



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2019

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(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo, GCSK, SC	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha, GCSK	Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
Hon. Anil Kumarsingh Gayan, SC	Minister of Tourism
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Minister of Health and Quality of Life
Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun	Minister of Arts and Culture
Hon. Marie Joseph Noël Etienne Ghislain Sinatambou	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Maneesh Gobin	Attorney General, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms
Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint	Minister of Youth and Sports

Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, MSK	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Premdut Koonjoo	Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training
Hon. Purmanund Jhugroo	Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Marie Cyril Eddy Boissézon	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Dharmendar Sesungkur	Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 32 of 2019

Sitting of 24 September 2019

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Professional Town Planners' Council Bill (No. XXXI of 2019). (In Original)

B. Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues

(a) The Annual Report of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the year ended December 2015. (In Original)

(b) The Annual Report of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the period January 2016 to June 2017. (In Original)

C. Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands

Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare

The Annual Reports of the Outer Islands Development Corporation for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012.

D. Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection

The Consumer Protection (Scrap Metal) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 151 of 2019)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – VICTIMS – REPORTED CASES

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to intimate partner violence in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues, she will state –

- (a) in the five cases thereof which have led to the death of the victims, since May 2019 to date, whether these instances of domestic violence had previously been reported or were known to the authorities and, if so, indicate the actions taken in relation thereto, if any, that could have prevented the death of the victims, and
- (b) the number of cases of physical assault reported to the authorities, since 01 January to 31 August 2019, indicating the number of arrests effected pursuant to section 11A(3)(a) of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Madam Speaker, allow me at the very outset to extend my deepest sympathy to the bereaved families of those victims who lost their lives in such tragic circumstances in Mauritius and Rodrigues. Domestic violence is a serious issue not only in the Republic of Mauritius but worldwide. We are not insensitive to this issue. We are all shocked and deeply concerned by what happened over the past months.

It is unfortunate that despite all efforts to address domestic violence in our society, we are still witnessing such tragic cases. Despite that amendments were brought to the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, including tougher penalties, women are still being victims of domestic violence. It is not only a legal issue. It is a societal problem which needs to be addressed collectively.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I would like to inform the House that the five cases in Mauritius and Rodrigues were not known to my Ministry. I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that these five cases were also not reported to the Police.

Insofar as part (b) of the question is concerned, I would like to inform the House that for all cases reported at my Ministry, immediate assistance and support are provided to victims and their children. Through the six Family Support Bureaux, a holistic service is

provided to victims of domestic violence and their children. Victims are also assisted in the drafting of their affidavits prior to making application for Court Orders under the Protection from Domestic Violence Act. Victims are also provided legal advice and legal assistance for Court cases.

This year itself, my Ministry launched the Integrated Support Centre. Through the use of technology, Hotline 139 for domestic violence is now being attended through four parallel digital phone lines. This system enables the Ministry to receive more calls on domestic violence related cases. The system is also connected to the Domestic Violence Information System, which is a computerised platform for monitoring of cases of domestic violence.

Ongoing public awareness campaigns are conducted across the island to sensitise the public at large on our services, the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, and the consequences of domestic violence, amongst others. My Ministry also makes use of the *Caravane de Proximité* of the National Women's Council so as to reach people in remote areas also, Madam Speaker. From 2015 to July 2019, 23,175 people were reached through 535 campaigns by the Ministry.

Concurrently, awareness campaigns are also conducted by the Mauritius Police Force. From 2015 to date, 120,000 people were sensitised through 1,867 campaigns. Awareness campaigns are also conducted in schools where 76,191 children were targeted.

While addressing domestic violence, it is crucial to work with perpetrators in specific programmes to enable them to end the cycle of violence. Through the UNDP, my Ministry has received the services of a Consultant for the programme. In last November, consultations were made both in Mauritius and Rodrigues. In March this year, training of 20 and 18 facilitators were conducted in Mauritius and Rodrigues respectively.

Following a study to make "A Quantitative Assessment of Intimate Partner Violence and its Associated Economic Costs in Mauritius", the Ministry is finalising a National Action Plan to address Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

The National Action Plan to address IPV is another step in the fight to protect survivors. The Action Plan will act as a roadmap in the fight against intimate partner violence for the next three years. The main axes of the Action Plan are Legislation, Primary Prevention, Capacity Building and Service Delivery and what is also important, Madam Speaker, Monitoring and Evaluation.

In view of enhancing service delivery, through a holistic approach, discussions are under way for the collaboration with the Police Family Protection Unit and the Ministry. This initiative will ensure prompt intervention in cases of domestic violence by Police Officers and Family Welfare and Protection Officers who will be responsible for providing psychosocial support to victims of domestic violence and will also be engaged in the rehabilitation of perpetrators of domestic violence.

A Domestic Violence Review Committee will be set up to identify any shortcomings from stakeholders while addressing cases of domestic violence. Stakeholders will be called upon to attend the Committees following serious cases of domestic violence, including homicide to address the lacunas and propose immediate actions.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 01 January to 31 August 2019, 1,790 cases of physical assault were reported and 996 persons were arrested.

Mr X. L. Duval: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me also offer my sincere condolences at the tragic death of these mothers. In fact, I think, for the whole nation, words cannot express our sorrow, Madam Speaker. First thing, major discrepancy from my information and what the hon. Minister has just said. My information, I have spoken to the families of the victims and three of the families say clearly that reports had been made to the Police, statements given to the Police a few days or weeks before the death, and she is saying, Madam Speaker, that reports have not been made to the Police. Has the hon. Minister spoken to the families concerned?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, following the three cases, I immediately gave instructions to the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry to offer all our support to the bereaved family, be it the sisters, the next to kin and also, more importantly, the children. I have even asked the Ministry to see to it that we send our Senior Psychologists to offer their support to the victims.

Mr X. L. Duval: So, I take it that you have not spoken to any of the families directly yourself. Now, I have spoken to the family of Chansella Perrine in Rodrigues, the family of Stéphanie Ménès in Briquetterie and the family of Joyce Revat. Now, the family of Stéphanie Ménès said that on 31 August, this lady went to the Police Station, I presume in Abercrombie, to give a statement. Will you please ensure, hon. Minister, that there is no cover-up anywhere in this issue and find out perhaps, yourself, personally - because there are

five deaths in a few months and you have not met any of the ladies - whether, in fact, the Police were or were not made aware of these cases of domestic violence?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, for me, personally, and for our Government, one case of domestic violence is one case too many. This is why since we took Government in 2014, we have brought a series of measures to address this serious concern. Domestic violence is not only the concern of the Government; it is not only the concern of the Opposition. It is the concern of the whole population. *C'est un problème de société.* And I must say that - I have recently read an article where mention has been made that Germany is one of the countries top in line where...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has put a question! I have the right to answer!

...victims are losing their lives, followed by other countries. I am not saying that this is something which is happening in other countries too and that we must not address this issue. I am saying that if you see the commitment of the Government since 2014, one will realise that we are taking this issue very seriously. Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying that I have not met the family. Of course, we are all with the family, we are all shocked by this tragedy, but I do not think meeting the family will solve the problem. What is more important is providing immediate support to the family, which is very much our concern, and this is what we have been doing since we came to know of the three cases which have taken place in Mauritius.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, meeting the families by the hon. Minister would have given much needed support to these orphans and to these families, and it is a shame that she has been too busy to do so.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask this very cold-hearted Government why none of these victims felt it necessary, useful to call the 139 toll-free number on domestic violence?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, this issue of domestic violence is not a political issue and one must not try to do politics with this. It is a very serious concern; I am with the families. As I have said, all support has been given to the families, and I can say that since we came to know of the passing away of the four women in Mauritius, I have everyday been phoning my Permanent Secretary to see to it that all assistance is being given to the families on a daily basis.

So, coming here to say that I am cold-hearted is not proper at all, hon. Leader of the Opposition. We are doing our work; you are doing yours. So, do not come here to say that I am cold-hearted. I will never accept this.

Mr X. L. Duval: My question was: Did any of these ladies, before being killed, find it useful to call 139? That is my question.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, as I have said, the cases have never been reported to our Ministry. Have the cases been reported, Madam Speaker, immediate actions would have been taken for the victims of domestic violence.

Now, if someone calls on hotline 139 - it is a 24/7 assistance provided - we make an immediate assessment of the case. If need be, we have a site visit. If the person cannot come to our office, we visit the person, we assist the victims in drafting the affidavits to enter cases in Court, we give psychological counselling, legal advice and also legal representations in Court free of charge, and referral to shelters if the victim cannot continue staying in the matrimonial home. So, we see to it that alternative accommodations are provided to the victims. We are doing our level best to tackle this problem of domestic violence, but as I have said, this is *un problème de société*, Madam Speaker.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, self-satisfaction after the death of five persons, *n'est pas de mise*. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is not true that, generally, the population is totally unaware of this number 139 and that the problem is that it exists, there is a call centre, there is one person answering after hours there - only one answering this number - and even that, the people of Mauritius just are not aware of this number 139 and that she should immediately start a sensitisation campaign - she should have started some time ago - to get this number known on private radio, on MBC, etc.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, as I have said, sensitisation campaigns have not started after the death of those ladies. We are having sensitisation campaigns since the beginning of 2015. We are having sensitisation campaigns, as I have said, in all the community centres, social welfare centres, women centres. We are having talks on the radio on a regular basis. We are trying to reach people in the remote areas also. We have the Hotline; we have come up with a new Integrated Support Centre at Phoenix to provide assistance to victims. It is operational 24/7, and we can now answer up to 30 calls at the same time. Through this centre, we can immediately liaise with the Police, hospitals, shelters, to provide support to victims. But the more ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, let me finish.

Mr X. L. Duval: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. I have been listening with a lot of patience. I ask short questions and I get long answers, totally outside of the question that I ask.

Firstly, there is the question that I asked before, whether they had called the 139, and I get a huge answer. Just now, I asked what is the sensitisation campaign, and I get totally irrelevant answers. The women of Mauritius are listening, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have asked your question, the hon. Minister is trying her best to provide as much information as possible, and I believe that the information she is providing will enable you to ask further questions.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, with due respect, she should answer the information that I am asking, not what is in her head.

Madam Speaker: But she has to be relevant at the same time, I concede.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition just mentioned that there is one integrated officer after hours. True it is, but give me some time ...

(Interruptions)

No, I agree there is only one officer, but we are in the process of recruiting. We cannot do ...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have put a very...

Madam Speaker: Do not talk directly to the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: No, Madam Speaker, the issue of domestic violence is very serious issue. So, we, on this side of the House, Madam Speaker, are doing our level best to tackle this. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has said that there is only one officer at night. True it is, but, during the day, there are four officers. There is one officer at night, but we are also working, we have already started the exercise; we are in the process of recruiting integrated support officers to ensure that the centre is open even at night. It is at the level of the Public Service Commission. So, the needful is being done, Madam Speaker.

Mr X. L. Duval: I suggest you recruit some advisers to answer the phone. That does not fall under the PSC. Madam Speaker, this centre was opened by my colleague in 2016, and nearly four years later we still have one person answering, at night, when all the calls come. The calls do not come during the day. The calls would come after hours and during weekends. There is hardly anybody answering there, and it is generally unknown to the public. If I were in the shoes of the Minister, Madam Speaker, I will ask her again to immediately start a sensitisation campaign on this number because, believe me, nobody or hardly anybody is aware of the existence of that 139 toll-free number.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, let me correct the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The Integrated Support Centre was launched only in March this year, not in 2016. Not in 2016! I disagree with this. So, coming here to say that is not correct at all.

Madam Speaker, one must understand that the problem of domestic violence is very serious. First of all, the victim must come forward and report. This is very important. We have put in place a series of measures. We have put in place a proper mechanism to address this problem of domestic violence, but you will agree with me, Madam Speaker, the victim must come forward and report the matter. If, in spite of the fact that we have toughened the law, in spite the fact that we have set up an Integrated Support Centre, in spite of the fact that we have come forward with a new measure, the Perpetrators Rehabilitation Programme, in spite of the fact that we are having sensitisation campaigns across the island, the victim decides not to come forward, we will never be able to help the victim. This is one.

Second, as an Attorney myself, I have seen cases where Protection Orders are issued to the victims. Then, during the course of the proceedings, the victims decide not to proceed with the case. This is the second problem we are having. Third, if an Interim Protection Order is issued, the victim must see to it that the perpetrator does not come close to her. So, there are many things which come in when we talk about domestic violence.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the hotline - I can table - was inaugurated on November 2016 and the Integrated Support Centre exists only in name, even today, and I can prove it.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, we understand that concerning the inquiry of the terrible death of Mrs Shabneez Mohammed, the DPP is not happy with the Police inquiry, which is not surprising. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether her Ministry has made any complaint to the IPCC, which also has a *droit de*

regard in this matter; whether she has gone, or her Permanent Secretary, who she phones everyday, has gone to the IPCC to make a formal complaint there?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Does the hon. Leader of the Opposition have a problem if I contact my Permanent Secretary everyday? So, there is no need for him to comment on this issue.

Madam Speaker, the hotline, as I have said, is free of charge. The hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying that the Director of Public Prosecutions is not happy with the outcome of the Police. I am not aware of this. So,...

(Interruptions)

Yes, rightly so! How do we know that the DPP is not happy? The DPP has not spoken to me...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, there is an inquiry which is ongoing. So, we will have to wait for the outcome of the inquiry. I am sure, I repeat it, that if there is any fault on the part of the Police, appropriate actions will be taken. We have already informed the public about this particular issue.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, as for the DPP, it was in the Press. So, I suggest that she should, maybe, have some time to read, at least, relevant articles in the Press. I understand, Madam Speaker, that no one has gone to the Independent Police Complaints Commission to ask them to look at it. This is a clear case of complaint against Police, inaction against Police.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, as I have said, Madam Speaker, there is an inquiry which is ongoing; let us wait for the outcome. So, necessary actions will be taken. We are a reliable Government; we are very serious in addressing the problem of domestic violence. I am sure the hon. Prime Minister will take appropriate actions when needful will have to be done.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, time is running out for the Government. Madam Speaker, November 2017, two years ago, the Minister, in a PNQ that I set, said that an Action Plan is forthcoming soon. Two years later, another PNQ, and she tells us, again, that the Action Plan is coming soon. When is soon now?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, as I have said, Madam Speaker, even though the Action Plan is not there, this does not mean that actions have not started. We have already started implementing some new measures. As I have said, we have come up with the Perpetrators' Rehabilitation Programme, we are trying to reach women in the remote areas; we have toughened the law. I have started thinking, Madam Speaker, if it is not time to start having electronic bracelets. Because I have seen they have started implementing this in other countries. So, we are thinking of this measure. Why not could perpetrators who have committed domestic violence start having the electronic bracelets? So, we are thinking of new measures, but, as I have said, all new measures are very much welcome.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister is not even aware that the Police turned down the use of electronic bracelets many years ago. She should at least be aware of that. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister where is the National Observatory on Domestic Violence. She announced, again, in the PNQ and after, that there will be a National Observatory on Domestic Violence. It is nowhere to be seen.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to the Action Plan, I must say it has taken some time because we have to align it with the SADC framework. This is also very important. It should be aligned with the SADC framework. Now, with regard to the Observatory, we are working on it.

Mr X. L. Duval: You made so many announcements all through the years, and no action has been done. Where is the National Committee on causes of domestic violence? Where is the report of that National Committee which you, yourself, announced?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: For the National Observatory on parental matters, it is not fully operational, but we have started it in 2018, Madam Speaker.

Mr X. L. Duval: Again, just words, no action. Madam Speaker, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), recommends that there be constant monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of Government services. Now, this is what we are complaining here. It is that there is no effectiveness in what is being done by the Police, the Family Service Unit, the Bureaux, etc. When? Because that is in the Convention of CEDAW. When has the Ministry effected a complete monitoring of its services, hopefully independently, to back what you are saying, that you are so concerned about the domestic violence?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, monitoring and evaluation was never there. In the past, there has never been monitoring and evaluation. Hon. Mrs Perraud was at the Ministry for two years. She should have started monitoring and...

(Interruptions)

What shame? We are all, Madam...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: What shame?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Order please! Please resume your seat! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have got only five minutes to go. So, it is better for you to allow the hon. Minister to reply. Yes, hon. Minister!

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, it is not a question of shame. Hon. Mrs Perraud has been at the level of the Ministry for two years. I also...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mrs Perraud, please! You are losing the time of the hon. Leader of the Opposition! You have now got only three minutes to go! Yes, finish your reply! Complete your reply!

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, I am at the level of the Ministry for almost the same period, two years. So, I say it again, Madam Speaker, I have done my level best to address the issue of domestic violence. We are having management meeting every week and the issue of domestic violence is one of the items on the agenda, every week. I agree it is not an easy task. It is a daunting task, because it is, as I have said, a societal problem. We cannot address it by amending laws only. We have to work with the community at large. There is need to bring change in the mindset of people also, of the victims. They need to come forward and

report. We need to have changes in the mindset of the perpetrators also. They should understand that violence will lead nowhere. We need to have changes in the mindset of the society also. We need to see how we grow up our girls and boys. There should not be any difference. So, there is a lot of work to be done, Madam Speaker. I must say that we will only be able to succeed if we work collectively - the Government, the private sector, the NGOs and the community at large.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, when hon. Mrs Perraud was Minister, there was a Report of the National Coalition against Domestic Violence - and I do not want any *bla-bla-bla*; just answer the question - and it recommended that financial compensation be given to victims of domestic violence, paid not by the State, paid by the perpetrators. What has happened to that recommendation? Can the hon. Minister be precise and tell me what has happened to that particular recommendation?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, this is a policy decision, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Of course, it is a policy decision. So, we cannot come up with any measure which will not bring its fruits.

(Interruptions)

Yes, exactly! You should have implemented this.

Mr X. L. Duval: I will tell why. Because we left a few months after. Because of the Prosecution Commission...

(Interruptions)

... and it was a few months after, and you have done nothing since that time...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr X. L. Duval: ...only wanted to pass the Prosecution Commission. Let me say it...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, last question!

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: I will! You want me to say? I will tell you why we left. I can go into a lot of details. Madam Speaker, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister says she wants to *conscientiser les personnes*. Nobody - unless I ask this question - is aware of the statistics on domestic violence because it is not reported in the Crime Statistics. So, let us end on a positive note. I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister - and I have a further question - will she ensure that, henceforth, the National Crime Statistics be comprised in a separate section, Domestic Violence, because, to me, it is one of the major scourges of our society?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, we will consider, Madam Speaker. Of course, all constructive criticisms, all good suggestions will be taken onboard. Madam Speaker, as I have said, since we took office in 2014, we have brought a series of measures but, in spite of all the measures, we are seeing that women are losing their lives when we talk about domestic violence. So, we need to think of new measures which can be implemented but, at the same time, I must say that we need to continue the sensitisation campaigns, try to reach as many people as we can. It is only by awareness campaigns that we will be able to reach many people.

Madam Speaker: Okay, time is over!

Hon. Members, I have...

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Hon. Members, I have an announcement to make. At the sitting of Tuesday last...

(Interruptions)

Can I ask for some silence in the House, please?

ANNOUNCEMENT

PQ B/838 – POINT OF ORDER

At the sitting of Tuesday last, in the course of exchanges in connection with Parliamentary Question B/838, the hon. Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development rose on a point of order, drawing my attention to the fact that the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, hon. Shakeel Mohamed, uttered the word ‘cover-up’ to his address.

The hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East admitted having uttered the said word, but denied having addressed same to the hon. Minister, explaining that

he stated ‘cover-up’ by the Ministry. I have checked the footage and I have found that the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East did, in fact, utter the words ‘you’ twice when uttering the word ‘cover-up’. I am satisfied that the hon. Member was referring to the hon. Minister when addressing the word ‘cover-up’.

I, therefore, request the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East to withdraw the word ‘cover-up’, addressed to the hon. Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development.

Mr Mohamed: I withdraw the part where I said it was him when, in fact, it should have been his Ministry. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Thank you for withdrawing. Hon. Uteem, your question to the hon. Prime Minister!

MAURITIUS DUTY FREE PARADISE CO. LTD – FEES & COMMISSIONS - INQUIRY

(No. B/874) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to if there have been allegations of payment of fees and commissions in connection with contracts for the supply of goods thereto, since 2012 to date and, if so, indicate if inquiries have been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the House will appreciate that no information may be disclosed when a Police inquiry or an investigation by the Independent Commission Against Corruption is ongoing as this may cause prejudice to the inquiry.

Notwithstanding this, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply made on 05 March 2015 by the former Prime Minister to a Private Notice Question from hon. Bérenger, the then Leader of the Opposition.

