers from Pointe aux Sables commuting to Rose-Hill and Quatre-Bornes have to

travel in two legs from Pointe aux Sables to GRNW and from GRNW to Rose-Hill or Quatre-Bornes.

I am further informed that on 22 July 2009, the Rose-Hill Transport Ltd (now RHT Bus Service Ltd) applied for a road service licence to operate buses along a new bus route from Rose-Hill (Place Cardinal Margéot) to Pointe aux Sables via Beau-Bassin, Coromandel, Camp Benoit, La Tour Koenig and Pointe aux Sables (Cité Débarcadère) and back.

Moreover, on 24 March 2010, the Triolet Bus Service Ltd also applied for a road service licence to operate buses along the same itinerary applied for by the Rose-Hill Transport Ltd as mentioned above; and from Pointe aux Sables to Ebène Cybercity via Cité Débarcadère, La Tour Koenig, Camp Benoit, Coromandel, Rose-Hill (Place Margéot), Rose-Hill Police Station, Sir Gaëtan Duval Ecole Hotelière, Ebène and back.

However, on 10 June 2011, both companies withdrew their applications. On 27 February 2015, the RHT Bus Service Ltd applied for an extension of route 174B (Coromandel Industrial Zone - Ebène Cybercity via Ebène Etoile, Beau Bassin, Rose-Hill (Place Margéot and back) up to Pointe aux Sables.

Moreover, on 10 April 2015, the Triolet Bus Service Ltd also applied for a road service licence to operate buses -

- (i) From Pointe aux Sables Terminus to Rose-Hill (Place Margéot) via Cité Débarcadère, La Tour Koenig, Camp Benoit, Coromandel, Beau Bassin and back, and
- (ii) From Pointe aux Sables Terminus to Réduit University of Mauritius via Cité Débarcadère, La Tour Koenig, Camp Benoit, Coromandel, Beau Bassin, Rose-Hill (Place Cardinal Margéot), Rose Hill Police Station, Sir Gaëtan Duval (Ecole Hotelière), Ebène-Cybercity and back.

The creation of a new route between Pointe aux Sables and Rose Hill is justified. However, NTA is looking into all implications, including related infrastructure and amenities before taking a decision to approve the applications for the new bus routes.

As regards the bus service between Quatre Bornes and Pointe aux Sables, I am informed that there is no immediate need for this service at this stage as the bulk of passengers for Pointe aux Sables commute mainly towards Rose Hill. However, this service may be considered at a later stage after an assessment of the situation.

GRANDE RIVIÈRE – DECONGESTION & BUS SHELTER

(No. B/859) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Decongestion Programme for the region of Grande Rivière, Port Louis, he will state –

(a) where matters stand as to the proposed refurbishment of the Old Bridge at Grand River North West, and

(b) if consideration will be given for the provision of an appropriate bus shelter for the Grande Rivière bus stop.

Reply: As the House is aware, my Ministry proposes to undertake a major Road Decongestion Programme for the whole island for an estimated cost of Rs15.5 billion as from July 2016. This programme includes phases 2 and 3 of the Ring Road as well as the A1-M1 road which will link Coromandel to Sorèze. The successful implementation of the A1-M1 road and its impact on decongestion in the region of Pointe aux Sables and GRNW will surely help us in deciding on the need to refurbish the old Bridge at GRNW.

In fact, the RDA has already conducted a preliminary study regarding the refurbishment project. However, the project is not included in the current budget of this financial year.

As regards the provision of a bus shelter for the bus stop, I have asked the RDA to do the needful.

GRNW – PAILLES ROAD - FOOTPATH

(No. B/860) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Pailles Road, in Grand River North West, he will state if consideration will be given for repair works to be carried out along same on the existing footpath and the provision of a new footpath after the Grand River North West Government School.

Reply: I am informed by the RDA that a site visit was carried out along the Pailles Road (B 77) in GRNW on 06 October 2015. Effectively, defects have been noted along the existing footpath of 150m in the vicinity of the GRNW Government School. Moreover, the drains under the footpath would need to be cleaned and rehabilitated. The RDA will undertake a detailed survey shortly to determine the scope of works to be carried out.

We are aware of the need to have a new footpath after the Grand River North West Government School for the safety of the inhabitants and especially the children attending the Government School. However, I am informed by the RDA that, at several locations, no adequate road reserve is available for the provision of a continuous footpath due to build up areas and private land. Further investigation would be required to determine the extent of land to be acquired.

