



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

FRIDAY 22 JUNE 2018

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 15 of 2018

Sitting of Friday 22 June 2018

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 3.00 p.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES - CÔTE D'OR SPORTS COMPLEX - CONSTRUCTION

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the forthcoming Indian Ocean Island Games, he will state the -

- (a) initial and subsequent variation cost incurred for the construction and the equipping of the Côte d'Or sports complex, indicating if alternative sites are being upgraded in case delays occur in completing the construction and equipping of the said complex, and, if so, indicate the cost thereof, and
- (b) amount of sponsorship received, if any, as at to date and how same will be spent.

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr S. Toussaint): Madam Speaker, I wish to point out right from the outset that in the normal course of things, Mauritius would have, on the basis of rotation, hosted the 11th Edition of the Indian Ocean Island Games (IOIG) in 2023. However, in November 2015, when it became clear that the Islamic Republic of Comoros, which had the responsibility to host the 10th Edition of the Games in 2019, would not be able to do so, the “*Comité International des Jeux*” (CIJ) decided to entrust to Mauritius the responsibility to host the 2019 games.

Immediately after, a survey was carried out to determine the state of play of our sports infrastructure. I need to add that the last time that a major upgrading and renovation of our sports facilities was carried out was in 2003 when we hosted the 6th Edition of the IOIG.

Conscious of the challenges and the time constraints, Government decided to work on two fronts. In addition to the upgrading and renovation of existing sites, it was felt that Mauritius should have a state-of-the-art sports complex, in line with its ambition to develop a sports hub in Mauritius and play a leading role in sports development in the region.

Accordingly, Government took the opportunity of the Bilateral Joint Commission between China and Mauritius in November 2016 and following the personal involvement of our Prime Minister, the hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, in his then capacity as Minister of Finance and Economic Development, managed to obtain financial assistance from the Chinese authorities amounting to RMB 350 m., that is, Rs1.9 billion, through a mix of grant and interest free loan for the financing of the construction of the complex.

In order to fast track the construction of the sports complex, Government decided to create the Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd - a company limited by shares, as a Special Purpose Vehicle and entrusted it with the whole responsibility for the project.

MMIL decided on 20 June 2017, following an open advertised bidding, to entrust to IOG Infracore Joint Venture the contract for consultancy services for the design and construction supervision of the multisports complex at Côte d'Or.

After the appointment of IOG Infracore Joint Venture, a Project Management Consultant, namely Hoolooman and Gibbs Joint Venture, was appointed in August 2017, in the absence of a proper in-house Project Management team at MMIL. Subsequently, the bidding documents for construction works, including geotechnical investigation and survey, were prepared jointly by IOG Infracore Joint Venture and the Project Management team.

Tenders were launched package-wise as follows for -

- (i) the aquatic centre;
- (ii) the multi-purpose gym;
- (iii) the stadium and athletic track;
- (iv) the off-site works, and
- (v) the geotechnical investigation survey.

The initial preliminary estimated project value (PV) for the Multisports Complex at Côte d'Or was Rs3.2 billion. However, after completion of the bidding exercise for the different component of the project, the PV is now estimated at Rs3.9 billion.

The main reasons for the increase in the preliminary estimated project value are as follows -

- (i) the preliminary estimates were done before the final detailed design based on international norms for aquatic centre and stadium;
- (ii) the preliminary estimates of the project cost for the football stadium was Rs1.3 billion. After a tendering exercise, the contract value of the football stadium is Rs1.574 billion. It is noted that piling works are required to satisfy the soil conditions on site and for which the contract value is Rs106 m.;
- (iii) the stadium is as per norms of *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA). The athletic track, initially planned to be inside the stadium, will now be a standalone facility adjacent to the stadium, and

- (iv) the preliminary estimates of the project cost for the aquatic centre was Rs430 m. After tendering exercise, the project value of the aquatic centre is now Rs756 m.

In May 2018, the results of geotechnical investigation, which started in mid-December 2017, were finalised and issued to the client. The recommendations thereof were that piling and ground improvement works would have to be undertaken. So far, piling works, following geotechnical survey, was awarded to the tune of Rs60 m. for the aquatic centre only.

In light of the geotechnical survey and the time factor which is becoming critical, MMIL has had to take strategic decisions regarding the design and structure. The costs relating thereto are still being assessed and will be finalised by end of June at latest.

As regards the multipurpose gymnasium, the design for piling, ground improvements, structural design and costs thereof, would be finalised by mid-July of this year.

Madam Speaker, because of the scope and magnitude of such a project, which is unprecedented in this sports landscape of Mauritius and because of the very limited time frame of barely two years for the planning, design, procurement and implementation thereof, MMIL necessarily had to consider different work packages and allow for simultaneous contract execution.

In regard to the specific issue of variation costs incurred, I am informed by the MMIL that, at this stage, there has been none.

As I had explained earlier, at the conceptual stage, the project for Côte d'Or was estimated to around Rs3.2 billion roughly.

That initial estimate was later revised to a project value of Rs3.9 billion based on tenders received from the different work packages. In light of the outcome of the geotechnical investigation, the project value will have to be further revised.

Negotiations are ongoing between MMIL and the different contracting agencies involved and the final costs will be finalised by the end of July at latest.

As regards delays, I am informed by MMIL that the works are progressing satisfactorily and that the initial completion dates have been rescheduled as follows -

Aquatic park - 30 May 2019;

Football and Athletics - 30 June 2019;

Multipurpose gymnasium - 30 June 2019.

According to MMIL, it is not foreseen that there would be any delay in completion. However, as a precautionary measure in order to be on the safe side in case there is any problem in completion and delivery of the sites, my Ministry has already envisaged a Plan B, whereby the competitions for the three sports disciplines concerned with Côte d'Or will be shifted to alternative sites as follows –

- swimming – Medine Private Swimming Pool;
- football – New George V Stadium, and August Volaire Stadium, and
- Volleyball – Pandit Sahadeo Gymnasium.

Except for Medine which is a private facility, these sites are being renovated by AUGI.

Madam Speaker, as regards the upgrading and renovation of the existing sports infrastructure, Government decided to set up the Association for the upgrading of the Indian Ocean Island Games Infrastructure (AUGI) - an association duly registered with the Registrar of Associations to be responsible for upgrading works. A similar association was created when Mauritius hosted the last IOIG Games in 2003, with an identical Term of Reference.

In view of the fact that 14 sports disciplines have been retained for the Games, it was initially established that 15 sites had to be renovated, later revised to 17 to include Malabar Gymnasium and Camp du Roi Stadium in Rodrigues. At that time, it was roughly estimated that these renovation works would cost around Rs340 m.

AUGI then proceeded with the appointment of consultants for the detailed survey, design and project management; five consultants were retained.

On account of the time factor and in order to forestall a situation where a consultant could possibly bid and obtain the contract for all the 17 sites in question, AUGI decided, strategically, to divide the sites into lots and after the evaluation of the bids received, decided to award one lot to each consultant.

The consultants accordingly carried out a survey with cost estimate and subsequent working sessions were held with the representatives of AUGI and the appointed consultants, following which the scope of works for each site has been revised and a final Project Value of Rs474 m. submitted and approved by AUGI.

Thereafter, consultants proceeded with the detailed survey and design and preparation of specifications and tender documents.

Tenders for Lots I (Anjalay Stadium); Lot II (New George V Stadium and Phoenix Gymnasium), and Lot V (St François Stadium, Auguste Volaire Stadium and Dojo GRNW) have been launched and the closing date is 11 July 2018.

Tenders for the remaining lots are expected to be launched by 02 July 2018, latest.

As regards the duration of the works, I have already made it explicitly clear in this House in reply to earlier PQs on the same subject that the works for the selected sites are not of the same magnitude and their respective duration will vary from site to site.

However, we have been reasonably comforted by the consultants that all the works would be completed within a realistic time frame of six to nine months after the award of contracts.

Consequently, by April 2019, all 17 sites would have been completely upgraded and renovated. This will afford to the athletes sufficient time to acquaint themselves with the new infrastructures and be accustomed thereto.

Concerning the costs, as I indicated earlier, the initial in-house cost estimate of Rs340 m. was later revised by the consultant to Rs474 m. The real tender value will be known once the bids are out. A provision of Rs500 m. will be made available to AUGI by Government.

Madam Speaker, the question of sponsorship for the IOIG is a matter that concerns COJI and COJI alone.

At this stage, the estimated cost for the organisation of the Games amounts to Rs400 m., out of which 25% (Rs100 m.) is expected to come from sponsors. For that purpose, COJI has developed a Marketing Kit Benefits which was finalised in May 2018 and issued to not less than 500 companies and potential subscribers.

Out Rs100 m. expected, we have a pledge for Rs43 m. as at to date.

However, no sponsorship money has been received so far. The sponsorship money would go directly to the organisation of the Games, particularly the operations of the 14 technical commissions and the *Commissariat Général*.

Sponsorship money will not be used for upgrading of sports infrastructure or for Côte d'Or Multisports Complex neither will it be used for preparation of athletes.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. Minister. His reply is both concise and complete, or fairly complete. I would like to ask the hon. Minister, firstly, the cost of the complex at Côte d'Or will be Rs3.9 billion, financed partly by loan from China, partly from our own funds and partly also from a grant from China, how much is a grant element and what is the interest rate on the loan, please?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, d'abord et avant tout, comme je l'ai dit dans ma réponse, en ce qu'il s'agit du *loan*, c'est un *interest-free loan*. *Grant loan from China, USD50 m.; Multipurpose Complex at Côte d'Or, Rs1.6 billion; grants, Rs1.1 billion and loan, Rs700 m. interest-free.*

Mr X. L. Duval: Tenders were issued. Now, the whole work is being done by one company, China State Corporation. Are there different Chinese companies doing the work?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, nous avons d'abord les consultants dont j'ai cité. Les compagnies de construction sont *China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd, Beijing Construction Engineering Group Ltd, A.N.T nominated sub-contractor and then Frankie Pai International Ltd.*

Mr X. L. Duval: Let us come now, Madam Speaker, to this thorny issue of the geotechnical tests which the additional costs related to this project the Minister told us as yet unknown. I would like to ask the hon. Minister how is it that a tender can be awarded, a contract can be signed, and yet, there have not been appropriate soil tests done to be able to justify the signing of the contract and this is done after the contract has been signed? How can that be?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, comme je l'ai dit initialement dans ma réponse, les tests ont été faits. Il y a eu d'abord un *desk work* comme on appelle et les *geotechnical tests* ont été faits en même temps qu'on a lancé aussi le *tender*.

Mr X. L. Duval: Can the Minister tell us therefore if the geotechnical tests were done, how come he did not find that the soil was not appropriate and that piling subsequently to the issue of the contract became necessary?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, le MMIL avait décidé d'aller de l'avant avec ce projet et le MMIL avec, bien sûr, la connaissance de tous les experts concernés, vont prendre les mesures nécessaires pour faire de sorte à ce que nous puissions construire ce complexe et, bien sûr, tout en limitant les dépenses.

Mr X. L. Duval: It is not the issue, Madam Speaker, I am asking why the proper soil tests were not done before so that we could properly have an estimate of the complex cost which has gone from 3.2 to 3.9 and I am told by some consultants that the piling, etc. may add 10% to the contract. So, we are taking maybe Rs350 m. - Rs400 m. more because the soil tests were not – so, we are moving from Rs3.2 billion to about Rs4.3 billion - Rs4.4 billion.

Mr Toussaint: Définitivement, Madame la présidente, nous aurons, comme je l'ai dit dans ma réponse, une réponse

(Interruptions)

Comme je l'ai expliqué dans ma réponse initiale, nous étions pressés par le temps. Donc, on a deux ans pour ce projet, les tests ont été faits en même temps et le travail aussi ainsi que le *tender* a été fait en même temps. Et je peux rassurer l'honorable membre, donc, je l'ai dit dans ma réponse. *In May 2018, the results of geotechnical investigation which started in December 2017 were finalised. That recommendation was that piling and ground improvement works would have to be undertaken.*

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister, we are talking about St. Pierre, Verdun, two minutes away from the famous Terre Rouge/Verdun Road which has cost billions of rupees more, has not it been irresponsible, after having been in charge of the project, to launch such a huge project on such a piece of land which is a part of the urban area which is extremely unstable, without having carried out adequate soil test which is now proven by the fact that we are going to pay maybe Rs400 m. more than was even subsequently estimated?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, c'est un sujet très technique. Je n'ai pas nécessairement les compétences et nous en avons discuté avec le MMIL et avec les ingénieurs et comme le *Leader* de l'opposition est en train de faire référence avec Terre Rouge, donc, il nous ont assuré que nous allons faire un bon travail et que nous n'aurons pas ce même résultat.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I want to ask the hon. Minister about the delays. Now, all this Rs4.3 billion - Rs4.4 billion is being spent principally for the Indian Ocean Games that will happen in July, just a little bit more than 12 months' time. What guarantee can you give to this House that all this money having been spent for a project that will actually open and be completed by July 2019 and what are the risks – your Engineers must

have done the risks - involved that we may – nothing is certain in life - miss the deadline entirely and finish the project after the Indian Ocean Island Games?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, d'abord laissez-moi rassurer toute la Chambre et la population mauricienne. Quand nous avons eu la bonne nouvelle de devoir organiser les Jeux des Iles en 2015, je me souviens, c'était mon ami et collègue, l'honorable Sawmynaden qui est venu annoncer la nouvelle au Parlement. Dès lors, la machinerie s'est mise en marche par rapport aux infrastructures, ce qui veut dire que nous avons toutes les infrastructures nécessaires pour faire des jeux.

Et il est prévu que pour le complexe de Côte d'Or, c'est la compétition de la natation, la compétition de football et le gymnase pour la compétition de volley-ball. Mais nous faisons un *close monitoring* avec l'équipe de la MMIL, avec les ingénieurs, avec toutes les personnes concernées de sorte à ce que nous soyons *on target*.

Mr X. L. Duval: Can the Minister tell us if there is a cyclone coming, has this also been taken into account or if the cyclone comes, the whole thing goes haywire?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, cela me fait penser que quand j'étais enfant, il y avait *a saying*, comme on dit en anglais, que tant que l'honorable Sir Anerood est là, on n'avait pas de cyclone. Ça se disait. Je comprends l'inquiétude de l'honorable *Leader* de l'Opposition. Nous espérons que tout va aller pour le mieux mais, je le redis, au cas où il y a un souci, les autres infrastructures sont là et les jeux pourront être faits.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, this is a national issue. Are we going to have a few minutes more for the colleagues to take part? Can you give us?

Madam Speaker: No, you have time up to 3.34 p.m.

Mr X. L. Duval: Will you not give us five minutes more perhaps for everyone?

Madam Speaker: No, I won't give additional time.

Mr X. L. Duval: That's a shame.

Madam Speaker: You have time till 3.34 p.m., so, if that is not your last question...

Mr X. L. Duval: No, this is not my last question.

Madam Speaker: Can you tell me when is your last question...

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, when I will come to it.

Madam Speaker: ... so that I can give the opportunity to others?

Mr X. L. Duval: Thank you. If we don't run out of time! Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister, the football turf, it is natural, are we going to expect it to be ready, it will grow and be fantastic by the time?

Mr Toussaint: Oui, Madame la présidente, je pense qu'avec la nouvelle technologie que nous avons aujourd'hui, avec tout ce qui est scientifique, je pense que c'est faisable.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, let us come now to the other very serious issue of those 17 sites which are being upgraded. It will take about nine months I think from what you tabled before, we are already about a month late in most of these cases. But the issue is not so much that they may not be ready, but what do our athletes do in the time that these are closed? Where are they going to train, especially the indoor activities, what provision have you made for our athletes to train up to April 2019 when this will be ready?

Mr Toussaint: Merci, Madame la présidente, de me donner l'occasion d'éclairer la population sur cet aspect qui est tout à fait très, très important parce que c'est vrai que les infrastructures vont fermer pour une période de neuf mois et nous, au niveau du ministère, avec les fédérations, d'ailleurs pas plus loin que le 29 mai, nous avons fait une réunion avec toutes les fédérations concernées par les jeux des îles, spécialement les *indoors* comme l'honorable Leader de l'opposition est en train de dire, et nous avons expliqué aux fédérations qu'est-ce qui va se passer pour les neuf mois à venir et nous allons les aider à trouver des endroits spécifiques pour les entraînements.

Il faut dire que nous n'avons pas de problème pour le cyclisme, c'est sur la route ; nous n'avons pas de problème pour la voile ; pour la natation, même si la rénovation est faite sur Serge Alfred, il y a toujours la piscine de Rivière du Rempart, de Calebasse, etc. Donc, je peux aller comme ça, discipline par discipline et de montrer que, par exemple, c'est okay, et qu'on a la place nécessaire pour les entraînements.

Mr X. L. Duval: I will come back to that later, if necessary. Madam Speaker, can I ask the hon. Minister, given that a lot of infrastructures will be closed, whether he has organised for overseas training of our athletes so as we all hope they will do extremely well next year?

Mr Toussaint: Yes, *Madam Speaker*, au fait, toutes les fédérations concernées par les Jeux des Îles, ils doivent nous soumettre leur plan de travail, leur calendrier de travail, que ce soit l'entraînement local, que ce soit les compétitions, et aussi les stages et les compétitions à

l'extérieur. Donc, ce calendrier est déjà prêt et nous veillons à ce que les différentes fédérations suivent ce calendrier de travail.

Madam Speaker: Two more minutes!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, some of the federations are already complaining of lack of overseas training, especially the Judo Federation. They are saying that there are not enough psychologists who are also very important and physiotherapists, etc. Is the hon. Minister going to, from now on, step up the Act and provide more facilities to the athletes?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, nous avons mis à la disposition de nos athlètes, ceux concernés par les jeux des îles, tous les moyens possibles. On leur donne le transport. Il y a un *meal also that is provided to them*; les physios, les masseurs. Nous avons déjà deux psychologues qui sont à leur disposition et nous travaillons sur un projet afin d'avoir des préparateurs mentaux pour venir aider nos sportifs.

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr X. L. Duval: What a shame that you could not give a few minutes more! Madame Speaker, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will give this time *per diem* to the athletes going overseas? I see a smile and secondly, whether he has agreed or collaborated with the Ministry of Tourism so that during that time, we are able to attract a maximum number of visitors in Mauritius?

Mr Toussaint: Merci, Madame la présidente. L'*issue de per diem*, je l'ai déjà expliqué. C'est vrai que c'est passé un peu à gauche et à droite. Mais, au fait, il n'y avait pas vraiment de *issue de per diem*. Les fédérations envoient leurs demandes, et, bien sûr, au niveau des officiers, on vérifie les demandes on a *case to case basis*. C'est vrai que parfois, pour certaines fédérations, il y a des abus. Et, malheureusement, on ne peut pas plaire à tout le monde et donner à tout bout de champ.

Pour terminer, Madame la présidente, je remercie l'honorable Premier ministre et ministre des finances qui a été à l'écoute, qui met à notre disposition pour ces jeux autant de financement que nous avons besoin. Donc, dans le budget de cette année-ci, nous avons quand même R 75 millions pour la préparation de nos athlètes. Et je lance un appel à la population de notre île, de la République de Maurice, que la population vienne vers nos athlètes, que la population commence à donner ce coup de main qu'il faut à nos sportifs. Et comme je l'ai dit dans mon discours, un événement important va venir la semaine prochaine

avec le dévoilement de la mascotte des jeux. Et je suis sûr qu'à partir de là, vraiment la mayonnaise va commencer à prendre.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, further to my announcement of yesterday, I have been informed that the time left for hon. Members yet to intervene, has already been communicated to them by the Whips. I am, therefore, inviting hon. Members to strictly adhere to the time allotted to each of them so as to avoid the Chair to have recourse to Standing Order 51.

Thank you.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2018-2019) BILL

(No. VII of 2018)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2018-2019) Bill (No VII of 2018).

Question again proposed.

(3.36 p.m.)

The Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping (Mr P. Koonjoo): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to address this august Assembly in the context of the presentation of the 2018-2019 Budget.

Madam Speaker, the Budget presented by the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development contrasts singularly with the Budget presented in pre-2014 period which left the country in shambles. While he has considerably presented Budgets with a high dose of social measures to provide relief to those who are at the lower end of the salary pyramid, he has not taken any measure which would prejudice the middle income or higher income group.

Allow me to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for once more presenting a budget marked by the same spirit of solidarity with those who are less fortunate. This is a budget represented by a man of vision and not from someone who has put on his mantle of politician.

Behind this budget, we can see a level of compassion and the standing and empathy for a man unparalleled in recent times. Going through the various measures in this budget, we find, at times, the politician, the father and the head of the family. He has combined all these qualities in this budget which is an extraordinary feat. He has to do so, while balancing the needs of the economy and the needs of the society. It is simply incredible that each time he presented a budget, he did not miss the opportunity of bringing relief to those caught in the poverty trap for a number of years. This time also he has lived up to the expectations of citizens of this country, despite the difficult economic environment in Mauritius and globally.

Madam Speaker, we have before us a budget which responds to the aspirations of all segments of the society: the youth, the vulnerable, the elderly, the disabled, investors, public officers and so on. No one has been left behind to the dismay of our friends of the Opposition. Madam Speaker, the level of compassion shown in this budget is remarkable. Though labelled as electoral motives, these are irrelevant considerations. What is of relevance is that it is a once more MSM led Government which is making the difference. This budget is a continuation of the philosophy which has guided the budgets presented by the MSM led Government.

Madam Speaker, I shall now come to the portfolio of my Ministry and I shall address the subject of ocean economy, in the first instance. It has long been recognised that ocean economy offers huge potentials for economic diversification and is undoubtedly the next economic pillar. A preliminary blueprint for the development of the Ocean Economy sector was drawn up a few years ago, but then Government did not make any serious attempt to provide a solid basis for the sector to take off.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition - *bhag gal* - and some hon. Members of the Labour Party still present in the House today were in Government in those days. Madam Speaker, it is simply indecent for some to aver that ocean economy has not been given the attention by this Government. The question can be returned to those making such a misleading statement. What did you do while you were in power? This is the biggest question! Do you have any answer? Certainly not, Madam Speaker!

It is this Government that created a Ministry dedicated to the ocean economy to set the tone and give an impetus to the sector. It would, however, be important to underline the fact that, unlike other economic pillars, the development of the ocean economy sector is fraught with numerous challenges. Competition to attract foreign investment is tough despite the best endeavours of the Economic Development Board. Local investment in the sector is also a subject which is being revisited from all practical perspectives.

I need to highlight that leading nations in the ocean economy sector have been able to establish themselves after a number of years of slow progress. We should, therefore, bear in mind that we have to ensure that we have the transfer of technology and skills from partners who have gone through the process prior to establishing themselves as leaders in the field.

Madam Speaker, notwithstanding the challenges, I must say that we have made some major achievements to harness the full potential of the ocean economy sector in order to accelerate our economic transformation and build resilience to withstand external shocks.

As per Statistics Mauritius, the House may wish to note that in terms of exports in the seafood sector in 2017, total exports of fish and fish products amounted to more than Rs14.2 billion, showing an upward trend since 2015, whereby it stood at Rs13.4 billion. Domestic exports which represented the mainstay of total exports has shown a similar upward trend from Rs9 billion in 2015 to nearly Rs11 billion in 2017. Similarly, domestic exports for fish and fish products have increased by 17% during the first quarter of 2018 when compared to the corresponding period in 2017.

With regard to transshipment of fish at Port Louis, which is an important economic activity, it has reached around 55,000 tons in 2017 against 53,000 in 2015. This trend will be maintained, if not increased in the future.

Madam Speaker, with a view to enhancing our exports, my Ministry is encouraging both product and market diversification. Besides canned tuna and loins, we are also exporting

fish meal, fish oil and other products to both traditional and emerging markets such as Asian and Middle East markets.

As regards local fish production, total fish production reached 22,732 tons in 2017 from 12,650 tons recorded in 2015, representing an increase of about 80%.

Madam Speaker, regarding the concern expressed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition on the supply of raw materials satisfying rules of origin to the canning industry, I wish to enlighten the House on this matter.

The House may wish to note that a request under normal derogation for a quota of 4,000 tons to the EU was approved in January 2018.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade jointly with my Ministry and the private sector made a request to the EU for a Joint Technical Committee to be set up between the private sectors of Mauritius and neighbouring States and the EU boat owners to discuss issues relating to, amongst others, the provision of raw materials to canneries. We have been informed that EU is considering the demand very positively.

Madam Speaker, fish production is high on our agenda. In this perspective, with a view to increasing fish production and harnessing our fish resources in our waters, national fleet development is a *sine qua non* issue. In this respect, hon. Members may wish to learn and note that in 2017, the number of semi industrial vessels operating under the Mauritian flag increased from 24 to 35.

I am advised that a foreign-owned company incorporated in Mauritius has expressed the interest to bring additional vessels to operate in our waters in the near future. This increase is also attributed to the budgetary measures announced in 2016/2017 relating to the allocation of a grant of 50%, up to a ceiling of Rs4 m. to fishermen cooperative societies for the acquisition of semi industrial vessel.

Four cooperative societies have already benefitted from the scheme. The facility will be allocated to two more societies shortly. Similarly, grant has been earmarked in this Budget for our fleet development.

Madam Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to respond to the comments made by hon. Jhuboo. The hon. Member has probably forgotten that under 10 years of Labour Government, the situation in the fishing sector as regards creation of a national fleet was not brighter. He should ask his former colleagues in Government as to what they did to bring

added value to the economy and to attract fishing companies to register their vessels in Mauritius. Zero, nothing!

With regard to his comments on the shipping laws which are not conducive to the registration of fishing vessels, here I wish to remind the hon. Member that Mauritius is not a rogue State and is bound by the International Maritime Conventions to which we are a party, and a respectable party.

As regards his comments on my Ministry and our future to make ocean economy an economic pillar, I would advise the hon. Member to go and ask himself the question ‘why it did not happen under the Labour Party Government? The ‘*gâchis*’, which he has referred to is definitely more relevant to the days of the Labour Government.

Madam Speaker, another important component of our strategy to develop the ocean economy sector is aquaculture. As the House may be aware, global production under capture fisheries is stagnating whilst that from aquaculture is increasing rapidly all over the world to meet the growing demand of fish for human consumption as well as also the food security. In line with global trend and to spearhead product diversification to boost exports, my Ministry is promoting sustainable aquaculture.

In this context, 18 out of 21 large-scale aquaculture sites earmarked have been allocated and some are already operational.

Following the signing of the first deed of concession for aquaculture activities, the existing fish farm, La Ferme Marine de Mahebourg, which is presently operating on five farming sites, will expand on three additional sites during this year. And it’s good to note that this Mauritian company, in those years of the Labour Party, never got the concession. They had to wait for years and years, and when this Government came to power, the first thing that - at that time, the Mentor Minister was the Prime Minister and we agreed to give the concession to that company. And they are doing very well. They are doing very well, let me tell you that. They have expanded and they are operating about five farming sites in Mahebourg and I am given to understand that another three additional sites would be given to the company. The aquaculture production has increased from about 700 tonnes for the same *Ferme Marine de Mahebourg* in 2015 to nearly 1,300 tonnes in 2017 and is expected to increase to 3,000 tonnes in the coming years.

In line with our diversification policy, Madam Speaker, my Ministry is encouraging promoters to undertake aquaponics culture as well. This is a new technique which involves

rearing of fish and growing of vegetables simultaneously. It allows to produce healthy fish and organic vegetables. In the Budget, provision has been made for Albion Fisheries Research Centre to provide fingerlings freely to the interested promoters.

Madam Speaker, in line with our diversification strategy, the House may wish to note that my Ministry has issued authorisation in principle to the promoter of the Deep Ocean Water Applications Project (DOWA) to undertake down streaming innovative activities apart from the cold water which includes thalassotherapy, cosmetics and bottling of desalinated seawater. These activities may further boost up the economy. Some promoters have already contacted my Ministry and have shown keen interest in investing in these sectors.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry, in line with the commitment to provide further facilities to the fishermen community to enable them to generate additional income, has made available to them some 10 floating cages; the price of one floating cage is about Rs1 m. So, 10 floating cages for fish farming. This is a new initiative which has been launched on a pilot basis and is being exploited by cooperative societies. We expect that the amount of catch would increase significantly over the coming years. The technical staff of my Ministry is closely monitoring the project to ensure that we obtain the desired results in the short or medium term.

Madam Speaker, our strategy to develop new areas by encouraging investment to that end in the diversification, already some private promoters have expressed a strong interest to invest in the farming of other species. My Ministry is giving serious attention to such initiatives and every project proposal is being examined in a holistic way with due regard to the protection of the environment and respect of the biodiversity. At this stage, I can inform the House that some 400,000 baby oysters are being bred by a private company in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, for the sustainable development of the fisheries sector, training is an indispensable instrument. Such training has to be provided by accredited professionals so that the safety and security of the fishers are duly ensured. Training in basic knowledge and skills is being imparted to artisanal fishermen so that they can operate efficiently and safely outside the lagoon and we are training the youngsters to go and fish outside the lagoon, because there lies the EEZ. In this regard, recently 51 fishermen plus three women who had successfully completed their training have been issued fishermen cards.

It is to be noted, Madam Speaker, that in 2009 the then Government discontinued the issue of fishermen cards. I hope that those present in the House today recall the disservice

done to the fishermen community at that time. The training exercise is ongoing and additional fishers will benefit from this measure.

As stated by my colleague, hon. Minister Callichurn - he is not here...

(Interruptions)

He just left! I wish to reiterate that since 2015, around 1,200 candidates have been trained yearly to qualify for jobs in the crews sector. The House may wish to note that the Canot Scheme designed to equip fishermen with better boats is to allow them to operate safely in the off-lagoon areas. Under this scheme, a grant of a maximum of Rs200,000, representing 50% of the cost of purchase of a canot is provided to the registered fishers. For the remaining 50% of the fish, the fishermen may contract a loan from the DBM. So far, 29 fishers have already benefited from this scheme. In the current Budget, funds have been provided to continue with this scheme.

Madam Speaker, with a view to promoting research and development in the ocean economy, a multipurpose support vessel is under construction in Australia under a G to G procurement. The vessel will cost about Rs57 m. and will be delivered in March 2019. It will be used in the fish aggregating devices, fisheries and also facilitate research activities in our EEZ. Naturally, it will be a great help for the fishermen who are going to fish outside the lagoon.