It is pertinent to remind the House of the following salient points of that reply of the former Prime Minister in regard to malpractices and irregularities in the allocation of contracts for the supply of goods to the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd –

- (i) the malpractices and wrongdoings at the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd had been reported to the Police in January 2013, but nothing had been done by the previous regime, which turned a blind eye to the malpractices;
- (ii) the then Prime Minister had removed the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd from the portfolio of the Ministry of Finance and brought it under his aegis;
- (iii) this Government reviewed the activities of the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd and also the two major contracts which were signed with a foreign supplier, Dufry AG;
- (iv) in the context of that review exercise and following information provided by Mr D. Gooljaury, meetings were held with representatives of Dufry AG for them to disclose all documents to the Government of Mauritius and to elucidate the structure and the mechanism for the payment of commissions to another company called Frydu. However, they could not provide same;
- (v) subsequently, Dufry Ltd in Switzerland provided to Government a number of documents, which revealed the following -
 - (a) with regard to the contract between the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd and its supplier, Dufry Travel Retail AG, it had come to light that substantial commissions have been paid by Dufry in Switzerland to a company called Frydu, which has been set up in Switzerland as recipient of commissions of 4.2% of the net sales of the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd;
 - (b) Frydu was initially 50% owned by Nandane Soornack and D. Gooljaury, each. A Swiss Bank account with VP Bank in Zurich was opened for Frydu to receive commissions on the supply contract with the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd as follows –
 - on 24 October 2012, EUR 431,000
 - on 02 May 2013, EUR 211,351
 - on 21 October 2013, EUR 464,179
 - (c) as at 21 October 2013, commissions paid on the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd supply contract amounted to EUR 1,106,530;

- (vi) on 12 October 2013, Nandanee Soornack and D. Gooljaury transferred their shareholding in Frydu to a company incorporated in Cyprus called Wigam Holding Ltd, which was apparently controlled and managed by an Irish national, resident in the UK;
- (vii) a Share Purchase Agreement dated 12 October 2013 was signed by Nandanee Soornack and D. Gooljaury to change the ownership structure of Frydu apparently to accommodate one Laurent Obadia and Wigam Holdings Ltd. Nevertheless, Frydu continued to receive commissions from Dufry Travel Retail AG in the Swiss Bank account during the year 2014, as follows –
 - (a) on 06 February 2014, an amount of EUR389,558 was paid to VP Bank in Zurich, but then Frydu's bank account was changed to another bank in Geneva, called *Union Bancaire Privée*, UBP SA, Rue du Rhone, Geneva, and
 - (b) on 16 July 2014, commissions of EUR337,134 were received in the new bank account.

(Interruptions)

- (viii) on 16 January 2015, a further amount of EUR296,466 representing 4.2% of net sales of Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd was paid to Frydu, and
- (ix) in total, Dufry had as at that date paid commissions of EUR2,129,688 to Frydu on the supply contract only with the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I am informed that the inquiries being conducted in this matter by the Police and the Independent Commission Against Corruption are ongoing inasmuch as this matter has international ramifications.

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister just repeated verbatim what was said in this House four and a half years ago. My question is very simple. Four and a half years ago, since March 2015, has it been established that the EUR2 m. commission paid by Dufry to Frydu was illegal or was that not illegal? Very simple question!

The Prime Minister: I must say that there are a number of countries which are involved in this issue, and I understand that there has been mutual legal assistance that has been applied for and that the matters are, of course, taking time. But information is being received and, therefore, the inquiry is ongoing and I do not see what is the problem with

regard to the time taken, in view of the fact that a number of evidence has to be gathered from a number of countries.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Prime Minister mentioned that Dufry consisted of two shareholders: Mrs Soornack and Mr Gooljaury. Mr Gooljaury is in Mauritius. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether Mr Gooljaury has been investigated, has been questioned, has been arrested, has been prosecuted or is he above the law and cannot be touched?

The Prime Minister: From what I understand, I am informed that statements have been taken from Mr Gooljaury.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: But then, if Mr Gooljaury, in Mauritius, has not been arrested, it means that there is no *prima facie* case that Dufry has received commission. Otherwise, I would have expected Mr Gooljaury to be behind bars by now. Should he not?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I do not understand the hon. Member's attitude with regard to this question. As I said, I have given a number of evidence that was already before the House. I have stated that they asked bank accounts in Switzerland. There are people involved in other countries also. There is mutual legal assistance with regard to authorities of those countries. I do not want to mention the countries which are involved because it would not be proper, but I must say that there are a number of countries. That is why it is taking time and, of course, when the inquiry will be completed, the file will be sent to DPP for DPP to take action.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister enlighten the House under whose ministerial portfolio was the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise, when the contract for the supply of products was agreed with Dufry, and when the case involving Nandane Soornack with the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise was first reported to the Police?

The Prime Minister: Well, let me say that I can personally testify to the fact that when I was Minister of Finance, the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise fell under my portfolio at that time. I do not want to go into the details of what happened because I have myself given a statement to the Police, not directly with this case, but in regard to the MITD case, where I had mentioned what had happened, where the former Prime Minister had asked me to cancel

the contract of the MDFP, of the supplier, and to give it to Dufry. It is all in my statement. I do not want to take the time of the House, but let me say that as soon as we left Government - and I hope that the hon. Leader of the Opposition can testify himself because he was nominated Minister of Finance after that - that institution was removed from the portfolio of Finance to be under the aegis of the Prime Minister, and this is how *ils ont fait le bal après*.

Mr Ramful: Madam Speaker, there is one thing that I do not understand. If whatever the Prime Minister is saying about the commission, the contract, etc., is illegal and one of the main persons involved in this whole scandal is Mr Rakesh Gooljaury, then why is it that the Prime Minister has been seen during the *Jeux des Iles* together with the said Rakesh Gooljaury, roaming around?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am not carrying out the inquiry. I am being provided with information and I am answering the questions. I cannot say why is it that X and Y have not been arrested so far. What I know is that the inquiry is ongoing because I have been informed of certain procedures that have already started with regard to gathering information and gathering evidence from other countries. There are numerous countries involved in this issue and the hon. Member, I hope, must be aware that the former Prime Minister has a number of his friends abroad. I do not want to say more than that because the inquiry will reveal, in fact, who are the people who are involved in this case.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

EBENE CYBERCITY - PARKING FACILITIES & AMENITIES

(No. B/875) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Ebene Cybercity, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd., information as to if consideration will be given for the uplifting of the environment thereat, especially with regard to parking facilities and a new hawker zone thereat and, if so, when.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in March 2018, Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd appointed a consultant, namely a Joint Venture comprising IYER Architects of South Africa, GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd and Hooloomann and Associates Ltd, to prepare an urban regeneration development plan for the Ebène Cybercity.

In their report submitted in October 2018, the consultants have proposed a number of measures to be implemented in phases. The key proposals include improvement to the

environment, better parking solutions, smoother traffic flow, modern amenities for food sellers and creation of pedestrian walkways.

A leisure space comprising a garden, a jogging track, a children's playground, an outdoor gym, a kiosk and seating benches will be developed on some 0.8 *arpent* of land belonging to Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd to improve the public environment. The works are scheduled to start shortly and will be financed by the High Commission of India.

As regards the parking issue, I am informed that works have started in April 2018 for the construction of a multi-storey building with 934 parking slots and construction is expected to be completed by the end of the year 2019.

Moreover, Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd will manage an off-site parking on the periphery of Ebène on some 3 *arpents* of leased private land for around 500 cars with shuttle facilities. This off-site parking will be operational in December 2019.

I am also informed that Hermès Properties Ltd, which is developing the Trianon Smart City project on the other side of the motorway, is proposing to make available some 2,000 parking spaces with shuttle service facilities to service the Cybercity as from November 2019.

To allow a smoother traffic flow, Government will upgrade the Ebène Flyover. It will be widened into a dual carriageway, the roundabouts will be redesigned and new junctions will be added. The traffic flow will, subsequently, be re-engineered to provide commuters safer and quicker access, to and from Ebène. Tenders have already been launched on a design and build basis, and works are expected to start in January 2020 and be completed in May 2021.

Madam Speaker, as regards hawkers, Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd has allocated, free of charge, 0.5 *arpent* of land on a temporary basis to accommodate the 50 food sellers who were operating along the streets of Ebène. I am informed that Landscape intends to launch a tender to select a private promoter to lease 0.8 *arpent* of land and develop a commercial project. One of the conditions would be that the private promoter must provide a food court to house 50 food sellers at a discounted rental rate.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The construction of the multi-storey car park is definitely a good way out of the parking problem. But, being given that this

parking is very near to one of the busiest roundabouts in Ebène, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether an impact assessment has been conducted on the traffic in Ebène before releasing 934 cars? Because it is located just adjacent to the Ebène roundabout.

Madam Speaker: You want to have a Traffic Impact Assessment, whether it has been done.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that, at that time, in fact, BPML had sought the views of different institutions, mainly the Traffic Management Unit and the MPI also, to see to it that it will not cause any problem with regard to the flow of traffic on the nearby roads. But I am told that the views have been sought and it has been incorporated on the conditions that have, in fact, been elaborated for the construction of the Parking Tower.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Hurreeram!

Mr Hurreeram: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Prime Minister please inform the House as to why, in 2014, the Ebène City environment has deteriorated to such an extent with regard to parking and hawkers?

The Prime Minister: Well, yes. I think we all know how BPML, those days, was managing all the plots of land that were under its jurisdiction at that time. It is so unfortunate to say that what had been planned before was not adhered to and that, in fact, land which was reserved for landscaping, for parking was given for development purposes, and we all know also that there was an inquiry. In fact, I was part of that Government, 2010/2011, where there was an inquiry which was presided over by former Minister Anil Bachoo. I do not need to go into all the conclusions, but what was concluded was that there was a chaotic situation, there was mismanagement, and, in fact, recommended also that Government would refer the matter to the Police for inquiry, but nothing happened. What is important, this is where we have resulted, today, with such a chaotic situation and, in fact, nowhere to have a proper place for developing parking spaces.

SBM (MAURITIUS) INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CO. LTD -PROJECTS - LINE OF CREDIT

(No. B/876) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the SBM (Mauritius) Infrastructure Development Co.

Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the amount of loans money channelled therefrom for the implementation of projects in Mauritius, as at to date.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the SBM (Mauritius) Infrastructure Development Company Ltd has been incorporated on 23 May 2017 to avail itself of a Line of Credit from the EXIM Bank of India.

As at to date, some USD 1.6 million, equivalent to around Rs60 m., have been channelled through the SBM (Mauritius) Infrastructure Development Company Ltd to part finance the construction of 956 social housing units by the National Housing Development Company Ltd (NHDC) at Mare Tabac and Dagotièrè.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In reply to the PNQ of 16 June 2017, the hon. Prime Minister had stated that the agreement between the SBM (Mauritius) Infrastructure Development Co. Ltd and the SPVs, together with the guarantee documents will be tabled in the National Assembly once signed. That was in 2017. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether that agreement has been signed and, if so, whether he plans to table that document? Because I have checked with the Library, it is not tabled yet.

The Prime Minister: Well, I will look into that, Madam Speaker.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Being given that the works on the Metro Express have reached such an advanced stage, and we all know that money to be used from this Development Fund is to finance the Metro Express Project, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister how come no funds have been disbursed for the Metro Express Project, so far?

The Prime Minister: Yes, because, the hon. Member, I think, should remember that we have half of the amount as grant. So, we are using the grant money, and there will come a time, obviously, where we will have to draw from the Line of Credit, but, that time has not come yet.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister had stated in that same PNQ, that the loan will come at an interest rate of 1.8% and that will have to go through preference redeemable shares, which will ultimately increase that figure of 1.8%. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that the former Government had loan from India at much lower interest rate, which is 0.8%? I have spoken to the two

protagonists of the project even this morning. Loans were being granted by India for the Metro Express Project at 0.8% interest on US Dollar, whereas with this arrangement it is 1.8%, excluding the cost of the preference shares.

The Prime Minister: I do not believe so, Madam Speaker. In fact, I hoped that the hon. Member would have given more precise information, apart from just saying, but I will check and, maybe, come back to provide the information. But I do not believe that at all. In fact, I must say we have got much better terms and conditions with regard to this Line of Credit.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Armance!

LA FOURCHE LANE, RICHELIEU - DRAINS

(No. B/877) **Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the flooding problem at La Fourche Lane, at Richelieu, in Petite Rivière, he will state where matters stand as to the construction of drains and other amenities thereat by the National Development Unit.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the issue of flooding in the region of Richelieu and its surrounding was raised with me some time back by hon. Alain Wong, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. In the reply I made to PQ B/260 at the sitting of 23 April 2019, I stated that in view of the complexity of the flooding situation at Richelieu and its surrounding, the NDU had decided to appoint a Consultant to carry out a feasibility study.

Madam Speaker, the Consultant Servansingh Jadav and Partners Consulting Engineers was appointed in May 2019 to study the area and propose flood-mitigation measures.

As I indicated, the Scope of Services of the Consultant comprise, *inter alia*, the following -

- (i) effect topographical surveys and undertake an inventory of the existing drainage infrastructure;
- (ii) identify the causes of flooding and forecast their evolution with future developments;

- (iii) identify the possible alternatives to address the flooding problems;
- (iv) make recommendations regarding geotechnical investigations, and
- (v) prepare the preliminary design of the selected drainage system and work out the cost estimate.

Madam Speaker, following surveys carried out, the Consultant has already submitted an Inception Report and is currently carrying out the Feasibility Study. It is expected that the Feasibility Study would be completed by November 2019.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In a publication of GNews of 14 December 2018, under item “Ongoing Project”, Madam Speaker, I fail to understand why it is written that the extension of drain at La Fourche Lane at Cité Richelieu is included while there is not even one single *coup de pioche* in the region of Richelieu, and now we learn from the hon. Prime Minister that they are doing a feasibility study. So, may I know why he is putting fake information in GNews, giving wrong information to the population?

The Prime Minister: No, it is not wrong information to the population. Far from that, Madam Speaker! In fact, a Consultant was appointed under the Framework Agreement for Consultancy Services under the name Vyas Consulting Engineers. The initial cost estimate of the project was supposed to be Rs30 m., but then, after, we found out that there were additional works that had to be done. It was revised to Rs100 m. and we all know that under the Framework Agreement, we cannot go, I believe, beyond Rs50 m. So, that is why we had to start another procedure in order to have an Expression of Interest and this is where this Consultant has been retained and, therefore, now the process is on. Once the feasibility study will be over, of course, we will move forward.

Mr Armance: Madam Speaker, in October 2018, the hon. PPS, Mrs Marie Claire Monty chaired a meeting with all concerned authorities and District Councillors about this issue of La Fourche Lane and, from what I gathered in the meeting, they recommended that CMT enlarges the drain at the level of their yard because this was one of the main problems as to why water was blocked at Richelieu. May I know what has been done so far since October 2018 to date?

The Prime Minister: My information is that the then Consultant had submitted a Preliminary Design Report, which was circulated for discussion to the Road Development Authority, *Compagnie Mauricienne de Textile*, District Council of Black River, Metro

Express Ltd since the project also concerns where part of the metro will be laying the tracks. Following this discussion on the Preliminary Design Report and those changes that are foreseeable with regard to the catchment upstream of Richelieu, the Consultant had pointed out that we have to take into account the development of the Metro Express. They have already constructed two culverts across the track and this has to be taken because then, there was going to be additional flow of water which would end up at some place. I do not have the name of the place, but that is why this has to be taken and the project had to be reviewed and, therefore, since the estimate has gone up by much more than what is allowed under the Framework Agreement, that is why we had to go another route.

Mr Armance: I have two questions, Madam Speaker. The first question is: may we know why there has been no action against CMT? This is the first question. No action has been taken against CMT. They have not enlarged the drain. The water is still blocked in front of the wall. Why is there no action against CMT?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware about whether any action should be taken against CMT.

(Interruptions)

Okay, I will find out if the hon. Member is providing me with this information. But, in my notes, I do not have anything with regard to what CMT is supposed to be doing. I will find out, Madam Speaker.

Mr Armance: My last question, Madam Speaker. Now that we know that this is going to be a long-term solution till we wait for the feasibility study, what is the NDU going to do on a short-term basis to tackle the issue of flooding in the region of Richelieu? We all know that the heavy rains are coming as from the month of November. So, what are we doing on a short-term basis to tackle this problem?

The Prime Minister: I must say that this issue has to be looked at, unfortunately, in a holistic manner. For example, we cannot build a small drain which will, first of all, involve spending money and will not be useful for the problem that is arising there because we all know it is a low-lying area there. The solution is what will be recommended by the Consultant.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

JOCKEY D. H. – SUSPENSION & REPLACEMENT

(No. B/878) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, following the suspension and replacement of Jockey D. H. during the 21st Horse Racing Day, on 10 August 2019, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority and the Mauritius Turf Club, respectively, information as to the subsequent actions taken in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that -

- (i) on 09 July 2019, the Racing Stewards had sanctioned the Jockey D. H. for careless riding during the 8th Race on 06 July 2019 and he was suspended for a period of two weeks. Since, on the same day, the Jockey lodged an appeal against the decision of the Racing Stewards, the suspension was not executed;
- (ii) on Thursday 08 August 2019, Jockey D. H. appeared in the Official Race Fixtures and he was supposed to ride two horses for stable Maingard in Races 2 and 6, respectively during 21st Race Meeting on 10 August 2019;
- (iii) at a meeting held at 1700 hrs on 08 August 2019, the Appeal Committee of the MTC maintained the sanction of suspension of two weeks against Jockey D. H. Thereafter, the MTC issued a communiqué informing the public that the Jockey D. H. has been suspended for two race meetings effective as from Sunday 11 August 2019;
- (iv) on 09 August 2019, in the morning, the MTC issued another communiqué to the effect that the suspension of Jockey D. H. for two weeks was effective as from 10 August 2019 and that he will be replaced by two other Jockeys. The replacement of the Jockeys was done by MTC on its own initiative without consulting the GRA;
- (v) at around 1300 hrs on the same day, the GRA informed MTC that it was not in order to replace Jockey D. H. on the races scheduled for Saturday 10 August 2019;
- (vi) according to yet another communiqué issued by the MTC on 09 August 2019 at around 14.30 hrs, the Appeal Committee had agreed to the suspension of Jockey D. H. for two weeks as from 10 August 2019 and that he will be replaced by two other Jockeys;

- (vii) on 09 August 2019 at around 21.40 hrs, the GRA issued another correspondence that should Jockey D.H. not ride, the two horses would have to be scratched from the race card;
- (viii) on Saturday 10 August 2019, upon insistence from GRA, the MTC finally agreed that Jockey D.H. will ride in the two races as initially decided. All previous bets were cancelled and started afresh;
- (ix) on Monday 13 August 2019, the MTC issued a communiqué to the public, apologising for confusion and uncertainty caused and also informed that the suspension of Jockey D.H. will be served as from Saturday 17 August 2019 to 24 August 2019.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that, in view of the controversy on the whole matter and complaints received from bookmakers, especially as one of them has entered a Court case, and pursuant to section 7(n) of the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act 2007, the GRA has instituted a Committee of Inquiry to investigate into the whole issue. The Inquiry is expected to start as from today, 24 September 2019.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, le Premier ministre vient d'informer la Chambre qu'un comité a été mis sur pied pour enquêter sur ce scandale - du jamais vu ! Peut-on savoir qui préside ce comité, quels sont les membres qui font partie de ce comité et comment ils ont été choisis ?

The Prime Minister: The composition of the Committee of Inquiry is as follows -

- (1) Mr Anil Kumar Kokil, an ex-director of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and ex-acting Chief Executive of the Gambling Regulatory Authority;
- (2) Mr Naresh Gujadhur, member of the Mauritius Turf Club. I am told that he is not a member of any Board or Committee of the Turf Club;
- (3) Mr Ravi Yerrigadoo, the legal Counsel of the Gambling Regulatory Authority...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please proceed. Order!

The Prime Minister: *Ki arriver, to pe gayne rier?*

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, order, please!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Hon. Baloomoody, please! Allow your colleague to ask his question.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, est-ce que l'honorable Premier ministre trouve cela approprié que monsieur Ravi Yerrigadoo, l'ancien *Attorney General* qui était lui-même impliqué dans un scandale que tout le monde connaît, le BET 365, fasse partie de ce comité ? Est-ce qu'il trouve cela approprié ?

The Prime Minister: There is nothing against him. What is it? What is there against him? What is there? There is no provisional charge against him. So, what is the hon. Member talking about?

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, le même Ravi Yerrigadoo apparut comme avocat de la GRA en Cour en avril dernier contre les *off-course bookmakers*. De plus, c'est lui qui a conseillé la GRA durant le bras de fer qui l'opposait au MTC. N'est-ce-pas, encore une fois, contre l'éthique qu'il soit appelé à faire partie de ce comité alors qu'il est lui-même un des avocats de la GRA ?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member does not know anything about *éthique*. Please go and seek advice *don!*

(Interruptions)

Eta ale do! Rekin!

Madam Speaker: Time is over! Order! Hon. Uteem! Questions to Ministers!