Accordingly, funding will be secured in the next Financial Year for the works and the Ministry of Housing and Lands will be requested to initiate action for acquisition procedures if necessary.

SUBRAMANIEN BHARATI EYES HOSPITAL - AVASTIN TREATMENT

(No. B/861) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Avastin treatment, he will state the number of patients who have permanently lost their eyesight following treatment therewith at the Subramanien Bharati Eyes Hospital in the recent past, indicating in each case, the name of the doctor who had administered same thereto.

(Withdrawn)

SOUTH-EAST HIGHWAY PROJECT - CONTRACT

(No. B/862) Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the South-East Highway Project, he will state – (a) the name of the contractor therefor;

(b) the initial and final costs thereof, and

(c) if consideration will be given for the development of an alternate plan to connect the eastern part to the southern part of the island to ease out the traffic problems encountered by the road users therefor.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the RDA that, on 15 January 2004, the Chinese firm Beijing Chang Cheng Construction Corporation was awarded the contract for the South Eastern Highway Project.

As regards part (b) the contract was for an initial sum of Rs655,302,286.62. The project was completed on 27 August 2007 at a reduced cost of Rs499,575,276.22. I have to inform the House that there was a reduction in the cost due to the cancellation of part of the project following a Government decision in October 2005 for environmental reasons.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the alternative plan available is the upgrading of the existing coastal road B28 from Mahebourg to Bel Air over a length of 31km at the cost of Rs1.3 billion. The detailed engineering designs and the bidding documents have already been prepared by LuxConsult Ltd. which was appointed as Consultant on 12 January 2010 following a Request for Proposal which was launched on 20 July 2009.

The project is not budgeted for the current year, but the RDA is ready to implement it once appropriate funds have been secured.

MINISTRY OF YOUTH & SPORTS - NPS BUILDING - RENT

(No. B/863) Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the office space rented by his Ministry at the NPS Building, at Rose Hill, he will state the –

- (a) monthly rental fee thereof;
- (b) purposes therefor, and
- (c) activities being carried out thereat.

(Withdrawn)

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM - BENCHMARKING

(No. B/864) Mr D. Sesunkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the educational system in Mauritius, she will state the –

- (a) benchmarking used to compare the attainment in the Mauritian schools with that in the schools of comparable countries;
- (b) steps taken to ensure that -
 - (i) the standard thereof remains internationally competitive, and
 - (ii) parenting and life skills are reflected in the national curriculum from primary to secondary school levels, and
- (c) assessment made of the lack of teachers and of other skills therefor.

Reply: Mauritius has regularly been benchmarking itself against other middle-income countries so as to determine the efficacy of its educational system. In this context, Mauritius has participated, over the years, in a number of international and regional surveys in the primary and secondary sub-sectors of education, namely the Programme for International

Student Assessment (PISA), the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) surveys and the Programme D'Analyse de Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC).

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), spearheaded by the OECD, was administered among our secondary schools in 2009. This survey aims at presenting an overview of the performance on 15-year old students in Reading, Mathematics and Science and it has revealed that Mauritius did not compare too favourably with OECD average in Reading, Mathematical and Scientific literacy.

The mean score of Mauritius in Reading, which was the main domain of assessment, was 407 compared to OECD average of 493. PISA found that there was a high proportion of poor readers with low proficiency in reading literacy.

In the minor domain of mathematical literacy, the mean score point for Mauritius was 420 which was below the OECD average of 496. Students have, in fact, demonstrated weaknesses in reasoning and application of knowledge. No statistically significant gender difference was noted though.

As far as scientific literacy is concerned, again the mean score of Mauritius was 417 and below OECD average of 501. Half of the sample surveyed demonstrated competencies that enable them to participate actively in real life situations related to science and technology. A statistically significant difference was noted in favour of girls in this minor domain of assessment.

Mauritius also participates in the surveys conducted by SACMEQ, which aim at gathering information on the general conditions of schooling, the reading and mathematics achievement levels of Grade 6 learners and their teachers, and their knowledge of HIV and AIDS.

The findings of the last published SACMEQ Report of 2007 has shown that Mauritius has scored well in the provision of basic teaching and learning materials. However, the survey also showed that a percentage of pupils leave the primary cycle without having acquired basic literacy and numeracy.