Madam Speaker, in the context of regional and international cooperation under the new protocol between Mauritius and the EU - the other day the Leader of the Opposition talked about the EU and he said why don't we go and talk to the EU. Well, we are discussing with them. Let me inform him that on 08 December 2017, we talked to the EU and proposed to obtain a financial help for the economy. I am happy to announce that the EU gave us Rs150 m. over four years to be utilised, *inter alia*, to implement the Ocean related projects.

At the regional level of the reciprocal fishing, agreement has been signed and ratified with the Seychelles as well to allow vessels of both countries to fish in both EEZ, in ours and theirs.

Madam Speaker, for the sustainable development and management of our marine ecosystem and conservative biodiversity, protection of our lagoons and ocean assets is imperative. In this regard, my Ministry has taken the initiative to set up various coral farming nurseries for the restoration of our degraded coral reefs and we know that the climate change is doing havoc to this part of our ocean.

Community-based coral farming training programme is being encouraged. A coral reef network has also been set up at the level of my Ministry to coordinate activities aiming at enhancing the adaptive capacity of our vulnerable marine ecosystem, including coral reefs, mangroves and sea grass. And, I must congratulate the Government for having decorated a young boy who gave his life for planting the mangroves and taking care of the sea around the coastal side of Grand Port. He was decorated, after his death naturally, by this Government. He was a young man, very devoted to the sea and the ocean.

I also wish to highlight that following the Commonwealth Heads of State and Government Meeting held in April last in London, and which was attended by our Prime Minister, Mauritius has been designated to co-pilot an Action Group on Coral Reef Restoration, together with Australia and Belize. My Ministry is coordinating this project, which will be an occasion for us to showcase what we are doing in the field of Coral Reef Restoration, and to learn from best practices implemented in other countries. It will also provide us the opportunity to secure assistance in terms of expertise in that field from the Commonwealth Secretariat. Moreover, my Ministry is working on the possibility to access the Green Climate Fund for the rehabilitation of lagoons.

Madam Speaker, with the major projects being undertaken in the Port area, Mauritius will be transformed into an important regional maritime and shipping hub in the near future. It is therefore vital to ensure that our waters and Port are safe and secure. The Shipping Division of my Ministry is the regulator for maritime safety and security, and prevention of pollution in the maritime environment. The Mauritius shipping sector is called to play a very important role insofar as maritime training and education for the maritime industry is concerned.

Madam Speaker, furthermore, Mauritius will be called upon to perform a more prominent role in the region in the near future with the development of the Mauritius Ship Register where more ships will be called upon to register under the Mauritian flag. It is something missing since many years and I believe that this will be a marking point in the history of the marine in Mauritius. The development of a Yacht Code, and this is very important, Madam Speaker. Yacht Code goes along the same lines where it is intended to have more luxury Yachts coming into our Port. And we know that Seychelles is doing very, very well in this field. I also wish to highlight that projects relating to a marina are in the pipeline. This will further develop marine leisure activities in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, as I have mentioned earlier, we have serious ambitions to make ocean sector become a pillar in our economy. Over the last three years, we have explored several avenues of the development of the sector. In fact, we have had discussions with leading nations which are favourably considering to provide support to our nascent industry. As a matter of fact, the Norwegian authorities with whom I had the pleasure to have a meeting, and we had a very serious discussion and they are very happy to give us all the help that we need and we are pursuing the matter further. I think that it will be a very important milestone in the history of the marine sector in Mauritius.

In the context of international and regional cooperation, we are extending our network. We have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Republic of South Africa and similar initiatives are underway with the Malagasy Republic, Egypt and the Turkey, amongst others.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Can we have some silence, please?

Mr Koonjoo: Besides these initiatives, we are committed to advancing the ocean economy agenda to new heights with due diligence while availing ourselves of opportunities and appropriate support.

Madam Speaker, the challenges ahead are daunting but not unsurmountable. With our traditional sense of responsibility and resilience, we have the potential to succeed and in this context, we are coming up with meaningful measures. Our prime objective is to harness the full potential of the ocean economy and open new frontiers of the development. The ocean economy is poised to undergo profound transformation.

This budget, Madam Speaker, makes provision for the setting-up of an ocean economy unit and with prime objective to prepare a national ocean policy paper to provide the orderly and sustainable development of the sector. The sector is so important that we need to ensure that the policies we intend to adopt will stand the test of time. In the same context, we shall also revisit the institutional arrangements so that we have the most optimal model for the development of the sector.

Madam Speaker, in line with institutional rationalisation strategy of the Government and so as to boost up the research and development in the ocean economy, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre and the Mauritius Oceanography Institute will be merged very

shortly. It will be appreciated to know that Albion Fisheries Research Centre was created some four decades back with the help of friendly countries like Japan.

(Interruptions)

Yes, I was saying that it was created some four decades ago. It was the pioneer in terms of research and development in fisheries and aquaculture. With technological and scientific progress, it has become indispensable to revisit and to adapt it to the needs of our society in the light of the new and modern technology.

Similarly, we need to review the operation of the Mauritius Oceanography Institute created a decade ago. That was really a *gâchis* until we came and changed the whole thing. They were staying, *le bâtiment qu'ils se servaient à cette époque-là, c'était pitiable*. We have made it *un bijou* in Albion. The Oceanography Institute, now it stands like a beautiful building but we will have to upgrade it, put machines, put scientists, laboratories, enhance it so that our youngsters can enjoy and work very, very peacefully in that atmosphere.

The House will also appreciate that as a responsible Government, we are duty bound to ensure that judicious use is made of the taxpayers' money. Therefore, it needs to revisit both models and bring more synergy.

While I am on this subject, it is important that I remind the House that the fate of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre was almost sealed by the then Labour/PMSD Government, which had already allocated the site at Albion to a local promoter for a hotel project. And thank God, thanks to the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor that we were able to recuperate that thing. This would have meant the end of the research initiatives and the end of any initiative to develop the ocean economy sector.

Without my sustained efforts, the Albion Fisheries Research Centre would have been a sad episode of our history. This was the achievement of our friends in the Opposition.

Madam Speaker, in the ocean economy sector, modern technology is essential for development of digital technology and it is called upon to play a very crucial role in the future, as such the whole economy in future will be digitalised.. It is in this perspective that our Ocean Observatory e-platform will be developed to support the Maritime Spatial Planning Initiative in Mauritius. Madam Speaker, in our strategy to promote the blue growth, a geotechnical study will be conducted by the extended continental shelf management area in Mascareignes region to explore its potential.

Madam Speaker, the Fisheries sector will, for years to come, remain the linchpin of the ocean economy. In line with the import substitution strategy of the Government and with a view to enhancing local production, foreign industrial fishing companies will be allowed to fish in our banks under exploited shallow water banks provided that they sell their fish and their catch on the local market. Madam Speaker, I commended this measure which will become a game-changer as it will significantly increase the frozen fish production from the banks.

For the last fifteen years, we have witnessed a constant decline in the catch from the shallow water banks. In the late nineties, there were about 15 large fishing vessels operating in the shallow water banks and the average annual catch of frozen fish from these banks amounted to around 5,000 tons. However, over the years, the Mauritian operators have not renewed their fleet so that today we have got only 2 Mauritian flagged vessels operating in the shallow water banks. The total catch in 2017 was around 1,200 tons only and the possibility of catching 5,000 tons is still there.

I should point out that there is a potential catch of 5,000 tons from these banks. The shallow water banks, namely: Saya de Malha Bank and Nazareth Bank are located at a distance of over 600 kilometres from the North of Mauritius. A foreign fishing licence will be issued to the company along with a set of conditions, including the fish caught on the banks shall be landed in Port Louis harbour and shall be sold on the local market to the Mauritian people. I wish to reassure the House that this measure will in no way affect the local fishermen community as well as our local operators in the fishing sector.

Madam Speaker, historically fishing activities are fraught with hazards and risks even with the advent of technology. This budget provides a landmark measure - for the first time in Mauritius - with the introduction of a group life insurance scheme for the registered fishers to cover any accidents and losses at sea. With this measure, we hope that those engaged in fishing will find some comfort for the future. Madam Speaker, equipment and other gears used by fishermen are not affordable to everyone. The Government has felt the need to provide support to the fishers and in this context, provision has been made for a grant of 60% of the cost of acquisition of an outboard engines and fishing nets for the fishermen cooperatives up to a ceiling of Rs60,000.

Another measure, though not so onerous in purely monetary terms, is the grant of a free icebox to all registered fishermen. This measure will help to improve handling and the

quality of fish. It will also improve the hygienic standards. This measure had been adversely commented by some hon. Members. This is, indeed, shameful inasmuch as while sitting on Government bench, they did not make any singular move to improve the lot of members of the fishing community.

Madam Speaker, to conclude, the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has presented a Budget where all the citizens find the amenities, opportunities and assistance to which he and his family are legitimately entitled. I wish to underline that we have a heavy responsibility towards the present and the future generations. Without any doubt, history will be the ultimate judge in the merits of this Budget. But for this Government, there is a certainty that those who are making adverse comments, they are standing on the wrong side and I think that for many years to come, this budget will be remembered as a showcase. I believe that in the future, the future belongs to the MSM.

I thank you for your attention.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(4.19 p.m)

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):

Madam Speaker, I have listened very carefully to hon. Koonjoo and the hon. Minister has been very careful not to even tell us how many jobs they have created ever since he is Minister in his sector.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Don't reply now. It is not Question Time!

Mr Mohamed: In Question Time, he does not answer and when it is not Question Time, he answers. However, having listened to him and having heard him make such great comments boosting, if I may say, about the ability of his Ministry and him at the helm of it, what I do recall is, in fact, the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor who in his speech, on 20 August 2015 for the 2030 Vision, said very interesting things. He said that there would be 100,000 jobs created and out of these 100,000 jobs over five years, he did say there will be 25,000 jobs in the ocean economy. 25,000 over five years! The hon. Minister has tried to, thinking it was Parliamentary Question that he had to answer, interject and say he has created jobs. 3000! If he has only created 3,000 jobs in four years and the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor said that what he should have created is 25,000. If you want to grade him from A to F, I do not

think he would really pass the stage of F, and F for me means fail because where are the 25,000. He owes in other words 22,000 jobs to the country. 22,000 jobs, that is what he owes! And he goes on to say, Madam Speaker, that he is such a great Minister. Maybe! He is the greatest Minister of ocean economy that we have seen. This is what he tries to portray. This is the impression that I have, and this is what I am saying and this is what I maintain. This is the impression he gives us.

Madam Speaker: No!

Mr Mohamed: This is the impression he gives us.

Madam Speaker: No, hon. Mohamed. I think every hon. Member has to be moderate in what he says. I would appeal to you to be a little bit moderate.

Mr Mohamed: Wherever I say something that hurts, I will try to moderate the hurt. I will try to moderate the short-term pain that you - the Government - will go through because it would be long-term gain for us. What I am trying to say to him is that if he portrays himself as having done such an amazing job, maybe he has forgotten something else altogether, apart from the 22,000 jobs that he owes us. Owes the country! Owes Mauritians!

I don't see the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor standing up and telling him where are the 22,000 jobs. Oh, no! He will sit down, not try to answer questions, and he will keep quiet and continue tolerating the incompetence of someone who owes 22,000 jobs!

But let me say something else to him. What about the Maritime Labour Convention? The Maritime Labour Convention is the Convention that we have ratified, adhered to ever since 2013. We were obliged within two years, in 2015, to be able to amend our laws to ensure that we would apply the Maritime Labour Convention. The hon. Minister does not even know what it is. It is his Ministry that is responsible for it, Madam Speaker. What was the purpose of the Maritime Labour Convention? It was to help Mauritian seafarers, workers, to have better conditions of work for recruitment and for their life when they are on board, for less money to be paid to recruitment agencies, the elimination of commissions to be paid to recruitment agencies and for better occupation safety and health conditions on board for seafarers and seamen and fishermen. But, then, this amazingly able Minister does not even know that he had, at least, to do something with regard to the Maritime Labour Convention. But he will not even comment on it; he will not even be able to interject on it; he will not even be able to ask me to give way on it because he knows nothing about it and he will stick his face in *Le Mauricien* newspaper.

But, then, again, the Speaker in United Kingdom, I recall, at one time, said to the Ministers who were sitting down that Parliament is not a place where you stick your face in a Paper. Either when you just sat down - you have made a speech -, you listen to the speech that is being made, but not read a newspaper. This is unparliamentary. But, then again, that was the United Kingdom, House of Commons. So, let me try to moderate my speech and say something else.

Madam Speaker: No, I am sorry hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Yes.

Madam Speaker: You do want to give me instructions and say what I should have done?

Mr Mohamed: This is the impression you have got? That was never my intention.

Madam Speaker: Was it so or not?

Mr Mohamed: Of course, not! I am sorry that you felt so.

Madam Speaker: Okay, thank you.

Mr Mohamed: I do not know why you feel that. For God's sake! Let me go to another important matter, which really is of utmost importance, and I would like to make a comment about it, and it is the following. Some would say it has got nothing to do with the budget, but I think it's of utmost importance for us to stop hypocrisy. And that, I will not moderate, Madam Speaker.

A child of 13 years died, and we were shocked to hear that this child of 13 years was married at 13 years. Not only was she married at 13 years, she was pregnant at the age of 13. And that child is now dead. For many, many years, we have been very careful not to comment politicians. I have been very careful not to comment on this issue for fear that it would be harming the feelings of a certain community that go into religious marriages.

Let me say it very clearly. We should all condemn any marriage for any child, any girl below the age of not 16, but 18. Enough is enough; we should ensure that marriages should be allowed from the age of 18, and this thing about allowing marriages below the age of 18 should stop. To those who say, 'it is my religious right to marry below the age of 18', I tell them, 'this is not what you will have to abide by'.

I say to them that they should ensure that the law of the country should be one law, and the law should apply to everyone, and one should not use the excuse of religious appurtenance. We are Mauritians and we should not tolerate such a thing. Let it be clear once and for all. What about this person who has committed the crime of marrying someone of 13? What about this boy who has committed the crime of fathering a child with a girl of 13? What about the priest who carried out this marriage? What about the parents, on both sides, that tolerated such a state of affairs? Why is it that the Police have not arrested anyone as yet? Is it because the Government wants to play politics with it? Not to offend the feelings of a certain community? And I say it out loud, you cannot play politics with the life of a child of 13. People should be arrested, and if it is a priest who allowed a marriage of 13, this means he tolerated sexual intercourse with a girl of 13. He opened the doors to a crime and he should be arrested and he should be punished for it. This cannot be tolerated.

But the same Government that could not even make a comment from the hon. Prime Minister when there was the LGBT manifestation; he could not even take a position until today. Stand up and say what he is for! The walk or people are not allowed to walk? Was he against the unlawful manifestation or is he for it? Or maybe the best thing to do is to sit on the fence and not offend anyone.

I am for only one rule; the rule is very simple. Mauritians are entitled, if they comply with the law, to carry out a manifestation, whether you like it or not. That is simple. However, what is even more shocking is that Police, whose responsibility the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor has, don't even, up to now, have bothered to find out who is the one who has made blasphemous remarks about supposedly 'Allah is gay'. This is what is on the internet. When it comes to finding out who has offended Mr the Prime Minister, right, rapid to be arrested!

When it comes to finding out who has offended hon. Soodhun, in jail he goes! When it comes to offending anyone from the side of Government, the Central CID comes into action rapidly; arrested, provisional information! But when it comes to this, nothing is done by the Police, apart from *tergiverser*; yes, you can do the manifestation, no you can't, yes you can, no you can't, yes you can, no you can't. This is *l'amateurisme* led by this Government under the responsibility of the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, and he is the very same person spin doctoring, saying that there will be 100,000 jobs created.

On average, Madam Speaker, the number of jobs that have been created is how many? 4,700 jobs on average a year ever since they have been in power! You want to be exact? 4,733 jobs a year ever since they have been in power. Where are the 100,000 jobs? How many people have lost their jobs? We do not hear that. And hon. Koonjoo talks about the number of jobs they have created in huge manufacturing companies! Let us be serious!

Let's look at something else, Madam Speaker. I was looking at this very interesting document; which is what? *Manifesto of gouvernement le peuple! Lepep!* It doesn't even exist that *lepep* anymore. I mean *le deuxième miracle économique dont il parlait ; le ministre des Finances d'alors n'est plus. Le Premier ministre n'est plus Premier ministre, le Deputy Prime Minister d'alors est maintenant chef de l'opposition. C'est le gouvernement Lepep dénaturé de 2018, 2.0* or whatever he wants to call it, but this zero is something which I can see coming up more and more often; zero as having totally failed in what they have said they would do.

Let us look at the first paragraph. They say -

« *Gouverner pour le peuple avec le peuple. Nous, notre contrat de confiance avec la population en 12 commandements - the 12 commandments etched in stone, I thought. Nous gouvernerons pour le peuple, avec le peuple et dans l'intérêt de toute la nation, pas pour nous, ni pour un petit groupe d'amis, d'agents politique.* »

Oh! Really? Yes, they said it ! And I say it again -

« (...) *Nous gouvernerons dans l'intérêt de la population, pas pour nous* », they said.

If they don't understand it, it means '*pas pou nous*'. It is the same thing in French. If you don't understand the French word, 'not for us, not for members of the MSM, not for family members of the MSM, for the family and the relatives of Ministers and Members of Parliament, not for political agents.' And I see hon. Koonjoo smiling. Is he thinking of a family member? Should I look around the House and see whether there is any other Minister smiling because he feels that we have touched him? Is the hon. Deputy Speaker smiling there or grinning because he is thinking of a family member? Is he or is he not? I don't know! Or maybe he is laughing at me? And maybe you are sticking your face into the newspaper because you can't even show it! Shame on those who wrote those words and went to sell it to the people out there! And what did they say again?

« *Nous allons créer des emplois tant dans le secteur public que dans le privé en préparant, aux frais de l'Etat, les jeunes diplômés, selon les compétences requises par*

le marché du travail. Nous comptons adopter une politique d'embauche fondée sur l'ouverture, la transparence et le mérite. Nous garantirons des chances égales à tous. »

But is it, Madam Speaker, that *c'est juste les honorables membres du MSM* and their relatives *qui ont le mérite*? Is it not bizarre that I have the impression that it is only hon. Members of the MSM and Muvman Liberator, who, *caré caré*, have the merit, whereas all the other people of this country they do not have any way? Is it what, sons and daughters of Ministers, they are the ones who have the chance to be nominated in positions of power? But then, what are they going to say to me? Do you know what they are going to say? They are going to say: "Well, – as hon. Koonjoo said - what did you do when you were in power?" Now, that's such an intelligent remark!

(Interruptions)

"What did you do?"

"I did nothing!"

In fact, if we were to listen to them, we did nothing. We did nothing! In fact, the country stopped existing since 2005! Do you know what, there was nothing happening in the country in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010! And it only started functioning again when hon. Pravind Jugnauth, nay, when they had the blessing of the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor for the alliance with the Labour Party, then it started functioning again, then the clock started functioning again.

(Interruptions)

I have another 30 minutes. Thank you, hon. Ganoo!

Now, can you imagine, it started functioning again! All of a sudden, the clock stopped in 2005. It stopped! And it started kicking again...

(Interruptions)

Please, sit down! Do not go! I still haven't finished with you. I just started, and it is going to be quite brutal. So, it started functioning again in 2010. But then, again, as soon as the alliance broke, the country stopped again. It stopped! Nothing was happening!

(Interruptions)

What did he say? What did he say?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, can you call the hon. Member back and ask him to withdraw?

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member cannot withdraw; he was not in his seat. I am sorry!

(Interruptions)

No, this is not - I am sorry!

(Interruptions)

Please, sit down! When an hon. Member makes a remark from his seat, I can order him to withdraw. He was not in his seat, how can I know?

(Interruptions)

I can't order him to withdraw!

Mr Mohamed: So, Madam Speaker, let everyone know, later on, when I finish speaking, I will start moving out and make a remark against you, then say nothing.

Madam Speaker: Several times you have made it, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Never! Never! I always...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Several times the hon. Leader of the Opposition has made it! When I have ordered Members out in this Chamber....

(Interruptions)

When I have ordered Members out, they have said all sorts of things when they moved out. And I have not been able to tell them anything!

(Interruptions)

Sorry?

(Interruptions)

No, I have time to intervene. And I have the right to intervene. Please, proceed!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: That is a new rule!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: They do say it! Please!

(Interruptions)

No! Hon. Member! I am sorry! Now from a sitting position, hon. Béranger is saying that when they walk out, can they say anything. Let me say...

(Interruptions)

Let me say for the benefit of all hon. Members of this House what I have observed when I have ordered people out of this Chamber...

(Interruptions)

When I have ordered Members out of this Chamber, the numerous remarks that I have seen, that they have made to my address

(Interruptions)

They have made personal remarks to my address and I have not said anything!

(Interruptions)

It was not made from a sitting position. I have ruled out! This is final!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Thank you! Even hon. Members of Government are sympathising with me. I thank them for that.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, and when I read, it says here: “*Nous libérerons (...).*”

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, please! Don't make provocation!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, it says...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order please!

(Interruptions)

Order ! Hon. Rutnah!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah, please!

(Interruptions)

Please, order!

Please proceed, hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Hon. Rutnah should make the comments when he is walking out! Then it will be okay!

(Interruptions)

I know! You know!

“Nous ferons preuve d’innovation ;”, it says.

And it goes on to say –

“Nous libérerons notre société de l’emprise d’une corruption généralisée, (...)”

There is an adviser, as hon. Bhagwan rightly said yesterday, in the Prime Minister’s Office, who is charged with corruption. And he says –

“Nous libérerons notre société de l’emprise d’une corruption généralisée.”

And someone has an *emprise* on the Prime Minister’s Office! And he is going to be charged of corruption and he is facing trial and, he says –

“Nous libérerons notre société de l’emprise d’une corruption generalisée, du favoritisme (...)”.

Do they understand what ‘*favoritisme*’ means? Et ça continue -

“(...) du népotisme (...)”.

Isn’t it when their family members are recruited, it’s *népotisme*?

I recall, and I will say it. I recall when I became Minister - and let this go for posterity! When I became Minister, hon. Soodhun gave me a call. He proposed to me that he

wanted to make my brother the Chairman of State Trading Corporation. Immediately - I recall that in my arms I had my son who was only a few months old. I was a proud father; I looked at my son, and I heard hon. Soodhun talking to me.

And I said to him: "Never! No!"

And he said: "Why, he is a good boy!"

I said: "He is a fantastic boy, not only a good boy. He is a good man, but no!"

And he said: "Why?"

And I said: "Because, precisely, he is my brother and I am Minister in that Government".

I called the Prime Minister of the day then, at 11.30 at night.

And I said to him:

"If ever anyone from the MSM tries to say that, please refuse. Otherwise, I will have to resign because I do not accept; because I will not be able to approve something like that if Cabinet goes through it, and I said 'no'. Whereas here, in this Government, when they put in their Manifesto, there will be no nepotism; there will be no favouritism; it will be not for friends of ours; it will not be for family members; it will not be for girlfriends; it will not be for boyfriends! Let us make things equal now! Gender parity!

So, they will not, in any way, be it from the front door or the back door, allow anything wrong to happen!

And what have we seen? We have seen hon. Members of this Assembly having their sons, daughters, nephews, nieces political agents polluting every parastatal body, Ministries; getting promotions, all this! And then, they will say "Well, what were you doing when you were in power?" When I was in power, this is what I said to hon. Soodhun, because I had been informed and I said 'no'. This is what I believe in. But it's not an excuse, *à chaque fois de venir dire: "mais quand vous étiez au pouvoir qu'est-ce que vous avez fait?" Cela veut dire quoi alors? Cela veut dire que s'il y a des erreurs qui ont été commises à l'époque, ça veut dire que ça donne le droit à ce gouvernement de continuer les mêmes bêtises, et non seulement cela, mais de faire des choses encore plus pire ! Est-ce que la population n'avait pas choisi ce gouvernement précisément pour faire de sorte que les erreurs du passé allaient être corrigées; pour faire de sorte que les mêmes erreurs will not be repeated. But they seem to have forgotten that!*

So, they come with the lamest of excuses. It shows the intelligence in the argument! It shows the ability to debate!

“When you were in power, you didn’t do it?”

That’s all they can come up with!

Yes, we are the ones who have been guilty for the worst of offences. Let it be ! Let’s call it now! Done! We admitted it. What are you doing? You are in power! What have you done to change that? Nothing! And then, when I read –

“*Nous allons construire 2,000 unités de logement chaque année (...)*”.

Chaque année, 2,000 unités de logements depuis qu’ils sont au pouvoir!

Si on enlève tous les projets que le gouvernement précédant du Parti Travalliste, quand nous, on était au pouvoir, et le PMSD pendant un certain moment, quand nous avons commencé nos projets, on enlève tout cela, ils ont construit peut-être 200 maisons. 2000 maisons par an chaque année.

And they go on to say –

« (...) Redonner à l’ICAC et à la Police leur indépendance opérationnelle (...). »

Are they serious? Are they?

Leur indépendance opérationnelle, do they understand what *indépendance* means or do they understand what *opérationnelle* means? When you have a Minister Mentor day in, day out just defending the Commissioner of Police, who does not even have the independence of mind, to even take position against the Commissioner of Police, if the Commissioner of Police has done something wrong, but, no, he will act as a wall there, to protect, defend and tolerate. In creole, we say *soutiré*, what the Commissioner of Police does. And they talk about independence, operational independence!

All those who have been arrested, you remember. But then they say – well, what about those who were arrested when Ramgoolam was Prime Minister. But is that a defence? It means that because people were arrested at the time that Ramgoolam was Prime Minister, and if it is the case that they were arrested wrongly so, I don’t know, of course, it’s wrong. But it means that they are entitled to do it now? What have they done to change things?

And then we promised we are going to stop betting, *nation zougadere nou pu arreté, Lottotech deuxième tirage, deux fois par semaine*. So, not only do we become *nation zougadere* but twice. Yes, if they have improved somewhere they have done it, *nu vine deux fois plis zougadere*.

And what about the promises! And then the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor goes to say financial services 15,000 jobs, they will be created in five years. Education and Knowledge Sector 3,000 jobs. Tourism 8,000 jobs. Construction and Property Development 15,000 jobs. Logistics 3,000 jobs.

C'est trop facile de venir dire il y aura ça, il y aura ça, il y aura ça, il y aura ça. *But at the end of the day, let's check where the jobs are. Where are the jobs? But then they will say - mais qu'est-ce que vous avez faire, vous?*

Well, that is a very intelligent defence once again. I am not the one who is in Government, you are. You are the one who made the statement, I didn't. You are the one who pledged, I didn't. You are the one who violated your promise, I didn't. You are the one who came and called all the private sector to impress them with your ability to second *miracle économique*, I didn't. Why is it gone?

Special purpose vehicles, let's talk about the SPVs. I am going to call this Government, Government SPV. Let us govern by SPV. Government SPV, it does make sense actually. It does not sound right. SPV because, it is basically the Government, tasteless, lack of transparency.

India has an accord with Seychelles, but Seychelles has the democratic might that I respect, that it has to go to Parliament to ask its Parliament whether they agree with what is being agreed in a document with India. *Chapeau!*

Here, you have the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, and the hon. Prime Minister, but the good thing is that at least we can't say father and son are different. They are the same. Their understanding of our transparency is seriously, totally walked and I recall this very beautiful speech. I'll come to that in a minute, but when you look at this document, what is it? 'Pursuing Our Transformative Journey', it has been transformed for Members, and relatives of the Government side. Yes, it has been transformed.

Economic miracle for some, for a few, and they have to wear orange ties, and then we are going to hang through that noose. And then...

(Interruptions)

Oh God, that's so intelligent, hon. Jhugroo.

(Interruptions)

I am sorry. I just saw stars coming from your mind there. Stars! My God, stars!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, please don't interrupt.

Mr Mohamed: At least, I don't have to write a speech and read it.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: *Après vine passe to di ber ar moi, taler après.*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Is it hurting?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, I have called you several times. If you continue to ignore my remarks, then I'll have to take action.

Mr Mohamed: Let's look at page 400 of that thick book that was shared with us. Maybe, some Ministers did not even look at it. Or, maybe they swear by it. It's called "Government by SPV", and what it is Metro Express Ltd., projects on the public entities. Maybe the backbenchers, a few that are left there, that hopefully would try to build up the stamina and the strength to try to stand up and say, they don't agree, because out there, people are waiting for you. Metro Express Ltd., National Water Development Company Ltd., CEB Green Energy Ltd., Landscape Ltd., National Housing Company Ltd., Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd., SIC Development Ltd., all this is put in this document, for

2018/2019 Estimates, what is it for? Construction of Metro Express, Rehabilitation of farms, 26 kilometers old and defective pipes, solar voltaic farms.

Madam Speaker, even a building by Landscape of the new administrative tower. My God! Is this such an emergency for our country, an administrative tower by Landscape for Rs329 m. this year; next year, Rs990 m., and one year later Rs376 m. Well, we really need an administrative tower for Landscape.

6,800 houses to be built in two years, SPV. Why go through a SPV? Because it ensures that there is no transparency, you can't put questions in Parliament and say, where the funds came from, who it is being given to, is the best person getting that right to build or not build?

Hon. Jahangeer, whenever and for the short while that he had courage to even speak out. Unfortunately, it was very short lived, God knows why. I do not know. But I feel sad that his courage is no longer there. I feel saddened that he is no longer that courageous anymore. I feel saddened that he is now not seen what he used to see. I feel saddened that he laughs when this country is going to be indebted by more than Rs40 billions through SPV, Special Purpose Vehicles, *pour la bonne et simple raison, Madame la présidente, c'est parce que nous, à l'assemblée nationale, on ne pourra pas alors poser des questions et demander comment cet argent des contribuables est dépensé. Et pour ajouter* insults to injury, all this money here. Can you imagine building a cancer hospital is also through an SPV! Building a cancer hospital is also through SPV. *Komien commission pou manger la?*

Who are going to get commission? Who are going to get the kickbacks? How much, who are the frames of power that are going to share the spoils of war. Fill up the war chess before an election. Because that's the only way they can even contemplate winning. Building a cancer hospital with a SPV, and then, in fact, what are we doing here? It's a shame.

Ladies and gentleman, Madam Speaker, today what we hear to do is just a sham. Because we are here, and this document is saying it is an estimate of 2018-2019. If it is an estimate, why then do I see that the Republic of Mauritius has already issued Request for Proposal for the selection of project management consultant for the construction of a new administrative building at Côte-d'Or, administrative building for Landscape at Côte-d'Or, *de 30,000 mètres carrés à 40,000 mètres carrés?*

What is in God's name? Are they going to stock or store in there, and it was done on 29 January 2018. I will table this document. Why is it here, Landscape, in this budget telling

us what they are going to do as an estimate, but they are already having Request for Proposal in January?