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY - CHAIRPERSON

(No. B/882) Mr R. Uteem (First 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 Chairperson of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the name of the incumbent, indicating the –

- (a) qualifications held;
- (b) terms and conditions of appointment, including fees, allowances and benefits drawn, and

- (c) number of overseas missions undertaken, indicating the aggregate costs thereof.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, the Chairperson of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority is Mrs Fawzia Toorawa. She is the holder of a BA Honours English, MA English, Masters in Education or Leadership and Management, and also holder of a certificate in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages, a certificate in English language teaching to adults.

As for part (b) of the question, Madam Speaker, Mrs Toorawa has been appointed of the ECCEA in line with section 6 subsection 1(a) of the ECCEA Act 2007.

The incumbent draws a monthly allowance of Rs28,500 plus travelling in accordance with the provisions of the PRB 2016.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that Mrs Toorawa has not undertaken any overseas mission since her appointment as Chairperson of the Board.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. According to the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority Act of 2007, members are appointed for a period of two years. May I know from the hon. Minister : is there any reason why her appointment keeps on being renewed?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, it is a matter of policy and the Ministry has decided to renew her contract.

Mr Uteem: Is the matter of policy of the Minister entrancing anyway by the family ties which this lady has to various people in Cabinet and Mr Ahmad Jeewa who just crossed over to your party?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I refuse to make any comment on such statements which I consider to be totally irrelevant.

Mr Uteem: I mean I don't understand the hon. Minister. We have been criticised by Transparency International for the high rate of nepotism. This lady happens to be the niece of a senior member of Cabinet. Does not the hon. Minister find it necessary to justify to the public why another case of nepotism is being paid with taxpayers money.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I believe that what the hon. Member is saying right now...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I believe that the hon. Member should have stated earlier – when we appointed the lady - that this lady was also the daughter of a member of the MMM party.

FALSIFIED HORSE POWER CERTIFICATES

(No. B/883) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the reported cases of forged horse power certificates, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiries initiated thereto and the actions taken in relation thereto, if any, as at to date.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, on March 29, 2016, I mentioned in my reply to PQ B/32 that over 3000 cases of falsified horsepower certificates were being suspected by the Police. In fact, as soon as the matter was reported, a series of consultations with the Attorney General's Office, the Director of Public Prosecution's Office and the then National Transport Authority was held at the level of my Ministry to agree on the course of action to be followed.

A special desk was accordingly set up and vehicle owners were invited, through a press communiqué, to voluntarily register modifications to their vehicles' horsepower certificates. A moratorium of 9 months from 08 March to November 2016 was given to them for that matter. I am informed that about 8200 vehicle owners subsequently called at the Authority for such amendments.

Moreover, Government proceeded with the privatisation of vehicle examination and three authorised Vehicle Examination Stations were set up as from November 2016. With this arrangement in place, the risk of falsification of documents has considerably been reduced with enhanced control through the fully automated systems.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed by the Police that since 2015 to date, some 669 cases of alleged forgery on Registration Books for Horse Power have been reported to the Police for the purpose of Inquiry.

The status of these cases is as follows -

- Classified - 80
- Referred to DPP for Advice - 20
- Referred for Court Action - 70
- Still under Inquiry - around 500

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister what is the total amount of loss incurred to the Government as a result of owners of falsified horse powers paying less duty than otherwise they should be paying?

Mr Bodha: Well, when this issue arose, there was one issue, which I mentioned here, that the solution was, in fact, to cancel the horsepower and to grant those vehicles. We had to take a decision on as to whether we were to grant those vehicles because of the falsification of horsepower and we can imagine the social problems it would have created. That is why then we had decided, in fact, to ask everybody to come over so that we reconsider the updating of the horsepower. I know that in the Public Accounts Committee Report, it was mentioned that there was loss of revenue because often the falsification of the horsepower was done in such a manner that you have to pay a reduced horsepower. But we have not been able to compute it for 8,000 people.

Mr Uteem: Then, may I know from the hon. Minister since 8,000 people came voluntarily, surrendered their horsepower, got a new horsepower. So, it is very easy, each time you issue a new horsepower you charge them for the fees that they have underpaid. So, why were these 8,000 people not requested to pay their shortfall in the duty they had to pay?

Mr Bodha: Yes, this was not done, I think, because of as a humanitarian measure at that time.

Mr Bhagwan: May I know from the hon. Minister whether he is happy with the National Transport Authority. We all know - we are Members of Parliament not since yesterday - that the NTA itself is a la Caverne d'Ali baba. Can the hon. Minister inform the

House what he intends, whether we just had a legislation at least to have an overall of this most corrupt institution which we call the National Transport Authority?

Mr Bodha: In fact, it has been qualified as a most corrupt institution in Mauritius, but we have to understand that we are dealing with more than 600,000 vehicle owners, about tens of thousands of people who have permits, Madam Speaker. We are also dealing with all the permits, the horsepower, the licences. As regards the horsepower, now everything has been digitalised so that the Police, the Insurance Companies and the NTA can, in fact, just by going to these data banks can have the history of the car. Recently, there were also cases of fake permits, but for the fake permits, the issue was with one officer of the NTA and he was caught by the NTA supervisor. So, we are doing our best, but I totally agree that with the digitalisation of the database of the vehicle, we will be able to see to it that the legislator and the legislation which has been done, that the regulatory body can assume its responsibility.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister has mentioned that there are certain cases that are being investigated, certain cases being referred to the DPP, certain cases being under investigation. Can I know from the hon. Minister in which category of these cases does the case of hon. Gungah fall because he has also been reported as having sold a car with a falsified horsepower?

Mr Bodha: Well, if anybody is involved, the enquiry is there. I remember I had said then that the role of the Police was to enquire, the role of the DPP was to prosecute and the role of the NTA was to regulate. So, any case will be dealt with by the Police as it has to be dealt with.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

MR R. Y. – ALLEGATIONS - INQUIRY

(No. B/884) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the allegations levelled against Mr R. Y. in 2017 whilst he held Office as Attorney General, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry initiated therewith, indicating –

- (a) the number of arrests effected in connection therewith, if any, and
- (b) if prosecution has been lodged and any conviction secured.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that two cases have been reported to the Central CID (CCID) in which the name of the former Attorney General, Mr R. Y., has been mentioned. The CCID is investigating into the two cases. So far, statements have been recorded from several persons and to-date no person has been arrested nor prosecuted.

Enquiry is still ongoing in both cases.

Mr Uteem: Can I know from the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor whether he has enquired as to the reason for the delay in the Police enquiries in this matter?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, am I supposed to enquire? I do not do enquiries.

Mr Uteem: Well, then the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor is aware that this Ravi Yerrigadoo was an Attorney General, not any ordinary person. He was a Member of Cabinet who was asked to step down because there was a Police enquiry. So, does not the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor find it necessary to - if there is no case against this gentleman, at least there is no case against this gentleman? It cannot be, everybody now thinks that he is subject to a criminal offence and the Police enquiry is still ongoing.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, so far he is not subject to any offence. The enquiry is still on.

Mr Uteem: In this case, Madam Speaker, it was reported that there was one gentleman, Mr Husein Abdool Rahim, who first gave a statement against Mr Yerrigadoo and then changed his statement under oath. So, may I know from the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor whether this gentleman has been prosecuted for perjury?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, this is a matter if there has been a complaint, the Police would have enquired and I will have to find out whether there has been an enquiry and whether there has been prosecution.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Can the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor state to the House whether this Mr Husein Abdool Rahim is subject of enquiry for false and malicious denunciation in writing against Mr Ravi Yerrigadoo given the fact that he publicly retracted?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, I am not aware of this. I will find out.

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

At 1.01 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

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

Madam Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval is not there! Hon. Osman Mahomed!

METRO EXPRESS – ST JEAN ROAD

(No. B/886) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Metro Express, he will state the positioning of the track thereof along St Jean Road, indicating the consequential traffic segregation thereat, if any, including the assessed impact thereof on the locality.

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

Situated in the heart of Quatre Bornes, St Jean Road is well-known for its retail and commercial outlets. Our vision is to connect this important commercial zone to a new and modern transport mode with the Metro Express Project, that will bring a set of new opportunities, regenerate the urban landscape and benefit the existing shops and commercial activities.

I am informed that the Metro Express Light Rail Transit System will be constructed along the median of the road, that is, the track alignment will be in the centre of the St Jean Road. A single lane carriageway will be provided on either side of the LRT corridor for vehicular traffic along St Jean. The LRT corridor will be segregated from the adjacent road via raised kerb.

Madam Speaker, currently, there is a high vehicular traffic volume generated by buses and cars on the two-lane bi-directional road. The vehicles travel mostly at low speed and there is also a high degree of pedestrian activities along and across the road.

Three crossings at Buswell Avenue, d’Epinay Avenue and Osman Avenue will be constructed for cross traffic perpendicular to St Jean Road. They will be controlled and managed by the Metro Express Traffic Signal Priority System.

As for any construction site, there will be some temporary disturbance, especially with regard to the traffic flow and this will be managed by appropriate Traffic Management Schemes, which are currently being finalised.

Metro Express Ltd along with the design and build contractor L&T and the supervisor RITES are working in close collaboration with all authorities concerned, the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, the Road Development Authority, the Central Water Authority, the Wastewater Management Authority, the Central Electricity Board, MT companies, and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport to find the best solution.

Madam Speaker, currently, the Quatre Bornes Municipality and Metro Express hold a weekly collaborative interface meeting at the Municipality which facilitates the implementation of works on site. So far, the works have been carried out very smoothly and any matter arising is being dealt with in consultation with the stakeholders. We believe that with the Metro, we will have improved accessibility to businesses, we will have also a new traffic configuration.

The RDA is currently implementing the Hillcrest Interchange, which will provide an improved alternative access point to the heart of Quatre Bornes from the Motorway. In addition, following a traffic redistribution through-traffic will have a choice of using alternative routes to reach their destination. Five dedicated parking facilities are also being provided along the St Jean Road.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. So, one lane will be left on both sides for vehicular traffic. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there will be bus stop along this lane? If buses were to travel on this lane and they are going to stop along bus stop, this will create a big backlog of traffic, because only one lane is left over and there is heavy traffic movement there.

Mr Bodha: I would like to reply to the hon. Member one thing. First of all, we had a number of land issues, Madam Speaker, because it is a very strict corridor and we have been able, in fact, to have the alignment through the corridor without disturbing any property from St Jean to the centre of Quatre Bornes and this has been a very challenging task.

The second thing is we had an issue with parkings because the parkings were diagonal. So, we are going now to have them horizontal along the main roads. So, we had land issues which we have addressed, parking issues which have been addressed. Now, this bus stop issue will be addressed with proper lay-by, otherwise as is rightly mentioned by my hon. colleague that will have a backlog on the traffic.

Mr Osman Mahomed: St Jean Road is like a fishbone structure with lots of roads linking to St Jean Road. The Minister has mentioned it is going to be elevated by a kerb and also there will only be three passages throughout that fishbone spine. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether a simulation exercise has been carried out? Because it could be a big issue either for old Quatre Bornes or for new Quatre if the simulation exercise proves otherwise.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, at one point in time, we have thought about having the traffic only leaving Quatre Bornes towards St Jean Road, towards Port Louis and the entrance would be at Hillcrest. The other possibility is having both way traffic and the traffic system is going to be on a left left so that you do not cross. Now, we have done a number of simulations, we are still working on them. But I think that the opening of the Hillcrest entry into Quatre Bornes will be able to help us to better understand the level of traffic and congestion that we are going to have in the St Jean. But what we wanted to do, Madam Speaker, is that in September, the Metro is going to be in Quatre Bornes without having the disturbance of this St Jean Road so that what we wanted to do is to offer to Quatre Bornes and to people in Vacoas the facilities of the Metro without having the hassle of the problems that we are going to face along St Jean Road. So, the Metro will already be in Quatre Bornes in September 2020. The works have already started; we have already addressed the issues. The rails are going to be put soon so that we will have this from Rose Hill to Quatre Bornes along the avenue; this will be done and will be ready by September 2020.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Currently, there are two pillars just constructed in between St Jean Roundabout and St Jean cemetery. Is that part of an overpass of the Metro Express or something else?

Mr Bodha: I think it is part of an overpass because it is going to connect, when the Metro is coming it will come from the motorway over and then it will go down to enter St Jean.

Mr Bhagwan: Avec l'expérience qu'on a vécu à Rose Hill, les problèmes, les misères des commerçants, pour les petits commerces, est-ce que le ministre a entrepris une étude, au niveau du Metro Express, comment va être la vie de ces commerçants, ceux qui ont investi dans leur commerce, avec l'expérience, l'enfer que certains commerçants, que le ministre est bien au courant, qu'on a vécu à Rose Hill?

Mr Bodha: That is a major challenge, Madam Speaker. We have said it, in Rose Hill, we are to some extent having to address this in Port Louis with the Victoria. We will sit down

with the shop owners to see to it that there is the flow. Because, at the end of the day, the most important thing is that the customers could assess the shops.

Dr. Boolell: Has the Minister taken cognizance of an interview given by the CEO of Metro Express Ltd in *Le Mauricien* to highlight the numerous problems that will occur? Because the spaces are very limited and there will be spill over in Hillcrest and along the Hillcrest Road, there is bumper to bumper and it will last over 24 hours.

Mr Bodha: The reengineering, we will have to reengineer the traffic for old Quatre Bornes, for new Quatre Bornes, the new entry and the new reengineered St Jean Road. I thought my hon. friend would ask me when we are going to have the meeting in Quatre Bornes which I have promised to the House. In fact, as soon as we'll finish with the launch in Rose Hill, the whole team of the engineers and everybody who has been working on this first priorities' section will move on to Quatre Bornes and then I will come personally. I would like also to inform the House that the request for proposals for the Quatre Bornes Terminal are now ready and will be launched very soon for promoters to come forward to implement a project of terminal in Quatre Bornes.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, B/887.

Mr Bodha: I see that my hon. colleague is getting very interested, very positive about the Metro Express. I thank him for that. He is asking me about the extension.

(Interruptions)

Yes.

Madam Speaker: No crosstalking, please!

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I think he will do well.

METRO EXPRESS – TRAFFIC CORRIDOR

(No. B/887) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Metro Express, he will state if any plan is being envisaged for the extension of the services through Ebene.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, Government is implementing one of the most complex and prestigious infrastructural project ever implemented in Mauritius. Mauritius is a fast, rapidly and growing economy, with a high density mixed up use development that has resulted in an increasing number of car ownership. However, travel options in terms of public transportation has remained very limited. Hence, there is considerable congestion during peak hours in and around the main cities.

The introduction of the modern light rail transit project will provide a long-term solution, Madam Speaker, to address road decongestion along the main business and traffic corridor from Curepipe to Port Louis.

The light rail will enable commuters travelling from Curepipe to Port Louis to benefit from a fast, modern and environment friendly mode of transport.

I am informed that as at date, 95% of the works are completed on the first segment. The (LRVs) Light Rail Vehicles are already in Mauritius, they are being tested and we are looking forward to a soft launch very soon.

As regards to the future, in line with the vision of the Government to improve and regenerate the transport system of the country and in line with the vision of the Prime Minister, we have indicated in several occasions that studies are being carried out to investigate the possibility of extending the Metro Express network across the island, that is, to have a national Master Plan.

One of the areas being considered as a potential area for extension is the Ebène Cybercity which has witnessed a critical growth in recent years, as evidenced by the rapid employment growth. It is estimated that up to 70% of the areas is already developed from an estimated available land area of around 100 arpents. Studies show that the City is expected to develop further over the next 5 years to cater for more than 50,000 workers which will account for nearly 10% of the total employment in Mauritius. Moreover, in terms of business growth, Ebène Cybercity has become a preferred location for both public and private sector offices.

Ebène Cybercity is hence considered as the new business hub of Mauritius for future economic development and, as such, it is a potential area that can be connected to the light rail transit system which is currently under construction.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, that a preliminary study has been carried out by the Singapore Corporation Enterprise for the potential extension of the light rail project through

Ebène to Réduit and a bit further. Extension of the light rail service in this area is expected to regenerate and integrate the existing and future road networks and infrastructure. The ultimate aim is to alleviate traffic congestion during peak hours, cut down on carbon emission, enhance traffic flow, improve road safety, reduce road accidents and in general also bring added value to the area.

We also intend to extend the system to the whole island, that is, from Port Louis up North, from Curepipe down South and also towards the West which will connect at Rose Hill.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Yes, thank you. One of the main priorities of the previous Government was Rose Hill through Ebène and then to Bagatelle, because Port Louis to Curepipe is the backbone and it was to be connected to this. I have been to the site where the alignment is such that it is going to be very difficult to connect at Rose Hill. So, can I ask the hon. Minister whether it is going to be a standalone system or is it going to connect to that existing system?

Mr Bodha: No, from what I have here, Madam Speaker, is that Singapore Corporation Enterprise is thinking of connecting the system with Rose Hill as a hub.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Even this morning, the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned about the urban re-generation plan for Ebène Cybercity. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, that plan together with what SCE is doing, there is correlation because, so far, I do not think this is the case.

Mr Bodha: What SCE has done in fact is, we have projection for Ebène Cybercity, that is, for having 50,000 workers. Today I think it's about 20,000. So the plan of Singapore Corporation Enterprise, Madam Speaker, is to consider the possibility of having 50,000 commuters from Ebène, then we have about 20,000 from Réduit with the students and then going further east towards Bagatelle.

Madam Speaker: Yes.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Last question. In his original reply, the hon. Minister has mentioned that 70% of the land has been developed. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is an acquisition plan – not acquisition plan, whether discussions are being held with

land owners because if the 30% balance is going to be developed in course of time which is fast developing, there would be a big problem tomorrow to cater for the metro in Ebène.

Mr Bodha: No, in fact, the metro is going a bit to the left of Ebène going east, it is not in the heart of Ebène.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Osman Mahomed.

METRO EXPRESS LTD – INSURANCE BROKER

(No. B/888) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Metro Express, he will give details of the insurance cover to the commuters and members of the public in case of injuries/deaths arising out of accidents/natural calamities.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Metro Express Limited has appointed the City Broker Ltd (CBL) as its insurance broker. City Broker Ltd has been requested to put in place insurances for the pre-operational phase as well as for the operational phase starting from the 30 of September. Insurances for the pre-operational phase are already in place. The insurance covers will mainly cater for Property Damage, Business Interruption and Liability as per the covers provided as per international standard practice for railways.

Madam Speaker, I am also informed that the insurance broker, City Broker Ltd, has carried out a tendering exercise to select the most technically suitable and responsive insurer that will propose the best insurance cover package for the Metro Express Ltd.

City Broker Ltd has submitted its evaluation report to the Board of Metro Express Ltd, and I am informed, Madam Speaker, that the Board of the Metro Express Ltd has approved the award for insurance covers to SICOM and SWAN, that is, a consortium as co-insurers subject to some conditions which are being finalised. The insurance will be in placed by the end of the month before the soft launch scheduled for the end of the month and the insurance will cover the liability of Metro Express Ltd towards third parties, including commuters and members of the public, in respect of injury/death/material damage that might arise out of accidents and natural calamities.

The liability section of the insurance will cater for Third Parties for damages in respect of body injury, fatal or non-fatal, and material damage, including but not limited to liability arising out operations of the rolling stocks, that is, the LRVs.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. The Light Rail Act of 2019 makes mention of, at Section 16 (c), passengers carried for hire, meaning those who are paying passengers. During the testing period, passengers would not be paying and I know the Minister has said that it is going to be pre-operation as well. So, can I ask the Minister to be clear about whether passengers, who are travelling free for testing purposes on the Metro Express, are covered by insurances that he has just mentioned?

Mr Bodha: Yes, this has been taken care of, Madam Speaker.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. We are a few days away from the soft launch of the Metro Express. Have train operators been issued with a licence at this moment in time?

Mr Bodha: Today, the trains are being manned by Train Captains who come from LNT. Today, the trains have not yet been handed over to Metro Express. This is called a taking over certificate. This will happen only in the end when everything has been done and Metro Express will have the responsibility of the service. So, up to now, that is, whatever tests are being done; the other tests which are going to be done during the pre-operational stage, the trains are going to be manned by LNT Train Captains and also by the Singaporean Train Captains. There are six who have arrived and we have 22 Trains Captains from Mauritius, they will be there also to see to it that this testing period is done in the best conditions.

Mr Osman Mahomed: In his reply to my PQ B/492 last year, the hon. Minister mentioned that the train will stop at cyclone Class 2 and that the structures are designed for a cost of 100 miles per hour. So, can I ask the hon. Minister what will happen because, in Mauritius, buses stop three hours post Class 3, in terms of insurance coverage and also some cyclones that we have had - like Gervaise we had 175 miles per hour which is way above the 100 miles per hour and Carol it was 160 miles per hour and, with climate change, this is going to be worse. Can I ask the hon. Minister the following question, the coverage of passengers in between Class 2 and Class 3 and also the structure of the Metro Express especially the overhead cables which have been designed, according to him, to only 100

miles per hour. What will happen in terms of damages? Is the insurance company going to cover for all these?