In addition, Mauritius has in the past been closely associated with PASEC which is an international evaluation methodology based on the comparison of education system's performance in Francophone countries. Our last participation in PASEC was in 2008 where it

was revealed that on the African level, Mauritius ranked among the best in terms of literacy and numeracy skills.

Taking into consideration the outcome of the benchmarking exercises, the need has been felt to take action with a view to remaining internationally competitive and also addressing the under performance levels which require a multi-pronged approach in terms of provision of basic education, acquisition of skills, teaching and learning and remedial pedagogies, capacity building programmes for teachers and development of high order skills. This is addressed in the context of the Educational Reform Agenda, particularly under the Nine Year Schooling.

As regards the life skills and parental skills, the new NCF deals with a whole set of skills required by the learner especially in the context of education for sustainable development in its Nine Year Curriculum. The NCF 2015 thus recognizes and emphasizes the importance of imparting life skills to our young people, that is, imparting the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demand and challenges of everyday life. These skills will help generate and reinforce 21st century competencies and consolidate personal and social skills of all learners.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to highlight that an annual survey is carried out with a view to planning for staffing requirements for the following year. Shortages are generally met through redeployment of redundant teachers and the enlistment of the services of Supply Teachers or resource persons in specialised areas, such as Music, The Arts, Physical Education among others. In new areas such as Tourism and Hospitality and Marine Science, which are new subjects, we have recourse to additional educators.

It is worth highlighting that one of the thrust areas under the Nine Year Schooling is continuous professional development and capacity building for our staff. In this connection, the conduct of relevant training and refresher programmes by the MIE will be a regular feature. Partnerships between MIE and international institutions in Continuous Professional Programmes will be favoured.

COMMISSION FOR CONCILIATION & MEDIATION – CHAIRPERSON - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/865) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)
asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in

regard to the appointment of Mr I. S. as Chairperson of the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to –

- (a) the date of appointment thereof;
- (b) the terms and conditions of contract thereof, and
- (c) who was acting as Chairperson prior to his appointment and since when.

(Withdrawn)

NTA - SEMI-LOW FLOOR BUSES - PROCUREMENT

(No. B/866) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the procurement of 100 semi-low floor buses, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to –

- (a) who prepared the specifications therefor;
- (b) the date the bid therefor was launched and the dates on which bids were received, and
- (c) if the contract has been awarded and, if so, indicate -
 - (i) the name of the successful bidder therefor;
 - (ii) the contract value thereof, and
 - (iii) if any representation has been received following the award of the bid and, if so, indicate by whom and where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the National Transport Corporation as follows -

- (i) the specifications for the purchase of one hundred (100) fully built semi low floor buses were prepared by a technical team consisting of the Director, Mechanical Engineering of the Ministry, and the Acting Chief Engineer, National Transport Corporation, and
- (ii) The bidding document was duly vetted by the Central Procurement Board prior to issue.

As regards part (b) of the question, the National Transport Corporation invited bids on 03 July 2015 through an open international bidding exercise and the closing date for submission of bids was Thursday 20 August 2015.

The tender notice for the acquisition of one hundred (100) fully built semi low floor buses was published in the local newspapers and also posted on the Government Procurement website on 03 July 2015. Nine (09) bids were received at the CPB.

As regards part (c) of the question, the bids have been evaluated by a technical team at the Central Procurement Board and the NTC was informed on 06 October 2015 that the lowest evaluated and substantially responsive bidder is ABC Coach Works Ltd.

In accordance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act 2006, the notification of award was sent to both the successful and unsuccessful bidders.

One challenge was received from Baoding Changan Bus Manufacturing Co. Ltd. within the prescribed delay of seven days. The challenge was examined and it was noted that it was not submitted on the prescribed form and the grounds for challenges were not specified. Moreover, the bidder failed to submit the Bid Security in the sum of Rs2.4 m. as required in the bidding document. The aggrieved bidder was informed accordingly.

I am also informed that according to the Bid Document, Bidders were requested to quote prices, Delivery Duty paid, inclusive of all applicable duties, charges and VAT in Mauritian Rupees. Baoding Changan Bus Manufacturing Co. Ltd. did not submit his quotation in Mauritian Rupees. Instead it quoted only the CIF in US Dollars. Thus, at the very outset of the exercise, the Company was found to be non-compliant.

Consequently, a Letter of Award was issued to the successful bidder, ABC Coach Works Ltd on Tuesday 20 October 2015, for the acquisition of 100 semi low-floor buses by the NTC for the sum of Rs406,266,240 inclusive of VAT, maintenance charges and a provisional sum of Rs25 m.