But what is our role here today then? Just to act as rubber stamps! Is Parliament being insulted therefor? Things are being done on the back of Parliament. You all are here, we all are here, pretending that we are doing something important but Government has already decided to issue Request for Proposal. And look at this one, February 2018, invitation for bids, construction of three administrative buildings, three market fairs, design and build, turnkey basis, SIC development. Since when is the SIC Development in building of what? Market fair, Administrative Buildings, SIC? Create another SPV, *encore une fois, ce que le MSM va appeler la transparence et ce que le ML dirait 'caré caré' dans l'izié !* I will tell him what is in his eyes! I will table another one.

But then again, there is another one, this time for what? Rehabilitation works for La Ferme Farm, again another one started in April 2018! And another one, the Ebène flyover upgrade, construction of La Vigie-Brasserie Link Road, going through an SPV again, and started out on 07 June 2018! What was the point, therefore, of this whole exercise today? *C'était quoi*, to fill up air? What is the point of having printed it in this document? All those who were supposed to go and read it, and object to it at Committee Stage and put questions, what for, when they already sent tenders out, and request for bids out? What is the point? This is how Parliament is being insulted and degraded!

But then again, that is the new methodology of MSM, and that is called the transformative journey. This is the transformative journey!

Madam Speaker, we have heard hon. Bodha speaking. When you look at his manifesto that he stood by, defended, in there there is a line: 'We will modernise Port Louis, we will create new infrastructure in Port Louis.' Four years on, *les marchands ambulants* are left to wither and die! *Les marchands ambulants* are left to wither and die and go away into the sunset, into the dusk. They can't make a livelihood because a shanty town has been created. That was never our intention to have sticks, plastic covering, no exit in case of fire, no proper toilet facilities, no cleaning facilities and he expects Mauritians to go to that place to shop!

But then, what is he going to say? Because he is very comfortable with his friends from the private sector, concessions to develop Port Louis! Let us sell Port Louis once again! Where is the development? This Métro Léger; bridge to Caudan over which he can spend

money. But what about accommodation for *les marchands ambulants*! Is it that *les marchands ambulants de Port Louis* are victims of this Government because they do not have the political support of people from Port Louis?

(Interruptions)

Yes, it is! Because Port Louis does not recognise the MSM as a partner they can have trust! Port Louis does not recognise MSM as a party they can even breathe in comfortably in their presence! That is why the MSM has turned its back on Port Louis! Promises, promises, and empty promises! Nothing but promises!

Let me, at this stage, talk about something else. It is an issue I brought up about the need for pension for people who are married religiously and who become widows. I did raise this issue here. I recall the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Collendavelloo was in this House then, he said that the proposal contained in my question deserves the most serious consideration. *La raison pour laquelle je dis ça c'est parce que plusieurs dames se sont mariées religieusement d'après les lois de notre pays. Il y avait un désordre qui fut créé par l'honorable ministre Mentor quand il était Premier ministre. Dieu sait pourquoi ! Un désordre pas possible, d'amendement au Civil Status Act ! Un désordre pas possible qui voulait abroger le Muslim Personal Law, qui voulait totalement insulter, en d'autres mots, une communauté, entre autres. Il avait l'habitude. C'était choquant !*

Jusqu'aujourd'hui, à cause de ce désordre irréfléchi - ou peut-être qu'il avait d'autres idées en tête, je ne sais pas. Je ne suis pas de son niveau pour pouvoir comprendre comment son esprit fonctionne. Je n'aimerais pas en fait.

Donc, il y a des dames qui se sont mariées en 1991 et qui sont veuves aujourd'hui. Hon. Abbas Mamode, hon. Ameer Meea et moi-même, nous en avons parlé. D'après notre Code Civil, ces veuves ont droit à une pension. The Ag. Prime Minister then, hon. Collendavelloo disait que ce que j'avais dit était très, très intéressant et il allait faire un comité là-dessus. Mais rien! On the contrary, they were denied.

Madam Speaker, a woman whose husband died, who has contributed to the Mauritius Meat Authority, contributed to the National Pension and National Savings, does not get a penny today! I have a letter here: pension denied. Just because she is married religiously! But who is to blame for all that, if not the MSM? Didn't the MSM think when they were amending the law that there would be consequences?

In 2018, he has a chance, Madam Speaker - he is still sitting there – to at least correct the mistakes of the past. At least! Before anything happens that is irreparable, correct the mistakes of the past for all those widows who can't even get a penny! I have promises, and empty promises from the Ag. Prime Minister here, who said, yes, he would set up a committee, he would speak to the Prime Minister. Nothing was done, and today you have widows who still don't have anything and they have to go begging!

Madam Speaker, let me talk about something which is of utmost importance again, it is the Financial Services Sector. The Financial Services Sector, Madam Speaker, is in shambles. But before I go to that issue, I would like to talk about the fuel prices. What people out there don't understand – the Members of this Government are quite interesting as subjects to study actually. Maybe down the road, there would be some people who would study Members of this Government and really come up with some interesting paper as to understand their psyche because I fail to understand it. I mean, they expect everyone *de leur donner des médailles. Pourquoi est-ce qu'ils veulent des médailles? Ils pensent qu'ils méritent des médailles parce qu'ils ont baissé, à travers le budget, le prix de l'essence et du diesel et du mogas.*

They increased it by 10%, and then they brought it down by 4.7%, and then they tell you: 'give me a medal.' Why did you increase it by 10% in the first place? Why did you send Minister Gungah to the MBC/TV and radio? And even Ministers from this Government, who will recognise themselves, say, oh well, you know, we have to be patriots. We have to accept the increase. *Il n'y a pas de patriotisme maintenant*, or was it a lie? When the Minister was saying, we have to be patriots and accept; there is no other choice. Government has decided that. Government agrees. We should increase 10%. Then, whoever was against that was an anti-patriot. When those who wanted to *manifester contre cela*, they were called in rapidly at the Central CID and they were taken to task.

When someone had to put his disgust, his shock, his disdain against that measure on Facebook, he was called at the Central CID - basically get him scared. Shut him down! Get him scared! Ensure that there is no freedom of speech! But now, all of a sudden, was hon. Gungah wrong? Was Cabinet wrong? Therefore, all the time that they took that money, should they not refund it?

Tout l'argent que vous avez pris pendant qu'il y avait une augmentation, personne ne pense à rembourser la population pour ça ? Et ce qui me choque encore plus - laissez-moi le lire en Français -

« L'opacité de la STC est lié à un secret bien gardé. Des années durant les membres de l'Opposition ont demandé des détails concernant les différentes conditions ce de contrat mais jusqu'à ce jour on n'a pas eu un minimum de détail pour nous expliquer comment on est en train de faire des économies. Et pourtant, le précédent ministre du Commerce ainsi que l'actuel ministre du Business avaient pris des engagements fermes, dans cette Chambre, pour rendre public les modalités de cet accord en déposant. Il avait promis de déposer une copie sur la table de l'Assemblée nationale, et à ce jour toujours rien. »

Those are not my words actually. Those are the words of hon. Pravind Jugnauth in those days. Hon. Pravind Jugnauth pronounced this speech on a Motion of the then Leader of the Opposition, hon. Paul Bérenger. Hon. Pravind Jugnauth pronounced these very important words that will go down in history as having been a blip, because it does not make sense actually. That is what I mean. Let us study them and understand what exactly is going on here. That is why people out there are totally disgusted and fed up, and say that politicians are hypocrites.

In 2009, it was totally fine to say that the STC – il n'y avait pas de transparence. It was totally fine to say that il fallait déposer le document et l'accord de Mangalore sur la Table de l'Assemblée nationale. Il fallait le dire qu'il y avait opacité. En 2009 c'était bon. Et il vient dire plus tard : « M. le président, concernant l'assurance, il y a autant de questions qui sont restées sans réponses en dépit de nos requêtes répétées pour que la STC joue la carte de la transparence. » Transparence, il demandait en 2009, sur le même accord, le même document ! Il demandait les mêmes choses ! Quel est le prix de l'essence ? Quel est le prix du fret ? Quel est le prix de l'assurance ? He wanted a breakdown. Quels sont les coûts réels associés à la marge du fournisseur, du fret, de l'assurance ? Et moi, j'ai été étonné de constater que le fret a diminué de 70%, de 50 dollars à 15 dollars. J'étais en train d'écouter avec attention les explications de l'honorable ministre.

Those are not my words! And if you listen to those words, it could be exactly our words today! And that is why people will say: "But wait a minute! When you are in the Opposition, you say something, when you are in Government, you say something else." And

that would apply to us as well! I am honest enough to admit, because it would apply to us as well. Because day in, day out, when we were in Government, whenever the Opposition said something - I accept we were wrong - we were wrong to treat them with disdain. We were wrong not to respect democracy. They have the right to put questions. And if it had meant that we had to lose elections for me to admit it, so be it. It was a great loss and a loss that we deserved, because this is what is done to show us that when you are on the other side, the hypocrisy cannot go on.

In 2018, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, Prime Minister of this country. How can he now say that what he said then is not correct? When the hon. Leader of the Opposition tried to table a document, *la transparence*, why did he not stand up and say he has no objection because it is exactly what he believes in? Or is it that he does not believe in anything? He just believes, to suit the time that he is and where he is, as long as he is at an advantage, his Party is at an advantage, his political agents are at an advantage, but not the country! What about the country? Who cares about the country? This stays, and let it also stay that we take the pledge, never again when we are back in power, will we ever behave in such a way because it is shameful! Shameful if we behave in this way again! We owe it to the people of this country to be of a better behaviour towards the Opposition and towards the people. And when we pledge something, we mean we pledge. And if we are to talk about hon. Sinatambou, *mon Dieu!*

Si on regarde les discours qu'il prononçait en 2006 et qu'il disait "*Monsieur Rama Sithanen, superstar !*" C'était cela son discours qu'il prononçait sur l'*Appropriation Bill*. Il disait "*L'honorable Rama Sithanen, c'est une superstar !*" And now he says that whatever we have done in 2005 is nil. Does that really include the time when he was Minister? What about hon. Dr. Joomaye? When he was in the Opposition here - he was sitting somewhere here, or maybe he has forgotten - he made a speech in 2015, criticising the other Government. Today, he says that whatever the other Government has done is perfect, ever since 2015. So, whatever I said before them, just basically delete. Hon. Dr. Joomaye says, "You know what? I was wrong. I was under stress and now I take my head down and bow to you hon. Pravind Jugnauth, because you are the king, and I am going to be - and he hopes - the king maker after I have eliminated Soodhun."

And hon. Lesjongard! You know, les donneurs de leçons ! Quand on regarde les discours qu'ils ont prononcés, même l'honorable Lesjongard critiquait le gouvernement de l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth ! Mais au moins, lui, il a eu le courage de venir dire que même

quand il était dans l'opposition, s'il trouvait des éléments qui étaient bons, il le disait et il félicitait le gouvernement Jugnauth. Mais au moins il a eu le courage de dire "Bon, je vois que cela est bon, cela n'est pas bon". Et j'apprécie. *Fair enough !* Mais l'honorable Dr. Joomaye, ah non !

And then he comes to tell me that I will benefit from supposedly marketing the idea of Government. Someone who was elected under the votes of the Labour Party and MMM, someone who does not understand what loyalty means, someone who has decided to go and jump ship. By the way, there is another line in the manifesto of *Lepep*, "We are going to clamp down on *transfugisme*". How did they manage to evade that trap? You have to be very able in order to be able to evade that trap and get away. "*Je suis le transfuge ! Je suis le transfuge !*" *Mais avant qu'ils aient réalisé ce que veut dire 'transfugisme', je m'évade, je me retrouve là-bas. Oh, c'est bon maintenant!*

And he has the gall to come and stand here and say that I will benefit from him. I will benefit from what? From his blunder? But there is one thing I can say, Madam Speaker. I was once with the MSM; I was once there. And I am still proud of the time I did there, because I learnt a lot from them and I will not criticise those I was with because they were my friends and we will always remain friends. I may not agree with them, but they are not my enemies. That is the difference. Because when they do not agree with someone, they crush you, finish you, try to imprison you and try to ensure that you do not have the right to believe otherwise and have another opinion. This is the MSM today. But I was there. Those friends, I will not behave and go down to what they have done.

But, for one thing, I am not a traitor. I am loyal. I may not agree, but it does not mean that we are enemies. And I will not come and criticise hon. Dr. Joomaye because of what he said against me. On the contrary, I think he has been a very good friend of mine by even helping me to get a ticket last time! And I recognise that! He knows that! But then again, there are those who speak the truth and are constant, and there are those who basically try to evade the rat trap. They try to pretend what they are not actually. But, anyway, it does not matter. You have that in life, it happens. Anyway, in English, I would have said something else that would have been unparliamentary on my part.

Anyhow, let me talk about something else which is of utmost importance. There are two issues, and then I am going to be done. Hon. Dayal, yesterday; you know, I was home watching TV because I was preparing my speech, and then my son, the eldest one - I am

always with him - basically said “Why is he screaming?” And I said “Who?”, and then he said “That man!” He is eight years old and he said, ‘Is he a Police Officer?’ My son of eight years old already knew he was a Police Officer! He is eight! And basically, hon. Dayal thought that he was a lawyer, using Parliament to come and defend himself for having obtained Rs15 m. This is unheard of! Using Parliament to come and defend oneself! I mean, the least you could do is basically say, “Well, let me take permission from the Chair because I am going to declare my interests”. But no! He was submitting, as a lawyer, putting documents in, putting documents out.

But then again, let me tell him one thing. As far as I am concerned, I have put in a Motion and I am waiting for the Motion to come up. Even when the Motion comes up, we are going to have a filled day with him, because we are going to really make him understand what a judgment is and what State proceedings mean, what two years exactly means as a time limitation, why is it that in all other cases, the Government takes the point and the defence “You cannot prosecute after two years”, but for Dayal, *koyi baat nahi, Dayal dayalu*. It does not matter. Before I go on to that, people will say, well, I talked about those expressions of interests and those grants obtained from India.

Let us understand one thing. Easily they will go outside. Because I know how crooked minds work. I know what crooked minds work because I, basically, have been victim of those crooked minds. They are going to say outside there, “Shakeel Mohamed is bashing India. Hon. Dr. Boolell is bashing India”. Let me make it clear. I am only a second generation Indian. My grandfather was Indian. I feel, in my bones, that I am Indian. However, I am a proud Mauritian and I am going to always fight for the sovereignty of my country. My origins do not make a difference. We will not beg. We will not go down in history as beggars and try to score political points just because “Oh! Shakeel Mohamed”. I still have got family in Calcutta. I can speak Hindi, I can also understand Bhojpuri, and I speak Urdu. So, many of those who try to point a finger at me, maybe they should go and sit on the benches of the baïtkas or the madrassas and start learning Hindi and Urdu first, before coming to criticise me as far as my love for India is concerned. I think I have done with that, because everything is a communal issue. Anyway!

As far as the EDB is concerned - let me just say that quickly - seven members of that Board are from the private sector. Where is the element of ethics? You have Mr Cartier from EDB, Mr Cartier who is with Accenture. And when you look at Mr Cartier, Accenture website today, just before I came in, what is he talking about? Artificial Intelligence, the

latest economic superpower! He is talking about Blockchain. He is talking about Fintech. He is the Head of EDB, but he is also at Accenture. Who will have confidence in Mr Cartier in sending projects if Mr Cartier is at the Head there? Who will have the confidence in telling them: this is the idea I have? It may be rejected. It may be copied. It may be stolen. Who will have that confidence? Where is the ethics? Where is the transparency? Where is the honesty in intent? Where is the honesty in approach? I do not see it!

Let me ask one thing about passports. There was one company that came to Mauritius and met with the representatives of EDB. That company is called Henley & Partners. Henley & Partners is a multimillion dollar company global network. In many countries in the world they sell passports. They came to Mauritius and met Mr Cartier! They came to Mauritius and met Mr Padayachy of the Bank of Mauritius! They came to Mauritius and met the representatives of the Prime Minister's Office!

Who is Henley & Partners? Let me now just tell you who they are.

(Interruptions)

The chosen one! They have shaken hands with the devil. They have shaken hands and tried to have a pact with the company that will bring Mauritius down. Disrepute!

Let us look at it. Henley & Partners, they are at the centre of a number of financial and political allegations of impropriety. Let me go straight to one thing. Who has forgotten about the murdered journalist in Malta? Who has forgotten about the murdered Maltese journalist who was investigating Island's Golden Visas in Malta? Who has forgotten about Daphne Caruana Galizia, who was blown up in her vehicle because she was investigating the Prime Minister of Malta who allegedly obtained kickbacks from passports? And which was the company that was involved in this whole matter of selling of passports? Henley & Partners! The friends of this actual Government! Just how they befriend people of very dubious characters like Mr Alvaro! Did hon. Collendavelloo look at Mr Henley & Partners' CEO in the eyes again? Did he see whether they had the ability to blow up a car? They are being investigated by Malta. They are being investigated by the European Union.

There is a Parliamentary Select Committee that has been set up, investigating another company called Cambridge Analytica that is connected with Henley & Partners.

Another article that I am reading here, entitled:

“Was it not in November that the Prime Minister of Malta, Chief of Staff instructed Henley & Partners to threaten, to ruin someone financially by suing him in the London Court simply because he was investigating?”

How about the FBI investigating the acts and doings of Henley & Partners?

How about authorities in Malta seizing control of a Bank, called Pilatus Bank connected with Cambridge Analytica, connected with Henley & Partners, connected to an Iranian over an alleged \$115 million sanction evasion scheme, who is in turn connected to the “blood diamonds” dictator’s sons, none other than José Eduardo Dos Santos. Henley & Partners! Selling passports in Grenada, even a diplomatic passport! And those are the friends that the EDB have met! “*Galé milao!*” Let us take them in our arms and then “*galé milao!*” And then take them by the throat as well! Who are those people that the Government are telling us to deal with?

I have no issues if Government says through an investment migration mechanism someone is going to have a passport, but who is going to verify who the person is? Does our island have a proper mechanism for verification and compliance? Does our island have a proper means of verification? No, it doesn’t! It does not even have that, Madam Speaker. They checked on Google and this is what Ministers have said here: “I goggled him.” I would say “Alvaro is fine.” I look at him in the eyes!” Clean!

(Interruptions)

Clean! Henley & Partners are involved in dangerous activities, with “blood diamond” President’s son, with killing of a journalist in Malta, with a blowing up of a car in the midst of an investigation about selling of passports by the Government of Malta. Henley & Partners are the Advisors of the Government of Mauritius and Henley & Partners have met with people from the Bank of Mauritius and the EDB and the Prime Minister’s Office. Tell them to tell me no and I will show them that they have! This is what my message is to this Government. They do not learn from their lessons and then they talk about something else. Just look at this!

“Pilatus Bank and Henley & Partners! Members of the Parliament in the United Kingdom slinking them and then they come and tell us everything is fine.”

Nothing is wrong?

Madam Speaker, what about all these news we have been reading recently in the newspapers about another scandal happening: the scandal about a Kenyan group and the State Bank of Mauritius. How about that one? Has one forgotten about it? Everyone has forgotten about the State Bank of Mauritius scandal? Everyone has forgotten about the issue of the State Bank and the two facility letters? Let me give details now. Rs3.5 billion potential hole in State Bank! The Minister of Finance has not talked about it. Let us cover that up or let us pretend that it is not there because we won't talk about it? The PABARI group, let's not talk about it! The Bank of Mauritius has asked that there be investigation. Ernst & Young has been asked to look into the malfeasance there. Doesn't the Minister of Finance have to come up with a statement? No, no! Does he have to reassure the banking sector and the financial services sector? Oh no!

Therefore, if we are going to take things *à la légère comme cela*, who cares? Then, let's read about this. What about the Rs3.5 billion, and four members from the State Bank going on holidays, invited by this very PABARI group to the wedding of the princess? Let us go to the hotel! *Nu alle popom!* Let us go *popom!* Who cares! Rs3.5 billion, who cares! But what is worse, it's the facility letter. I read that in the Press. You know what the facility letter says on 02 February 2018 -

“The Board Credit's Committee of State Bank, at the request of customer *un lien* on deposit of Rs10 million (...)”

It is written there on that document.

“(...) shall not be mentioned on the offer letter for the invoice discounting limit”.

And listen to that!

“(...) a separate addendum mentioning *lien* on deposit as security will be issued together with the full offer”.

On the same date, le 02 février, le même jour, le client donne les instructions that a separate addendum mentioning *lien* on deposit as security will be issued, therefore, two different issues. Hiding the information from the Kenyan authorities, hiding information as to how much money the group has in Mauritius. This is not tax evasion? Who are those who are connected to the MSM, who are in State Bank, being protected at the moment?

How is it that for Bramer Bank, the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor was so proud to even accuse wrongly Bramer Bank? And today, he is sitting here, Minister Mentor in charge of the Police! His friend, the Commissioner – good boy, and good man - and he is going to sit there together with the Prime Minister, with his friends in the State Bank and the friends in the Financial Services Commission, and with the Bank of Mauritius, Mr Padayachy! Oh yes, that one, Mr Padayachy! And those guys, they are not going to be suspended! No one has been suspended, not even for one second at the State Bank of Mauritius! Is this *le sérieux que le gouvernement veut démontrer à la communauté internationale pour protéger nos acquis dans le secteur bancaire et financier*? What about this recent one - another one! And then they go on saying everything is fine!

What about, Madam Speaker, the situation with New Mauritius Hotels Ltd (NMH)? *On commence avec NMH, avec un communiqué* that starts last year, the *communiqué* starts le 20 février. There is nothing wrong? Then you are going to have the communiqué that says you are going to appoint Mr Kriti Taukoordass and then the report is published, I was sent a copy of the report anonymously.

I saw what the report contained. The report condemned the acts and doings of New Mauritius Hotels Ltd. In other words, it was the *Certificat d'incompétence* for the Financial Services Commission, but what happened instead. It was a draft report. They could have asked Mr Taukoordass to finalise the report. No, they did ask Mr Taukoordass to finalise the report. What they did instead was to issue another communiqué. Let us reassure the community at large, the International Community about the power and ability of the Financial Services Commission to protect our Financial Services Sector and it says –

“Having given due consideration to all material circumstances and in line with its object to ensure the stability of the Financial System in Mauritius, the Commission is of the view that no further regulatory action is required.”

Le 10 Novembre 2017. I read the report. I saw the report condemned NMH. I saw the report referred to the statute, referred to the law and I know what the law is with regard to this breach of rules. The Stock Exchange Commission keeps quiet; the Financial Services Commission keeps quiet. They issue a report, they cover up the report, they don't ask him to finalise it and all of a sudden, the Financial Services Commission says: ‘we will not go ahead.’ And then we have the *démission sur démission, quatre personnes* of the Board of the FSC resigned, including the Solicitor General and I say it out loud.

They resigned because pressure was being placed upon them by certain Members of Government in order to satisfy their desires for NMH and their love for Mr Sobrinho. That is the reason why they had to resign and then they talk about there is no need to come and reassure the international community! None whatsoever! Isn't it important for the Prime Minister to come and mention it at least? No! Nothing! But let me say something else!

The Financial Services Commission, there is another scandal, or let's not finish with the scandals. Mauritius, again, the day before he presented his budget, the DPP of Kenya talked about the Ruaraka Land Scandal. The DPP of Kenya, Mr Noordin Haji, stated in a Press Conference that 1.5 billion Kenyan shillings have been stolen from Kenya in the Financial Scandal. That is equivalent to approximately Rs5 billion. And where is the money? In his Press Conference, he says that the money is lost and it has been traced by the Kenyan Government to a Mauritian Bank – which Bank?

And all of a sudden, we don't see who has to be protected, who is being protected. Where is the confidence that you gave the authorities and the community in our Banking Financial Sector? But you won't hear the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance talk about that. You won't hear him talk about that. Why? Because he did not know or was it not important to let people know? Or was it important to cover it up? What is it?

So, let me say as far as the Financial Services Sector is concerned, compliance – very important, financial crime, we have to fight it. Anti-Money Laundering, we have to really go strong on it. There is clearly in Mauritius, Madam Speaker, lack of competence when it comes to due diligence. There needs to be one regulator for everything that has to do with Financial Services and Banking Services. Right now, any non-deposit taking institution, it is the FSC, and any deposit taking institution is the Bank of Mauritius.

Going forward, there needs to be one regulator to streamline the process. And we have to ensure that we don't take friends and political nominees in places of such an institution because they have to serve the country, whatever the Government, whichever the political party which is in power. We have to choose the best people, not those who are in love with one political party and who have to wear an orange shirt in order to get promoted. I don't know if there were more than that, orange somewhere else, I don't see it.

The FCA – Financial Conduct Authority, why is it that in England there is one and in Mauritius there are two? Why is it that in the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, there is one, in Mauritius there are two? Who will carry out due diligence of sale of passports, Madam

Speaker? Who? The Prime Minister's adviser who has to deal with Boskalis or is it going to be Ivan Collendavelloo who is going to have an eye test? Everyone wants a passport, let's go and see Collendavelloo and have an eye test or EDB, Mr Cartier. What about the common reporting standards? Compliance is the basis of everything.

Madam Speaker, whenever we have a jurisdiction that wants good clients, we have to ensure that there is good practice and compliance. If there is good practice and compliance, you bring good clients and the reverse is also true, if there isn't good practice as is the case in Mauritius right now with this Government in power, you are going to bring bad clients. That is why you have the style of Sobrinho.

Madam Speaker, let me basically talk about a very important element which is - and I will finish on the following -

What do we want our country to be like? What type of country do we want and this is what people are asking day in, day out, we are going to come to this Parliament and listen to a Minister of Finance come up with a budget once a year and he is going to pretend to make some people happy when in actual fact it's not true at all that 60,000 people are going to be able to pay Rs18,000 less tax; it's not true. It's impossible because then you have to put yourself one question: how many single people are there in Mauritius who earn Rs50,000 or above? Actually, it's Rs50,000 maximum, who have no children and no dependents and who will basically not have any exemptions that they are allowed by statute and who will have to pay Rs18,000 taxes. It doesn't make sense. None whatsoever! It does not make sense. What I ask the Prime Minister to do is to give us his exact figures. How many taxpayers fall in that bracket?

He says Rs60,000 based on work. Impossible ! What he is saying *ce n'est pas vrai. Ce que le Premier Ministre et ministre des Finances dit quand il y aura 60,000 personnes qui vont bénéficier d'une réduction d'impôt de R 18,000 par an, ce n'est pas vrai, ce n'est simplement que de l'enfumage.* I love that word. But then, again, people don't like being *enfumer*, they don't like being fooled. It is easy to just pretend things are right. Don't we want a clean country? Our country is dirty.

The Minister of Environment is here and he pretends he is doing a great job. This country is in a mess, it is dirty, people throwing rubbish everywhere; other Members before me have said it. Why not have one day a month as a National Cleaning Day for everyone? Why don't you have one day a month where all of us would pull up our sleeves, put down our

gloves, forget about work and take care of our country, the land and the air we breathe. The land we live in, the land we were born in, the land we will be buried in.

Why don't we take care of our country one day in a month? Why is it that we don't take care of our country, why is it that we are only concerned about listening to the fallacies of this Government? When will be the day when people will be able to understand *que la moralisation de la vie publique est importante*? When will we understand that? Do we have to go down the crooked way of thinking of certain people, including hon. Collendavelloo who says '*mais c'est normal de nommer les gens qui sont proches de nous*'. *Non!* Madam Speaker, I think people outside are fed up.

And I am not saying only with Government, people outside are fed up with politicians, because politicians have a bad name. Because politicians, including me, I am a politician; they don't have confidence in us anymore because they expect this Government to really do miracles that they have promised as I had explained. But they have done nothing of the sort. They expected the politicians that were ruling since 2015 would not lie and have a different way of ruling. They have not done that.

Out there, the youth want to believe that they still can dream of something better. So, for all the wrongs we are doing to these people, we should apologise because what this Government has done is not a long term solution *pour la survie de l'île Maurice*. The debt, Madam Speaker, is shocking. I remember campaigning in 2005 and blaming the MSM/MMM for a debt of a Rs100,000 per head, on each head.

We went around in Souillac, I remember, dans No. 13, saying: "*Ou ena saken d'entre zot R100,000 dette lor ou la tête!*" Today, it is above 70% of public debt. It is more than Rs400,000. *Chaque mauricien est endetté par R 400,000 par tête d'habitant. Chaque mauricien! Avant mêm ki li naît, R 400,000 dette!* And this is, us, telling you that I am wrong, I am right. We have an ego issue. And all of us are forgetting about the country. When will be the time when we will put the country first and party last? It is only then that we will start regaining respect on the part of the population.

Thank you very much.

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

At 5.33 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.11 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please, be seated! Hon. Rutnah!

Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton and Rivière du Rempart): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we are in this House today to debate the Appropriation Bill of 2018-2019, that is, the Budget. And to debate the Budget, we have to put views across, in relation to what the Budget says. But the last orator who addressed this House, and when we see the hon. Members of the Opposition who have addressed the House, except for hon. Uteem, who really debated the Budget, and the hon. Leader of the Opposition touched a little bit on the Budget, but the rest of the Opposition Members who have addressed this House on the Budget, have really missed the opportunity in holding their speech on 01 May. They were as if, as we say in Creole, *avec caisse savon*, in a wild goose chase of criticising the Government, making speeches, as if *le 01 mai* has arrived for them, and to go to the extent of saying that a study has to be carried out on Members of the Government. But what sort of study to be carried on Members of the Government? I will not go as far as qualifying Members of the Opposition as ‘subject matter’. We are not ‘subject’ and they are not ‘subject’ as well. But if they want to carry out a study on the progress of this Government since 2014, when we inherited almost a bankrupt country economically, and today where we are economically...

(Interruptions)

No! They are entitled to laugh! They are entitled to make comments, but I will demonstrate with facts and figures.

You see, Madam Speaker, there is a very gloomy picture painted by the Opposition. The future is bleak; it is darkness everywhere. This Budget is as if bringing the country into doom. Nothing good! Yet, hardly any of them have dealt with issues, policies, monetary policies, fiscal policies, macro-economic policies, micro-economic policies, social policies. Hardly any! But what have they done? Hon. Mohamed...

(Interruptions)

I think the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor is right...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Please proceed with your speech.