Mr Bodha: As far as the cables are concerned, from what I have been told, they will resist. They have the same resistance as the electricity system that we have today.

As regards to the Class 2 warning, the train will stop just like the public transport will stop at Class 3.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether the trams or the trains will be equipped with video camera for safety reasons?

Mr Bodha: We will have the CCTV cameras in the LRVs and we are going also to have CCTV cameras along the track.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Est-ce que le ministre peut informer le public si le contrat pour la publicité à l'intérieur du tram a déjà été alloué parce qu'on nous a fait comprendre que le contrat a été alloué à une compagnie proche du ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, I am sorry, this question relates to commuters, members of the public in case of injuries, not to publicity. So, can we have the next question, hon. Bhagwan!

STC – BARRISTERS & ATTORNEYS - CONTRACT

(No. B/889) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the State Trading Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the names of the barristers and attorneys whose services have been retained thereat on contract or otherwise, since January 2015 to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) terms and conditions of contract, and
- (b) amount paid as retainer and/or other fees for court cases, locally and before the Privy Council.

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that, since January 2015, it has retained legal barristers and attorneys for disciplinary proceedings against STC staff and advisory services to the corporation. The information relating thereto is being compiled and will be laid in the library of the National Assembly.

Regarding the Court cases between the STC and Betamax Ltd, as stated in my reply to PQ B/702 in November 2017, the barristers and attorney retained by the STC are as follows –

- Mr Ravindra Chetty, Senior Counsel, & Chambers;
- Mr André Robert, Senior Attorney;
- Rajah & Tann Singapore LLP;
- Mr Alain Choo Choy QC, and
- Mr James Guthrie QC.

Regarding part (a) of the question, the stand of the STC is that such information are privileged and can only be questioned by the client, that is the STC, regulatory bodies such as the Bar Council of the relevant country, and eventually the Court of the relevant country only.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that since the Court cases are still ongoing, such information is not available now. They will be released eventually and the STC will account for same in its accounts and financial reports.

The STC also retains the services of the Solicitor General Office for legal advice against a yearly retainer fee of Rs80,000 for 2015 and 2016 and Rs120,000 for 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister has just informed us that the list is being compiled and will be circulated. Can he give assurance to the House, the country and the taxpayers that this list will be circulated before the dissolution of Parliament? We are a few weeks or a few months before dissolution of Parliament, so, can he give an undertaking to the House, the country, the nation that this list, which I am sure contains *certain petits copains du MSM va être circulée?*

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, the list is being compiled, and as I stated in my reply, I will table it in the library of the National Assembly once the Ministry gets the list from the STC.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I be given an indication of this ‘once’? Is it one week, one month, 3 months or the next Government will have to circulate this list?

Mr Gungah: I cannot say for STC, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister has stated with regard to part (b) of the question that he could not give the information since the Court cases were still ongoing. Which are the Court cases that are still ongoing because the question refers to cases locally and before the Privy Council? So which are the cases that are still ongoing that he was making reference to? Could he list them?

Mr Gungah: For the local cases, I said, Madam Speaker, that the list is being compiled because there are disciplinary cases, advisory fees also for consultancy with legal advisors. And the case to which I am referring here, that the information is not available, concerns the Betamax-STC case.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since the fees are likely to run in the millions, can I know from the hon. Minister whether consideration would be given to having a tender process so that interested barristers can apply to be retained as counsels instead of arbitrary selection by the STC?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, it concerns legal advice and it, of course, depends on case to case. But concerning the procurement method, I think everyone knows in the House, even the country, that procurement comes into play when expenses of services exceed a prescribed amount in the schedule of the Public Procurement Act, that is, Rs100 m.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

NHDC LTD - ATTORNEYS, BARRISTERS & NOTARIES

(No. B/890) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the National Housing Development Company Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the names of the attorneys, barristers and notaries whose services have been retained thereat, since January 2015 to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) terms and conditions of contract, and
- (b) amount paid as retainer and/or other fees for court cases.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the NHDC Ltd that since its operation in year 1991, the State Law Office is its main Legal Advisor. The retainer fee paid presently to the State Law Office is Rs90,000 per year.

I am further informed by the NHDC Ltd that with the expansion of its activities, the services of attorneys and barristers have been solicited.

Moreover, the services of notaries are retained by the NHDC Ltd to draw up deeds of sale for housing units for specific sites and the cost is borne by the beneficiaries thereof.

Madam Speaker, the detailed information as requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and once completed, same will be placed in the library of the National Assembly.

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister has just informed us that the list is being compiled. I will come to the same question I have asked, can the Minister give an indication to the House, the taxpayers when this National Assembly will take cognisance of the list? Can we have an idea of the date?

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, I just mentioned that once it will be compiled, it will be placed in the library of the National Assembly and we will be again in Government after the next elections.

Mr Bhagwan: I insist to have an indication from the hon. Minister. Is it one week? One month? We all know that this Parliament will stand dissolved by 22 December. Can the Minister at least give a commitment to the House, to the nation, that this document will be circulated before the dissolution of Parliament?

Mr Jhugroo: I am giving the assurance that this will be tabled once it will be compiled.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me to put this additional question to the hon. Minister. He said that the list is being compiled. I understand since it concerns several millions, that is why it takes time to compile. But then again, could he at least give us the names of the attorneys, the barristers and the notaries? This is very

simple. Why does he have to compile such a list? Or is it simply because they are close to Government that he does not want to give us the name? Is that it?

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, I mentioned earlier in my answer that so many issues have been asked in the main question. So once all will be compiled, I will table it. But one thing I can say, that during the mandate of this Government, whenever we are recruiting barristers, notaries or attorneys, all are done by expression of interest. Not like it had been done previously by the former Government.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

FAKE MOTOR VEHICLE LICENCES - ARREST

(No. B/891) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the recent reported cases of fake motor vehicle licences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of persons arrested in connection therewith, if any, indicating where matters stand as to the inquiries initiated thereinto.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 27 August 2019, by virtue of a search warrant, ADSU carried out a search at the residence of one M. S. A., 25 years, of Vallée des Prêtres, holding a post of General Worker at the National Transport Authority. A certain quantity of substance suspected to be ‘Synthetic Cannabinoid’ was secured along with

Madam Speaker: Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, we are on B/891.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, it is B/891.

Madam Speaker: Fake motor vehicle licences?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: B/891, yes.

(Interruptions)

...secured along with a Motor Vehicle Licence (MVL) booklet. He was arrested and provisionally charged for the offence of ‘Possession of Cannabinoid’. He was released on bail on 28 August 2019 after having furnished a surety of Rs2,000 and recognizance of Rs4,000.

As regards the possession of MVL booklet, the matter was referred to CCID on 05 September 2019. The enquiry revealed that he had issued two Motor Vehicles Licence Discs

from the booklet. He was accordingly charged with the offence of 'Forgery by Public Official' and was presented in Court on 06 September 2019. He was released on bail after having furnished a surety of Rs5,000 and a recognizance of Rs15,000.

The enquiry is still in progress.

Madam Speaker: Next question hon. Lepoigneur!

MORCELLEMENT LA CONFIANCE - LARSEN & TOUBRO - WORKSHOP

(No. B/892) Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the workshop of Larsen and Toubro located at Morcellement La Confiance, he will state if he is in presence of complaints from the owners of residences adjacent thereto as to the inconveniences being caused thereto and requesting the relocation thereof and, if so, indicate if due consideration will be given thereto.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will answer this question. Some hon. Members have mentioned this issue to me.

I am informed that the workshop that has been set up temporarily for the Metro Express Project by the Larsen & Toubro Ltd, at Morcellement La Confiance, is the precast yard whereby the I-Girders, that is what we put for the elevator structure, are cast and various quality tests are carried out on construction materials.

Larsen & Toubro Ltd is implementing a collaborative Communication and Stakeholder Management Plan, which covers the modality of timely communication to individuals/residential and businesses to meet the requirements of all concerned stakeholders.

I am further informed that Larsen & Toubro Ltd has put in place a dedicated Place Manager to proactively engage with residents and businesses in the region of Beau Bassin/Barkly.

Moreover, any person or business who has a concern, may direct same to the complaints desk at the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill.

I am informed, Madam Speaker, there has been one complainant regarding the workshop and the precast yard. The complainant wrote a letter about noise disturbance, especially at night and about the dust. Larsen and Toubro Ltd, the contractor immediately responded and took appropriate measures to lower the noise level and to reduce the amount

of dust on the worksite through watering of the ground. Since then, that person has not complained again and no other complaints have been received from residents living in the vicinity.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lepoigneur!

Mr Lepoigneur: Merci, Madame. Effectivement, cette même personne est venue me voir, parce que cela cause toujours des ennuis, et j'ai deux photos qui montrent que c'est assez collé avec son mur et que cette personne-là, la femme, subit une dépression et suit un traitement. Moi-même, j'ai été témoin la semaine dernière, en sortant d'une veillée mortuaire, je suis passé chez eux. Effectivement, il y a du bruit de *grinder* et de soudeur, qui se passe la nuit. On avait promis que cela allait être arrêté au 30 juin 2019, on est déjà fin septembre 2019. Si, c'est possible de voir pour que ces gens aient plus de confort dans la nuit, et moi, j'ai été témoin, je vais déposer les deux photos pour montrer.

Mr Bodha: One of the beds for the casting which is very close to the residence has been removed. Usually, we have a Communication Officer of Larsen and Toubro who went to see the family. I will ask her to go and see the family again and see what we can do, because the precast yard, we will be needing it for another two years, because the girders are cast there and the girders leave the yard at 10 o'clock at night, they are put, place at night before 2 o'clock in the morning. So, it's a very challenging task, but I will see what can be done. I will ask the lady to go and see the family.

Thank you, Madam.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, the inhabitants - if the Minister can listen. Hon. Minister, you can listen to what I am saying.

Mr Bodha: Yes, please!

Mr Bhagwan: I would have wished if the Minister could have a site visit at night if he hasn't. Not only the girders which are being transported, the heavy vehicles which are being used, almost escorted by the Police which, in fact, is a problem to the inhabitants. Now, the Minister has informed the House that it would be for another two years. So, I think the Minister owes to the inhabitants of that region a site visit to be effected by him and his officers, at least, to see the way the area has been disrupted. What action would be taken by

the Metro Express or his Ministry, at least, to have all this region be reinstated, the roads, the drains, the area within that *morcellement* where people have bought land and built houses.

Mr Bodha: As regards the reinstatement, this is going to be done, because this is part of the project and as soon as the project has been implemented, the landscaping and the reinstatement of road and drains have to be done as per the contract.

As regards visiting the region, well, I have visited the region many times, at different hours, I will do that.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam. In regard to the setting up of workshop in a residential area like the case of Morcellement La Confiance, will you please tell us whether there is any code of conduct that the contractor is liable towards the population that he should take all the precautions, and will you please refer the matter to the Ministry of Labour in order to take immediate action regarding the case of La Confiance?

Mr Bodha: Well, we will do that with my colleague, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

PEREYBÈRE – YELLOW FUTURES LTD – EIA LICENCE

(No. B/893) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the project for the construction of villas by 2 Futures, along Pyndia Lane, at Pereybère, he will state if the terms and conditions of the Environment Impact Assessment Licence are being strictly complied with.

Mr Sinatambou: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am informed that on 19 August 2016, Yellow Futures Ltd submitted an application for an Environmental Impact Assessment Licence for the setting up of an apartment complex (KI Grand Bay Residences) comprising 56 private apartments together with green spaces, a café, two outdoor pools and a gym at Pyndiah Lane, Pereybère.

An EIA Licence was granted to the proponent on 06 October 2017, that is, nearly 15 months later, after consultation with all relevant stakeholders and subject to a list of 37 conditions.

As per condition number 5 of the EIA Licence, the proponent was required to submit an Environment Monitoring Plan (EMP) for approval, prior to the start of works. The application for approval of the Environment Monitoring Plan was submitted on 10 May 2018 and was approved on 13 June 2018, following consultations with the relevant authorities. According to the Environment Monitoring Plan approved, the proponent is required to submit Environment Monitoring Reports regularly.

The proponent has obtained other necessary permits and clearances as required under the EIA Licence, namely a Building and Land Use Permit from the concerned local authority, a Ramsar clearance from the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, as well as clearances from the National Development Unit and the Road Development Authority. I am informed that the project is currently at implementation phase and that infrastructural works on site started on 16 June 2018.

Since then, officers of my Ministry have carried out three post EIA site monitoring exercises, namely in August 2018, in February 2019 and in September 2019, respectively. As per the Environment Monitoring Reports submitted during the implementation phase and the site inspections effected by officers of my Ministry, I am informed that there has been no non-compliance with the EIA conditions and no environmental nuisance has been noted.

Moreover, since the start of implementation of the project to date, no complaint has been received at the level of my Ministry and no authority has informed my Ministry of any non-compliance with conditions of the EIA Licence falling under their responsibility.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As this project along Pyndiah Lane is in an environmentally sensitive area, as per Clause 8 of the EIA Licence, the promoter is to provide a strip of land to the NDU to enlarge the existing drain at Pyndiah Lane. May I know from the hon. Minister if the promoter is complying with this specific Clause 8?

Mr Sinatambou: I cannot say whether he is complying. What I can say, however, is that the National Development Unit has informed my Ministry that the works along Pyndiah Lane are expected to be carried out before completion of the EIA project and this is scheduled to be by October 2020. I am further informed that the works to be undertaken by the NDU concerning the enlargement of the existing drains will be implemented in two phases, Madam Speaker. The bid documents for Phase I have already been prepared since 26

August 2019 and the NDU is in consultation with the Local Authority to obtain necessary wayleave prior to implement the works on site.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Also as per the EIA, Clauses 13 and 14, at the front page of the development from La Route Nationale along Pereybère till the site, there is a setback of two metres and 1.5 metres, that is, a total of 3.5 metres, excluding landscaping works that the promoter has to do ultimately, but it appears that this setback is not being complied with. May I know from the hon. Minister, during the monitoring exercise, whether the officers of his Ministry have looked into this specific issue?

Mr Sinatambou: Well, it is true, Madam Speaker, that under conditions 13 and 14 of the EIA Licence, there is a road reserve of two metres which has to be provided along the B13 Road and a footpath of 1.5 metres wide along the same frontage. What I understand is that the project is still at implementation phase and the proponent has already submitted an amended plan which provides for the road reserve and the footpath provided for at conditions 13 and 14. So, if the works have not been done yet, the plans already foresee that they will be done. I can assure the hon. Member that my Ministry, in collaboration with the Road Development Authority and the Local Authority, will maintain a close monitoring to ensure compliance with each and every condition.

Mr Rughoobur: Madam Speaker, I would request the hon. Minister to please look into this setback issue. The last supplementary relates to Clauses 17 and 26 of the EIA Licence where it is clearly specified that on each deed of sale, it is mandatory to include that in case of flooding, *le syndic* has to put in place a mechanism to remove water from site; this is one, and secondly, to maintain the drain along Pyndia Lane. Since the sale has started with clients, may I know if this particular Clause which is mandatory is being complied with?

Mr Sinatambou: It is true to say that under condition 17 of the EIA Licence, the promoter or *syndic*, as the case may be, shall be responsible for regular maintenance and upkeep of the drain and, at Clause 26, that they have to make arrangements to pump any accumulated water from the site and dispose of same in an appropriate manner. I can say that it has been made a condition of the EIA Licence that both conditions 17 and 26 have to be included in a deed of sale, but I must confess I have not seen any deed of sale yet. I will certainly make sure that my officers actually have a look at any deed of sale which has already been signed, and we will make sure that if it has not been done, it has to be done.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

PEREYBÈRE - JIN MEI CO. LTD - PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

(No. B/894) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the project for the construction of villas by Jin Mei Co. Ltd., along Pyndia Lane, at Pereybère, he will state if the terms and conditions of the Environment Impact Assessment Licence are being strictly complied with.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, the project submitted by Jin Mei International Development Ltd does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment. However, in view of flooding problems in the region of Pereybère, I exercised the discretion vested in the Minister, under Section 17 of the Environment Protection Act of 2002, and declared the project as a scheduled undertaking requiring the approval of a Preliminary Environmental Report (PER). A PER application was thus submitted on 08 September 2017 for the construction of 16 villas and associated amenities under the Investment Promotion (Property Development Scheme) Regulations on a plot of land of an extent of 6,010 square metres at Pereybère.

After consultation with all relevant authorities, the Preliminary Environmental Report approval was issued on 15 December 2017, subject to a list of 18 conditions. Some of the conditions are required to be complied with during implementation phase while others are required to be complied with during the operational phase of the project.

I am informed that prior to the PER application, the proponent obtained a Ramsar Clearance on 26 April 2017 from the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security. Pursuant to the PER approval, the proponent subsequently obtained an approval from the National Development Unit on 26 February 2018 as well as a Building and Land Use Permit from the Rivière du Rempart District Council on 13 March 2018. The project is at implementation phase and works on site started in April 2018. Since then, officers of my Ministry have carried out three site inspections, namely in August 2018, in February 2019 and in September 2019 respectively. It is to be noted that the site visit undertaken in February 2019 was following heavy rainfall and, at the time of visit, no flooding was observed at the subject site or in its immediate surroundings.

Madam Speaker, during all three site inspections no environmental nuisance was observed on site. Moreover, since the grant of the Preliminary Environmental Report

approval, I am informed that no complaint has been received at the level of my Ministry and no non-compliance has been observed. My Ministry, in consultation with other authorities, will continue to monitor the project and will initiate necessary enforcement and remedial action in case of non-compliance with any of the conditions of the Preliminary Environmental Report approval as provided for under the Environment Protection Act of 2002.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again as per Clause 8 of this PER (Preliminary Environmental Report), the promoter has to have the approval of the Local Authority after construction of drains inside and connect it with the masonry drain that you have outside, which is for the NDU. It has to have the approval of the Local Authority. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been the construction of that drain inside the site and whether it has connected that drain to the main drain of the NDU?

Mr Sinatambou: I cannot say here whether the drain has been connected. I have not been on site myself. What I know, however, is that under Clause 8 of the PER approval, necessary approval needs to be obtained from the relevant authority for connection of the drain network for that existing masonry drain.

I got the information that, since 13 March 2018, approval for surface drainage network drawings has been obtained; so the drawings have been approved, but I cannot say whether the networking has been done. What I can also say is that I have been informed that the Local Authority has informed my Ministry that the proponent has respected all planning norms and is complying with the requirements of the Building and Land Use Permit.

Mr Rughoobur: It is not surprising with this Local Authority, Rivière du Rempart District Council, Madam Speaker. I am going to table some pictures as evidence to prove that no drain has been constructed inside the site and that there has been no connection that has been done, and this Clause 8 has not been respected by the promoter. I would humbly request the hon. Minister to send his officers to check and to ensure that there is compliance to the provisions of this Preliminary Environmental Report.

Mr Sinatambou: As I say, I cannot say what has happened, I have not been there. I know that, however, as I said earlier in my reply, there have been three on-site inspections by the officers of my Ministry. I can assure the House that my Ministry, not only on its own, but also in consultation with other authorities, will continue to monitor the project and will

initiate necessary enforcement and/or remedial action in case of non-compliance. I have not seen the photographs. Based on what I will see, I will certainly then request my officers to carry out an inspection in the light of those photographs and I will make it a duty to keep the hon. Member informed.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

RIVIERE DU REMPART DISTRICT COUNCIL – BULBS PROCUREMENT

(No. B/895) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the procurement of bulbs for the provision of lighting facilities in the villages in the North, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rivière du Rempart District Council, information as to the quantity and value thereof procured over the past six months, indicating the –

- (a) name of the supplier, and
- (b) procurement method used.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart that a procurement exercise was carried out on 25 September 2018 through a request for sealed quotation for the procurement of 3,000 led bulbs for the maintenance of street lighting facilities in villages under its jurisdiction for the financial year 2018/2019.

The contract was awarded to the lowest responsive bidder, Dionics Ltd. for the amount of Rs650,500. I am also informed that the contract Dionics Ltd. was terminated in March 2019 to the fact that the contractor could supply only 240 out of 3,000 led bulbs to the Council. In order to cater for the maintenance of the street lighting facilities, the Council had, over the period of 06 March to 01 April 2019, to have recourse to direct procurement method in virtue of Section 25 of the Public Procurement Act 2006, for the purchase of 720 led bulbs.