PUBLIC HOSPITALS, DISPENSARIES & MEDICLINICS – NATIONAL IDENTITY CARD

(No. B/867) Dr Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the public hospitals, dispensaries and mediclinics, he will state if consideration is being given for the mandatory requirement for the patients attending thereto to present their respective National Identity Card before health services are dispensed thereto, failing which, the said services will be denied thereto and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) rationale therefor, and
- (b) expected date of coming into effect thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE – MEDICAL HEALTH
OFFICERS - CONTRACT**

(No. B/868) Dr Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to employment of doctors on a contractual basis as Medical Health Officers, Senior Medical Health Officers, Specialists, Senior Specialists and Advisers respectively, he will state the number thereof who are presently in post and are above 65 years of age in each category.

(Withdrawn)

CPE EXAMINATION 2015 - COMPLAINTS

(No. B/869) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the Certificate of Primary Education Examinations 2015, she will state the number of complaints received in relation thereto concerning ambiguous questions set in the papers, indicating the actions being taken to ensure that the students who sat therefor are not unfairly or unjustly penalised as a result thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate that, as at to date, seven complaints emanating from parents, one socio-cultural association and a group of educators have been received in respect of the English, Science, Arabic, Urdu and Tamil Papers for the Certificate of Primary Education Examinations 2015.

However, according to the MES, the papers carried no error. The complaints received pertained firstly to the use of certain specific words in the English, Arabic, Tamil and Urdu Papers and secondly on the possibility of having an alternative answer to one Multiple Choice Question in the Science Paper.

I wish also to highlight that as part of the process of marking of CPE Examination scripts, the MES annually conducts a rigorous and extensive sampling exercise prior to the marking exercise with a view to assessing how candidates have responded to the different questions. It is only after this sampling exercise has been completed that the marking scheme is finalised. Representations and comments received are also taken into account during this exercise.

Following the above exercise, I am informed by the MES that for the English Examination Paper, the composition topic has been understood by the great majority of candidates. Regarding the two questions in the Science Paper, correct answer has been

obtained by the majority of candidates and no particular problem has been reported. As for the Arabic Paper, the Question Paper was based on a prototype and the level of the paper was comparable to other Asian Languages. The same applies for the Tamil Paper where all words used were within the level of the 6th Standard students. The MES has confirmed that there was no error, no ambiguity and no question set out in the syllabus for any subject.

I wish to highlight that the complainants have made requests to the MES to exercise some flexibility during marking of these Papers owing to the problems raised such that the candidates are not penalised.

MES will stick to the normal procedure with regard to sampling and marking for all subjects examined.

NINE YEAR SCHOOLING REFORM PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/870) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the Nine Year Schooling, she will state if prior consultations were held with the unions in the private and public school sectors in relation to the implementation thereof, and, if not, why not.

Reply: The reply is in the affirmative.

Further to the endorsement of the draft Concept Paper on the Nine-Year basic continuous schooling (NYS) by Cabinet in May 2015, my Ministry engaged in consultations with a wide cross-section of stakeholders of the Education sector on the policy orientations of the NYS Reform Project and its eventual implementation. This included Unions of Primary and Secondary sub-sectors (public and private), the Bureau Education Catholique (BEC), the PTAs, Educators (Std IV), the Federation of Managers, Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) and its Education Commission, and even my colleagues Members of Parliament and the Press; so that information on the NYS Project could be diffused to the public at large.

I must emphasise that I personally made it a point to chair the Consultative sessions with them and we received a number of live suggestions and comments that are being taken on board.

It has been gathered that stakeholders are generally agreeable on the policy guidelines of the NYS Project and that they really want it to see the light of the day.

In fact, I would like to add that a striking feature of the outcome of the consultative process is the encouragement which I have received to pursue this Reform Project which is above all in the interest of the child – it is a golden opportunity to seize in the wake of general acceptability on the policy guidelines.

This major Reform Project has the blessings of this Government which will provide the necessary resources and support to ensure its successful implementation.

The House may wish also to note that my Ministry is shortly coming up with a detailed Communication Strategy with a view to further sensitising the public in general on the implementation modalities of the NYS Reform Project.