(Interruptions)

I am not here to answer the hon. Member’s questions, I am sorry.

(Interruptions)

Sorry? I should listen to your questions, and I have to answer your questions?

(Interruptions)

Do not argue with me and sit down!

(Interruptions)

Do not argue and sit down!

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order. I ask that he withdraws the words '*bousse to la bouche*'. At least, he has to have some decorum in the House. Did you not hear that, or am I not surprised?

Madam Speaker: No, I did not hear, and I will have to see whether it appears somewhere on the video.

(Interruptions)

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, it is okay. His exuberance lies in his verbosity. We have heard it all. Anyway! But he is a friend of mine.

So, there is a gloomy picture painted. Some even say a '*budget électoraliste, faire la bouche doux. En budget ki faire la bouche doux, enn budget ki pas bon.*' Yet, there has been no criticism about the policies that have been enunciated in this Budget although most of them spoke about the passport. My very good friend, hon. Adrien Duval, spent almost an hour speaking about the passport. But I will come onto that.

But I noticed one common denominator. That the criticisms they levelled against the Government in 2015, similar criticisms, same criticisms, same contents in 2016, same criticisms in 2017, same criticisms in 2018; parrot fashion criticisms. I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition said this was not a Budget, but a communication exercise. But when I look at them, they have carried out a scientifically orchestrated communication exercise simply to come and criticise all over the places, which does not exist in the Budget, save and except for the passport.

Now, let me talk a little bit about economics. I will talk about mathematics as well, hon. Duval, if you want to. There have been lots of things said about the rate of inflation, the rate of unemployment. Rate of inflation, rate of unemployment! Now, we all know that an economy like ours functions in relation to market forces; the interactions of market forces

determine price. Price has got an inverse relationship with demand and, as price increases, demand decreases, as price decreases, demand increases. When price increases, supply increases, when price decreases, supply decreases. Now, what impact has this got on the economy? What impact has this got on inflation?

Since 2014 up to now, we have had a record level of investment in this country - billions of rupees. And when, in an economy, you invest that kind of money, it is normal that there is going to be high level of economic activities and there will be people who will be chasing after goods and services. When you have got money, when you have got liquidity, you will go and buy, and when you buy, it leads to an increase in price because there is demand for goods and services out there. And you can see this! If you go, in a weekend, to any mall in Mauritius, you go to Bagatelle, you go to La Croisette, you go anywhere, try and find a parking easily. You will hardly get a parking; you will have to wait. And what does this demonstrate? It demonstrates that people are buying, people have money, people are spending, and when you spend, it triggers inflation, but this does not mean that inflation is bad. The stigma given to the word 'inflation' by people who do not understand inflationary process, do not understand economics, tend to send message out there that inflation is a very, very bad thing for the country. There is inflation because there is high level of employment, people are being employed, and people are spending. There are two types of inflation: cost-push inflation and demand-pull inflation.

Cost-push inflation is when the cost of production of goods increases. Then, automatically, the price of goods on the market will be higher, because the increase of the cost in production will be transferred to the buyers. So, that is going to cause an inflationary process. Demand-pull inflation is what I explained earlier on. When people have got liquid, money, they will go and buy and that is going to create an inflationary process.

I listened very attentively to that part of the hon. Leader of the Opposition's speech where he criticised the economic state of the country and he produced a graph. In doing so, he dealt with inflation and public debt. He produced a graph which, according to him, demonstrates the real economic situation insofar as inflation is concerned in this country. This is what he produced.

Madam Speaker, when he tabled this document, I deliberately did not take a point of order. Why? Because I wanted this document to go on Hansard! I wanted this document to go on record. Whenever you produce a graph, you have to say where you collected your data.

You have to give the background information. You have to give the history. What history do we have? What explanation do we have here? We have a graph which is purported to be figures that have been gathered from the IMF and there is a comment there saying inflation is the rate at which the general level of prices for goods and services is rising and, consequently, the purchasing power of currency is failing. That is all we have here.

But what is misleading in this graph are the points and the hon. Leader of the Opposition - I will not say dishonesty, perhaps he has made a mistake or perhaps he is not aware or perhaps he refuses to do so for political reasons, because if he wanted political mileage, perhaps he thought that he will get political mileage out of this graph. But, Madam Speaker, if we look at the figures from Statistics Mauritius, true it is that at some point the inflation rate was at 5%. True it is in April. Why? Why was it 5% in April?

Firstly, we had very bad weather conditions. The price of vegetables, the price of various products on the market went up. When the prices went up, automatically it created an inflationary process in the country. Also, the price of dollar started to increase on the world market and our import became expensive and some products' prices were increased. That is why. And, at the same time, we had the increase in petrol price, which has been criticised and that also contributed to the 5%. I will deal with it later on.

But, Madam Speaker, to give the impression that in 2018 we are at 5% inflation is completely wrong. Because when we look at the real figure which is from Statistics Mauritius as well, and I am going to table it so that the hon. Leader of the Opposition can have a look at this graph and compare the work that he has done, if any work has been done, because I think that this has simply been drawn to actually create an impression.

So, when you look at the real graph, you see that in 2018 up to April, there is 5%. But, after April, there is a steep decline in this graph. Why this decline? It is because the Government, the Finance Minister has taken the necessary steps to control the economy so that we won't go into a spiral of inflationary process and that there is a declining process according to this graph and this graph is being explained by Statistics Mauritius on how they construct this graph. So, this can be referred to because it is public document at Statistics Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, the management of the economic affairs of this country - if we look at the public sector debt over which we were criticised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition,

when he was Minister of Finance in December 2012, the gross public sector debt was Rs199.058 billion which was at 56.8% of GDP.

In 2013, it came up to Rs219.937 billion which was 59.1% of GDP which means an increase from 56.8% to 59.1%. In December 2014, the public sector debt was measured up to Rs138.033 billion and increased from 59.1% in the previous year to 60.7% in 2014. In June 2015, the figures Rs251.904 billion, an increase of 62.9%. But, when you see 2016-2017, it was 64.8% of GDP, but in June 2018, the public sector debt has started to decrease and it is now, according to Statistics Mauritius, 63.4% of GDP.

Madam Speaker, when you implement an economic policy you have to wait to yield what you sow after an economic cycle. So, the Crossroad Budget and subsequent budgets prepared this country for massive development, prepared this country towards progress and enlightenment of the future of our children and that is why now you can see that there is a decrease in the percentage of public debt and that decrease is forecasted to decrease continuously until next year when we will present the next Budget. And, if I may also draw everybody's attention to the article published yesterday in '*Le Mauricien*' in relation to the balance of payment, and it says: « *Excès de R 6.8 milliards au premier trimestre.* » I am not going to read the whole article that it gives a very good picture of our balance of payment.

So, against this background, Madam Speaker, the hon. Leader of the Opposition made the following remarks the other day, he threatened us. He says that the "Public sector debt has been understated." He says that "figures have been manipulated" And he goes on to say, in a threatening manner –

"I am going to do something very rare. I am going to do that nevertheless, Madam Speaker. I am going to take the trouble of writing to the IMF. I will write to the IMF. The name of the person I am going to write to is Mr Abebe Selassie. He is the Head of the Africa region and the IMF. I am going to write to him. I am going to expose to him my understanding because it is all hidden, we are not sure, any of us, of what is happening. I am going to expose to him what I, as Leader of the Opposition, think is actually being done to hide the real amount of public debt in Mauritius."

Madam Speaker, a Leader of the Opposition who during his PNQ to hon. Gungah on 22 May 2018 in relation to the Petroleum Products Funds Contribution Taxes and Levies, said –

“I understand! Because il y a *un vol*, there is a crime, un arnaque. Rs2.70 is being charged on every litre of fuel for subsidising rice, Madam Speaker. Rice! Ration rice for poor people!

And it goes on –

“LPG! Flour! This money is not being used to subsidise, it is being kept by the STC, stolen by the STC (...).”

A Leader of the Opposition who is asking questions to hon. Gungah that we are giving subsidies on rice to poor people. And he termed it as ration rice. He has got the cheek to threaten us that he is going to write to someone at the IMF. But let me tell you something, Madam Speaker, and let me tell my people out there, who are listening to me tonight on their screen, live at home, that I am also going to write to the same person. And I, as a citizen of this country, as a Member of Parliament of this country, I am also going to write to the same person to expose how figures have been manipulated to give the wrong impression of the economic state of this country. So, I will wait for the Leader of the Opposition to write and my dossier is already ready to write as well.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I know hon. Lepoigneur, he is a friend of mine. But he does not realise that he is not a Duval or a Henry. He thinks that he can turn PMSD into a Parti Mauricien sans Duval but he does not realise that PMSD is a party which is Parti Mauricien Seulement Duval.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Rutnah: Quand le...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ms Sewocksingh, why are you raising your voice like this? You should have some discipline. There should be some discipline in the House. No, you do not have to argue with me, please. Please proceed!

Mr Rutnah: This is what happens *quand le défonceur se fait défoncer*. Now, Madam Speaker, I see my hon. friend, Shakeel Mohamed, has gone out for the moment. So, in order to spice up the debate, I will better wait for him. He is back. That's good! I was going to wait for you but now I will proceed on a little bit of what you have raised today in this House.

Madam Speaker, when hon. Shakeel Mohamed has given this discourse, as if he has missed his opportunity to do it *le 01 mai* speech, he started by picking up on hon. Koonjoo. When he treated hon. Koonjoo in the manner he did, I decided to look at his previous speeches in this House in relation to the Budget debates. His criticism was literally the same; same tune, parole fashion and then it was never promised by anyone in this House that there will be 100,000 jobs created in the Ocean Economy. Never!

(Interruptions)

You said 100,000! So, Ocean Economy, when you look at the work that has been done since 2014, and I am glad he queried hon. Koonjoo about the Maritime Labour Convention. He did it last time as well. But when he was in Government, what did they do about Ocean Economy? What did they do? And it is good if I refer him to the Budget Speech of 2012, when hon. Duval was Finance Minister, at paragraph 166, dealing with Ocean Economy –

“In line with the announcement made in the Government Programme 2012-2015, this Budget promotes the development of an Ocean Economy. With a sea area 1,000 times larger than our land mass, over which Mauritius has jurisdiction, our maritime space can constitute one of the new pillars of sustainable development”.

True! Good to read! *L'effet d'annonce!* And then, I am not going to read all but the operative one –

“To enable the generation of clean and renewable energy the Island consideration will also be given to the creation of offshore farms in the waters of Rodrigues.”

Have we seen any offshore farm in the waters of Rodrigues until the PMSD and the Labour Party were in power? *Zéro plombage!*

“To build capacity in the blue economy, Government will grant special scholarship to encourage our youth to embrace a career in Ocean Economy.”

Have we seen that during the tenure of the PMSD/Labour Government? You see, Madam Speaker, in fact they did nothing in the Ocean Economy, and when hon. Koonjoo

took over in December 2014, and when he started the work in January 2015, he has implemented a lot of policies that were promised and he outlined it in his speech. So, I am not going to go over it again. But his Ministry has created 3,000 jobs in that sector today; a sector in which the Labour Party and PMSD created zero employment, despite your pledge. And earlier on, hon. Mohamed was saying that he is making pledge. His Leader has not made a pledge yet. But I always thought he might be a good leader. I always thought that hon. Dr. Boolell could be a good leader.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Rutnah: But now I know that the pledge he has made earlier on is a pledge that can never be honoured, because he will always be remote controlled by that man there!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Do not make provocations, I said!

Mr Rutnah: My very good friend, hon. Bashir Jahangeer, has asked me who. My very good friend, friends, romans, countrymen! The *djembe* man is going to remote control the Labour Party and it's only him! He will pledge in his own way. Whatever pledge my learned friend, hon. Mohamed, is making in this House cannot be honoured and cannot be the true position of the Labour Party, and I am sorry to say this. And I am sure his leader is going to contradict him tomorrow!

Now, hypocrisy! Talking about hypocrisy, about a 13-year-old child who has passed away! Hon. Mrs Roubina Jadoo-Jaunbocus has spoken about it. She has expressed her views about it. It is wrong, blatantly wrong for a 13-year-old to be forced to be married or otherwise to get married to an adult. I am glad that he comes out from his dream; that it is wrong! Almost 10 years in power, he could have then - he was a Cabinet Minister - asked to amend the Civil Status Act. He could have asked to amend the law. But he did not, he failed. He failed the challenge. And hypocrisy!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, do not interrupt him!

Mr Rutnah: No!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! Do not interrupt him, please!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, my learned friend from a sitting position quite rightly asked me what the Civil Status Act has to do. The Civil Status Act has to do also not only in relation to birth, but also in relation to marriage. If you go to get married, it is done in accordance with the Civil Status Act. Now, Madam Speaker, there should be no religious marriage. What religious marriage is he talking about?

And, on the same Bill, this proposition about women who have lost their husband end up getting any pension. I have not known any case where a woman is civilly married, according to the law of this country, whose husband has passed away and is not getting a pension, a widow's pension. If you get married civilly, you will, if your husband passed away, get a pension de *vieillesse* in this country. That is the law, and religious marriages have got no legal status.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed! You had ample time to talk. Why do you interrupt him? Please!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, I am not going to go into great detail about the demonstration of the LGBT and the anti-demonstration of the LGBT. But since hon. Mohamed has chosen to raise it in this Parliament and giving the impression that the Prime Minister has not said anything about it.

You know, whatever your sexual orientation, LGBT or straight or whatever you are, it is not a matter of public concern. If you have an opinion, you keep that opinion for you. You do not do politics on people's sexual orientation. It is a personal matter. A Prime Minister of the country, a serious Prime Minister, do you think he will go and opine on the sexual orientation of people? But if you are in Opposition and you feel that that is going to bring you some votes and you want to do it for that, so be it! It is a matter for you! But as a responsible and caring Government, we ensure that everybody is treated according to the law, the supreme law of this country, and that everybody is treated equally. Whether you are LGBT or not LGBT, whether you are straight or bent or whatever you are. This is a country where the rule of law is respected.

Madam Speaker, this family business, oh dear! If it would have come from any other Member of the Opposition Party, I would not have said anything, I would have refrained. For example, if it would have come from my good friend, hon. Thierry Henry, I would not have

said anything. But because hon. Mohamed said it, let me remind him. When he was in Government, when he was the Minister of Labour, who was the lawyer of the Bangladeshis Recruitment Programme? Who was the consulate of the Bangladeshis? Who was acting as their agent? I am not going to say more than this on this issue, and if you want to know about who were briefed on various public authorities at the time, as Counsel, that also I am not going to say anymore, because I am not going to use this House to make attacks on family of people.

If a Minister has got a qualified son or daughter, just because he is Minister, his son or daughter should starve at home, and he is disqualified? No. If you show me one person who is not qualified and has been recruited, then I will say you are right. But if someone has his educational background, his experience, then, just because he is the son or daughter of a Minister, a politician, for political reason, disqualified and he rots with his qualification and experience somewhere in the backstreet of Port Louis? That is wrong, plainly wrong. And argument like these do not give anyone political mileage, whether you are in Opposition or in Government, because, at the end of the day, if you are competent, you deserve it, you should get it.

Madam Speaker, insofar as family members concerned with regard to *logement*, NHDC, you know how many of them are minors? But I am not going to say more than this. But to pretend to be politically virgin is a bad habit, is not good enough. We have to be honest in life. When you do politics or any spheres of activities, one should have some degree of honesty, not because of political mileage, not because of some self-gain, you just throw mud on people's family life. We all have a family life. Family life is a constitutional right. It is a fundamental right. It is a right recognised by the International Convention of Human Rights. We have to respect people's family, not just because he is related to a Member of the Government, then it is a green card to throw mud on that person.

Now I am going to talk about *marchands ambulants*! From 2000 to 2005, Government was led by the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, then Prime Minister - and if I am wrong, he is going to correct me. The MSM/MMM Government had a plan for the *marchands ambulants*. They built the Garden Tower, which was going to be called the Hawkers Palace. The Hawkers Palace was supposed to house all the *marchands ambulants*. But what did the *Parti travailliste*/PMSD Government do? They turned that into a commercial complex and some floors leased. They transferred even the DPP's Office from Renganaden Seeneevassen Building to the Garden Tower now, which was originally the

Hawkers Palace. That is what they have done with *marchands ambulants*. And today, to do politics on the back of people who are trading, people who are poor just because you want and you think that you are going to get some political mileage, you used those people. That also is very wrong, despicable. Not appropriate at all!

Political honesty is a great thing. If you are politically honest, people are going to like you. How many MPs do we have in Port Louis? Two over 12!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Rutnah: I am talking about *le parti Travailleiste*...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker,...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Rutnah:...now that the Member has decided to open his mouth from a sitting position, the Accountant man, who is ACCA partly...

Madam Speaker: Now, it is not good. I don't think you should mention all these!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, that is how he is described in his biodata. I am not fabricating it. He chose to describe himself as that in his biodata of the Legislative Assembly.

So, I was talking about the *marchands ambulants*, but, anyway, given that he is making remarks from a sitting position. If I have to talk on him about the Alladee's, about who went to save his life ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. Why is the hon. Member mentioning name? What is he trying to say? Come on say it. Go outside and say it. What do you have to do?

Madam Speaker: This is not a point of order, first thing. The second thing is that when you were addressing, you stood up and you addressed yourself to the hon. Member. You know fully well, you have been in this House for a long time, that you have to address

yourself to me and if you have any point of clarification, you ask for permission and I will give you the opportunity to make your point of clarification.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member of Rivière du Rempart just mentioned names and he tried to impute improper motives on me. I would like to know what is he accusing me of...

(Interruptions)

Yes, because he referred to me...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I am sorry! Hon. Ameer Meea, a point of clarification is not a point which is debatable. Right! There is no reply to a point of clarification. I would, however, ask the hon. Member not to mention names.

Mr Rutnah: So be it, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, you know when the Opposition Members, when hon. Shakeel Mohamed was speaking even, I normally sit and listen quietly. But when I am on my feet, I always get interrupted by remarks and so on. But anyway...

(Interruptions)

You want me to talk about *transfuge* now. Okay, let's talk about *transfuge*!

Hon. Mohamed was in a Government that survived on *transfuge*. A Member from Piton/Rivière du Rempart, Member of the MSM, jumped, came into the Labour Party. He did not express any concern, others as well, - hon. Seetaram, hon. Mireille Martin, hon. Michaël Yeung Sik Yuen, all of them, he did not say anything. Why? Because at that time it was in his favour, it suited him. But one thing, the hon. Member has forgotten...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Rutnah: ... where he started his political career.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Rutnah: The hon. Member forgot where he started his political career.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, are you engaging yourself in a conversation from a sitting position with the hon. Member?

(Interruptions)

So, why are you interrupting then? Please!

Mr Rutnah: He started his political career in the MSM. He was candidate for the local election. He was candidate for the general election. He was an MP later.

(Interruptions)

No, he became an MP with the Labour Party. Why, Madam Speaker? Because he could not face the fact that when you are in MSM, you have to act according to a certain degree of discipline and you have to be loyal to the party because when he noticed that, he said: 'Okay, let us jump and go into the Labour Party'. So, when it suits him to be in MSM, okay then *chuite* into Labour Party. But never mind!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, do not let yourself be distracted by comments. Please proceed with your speech, but don't let yourself to be distracted by comments made on the other side of the House.

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, I think my people out there know that I have a very broad shoulder and thick skin. I never get distracted. I like to look at the beautiful Chair and address, like hon. Dr. Boolell did.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: What sort of remarks you are making?

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, talking about the state of the Ministry that my good friend, hon. Sesunkur, is managing, the Ministry of Good Governance, and criticising him, and also at the same time, let me deal with hon. Gungah's Ministry that he said that he should get a medal for the price increase and the announcement in the Budget for the price decrease of Mogas and Diesel.

Madam Speaker, we all know that it is not the doing of this Government to levy taxes, all sorts of taxes on the prices of mogas and diesel. It is not the doing of this Government. It is the doing of the Labour Party and the PMSD when they were in power! Rama Sithanen

introduced those taxes. Hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, for whatever good or bad reason, continued with that fiscal policy. But we are a country that buys petroleum products in dollars.

When the price of the dollar goes up, automatically it has an incidence in our economy; it has an incidence on the price of the petrol here. And the STC had no choice than to increase the price relatively to what the increase of price was for the dollars. But then, when the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development sat to prepare his Budget, when he listened to the people, when he listened to the country, as a democratic Prime Minister and a democratic Minister of Finance and Economic Development, he took the bold decision to announce it in the Budget that he is going to decrease the price, and he did so. He did so, and this decrease in price is contributing towards the lowering of the rate of inflation. So, in relation to the national debt, I have already spoken about it. It is wrong to say that the debt is at 70% at the moment, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, let me now deal a little bit on the speech of hon. Dr. Boolell. During the course of his intervention, he accused us of practising what he called '*une politique de vengeance*'. He tried to lecture us on politics of decency. I agree with him, in politics there should be honesty and decency. But to refer us to a book written by a journalist - I will not name her. If you want to know about human rights abuse, about arbitrary arrests...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I think hon. Gayan is right! She should go to Morocco and check it out there what 'human rights abuse' means. But if you talk about arbitrary arrests, the arrest of those people in 1971, in 1979, who were claiming the workers' rights when they were striking, taken them to Court, imprisoned - ask me, because I have lived it! Rivière du Rempart bus service, when the employees were on strike, they had to run in the sugarcane field to escape the Police, *les matraques*. Some even run through the sugarcane field to hide. State of emergency! '*Chacha*' Alibocus was arrested, sent to prison, and interestingly in those days, together with hon. Paul Bérenger. If the journalist really wanted to set the record right, because when you write a book, when you claim to be a journalist and you write about the history of the country, you have to be objective and you have to be honest about it. You don't start history post 2014 on arbitrary arrests, you start the history of arbitrary arrests since the colonial era and you come down.

(Interruptions)

You forgot? Let alone 1971, 1979...

(Interruptions)

No, that was in 1971, Vacoas Transport. Now, Madam Speaker, what about the arbitrary arrest of hon. Pravind Jugnauth on the eve of New Year? That was not arbitrary arrest? What about the arrest of my friend, hon. Yogida Sawmynaden? That was not arbitrary arrest? That was not an abuse of human rights because his name is Yogida Sawmynaden and he belongs to a party called the MSM?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Rutnah: What about the arrest of hon. Dr. Joomaye? What about these arrests? Is it because his name is Dr. Joomaye, and at that time he belonged to a party called the MMM?

(Interruptions)

What about your arrest? I am so sorry, but I have to deal with this. The manner in which you were arrested, the manner in which you were treated, were you less human than them?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please!

(Interruptions)

No crosstalking, please!

(Interruptions)

No crosstalking, can you!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, what about this one? Listen to this one: 6 o'clock in the morning, helicopter hovering over Rivière du Rempart, 20 Police Officers from CCID looking for Ravi Rutnah! Helicopter hovering over Rivière du Rempart, 20 Police Officers looking for Ravi Rutnah, taken to CCID, taken to Court on provisional charge! I am grateful to my friend, the then hon. Steve Obeegadoo, who came to represent me. That was not arbitrary arrest? I was not human then?

(Interruptions)

I was not human because I did my job as a lawyer and defended innocent people? I defended a journalist called Dwarika, I was not human! Because I belonged at that time to the MMM

party, I was not human? Is there any mention of these cases in that book? And you are saying that you are writing about history? The arrest about Deven Anacooty! The arrest about Dharmanand Dwarika! Come on! Please!

(Interruptions)

It is not a reference book as far as I am concerned from someone who is of the gutter Press!

(Interruptions)

Right to strike! Hon. Dr. Boolell referred us to the right to strike. Do you know, Madam Speaker, which Government enacted the IRA (Industrial Relations Act) and the POA (Public Gathering Act)?

(Interruptions)

Do you know who did it? It was the Labour Party and PMSD when in power.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, you know who recently, in 2002, amended the Employment Rights Act and the Employment Relations Act to curb the little rights that were left in the hands of the workers to strike. Hon. Benydin might say who was then Minister of Labour. Hon. Shakeel Mohamed was Minister of Labour, yes. And, today, you are trying to give us lessons about the right to strike!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please!

Mr Rutnah: And then, you wanted...

(Interruptions)

Yes, he is right. Hon. Gayan is always right.

And he wanted to change the Constitution for the election in 2014, to have a President for seven years with all sorts of immunities.

(Interruptions)

And worse, with the complicity of hon. Paul Bérenger! I am sad for that party, because since my childhood, I was in that party, I am sad. Today, they have been reduced to mere Banana Party, when I see them fighting.

(Interruptions)

Look at the hon. Member from sitting position who said to me '*bousse to la bousse, alé*'.

(Interruptions)

He is a...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member from a sitting position who just said to me '*bousse to la bousse, alé*', he is a loser.

Madam Speaker: Please! Hon. Rutnah, please!

Look, there have been Members on this side of the House who have intervened. Now, he is rebutting those points. He has got the right to rebut those points.

Mr Rutnah: The hon. Member who has made that remark, he is a loser in that election, and he is not just an ordinary loser, he is a best loser, and he has to be grateful when he comes as a best loser to learn and to listen to debates, but then he sits there, making remarks.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No.

(Interruptions)

No.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin, I am sorry.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin. Hon. Quirin, that word '*gopia*' is unparliamentary. Please, withdraw that word.

Mr Rutnah: And he also said *imbécile*, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please withdraw that word!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Quirin: Okay....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! I did not hear what you said.

(Interruptions)

I didn't hear what you said, hon. Quirin. There was...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin, don't argue with me! I said I haven't heard what you said. You stood, but I didn't hear what you said. Can you tell me what you said? There was too much noise, I couldn't hear.

Mr Quirin: Yes, Madam, I withdraw the word.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

(Interruptions)

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, in fact, it does happen sometimes. When you feel hurt, you tend to reply in a certain way. It is okay, he is excused, Madam Speaker. He has withdrawn his remark. It is okay. Provided that he withdraws because it shows that he has got some humility unlike others in the Opposition. Again, dealing with hon. Boolell, I am so sorry, I have to reply to hon. Boolell on this point. This issue on VRS, Voluntary Retirement Scheme, when I heard that it was M. Bertrand Lemaire...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

I don't think he needs you to tell him what he has to say. He knows what he has to say. Please!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, Bertrand Meyer - hon. I was going to say - Bertrand Mère, as if from Bertrand mère, Bertrand père de la VRS....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No! Hon. Rutnah, please don't make a mockery out of the names of people who are not here to defend themselves. Please!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, no it was just because hon. Boolell was trying to give paternity of the VRS to Mr Lemaire which is quite wrong. It is quite wrong because the father of the VRS, we all know – we don't have to distort history. We all know the father of VRS, père de VRS, c'est Pravind Jugnauth....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Rutnah: And this reference...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Rutnah: And this reference to us, being Oliver Twist, gives us some more. Madam Speaker, Oliver Twist was an orphan. Madam Speaker, Oliver Twist was a poor guy. Madam Speaker, Oliver Twist, during his lifetime was thrown round and round, and get up in the hands of crooked people, dishonest people, thieves, he had no choice, he had to beg, he had to ask. We cannot be compared with the character of Oliver Twist, we, as a nation, we, as a country and my people who are hearing me, we are a hard-working nation.

Since 1834, when the first immigrants came to this country and those who were traded as slave before that, we have worked hard in this country, always worked so hard that we managed to bring this country now to the level where it is. And now, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance has announced on the other day in the Budget that we are going to become a country, a nation where the digital era will become a fact that our children tomorrow are going to live.

So, we are resilient people, resilient nation and a hard-working nation. In this country, sons and daughters of labourers have become lawyers, have become doctors, have become accountants, and have become professionals, Prime Minister, Minister of Finance. Son of a bus conductor...

(Interruptions)

Son of a driver, Minister of Tourism! Son of a bus conductor, Deputy Chief Whip! Those who have made progress in this country, from poor, downtrodden, we have proved ourselves

that we are not beggars and we are not going to beg. I love my country, I love my people, and we are never going to beg, but we are going to work and we work hard for what we earn, Madam Speaker, and we are going to continue to do so.

Madam Speaker, now I am duty bound to deal with all the criticisms about the passport business. You see, Madam Speaker, some people always, for political reason again, refuse to understand what this announcement about citizenship was all about, and it is documented as from page 25, and perhaps I should read the relevant part. I may read paragraph 107 of the Budget Speech –

“To this end (...).”

That is the end of further opening our economy and country.

“To this end, the EDB will manage two schemes to attract High Net Worth individuals who satisfy defined criteria and after due diligence.”

The operative word here is the ‘defined criteria’, and ‘after due diligence’.

“The first scheme will offer foreigners the opportunity to obtain Mauritian citizenship provided they make a non-refundable contribution of USD 1 million to a Mauritius Sovereign Fund. For their spouse and dependents, they will have to make an additional contribution of USD100,000 per member of family.”

And then it goes on.

This is an announcement, Madam Speaker. It is not a policy paper. It is not the law. The law will come in the form of statute in this House to be debated. It will come in the Finance Act. We will have the opportunity to debate. We will have the opportunity to set up the criteria, the parameters and all the conditions, etc. And, if we are not happy, we are not going to vote. Everybody will have the opportunity to express himself about the criteria that are going to be proposed and that are going to be set up. It is not going to be just like that. A Budget Speech is a Budget Speech. It gives you an estimate of what the Government is going to do.

We are not the first country, Madam Speaker. The other day I heard my good friend, hon. Duval, speaking about this beautiful island called St Kitts and Nevis. Madam Speaker, I have also done some research and I can tell you that this island, like Mauritius, was a poor island and today, it is in bold in this article: “passport sale accounts for 25% of St Kitts’ GDP 25%!” Yes, it is a very small island and 25% of GDP of St Kitts.

Let us look at what another article of “The Guardian” says. “The Guardian World News” dated Saturday 02 June 2018, I have to read this for the record, Madam Speaker, in relation to the passport, and I quote –

“The first launched in 1984, a year after young, cash-strapped St Kitts and Nevis won independence from the UK. Slow to take off, it accelerated fast after 2009 when passport-holders from the Caribbean island nation were granted visa-free travel to the 26-nation Schengen zone.

For poorer countries, such schemes can be a boon, lifting them out of debt and even becoming their biggest export: the International Monetary Fund reckons St Kitts and Nevis earned 14% of its GDP from its CIP in 2014, and other estimates put the figure as high as 30% of State revenue.”