I am further informed that a new annual procurement exercise has been carried out by the Council on 16 May 2019, through a request for sealed quotation for the supply of 2,000 to

6,000 units of led bulbs for the financial year 2019/2020. The contract has been awarded to Sunrise East Ltd. and, as at date, the latter has so far delivered 1,000 led bulbs to the Council.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There have been serious delays during the last six months in the supply of those bulbs, so may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether she could look into this issue of procurement procedures at the level of the Rivière du Rempart District Council, based on the fact that there has been a series of complaints from various village councils in the North?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, as I have said, the first Contractor Dionics Ltd. has not been in a position to supply all the bulbs, so we have had to carry out a second exercise. I will urge the District Council to look into it and address the issue urgently.

Mr Rughoobur: The reason why I mentioned about this issue of procurement is because the supplier that has been awarded the contract for bulbs was also the supplier for bins. Bulbs and bins! This is the reason why I was requesting the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to please look into this issue. Thank you.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, the question is not related to the same contract but, however, I will look into it.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

RIVIERE DU REMPART DISTRICT COUNCIL - SOCIAL ACTIVITIES - EXPENDITURE

(No. B/896) **Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Rivière du Rempart District Council, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the total expenditure incurred on catering for social activities organized over the past two years, including hotel charges and/or cost of *salle verte*.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): With your permission, Madam Speaker, the information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Madam Speaker: Next question! Hon. Ameer Meea!

MRS S. M. - DEATH - POLICE ASSISTANCE

(No. B/897) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to death of Mrs S.M., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the time at which the -

- (a) son of the deceased called at the Bel Air Rivière Sèche Police Station requesting for urgent police assistance, and
- (b) Police officers reached the locus, indicating if consideration will be given for additional actions to be taken against the Police officers for failing to deploy assistance in time, pending the conclusion of the inquiry initiated thereinto.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I will reply to Parliamentary Questions B/897 and B/910 together as they relate to the same subject matter.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question B/897, I am informed that on 10 September 2019, minor N. A. M., aged 10 called at the Bel Air Rivière Sèche Police Station at 08.32 hours and stated that his father, Mr N. M. was assaulting his mother, Mrs S. M. at his place. Immediately thereafter, at 08.34 hours minor S. M. aged 14 joined his brother at the Police Station.

With regard to part (b) of the same question, I am further informed that Police officers left the Police Station at 09.03 hours and reached the locus at about 09.11 hours.

Police have initiated an inquiry into the present matter as there is reasonable ground to suspect that Police officers on duty at the material date and time may have failed to take prompt action to prevent the commission of an offence. Accordingly, the CCTV footage of 10 September 2019 has been secured and a case of 'Culpable Omission' has been opened for an in-depth investigation into the matter.

As an immediate measure, on 14 September 2019, the four Police officers who were on duty at the material date and time have been transferred out to other Police Stations.

On 16 September 2019, an interim report has been sent to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice. On 18 September 2019, the Office of the DPP has returned the case for further inquiry. After completion of supplementary inquiry, the case has been returned to the DPP.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, according to information which appeared in the Press, the Police officers gave reason for non-assistance to this case that they were busy with a road accident. But is the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor aware that in the Diary Book of the Police Station nothing is mentioned for the road accident? Is he aware of this information?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I am not aware of this information and I believe that we should not go by what is published in the newspapers, especially the newspapers that we have in this country.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, since the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor mentioned that he does not go by the newspaper, I would advise him to go by the security camera, because the security camera revealed that the Police officers were sitting in their place and they were not attending any road accident. So, can I ask the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor to see to it that there is no cover-up in this case?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, I have already talked to the Commissioner of Police. I, myself, I consider what has happened as being very serious and that the enquiry should be held in such a way as to cover every aspect of the case, and action must be taken. So far I am concerned, if these people are found guilty, they must be dismissed from the Force.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor inform the House if the CCTV footage reveals the way the children were being treated and being left unattended at that time at the Police Station?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I have not been given such information and I have not viewed it. So, I can't say.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are not asking the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor to view, we are asking him to find out how these children were being treated at that time when their mother was being murdered over there. This is what we want to know. We do not want this case to be taken lightly and to be taken as something normal. Madam Speaker, will the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor advise the Commissioner of Police to give

refresher courses to members of the Police to remind them of their duties and abide to the standing orders?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I think the Police Officers follow training before they start their duties and they must be aware of their responsibilities. It is not for the Commissioner now to teach them.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Can the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor enlighten the House whether the Independent Police Complaints Commission has *proprio motu* ceased this matter to investigate?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, the Police had a preliminary investigation which is submitted to DPP. Well, the enquiry was really not complete and I, myself, I find it very strange why at that stage it was sent to the DPP. The enquiry should have been completed and then should have been submitted to the DPP. Now, we wait the decision of the DPP.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Speaker. What has happened in this case is very serious by the acts and doings of the Police Officers. In the past, Police Officers have been suspended for lesser offence...

Madam Speaker: Don't make statements, hon. Baloomoody! Ask your question!

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor whether he finds it proper that the Commissioner of Police has decided to transfer these Police Officers to another Police Station instead of suspending them from service?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, I don't know whether at this stage, they should have been suspended, but then we see Police Officers being suspended for 15/16 years, they are being paid their whole salary, they are working outside. Well, this situation cannot be tolerated in this country.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, next question!

ETIENNE PELLEREAU STREET, PORT LOUIS – RESURFACING & DRAINS

(No. B/898) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the

Etienne Pellereau Street, in Port Louis, he will state if remedial measures will be taken to attend to the –

- (a) bad state thereof, from its junction between the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street to the Royal Road, and
- (b) absence of adequate drainage system from its junction between Royal Road to the Mariamen Street, which causes flooding of houses in the vicinity thereof and, if so, when.

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

The Etienne Pellereau Street falls under the jurisdiction of the City Council of Port Louis. I am informed by the National Development Unit that the following works have been earmarked for implementation in this financial year -

- resurfacing of Etienne Pellereau Street;
- Plaine Verte/corner Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street;
- off Mariamen Temple Street, Port Louis, and
- upgrading of drains at Etienne Pellereau Street, that is, the corner David off Mariamen Temple Street near Joonas, Port Louis.

I am informed by the Road Development Authority that it has already constructed a cross drain to the tune of Rs340,000 at Royal Road to resolve the issue of flooding in that location.

As regards the Port Louis/Central Flacq Road and Abercrombie/Queen Elizabeth Road, I am informed that these roads and drains are in good condition. If that is not the case, I am proposing that we'll have a survey to consider whether additional works have to be carried out.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, in relation of Part (a) of the question, Etienne Pellereau Street is a very busy one because it leads to the Immigration Bus Station. So, my question to the hon. Minister is whether he can see to it that when the road is resurfaced the existing tar is being removed first because what happened in Port Louis is that they piled up the tar on the road and the level increases and this creates lots of problems. So, can I ask the hon. Minister to see to it that it is being removed first and then new tar is being placed?

Mr Bodha: I will certainly do that, Madam Speaker.

Mr Ameer Meea: In the second part of the question, true it is that part of the work has been done, that is, a cross drain has been constructed on Royal Street, but it is only half of the work that has been done. It has to be completed because the level of the drain is not good and this is causing lots of problems, especially with heavy rains coming. So, I will accept the request of the hon. Minister that a survey be done there so as to see what can be done.

Mr Bodha: We will certainly do that, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

BOIS MARCHAND CEMETERY – CCTV CAMERA

(No. B/899) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Bois Marchand Cemetery, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if he is in presence of a letter from the United Chinese Associations for the installation of CCTV Camera Surveillance System thereat under the Safe City Project and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given thereto and, if not, why not.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that his office received a letter from the United Chinese Associations on 18 January 2019 requesting the installation of CCTV Camera Surveillance System under the Safe City Project at Bois Marchand Cemetery.

A survey has already been carried out at Bois Marchand Cemetery and a proposal to install CCTV cameras thereat is being finalised.

Necessary clearances are being sought from appropriate stakeholders.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: I really hope that this goes ahead, that is, CCTV camera is being placed at the entrance of the Cemetery, Chinese Section. Madam Speaker, I have raised this issue several times in the House since 2015. Can I ask the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor to see to it that camera is installed not only at the entrance of the Cemetery but also according to this letter for better monitoring of overpass, that is, where M2 Highway because there are problems of numerous throwing of rocks to passing vehicles that have been recorded at this place. Can this problem also be tackled at the same time?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, the question is about the cemetery. As I have already answered, survey has already been carried out at Bois Marchand Cemetery and the proposal to install CCTV cameras thereat is being finalised.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Armance!

COTE D'OR –MULTI-SPORTS COMPLEX PROJECT

(No. B/900) Mr P. Armance (First Member for Grand River North West & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Multi-Sports Complex Project at Côte d'Or, in St Pierre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Multi-Sports Infrastructure Ltd., information as to where matters stand regarding completion thereof, including the football playground and other amenities.

Mr Toussaint: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Mauritius Multi-Sports Infrastructure Ltd. (MMIL) that the Aquatic Centre Multi-purpose Gymnasium, Football Pitch, the Grand Stand, offsite and onsite works have been completed at hundred percent. To date the only facility that has yet to be completed is the athletics field, but I am informed that same should be ready by mid-November 2019.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On the Government website, Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister stated that the seating capacity of the football playground would be 15,000 seats. Can he confirm that today we have reached 15,000 seats with the number of gradins present on the football playground?

Mr Toussaint: Madam Speaker, the actual seating capacity of the football stadium is 4,690 and to achieve the 15,000 capacity, this will be done phasewise.

Mr Armance: Madam Speaker, I fail to understand whether he is telling us now that the project is in two phases. Is it phase I, phase II, phase III. Can he confirm this please?

Mr Toussaint: Yes.

Mr Armance: This has never been mentioned in the House. I will quote what the said Minister stated on the 27 of June in reply to a PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition. He mentioned that – in regard delays in the work, I am informed by MMIL that the works are progressing satisfactorily and that the football and athletic pitch will be completed by the 30 of June 2019. So, is he now confirming to the House that there will be only 4000 seats and we will not reach the 15,000?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, Madam Speaker. The pitch is completed and the seating capacity of 4690 seats are completed and then we will expand and like I have said this will be done phasewise.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin.

Mr Quirin: Peut-on savoir de l'honorable ministre si les différentes fédérations sportives auront la possibilité d'utiliser les infrastructures de ce complexe sportif et, si oui, sous quelles conditions?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, les conditions n'ont pas encore été établies mais il va de soi que nous allons mettre à la disposition des fédérations sportives ce bijou.

Madam Speaker: Yes, last question.

Mr Armance: The last question. Regarding the aquatic centre, the swimming pool, there have been a lot of complaints with the swimmers regarding the wind that impact on their performance in the aquatic centre. Is he now envisaging to put wind breaker to protect the water?

Mr Toussaint: Madam Speaker, I am not aware at all about complaints from athletes concerning the wind. Mais, de toutes les façons, nous avons pu voir les performances de nos athlètes lors des jeux des îles. De toutes les façons, je vais passer l'information à la MMIL. Si besoin est, on va faire le nécessaire.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Armance.

BUILDING AND LAND USE PERMIT – APPLICATIONS/COMPLAINTS

(No. B/901) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Building and Land Use Permit, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of applications received and number of complaints received concerning the prescribed procedures, indicating the –

- (a) cost of application, and
- (b) recurrent cost incurred, since the coming into operation of the new legislation in relation thereto.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Madam Speaker, with your permission, the information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly. I will see to it that the information is placed as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Armance.

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam. Can the hon. Minister confirm that now all applications for the BLP and BLP1 licence is done through the EDB?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: The Local Government Act 2019 was amended for the Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2019 to provide that application for building and land use permit for a building having floor area above 150 square metres be made through National Electronic Licensing System.

Mr Armance: Can she, as well, confirm to the House that each and every time someone goes to the website to do the application, there is a fee of Rs500 applicable? When the file is rejected, the person has to again pay Rs500 for the application.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes, Madam Speaker. This is one of my concerns also. The processing fee varies from Rs500 to Rs1000 depending on the local authorities. So, I am looking at it personally. I think that we need to standardise the processing fee. This is very important.

Mr Armance: Madam Speaker, I have personally tried to apply using the website of the EDB and I have noticed that it is not user friendly. My main concern is: what happens to people who do not use computer, who do not have the facility to use computer to apply for the licence what do you do in such case?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, Madam Speaker, a decision has to be taken. So, a decision has been taken for applications to be conducted online. So, I am sure that help/support is being provided through all the local authorities. If there is any particular issue, the hon. Member just let me know and I will look at it personally.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there are still courses because this is a very new legislation to both officers and users. Are there still courses being run by the Ministry to local officers.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Yes. Certain training has been given to the officers, Madam.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Armance.

Mr Armance: As a last question, Madam, will the Minister consider to provide such facility at the level of the Municipality and District Council so that people that are not computer literate have access to this facility?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Madam Speaker, the facility is being offered for the Mauritius Post also with the assistance of the officers of the local authorities.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Armance.

TI-LAC PUBLIC BEACH - POINTE AUX SABLES - ACCESS ROAD

(No. B/902) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Ti-lac Public Beach and access road at Pointe aux Sables, he will state if remedial measures will be taken to attend to the –

- (a) deteriorated state thereof, and
- (b) waste water outflows from the Foyer Trochetia onto the access road and stagnation thereof thereat and, if so, when.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that it is this Government which proclaimed the public beach of Ti-Lac in 2017, with an extent of 17,815 square metres and a sea frontage of 160 metres.

Following several requests from hon. Minister Alain Wong Yen Cheong, the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, the Beach Authority has included the Ti-Lac public beach in its programme for the upgrading of proclaimed public beaches which will be implemented in the near future.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that Foyer Trochetia is a centre for elderly persons with severe disabilities and young adults suffering from autism.

The Foyer was a donation from the Government of Luxembourg to the Government of Mauritius and has been in operation since 2008. It consists of five living units, laundry, administrative block and kitchen. It is jointly managed by my Ministry and Arya Sabha

Mauritius, which is a non-governmental organisation. The Foyer has a septic tank of 23,000 litres within its premises for the discharge of wastewater from the toilets, kitchen and laundry activities. In July of this year, the City Council of Port Louis registered a complaint from neighbours living in the surroundings of Foyer Trochetia to the effect that wastewater was seeping through the boundary wall of the compound onto the road.

My Ministry was apprised of same on the 11 of July 2019 and it organised a site visit with technical officers from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport and the Wastewater Management Authority on the 17 of July 2019. The site visit revealed that wastewater was seeping from the septic tank onto the public road through an opening in the boundary wall. Following the visit, my Ministry arranged for the accumulated wastewater to be removed from the compound and from the road by wastewater carriers. Wastewater carriers have also been requested to remove the wastewater every three days to avoid further nuisances.

I am informed that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport will carry out a percolation test and, based on the results, either a new absorption pit or a leaching field will be constructed or a new septic tank of higher capacity will be installed depending on the advice to be tendered by the Wastewater Management Authority.

Mr Armance: Let me just first thank the hon. Minister for the proclamation of the beach. Thank you, but my main concern is that, if you see the state of the beach right now and this has been caused mainly by Triolet Bus Services that use it as a parking area. Since 2017 to date, the environment surrounding is completely deteriorated.

I understand that there will be an upgrading. Can the hon. Minister please give us some dates when he intends to proceed with the upgrading of the beaches?

Mr Sinatambou: I think, first of all, that the hon. Member should rather thank his colleague, Minister Alain Wong, who actually helped to make it a public beach.

Now, following further requests from the hon. Minister, as I said earlier, the Beach Authority has included the Ti-Lac public beach in its programme for the upgrading of proclaimed public beaches which will be implemented in the near future.

As a Minister, I cannot give an exact date now because one must be aware that the Beach Authority looks after 127 public beaches. But it is already a good sign that it has intimated that it will implement the request of hon. Minister Wong Yen Cheong in a near future.

Mr Armance: Regarding the wastewater that is coming from the Foyer Trochetia, the hon. Minister is right to say that the water comes through the boundary roads. Will he, please, refer the matter to his colleague, the hon. Minister of Energy and Public Utilities to see whether we can have a Wastewater Project there to avoid the septic tank and the leaching field?

Mr Sinatambou: As I said in my reply, I am informed that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport will first carry out a percolation test and, based on those results, either a new absorption pit or a leaching field will be constructed or a new septic tank of higher capacity will be installed, depending on advice to be tendered by the Wastewater Management Authority. So, I will request the hon. Member just to be slightly patient, he will know soon what to do and how to do it.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Abbas Mamode!

PARISOT ROAD, MESNIL - FOOTBRIDGE

(No. B/903) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to Parisot Road, in Mesnil, he will state if consideration will be given for the widening thereof towards the end thereto on the motorway and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, with your permission I will answer this question. The Parisot road which passes through a built-up area on both sides falls under the responsibility of the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix.

I am informed by the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix that widening of the road cannot be envisaged due to existing buildings on both sides of the road.

I am further informed by the RDA that the Parisot Road cannot be connected to Motorway M1 due to unavailability of space and significant difference in levels. For this reason, a foot bridge has been provided at this location for movement of pedestrians and the residents have the possibility to connect to the Motorway through Camp Fouquereaux road or via internal roads such as the Galea Road.

Mr Abbas Mamode: Since it is impossible to enlarge, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether his Ministry is working on alternate? He knows the situation prevailing in this corner of the island.

Mr Bodha: Well, from the information I have, the residents have the possibility to use internal roads. But what we can do, we can give some facilities.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Abbas Mamode!

MEDICAL & HEALTH OFFICERS - WORKING HOURS - REVIEW

(No. B/904) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Medical and Health Officers, he will state if consideration will be given for a review of the policy regarding the working hours thereof, having regard to the workload and roles and responsibilities assigned thereto, indicating if the proposal of 33 hours per week will be studied.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, may I, in the first instance, inform the hon. Member that the working hours applicable to the Medical and Health Officers do not fall within any policy of the Ministry of Health. All terms and conditions of service for the grade of Medical and Health Officers are determined by the Pay Research Bureau, as for any public officer.

The PRB has, since its report in 1993, classified the grade of Medical and Health Officers as shift workers as they are required to provide a round-the-clock service. And according to PRB, shift work is defined as -

“a flexible working arrangement for a 24-hour coverage where one employee replaces another or where a different group of workers do the same job one after another and whereby workers normally work 40 hours weekly, or an average of 40 hours weekly in a cycle. These workers work in relays on a 24-hour basis including invariably night duty and works on Sundays and public holidays.”

However, the shift system for the Medical and Health Officers, as recommended in the PRB Reports since 1993, could not be implemented in view of the shortage in the grade on the establishment of the Ministry. The issue of shift system for Medical and Health Officers was again highlighted in PRB Reports of 2008 and 2013 and it was recommended that the Ministry should contemplate the introduction of the shift system as soon as practicable.

In their submissions to PRB, the Union members, that is the doctors themselves have, as revealed in the PRB Reports 2013 and 2016, continuously stressed that the prevailing

arrangement was strenuous and impacted on service delivery and they supported the idea of implementing the shift system.

Madam Speaker, subsequently, the PRB, in its Report 2016, strongly recommended the implementation of the shift system for officers of the medical group. To give effect to this recommendation, the Ministry recruited some 356 Medical and Health Officers in June 2017. The shift system has, therefore, been implemented in all hospitals as from 01 August, 2017.

The House may wish to know that all the Medical and Health Officers have opted for the revised terms and conditions of the service of the PRB Report 2016, and as at to-date, they are all governed by the terms and conditions of service as laid down by the PRB Report 2016.

The Ministry is, therefore, not mandated to review any terms and conditions of service as may be applicable to the grade of Medical and Health Officers. Any review can only be done by the PRB.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since the Minister himself is a Medical Practitioner, normally there is consultation between his Ministry and PRB prior to PRB Report. So, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether - he knows well the duties of doctors, especially in public service - there has been any consultation between the Ministry and the PRB prior to PRB Report?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes, Madam Speaker, I am very well aware of the hours of work of junior doctors. Just to give an example, Madam Speaker, it used to be very long hours before. It used to be like that. For example, if doctors start working on Monday morning at 9 o'clock, he will work the whole day Monday till 4 o'clock and 4 o'clock Monday till 9 o'clock Tuesday morning and then Tuesday he continues from 9 o'clock till 4 o'clock and then he goes home. Nearly 31 hours. I know about this. That is why this Government has taken many doctors. Just to give an idea as well about the number of doctors we have taken, Madam Speaker. When we came in 2015, for the junior medical staff, there were only 677 junior medical staff.

In 2016, we took 136 doctors. In 2017, 430 and now interview has been done at the PSC already, we are taking 105, making a total of 671 doctors. Before, when we came in, it was 677 and in the last five years, we have taken 671 more. So, we appreciate. We are

aware of the problem. I am aware how many hours they have been working. And they were complaining about it, rightly so. It was very strenuous; it was affecting their social life. We appreciate that. That is why we have more or less doubled the number of doctors. There have been consultations all along the way. They have signed the PRB form and when we put the shift system, they signed and they were given two increments. We have been trying to do whatever we can. So, to say that we have not worked, I do not think it is fair.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Abbas Mamode!