VACOAS POPULAR MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY – BOARD MEMBERS

(No. B/871) Mr A. Aliphon (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the Vacoas Popular Multipurpose Cooperative Society, he will state where matters stand as to the holding of an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting thereof to elect nine members to sit on the Board thereof to replace the caretaker Board which is holding office since January this year, following the press conference held jointly by representatives thereof and his good self.

Reply: I am informed that a “Caretaker Board” was appointed by the Registrar of Cooperative Societies on 12 January 2015. The Board had convened an AGM (Annual General Meeting) and a SGM (Special General Meeting) on 11 July 2015 to decide on the liquidation of the society. The AGM did not agree to the proposal.

During the same AGM, member proposed the election of 9 (nine) Directors though the item was not on the Agenda. The advice of the SLO (State Law Office) was sought on the election of the 9 (nine) Directors, being given that a “Caretaker Board” was already appointed by the Registrar. The SLO has advised that the election was illegal.

Another SGM was held on 24 October 2015 wherein it was decided that the injunction entered in the Supreme Court by members of the society would be withdrawn. However, as at today, seven (7) members have maintained their injunction in the Supreme Court.

I have been advised by the SLO that the Caretaker Board cannot initiate any action regarding the assets of the society in view of the injunction in the Supreme Court.

**INTERNATIONAL PARALYMPICS COMMITTEE GRAND PRIX 2015 –
Ms N. A. – GOLD MEDAL**

(No. B/872) Mr A. Aliphon (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Ms N. A. who won a gold medal in the 1500 m on Wheelchair Competition at the International Paralympics Committee Grand Prix, in Italy, in June 2015, he will state if his Ministry has offered/will offer thereto -

- (a) any monetary rewards as a result thereof, as per established practice in respect of Mauritian gold medalists at similar high level competitions and, if not, why not and
- (b) a high level sport scholarship, in view of her high performance level and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the High Level Sports Unit of my Ministry that it is the established practice for the National Sports Federations to submit a request along with the official technical result recorded by any medallist.

As at date no request has been received at the level of the High Level Sports unit from the Physically Handicapped Persons Sports Federation in respect of the performance of Ms N. A. in spite of the Federation being requested to do so since 22 September 2015.

Once all the relevant information is obtained she will be rewarded accordingly.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is to be noted that handisport athletes started to benefit from high level scholarships as from January this year. These athletes were listed on the basis on their performances. The High Level Sports Unit will only decide on the eligibility of Ms N. A. for a High Level Sports Scholarship once the minima of Handisports are finalised.

In fact, the unit is presently working in collaboration with the four Handisports Federations to determine the minima which is indeed a very complex exercise in view of the specificities of Handisports.

CHAMAREL ROAD – REPAIRS & CAR RALLIES

(No. B/873) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Chamarel Road, at the level of Case Noyale to that of Chamarel, he will state if his Ministry is in presence of any complaint regarding the –

- (a) bad state thereof and if so, indicate if a study will be carried out to assess the state thereof and take remedial actions in relation thereto, and

- (b) holding of car rallies along same putting at risk the security of other users thereof and, if so, indicate the remedial measures that will be taken in relation thereto, if any.

Reply: I am informed that, on 01 September 2015, the Road Development Authority received a complaint from the District Council of Black River regarding the bad state of the Baie du Cap – Chamarel – Case Noyale Road (B104) as follows -

- (i) presence of cracks at the dangerous bends and in the vicinity of traffic lights along the B104, and
- (ii) collapse of the road edge of the B104 near *Rhumerie de Chamarel*.

Consequently, the RDA carried out a survey in mid-September 2015 and dangerous bends between the traffic signals over a stretch of approximately 365m were identified as being severely damaged due to a problem of edge failure resulting from poor drainage and the specific topography of the region as an immediate remedial measure, the road was converted into a single-lane traffic with the use of traffic lights for the safety of road users and to avoid further damages to the road structure.

I am further informed that the RDA is envisaging to restore the two way traffic along the section of the road and the works would involve specialized techniques such as micropiling, reinforced retaining wall and geonailing. The RDA is proposing to invite bids on a “design and build” basis for the damaged road section in the next financial year. The estimated cost of the project is Rs50 m.

Concerning the collapse of the road edge of B104 Road near Rhumerie de Chamarel, a survey was carried out by the RDA on 15 September 2015 which revealed that the damage to the road edge is being caused by upheaval of the road structure by tree roots. The RDA is proposing to carry out repair works shortly.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit that no complaint has been officially received recently in respect of rallies along the Chamarel Case Noyale Road. However, I have to inform the House that the whole issue of car rallies will be looked into by my Ministry in consultation with all stakeholders, that is, the TMRSU, the Police Department and Organisers of Rallies. The ideal solution will be to come up with a Racing Course.