We have talked about poor countries, now we talk about wealthier countries -

“Wealthier countries such as Canada, the UK and New Zealand have also seen the potential of CIPs (the US EB-5 programme is worth about \$4bn a year to the economy) but sell their schemes more around the attractions of a stable economy and safe investment environment than on freedom of movement.”

Madam Speaker, we are not the only country, we are not selling our country, we are not selling passport. It is an investment programme. You invest then you get. And, for you to be eligible to invest, you have to satisfy certain criteria. We have Europe, it is stated –

“Almost half of the EU’s member States offer some kind of investment residency or citizenship programme leading to a highly prized EU passport, which typically allows visa-free travel to between 150 and 170 countries. Malta’s citizenship-for-sale scheme requires a €675,000 donation to the national development fund and a €350,000 property purchase (...).”

This is about Europe. Then the rest of the world, we have got Thailand, China, New Zealand and many other countries like Australia, France and even the United Kingdom, Madam Speaker. I had the opportunity to practise a little bit in immigration and nationality in England when I was qualified. Even in England there is such programme to go and invest money and obtain a British passport.

So, it is not new and it is wrong again, it is a distortion of the truth when for political reason you use *cliché* like ‘they are selling the passport’, ‘they are selling our nation’. That is very wrong! It is against the spirit of being a patriot of the country.

Madam Speaker, we have to work hard. Madam Speaker, we have always worked hard in this country and when we work hard, we have to save for the future. When we have it now we can’t just spend. We can’t be like *Les Fables de La Fontaine, La Cigale et la Fourmi*. Madam Speaker –

« *La Cigale, ayant chanté
Tout l’été,
Se trouva fort dépourvue
Quand la bise fut venue :
Pas un seul petit morceau
De mouche ou de vermisseau.*

*Elle alla crier famine
Chez la Fourmi sa voisine,
La priant de lui prêter
Quelque grain pour subsister
Jusqu’à la saison nouvelle. »*

Even my good friend, hon. Lepoigneur, knows about it and eventually when the *fourmi* asked *la cigale* what were you doing during the good season...

(Interruptions)

Non. He said: “*je chantais...*”

(Interruptions)

« *Je chantais, ne vous déplaie.*
– *Vous chantiez ? j’en suis fort aise.*
Eh bien! dansez maintenant. »

Dansez !

(Interruptions)

We believe in preparing this country for the future. We don’t believe in *zordi paysa...*

(Interruptions)

...we don't believe in *zordi paysa dimain jalsa*...

(Interruptions)

And after that *tam tam*! We don't believe in *khale, pile jile*, not that!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, in relation to the work that is being undertaken in my constituency, I have to very briefly deal with this, Madam Speaker, because it is Budget debate. Firstly, Madam Speaker, I would like to offer my gratitude to the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo in relation to the amount of money that she has made available to the Rivière du Rempart District Council to carry out works in my constituency and Constituency No. 6. Madam Speaker, a colossal amount of Rs80,146,000 given to the District Council of Rivière du Rempart which has never in the past been given to the District Council to carry out work.

Madam Speaker, there are a number of projects...

(Interruptions)

...too many projects to go through that have been carried out, that have been completed and that continue to be completed.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I also have to extend my gratitude to...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister has, through the CWA, completed a vast amount of work in relation to water supply; that he is going to meet target very soon, by the end of the year. And it is for the first time that any Government is investing that amount of money in water supply.

Madam Speaker, I have also to extend my gratitude to the Minister of Youth and Sports, to my good friend, hon. Toussaint, who has done an immense amount of work in my constituency. I, myself, did not realise that from Rivière du Rempart, we have got 50% of

badminton champions who go and play for our country. His work, all over the island, and, in particular, in my constituency, is exceptional.

Madam Speaker, my very good friend, hon. Yogida Sawmynaden, thanks to him, the man who is going to send a space cube very soon from Japan, in the air, to digitalise this country. Thanks to him, technology has come in the CAB Office at Rivière du Rempart and elsewhere.

Madam Speaker, thanks to the effort of hon. Bodha - who is not here - in Piton, in my constituency, there will be very soon a modern traffic centre that is going to be completed by the end of this year.

Madam Speaker, before I finish, I have got a soft corner for those who are disabled in this country. I am very grateful for the measures that the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has taken in relation to the advancement of the causes of people who are disabled, the setting-up of the SEN Authority. Madam Speaker, I even have a letter from the Global Rainbow Foundation, which has reviewed the Budget. Professor Armoogum Parsuramen from the Global Rainbow Foundation, which is an organisation, has written to me personally and asked me to extend his gratitude to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for all the measures that he has taken in this Budget.

Madam Speaker, before I end, today, we have a Prime Minister who is a caring Prime Minister, who cares for this country, who cares for the people of this country. And as Minister of Finance, he has done everything possible to help the poor and the needy, from housing programmes to fiscal measures that he has taken to alleviate the hardship cases. I do not have enough time to expand on everything that he has done in this Budget, but overall, Madam Speaker, when you go out there, they are all saying: '*Pravind pe faire bien*'. And this is what is worrying the Opposition.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(7.36 p.m.)

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Madame la présidente, pour commencer, j'aurais aimé déclarer à la Chambre que je n'ai jamais fait l'objet d'aucune poursuite en réclamation devant la Cour, le *Central London Country Court*, logée par une cousine résidant en Angleterre. Cette dernière réclame et a obtenu un ordre de ce tribunal le 21 mai 2009, ordonnant quelqu'un que - cela ne vaut pas la

peine de mentionner le nom - vous savez tous, et a dû verser un montant de R 730,000 pour loyers impayés.

(Interruptions)

Si vous insistez, c'est l'avocat et le *Deputy Chief Whip* de la majorité, Monsieur Ravi Rutnah ! Un ordre a été émis par une Cour de justice où il doit R 730,000 à sa cousine...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: *Volere!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Can we have some order in the House, please?

(Interruptions)

If there is so much noise...

(Interruptions)

Order, please, I said! Please sit down, hon. Ameer Meea! If there is so much noise in the House, how do you think I can hear when someone says something which is unparliamentary? So, I would request you to remain silent when he is intervening.

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Also, Madam Speaker, I have no lesson to take from someone who has assisted a gathering, whereby a Police Officer mentioned, '*Pas kapave laisse ene musulman vine commissaire de police*'. *Des propos sectaires qu'il n'a jamais condamnés!* Also, Madam Speaker, I have no lesson to take from someone who has treated a lady journalist as '*Tah femelle li chien*'. I have no lesson to take, and I will end on that note, *un proverbe de A. Victor, 'Quand Ravi Rutnah parle le français, une bibliothèque brule quelque part dans le monde'*. Donc, Madame la présidente...

(Interruptions)

...laissez-moi aller directement...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! I have asked for some order in the House. But I wish also to remind hon. Members that this House is not a forum for insults.

Mr Ameer Meea: Juste par rapport à ce qu'il a dit concernant mon collègue, l'honorable Franco Quirin, à l'effet qu'il est un *best loser*. Laissez-moi lui dire que le *best loser* est garanti par la Constitution. Il est un avocat, il aurait dû savoir, avant n'importe qui, que c'est un poste qui est garanti par la Constitution, et, ici, il a les mêmes droits que n'importe qui. Il peut voter, il a les mêmes droits. Combien d'autres illustres députés, ministres ont été *best losers* avant ? C'est une honte qu'un tel député vienne faire des commentaires par rapport au *best loser*. Si vous n'êtes par d'accord, venez de l'avant avec la réforme électorale !

Donc, Madame la présidente, passons aux choses sérieuses. Un budget qui a du mérite, c'est un budget qui jette les fondements d'un édifice nouveau. Un budget, c'est surtout une occasion d'insuffler un nouveau dynamisme à l'économie. Ce n'est pas celui qu'on nous a présenté le 14 juin. Depuis 2015, ils n'ont rien inventé ou réinventé, rien de nouveau sous le soleil.

Madame la présidente, un budget est une occasion pour fixer un nouveau cap. Le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances pouvait donner l'élan nécessaire pour relancer l'économie mauricienne, mais il a raté l'occasion. S'il est vrai qu'on n'attend plus rien du budget, celui de 2018/2019 intervient dans un contexte économique incertain et tourmenté; tout, sauf rassurant pour l'avenir. Qu'y a-t-il à l'horizon ? Pas grand-chose pour embrigader la nation mauricienne. Et là, je vais rentrer dans le vif du sujet par rapport à la dette publique.

L'appétit de l'État pour emprunter se manifeste encore une fois, malheureusement. Lors de la précédente année financière, la dette a connu une augmentation de R 12 milliards.

Entre juin 2018 et 2019, le montant devrait enregistrer une hausse de R 21 milliards. Sur trois ans, se basant sur les chiffres contenus dans les documents annexes au discours budgétaire, la dette publique atteindrait les R 358.7 milliards, représentant un bond de 18.7%.

Et là, je fais référence aux prêts contractés, hors budget, par le gouvernement l'année dernière auprès de l'*EXIM Bank* de l'Inde pour financer partiellement le projet Metro Express au coût total de R 18.8 milliards, soit à 50%, donc de R 9.9 milliards. C'est à travers une institution d'État, la *SBM*, la banque dont le gouvernement détient une majorité par le biais d'une nouvelle filiale, *SBM Infrastructure Fund*. Idem, pour le projet *Safe City*. Le gouvernement a fait appel au *Mauritius Telecom* récemment afin d'emprunter des milliards de roupies auprès de l'*Exim Bank* de *China*. Le montant exact n'est pas connu, vu que les détails de ce *deal* n'ont pas été révélés publiquement. Cette pratique *Off-Balance Sheet Financing* signifie nécessairement que certaines dettes ne sont pas reconnues officiellement et masquent le niveau réel d'endettement du pays. Si on devrait comptabiliser ces emprunts, la dette publique se rapprocherait de 70% du PIB.

Le gouvernement donne le mauvais exemple en incitant les gens à s'endetter. R 117 milliards de recettes comprenant des revenus de R 100 milliards de nature fiscale, des dépenses de R 133 milliards, dont R 116 milliards pour les choses courantes. Un déficit de R 16 milliards, représentant 3.2% du PIB. Une dette publique de R 323 milliards à 63% du PIB. Montant légitimement contesté par de nombreux économistes, y compris par l'Opposition parce qu'à travers le *Special Purpose Vehicle*, les chiffres savamment ventilés, la taxe à valeur ajoutée, droits de douane, *corporate tax* et l'impôt sur revenu.

Il est aussi impératif qu'une étude comparative soit faite pour savoir si toutes les mesures énoncées d'un budget à un autre - accompagnées souvent d'applaudissements délirants - ont été concrétisées ou pas. Une telle étude comparative pourrait être édifiante car il établirait combien de mesures sont restées lettres mortes; des déclarations d'intention de vœux pieux, les mesures annoncées dans le Budget 2017/2018.

Me référant à un article de presse du 'Défi Quotidien', le 06 juin 2018, seulement 105 mesures réalisées sur 253 mesures du précédent budget. Et là, un autre secteur que j'aurais aimé commenter, c'est par rapport à l'offshore, dont la gravité de la situation, surtout par rapport aux difficultés du secteur offshore. Ici, le discours budgétaire entretient le flou et l'incertitude. Après avoir sacrifié les bénéfices du traité de non-double imposition entre

Maurice et l'Inde, le gouvernement envisagerait de revoir le taux de 3% appliqué aux revenus des sociétés offshore.

Madame la présidente, l'impact de la révision du traité de Maurice avec l'Inde sur l'offshore ! Nous n'avons pas encore senti cet impact parce que l'offshore emploie des milliers de jeunes directement ou indirectement dans les sociétés offshore, dans les firmes comptables, de l'audit, dans les assurances, dans les banques, même les chauffeurs de taxis, les restaurateurs, tout le monde trouve son compte et dans tout cela il y aura un *multiplying effect*. Et pour tous ces jeunes qui font leurs études dans la comptabilité, c'est surtout dans le secteur offshore qu'ils génèrent tous ces emplois-là, et je parle en connaissance de cause. Je suis extrêmement tracassé pour l'avenir de ce secteur, surtout comme j'ai dit, l'effet n'a pas encore été totalement ressenti.

Madame la présidente, en essayant de revoir le taux d'imposition sur les sociétés d'offshore, le gouvernement est en train de céder aux pressions des organisations des pays développés sans égard à notre souveraineté fiscale. Il est vrai que la juridiction mauricienne ne devrait pas continuer à fonder sa compétitivité sur un avantage purement fiscal. Il est vrai, mais il lui faut des mesures d'accompagnement comme l'industrie sucrière pour diversifier ces produits et ces marchés.

Ce secteur est en pleine transition avec la fin du traité indien et ce budget ne fait presque aucune mention, par rapport à ce que j'ai mentionné.

Actuellement, les sociétés offshore payent 3% au lieu de 15% du *Corporate tax*. C'est donc ces mesures surtout qu'exige l'OCDE. L'année dernière dans le budget précédent, mention a été faite par rapport au *Blueprint*. Encore une fois, cette année-ci, mention a été faite, mais le *Blueprint* n'a toujours pas encore été circulé parmi la population, le Parlement et surtout les gens de l'industrie de l'offshore, un secteur qui contribue 5.8% de notre PIB. Et maintenant, si on veut aligner les sociétés d'offshore parallèlement aux compagnies locales, rien n'a été dit. Est-ce qu'ils vont être imposables de la VAT, du CSR et bien d'autres réglementations ?

Madame la présidente, parlons du *EDB (Economic Development Board)*. Pour moi, Madame la présidente, l'*EDB* c'est un gouvernement dans un gouvernement. On vient d'apprendre que les procédures seront revues au niveau des 14 ministères, des organismes du public et d'autres collectivités locales. Et là, je me réfère à un article du journal 'L'Express' du mercredi 20 juin. Rapidement, l'*EDB* chapeautera également le projet sur la vente de la

nationalité, la création du *seafood hub* à Agalega, la mise sur place de la *National Regulatory Sandbox Licence Committee*, du *National Regeneration Scheme* et du *sheltered farming*. L'institut aura aussi un rôle important dans l'industrie cinématographique, dans le *Film Rebate Scheme*. L'*EDB* devra chapeauter le *Film Promotion Fund* avec R 500 millions et aussi ils vont promouvoir le pays et attirer les étrangers.

Donc, Madame la présidente, j'ai de nombreux points de désaccord concernant le *Board* et le fonctionnement de cette superbe institution. Si on se réfère aux provisions de la loi concernant la création de cette institution, il est clair que la composition du *Board* est totalement déséquilibrée. De nombreux économistes ont exprimé leur crainte, parmi des économistes très respectés, tels que M. Pierre Dinan, M. Eric Ng, incluant aussi M. Rama Sithanen. Au niveau du *Board*, on constate qu'il y a cinq hommes d'affaires, le Secrétaire Financier et une personne dans le domaine de la médecine. Je l'ai dit de façon sans équivoque, qu'au niveau de ce *Board*, les compétences et les expériences ne sont pas visiblement équilibrées parmi les directeurs nommés. En disant cela, je ne mets pas en cause l'intégrité professionnelle des personnes qui y siègent, car je pense qu'il n'est pas éthiquement correct et raisonnable pour le pays d'accepter ces risques à un moment où d'importants défis se profilent à l'horizon. Où est la bonne gouvernance dans tout ça? Malheureusement, l'*EDB* ne satisfait pas la règle de la bonne gouvernance dans sa composition actuelle. Sur la composition du *Board* elle-même, je suis sûr que le secrétaire financier n'a pas sa place au sein de cet organisme car il existe de réels risques de conflits d'intérêts.

C'est le *BOI* qui soumet le plus gros volume de dossiers durant l'exercice budgétaire. Donc, comment le *Financial Secretary*, qui est un des directeurs de l'*EDB*, pourra-t-il faire l'arbitrage des projets soumis par la même institution? Il sera *judge and party*. Éthiquement parlant, ce n'est pas professionnel. Et parallèlement, je ne suis pas d'accord avec la présence comme *Chairman* de la *FSC* par le *Financial Secretary*. On en a discuté plusieurs fois, ici, à travers de mes questions parlementaires et de celles de nombreux collègues de l'Opposition.

Autre point conflictuel, c'est qu'il y a une mainmise des *businessmen* du secteur privé au sein de ce *Board*. Madame la présidente, il faut reconnaître qu'une bonne réussite de notre économie repose sur un partenariat entre le secteur public et privé, mais il y a des limites à ne pas dépasser. Il y a un premier risque de perte d'informations sensibles et confidentielles, c'est-à-dire, des personnes qui ont plusieurs rôles au sein de ce *Board*. Ils peuvent ne pas faire la distinction entre leur rôle de directeur de l'*EDB* et celui de leur compagnie.

Quand on regarde certains de ces nominés, les risques sont énormes dans une petite économie comme la nôtre. Est-ce qu'on peut s'assurer que ces personnes ne vont pas confondre les intérêts de leurs entreprises et l'intérêt du pays ? L'autre risque qui est réellement évident, c'est le conflit d'intérêts. Il n'est pas un secret pour personne que les directeurs de l'*EDB* qui représente des compagnies bien implémentées à l'île Maurice sont aussi des développeurs et des demandeurs de permis.

Ils seront appelés à approuver des projets, à analyser d'autres, en attente ou encore à rejeter certains. Qu'est-ce qui se passe dans un cas de figure...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes.

Madam Speaker: I will stop you for a few minutes to tell you that there was a Bill which came to the House which has been fully debated. I agree that you can raise some points on the EDB, but please don't go into the details because the Bill has been fully debated in this House.

Mr Ameer Meea: I bow to your ruling, Madam Speaker, but still even if it has been debated and voted *j'exprime mes craintes par rapport aux risques que ça comporte, Madame la présidente.*

Madam Speaker: But please don't go lengthily!

Mr Ameer Meea: Je ne vais pas trop m'attarder là-dessus, Madame la présidente, mais il y en a une question aussi de graves conflits d'intérêts parce que beaucoup de ces gens qui sont sur le *Board d'EDB* comme je l'ai dit ils sont dans le secteur privé et aussi il y a le risque d'*insider dealing, insider trading.*

Moi-même à l'époque où je travaillais dans une firme d'audit, dans une firme comptable, je connais un cas spécifique d'une compagnie que je ne vais pas mentionner le nom, il avait soumis un projet qui n'avait pas de réponse après plusieurs mois et après il a appris qu'une autre compagnie est allée de l'avant avec ce même projet. Donc ce risque de conflits d'intérêts, ça existe et c'est vraiment grave. Et surtout puisque je mentionne, conflits d'intérêts comment ne pas oublier ce cas plutôt d'*insider dealing*. Je donne l'exemple de la fermeture de la *Bramer Bank*. Qui ne se souvient pas de cette fameuse phrase du ministre Mentor : « *Kan bato coulé, b mo sové premier* ».

Donc, qui ne se souvient pas que l'honorable ministre Mentor, il avait fermé ses comptes de 13 Février 2015 et il avait retiré tous ses fric avant que le Bramer Bank ne s'écroule. Pareillement, avec lui son ministre de *Good Governance*, lui, il avait fermé ses comptes cinq jours après, le 18 Février 2015, il avait retiré R 700,000 et maintenant aussi *high rank official from the Bank of Mauritius* à l'époque, M. Googoolye, et lui, il a *uncash* a *fixed deposit* de R 2.5 millions en mars 2015. Et au lieu d'être sanctionné, il est catapulté gouverneur de la banque de Maurice, Madame la présidente.

Donc voilà un peu comme j'avais dit par rapport aux risques de conflits d'intérêts et aussi il y a des risques quand même par rapport à la promotion et du *marketing* mais je ne vais pas m'attarder là-dessus, je vais passer à un autre item, l'item logements sociaux. J'aurais aimé quand même que l'honorable ministre Jhugroo soit là, mais ce n'est pas grave, le budget 2015 à ce jour contienne tous des chapelets d'intention concernant le logement, mais en réalité toutes ces intentions sont restées lettres-mortes, toutes ces intentions n'ont jamais été réalisées et là sous ce même gouvernement cette année-ci dans le budget une somme de R 1.3 milliards est prévue pour le *Social Housing Unit*. Que des milliards et de belles paroles. J'aurais espéré que cette fois-ci la donne va changer mais je suis très sceptique par rapport à tout ce qui se passe depuis 2015. Il faut avoir une volonté politique pour résoudre ce problème de logement. L'argent est là mais il n'y a pas de volonté pour résoudre ce problème.

Sur 10,000 logements sociaux, promis par le gouvernement pour son présent mandat seul 1355 ont été construits à ce jour et une grande majorité de ces maisons, la construction avait déjà commencé sous le mandat précédent. Devant l'urgence de la situation, le gouvernement a procédé à la construction des maisons à un rythme relativement lent avec pour résultat une situation qui est en train d'échapper à tout contrôle. Des informations fournies au Parlement le mardi 15 mai dernier par le ministre Mahen Jhugroo, d'ailleurs cette question était adressée par moi-même mais ce qui est plus choquant, Madame la présidente, c'est que le ministre insiste à dire qu'ils vont construire plus de 10,000 maisons avant la fin de leur mandat.

Donc, même pas 300 maisons ont été construites en trois ans et demi et il ne reste qu'une année et demie, il insiste à dire qu'ils vont construire 10,000 maisons, il faut cesser de vendre des rêves à la population, Madame la présidente.

Concernant le *casting of roof slab*, mention a été faite dans le budget que le plafond a été augmenté. Mais *the devil lies in the details*, le plafond a été effectivement augmenté mais le montant budgété est resté pareil, ce qui veut dire que le nombre de bénéficiaires va diminuer.

Il n'y a pas de mesures positives qui ont été prises par rapport au *roof and slab*. Et maintenant, Madame la présidente laissez-moi venir sur la problématique des marchands ambulants. S'il y a un dossier qui symbolise l'incompétence, la mauvaise administration c'est bien le dossier des marchands ambulants. Malheureusement, encore une fois, aucune mention n'a été faite dans le dernier budget. Je suis profondément attristé par les difficultés que rencontrent les marchands ambulants, il s'agit de la subsistance de nombreuses familles, voire même une question de survie.

Tous ces projets annoncés en fanfare, les 1000 places les projets vont être financés maintenant par qui, par le secteur privé. Donc, on n'a aucune idée par rapport au coût du loyer, combien ça va être, quel est l'espace qui va être alloué, qui va déterminer ces espaces, qui va déterminer le loyer. Et pour le projet, Madame la présidente, qui est supposé être déterminé cette année-ci, ça n'a pas encore même été commencé.

Madame la présidente, pour moi un gouvernement responsable, quand on prive quelqu'un d'un travail, il faut lui donner un alternatif. Quand on les a privé des *jobs* dans le secteur public dans les années 80, ils sont devenus des marchands ambulants, aujourd'hui, on les empêche de travailler, il faut leur donner un alternatif pour qu'ils puissent gagner leur vie correctement et convenablement. Et là je vais revenir sur les deux sites qui ont été alloués au *Decaen* et à la gare du Nord qui sont dans un état déplorable, Madame la présidente.

Il n'y a aucune infrastructure, ce n'est pas couvert, il n'y a rien, ils ont couvert avec des abris de fortune, il y a l'insalubrité total, il y a un manque d'hygiène, les gens n'ose même pas entrer et quand je pense les R 50 millions qui ont été gaspillées dans le projet *Heritage City* quand on a payé le *Stree consulting*. Même pas un rapport on a eu avec le *Stree consulting*. Tous ces frics on aurait pu mettre ça pour essayer de régler le problème de marchands ambulants. Et là, Madame la présidente, je me réfère au paragraphe 121 quand on parle d'*Urban Bus Terminal*. L'*Urban Bus Terminal* dans le budget *it is expected to start in February 2019*. Madame la présidente, rien n'a été fait à ce jour et *the construction of the Victoria Terminal is expected to start in February 2019*.

Vous les avez chassés des rues là où ils travaillaient en début de 2015 et les travaux vont commencer en février 2019. Mais quand est-ce que ça va être finalisé, quand est-ce qu'ils auront leur place pour travailler. De toute façon, vous n'allez pas être là pour la concrétisation de ce projet, Madame la présidente. Et encore une fois *Government is working with the Local Authorities to construct two additional Urban Terminals at Immigration Square and Rose Hill*.

Rien n'est mentionné par rapport au financement, rien n'est mentionné par rapport aux dates quand ça va commencer, quand ça va être livré, Madame la présidente. Et là aujourd'hui comme par hasard, j'ai passé dans la bibliothèque du Parlement et je suis tombé sur un article du 'Mauricien' du 22 juin 2018, sur le 'Victoria Urban Terminal'. Qu'est-ce qui est dit dans cet article, Madame la présidente?

« La mairie doit remettre R 5 millions annuellement pour Consortium. »

Donc, aujourd'hui, le gouvernement se frotte les mains carrément avec les marchands ambulants. C'est devenu le problème du secteur privé. Au lieu de mettre de l'argent public dans un projet public, maintenant le secteur privé fait du *business*, c'est normal que son objectif soit le profit. Et encore dans cet article, mention est faite qu'il y avait une rencontre urgente à la mairie de Port Louis, parce que les échoppes destinées aux marchands ambulants - tenez-vous bien et c'est bien que la population, surtout les marchands ambulants prennent connaissance des dernières informations - une somme de R 4,000 par mois pour la location des étals, Madame la présidente. Voilà, après trois ans et demi de ce gouvernement-là, ce qu'on propose aux marchands ambulants! Pour ces pauvres gens qui n'arrivent pas à travailler, on leur propose une location de R 4,000. Et cela a été décidé par le conseil à la municipalité de Port Louis.

Madame la présidente, je veux y revenir plus tard, mais aujourd'hui, pour une question de temps, il faut que je passe à autre chose. Mais pour vous dire que gouverner c'est prévoir. On aurait dû savoir que tout cela allait venir. Je me souviens de la première déclaration de l'honorable ministre, Dr. Husnoo, dans le journal 'Star'. Il avait mis le problème des marchands ambulants comme sa priorité. Aujourd'hui, on n'entend rien! Aujourd'hui, on parle de 2019, du secteur privé et une location de R 4,000 par étal, Madame la présidente.

Madame la présidente, laissez-moi dire rapidement quelques mots par rapport à la situation de *law and order*, mais vu le temps qui m'est alloué, je vais directement parler de la

situation de *law and order* dans ma circonscription, la circonscription No. 3. Aujourd'hui, quand vous passez à la rue Desforges, à la Route des Pamplermousses, à la rue St François Xavier, Madame la présidente - je vous invite, j'invite aussi les autres honorables membres - il n'y a pas un seul policier.

La semaine dernière, c'était la veille de la fête Eid, la rue Desforges était peuplée des gens, il y avait beaucoup de marchands, mais il n'y avait pas un seul policier sur nos routes. Pareillement, pour la rue Desforges qui est une des rues la plus fréquentée, la plus connue, les gens de l'île entière viennent à la rue Desforges. Il n'y a jamais un policier à la rue Desforges, et cela fait des années que ça dure. Et comment ne pas oublier la problématique de la route Militaire et la route Pamplermousses! Je ne sais pas combien de fois j'ai soulevé ce problème, ici, dans la Chambre, qu'il faut mettre des policiers. Si là aussi la police n'arrive pas à régler le problème de la circulation, Madame la présidente, comment vont-ils régler tous les autres problèmes quand on sait que le banditisme évolue?

Donc, voilà, Madame la présidente, par rapport au problème de *law and order* dans ma circonscription. Je vais être honnête là-dessus qu'il y a beaucoup d'incivisme. Je suis d'accord qu'il y a beaucoup des gens qui garent leurs voitures n'importe où, mais c'est le devoir de l'autorité de mettre de l'ordre. Si les gens ne respectent pas les lois, c'est le devoir de la Police de faire son travail.

Madame la présidente, par rapport à Agaléga qui est aussi une partie prenante de la République de l'Île Maurice, et dans la circonscription No. 3, beaucoup de choses ont été dites depuis 2015, mais à ce jour, rien n'a été fait. La dernière question en date que j'avais demandée à l'honorable ministre de *Local Government*, la réponse, je cite de mémoire : « *bidding exercise has not yet started.* » Donc, le *bidding* même n'a pas encore commencé. Quand est-ce que les travaux vont commencer, Madame la présidente ? On parle de piste d'atterrissage, on parle de beaucoup de *jetty*, mais vous vous imaginez trois ans et demi se sont déjà écoulés! Il ne vous reste qu'un an et demi, le *bidding exercise* n'a même pas commencé. Quand est-ce que ces gens vont avoir leur piste d'atterrissage ? Quand est-ce que ces gens vont avoir le *jetty*? Donc, dans une année et demie, il y aura 10,000 maisons, piste d'atterrissage, *jetty*! L'île Maurice va être transformée comme dans un rêve, Madame la présidente!

Donc, il faut encore une fois arrêter de berner les gens, et surtout par rapport à Agaléga, l'opacité totale par rapport à tous ces projets annoncés. On ne sait pas si le projet va

être financé totalement par l'Inde ou bien partiellement ? Combien cela va coûter? Comment le contrat va être alloué? Est-ce que cela va être alloué uniquement aux firmes indiennes ou bien aux firmes mauriciennes ? Rien! L'opacité totale! Et c'est ce même gouvernement qui parle de bonne gouvernance, Madame la présidente!

Rapidement quelques mots sur le *CSR*. La *CSR*, Madame la présidente, est un drame. C'est un drame depuis 2015 quand on a retiré tous les *guidelines*. Aujourd'hui, on amende les lois très souvent. Aujourd'hui, quand on regarde les critères par rapport à la *CSR*, ils viennent nous dire qu'ils vont financer les projets de *Road Development Authority* avec la *CSR*. Ils vont faire le *peace and nation building* avec la monnaie de la *CSR*, Madame la présidente. Et aussi, quand on regarde par rapport à la *CSR* dans le manifeste électoral, le *Mauritius Telecom* s'est servi de la *CSR* pour faire du *Wi-Fi hotspots*.

Donc, Madame la présidente, la *CSR*, comme le nom mentionne '*Corporate Social Responsibility*' a été dévié totalement de son objectif principal, c'est-à-dire de régler le problème social du pays. Maintenant on fait n'importe quoi avec la *CSR* et ce sont les gens qui en ont besoin qui souffrent par rapport aux problèmes de la *CSR*.

Madame la présidente, encore une fois, je dois écourter mon discours par rapport au temps qui m'a été alloué. Je vais rapidement parler du *Public Accounts Committee*. Rapidement, deux mots sur le *Public Accounts Committee*. Comme je suis membre du *Public Account Committee* depuis 2010, beaucoup a été dit par les différents *Chairpersons* du *Public Accounts Committee*, que ce soit l'honorable Jayan Cuttaree, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval au temps où il était *Chairperson*, l'honorable Baloomoody et l'honorable Ganoo.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, I am sorry, I will have to ask you to resume your seat because the time allotted to you has lapsed already, unless you have an agreement with your colleagues to take from their time.