POLICE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT – POLICE OFFICERS & VEHICLES

(No. B/905) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the *Police de l'Environnement*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of -

(a) Police Officers posted thereat;

(b) vehicles at the disposal thereof;

(c) offices available thereat, and

(d) contraventions booked for breach of Environment legislation and convictions secured since November 2018 to date, per category of offences.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the *Police de l'Environnement* is serviced by 35 Police Officers of different ranks.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that there are nine vehicles attached to the *Police de l'Environnement*, out of which four are at the disposal of the main office at Ken Lee Tower and one vehicle at each of its five regional offices.

With regard to part (c) of the question, the *Police de l'Environnement* operates from six different locations. The main office is located at Ken Lee Tower, near Line Barracks in Port Louis, with a strength of 15 Police Officers. The five regional offices are located as follows –

- The Northern region operates from Trou-aux-Biches Police Station with four Police officers;

- The Southern region operates from the Rose Belle Police District Headquarters with four Police Officers;
- The Eastern region operates from Flacq Police with four Police Officers;
- The Western region operates from the Rose Hill Police District Headquarters with four Police Officers, and
- The Central region operates from the former Curepipe Police Station with four Police Officers.

With regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed that 2,741 contraventions have been booked from November 2018 to date for offences in breach of environmental laws.

As regards the number of convictions secured, I am informed that from November 2018 to date, out of the 2,741 abovementioned contraventions, 1,041 offenders have been convicted and 1,700 contraventions are still under inquiry.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: As regards the four Police Officers in regional offices around the beach, does the hon. Minister think that this is the sufficient number needed to treat *la propreté*, when Government itself, during *les Jeux des Iles*, put much stress on *proprté*? So, does the hon. Minister think that the amount of four Police Officers in regional office is sufficient to look after *propreté*, to look after contraventions throughout the island?

Mr Sinatambou: I must say I entirely agree. The number of Police Officers to protect the environment is never sufficient, but, we must, however, be aware that there so many other scourges. How can we fight drug trafficking, drug dealers and so on, and then, we have only limited means. Wants are always unlimited, but resources are always limited. If I could I would have multiplied the number of Police officers by 10, but the numbers are limited and we have to deal with what we have.

Mr Mohamed: Whilst I totally understand that the hon. Minister has himself not been Minister of Environment for a long time, he is not for the past five years. Has he at all tried to impress upon the Minister Mentor when he was Prime Minister or the actual Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance? Has he impressed upon them to increase the number of Police Officers who would be responsible for the environment, and if he has, when has he done it, in what way and what has been their response?

Mr Sinatambou: Well, yes, I have and I must say we have to take policy decisions, and the policy decision is that we can only deal with what we have. In fact, we are recruiting more Police Officers in this country in order to be able to disseminate them in the regions concerned and for the specific purposes which are of importance, but, as I say, wants are unlimited, resources are limited. Requests have been made, but we can only deal with our limited resources in the most optimal manner that we can.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode, next question!

CONSTITUENCY NO. 3 – CLASSIFIED ROADS – TRAFFIC CONGESTIONS

(No. B/906) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the classified roads in Constituency No. 3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if urgent measures will be taken to prevent traffic congestions thereat at night due to obstruction by vehicles/vehicles parking in disorderly manners.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Constituency No. 3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, Comprises the following classified roads –

- (i) Abercrombie, SSR Street, Queen Elizabeth Road;
- (ii) Magon East Road;
- (iii) Military Road;
- (iv) St François Xavier Road;
- (v) Sir Edgar Laurent Street;
- (vi) Bernandin de Saint Pierre Road, and
- (vii) Boulevard Victoria Road.

The constituency is policed by the Plaine Verte, Vallée Pitot and Trou Fanfaron Police Stations.

Madam Speaker, I am informed that in the recent years, there has been a significant increase in commercial activities, such as food courts, offices and other related businesses

along these roads resulting in greater flow of traffic. The main problem is identified at night along SSR Street starting from junction Edgar Laurent up to junction La Paix Street.

With a view to address the problem, a team of Divisional Support Unit (DSU), Emergency Rescue Service and hot spot policing has been deployed to monitor traffic thereat from 18.00 hrs to 22.00 hrs daily. Additionally, Police is monitoring the situation by maintaining strict vigilance and taking appropriate actions against undisciplined drivers and riders.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, it is with deep regret and anger at the same time that I have to say that Constituency No. 3 is the most neglected one in terms of traffic congestion by the Police. Therefore, I would like to ask the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor if he is aware that from the junction of Route Militaire and Route des Pamplemousses – and by the way, you did not mention Route des Pamplemousses which is also a classified – and Desforges Street/SSR Street, there is not a single Police Officer from a.m. to p.m.? Not a single officer! I have on numerous occasions raised this in the House. So, is the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor aware of this situation, and can he see to it that needful is being done, that Police Officers are posted at the busiest roads of the capital?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I must confess I am not aware of the situation, but to place Police Officers everywhere like this, we have to increase the number considerably, we will have to recruit lot more of Police Officers.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, don't interrupt the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor!

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: And, therefore, for the time being I know that we don't have enough number of Police Officers to do what the hon. Member is asking us to do.

Mr Abbas Mamode: The situation is very chaotic concerning Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed Road which is called Route des Pamplemousses. So, will the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor ask the Commissioner of Police to have Police over Port Louis, that is, Police Traffic Branch, especially at night? The problem is more acute at night at Route des Pamplemousses where we have double parking. So, will the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor ask the Commissioner to make available to Plaine Verte Police Station, Police who deal with traffic and to have these traffic officers at night at Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed Road?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, the roads mentioned by the hon. Member do not form part of the roads that concerns the question that has been put. Therefore, he must come with a specific question.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, the question that has been put by hon. Abbas Mamode specifically talks about classified roads in Constituency No. 3, and Route des Pamplemousses, now known as Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed Road, is specifically in Constituency No. 3 and is more specifically a classified road. Is there any reason why the Commissioner of Police, who most probably gave the information to the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, is not aware that Route des Pamplemousses is a classified road in Constituency No. 3, or is there any other specific reason that the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor can give us as to why it is that the Commissioner of Police does not give appropriate information to the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I have mentioned the classified roads in the question put by the hon. Member and I don't see those roads that are being mentioned.

Madam Speaker: Next question hon. Baloomoody!

STATE INFORMATICS LTD – CEO

(No. B/907) **Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the Director of the State Informatics Limited (SIL), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the SIL, information as to the name of the incumbent, indicating the –

- (a) mode of recruitment thereof;
- (b) total pay packet thereof;
- (c) number of missions attended since his appointment to date, indicating the countries visited, dates, cost of air tickets and *per diem* paid thereto, and
- (d) performance appraisal thereof.

Mr Sawmynaden: Madam Speaker, the CEO of the State Informatics Ltd was appointed by the Board of SIL since 2007.

As regards parts (b), (c) and (d) of the question, the House will appreciate that since State Informatics Ltd is a private company governed by the Companies Act and its Board of Directors, it will not be appropriate for me to give details as requested.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has taken cognizance of the recent report of the Director of Audit? In fact, the Director of Audit has constantly criticised SIL with regard to project undertaken, be it at the Crime Occurrence Traffic Unit for the Police, the Human Resources Management System in the Civil Service, the Recruitment System at the PSC, the Management Information System at the Ministry of Social Security and the Border Control System. It has been criticised on many occasions. May I know from the hon. Minister what action has been taken following the criticisms of the Director of Audit?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, since the State Informatics Limited is a private company, it is a contract between two parties. Actually, it is between these two. Because we, as Ministry, we cannot get involved into matters between two parties, whether it's the Ministry or any other organisation and the SIL. Actually, it's a contract between them and if there is any dispute within that contract, actually they need to take it to the appropriate authorities.

Mr Baloomoody: The Public Sector Governance Division of the Ministry of Justice has just made a report on the performance of SIL. Is the hon. Minister aware of its contents?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, we are aware, but, as I mentioned, the State Informatics Limited is a private company. Actually, they have got their own Board, we have passed on the message to the Board, and it is up to the Board to see where is the exact issue, where is the problem exactly. Actually, we, as a Ministry, we cannot look into the day-to-day running of the SIL.

Mr Baloomoody: That report has recommended the scrap of SIL and it has recommended Government not to have any dealing with SIL. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether action will be taken following that report?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, we cannot base on a report to scrap a company. Actually, as I mentioned, it is a private company. So, it is up to them to see whether they will run accordingly or not. This is not our main issue but they will need to amend accordingly.

Mr Baloomoody: That Director is a very close relative of somebody very close to Government that action cannot be taken on that company. In fact, very close to the Financial Secretary.

Mr Sawmynaden: I think now the word ‘close’ is very famous on this side of the House, everyone is close. The CEO has been appointed since 2007, I do not know he was close to whom at that time that he was appointed. When we came into power, he stayed in his seat. I do not know whether he changed family or not. I am not aware of that.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Baloomoody!

ICTA – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

(No. B/908) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the post of Executive Director of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to –

- (a) the names and qualifications of the successive incumbents thereof, since 2015 to date, indicating the reasons for the laying off thereof, and
- (b) since when the post is vacant.

Mr Sawmynaden: With your permission, Madam Speaker, I am tabling the information requested at part (a) of the question.

As regards part (b) of the question, I already indicated on 15 May 2018 in my reply of PQ B/384 that the last Executive Director of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority resigned from the post on 27 March 2018. Since that date the post is vacant and we have an officer who is acting as Officer-in-Charge.

Mr Baloomoody: Given the importance of that Authority which is mainly, amongst others, to license and regulate the Information and Communication Services. Can I ask the hon. Minister what action has been taken to have this post filled?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, action has been taken since there is a consultancy job which has been undertaken for the merger of the IBA and the ICTA. Once that merger will be completed, this is when we are going to find the appropriate person because these are two different bodies so that we’ll have the appropriate person to run the organisation.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Now, the issue of merger has been on the table for the last two years. Can I know from the hon. Minister why this merger is being delayed?

Mr Sawmynaden: Actually, this merger is very complex. Even in countries like Singapore, it's very complex, today with latest technology, with WebTV and everything. So, this is why it is taking some time because we need to see all the nitty-gritties of the merger so that there is no loophole. So, once this is completed, we will continue with the merger and then we will find the appropriate person to run the whole organisation.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: PQ B/909. It should read "Chief Executive". The word "Executive" has been swallowed somewhere, I don't know.

POLYTECHNICS MAURITIUS (LTD) – CEO

(No. B/909) 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 Chief of Polytechnics Mauritius (Ltd.), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Polytechnics, information as to the –

- (a) mode of recruitment thereof;
- (b) total pay packet thereof, including fringe benefits, and
- (c) list of missions and conferences attended since his appointment to date, indicating in each case the –
 - (i) country visited;
 - (ii) duration thereof, and
 - (iii) cost of air ticket and *per diem* allowances drawn.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/432 of 22 May 2018, I informed the House about the details regarding the recruitment of Mr Yamal Matabudul as Chief Executive Officer, Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd.

Following the approval of Cabinet on 06 October 2017, Mr Yamal Matabudul was appointed as Chief Executive Officer, Polytechnics Mauritius. Mr Matabudul is a holder of a BSc in Physics from McGill University in Montreal, Canada, an MSc in Public Policy and Management from the University of London, as well as an MSc in Education with specialisation in Higher Education from the University of Oxford. He assumed duty on 16 October 2017 on a contractual basis for a period of three years renewable on a yearly basis

subject to satisfactory performance. His contract has been renewed on 19 October 2018 for a period of one year.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the emoluments drawn by the Chief Executive Officer comprise the basic salary of Rs116,760 and all-inclusive monthly allowance of Rs40,000.

In regard to part (c), I wish to inform the House that the Chief Executive Officer has undertaken two overseas missions and I am tabling the relevant information.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In 2016, this post was advertised and many people who were qualified did apply. Can I know from the hon. Minister what happened subsequently following that advertisement and the application of qualified people?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I had just informed at the beginning of my answer that I had already given information regarding the recruitment of Mr Matabudul. So, for the information of the House, I'll go over it again.

The post was advertised in 2016 and following a selection exercise, 13 candidates were shortlisted for interview and the interviewing panel had recommended that Dr. Arun Patil, Associate Professor and Director of Post Graduate Course Work Studies in the School of Engineering of Deakin University in Australia to be appointed as Chief Executive Officer of Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd., but the latter had, in a correspondence dated September 2017, declined the offer made to him, and Government decided to appoint Mr Matabudul for the post.

Mr Baloomoody: So, do we take it that Mr Matabudul was appointed without any selection from the list of those who applied, when the post was advertised in 2016?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, following the recruitment exercise, Dr. Patil was appointed and no other candidates were selected. Following that, we had appointed Mr Matabudul because he had already worked at the Ministry of Education and was responsible for the tertiary education section.

Mr Baloomoody: So, the hon. Minister is confirming that Mr Matabudul was appointed without any selection exercise?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Yes.

Mr Baloomoody: And can she confirm that Mr Matabudul was one of her advisors prior to his appointment?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: No, Madam Speaker, Mr Matabudul was not an advisor to the Ministry.

Mr Baloomoody: Can we know when the selection exercise of 2016 was cancelled, why there was not another selection exercise so as to appoint the most competent person to that post?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, in my answer to PQ B/432, I had clearly explained to the House the reasons why Mr Matabudul was appointed. I would request the hon. Member to go back to that answer.

MRS S.M. – DEATH

(No. B/910) **Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the death of Mrs S.M., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) if the footage of the CCTV Camera Surveillance System regarding the calling by the children of the deceased for urgent assistance has been secured, and
- (b) where matters stand as to the inquiry initiated thereinto.

(Vide Reply to PQ B/897)

Madam Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S. O. 10(2)

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

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER

HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS - VISIT - 09 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I have two statements to make. The first one is regarding the State Visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Mauritius.

Government, in consultation with the Diocese of Port Louis, extended an invitation to the Vatican in November 2018, for His Holiness Pope Francis to visit Mauritius while effecting a trip in the region.

His Holiness Pope Francis accepted the invitation and decided to visit Mauritius on 09 September 2019 after his visit to Mozambique and Madagascar.

Subsequently, on 14 March 2019, an Advance Team from the Vatican led by Monseigneur Mauricio Rueda, *Organisateur des voyages pontificaux*, effected a visit to Mauritius and gave an outline of the proposed official Programme of Visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Mauritius, which consisted, inter alia, of a Mass at Marie Reine de la Paix and an official function at the State House comprising a *tête à tête* with the Acting President and myself, and a meeting with members of the Government, the Diplomatic Corps and Civil Society. An introduction of the family members of the Acting President and my family members was also included in the proposed Programme as it is the practice of His Holiness Pope Francis to meet family members of Heads of State/Government and members of their respective families of countries that he visits.

At the request of the Vatican, I made the official announcement of the Papal visit along with Cardinal Piat, in a Press conference on 27 March 2019 at 1500 hrs. The visit of His Holiness Pope Francis was made public simultaneously at the Vatican, in Mauritius as well as in Madagascar and Mozambique.

Madam Speaker, an Organising Committee headed by my Office and comprising the Diocese and other stakeholders, was set up to look into all organizational aspects of the visit in line with the official programme submitted by the Vatican.

Several visits of the Advance Team from the Vatican were effected to look into the logistics and preparation of the visit, which included security arrangements and protocol issues.

On 09 September 2019, His Holiness Pope Francis accompanied by a delegation of 45 persons, along with 69 Vatican accredited media personnel undertook the visit to Mauritius. In addition, some 53 foreign journalists also covered the event. The visit in Mauritius started

with a Mass at Marie Reine de la Paix followed by a visit at the Shrine of Père Laval and concluded with the function at the State House comprising a *tête à tête* with the Acting President and myself and a meeting with Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Civil Society. As per the usual practice, the Acting President and I also presented our respective families to his Holiness.

Madam Speaker, the visit of His Holiness Pope Francis was a momentous event and a blessing for our country. The Mauritian population and visitors from neighbouring countries gathered to give him a warm welcome to His Holiness Pope Francis all throughout the visit to Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, this visit has been an opportunity for the Mauritian population to showcase to the international community our unity in diversity whether cultural, ethnic or religious. And indeed, this visit transcends all religious and political affiliations. I must here underline that the collaboration between Government and the Diocese was exemplary and contributed to the resounding success of this event.

I wish to seize this opportunity to thank the Mauritian population for the very warm welcome extended to His Holiness Pope Francis and his delegation.

My thanks also go to the Organising Committee, the Diocese of Port Louis, Business Mauritius, the Police Force for making of the visit a real success which is a matter of national pride.

Thank you.

(4.28 p.m.)

PQ B/876 - PROJECTS - LOANS

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I have another statement to make in connection with PQ B/876.

I refer to the point made by hon. Osman Mahomed this morning, where he stated that the previous Government had obtained a loan for financing the LRT project at a rate of only 0.8 per cent.

I have verified the records and wish to point out that this information is not correct. In fact, he is making reference to a Line of Credit of USD 200 million at an interest rate of LIBOR + fixed spread of 0.5 per cent to part finance the project which was estimated at USD

830 million. Currently, the interest rate would have been 2.57 per cent, i.e. LIBOR 2.07 per cent + 0.5 per cent.

In addition, the previous Government would have had to borrow the remaining balance of USD 630 million on commercial rate, which would have brought the weighted average interest rate to above 4 per cent.

In contrast, the current weighted average interest rate for the Metro Express project is only 0.87 per cent, when compounding the fixed interest rate of 1.8 per cent with the grant element at zero per cent for the full project cost of USD 535 million.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Do not interrupt, hon. Shakeel Mohamed! Do not interrupt!

(Interruptions)

Why 'why not?' Do not interrupt!

(Interruptions)

Yes, please proceed!

(Interruptions)

Order, I said!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

The Prime Minister: I can show you the Cabinet paper!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! I am addressing myself to you! Please, do not interrupt the hon...

(Interruptions)

Please resume your seat! When I am on my feet, you should not stand up for any clarification. I have said that you should not interrupt the hon. Prime Minister. He is making his statement. Allow him to finish with his statement.

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order...

Madam Speaker: Is that a point of order? Because I have asked...

(Interruptions)

You should allow the hon. Prime Minister to complete his statement first and then...

(Interruptions)

Then, you do whatever you want!

(Interruptions)

There are rules in this House; there are regulations in this House. I would not accept any point of order now. I would allow the hon. Prime Minister to complete his statement. Only then would I see whether there is any point of order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: No! I have said no!

(Interruptions)

I have already given my ruling on this issue! Please proceed!

(Interruptions)

I have said no!

(Interruptions)

Please proceed!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, thus, the terms and conditions of the current loan is far more favourable than the previous package obtained by the previous Government...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! I would take action against you if you continue to interrupt the hon. Prime Minister. You are causing obstruction to the smooth working of this House.

The Prime Minister: Do you want me to read the statement again?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, this is the last time that I am calling you to order and that is enough, I believe!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: *Eta ress trankil do moustas! Rekin moustas! Rekin! Rekin!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please! Order! Hon. Prime Minister, please proceed and complete your statement!

Mr Rutnah: On a point of order!

Madam Speaker: No!

Mr Rutnah: I have a point of order.

Madam Speaker: No!

(Interruptions)

I have just said that hon. Shakeel Mohamed cannot raise a point of order!

(Interruptions)

What is the point you are raising?

Mr Rutnah: A point of order...

Madam Speaker: I do not want...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah, I am ordering you out! Please proceed!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, thus, the terms and conditions of the current loan is far more favourable than the previous package obtained by the previous Government, i.e. a repayment period of 20 years against 10 years and a grace period of 7 years compared to only 2 years for the previous package.

Thank you.

Mr Mohamed: I am following your advice.

Madam Speaker: Do you have a point of order?

Mr Mohamed: Thank you. The point of order is the following - and I am following your advice. The only thing I wanted to say, with all due respect, is that the hon. Prime Minister has made a statement that is clearly controversial. That is my view. It is also my humble view that no controversial statements should be allowed at Statement Time. And the third and last issue I would like to raise is the following. He has made references to documents that we do not even know where they are from, and the least he could do, according to parliamentary practice, is to table it. If, at least, he believes in what he says...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, this statement has been vetted. They are factual and there is no controversy in the statement. This is my ruling. There is no debate on a statement. Yes! First Reading!

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Professional Town Planners' Council Bill (No. XXXI of 2019) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT NO. 3) BILL

(No. XXX of 2019)

Order for Second Reading read.

(4.35 p.m.)

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Mr Bodha): Madam Speaker, I move that the Road Traffic (Amendment No 3) Bill (No. XXX of 2019) be read a second time.

In fact, the main object of the Road Traffic (Amendment No. 3) Bill is to –

- (a) to provide for the introduction of the digital driving license;
- (b) to enable a person issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice -
 - (i) to pay the appropriate fine at the District Court, in lieu of a specific District Court;

- (ii) to authorise another person to pay the appropriate fine, on his behalf, at any District Court, and
- (iii) to pay the appropriate fine electronically.