YVES CANTIN COMMUNITY HOSPITAL - PROJECTS EARMARKED

(No. B/874) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Yves Cantin Community Hospital, he will state –

- (a) if it is in fact a dispensary, a mediclinic or a hospital, and
- (b) the projects earmarked for implementation thereat, if any.

(Withdrawn)

ALFRED GELLE STREET, CITÉ MARTIAL - SEWERAGE CONNECTION

(No. B/875) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the proposed sewerage connection of house numbers 20 to 26, at the Alfred Gellé Street, in Cité Martial, Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the expected start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/251. According to the Wastewater Management Authority, these houses form part of the rehabilitation of CHA estates Phase IV project which covers six CHA estates, including Cité Martial.

The feasibility study and detailed design have been completed and funding for the works have been provided in the 2017/2018 budget.

However, recurrent sanitation problems have been reported at the houses referred to in the Question. The Wastewater Management Authority proposes to carry out urgent works within this financial year to rehabilitate the sewer network along that street.

BASSIN BLANC RESERVOIR - TOURISTIC ATTRACTION

(No. A/22) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Bassin Blanc Reservoir, he will state if consideration will be given for the –

- (a) transformation thereof into a touristic attraction;
- (b) creation of a hiking trail thereat, and
- (c) construction of food outlets to cater for the tourists/visitors attending thereat and as a means of providing employment to the local inhabitants.

Reply: In March 2007, Government has compulsorily acquired under the Land Acquisition Act a portion of land at Bassin Blanc of an extent of 149 Ha 600 m² from Heirs of Abdool Rajack Goburdhun.

The main purpose of acquiring the land at Bassin Blanc was to incorporate this area to the Black River Gorges National Park and to protect its biodiversity as the area is one of the most important remaining area for native Mauritian birds. The land is a declared mountain reserve under the Forest and Reserves Act.

The acquisition was made by the Ministry of Housing and Lands following assessment made by the Director, Valuation and Real Estate Consultancy Services. An offer of compensation as determined by the Valuation Department was accordingly made to the Heirs Abdool Rajack Goburdhun who subsequently made counter claims per arpent for biodiversity over and above their claim for the land acquired. The case is at present before the Board of Assessment.

As the legal issue has not been settled yet, the National Parks and Conservation Service has no project for Bassin Blanc at this stage.

CHAMOUNY - RIVER RAFIA - FLOOD

(No. A/23) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the River Rafia in the region of Chamouny and to the damages caused to a certain number of houses and a poultry during the last floods in the vicinity thereof, he will state -

- (a) if a survey has been carried out in relation thereto and, if so, indicate the findings thereof, and
- (b) remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto, if any, indicating the –
 - (i) cost implications thereof, and
 - (ii) time frame set for the implementation thereof.

Reply: The Forestry Service of my Ministry which is responsible for the management of rivers has not received any complaint with regard to damages due to flood caused by River Rafia in the region of Chamouny. Consequently, no survey has been carried out to assess the extent of damages.

However, the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) which operates under the aegis of my Ministry carried out an island wide survey on damages caused

by the torrential rainfall of 08 and 09 March 2015 to the crop and livestock sector. No major damages were noted at Chamouny except for a poultry farm which was severely affected. It was established that flood water coming from the upper neighbourhood sugarcane fields had submerged the field premises and the water had reached a level of more than one meter high inside the two poultry sheds. All the openings and the poultry equipment were damaged. 9000 broilers of about 40 days' old were drowned.

Following the flood, the farmer has taken precautionary measures by rehabilitating existing drains and digging new canals in order to divert flooding water towards the river. The farmer has also constructed a concrete wall on his farm as a barrier against flood.

The farmer applied to my Ministry for a grant of Rs100,000 to purchase new farm equipment. This grant has been approved by the Food Security Fund and will be disbursed shortly.

RIVIERE DES ANGUILES – MARKET – STALLS ALLOCATION

(No. A/24) Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the new market at Rivière des Anguilles, he will table the names and respective address of the individuals to whom the stalls found thereat have been allocated, indicating the respective stall number and the fees payable therefor in each case.

Reply: The District Council of Savanne which has been consulted, has provided the information requested for.

I am arranging for the information to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.