Mr Ameer Meea: *Madame la présidente*, I need only two minutes to conclude my speech.

Madam Speaker: But then you are taking from their allotment.

Mr Ameer Meea : Okay, no problem, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker : No, you have no problem, but I don't know whether they have a problem. Do you have any problem, hon. Baloomoody?

Mr Ameer Meea: As I have mentioned that there need to be changes in the mandate of the Public Accounts Committee. When we look ourselves at countries like Uganda, our Standing Orders for the Public Accounts Committee have not been changed for more than 30 years. And we are talking about transparency and accountability. How do you think that the Public Accounts Committee can manage with those changes that have never come? But still just a quick remark on what hon. Ezra Jhuboo has mentioned in regard to Public Accounts Committee. I am of the opinion that it is a fundamental institution for the Parliament and the democracy at large. I think that we have to do our duty in the Public Accounts Committee. Even though that the mandate has not been changed, the battle must still go on so that change will occur sooner or later.

J'en ai terminé. Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun!

(8.12 p.m.)

The Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Madame la présidente, s'il y a quelque chose qui nous frappe tous aujourd'hui, c'est la cohérence et la constance dans l'effort consenti dans les quatre budgets depuis notre arrivée au gouvernement en 2014.

On se souvient, Madame la présidente, du premier budget de ce gouvernement, qui reflétait clairement la situation dans laquelle le pays se trouvait, à la croisée des chemins, *at the crossroads, Madam Speaker*.

We, as a new Government, were left with a legacy that was on the brink of potential freefall. But we refuse to indulge in any form of futile hand-wringing, Madam Speaker.

Nous ne sommes pas restés les bras croisés; *we had not time for it. We had been elected for a purpose: that of setting things right.*

Nous nous sommes attelés à la tâche, et le Budget 2016/2017 venait confirmer notre vision; *to usher a New Era of Development* en ligne avec les aspirations du peuple mauricien.

Madam Speaker, the 2017/2018 Budget confidently made it clear that we, Mauritians, can and will rise to the challenge of our ambitions. And now, Madam Speaker, in this Budget, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has made it crystal clear, we will pursue our transformative journey. Pursuing this transformative journey implies inclusiveness. It

presupposes taking everybody on board. Madam Speaker, everybody, not a chosen few! It definitely implies that conditions must be created for engagement of all on this journey - no one should be left behind. The several actors, State as well as non-State, the corporate world, that of services as well as the citizens across rank and file. *Personne n'est oublié, Madame la présidente.*

It is now a question of consolidation the momentum generated by the previous Budgets, for this is a Budget in which the considerations of all the people of the Republic are taken on board. This Budget, Madam Speaker, reinforces and consolidates measures that have already started proving their worth, and, Madam Speaker, *le peuple le sait.*

En fin de compte, Madame la présidente, ce budget vient renouveler l'engagement de l'État et l'*empowerment* du citoyen mauricien. Le peuple mauricien ressent déjà les résultats positifs d'une politique sincère. Nous ne pouvons pas, Madame la présidente, passer sous silence les réalisations suivantes -

- l'augmentation conséquente de la pension de vieillesse de R 3,500 en 2014 à R 5,810 aujourd'hui ;
- la subvention des frais des examens de la SC et de la HSC pour que tous nos enfants aient les moyens de prendre part aux examens ;
- la régularisation de la situation des femmes *cleaners* pour un salaire décent ;
- le salaire minimal est une réalité aujourd'hui, Madame la présidente ;
- la *Negative Income Tax*, les *solar panels* attribués à ceux qui sont au bas de l'échelle ;
- la commission sur la drogue ;
- la réforme éducative - les tentatives n'ont pas manqué, mais aujourd'hui c'est encore une réalité ;
- le *Nine-Year Schooling* a mis fin à une compétition inhumaine que représentait la CPE ;
- l'accès au secondaire, à tous nos enfants, assuré. *No one is left behind, Madam Speaker;*
- l'introduction de la technologie of *Grades I and II* dans les salles de classe ;
- le *National Curriculum* qui a été reconçu ;
- la baisse du prix du gaz ménager ;

- le Metro Express. On en a parlé, Madame la présidente, depuis des décennies. Le Metro Express est aujourd'hui là pour entrer de plain-pied dans la modernité.

On ne peut pas oublier les autres points - très, très importants - et je trouve vraiment étrange, Madame la présidente, que tous ces membres ont pris la parole et personne n'a eu un mot à dire sur ces mesures, et je crois que l'honorable Rutnah a bien raison de dire qu'il y a tant de bonnes choses qu'ils ne peuvent même pas *utter a word against*. Alors, on passe sous silence.

- Work@home Scheme ;
- les crèches pour les enfants ;
- les *high-tech sport facilities* à Côte d'O
- r ;
- le *Teaching Hospital* de Flacq ;
- le village touristique de Mahébourg ;
- la révision du seuil d'éligibilité pour la déduction fiscale pour les parents dont les enfants entreprennent des études supérieures.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance has rightly put forward that priority should be given to ensure an improved quality of life. This must place a premium on a healthy lifestyle, on a safe and secure environment and on sound living conditions.

Madam Speaker, education is the agent *par excellence* capable of bringing about this transformation, and I am pleased today that there is consensus on the changes we have brought about in the system. The empowerment of our learners, Madam Speaker, has to start right from their early schooling.

We cannot allow precious time and precious human talent to be left on the sidelines. *Nos ressources humaines, Madame la présidente, demeurent notre bien le plus précieux.*

Education, by its very nature, is a fundamental human right and it has to be inclusive and qualitatively enriched for all to benefit from it.

Madame la présidente, qu'avons-nous dit pendant tout ce temps ? Que nous comptons sur notre ressource humaine, nous comptons sur nos jeunes, nous comptons sur notre population, et l'école doit œuvrer à l'épanouissement de la personne humaine. Notre population, aussi diverse qu'elle soit, mérite un cadre adéquat. A travers le monde, l'accent

est mis sur une éducation qui permet le développement du capital humain afin de promouvoir la vitalité économique et le développement national. Ceci impacte directement sur la formation des enseignants qui doivent être équipés pour l'accompagnement pédagogique de l'apprenant dans un univers qui évolue constamment.

Madame la présidente, dans un monde où la technologie est omniprésente, où les jeunes reçoivent constamment les informations venant des quatre coins du monde, où ils sont exposés à toutes sortes de courants divers, il devient impératif que l'enseignant les accompagne et les apprenne le discernement. Et c'est pour cette raison que la formation de nos enseignants devient capital. Il s'agira autant du contenu que d'attitude. L'enseignant, Madame la présidente, n'est plus le seul détenteur de connaissances, mais il devient aujourd'hui l'accompagnateur. Comme je l'ai dit il y a quelques minutes, c'est celui qui aidera le jeune à faire preuve de discernement, à pouvoir dire *this is right and this is wrong, this is what I should adopt, this is what I should reject*.

Mais c'est important de souligner, Madame la présidente, dans n'importe quel pays à travers le monde, l'éducation passe par trois phases. Un premier temps où on met l'accent sur l'expansion, ce qui veut dire qu'il faut augmenter l'accès à l'éducation, et cela a été fait à Maurice. On est passé à un *enrolment rate* de presque 100%.

La deuxième phase met l'accent sur l'équité. Il faut s'assurer que tout le monde ait des chances égales, et il faut aussi, par la suite, bouger vers la qualité, vers l'excellence. Et c'est cela que nous devons faire. A travers le monde, vous allez voir, on a réussi à augmenter l'accès, et la facilitation à l'accès a permis à ce que des millions de jeunes puissent passer à l'école. Finalement, il y a des millions des jeunes qui entrent dans le système scolaire et malheureusement, très souvent, ils en sortent sans avoir acquis les compétences voulues pour pouvoir *build up* sur ces connaissances. C'est ce qu'on appelle le *learning crisis*. Et c'est ça qu'il nous faut éviter à tout prix, Madame la présidente. C'est pour cela qu'il nous faut, bien sûr, nous assurer qu'à part l'accès, il faut insister sur la qualité.

Je le disais, Madame la présidente, nous avons pris beaucoup, beaucoup de mesures au niveau de notre pays, au niveau de notre système éducatif. Il va falloir, bien sûr, qu'on reconnaisse que les enfants viennent vers nous avec des possibilités diverses.

We must, obviously, have a system that accommodates the diversity of learner abilities, their aptitudes and interests, without forgetting those who have special education

needs. I have had the opportunity of saying it before, learning gaps, if not tackled at an early stage, will have deleterious and handicapping consequences on future learning.

Let me quickly inform the House of the numerous measures that we have taken. And I must say that the point that I highlighted during my intervention during the last Budget debates, have, today, reached cruising speed. One of these is the Early Support Programme (ESP).

Madame la présidente, on a pu recruter 213 *Support Teachers* pour donner le soutien qu'il faut aux jeunes enfants durant les heures de classes, et cela dans le *lower primary sector*. So, by addressing their learning difficulties in core subjects, we are making sure that they succeed.

The curriculum has been adapted, and a variety of learner-centered teaching and learning strategies are used that suit the learning abilities of our pupils.

I am glad, Madam Speaker, that such a Programme has already had a positive impact on learners and has been evidenced during the evaluation carried out by the World Bank consultants in 30 pallet tools.

Moreover, we have to note that with the declining demography, the pupil population is going down and will be having smaller pupil-teacher ratio, and thus, this would help even more in our drive towards effective learning.

We will be having an additional 150 trainee primary school teachers, who will again help in this endeavour.

Madame la présidente, le Premier ministre n'a cessé de souligner l'importance de développer une culture de l'activité physique pour une meilleure hygiène de vie et cela dès le plus jeune âge. L'*After School Sport*, lancé par le Premier ministre dans toutes les écoles primaires de l'île, est un pas en ce sens. De plus, la natation scolaire est une réalité aujourd'hui. Et j'ai le plaisir d'annoncer que cette année-ci la construction des piscines d'apprentissage débiteront dans les quatre zones. Il est aussi prévu la construction de six gymnases dans nos collèges.

Madam Speaker, we all know that we need to render our schools attractive so that our children are happy to be there. And, again, the Minister of Finance has been very responsive to our requests and has earmarked funds for the reconstruction of 7 Government Schools. Our State Secondary Schools are also being upgraded with funds allocated for the construction of 108 specialist rooms for Food and Textile Studies, Design and Technology in all regional State Schools.

New Science Blocks are in the pipeline for three secondary schools. This is in line with the reinforcement of gender mainstreaming policy in the education system.

Madam Speaker, you will recall that one of the major misperception was that the reform that we are bringing in would unleash an excessive demand for private tutoring at Grade 7. This has not been the case because we have a proper plan. We had prepared to come up with a Special Support Programme. This Student Support Programme consists of an Online Support Platform for Grade 7 onwards.

Ce sont des leçons préparées pour les jeunes du *Grade 7* afin qu'ils puissent y accéder et étudier, *any time, any place at their own pace*. It enables students and Educators to access a choice of open educational digital resources. This platform will enrich classroom practice and the digital contents will also allow our learners to grow in a 21st Century learning context.

Madam Speaker, we have the Tablets which have been provided to school children in Grades 1 and 2. Next year, it will be in Grade 3. I must say that we have had the support of the World Bank in ensuring the smooth implementation of this project. All these measures, Madam Speaker, form part of the overarching ICT in Education Strategy that aims to give a new impetus to teaching and learning through the use of tools aligned with modern technology.

Madam Speaker, I have to be grateful to my colleague, hon. Minister Sawmynaden, who, through his Ministry has allowed the connection in all our schools and colleges to Internet. I must thank him for that.

Madam Speaker, we are also taking a lot of care to make sure that our system is inclusive. Our goal has unceasingly been for inclusion, integration for learners with disabilities.

Our Special Education Needs (SEN) Strategy has already been formulated with the support of all stakeholders. We are now setting up the SEN Authority that will be, among other things, a regulatory body which will monitor and facilitate the implementation of our Special Education Needs policies.

We must thank the hon. Prime Minister for the four-fold increase of the annual per capita grant for teaching aids, utilities, furniture and equipment for our SEN students. We are talking here of a grant moving from Rs1,300 to Rs5,200, Madam Speaker.

And, of course, the extension of the facility of taxi fares to all learners with Special Education Needs, whether in primary, secondary or tertiary, is also a landmark in the facilitation process towards the achievement of their potential. These measures, Madam Speaker, will serve to supplement the actions of my Ministry and other actions which, amongst others, are school building adaptations, the use of assistive technology, specialist equipment as well as capacity building of teachers in the Special Education Needs.

Madam Speaker, the Mauritian economy has structurally diversified over the last decades and is rapidly evolving. Globalisation dictates the need for increased productivity and competitiveness and this, obviously, through the use of technology. Individuals, therefore, require broader skills set to match the ever changing skill requirements. What this means is that we need a comprehensive, flexible and adaptive approach to skills acquisition and development, one that relies on the collaboration of both public and private sectors. This budget lays emphasis on the needs of skills development that will enhance youth employability.

Madam Speaker, for the first time ever, this Government has earmarked funds at the level of Rs1 billion, targeting 14,000 youths for employment. This is, indeed, a historic measure to enhance youth employment through training and greater exposure to the world of work.

- 1,000 *gradués* bénéficieront from the SME Employment Scheme, with a monthly stipend of Rs14,000;
- 2,000 youths will be getting trained under the NSDP, with another 1,000 youths under the Youth Service Programme;
- 3,000 youths to be trained by the MITD under the National Apprenticeship Scheme, and
- 3,000 individuals under the Youth Employment Programme.

Toutes ces mesures sont prises, Madame la présidente, pour assurer que nous pouvons donner le soutien qu'il faut aux jeunes.

Je dois dire, Madame la présidente, que le *National Skills Development Programme*, qui était initialement *focused* sur l'ICT, le tourisme et la construction a été étendu maintenant pour couvrir les *emerging sectors*, notamment le *Financial Services*, *the Cruise sector* and *the Film Industry*.

De ces 3,661 jeunes qui avaient commencé le *training programmes*, 1,929 ont déjà complété leur *training* et 1,149 ont déjà été employés.

Madam Speaker, the fact that NFDP has been successful in bridging the gap between the world of work and training providers is clear. This is a very important means of enhancing employability of our young. We need to have skills matching. We have a duty to sustain the relevance of training.

Madam Speaker, today, it is a trend. Industry people are involved not only in the design and elaboration of programme courses, but they are also involved in the training. This is what we are aiming at. We want their support in providing opportunities for learners to integrate the workplace in workplace situation.

Je dois aussi parler du Graduate Training for Employment Schemes; 310 jeunes gradués ont été trained. They had to follow tailormade training programmes and this led to the automatic recruitment by the industry people. Madam Speaker, such training can cover skill needs that are immediate, and also those that are prospective in nature. This is directly pertinent to the upcoming business development and new growth polls.

Je dois dire quelque chose, Madame la présidente. On parle du *mismatch*, c'est un phénomène mondial, à travers le monde, tous les pays aujourd'hui font face à ce problème. Mais quelle est la solution? La solution c'est de préparer nos jeunes afin qu'ils puissent s'adapter aux changements dans le monde du travail. Nous sommes dans un monde qui évolue rapidement. La technologie est présente partout, omniprésente. Et, bien sûr, la vitesse à laquelle le monde évolue, rend encore plus difficile la possibilité de *match the training to the skills required*. Alors là c'est important qu'on réalise que très souvent nous sommes en train de former des jeunes pour des jobs qui ne sont peut-être pas encore créés.

We are training them for jobs that have not yet been created. This is the trend throughout the world. We do not know what will be the state of affairs in a few years' time. So, what do we do? We train them for the soft skills, we train them to be able to adapt. We train them to think out of the box, we train them to be able to work collaboratively because the word of the day, Madam Speaker, is no longer to think for oneself and to try to surpass the other.

The word of the day is to work collaboratively and we have a duty to inculcate in these young people such values; collaborate, corporate and move together. I always say that, 'if you want to succeed, you have to make sure that the success of one person becomes the

success of many'. If you are succeeding, you have to be able to help your peers and to draw them along with you. Then you can really be called a successful person'. And this is what we need to impress on our young people.

Cela a été comme ça de trop longtemps déjà. Nous avons un système éducatif, qui a été dans le passé, un système tellement compétitif que les parents, eux-mêmes, avant de faire admettre les enfants à l'école, c'était une compétition. Et une fois l'enfant à l'école, il fallait apprendre : « Ecoute, tu dois être toujours en tête de ta classe, sinon tu n'auras pas le meilleur collègue » Tout cela *is gone now, Madam Speaker*.

And with a system which has evolved, the mentality also has to evolve. And it is for us, the adults, the policymakers to make sure that we do have people growing up with a fresh mentality. Madam Speaker, this Budget is strengthening our resolve and is giving us the means to ride the quest of our success in providing more opportunities for our youths. And my Ministry, Madam Speaker, is determined to further its actions. We will continue to fulfil our obligations in an evidence-based manner. Indeed, policy dealing with issues of skills mismatch and employability can only be formulated once up to date information is available. Bearing in mind the fact that economic development is a dynamic process. I must say, the concern of some of the Opposition Members regarding employability and mismatch, are being taken care of. Skill studies have been carried out by the HRDC to help identify future specific skill requirements in key sectors of the economy. Studies were carried out in different fields, ranging from agriculture and fishing, tourism and hospitality, construction and allied services to financial insurance services, from ICT BPO to manufacturing, from freight logistic and transport to other business services, and even real estate. These will be sustained and the findings will be disseminated at large but also used for policy formulation.

Madam Speaker, I have just said that we are working very closely with industry people. As universities across the world, our tertiary education institutions are also brainstorming, trying to figure out what would be the most likely requirements in the years to come.

Notre responsabilité, comme je l'ai dit, Madame la présidente, est donc d'assurer à nos étudiants la maîtrise des compétences douces leur permettant de s'adapter à des situations encore inédites. Bien sûr, on a eu le soutien de quelques agences internationales. L'Agence Française de Développement nous a aidés pour venir avec un *framework* pour la promotion du *skills development*. Et c'est une étude qui est en trois phases et qui va être complétée en

novembre de cette année-ci. Bien-sûr, avec le budget, vous avez dû le remarquer, le *Apprenticeship Scheme* a été *reengineered*, je peux dire. Et cela permet encore beaucoup de possibilités à nos jeunes.

Madame la présidente, j'ai parlé aussi du cas de l'*Apprenticeship Scheme*. Vous savez, à travers le monde, les pays tels que la Suisse, l'Allemagne, la Corée, le Singapour, ils ont tous adopté l'*Apprenticeship Training* et cela a été extrêmement profitable. Notre système à Maurice suit le système Allemand, et c'est intéressant de noter que ce *scheme* va permettre à nos jeunes d'acquérir les *technical skills* mais, en même temps, leur donnera les *employability skills*. C'est-à-dire, la possibilité de communiquer avec d'autres *in the workplace* ; d'agir, comme je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, en équipe et de développer ce qu'on appelle les relations interpersonnelles. D'après les statistiques, 80% de ceux qui vont pour l'*Apprenticeship Scheme*, trouvent de l'emploi *within 6 months*.

Madam Speaker, as I was saying earlier, the Apprenticeship Scheme in Mauritius is being reengineered and incentives are being reviewed to attract still more enterprises to engage themselves in this scheme. And we must not forget the importance of having entrepreneurial skills. This is becoming very, very important. We want our young people to grow, to learn, to be able to stand on their feet obviously, everywhere throughout the world, people go and look for employment. We talk about unemployment issues but if you manage to allow your young people to grow up and to become more creative, to become more entrepreneurial, I think this is already *une bataille à gagner*. Alors, the Budget also comes forward with measures which will increase capacity building, which will increase the possibility for young people to develop their entrepreneurial skills and to benefit from schemes that the SME Ministry will be providing.

Some Members also mentioned the need for career guidance. I totally agree with them. And I must say that as far as career counselling is concerned, the career counselling system in our schools is poised to play a cardinal role in enabling learners to make informed career related decisions. My Ministry has strengthened the Career Guidance Unit as follows –

Our Unit at the Ministry is working closely with the HRDC. We have already conducted training for 80 Senior Educators so that they can improve the career guidance delivery services, and we are planning to repeat the same exercise with another batch of 80 Educators.

We are all aware that there is a need for young people to go for technical training. And technical training has been considered all the time as second class training, as second to the best. But we are modernising the TVET centres, not only in terms of equipments and infrastructure, but we are also reviewing that curriculum. And there is one thing very important; we talk about equity; we talk about equal opportunities. This time, with the reform, we are ensuring that students who go for technical training get the same type of support as those in the mainstream education. They should also be given the possibility of learning music, of doing sports, of developing all their skills. So, technical education will receive the same attention as the normal regular education streams. We are having new centres being set up; one in Beau Vallon and all the other training centres are being renovated.

Madam Speaker, it is important, as I have said, to ensure that we give a conducive environment for them to learn, etc. We want to give them all the possibilities, but there is also a necessity to ensure that those who are in the system and those who have got the skills, to get these skills recognised. So, the recognition of prior learning and the certification for technical education become important. So, people going for training have to come out with a certification showing that they are professionals, trained in certain areas, and this is extremely important. *On parle de revaloriser l'enseignement technique, mais il va falloir aussi se donner les moyens pour le faire et ce budget l'a fait.*

Madame la présidente, on a beaucoup parlé dans le passé de faire de l'île Maurice, un centre pour l'enseignement supérieur, au moins pour commencer un centre régional pour l'enseignement supérieur. Je dois vous dire qu'au cours des conférences et des visites que j'ai faites sur le Continent Africain, je me suis rendue compte qu'il y a beaucoup de choses que nous pouvons partager avec d'autres et nous recevrons tout le temps des requêtes pour que mes collègues de Continent viennent au pays, ici, pour apprendre et voir quelles sont les stratégies que nous avons adoptées, et nous aussi nous allons vers nos collègues du Continent pour le faire.

Le Kenya a fait beaucoup de progrès et nous sommes en train de discuter en termes du développement des ressources - *digital resources* - avec eux, comment le faire à Maurice. Ils veulent venir vers nous pour l'enseignement technique. Ils veulent venir vers nous pour apprendre autre chose. Il y a déjà un forum des ministres Africains de l'Éducation qui sont en train de travailler ensemble pour créer une synergie, pour s'assurer que les jeunes du Continent puissent avancer dans le domaine de l'Éducation. Aujourd'hui, c'est bon de le

souligner, l'Afrique reste le Continent le plus jeune. 60% des jeunes du monde seront de l'Afrique. D'ici 2050, le nombre de jeunes étant prêts pour les études supérieures en Afrique, sera de l'ordre de 400 millions, et je dois dire que nous sommes bien positionnés pour pouvoir aider et apprendre de l'Afrique.

On parle du *demographic dividend* que l'Afrique peut avoir, bien sûr! Mais pour pouvoir profiter du *demographic dividend*, il va falloir se préparer autrement. *The demographic dividend can easily be converted into a demographic disaster or chaos*. Alors, l'Afrique se prépare pour avancer et l'Afrique sait qu'ensemble nous allons réussir, que ce soit l'île Maurice qui forme partie de l'Afrique en tant qu'une île, mais nous sommes conscients du défi qui se trouve devant nous. Et là, je dois le dire, il y a un gros travail qui peut se faire chez nous, et nous avons fait beaucoup de progrès. Je voudrai le dire parce qu'on a tendance à critiquer ce qui se passe dans l'enseignement supérieur à Maurice. C'est vrai, nous ne sommes pas arrivés *at the summit*. Il y a un parcours à faire, mais il faut aussi qu'on reconnaisse ce que l'île Maurice a pu faire durant ces dernières années. Il y a eu beaucoup de dégâts, mais je ne parlerai pas sur ces dégâts-là. On a archi parlé dans cette auguste Assemblée.

Je voudrais dire qu'aujourd'hui il y a 22 médecins qui avaient investi d'énormes sommes pour faire leur spécialisation dans un établissement de l'enseignement supérieur de renom, qui été géré par des gens très proches du pouvoir. Ces jeunes-là se sont retrouvés, après deux ans d'études, avec un diplôme, qui n'était pas reconnu par le *Medical Council*, avec des dettes dans leur compte. Qu'est-ce que nous avons fait nous autres, en tant que gouvernement responsable? Nous sommes venus et nous avons fait une évaluation. On a essayé de les encadrer. On les avait donnés les moyens de sortir du gouffre dans lequel l'ancien régime les avait poussés. On a pu le faire et nous en sommes fiers. Quelle est l'institution qui a pris le devant pour le faire ? C'est l'*UTM* qui a réussi à le faire. Comment l'*UTM* a pu le faire ? C'est en montant le *School of Health Sciences*.

Madame la présidente, je ne suis pas là pour protéger qui que ce soit. Je l'ai dit la dernière fois, si quelqu'un a fauté, cette personne, ou peu n'importe qui, prendra ses responsabilités, mais il faudrait aussi venir de l'avant et me montrer concrètement, qu'est-ce qu'on reproche à ces personnes. Venir me dire de temps en temps qu'il y a des problèmes relationnels, mais dites-moi quelle est la cause. Parce qu'on fait notre travail ! Ce gouvernement-là n'est pas un gouvernement qui vient cacher des choses. Nous sommes en

train de travailler, mais il faudrait aussi venir me dire concrètement: ‘Voilà ce qu’on reproche à cette personne!’ Mais venir dire qu’on peut me manipuler, moi !

On ne me connaît pas, Madame la présidente. Personne ne me manipule et personne ne pourra le faire. Seulement, je vous dirai clairement, j’ai suivi cela depuis trois ans déjà et je peux vous dire que je ne suis pas restée les bras croisés. J’ai été aux informations. Qui c’est qui me manipule, qui? J’ai rencontré les élèves. Jusqu’aujourd’hui est-ce que vous avez entendu les élèves de l’*UTM* pointer du doigt l’administration? Oui, à un moment donné, ils étaient venus nous voir en nous disant qu’ils ont quelques difficultés. Très promptement, on a pris le devant et on a apporté des changements.

Mais il y a aussi des choses qu’on ne dit pas, les choses qui restent entre les lignes. Il y a aussi le mécontentement d’avoir vu quelqu’un venant d’ailleurs venir à l’*UTM*. Il y a aussi the *resentment*, *Madam Speaker, of some people over there, I must say it, to block the administration*. Le *Leader* de l’opposition a raison. Il a dit. Oui, c’est vrai qu’il y a cela à l’université.

Quelqu’un s’est permis de bloquer un *tender procedure* juste pour qu’on ait à refaire ce *tender procedure*. Qu’est-ce qui s’est passé par la suite ? Le projet n’a pas avancé. *The funds allocated for that particular project were left untouched* et ensuite on est venu dire : ‘Qu’est-ce qu’on a fait de l’argent qu’on vous avait donné ?’ C’est ça qui me chagrine, Madame la présidente. Si jamais demain quelqu’un vient de l’avant et me dire: ‘Voilà, on nous reproche telle ou telle chose’, je serai la première à dire : ‘On prendra des sanctions’. Il faudrait qu’on vienne de l’avant. Je ne suis pas une personne qui écoute ce qu’on raconte. J’ai regardé les *Press cuttings*. Il y a deux incidents, probablement cinq ou six mois et, de temps en temps, cela surgit dans la presse et dans tous les journaux. Quand on voit, c’est la même chose, ça a été discuté. Il vous raconte que cela a été à l’*ICAC*. Moi je n’ai pas été à l’*ICAC* pour voir, mais seulement j’attends. Si jamais il y a quelque chose, bien sûr cela va faire surface, mais rien. Il y a tous ces va-et-vient, tous les jours à chaque fois. On attend et on regarde quand est-ce que le contrat is *about to be over*. On fait la pression. Je ne suis pas une personne qui change mes décisions sous la pression.

Mais si vous venez concrètement me dire : ‘Madame la ministre, voilà ce qu’elle a fait’, et si on vient me dire, je prends la responsabilité de faire ce qu’il faut faire. Je prendrai la responsabilité parce que je l’ai dit à maintes reprises, que ce soit à l’*UTM*, que ce soit à l’université de Maurice, que ce soit à l’université des Mascareignes, je ne suis pas ministre à

m'ingérer dans les affaires du *day-to-day running*. Il y a eu un temps, Madame la présidente, un ministre de l'Éducation Tertiaire qui s'asseyait dans son bureau, faisait venir tous les VCs et leur demandait de s'asseoir dans son bureau, chaque matin, de 10 heures à 11 heures. Je ne fais pas cela, Madame la présidente!

(Interruptions)

Je ne dirais pas qui c'était, ils sauront. Nous avons affaire ici à une équipe de gens qui sont là pour travailler.

Ayant fait ce point, Madame la présidente, je dois dire qu'à travers le monde l'enseignement supérieur passe par des moments extrêmement sérieux parce que c'est clair que si nous voulons un développement économique poussé, il nous faut des gens formés.

Macroeconomic considerations, Madam Speaker, have always placed a high premium on higher education provision and rightly so. It increases the potential for employment. It protects against the unemployment. It supports policies towards improvement of quality of life, Madam Speaker, let us face it. If there is no doubt that higher education, including academic research, has a crucial role to play in building a country's capability of self-resilience, we must also recognise that this particular Budget flags education as the first of its 10 priority areas, and that this Government wants to spearhead all this through education. Investing in education, especially in higher education, is certainly a step change that we need to embark upon so as to make Mauritius move from its middle-income country status to a high-income one.

Madam Speaker, for some people, it is clear that unlike Africa, we have got a demography which is declining. And people tend to think it is going to be very bad and, in fact, it is a real challenge. We have got a declining demography; we have got an aging population. Where do we get the brains? Where do we get the energy? Where do we get the vitality to boost up our economy? There is a need for us to prepare ourselves for that and, Madam Speaker, we are working hard. I will tell you why, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I was saying earlier that we have got a decline in demography. We want to become a knowledge hub. How do we cope? I keep on saying that we can at once provide higher education opportunities for our youths, our adult learners, but we can also tap the possibilities that reside at our doorstep. Madam Speaker, some figures speak for themselves. I was saying it earlier, on the continent close to us, to which we belong, there is a

huge captive market of youths waiting for a lifetime opportunity to better boost their living standards and their lifestyles as well as the lifestyles of their communities.