The above amendments, Madam Speaker, aim at bringing a major reform in our driving licensing system in line with the National Road Safety Strategy 2016- 2025. It will also ease the lives of the citizens whilst at the same time enforcing law and order.

The provisions of the Digital Driving license will be an electronic version of the original driving license which will bear the signature of the Police. This would enable driving license holders to do away with the carrying of paper base photocopy of their driving license whilst driving. On the other hand, with this new Scheme, Police will be able to track down production of falsified photocopies of driving licenses or fake driving licenses and thus reinforcing law and order.

It is worth mentioning that the reform of the Driving Licensing Scheme is also one of the ten strategic actions of the National Road Safety Strategy which has the objective of reducing the number of accidents. Measures are being implemented on various fronts, be it engineering in terms of road infrastructure and vehicle road worthiness, enforcement by Police and the National Transport Authority in accordance with the legislations, road safety education, sensitisation, research and traffic management.

Madam Speaker, the Road Safety situation is yet to be improved and much remain to be accomplished, for which the collaboration of every stakeholder is imperative. Needless to say that the main causes of road accidents still remain speeding by reckless drivers, unfortunately, this year as at 18 September 2019, we have had 100 persons killed in road crashes corresponding, however, to a fall because last year the number was 119 at the same period.

It is to be noted that the category of motorcyclists are still the most vulnerable group of road users, though a decrease of 36% in the number of fatalities has been recorded in comparison to the same period last year.

Madam Speaker, as you are aware, the Budget Speech 2017-2018 at paragraph 136 makes mention that “Mauricloud will be created to offer a platform for issuance and verification of documents and certificates in a digital way”. The objective of Mauricloud is to offer a platform for citizens to access their official documents online thereby avoiding the need for physically carrying paper based documents.

Madam Speaker, hence, the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation has over the past twelve months developed the Mauricloud platform to host official documents of citizens registered on the platform. Each Mauricloud user will receive a dedicated and secured cloud storage space where his digital copies of official documents and certificates will be stored by the respective public sector agencies.

Madam Speaker, eventually, the digital driving license has been selected to be among the first documents to be made available to driving license holders via the Mauricloud platform. The expected benefits of having the digital driving license are -

- a. reduction in the use of physical documents where the public will have their driving licenses ready at hand on their mobile phones, and
- b. strengthening the authenticity of digital driving licenses since the Mauricloud platform eliminates the possibility of having fake licenses given that they will be issued and digitally signed by the Police.

Madam Speaker, in view of implementing the digital driving license, amendments are being proposed to the Road Traffic Act to cover the definition of the digital driving license at section 2 of the Road Traffic Act. The issue and production of digital driving license on demand is dealt with at section 46 of the Road Traffic Act.

The Police is currently digitalising its driving license physical records including scanning of the photos of the license holders. This exercise is expected to be completed by July 2020. Therefore, it is proposed to start with issuing driving license holders access to their digital driving licenses. Thereafter, once the digitalisation of driving licenses is completed, they may be used for verification purposes.

Madam Speaker, the digital driving license contains the same information as the paper-based driving license in an A4 PDF format except that the license will carry a Quick Response (QR) code which may be scanned by the Police to verify the data displayed on the license and to confirm that the license has been digitally signed by the Police.

Mauricloud will retrieve data from the Traffic Branch database of driving licenses seamlessly and securely using the Information Highway which is another flagship platform of the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation.

Madam Speaker, in view of ensuring the authentication of a user on the Mauricloud platform, a user registering on Mauricloud for the first time, will have to call in person at any

Post Office to complete the verification of his or her identity. In addition, access to Mauricloud will be assured through a 2 factor authentication mechanism wherein the public will login with a user name and a password and a One Time Password (OTP) on their mobile phones.

Madam Speaker, nonetheless, I want to reassure the general public that those who wish to continue using their paper-based driving license will still be allowed to do so under the Road Traffic Act.

Madam Speaker, on top of introducing the digital driving license, the Judiciary has implemented the computerization of the 'Revenue Collection and Case Management System' for proper control and monitoring of collection of revenue through a decentralised payment of fines and other fees. In line with the above objectives of digitalising the payment of fines, the Road Traffic Act is being amended to have recourse to an efficient electronic system for payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The previous regime of Fixed Penalty Notice whereby a person had the option to elect either to accept a Fixed Penalty Notice or to be reported with a view to proceedings being taken against him before a Court was amended in July 2018. Presently, a more efficient regime whereby a person who refuses a Fixed Penalty Notice and who elects to go before the Court for the proceedings against him, shall in any case be served with the Fixed Penalty Notice by registered post within 10 days of the date of the offence. This was done, Madam Speaker, to enable the driver to still effect payment of the fixed penalty at the appropriate District Court, within the delay of 28 days from the date of the offence, in case he changes his mind.

Given the increasing number of accidents, the amendment made in July 2018 provided that the number of road traffic offences under the Fixed Penalty Notice regime be increased from 141 to 204, with various levels of fines ranging from Rs500 to Rs20,000. Consequently, with these amendments, the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued has drastically increased. On the average, 2,990 notices are served per month by the Police since July 2018 as compared to 1,950 previously. Likewise, there are about 3,500 Photographic Enforcement Device Notices in relation to speeding offences which are issued on the average every month.

Madam Speaker, the amendments proposed in respect of payments of a Fixed Penalty Notice will avoid queuing and unnecessary delays for payment at the District Court counters

as with the proposed amendment, payment can be made at any District Court. In other words, there is a decentralisation of the payment process for some traffic fines. Furthermore, as the law stands now, a driver who has been served with a Fixed Penalty Notice has to attend in person the District Court where the offence for which the Fixed Penalty system has been served. With the proposed amendments, Madam Speaker, the offender can pay the fines for Fixed Penalty Notice at any District Court or he can send anyone to pay the fine on his behalf. He would, however, have to produce the Notice served upon him, his driving licence or his provisional driving licence or his National Identity Card or where he is the holder of an international driving permit, his passport.

Notwithstanding the above provision, the proposed amendment will also enable a driver who has been served with a Notice to authorise another person to pay the fine on his behalf. Therefore, he needs not take a day off from work in order to pay the fine. The person authorised to pay the fine shall, within 28 days from the date the driver has been served with the Notice, at any District Court produce his National Identity Card and the Fixed Penalty Notice.

Moreover, he should bring the person's driving licence or his provisional driving licence or his international driving permit. The driver's National Identity Card or, where the driver is the holder of an international driving permit, his passport must equally be produced. As the law stands now, the driver has to attend in person the District Court where the offence for which the Notice has been served. With the proposed amendments, the offender can pay the fines for the Fixed Penalty at any District Court and he can send anyone to pay the fine on his behalf.

Madam Speaker, additionally, with the proposed amendments, online payment through internet and mobile devices can be effected on a 24 hour basis and during seven days a week. Payment can be made on the last payment date from the date the Notice was issued and even on a holiday or after working hours.

Madam Speaker, the benefits incumbent to Government will be in terms of collection of fixed penalty fines thereby improving productivity at the level of the Judiciary whilst also consolidating the vision of Mauritius for a digital Mauritius. It goes without saying that the project will improve the ranking of Mauritius at the regional level in the context of e-Government. In fact, following the amendment of the Road Traffic Act in July 2018, the number of cumulative road traffic offences was increased from 11 to 24. The Road Traffic

Act was also amended to provide that a driver is disqualified from holding a driving licence where he is convicted of five cumulative road traffic offences instead of six previously.

Madam Speaker, I am also proposing to bring amendments to the Road Traffic Act to allow for the payment of the fines specified in the Photographic Enforcement Device Notice at any Court, instead of a specified District Court, within 28 days from the date the driver has been served the Notice which represent offences related to over speeding.

Madam Speaker, the Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by Proclamation and different dates may be fixed for the coming into operation of different sections of this Act.

In respect of the online payment, Police will be provided with an interface to input fixed penalty notices issued to the public within 72 hours. In case, the public has effected manual payment at any District Court cash office, the information will be synchronised to ensure the database is updated. The essential requisites for payment of Fixed Penalty Notice from the National Transport Authority for online payment is that information will be pulled using the information highway from the National Transport Authority database to the Judiciary system. On top of the above, the Online Payment facility for the Fixed Penalty Notices will support a Web Portal having the specific functionalities where the public will register to the Judiciary portal prior to having access to the online payment module. The payee would thereafter need to provide information prior to effecting payment, such as, the -

- Fixed Penalty Notice number;
- his last name;
- the Registration mark of the vehicle, and
- the date of the offence.

Madam Speaker, after entering the above information, the details of the outstanding payments will be displayed on the screen provided the information have already been entered by the Police. The payee can then proceed with the E-Payment. Upon successful payment, users will be allowed to download or print the electronic receipt. The system will also notify users on whether the payment was successful or not. Meanwhile, a secure mobile application will also be developed to allow for online payment via Android or Apple devices. The Mobile Application should be downloaded via Playstore or App Store. The Online payment of Traffic Fines will in simple steps allow instant confirmation of the successful transaction.

Madam Speaker, the Road Traffic (Amendment No. 3) Bill has been worked out in close collaboration with the Judiciary, the Central Informatics Bureau, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of my Ministry and the Police. The implementation of all the measures enumerated will bring changes in the life of our citizens in line with our vision for a modern society.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague, the Minister of Technology, Information and Innovation, without whom, this whole process would not have been possible.

Madam Speaker, with these words, I now commend the Bill to the House.

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members must have observed that the Bill in front of us is an amendment to a main Act. So, I would request all those who will be taking the floor to restrict their interventions to the amendments and not to open the debate as the hon. Minister has made. And secondly, I would request hon. Members also who will be taking the floor not to make a repetition of arguments which have already been made. Thank you for your indulgence.

Hon. Bhagwan!

(4.51 p.m.)

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I won't be very long because this Bill is a very positive one and goes in the right direction.

I still remember in one of these interventions, my colleague, I think it was for Budget Time or in another legislation, while we were discussing, made suggestions to the Minister with regard to the payment of fixed penalties. We all know the difficulties with those who are taken on fine with regard to payments, and the proposals of the Minister go in the right directions to facilitate payment, especially with regard to fixed penalties.

The introduction of electric driving licence goes also at a moment, where we have seen even this morning, I asked question about this issue of fake driving licence and also these issues concerning the national transport corporation, which I won't go into details.

There are a few questions which I would like to ask the Minister, at least, to clarify, because once this new system comes into operation, it would be up to the NTA, at least, the relevant Authority to see that it is well implemented. It would be a new type of driving

licence, an electronic one, modern one, but while working with regard to the details, the implementation is very much of great importance. My query would be: what about the tourist drivers, how would they be taken care of? And also, what would happen to international driving licences issued to Mauritians while proceeding overseas and the validity of such new licences in Commonwealth countries, because many Mauritians travel, and with the issue of a new electronic device, how would that be taken care of in other countries? The hon. Minister has informed us of the security aspects of this Electronic Driving Licence card which will come into operation. When these cards will be procured, the information will be on the drivers and that will be made available to a third party. So, the hon. Minister must give us more information about the security aspects as we may have one procurement contractor and then once another procurement contractor takes over, how will the whole issue of security be taken care of.

The hon. Minister must also inform us how road checks will be done as some of these card readers will have to be given to enforcement officers in the Police. There also we should know what would be the procedures, the security aspects. We all know in Mauritius how things are evolving. I won't go into the corruption aspect. So, I think the hon. Minister should give us some information with regard to enforcement, the different security measures which would be taken care of. We have seen in other countries where the National Identity Card is being used also – the National Identity Card is still embedded with a SIM Card, which is *desactiv *. So, we want to know whether consideration has been given for using the present ID for the purposes of having this Driving Licence instead of spending public money again.

Again, once this new system is put into operation, the IT system will need to be upgraded to capture the details on the new licences. So, there again, there is a high cost implementation, when the NIC Department already has the system. There also the Government Online Services can be used.

Madam Speaker, this legislation - according to the hon. Minister - goes in line with progress, with the new ventures of the hon. Minister. But again, as we go on, the increasing number of road accidents has not stopped. The Minister has informed us of the various investments which are made with regard to the road developments, but there also I think there should be more coordination between the RDA, the Minister of Public Infrastructure and these local authorities. Because local authorities have the responsibility for non-classified roads and the RDA has the responsibility for classified roads. We have been discussing for

months about the Metro Express Project. I will again impress upon the hon. Minister to go and see the quality of work done at Vandermeersch Street. I will give him one example, at Corner Malartic and Vandermeersch and also at Révérend Lebrun. I won't go into other non-classified or classified roads which are outside my Constituency. I have one case which is in Constituency of Rose Hill where I reside, and also in Beau Bassin where the type of work carried out there can cause accidents during the months to come. So, there again, Madam, I will ask the hon. Minister to have an overall look, not only to see what the RDA is doing in terms of the road accident.

Madam Speaker, I won't be long, but I must say that the implementation of the project *est un pas dans la bonne direction*. There is also the public awareness, how the Minister will communicate, - we all believe that he is an expert in communication - how the RDA, the different sections of the Ministry will communicate to the public. It can be done through the MBC. Instead of doing political programmes to, at least, use the MBC for positive things, such as to explain to the population about this new venture which the Ministry and the Minister are doing.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

At 4.59 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.39 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Sawmynaden!

The Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): Merci, Madame la présidente. Madame la présidente, merci de me donner l'occasion d'intervenir sur ce projet de loi qui est d'une grande importance pour un pays moderne comme Maurice.

Laissez-moi tout d'abord féliciter mon collègue, l'honorable ministre Nando Bodha et son équipe, qui ont travaillé sur cette nouvelle proposition de loi.

Il est bon de se rappeler la situation actuelle à Maurice concernant les véhicules. Aujourd'hui, grâce au progrès, chaque famille Mauricienne peut aspirer à acheter une voiture. D'ailleurs, les chiffres montrent que beaucoup de familles possèdent deux voitures. Naturellement, notre parc de véhicules contient aussi des milliers de motocyclettes, de

voitures, de bus et de camions d'un âge ancien. Le parc automobile à Maurice grandit d'année en année pour arriver à approximativement 550,000 véhicules aujourd'hui.

En tant que gouvernement, nous pouvons être heureux de cette situation, qui dénote d'un pays en forte croissance. Malheureusement, ces 550,000 véhicules requièrent autant, sinon plus, de bons conducteurs afin de minimiser les risques d'accident et fluidifier le trafic. Ces conducteurs doivent naturellement avoir un niveau adéquat de maîtrise de leur véhicule. Nous savons tous que quelqu'un à Maurice n'a le droit de conduire que s'il possède un permis délivré par le *Traffic Branch* de la Police. Historiquement, ce permis est en format papier et, depuis quelques années, il n'est même pas nécessaire d'avoir son permis en format original en sa possession. Une photocopie suffit.

Naturellement, cela simplifie grandement la vie de nos citoyens mais permet aussi à des individus véreux de fabriquer des *driving licences* qui sont ensuite utilisées par des chauffards. Ces criminels sont souvent la source d'accidents et cette situation est intolérable dans un pays moderne comme Maurice.

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de revenir sur un événement qui était survenu en août de cette année où nous avons constaté l'ampleur du problème.

Dans son édition du 16 août, un journaliste du 'Mauricien' explique, et je cite -

« Le Central CID enquête sur un réseau qui écoulait de faux permis de conduire à travers l'île. Environ 500 de ces faux documents ont été saisis (...) et trois suspects ont été arrêtés (...).

L'affaire a éclaté lors d'une patrouille effectuée dans la capitale. Une équipe de l'ADSU avait alors intercepté deux personnes. Les policiers les ont alors fouillés et sont tombés sur de faux permis de conduire que le duo vendait pour 'trass enn lavi'."

En remontant la filière, les enquêteurs du Central CID ont « mis la main sur des centaines de faux permis de conduire, ainsi que de papier utilisé pour la fabrication de ces documents.»

Madam Speaker, you would imagine the amount of people driving on the roads without a proper driving licence, it is scary. Le risque que cela représente pour tous les citoyens de ce pays, chauffeur ou pas.

Madame la présidente, dans notre monde moderne, certains essayent de créer de faux documents, papiers ou de fausse monnaie. Ici nous parlons de faux permis de conduire. Il est

clair qu'avec le nombre grandissant de voitures et, par conséquent, de conducteurs, certaines personnes puissent avoir l'idée d'essayer de contourner la loi.

C'est dans ce contexte où une fausse licence imprimée sur une imprimante *Inkjet* couleur peut berner un membre de la force policière. C'est pour cela qu'il fallait trouver une solution rapide pour contrer ce problème.

It was time to act! Notre solution est le *digital driving licence*. Avec ce *Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill*, le gouvernement entend faire disparaître les pratiques frauduleuses par le biais d'un permis de conduire électronique, qui ne pourra pas être reproduit ou falsifié.

Madame la présidente, je vais maintenant aborder les points les plus pertinents de ce permis de conduire numérique, qui est en fait une parfaite adéquation avec la vision de notre gouvernement d'utiliser la technologie pour améliorer la vie de tous les mauriciens : conducteur, passager ou piéton.

Permettez-moi de lister quelques avantages du ce nouveau permis de conduire numérique. Le permis de conduire numérique sera disponible sur la plateforme Mauricloud développée par mon ministère. Cette plateforme a pour objectif de mettre à la disposition des citoyens les documents officiels en format numérique, par exemple, sous la forme de fichiers PDF.

Naturellement, nous ne sommes pas ici en train de parler de n'importe quel fichier PDF. Nous avons adopté une batterie de mesures de sécurité informatique pour rendre ces documents officiels, fiables et sans failles. Vous conviendrez, Madame la présidente, cela mènera vers un *paperless public sector*.

Donc, nous pouvons dire que la plateforme Mauricloud offre les avantages suivants -

- Les citoyens peuvent accéder à leurs documents officiels en format numérique à tout moment, n'importe où, en utilisant quelconque appareils en leur possession (tel qu'un ordinateur ou un smartphone) et partager ces documents officiels numériques en toute sécurité avec des tierces parties. Cela est extrêmement pratique, ne nécessite plus de faire la queue et permet par conséquent de gagner un temps fou.
- Mauricloud réduit de plus les frais généraux administratifs des ministères en réduisant l'utilisation de papier.

- Finalement, Mauricloud permet de facilement valider l'authenticité des documents officiels numériques, car ils ne peuvent être émis que par des entités possédant une signature numérique spécifique. En d'autres mots, Mauricloud ne contient que des données fiables.

En mettant en place cette plateforme, chaque citoyen pourra faire la demande auprès du gouvernement pour obtenir son permis en format numérique.

Suite à cette demande, les services du gouvernement mettront le permis de conduire numérique dans le casier Mauricloud du citoyen concerné.

Lors de la première utilisation de la plateforme Mauricloud, afin de s'assurer de l'identité du citoyen, ce dernier aura à se présenter au bureau de poste le plus proche pour valider son identité.

Suite à cette phase de vérification, le citoyen aura accès à son permis de conduire numérique et tout autre document officiel qui serait dans son casier Mauricloud.

Cette vérification d'identité est semblable à ce qui se pratique pour l'enregistrement des utilisateurs de l'*Internet banking* par exemple.

Madame la Présidente, il faut savoir qu'une *digital driving licence* contient un certain nombre d'informations. Ces informations sont -

- la signature du conducteur,
- sa photo – pour laquelle un exercice de numérisation est en cours,
- et un certain nombre d'informations administratives concernant la licence.

Ces permis de conduire numériques pourront bien évidemment être contre-vérifiés par les officiers de police. Donc, fini l'angoisse d'avoir oublié son permis papier à la maison car tout un chacun pourra désormais avoir son permis numérique sur son smartphone et le produire à tout instant.

Les personnes n'ayant pas de smartphones auront naturellement toujours la possibilité de montrer leur licence papier mais, par contre, la contre vérification pourra se faire sur place par les policiers de police. Alors fini le problème de faux permis. Permettez-moi de rappeler que nous avons à Maurice un taux de pénétration de mobile à plus de 145%. Cela montre qu'il existe à Maurice plus de smartphones que de personnes. Donc, nous pouvons déduire que la grosse majorité de nos conducteurs sont aujourd'hui équipés d'un smartphone.

En outre, ces permis numériques seront munis d'un QR code. Le QR code contiendra toutes les données contenues dans un permis de conduire en format crypté et une signature numérique qui confirmera que c'est bien le Traffic Branch de la Force Policière qui a émis ce document numérique. Ceci combattra efficacement la fraude car personne d'autre ne pourra avoir cette signature numérique.

Madame la Présidente, le permis numérique sera hébergé au Government Online Centre qui est le *data centre* du gouvernement, qui est équipé avec toutes les infrastructures nécessaires pour pouvoir sécuriser les données. Alors il faut se rappeler que le GOC héberge tout le système critique du gouvernement. Avec cette avancée numérique, notre gouvernement réussira à rendre le système de permis de conduire plus fiable et à réduire les coûts.