Let us consider the evidence-based figures. I was telling you, by 2050, Africa will have around 400 million university age young people. That is roughly double the current figure. Already 60% of the youths of Africa are unemployed and it is anybody's guess as to what the consequences are likely to be for that influx of youths by 2050.

Je vous disais tout à l'heure qu'il va falloir se préparer pour s'assurer que ce demographic bulge becomes a demographic dividend, and together, Africa can make it.

Madam Speaker, there is a huge asset that Mauritius possesses. *Premièrement*, when you look at our regional competitiveness as per the Africa Competitiveness Report 2017, we are the most competitive African economy, ranked, I think, 25th globally. This situates us among the higher African countries.

In addition, when we talk about tertiary sector, let me give the figures because people often talk about our tertiary sector. We have a high growth tertiary enrolment rate. A 47%, and this is much higher than the global average of 33%, and, most definitely, by far, surpassing the 9% of the continent to which we belong. What I am saying here, Madam Speaker, is that Mauritius can exert a major pull. It has the attractiveness for students from the continent, and we offer a safe place, a secure place, political stability, and we also offer an intercultural experience unequalled in the world. So, this proves us right in banking on the internationalisation of our higher education sector.

Madam Speaker, of course, important policy decisions have had to be taken, and this Government has not shied away from doing just that. Let me briefly take some of those, Madam Speaker. We have put up a higher education desk, the role of which will be to provide support to our foreign students, to act as a one-stop shop for the dissemination of university related issues, the conditions for admissions, free structure and also the right *encadrement*, the pastoral care that we need to offer to our foreign students.

We have come up, as you already know, with the Africa Scholarship Scheme. But what is most interesting also is that while talking about higher education, we are also talking about higher education in certain specific fields; the 50 scholarships offered for students to go for Master's studies at the University of Mauritius, specifically for Mauritians, however. Now, we also have to mention that lots of international partnerships have been developed by

our tertiary education institutions, and I must also say that there is an *engouement* for many of the foreign renowned campuses to come to Mauritius and to link up with our universities.

Madam Speaker, constructing an education hub is engaging in international partnerships so as to make it a win-win situation...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Can we have some silence in the room, please? Because you are disrupting the hon. Minister.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Incidentally, Madam Speaker, our public higher education institutions have to strike up a number of partnerships and MoUs. *L'Université des Mascareignes*, its partnership with *l'Université de Limoges* and *l'île de la Réunion*; the University of Mauritius linkages with Arizona University, the UTM with Imperial College, and a number of others. All are illustrations of this strengthening nexus with international service providers.

We must also talk about the private sector. Charles Telfair with Curtin University in Australia, Médine with the renowned French *Grandes Écoles*, all this is helping us to create the right ethos for making of Mauritius the hub.

Madam Speaker, for such a strategy to gain cruising speed, my Ministry has ensured that the right legal and institutional frameworks are in operation. We must say that if we have any ambition to become a knowledge hub, we have got to bank on quality. And the Higher Education Bill that has been enacted a few months back will allow us to come up with the Higher Education Commission and the Quality Assurance Authority, which will have to ensure that all our institutions are properly monitored, whether public or private.

Madam Speaker, when we talk about universities, we normally say that *l'université peut être considérée comme une banque de connaissances*, a storehouse of knowledge. But to be able to store knowledge, you have to create knowledge first, and then disseminate the knowledge. And you cannot talk about knowledge creation if you do not carry out research. So, engaging in production of knowledge in active research is valid for any university. And I am glad to say that this new culture research is now catching up fast in our centres of higher-learning, and Government is *partie prenante* in this endeavour.

Last year's Budget had made provision for Rs50 m. devoted exclusively to research through the Tertiary Education Commission, and the Commission had come up with 14 new

Research Schemes, which have been operationalised to meet the needs of the sector. Madam Speaker, I am happy to inform that TEC has received more than 60 different research proposals worth more than Rs100 m. After rigorous blind review process by both national and international reviewers, some 34 proposals worth Rs87 m. and spanning over three years were accepted.

In addition, Madam Speaker, the inaugural National Research Week in the Higher Education Sector, launched in May this year, attracted more than 600 participants, both local and international, so as to enhance collaboration and research in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, when we talk about linkages with the industry, it is not only for the technical education side. All our universities have started getting collaboration of the private sector, as I have said earlier, for the development and elaboration of programmes and also for opening up their institutions, their factories and workplace to our students.

Our universities have also awakened to this new call, and under the Government's watch, we intend to strengthen, consolidate and sustain linkages of universities with the world of industry, business, and all new courses being run by the University of Mauritius and UTM have placement and internship programmes imbedded with them. Already, employers are engaging in a lot of head hunting of potential employees even prior to their graduation.

Madam Speaker, I also know that UDM is linking up with MEXA, lots of courses are being run together. And I must say - I see the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is here – that the dual training programme that l'*Université des Mascareignes* is having with MEXA is coming forward with the award of a Masters in *Efficacité Énergétique et Développement Durable*. And this is going to be serviced by a consortium of the Universities which include UDM, Limoges and University of Reunion.

L'Université de Technologies, elle, s'est tissée pour sa part des solides liens avec le monde de l'emploi. Les partenariats que je viens d'évoquer, Madame la présidente, se traduisent en une meilleure possibilité d'employabilité pour nos jeunes.

Madam Speaker, we know that from this year, our Tertiary Education Landscape has become dotted with three brand new campuses of Polytechnics Mauritius. And I must say that the Polytechnics Mauritius is now fully operational. Its Strategic Plan 2018-2020 has been presented and validated by its Board this month. Partnering with Mauritius Institute of Health, it has already started its National Diploma in Nursing with about 120 students

enrolled at Pamplémousses. Courses in Hotel and Tourism Management have been launched with the collaboration with HTMI Switzerland.

The building has state-of-art simulation rooms and all hi-tech equipment. The Réduit Campus will launch inaugural workshop on Fintech, including artificial intelligence, big data, internet of things on 27 June. A modern cloud club will also be set up on the Réduit Campus this month.

Madame la présidente, les mesures présentées dans ce budget sont tellement multiples, tellement fascinantes que vous pourrez en parler jusqu'à demain. Mais je ne ferai pas cela. Madame la présidente, ce qui m'étonne, j'ai entendu les membres de l'opposition dire que c'est un budget '*la bouche doux*', un budget 'électorale'. D'habitude, quand parle-t-on d'un budget électoraliste? C'est quand on veut faire plaisir aux gens ! Et si on veut faire plaisir aux gens, ça veut dire quoi? Que c'est que c'est un bon budget ! Ce n'est pas nous qui sommes en train de le dire, c'est l'opposition. Ils nous disent que c'est un bon budget et qu'on est en train de faire ça parce que les élections sont derrière la porte ! Nous sommes à la quatrième année de notre mandat et c'est clair pour tout le monde que l'année prochaine on aura terminé notre mandat et les élections viendront, bien sûr. Mais certains viennent nous dire, c'est un budget '*électorale, la bouche doux*'. Ils viennent confirmer que les élections sont prêtes.

(Interruptions)

Mais, bien sûr ! Tout le monde le sait quand les élections seront là.

(Interruptions)

Madame la présidente, quelquefois en écoutant attentivement nos amis de l'autre côté de la Chambre, je suis parvenue à la conclusion que nos camarades...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, you are interrupting the hon. Minister!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madame la présidente, l'impression que j'ai moi, c'est que nos collègues de l'autre côté de la Chambre s'efforcent éperdument de se convaincre que les mesures prises par ce budget ne seront pas bénéfiques et qu'ils auront quand même une petite chance de revenir aux affaires très bientôt. Madame la présidente, il faudrait leur dire de se ressaisir.

C'est déjà une semaine depuis que le budget a été présenté et que les membres du gouvernement s'expriment tour à tour sur les diverses mesures visant à mener à bon port notre République. Et certains membres de l'opposition semblent toujours n'avoir rien compris de cet exercice ou bien ils font tout simplement semblant de ne rien comprendre. Pourtant, Madame la présidente, ces nombreuses mesures budgétaires les concernent également. Et comme je le disais tout à l'heure, *better* se ressaisir !

Malheureusement, des fois, j'ai l'impression qu'ils souhaitent qu'il arrive malheur afin de faire une récupération politique. Madame la présidente, je trouve cela très triste. Ce quatrième budget est venu une nouvelle fois apporter son lot d'oxygène aux différents secteurs de l'économie et aussi au peuple mauricien. Madame la présidente, c'est peut-être la première fois qu'un budget vient toucher tout un chacun dans la population. Vous savez, c'est important de travailler, bien sûr, dans un premier temps pour tout, surtout ceux qui sont au bas de l'échelle. Mais ce budget cette fois-ci a pris la peine de voir quand même ceux de la classe moyenne, ceux qui font l'effort, ceux qui malgré qu'ils travaillent et qu'ils perçoivent des salaires, ont mis de côté de l'argent, ont pris des *loans*, ont fait construire leur maison, ont fait des sacrifices. Et ce budget vient les soulager.

Cette baisse de 5% sur l'*Income Tax* va leur permettre de respirer. De pouvoir se dire : « Okay, j'ai fait des efforts, mais je peux aussi quand même vivre correctement. » Les facilités qu'on a données aux parents qui ont des enfants qui étudient à Maurice comme ailleurs, leur permettront de respirer. *It is a relief, Madam Speaker.*

Mais je dois dire une chose. Peu importe ce que les gens racontent, peu importe le scepticisme démontré par les gens de l'opposition, le peuple mauricien sait. Le peuple mauricien ressent que cette fois-ci il y a un gouvernement qui est sensible à leur problème.

Madame la présidente, on reste plus que jamais confiant et déterminé à mener à bien notre mission. Une mission qui nous a été confiée par ce peuple. Et je le répète, Madame la présidente, la population le sait, la population le sent. Il y a une sérénité dans ce pays. Ils savent que le Premier ministre ne les laissera jamais tomber. Nous avons une population sereine aujourd'hui. Elle sait qu'elle peut compter sur nous, qu'elle peut compter sur Pravind Jugnauth, qu'elle peut compter sur Ivan Collendavelloo, qu'elle peut compter sur l'honorable Madame Jeewa-Daareewoo. Et, bien sûr, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, notre *Mentor Minister*.

Tout à l'heure, j'ai entendu certains membres de l'opposition dire qu'on ne respecte pas les gens. Mais je dois *put it on record*, Madame la présidente. Sir Anerood Jugnauth était

assis là, quelqu'un que chaque mauricien reconnait comme étant un patriote qui a travaillé dur pour ce pays. Mais les commentaires que j'ai entendus de certains membres de l'opposition, vis-à-vis de Sir Anerood Jugnauth assis là, sur ce siège, en train d'écouter tous les discours, je trouve ça déplorable. Il nous faut quand même avoir du respect pour quelqu'un de l'envergure de Sir Anerood Jugnauth, un patriote qui a travaillé pour ce pays, qui a amené le miracle économique.

C'est quelqu'un qui a vraiment fait émerger l'île Maurice comme étant un pays phare de la région et dans le monde, quelqu'un qui a cet âge a pu prendre le défi et a amené le cas des Chagos à l'ONU ! Quand on parle du respect qu'on se doit vis-à-vis de l'autre, il nous faut quand même avoir le courage de se dire que ce respect que l'on attend de l'autre, on doit être en mesure de l'offrir à l'autre. Et je pense que là, il va falloir vraiment qu'on se ressaisisse dans cette auguste Assemblée, Madame la présidente. L'honorable Pravind Jugnauth est resté fidèle à ses principes. Il demeure un Premier ministre, ministre des Finances qui reste à l'écoute de la population, surtout ceux qui sont dans le besoin. Il ne reste pas insensible. Cela on le perçoit dans ses actions, dans ses prises de position. Il demeure quelqu'un qui croit fermement au dur labeur et à l'effort, et au sens du sacrifice, et on peut le voir dans les mesures qu'il a prises.

Les mesures de ce budget, Madame la présidente, servent à encourager l'effort et à récompenser ceux qui en font, tout comme ceux qui sont dans le besoin. Depuis fin 2014, le gouvernement est venu avec une vision, celle de faire de Maurice une République moderne, sécurisante, prospère, où il fait bon vivre. Et pour nous, c'est pari réussi. Notre gouvernement continuera à prôner cet esprit d'ouverture dans le souci du bien-être de chaque citoyen. Dommage pour ceux qui ont choisi de faire preuve d'une étroitesse d'esprit ! Le peuple a fait son choix, Madame la présidente. Et nous le nôtre. On continuera à mettre à exécution les projets pour satisfaire les attentes du peuple mauricien.

Je vous remercie, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker : I suspend the sitting for one hour.

At 9.12 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 10.15 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue):

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

First of all, I would like to join my colleagues from this side of the House, who have expressed themselves before me showing their disappointment and surprise at the Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a Budget is a financial plan for a defined period of time. It is the sum of money allocated for a particular purpose and the summary of intended expenditures along with proposals for how to meet them. The Budget time is very important for a country. The population usually awaits this moment and expects that the budgetary measures will cast away the shadows, the darkness which hurdles over their future.

However, last week, we did not see much enthusiasm in the population. *Définitivement, la coupe du monde a volé la vedette au budget.* The budgetary measures were like *un soufflet bien monté, mais qui est retombé bien vite pour utiliser une image culinaire ou un gâteau à demi-cuit, ou un budget faire la bouche doux.* Other people described the Budget as *confettis*. *M. le président, les confettis ont de belles couleurs qui attirent, mais les confettis s'envolent partout mais retombent bien vite.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a budget serves as a –

- (i) plan of action for achieving qualified objectives;
- (ii) standard for measuring performance, and
- (iii) device for coping with foreseeable adverse situations.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, those three objectives have not been met in this Budget titled, ‘Pursuing Our Transformative Journey 2018-2019’.

M. le président, un budget est un instrument important entre les mains du grand argentier. Un budget donne au ministre des Finances les moyens nécessaires pour construire et consolider l'économie d'un pays. Lors de son grand oral pendant deux heures, le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances a énuméré des mesures populistes et électoralistes. Alors c'est dommage que l'honorable ministre, Madame Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun n'est pas présente dans cette Chambre. Elle s'est réjouie se vantant que l'Opposition a utilisé le mot ‘électoraliste’ comme un compliment, alors que je crois que définitivement le gouvernement a un gros problème avec la définition, la compréhension des mots.

On se rappelle l'épisode où l'honorable Rutnah avait, je ne vais pas répéter ce qu'il avait dit, n'est pas, par respect à cette journaliste, parce qu'il avait cru que la journaliste avait utilisé les mots ‘aboyeur de service’. Or, il n'avait pas compris ce que c'est que ‘aboyeur’.

On se souviendrait aussi quand le *leader* de l'Opposition avait utilisé le mot 'récidiviste notoire'. L'adjectif 'notoire' avait été mal compris, et, aujourd'hui la preuve c'est que encore une fois, ce gouvernement, vous avez mal compris et vous vous êtes réjouis pour quelque chose de péjoratif. Alors, je prends la peine, M. le président, quand la ministre a parlé, j'étais toute ouïe, j'ai écouté attentivement, je n'ai pas dit un seul mot et j'ai compris qu'elle s'est réjouie pour le mot 'électoraliste'.

Alors, qu'est-ce que le dictionnaire nous dit de la définition de 'électoraliste'. 'Electoraliste' c'est un adjectif, politique, péjoratif. Alors, je crois qu'ici tout le monde comprend ce que c'est qu'un mot péjoratif, qui relève de l'électorisme ou en fait preuve. Alors, quand on a utilisé le mot 'électorisme', ce n'était pas du tout un compliment.

Alors, donc, je disais que ce budget contient beaucoup des mesures populistes et électoralistes, je répète, comme, par exemple, baisse de prix des carburants, pas de hausse du tarif d'eau, révision à la baisse de l'*Income Tax* pour la classe moyenne, entres autres.

Il faut bien comprendre et mettre le Budget 2018-2019 dans son contexte. C'est le quatrième budget de ce gouvernement, troisième budget pour l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth. Et c'est un gouvernement, qu'on le veuille ou pas en fin de mandat. D'ailleurs, il y a une dotation budgétaire dans le budget pour les élections. Donc, le gouvernement veut séduire l'électorat à travers ces mesures populistes. Alors, je n'ai pas besoin de définir le mot 'populiste' aussi.

M. le président, le Budget 2018-2019 est présenté lors de notre jubilee d'or, les 50 ans de l'indépendance de l'île Maurice. On a dépensé la somme de R 100 millions pour fêter avec faste, en grande pompe, notre jubilee d'or. Pourtant le cadeau d'anniversaire fait au peuple est une grande déception. C'est une trahison, c'est un cadeau empoisonné. Bien sûr, vous savez tous de quoi je parle, on nous propose après 50 ans d'indépendance de vendre notre passeport, de vendre notre nationalité, de vendre notre pays, de vendre notre âme. Et un peuple qui se respecte, ne peut accepter une telle décision, pas après tous les efforts que nos ancêtres ont fait pour faire de notre île ce qu'elle est aujourd'hui. Mais je ne vais pas m'attarder sur ce sujet, parce que beaucoup d'orateurs avant moi ont parlé dessus en long et en large, surtout l'honorable Adrien Duval qui a fait un long plaidoyer pour expliquer le danger que représente cette mesure.

M. le président, je ne vais pas exagéré si je dis que ce budget est un leurre. Oui, M. le président, ce gouvernement nous a bien leurré et continue à nous mener en bateau. *The*

Government is taking us for a ride in his pursuit of a transformative journey. Combien de mesures dans les précédents budgets sont des mort-nés. Combien n'ont pas été réalisés ou abandonnés, pourtant annoncés avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme par le ministre des Finances dans le passé. Ces 105 mesures réalisées sur 205 mesures.

M. le président, pourquoi ce budget est un leurre? Certaines mesures budgétaires me laissent dubitative, perplexe. Par exemple, en trois ans, 612 maisons construites, 268 maisons livrées. Je me réfère à une question parlementaire de l'honorable Aadil Ameer Meea, No. B/374, je me base sur la réponse du ministre. Et, aujourd'hui, on veut nous faire croire que le gouvernement va construire, en une seule année, 6,800 maisons.

Mais, M. le président, si c'est le cas, quelle sera la qualité de ces maisons? Que prévoit-on pour le bien-être, l'inclusion et le développement des habitants? Nous, au PMSD, avons déjà émis des réserves sur la construction de beaucoup d'appartements en hauteur pour ne pas créer des ghettos. Je sais que l'honorable Showkutally Soodhun est d'accord avec cette vision de l'habitation, l'intégration des habitants dans leur environnement.

D'autres mesures qui sont - du déjà vu ou déjà entendu, pour ne pas utiliser le terme 'réchauffé' - sont la Crèche *Scheme*, le *YEP*, le Syndic pour la *NHDC*, des mesures pour certains ministères que je vais développer plus tard.

M. le président, maintenant, je viens à l'essentiel de mon discours. S'il y a un mot, qui m'a interpellé lors du grand oral du ministre des Finances, c'est bel et bien le mot '*inclusive*', inclusion dans l'introduction déjà et dans la présentation des '*seven pathways on our transformative journey to a high-income country*'. Je dois admettre que ce mot '*inclusive*', inclusion, m'a interpellé. Le fait qu'il ait été utilisé plusieurs fois a éveillé ma curiosité. En continuant d'écouter l'oral du grand argentier, j'ai été vite désenchantée.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development is inviting us to a transformative journey to a high-income country and I would like to extend an invitation to the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development - unfortunately, the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development is not here - and to the Government to another journey.

Oui, M. le président, je vous invite et j'invite aussi, Monsieur le Premier ministre, même s'il n'est pas là, j'invite les honorables membres de cette auguste Assemblée à faire un voyage avec moi, avec les faibles, les vulnérables, les marginaux et les rejetés de la société.

Alors, vous êtes prêts pour le départ ? Bouclez votre ceinture, surtout bouclez là, je veux dire pour votre sécurité. On commence notre voyage dans le secteur de l'éducation.

Alors, je crois que tout le monde a remarqué que pendant que ma collègue l'honorable ministre de l'Éducation, Madame Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, faisait son discours, je suis restée toute ouïe. J'ai pris beaucoup de notes. J'ai écouté attentivement et je dois dire que vous m'avez beaucoup réconforté, dans ce que je vais dire, dans le discours que j'ai préparé. Au fur et à mesure que vous avanciez dans votre discours, je me suis dit je ne pouvais pas écouter par rapport au discours que moi j'ai écrit, je ne pouvais pas écouter un meilleur discours. Alors, je vais vous expliquer pourquoi.

Dans votre discours j'ai noté, vous aussi, tout comme votre *Leader*, le Premier ministre, vous avez utilisé le mot '*inclusive*' plusieurs fois. Alors, je vais citer quelques phrases de votre discours. Vous avez dit entre autres: '*taking everybody on board, not a chosen few*', '*no one should be left behind*', vous avez renchéri: 'personne n'est oubliée', vous avez aussi dit un peu plus loin dans votre discours: '*we are taking a lot of care for our system to be inclusive*', '*education has to be inclusive*'. Et voilà!

Donc, notre voyage commence dans le secteur de l'Éducation. *Mr Deputy Speaker*, Sir, la réforme dans le secteur éducatif a été enclenchée par le gouvernement de l'alliance Lepep parce que nous étions tous unanimes à dire qu'il fallait un système où l'enfant est mis au centre de l'éducation. Nous étions tous d'accord que c'est inadmissible, qu'année après année à peu près 5,000 enfants échouent à la fin du cycle primaire. Alors, je suis allée voir un peu les chiffres. En 2014, c'était 5,609, en 2015: 5,281, en 2016: 5013. Donc, vous voyez que ce sont 5,000 enfants chaque année qui échouent à la fin du cycle primaire.

Si la réforme proposée, le *Nine-Year Continuous Basic Education* communément appelé le *Nine-Year Schooling* est pétri de bonnes intentions, je vous l'accorde, mais par contre, elles pèchent toutefois par de grosses lacunes dans sa mise en place. Et si rien n'est fait pour redresser la situation, nous nous retrouverons avec des milliers d'enfants ne sachant toujours pas ni lire ni écrire arrivant en *Grade 9*. Si rien n'est fait pour changer le nouveau système proposé, nous nous retrouverons avec des jeunes abandonnant l'école ou quittant la MITD sans avoir acquis les compétences de base en *literacy and numeracy*. Si rien n'est fait pour aligner nos priorités, nos ressources, nos politiques dans le secteur de l'éducation sur la philosophie, les ambitions et la vision de l'île Maurice 2030, nous nous retrouverons avec des

jeunes en fin de scolarité qui auront beaucoup de difficultés à se faire embaucher sur le marché du travail.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, je disais j'ai écouté attentivement le discours de Madame la ministre et je crois que tout le monde, tous ceux qui ont écouté, du moins vous conviendrez avec moi, qu'il y a deux secteurs que la ministre n'a pas fait mention. Alors, je vais aborder le premier secteur. C'est le secteur pré-primaire, la maternelle. Aucun mot! Pas une ligne! Pas une seule fois ce secteur a été traité dans le discours de la ministre de l'Éducation. Et moi, plus je l'écoutais, plus je m'inquiétais parce que je me disais que, ce que j'ai écrit, me donne raison.

Alors, non seulement la ministre n'a pas jugé bon de parler du secteur pré-primaire dans son discours, et quand nous voyons le budget alloué au secteur pré-primaire, c'est un budget dérisoire. 2016-2017: 2% du budget national; 2017-2018: 2%; 2018-2019: 1.6%. Pourtant, M. le président, tout repose sur la fondation que sont les premières années de la vie d'un enfant, les premières années de scolarité d'un enfant. Je crois, ici, nous avons beaucoup de pères et de mères de famille, comme moi, j'ai deux enfants, nous savons tous, les premières années sont les années cruciales. Alors, j'ai déjà fait un plaidoyer en faveur du secteur pré-primaire, ici même, dans cette Chambre, lors d'une de mes interventions dans le passé, mais n'empêche que je vais devoir y revenir.

M. le président, si nous voulons vraiment, réellement redresser le secteur de l'éducation à Maurice, il nous faut donner plus d'attention, plus de ressources, donner la priorité à ce secteur. Aujourd'hui, en tout cas, tel n'est pas le cas. Ce secteur est complètement négligé avec un budget de 2%. L'État met l'emphasis sur l'éducation gratuite. L'État contribue, non pas 2%, R 200 par enfant pour toutes les écoles maternelles. Mais cette allocation de R 200, M. le président, est une somme modique.

Est-ce qu'aujourd'hui, en 2018, R 200 peuvent subvenir aux dépenses pour le coût du matériel pédagogique, matériel ludique, les activités extra-scolaires comme la danse, la piscine, le théâtre, le repas ? La réponse est, vous le savez, non. C'est la raison pour laquelle beaucoup de parents, ceux qui peuvent se le permettre, envoient leurs enfants dans des écoles privées. La scolarité dans les écoles privées varie de R 500 à R 4,000 mensuellement pour certaines écoles, et pour d'autres, jusqu'à R 7,000. Les écoles maternelles sont majoritairement privées. Donc, nous déduisons que l'éducation n'est pas gratuite, sauf pour les enfants fréquentant les écoles municipales. Il va s'en dire que des disparités énormes

existent entre ces écoles. Le niveau des écoles n'est pas le même, ce qui démontre que tous les enfants n'ont pas les mêmes droits.

Tous les enfants mauriciens ne commencent pas le départ dans la vie sur la même ligne. Certains ont une avance considérable sur les autres de par la qualité de l'éducation qu'ils reçoivent, l'environnement dans lequel ils évoluent, le contact, la stimulation et le développement au niveau langagier, psychomoteur et intellectuel. Ce qui représente une grande disparité, une injustice, une discrimination à l'égard des milliers d'enfants mauriciens. L'État mauricien doit être le garant de l'égalité pour une éducation de qualité pour tous. Un autre exemple - j'en ai plusieurs - qui montre le manque de considération du gouvernement, du ministère de l'Éducation à l'égard du secteur pré-primaire est l'absence de Directeur à la tête du *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*. Et cela, depuis l'arrivée de ce gouvernement. Depuis 2015, c'est un *teacher*, un *educator* qui assure le service.

M. le président, alors que cet organisme paraétatique, le *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*, doit jouer un rôle clef dans la bonne marche des écoles maternelles, le gouvernement n'a pas jugé bon de nommer une personne à la tête du *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*. Est-ce que cela vous choque ? Est-ce que cela vous surprend ? Moi oui, parce qu'on nous a habitué; ce gouvernement nous a habitué. On voit tous les jours dans les journaux qu'on fait les nominations partout, n'est-ce pas ! On nomme les petits copains, les petites copines, les membres de 'la cuisine' ; on nomme partout.

Et la dernière nomination en date qui a fait polémique, c'est, bien sûr, *behenji Ori*. Alors, on a trouvé une nomination pour *behenji Ori*, mais pour les enfants mauriciens, pour les petits enfants mauriciens, on n'a pas trouvé une personne pour nommer à la tête du *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*. Alors, depuis 4 ans, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, on n'arrive pas à trouver, que dis-je, ou peut-être *we do not care*. Peut-être qu'on ne veut pas ou on ne se soucie pas de ce secteur. Ce secteur veut dire les petits enfants mauriciens. Ou alors on n'arrive pas à trouver l'oiseau rare. J'ai essayé de chercher combien touche un directeur ou une directrice, je dois vous dire franchement, je n'ai pas trouvé, mais je me suis dit peut-être que les copains ou les copines ne veulent pas de ce poste car peut-être le salaire n'est pas attirant.

Dans le temps, lorsqu'il y avait une Directrice à la tête du *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*, ce corps paraétatique organisait des ateliers avec des organismes internationaux : l'UNICEF, UNDP, BREDIA UNESCO. Il y avait des animations

pédagogiques pour les écoles maternelles. En 2013, avant l'arrivée de ce gouvernement, un séminaire réunissant le *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority* et l'Organisation Internationale de Francophonie (OIF) avait été organisé, ayant pour thème 'Restitution et examen de l'état des lieux des écoles pré-primaires à Maurice'. C'était en 2013. Mais, malheureusement, aucune suite n'a été donnée après l'analyse des résultats et les recommandations faites. Le rapport dort quelque part au fond d'un tiroir, alors qu'on nous dit que le thème de ce séminaire était 'Restitution et examen de l'état des lieux des écoles pré-primaires à Maurice'. Je ne sais pas pourquoi ce document si important dort dans un tiroir. *Who cares ?* Et on parle d'inclusion. On se permet de parler d'un système éducatif inclusif. *Who cares ?*

M. le président, à chaque fois, nous, les membres de l'opposition, nous faisons des propositions et, encore une fois, je vais faire des propositions. J'espère que cette fois-ci ces propositions ne vont pas tomber dans l'oreille des sourds. Alors, il faut au plus vite, dans l'intérêt de nos enfants, et par extension dans l'intérêt de notre pays. A quoi cela sert de réformer l'éducation, de réformer le secondaire, le tertiaire, le technique, alors que ceux qui commencent sont handicapés ? C'est bien cela le mot. Ne sont pas inclus. A quoi ça sert de réformer ? Alors, il faut nommer un capitaine à bord. Mais il faut que cela soit, bien sûr, un professionnel. Ni un copain, ni une copine, ni un membre de 'la cuisine'. Il faut que cela soit un professionnel. Il faut redynamiser l'organisation des ateliers de travail avec les différentes écoles, maternelles, publiques et privées, dans le but d'échanger des pratiques pédagogiques et promouvoir des interactions entre les enfants et les adultes. Il faut employer les psychologues pour une meilleure prise en charge des enfants, mais aussi de leurs parents.

Vous imaginez, M. le président, aucune provision n'est faite dans le budget, ne serait-ce pour un psychologue dans ce secteur. Alors, quand on parle du secteur pré-primaire, je vous rappelle un peu les chiffres vite fait ; c'est 2% du budget, c'est R 200 par enfant - c'est un peu lourd le document. Le document est là. Je suis sûre que vous allez vérifier. Quand on regarde dans les *estimates*, c'est une demi-page pour le secteur pré-primaire. Je ne sais pas pourquoi le chiffre 2, mais le chiffre 2 revient. 2% du budget national, R 200 par enfant, et une demi-page dans le budget. Alors, il faudra offrir un service psychopédagogique à toutes les écoles maternelles, ainsi accompagner l'éducatrice à élaborer des stratégies susceptibles à détecter le plus tôt les troubles liés au comportement, au développement langagier, aux difficultés d'apprentissage. De ce fait, offrir aux enfants et aux parents un encadrement efficace pour une expérience préscolaire réussie.