Le permis de conduire sur une carte à puce – une suite logique, me diriez-vous, Madame la Présidente - interviendra plus tard avec une infrastructure numérique adéquate. Dans notre phase d'évaluation, nous avons aussi constaté que donner une carte à puce à chaque conducteur coûterait beaucoup aux contribuables et l'implémentation prendrait beaucoup de temps.

En tant que gouvernement responsable, nous sommes venus de l'avant avec une technologie, plus simple et moins coûteuse, mais offrant tous les avantages nécessaires.

Pour nos besoins du jour, l'introduction du permis de conduire numérique comme indiqué par cet amendement au cadre législatif est facile à mettre en œuvre, grâce à la disponibilité de Mauricloud, tout en assurant la sécurité, la fiabilité nécessaire pour combattre la fraude.

Il est clair que nous nous inscrivons dans une démarche où nous n'inventons pas la roue. D'autre pays, par exemple, l'Inde, les pays de l'Union Européenne et l'État de la Californie, l'Australie proposent des solutions électroniques pour les permis de conduire.

J'ai l'intime conviction que tous les ingrédients sont réunis pour faire de cette initiative un grand succès.

Madame la Présidente, notre gouvernement, sous l'égide du Premier Ministre, vient de l'avant, pour la énième fois, avec un projet moderne et conforme à notre Vision 2030 de transformer Maurice en un pays à haut-revenu, inclusif bien avant 2030.

Aujourd'hui, nous allons avoir le permis de conduire sous forme numérique. Demain, la plupart des documents et certificats fournis par le gouvernement seront numériques et résideront dans notre casier numérique personnel au sein de Mauricloud.

Notre gouvernement a bien compris l'importance de transformer le pays en utilisant au mieux la technologie.

Aujourd'hui, nous sommes fiers de proposer quelques 130 e-services à Maurice, notamment l'application pour un *learner's licence*, pour un *fire certificate* ou pour une aide légale.

Madame la Présidente, c'est toujours dans un souci de faciliter le quotidien des conducteurs mauriciens que ce projet de loi introduit aussi la possibilité de régler les amendes dans n'importe quel *District Court*.

Auparavant, les conducteurs verbalisés devaient se rendre dans la cour de justice de la région où le délit a été commis. Cela occasionnait bien des dérangements à une grosse majorité de nos citoyens. Il leur fallait prendre une permission au travail ou même un jour de congé pour s'acquitter du paiement de l'amende sans compter d'interminables files d'attente.

De plus, avec ce projet de loi, il devient possible pour quelqu'un de demander à quelqu'un d'autre de payer son amende.

Cerise sur le gâteau, il est aussi possible maintenant de faire le paiement électroniquement. Plus besoin d'aller à la banque pour faire un retrait. Une simple connexion d'Internet suffit comme c'est le cas pour le *motor vehicle road tax*.

Un des avantages de ce paiement en ligne est qu'il constitue une preuve électronique que la personne a réglé son amende. Donc, si la personne perd, pour une raison ou une autre, son reçu de paiement, il reste encore une trace. Elle n'aura pas la mauvaise surprise d'obtenir une réclamation pour le paiement d'une amende qu'elle a déjà réglé. Nos concitoyens peuvent dormir tranquille car, dans le passé, on a vu plusieurs arrestations pour non-paiement des amendes qui étaient en fait déjà réglées.

Madame la présidente, je félicite encore une fois mon collègue, l'honorable ministre Nando Bodha, et son équipe pour avoir travaillé sur ce projet de loi innovant.

Avant de terminer, Madame la présidente, je voudrai citer quelque chose. J'ai été surpris la semaine dernière, de voir dans le journal un article intitulé «Permis de conduire numérique : pas avant 2020». Alors je demanderai aux journalistes de bien vérifier leurs

informations. Ce sont deux systèmes complètement différents. Le premier c'était la carte à puce et le *digital licence* que nous allons introduire bientôt. «La critique est facile, l'art est difficile» - ainsi va le dicton.

En réalité, je me suis rendu compte que je suis Ministre et que «la critique est facile, oui, mais innover peut aussi être facile si nous œuvrons méthodiquement et sérieusement».

Il est clair que ce gouvernement, sous la houlette de notre Premier Ministre, procède avec des méthodes sérieuses.

Nous voulons tous d'une République de Maurice meilleure, aussi bien pour nous, mais aussi pour nos enfants et les générations futures.

Ce gouvernement n'a eu de cesse de le répéter depuis son arrivée au pouvoir en 2014: il nous faut professionnaliser et moderniser notre pays tout en promouvant la transparence à tous échelons.

Oui, notre gouvernement, sous la houlette du Premier Ministre, en l'espace d'un seul mandat, a transformé Maurice en un état moderne, dotée d'infrastructures de grande envergure.

Pour répondre à la question de l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan, concernant les licences et quand nous partons dans des pays étrangers – comme je l'ai annoncé – beaucoup de pays dans l'Union Européenne se servent du *digital driving licence* et aussi la licence en papier est toujours valide.

Concernant le ID Card, Madame la présidente, avec l'application mobile ou les équipements que les policiers will have in their possession, just by typing in the ID Card of that particular person, they will have all the information on the driving licence that that driver possesses at the time of driving.

Madame la présidente, je voudrais aussi dire que nous formons partie de ces pays qui sont bien en avance concernant les projets digitaux. Madame la présidente, avant de terminer, je voudrais encore une fois remercier mon collègue, l'honorable Nando Bodha, les officiers de son ministère, les officiers de mon ministère et la force policière. Madame la présidente, ceci est une preuve, en travaillant en équipe *we can deliver marvels at a very low cost, in a very short period of time and in the interest of our citizens.*

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer has had the courtesy of informing me that he does not propose to intervene. Hon. Rampertab!

(5.54 p.m.)

Mr R. Rampertab (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First and foremost, let me thank and congratulate the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, hon. Nando Bodha for coming up with the Road Traffic (Amendment No. 3) Bill which is being presented at one of the most pivotal moments.

I feel privileged and humbled to be able to address this august Assembly on this very important piece of legislation. Madam Speaker, once again, I would urge my fellow Members of Parliament to put party politics behind us so that we can constructively debate the Bill being presented today.

Madam Speaker, the first object of the Bill mentions the introduction of digital driving licence. Indeed, Madam Speaker, as we are all aware, ensuring law and order has been one of the priorities of our Government and of our Prime Minister. Hence, in each of his Budgets, he has been putting aside considerable funding provisions towards the same aim. We are glad that, for example, recently gangs which have been operating without being worried at all for more than a decade, have been seen their empires crumbling.

Madam Speaker, the CCID, very recently, uncovered a counterfeit driving licence business which had been operating freely. Hence, the need to present this Government's plan to introduce digital driving licences is even more important today. Through such historic measure, we will undoubtedly bring our country to its next phase of its digital revolution path devised by our Government.

Madam Speaker, through a digital driving licence, the risk of counterfeit driving licences which are putting at risk the lives of our inhabitants will be significantly reduced. In fact, this will also allow Mauritius to join the numerous other countries that have already trialled and rolled out such digital driving licences.

Madam Speaker, the blue paper driving licence has played its role, but we all are very conscious of its serious limitation with regard to durability. How many people have had to repair their licence, for example, because it was falling apart or was inadvertently damaged?

Madam Speaker, the most common form of digital driving licence used in many countries such as the UK comes in the form of a plastic card format similar to our national ID

cards. Indeed, this type of driving licence has proven its worth by standing the test of time and not being subject to wear and tear.

Madam Speaker, having a plastic driving licence card with the basic details of the driver will be considerably strived forward. Indeed, the Government will hold further consultations alongside the help of international consultants and after studying similar models in other countries.

In fact, Madam Speaker, there is room to include a chip within the plastic driving licence card to be able to hold and allow the authorities to read when required information such as car insurance details or even a person's previous fixed penalty notices can be included in it.

Madam Speaker, in the UK, for instance, the driving licence is a simple photo card and does not hold any chip which allows any information to be read. Hence, the UK driving licence card only holds the basic details of the person such as the photo, name, date of birth, address, issue date, driver number and vehicle category. The main advantage of this photo card is that it contains security elements which ensure that the driving licence cannot be tampered with.

However, Madam Speaker, in our digital revolution age, where the smart phone is gradually establishing itself as a unique tool to perform most daily transactions, there is a possibility for Mauritius to follow the examples of other countries and to adopt a digital driving licence which can assess one's smart phone and which is directly linked to the Traffic Branch. I understand that the hon. Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation is already considering this innovative type of digital driving licence.

Madam Speaker, the technology behind digital driving licences has an immense potential. However, it is our Government responsibility to assess the extent to which we want to push the barriers of such innovative tools. Indeed, I welcome the comprehensive assessment being undertaken by the two Ministries being impacted. It is noteworthy to mention the advantageous features some digital driving licences can offer. For instance, some digital driving licences allow the licence holder to update their personal information online as well as the possibility to raise online request without having to fill in endless forms and having to queue up. The digital driving licence could also be kept on one's smart phone without having to carry the physical card.

Madam Speaker, it is essential that with the help of the international consultants that key questions around implementation of the digital driving licences are ironed out, for instance, if the licences contain advanced data such as past traffic offences or car insurance details, the Police will have to be supplied with and trained to use the appropriate card reading machine.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, with the nearly 800,000 driving licences currently in issuance, a full-fledged replacement schedule and programme will have to be implemented. At any point, the chaos which accompanied the replacement of the National ID cards lately under the previous Government will have to be avoided.

Madam Speaker, I also note with much satisfaction that the payment fines are being reviewed. During my previous intervention on the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, the Judicial and Legal Provisions Bill and my Budgetary Speeches, I have been consistent in speaking out on the need to ensure that our current fine collection system is efficient and up to date.

Madam Speaker, no excuses should be given to fine payers for avoiding payments due to any inefficiency in collection and follow-up. Hence, I very much welcome the proposal to allow the payment of fixed penalty notice at any District Court as well as allowing another person to pay for the fixed penalty notice on one's behalf.

Again, Madam Speaker, I salute the fact that these minor changes will give much more flexibility to any person who has an FPN to pay. Moreover, Madam Speaker, I also welcome the provisions to aiming at allowing fines to be paid electronically. I have been proposing an online fine collection system to give the flexibility to fine payers. I call upon the relevant Ministries to work together so that this modern fine collection system is built and launched as soon as feasible.

Madam Speaker, our Government has already made changes to the Fixed Penalty Notice regime through the amendments presented by the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport. In fact, during my intervention on the same Bill, I welcome the initial set of proposals around the changes to FPNs issued following any traffic-related offence. Hence, now, with the introduction of the previous amendment, even if a person goes to the Court, the FPN will have to be paid and no amount higher than the FPN is being paid.

Madam Speaker, the intention of this Government is to make the law work and be practically efficient as well. The new amendment being proposed today and with the amendment being proposed, Madam Speaker, together with the previous amendment, today's proposal will ultimately lead to a better application of the fixed Penalty Notices for individuals who have committed road traffic offences.

Madam Speaker, to conclude, I will once again use this opportunity to thank the hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for providing his unflinching support in empowering our public service to invest and implement policies aimed at simplifying the daily lives of our population.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baboo!

(6.03 p.m.)

Mr S. Baboo (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this Bill shows that the hon. Minister is running the race at the best of his capacity at the end of the Government's mandate.

We are now accustomed to the trend of having amendments to the principle Act brought on a piecemeal basis. But, this time, unfortunately, the Minister has bitten the dust with this Bill.

Madam Speaker, I cannot understand how come the sections 191, 192 and 195 of the principle Act did not take into account these amendments when the Road Traffic (Amendment) Act amended on 06 July 2018 with respect to Fixed Penalty Fee. Can we deduce that we are here not dealing with professionalism and not acting upon proper consultancy exercise, but rather show trial and error?

Madam Speaker, I fully agree that in this era of digitalization, an FPN can be paid at any District Court by any authorised person on behalf of the offender or electronically. However, we do have confirmation of any secured central database and if all the District Courts have access to the information stored in the central database, I hope that there will not be any surprises that reaching the District Court, the system is down or after paying his fine at a particular District Court, the offender receives another fine for non-payment as the payment has not been properly recorded or stored in the system.

Madam Speaker, the advent of the digital driving licence is a key part of the digital transformation. On this side of the House, we agree that it is a very good initiative to come upon with the digital driving licence. But, once again, I want to ring the alert bell that we are moving too fast in such a short span of time. At the eve of the dissolution of Parliament, this raises several pertinent questions on the project itself. And why such an important development being brought, *à la va-vite*, and as a last call?

Madam Speaker, I think that other hon. Members of the House would agree with me that the hon. Minister ought to have come with a full-fledged Bill for the digital driving licence and not merely with a trailer. There are so many important issues which should be taken care of. I am pretty sure that the hon. Minister, as we have noticed the trend so far, intends to bring a series of Bills to the House on a digitalization issue.

Again, Madam Speaker, behind the digitalization of the driving licence, there are so many issues to be taken care of. My first and foremost question is whether the Police IT system has been upgraded to capture the details of all the licences? Are they themselves conversant with the digital system? Are they ready for the digital driving licence.

Madam Speaker, this gives rise to several pertinent questions like, in how many places the backup and recovery system will be stored, both in mainland Mauritius and outside. Is the Mauricloud as stated by the hon. Minister be the only reliable source? Will the Police Officers be provided with handy and mobile card reader to crosscheck the driving licence, any equipment to crosscheck the digital licence from the application of the mobile phone of the holder of the driving licence? What would be the total cost of the project and other hidden cost associated with the project.

Madam Speaker, we are all in the dark. There is no mention of what happens with the physical driver licence. For example, when the drivers have their licence suspected or are disqualified, they must surrender their physical driver licence to the authorities. How this digital driving licence will take care of that? Will the Police be proactive enough to update its record timelessly? Will there be parallel run of both digital and physical driving licence? What will be the cut-off date, Madam Speaker?

There are so many questions which remain unanswered. What about the citizens of the Republic of Mauritius travelling abroad? Will the international licence be corporate and be accepted around the world? Therefore, Madam Speaker, we can call it a sad day today with so many important factors having not been taken care of when drafting this speedy Bill.

I will end on this, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister!

(6.10 p.m.)

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all the hon. Members who have participated in the debates. I thought there was a consensus in the House, but, my hon. colleague of my own constituency seems not to be on the same wavelength as me.

First of all, Madam Speaker, we have today a database as regards to what we call the VIN number, that is, the Vehicle Identification Number, which is a 14 digit number. This database is on the information highway and the Government Online Centre which provides the Police with the reader, but, as soon as you put this VIN number, you know the history of the vehicle. This, we have already implemented, Madam Speaker. And it helps in the enforcement as regards the vehicle, road worthiness, whether you have the insurance cover, the age of the vehicle, the make of the vehicle and this is available now for the insurance companies, the Police and the National Transport Authority. What we are doing, in fact, is the same for the driver. Today, in this digital world, where technology is everywhere, at the tip of the finger, we have the possibility of having the electronic driving licence and the digital driving licence.

My colleague from my own constituency was not here whilst the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation was giving his speech, because he addressed the issue of security, of backup. He addressed the fact that it will be on the Government Online Centre, the whole process is under the purview of the CIB. He also mentioned that it is on the information highway, this is where we are heading, Madam Speaker.

Now, the Police has the particulars of each driver today, and he provides the hard copy of the driving licence. So, they will take some time to be able to prepare this database. I think we should be having about...

(Interruptions)

Drivers. I think we have 560,000 vehicles. As regards drivers, I think there must be having at least half a million drivers. So, we have to do this and we will be able to have the database with the Police which will help the enforcement.

As regards the questions which my colleague has asked about security, about the fact what happens if the system goes bust. Well, this is technology. If you have everything in your

mobile and you don't have the battery, well, you can always lend a mobile. But this is what we have to live with. We are in the digital age where information is available, databases are available, but we should be able to see to it that we make the best use of it. Now, if you travel abroad, the mobile phone is still the tool and the time is coming, Madam Speaker, where you can do everything with the mobile phone. We will be living with the mobile phone. The first thing we see in the morning and the last thing we see before we go to sleep, Madam Speaker. This is the mobile phone, the mode and the applications.

So, I am very happy to bring this Bill today, because it brings the whole issue of transportation, that is, the worthiness of the vehicle, all the details of the vehicle as well as all the details of the driver on a format which is virtual on a Cloud, with a possibility of each one having his own, I would say virtual cabinet where you can put all the information that you need. My hon. colleague mentioned the issue of everything is piecemeal, whether in 2018 we couldn't have brought it, but, Madam, this is a huge task and the Road Traffic Act dates back to, at least, 50 years. We have so many clauses, so many things which are now outdated, so we have to take time to do it incrementally, which we are doing because, at the end of the day, we have to see to it that there is road safety and that each driver, each vehicle can be to the standard that is required by the regulator.

I would like to thank all my hon. colleagues who have participated in the debate. I know that hon. Bhagwan raised the issue of communication; I think he is right there. We are going to have a strategy to see to it that people have access to the information and that they can tomorrow use the digital form or the electronic form to the best of their ability and efficiently. This is what I would like to say to conclude, Madam Speaker, I think that this will help us to move forward as regard to law enforcement, but also when it comes to accidents - I don't think this is going to reduce the number of accidents, but it will help us to see to it that the law is enforced and that there is a facilitation for the payment of the fixed penalty notice. So, this is what I have to say, Madam Speaker, and I conclude that in the age of digitalisation, it's a further step to move in an easy way to go around for your own driving licence and for the road worthiness of the vehicle. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

The Road Traffic (Amendment No. 3) Bill (No. XXX of 2019) was considered and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Madam Speaker in the Chair, Madam Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, The Road Traffic (Amendment No. 3) Bill (No. XXX of 2019) was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I move for the adjournment of the House to Tuesday 08 October 2019 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Hurreeram rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 6.19 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 08 October 2019 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MÉDINE SUGAR ESTATE - VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT SCHEMES

(No. B/915) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the former workers of the Médine Sugar Estate, he will state the number of plots of land allocated thereto, following the implementation of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme, indicating if the beneficiaries thereof have been remitted all the clearances from the relevant authorities, purporting to ascertain the residential nature of the respective plot of land, together with the title deeds.

Reply: The Médine Sugar Estate has implemented Voluntary Retirement Schemes in the years 2001, 2007 and 2012 respectively.

For VRS Schemes implemented in 2001 and 2007, all clearances have been received from relevant authorities.

For VRS 2001, there were 927 beneficiaries and for VRS 2007 there were 431 beneficiaries who have already received their title deeds.

Regarding VRS Scheme for 2012, three sites at Chebel, Bambous and Palma respectively have been identified by Médine Sugar Estate for a total number of 289 beneficiaries. For the Chebel site, all the 20 beneficiaries have received their title deeds on 19 July 2019.

For the Bambous site where 151 beneficiaries are concerned, Médine Sugar Estate has been requested by the relevant authorities to upgrade a culvert and to carry out dredging works on Rivière Dragon found near the site to address the problems of flooding in the region.

There were subsequently consultations regarding sharing of the cost for these works and Médine Ltd has finally agreed to finance 50% of the costs whereas Government will finance 50% of the cost.

Furthermore, Médine Ltd has to seek necessary approval of the Supreme Court before carrying out dredging works on Rivière Dragon.

Regarding the site at Palma where 118 beneficiaries are concerned, there are several issues which cropped up and have caused major delays in the progress of works. These issues are –

- (i) the presence of asbestos water pipe found on the site;
- (ii) the acquisition of land to allow the upgrading of the Palma Roundabout by Road Development Authority and Traffic Management Road Safety Unit, found on the site, and
- (iii) the presence of caves and lava tunnels on the site.

I am informed that the asbestos pipes have already been removed and for the upgrading of the Palma Roundabout, Médine Ltd has agreed to finance the cost and land acquisition by the Government is in process.

Regarding the presence of caves and lava tunnels, geotechnical investigations are currently being carried out by Médine Ltd and the report is awaited from Médine Ltd by end of this month.

A decision will be taken in the light of the geotechnical investigation report as to whether Médine Ltd can go ahead with the infrastructural works or look for an alternative site for the whole area or parts thereon affected by the tunnels/caves. It is understood that EIA clearance will be required where the sites will be found to be affected by the presence of tunnels/caves.

I wish to point out that since 2015, a Monitoring Committee has been set up under my Chairmanship and comprising all the relevant stakeholders to monitor the overall implementation and completion of all outstanding VRS projects.

Furthermore, Government has in May this year set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee chaired by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to closely monitor and look into all bottlenecks regarding outstanding VRS projects.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee has met regularly and meetings were specifically held with Médine Sugar Estate on 3 occasions to expedite the completion of outstanding works.

Initially, there were 18,012 beneficiaries and, as at date, 17,002 title deeds have already been handed over to the beneficiaries.