M. le président, je ne sais pas si cela a attiré votre attention, mais - peut-être parce que je viens de la profession de l'enseignement, tout comme la ministre ; nous sommes plusieurs ici - je me suis dit pourquoi il n'y a pas, par exemple, des orthophonistes engagés dans les écoles. Il y a beaucoup d'enfants, qui, à cause d'un problème de dyslexie, n'arrivent pas à réussir à l'école. Il faut faciliter l'inclusion - ah, que c'est un joli mot, inclusion. Il faut que ce soit une réalité pour toutes les écoles maternelles en leur donnant des moyens d'améliorer leurs infrastructures, l'immobilier, et se doter de matériels appropriés pour accommoder les besoins des enfants souffrant d'un handicap, et qui demandent une approche particulière.

J'ai parlé, ici, de toutes les écoles, non pas *a one-off grant* pour certaines écoles seulement et on arrête. Il faut le faire pour toutes les écoles à travers l'île. Il faut impliquer la MIE et le ministère de l'Éducation à la prise en charge des *Teacher Supervisors* afin d'en faire de vraies conseillères pédagogiques, capables de mettre au service des éducatrices de bonne expertise pédagogique et didactique. Mettre sur pied un système d'accréditation pour assurer une meilleure gestion des écoles maternelles sur le plan qualité. J'ai appris que tout un travail de recherche a été déjà fait par les experts australiens, M. Fred et Mme Marjorie Ebeck.

Donc, M. le président, nous voyons clairement que le secteur de la petite enfance, du préscolaire contient beaucoup de lacunes, beaucoup de manquements et, malheureusement, comme je l'ai dit, c'est un secteur oublié ; un secteur négligé. Et comme je l'ai dit, et je le répète, pas une seule fois la ministre a développé, ne serait-ce qu'un paragraphe sur le secteur préscolaire. J'ai l'ai bien écoutée et j'ai pris des notes du début à la fin. Au début, je vous avais dit qu'il y a deux secteurs que la ministre a oubliés. Elle a beaucoup parlé du secteur tertiaire, mais il y a deux secteurs qu'elle n'a pas mentionnés. Le premier était le préscolaire, et le second ...

(Interruptions)

Si vous avez écouté attentivement comme moi, vous vous rappellerez que vous n'avez pas entendu les mots '*Extended Stream.*'

(Interruptions)

Okay, Extended Programme! Pourtant, la ministre sera d'accord avec moi. J'en ai parlé avant de venir faire mon discours - tout comme dans le secteur du préscolaire, j'ai parlé à beaucoup de personnes. Tout comme dans le secteur de l'éducation primaire, j'ai parlé à beaucoup de personnes. Il y a beaucoup de problèmes dans le secteur, anciennement pré-vocationnel, qui,

aujourd'hui, la ministre me dit que c'est *Extended Programme*. Donc, j'aurais aimé vous dire que notre voyage avait débuté avec les enfants du préscolaire, et souvent, ce sont les mêmes enfants qui n'ont pas débuté leur scolarité sur le même pied d'égalité que les autres, qui ont subi cette discrimination qui existe dans le secteur pré-primaire. Comme je l'ai démontré plus tôt, ce sont les mêmes enfants qui sont dans l'*Extended Programme*, *Extended Stream*. C'est-à-dire, ils n'ont pas réussi le PSAC. Souvent, ils ne savent toujours pas écrire leur nom, les lettres de l'alphabet et les syllabes.

Ce que la réforme propose, c'est que les enfants de l'*Extended Programme* fassent quatre années d'études, au lieu de trois années, pour se présenter aux mêmes examens de *Grade 9*, c'est-à-dire, le *National Certificate of Education*. De surcroît, ces enfants qui ne savent ni écrire leur nom, ni les lettres de l'alphabet, ni les syllabes, doivent faire huit matières principales, incluant des composants tels que *Social Studies*, *Economics*, *Accounts*, *Entrepreneurship education*, *Home Economics*, *Communication Design and Technology*. Ce qui fait un total de 13 matières. Vous imaginez, un enfant qui ne sait pas écrire, qui ne sait pas lire, avec cette réforme, il va devoir faire 13 matières !

Est-ce qu'on n'est pas en train de tromper ces élèves et leur donner de faux espoirs? Dans le document '*Education Reforms and Extended Stream to be Implemented in January 2018* - je dois avoir le document quelque part dans mes papiers ; la ministre m'a corrigé, elle m'a dit *Extended Programme*. Et sur le document c'est dit '*Extended Stream*'.

Anyway! Let me read this, and I quote –

“Under the Extended Stream, pupils who have not reached the standards required at the Grade 6 level will have more time to develop and acquire essential competencies.”

M. le président, nous nous posons la question, en quoi le fait de donner le même curriculum que l'*Extended Stream* à ces élèves va développer des *essential competencies* chez eux? Comment? Ne devrait-on pas se concentrer à développer plutôt leur *literacy and numeracy skills*? J'aimerais me référer, ici, à un rapport soumis par le *Prevocational Unit* du ministère de l'Éducation en 2016, où c'est écrit, en parlant de ces enfants, je cite –

“They display poor functional literacy and numeracy skills. They are unable to cope with language skills and the medium of instruction. They suffer from learning disorders, developmental and intellectual delays.”

Donc, ce rapport qui vient du *Prevocational Unit* est de 2016 et la réforme a été enclenchée en 2017. Alors qu'en 2016, ce *Unit* du ministère publie un rapport où il est dit que le niveau des enfants du *Extended Stream* est très bas, voilà, qu'en 2017, le ministère pense que cet enfant va pouvoir faire 13 matières et réussir ! Vous conviendrez avec moi, il est clair que la chance que ces élèves réussissent est très minime. Donc, le programme doit être revu.

On doit leur proposer un programme adapté à leur niveau. Le mode d'évaluation doit être revu. Il nous faut leur offrir un examen spécifique, même si on leur donne une année additionnelle. Ils ne vont pas pouvoir, en quatre ans, prendre part aux National Exams. Les enfants qui seront en *Extended Stream* ont le même profil que les enfants du pré-vocationnel, sauf que ceux du pré-vocationnel - qui veut dire anciennement pré-vocationnel - rejoignent le pré-vocationnel après deux années d'échec en *CPE*. Donc, ces enfants-là avaient plus de maturité. Ils font deux fois et après ils sont arrivés au collège, tandis que là, après une année d'échec, ils vont en *Extended Stream*. Donc, il y a beaucoup de flou, beaucoup de confusion, des ondes d'ombres autour de l'*Extended Stream*.

Je suis sûre que les parents, les éducateurs, nous-mêmes parlementaires, on attendait avec impatience le discours de la ministre pour qu'elle puisse nous éclairer sur cette situation. Mais motus et bouche cousue ! Pas un mot sur l'*Extended Stream* ! Je m'attendais à voir un budget conséquent, dédié à la formation spécifique sur l'alphabétisation, *Numeracy and Literacy*, des enseignants pour mieux enseigner ces élèves du primaire, car c'est inadmissible, c'est inacceptable que nous ayons des enfants qui ne savent ni lire, ni écrire, ni compter à la fin du *Grade 6*.

Une autre proposition qui a été faite - on m'a demandé de faire cette proposition que je trouve valable - c'est de proposer de faire les matières bilingues, Anglais et Créole parce que les matières que ces enfants doivent faire sont en Anglais. Les Mathématiques et les Sciences sont en anglais. Ce système bilingue a très bien marché. Ce système a fait ses preuves dans les écoles Catholiques pendant 15 ans.

Alors, M. le président, poursuivons notre voyage avec nos enfants qui ont raté le départ dans leur scolarité, vous vous souvenez ils ont quitté pas le *pre-vocational* mais l'*extended programme stream* et ils sont partis dans les centres de la *MITD*. Beaucoup de ces centres manquent d'infrastructures, manque d'outils, manque de formation. Bien sûr, je ne parle pas de grands centres *MITD*. Je parle des centres de *MITD* qui accueillent des enfants en quatrième année, enseignement quatrième année pré-vocationnel. Il y a même un

instructeur qui m'a confié qu'il connaît une école *MITD* à Barkly et je vais le dire comme il m'a dit –

« *Pe faire ene semblant agriculture lor ene ti lopin de terre.* »

C'est pour vous dire à quel point il y a un manque d'infrastructures, un manque de soutien pour les éducateurs, pour les instructeurs et pour les enfants. Nous savons tous qu'un gros problème de discipline, de violence sous toutes ses formes, violence verbale, physique, sexuelle, tout ce que vous voulez, prévaut dans le milieu scolaire à tous les niveaux : primaire, secondaire, et dans les centres *MITD*. Il nous faut tout simplement ouvrir les journaux et on pourra comprendre à quel point c'est alarmant le problème de discipline dans les institutions aujourd'hui.

Ajouté à cela, il y a un gros problème de drogues, cigarettes et autres substances. Alors, je pense que le gouvernement, le ministère aurait dû employer plus de psychologues mais aussi des travailleurs sociaux, des sociologues comme je l'ai dit des orthophonistes, etc. Parce que, M. le président, l'aspect accompagnement est très important car un enfant est avant tout un être social.

Alors, aujourd'hui, je ne vais pas aborder le secteur tertiaire, quoi qu'il y a énormément de choses à dire. J'ai choisi de ne pas aborder le secteur parce qu'ici j'en ai longuement parlé dans cette Chambre lors de mon intervention si vous vous rappelez sur le *Higher Education Bill* aussi parce qu'on a déjà eu deux *PNQ* sur le secteur tertiaire pas plus tard qu'hier.

Sincèrement, vraiment sincèrement, je ne voulais pas remuer le couteau dans la plaie. Alors, j'ai écouté, comme je vous ai dit, le discours de Madame la ministre de l'Éducation. J'ai trouvé qu'elle défend beaucoup la nominée politique à l'Université de Technologie et j'ai retrouvé regrettable qu'elle n'a pas défendu les petits-enfants mauriciens pour nommer quelqu'une ou quelqu'un à la tête du *Early Childhood*. J'ai trouvé aussi que la ministre quand elle a fait son discours a dit je ne suis pas là pour protéger qui que ce soit, personne ne peut me manipuler mais on voit que lors des deux *PNQ*, tout le contraire a transpiré.

Vraiment la ministre était acculée hier, mais comme j'ai dit je ne vais pas – puisqu'elle en a parlé, je la répons – remuer; la façon dont elle a répondu dans son discours, je sais que cette blessure est encore à vivre et que c'était difficile pour elle. Donc, je ne vais pas poursuivre avec le secteur tertiaire. Alors, qu'il me renvoie l'ascenseur, je ne sais pas, ça dépend de la civilité, le respect et l'amitié tout ça. Je ne sais pas si ce sont des valeurs qu'on

connaît. Excusez-moi, je pensais à haute voix. Je vous invite tous donc à poursuivre notre voyage avec les enfants, ces mêmes enfants dans les *shelters*.

Je ne peux pas faire un discours sans parler de la situation qui prévaut actuellement dans les *shelters*. La ministre de l'égalité de genre, du développement de l'enfant et du bien-être de la famille avait fait ici même dans cette chambre un *statement* suite à mon interpellation sur la présence de punaises qui ont envahi le *shelter* de La Colombe depuis des mois, et qui y ont élu domicile et qui s'y trouvent toujours. Par contre, ce que la ministre a omis de dire, c'est que les enfants de ce *shelter* dorment à même le sol depuis des mois.

Alors, je ne parle pas d'un ou de deux mois, je dis des mois et ces des mois veut dire un peu presque une année. Alors, j'ai des photos des enfants qui dorment à même le sol. Étant été moi-même ministre de l'Égalité de genre, du développement de l'enfant et du bien-être de la famille, bien sûr, je ne peux pas produire ces photos. Mais si vous voulez voir la photo, je peux vous la montrer. Alors, je ne parle pas de deux mois, je parle de presque plus ou à peu près une année.

Alors, je suis très contente, alors j'étais bien gâtée aujourd'hui, j'ai eu la ministre de l'Éducation avant moi et j'aurais la ministre de l'Égalité de genre juste après, je vais attendre sa réponse avec beaucoup d'impatience. J'aimerais que la ministre nous informe et nous disent pourquoi est-ce que la ministère, la CDU, la NCC laisse perdurer cette situation. Vous savez on est en hiver, vous imaginez vos enfants dormir sur le sol ; quand on occupe ce ministère je ne suis pas en train de critiquer rien que pour critiquer. Je peux vous dire franchement, sincèrement je comprends la situation de l'honorable Madame Roubina Jadoo, j'y étais à sa place.

Je sais ce que c'est que d'être à la tête de ce ministère. Ce n'est pas un ministère sans diminuer les autres ministres et les autres ministères, on ne s'occupe pas des chiffres, de l'emploi, on ne s'occupe pas de construire des maisons, on ne s'occupe pas, je ne sais pas moi de l'océan, on ne s'occupe pas du sport. C'est un ministère où on s'occupe des êtres humains, *people*, des hommes, des femmes, des enfants, mais surtout des femmes et des enfants blessés, brisés et c'est à nous quand on prend la responsabilité de ce ministère on prend la responsabilité aussi de restaurer ces personnes. De réparer, je ne sais pas si on peut réparer, mais de panser, mais pour pouvoir panser, il faut y penser et je ne sais pas si la ministre y pense. Je me pose la question comment se fait-il que les enfants dorment à même le sol alors que nos enfants dorment bien au chaud. Je me rappelle lorsque j'étais ministre,

j'ai connu aussi des difficultés. J'ai connu aussi des situations bien compliquées et c'est pour ça que je dis je comprends, je sais ce que c'est.

Je me rappelle lorsque j'étais ministre, c'était le jour de mon anniversaire, nous étions tous en famille. Et il y avait un gros problème, même *shelter*, le *shelter* La Colombe et quand je l'ai appris, je peux vous dire tout de suite pour moi la fête était terminée. Je n'avais plus le cœur à la fête et je suis partie voir ces enfants. Je suis partie les rencontrer, comprendre, c'est ça notre responsabilité. Ces enfants de ces *shelters* sont nos enfants. Il faut qu'on s'en occupe pareil comme nos enfants. Parce que l'État nous a confié ces enfants. Pourquoi j'en parle ?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member!

Mrs Perraud: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Can you sit properly?

Mrs Perraud: Pourquoi, j'en parle, M. le président ?

(Interruptions)

L'heure se fait tardive, il est fatigué.

Pourquoi j'en parle, M. le président? C'est que j'ai hérité du *shelter* La Colombe, un bâtiment qui n'était pas fait pour être un *shelter*, mais qui était un *shelter*. Alors, comme je vous dis, je passe devant ce bâtiment toutes les semaines. C'est sur ma route. Ceux qui habitent à Pointe aux Sables connaissent le *shelter*, savent dans quel état ce *shelter* est. Alors, la couleur de ce *shelter* est d'une couleur effrayante. Horrible! Et la façon dont la cour est, ce n'est pas...

(Interruptions)

Couleur orange! La façon dont le *shelter* est, n'est pas appropriée pour le développement et le bien-être des enfants. Pourquoi j'en parle ? C'est parce que avant de partir – avec le ministre des Finances - il y avait une dotation budgétaire pour *upgrade*, pour améliorer ce *shelter*. C'est ce que j'avais fait. Et à chaque fois, chaque semaine je passe et je me pose la question: qu'a-t-on fait de cet argent?

Il y avait, M. le président, un terrain vague. Ceux qui passent à Pointe aux Sables le savent. Un grand terrain vague à côté du *shelter*. En tant que ministre, j'ai fait des démarches pour que le *shelter* puisse avoir ce terrain parce qu'il y a un besoin d'air. Les enfants, ça jouent, ça courent! N'est-ce pas ? Vous ne pouvez pas mettre 50 enfants - je ne sais pas combien on est arrivé, quelle est la population - dans un bâtiment exigu. Et l'autre question

que je me posais jusqu'à ce que le budget arrive - c'est fait depuis deux ans - pourquoi ce terrain que j'ai pris la peine de faire des démarches pour avoir pour ses enfants, pour nos enfants - n'est toujours pas aménagé pour le bien-être de ces enfants? Je suis sûre que c'est ce que l'honorable ministre va me répondre et avec raison, je vois qu'il y a une dotation budgétaire. Je crois que ces R 4 millions, si je ne me trompe pas, c'est pour ériger un mur. Mais malgré cela, je me dis après deux ans ériger un mur, il faut encore deux ans pour faire autre chose.

Mais un jour, M. le président, un seul jour, c'est trop pour ces enfants. Rester dans cette promiscuité, dans cet environnement exigu, c'est trop pour eux, avec tout ce qu'ils portent déjà. Je vous ai dit que ce sont des enfants qui ont eu des histoires lourdes, un passé difficile. Pourquoi a-t-on pris deux ans ? Maintenant, on a un budget pour ériger un mur. Il a fallu deux ans! Est-ce qu'on ne pense pas à ces enfants ?

Vous l'avez appris dans les journaux, pas plus tard que weekend dernier, quatre enfants se sont évadés de ce *shelter*. C'est monnaie courante! Ne soyez pas surpris! Ne sourcillez pas! C'est chose courante! Pourquoi c'est chose courante? Pourquoi veulent-ils s'enfuir? Pourquoi fuguent-ils? Il faut qu'il y ait une raison. Pourquoi ? Est-ce que si on s'occupait bien d'eux, ils l'auraient fait ? Je ne demande pas un hôtel cinq étoiles, quoi qu'ils méritent quand même un hôtel cinq étoiles. S'ils avaient un environnement plaisant, est-ce qu'ils auraient fugué? J'ai eu une information troublante, Madame la ministre de l'Égalité du genre, sur le fait que j'aimerais que si vous puissiez donner des informations à cette Chambre, à la population, qu'il y a un enfant avec les initiales - j'ai le nom, mais je vais donner les initiales par respect - V. C., qui a fugué depuis septembre 2017 et qu'on a toujours pas eu de ses nouvelles.

Donc, je serais ravie si vous me dites: «L'honorable Madame Perraud, vous avez tort ». Au fait, c'est ce que j'attends. Au cas contraire, si vous me dites: «Oui, cet enfant depuis septembre 2017, erre quelque part dans la nature », alors qu'il est supposé être sous la responsabilité de l'État, là il y a un gros problème.

Il faut que je fasse la course apparemment. Je crois que l'honorable ministre connaît déjà le rapport qu'on appelle 'Rapport Vellien', le *Fact-Finding Committee on Residential Care*. Il y a tout dedans. Tout est fait. J'avais tout laissé.

(Interruptions)

Non, mo pas pou dire ça ! Fait mal au cœur !

Alors, j'avais déjà fait les démarches pour le terrain. J'ai déjà donné la dotation budgétaire pour le *shelter*. Donc, c'est pour cela qu'aujourd'hui je suis indignée de voir que malgré tout ça, la situation dans le *shelter* La Colombe s'est empirée. Alors, je voulais parler de beaucoup d'autres choses. Alors quelques réponses que peut-être l'honorable ministre pourra tout à l'heure quand elle va faire son discours nous dire est-ce qu'il s'agit de la réunion qu'on avait au niveau du ministère avec les ONGs sur les drogues synthétiques, parce qu'on avait un comité assez régulier, et maintenant je n'entends plus parler. Je suis sûre qu'elle va parler du *Children's Bill* parce que c'était déjà fait. J'ai un document qui atteste que le *Children's Bill* était déjà parti au bureau du *SLO*. Je n'ai pas compris pourquoi on a pris deux ans. On est encore à *process*. J'avais tout ces points-là à demander.

Par rapport au budget pour l'Égalité du genre, l'autonomisation des femmes, ce budget ne m'a pas impressionné du tout. Alors pourquoi ? Je vais aller très vite. J'avais tous les détails, mais je vais aller très vite. On fait référence au *Gender Cell* dans le budget. Alors le *Gender Cell* c'est quelque chose qui est déjà sur pied dans chaque ministère. D'ailleurs, j'ai le papier du *National Steering Committee on Gender Mainstreaming*. Donc, le *Gender Cell* n'est pas...

(Interruptions)

Et vous autres, j'ai 5 minutes seulement ! Le *Gender Cell* n'est pas chose nouvelle. Et la mesure allouée de R 200,000 au ministère, ça aussi c'est du déjà vu, du déjà entendu, parce qu'il y a déjà cinq ministères qui en bénéficient. Celles concernant le soutien aux ONG, à la page 202, au paragraphe 57. Donc, ça aussi c'est une mesure qu'on connaît déjà. On avait commencé avec Passerelle, Chrysalide, SOS Femmes. Et, bien sûr, la mesure concernant la Crèche *Scheme* qui n'est pas aussi nouvelle. Donc, malheureusement, le temps me fait défaut, sinon j'allais expliquer avec les documents relatifs.

(Interruptions)

Définitivement, on a un problème à chaque fois après le repas. Il y a des langues qui s'alourdissent. Il y a des personnes qui ne se comportent pas bien. Qu'est-ce qui se passe pendant le repas ? Je ne sais pas trop ! Donc, je dis que je ne suis pas du tout impressionnée par le budget...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Abbas Mamode, please do not start a conversation!

Mrs Perraud : M. le président, malgré qu'on m'a signalé qu'il faut que j'arrête, mais je vais désobéir. J'ai un paragraphe, un sujet qu'il faut absolument que j'en parle.

I have the honour to be the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee. I cannot end my speech without mentioning page 68, paragraph 273 of the Budget Speech. So, I won't quote the paragraph. I welcome this measure, but, however, I was expecting that the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development would have taken a further step, a bold step to bring relevant amendments to the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly and to any other relevant pieces of legislation to ensure that the PAC has more powers and is not a *bouledogue sans dents* as it is actually.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I, myself, as a Chairperson of PAC, accompanied by Members of my Committee, had a meeting with the hon. Prime Minister and made some recommendations so that Mauritius PAC should be given appropriate powers by Parliament. Its mandate should be broadened beyond examining National Audit Reports. I am aware of a series of similar recommendations made by the PAC in the past, with almost no evidence of their subsequent implementation. However, the PAC intends to pursue discussions with Government in order to review its powers and its current functioning model.

Pour conclure, donc, M. le président, ce budget 2018-2019 n'est pas un budget qui prône l'inclusion, et je l'ai démontré. Le ministre des Finances nous envoie nous balader à travers ce *transformative journey*. Les grands défis économiques obscurcissent toujours l'horizon et le réveil risque d'être brutal. Heureusement, M. le président, le leader de l'opposition, à travers ses *PNQ*, se positionnera toujours pour protéger les intérêts de la population.

Désolée honorables Membres, il y a une seule chose que je vais dire. Je ne vais pas pouvoir dormir si je ne dis pas ça. J'étais ahurie d'entendre la ministre de l'Éducation parler de respect. J'ai failli m'étouffer, surtout...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, allow hon. Mrs Perraud to conclude her speech.

Mrs Perraud: Définitivement, il faut faire un alcotest après le repas. Vraiment, il faut...

(Interruptions)

Non, je le dis sérieusement. Il faut faire un alcotest après le repas ; très important.

Donc, on parlait de respect ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Gayan!

Mrs Perraud: Alors, on parlait de respect justement. Vous faites référence au ministre Mentor, et je me permets justement de jeter la réflexion. Pendant que vous passiez cette remarque, je me faisais la réflexion que le respect ne se commande pas, le respect se mérite...

(Interruptions)

Exactement ! Merci de me donner raison. Quand je me dis tout ce que le ministre Mentor a dit et dit encore...

(Interruptions)

Je sais! Justement!

The Deputy Speaker: Allow her to conclude!

Mrs Perraud: Exactement ! Non ! Puisque la ministre a choisi cet exemple, je ne peux pas choisir un autre exemple pour répondre. Alors, je vous laisse tous, si vous êtes sincères - vous savez pourquoi vous ne voulez pas que j'en parle, n'est-ce pas ?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Perraud, please! Conclude your speech now.

Mrs Perraud: Je vais terminer. Mais il se pourrait que...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lepoigneur, do you have a brief for her?

Mrs Perraud: Il se pourrait que mon parti me dise de continuer. C'est entre nous ça ! On décide entre nous combien de temps.

The Deputy Speaker: Please conclude!

Mrs Perraud: Je peux prendre le temps de...

The Deputy Speaker: Do not engage into private conversation!

Mrs Perraud: Si l'honorable Armance ou l'honorable Henry me donnent leur temps, je peux continuer. C'est entre nous.

Alors, je vais conclure. De toutes les façons, tout le monde a compris que le respect ne se commande pas, le respect se mérite. C'est une question de valeur de toutes les façons, et

comme l'a dit mon ami et collègue, l'honorable Lepoigneur, nous avons tous le titre d'honorable ici, mais il faut encore qu'on soit des hommes et des femmes d'honneur.

Merci beaucoup.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Jadoo-Jaunbocus!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Lepoigneur, your last warning! Hon. Armance, your last warning!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Soodhun, your first and last warning. Hon. Mrs Jadoo-Jaunbocus, please!

(11.17 p.m.)

The Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs R. Jadoo-Jaunbocus): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

It is really with great honour and pride and respect that today I take part in the debates concerning the Budget in a Government which is committed in making a difference in the lives of people, not to stand here and to lecture, but actually to make a difference in the lives of people, the *peuple*.

Of course, I associate myself with all those who have spoken before me on this side of the House, to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for this bold and forward-looking budget, making provision for each and every one - never mind of what has just been said; I will go into that in a minute -, men, women, children, elderly and, in fact, for the whole family in a very holistic manner.

I say with respect, because respect is something that you earn. Respect is not something that you get by '*défoncer*', using such kind of words with disrespect to what is called the constitutional safeguards, people who watch the Constitution, the guardian of this House, and you do not use rude words and then you come in this House, to tell this House what respect is. Respect is to call the man who insults a woman to order. That is respect. You want to teach us respect; we will tell you what respect is. Respect is when there is the head of the House, the Speaker; you do not go and take political gains and disrespecting her out there. Respect is honouring a woman, honouring the nomination of women; respect is respecting the kitchen in the house, because this is where your food comes from. Respect is not about telling 'Cabinet kitchen', telling *behenji* in such a derogatory manner. This is respect? And you

want respect! Respect is something which is earned. Respect is not something which says ‘come and respect me’. You inspire respect, you deserve respect and you earn respect; you do not ask for respect, you get it because you deserve it. That’s the law of respect.

And respecting women is yet another step of respect. There are different chapters in respect, and one of the chapters is respecting women. Self-respect is something which is not known to the other side of that House, and I will say why. But respecting women is very important. Associating yourself with people who cheat women like a *platebande de cotomili* and walking over them, makes you become like them and not respecting women. Just because someone gets a certain nomination or has not got a nomination, she has to be part of the ‘kitchen’?

We come and claim that we were Minister of Gender Equality and we talk about the kitchen in such a derogative manner! Where were you and where was your respect when women were laid in the bedroom and on beds to get nominations? Where was your so valued respect then? And you dare talk of respect! Where was your self-respect when no respect was made for women on this side - and you were on this side when women were being denigrated in the last electoral campaign? Did you know the meaning of respect? And you come and teach us respect! Please, we respect ourselves too much to take lessons on respect from the other side of the House, and especially respect for women.

And I say why I am proud to associate myself with this Budget. Why are there qualms on the other side of the House to talk about this Budget? What were the words? So many qualifications have been used like Panadol, panacea - Lysol, I think not - but Panadol, yes, palliative.

Now, there is a literary debate - or what was the meaning, *électorale*. Then, we get a lecture about what it means, but for God’s sake, this is not a Budget about filling a coffer with Rs200 m. *billets neufs*, which have not even gone into the circulation, but gone straight into the coffer! This is not a Budget about filling one’s pocket or filling the rich! This is a Budget of feeding the poor and needy and those very children, because when we talk about the Budget, all I hear is criticism on the other side. Does it hurt so much to say: ‘yes, so much has been given’? Forget what we wanted to see in the Budget, but for what it is in there, for what it is in that Speech and for what it means for those people out there, let us talk about that.

Hon. Mrs Perraud, with respect, has said, oh yes, momentarily the ball was out there, and then the focus is on the World Cup! This is the value that this party gives to *le peuple* which is out there, and equates what is being given to them for a whole year! And what is this talk about the Budget not catering for the future and economic progress? This is what you equal the Budget to? To a football match? But, of course, with respect, and when I say respect, this time I mean with due respect to football. Because in this House I dare not say anything about football! But, with due respect to football, that means we live in a cocoon where we are lulling ourselves in that *basse-cour*, that that Budget has not had its impact?

In fact, this Budget is like dropping the wolf loose in the *basse-cour*, the headless chickens are running around everywhere saying: 'the Budget of Pravind Jugnauth has come, where do we run because *le peuple est très content. Le peuple est satisfait!* We do not care about what they say: panadol, panacea, confetti or whatever, or *suppositoire*. What we say is that *le peuple est satisfait. On œuvre pour le peuple dans ce gouvernement et le peuple est satisfait.* This is what we care about and this is what we are going to be working for, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

So much has been said that this Budget has no vision; this Budget has not much for *relance!* Hon. Members on the other side, in their opening speech, said that we came into this, we gained the general elections on false promises, lulling the population that we are going to make a change for them! How dare they?

We came into the Government because *le peuple* has had enough of them fooling with people and with their women, and their lack of respect for women. We came in this Government because *le vrai peuple* has had enough of being robbed and not being taken care of. We came into this Government because of the legacy that had been left behind for nine years after being given the custody of the country not doing enough for the advancement of the country. That is why we came into Government and not because we had lulled the population; we had not. Those who say that there is not enough in this Budget to set *la relance*, to bring the economy forward, it means that they have not been following our successive budgets. We started at a crossroad. Crossroad it was because we had a legacy of debts. Let us talk about public debt. In 2004, with the then Government, MMM/MSM, the public debt was 29.2% - this is what happens *quand la basse-cour et la clé take over!* The public debt rises, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to 59%! This is the inheritance that we obtained and it continued and continued.

Of course, it came to arise public debt in 2016, 2017 because at that time the total public debt was thus, because there was a lot of investment in large public investment programmes. These had to be financed because of major capital projects in a variety of sectors. *C'est ça qui va produire la relance. C'est ça qui a commencé à faire bouger l'économie!* Every year, we are not going to do the same kind of investments. Investments are what they are, you start with your investment, you start with your economic strategy and planning, and then it is rolling and you reap the benefits as you go along. And this is why public debt started to reduce so that as at 2017 it went to 64.8%, and 2018 as at end of June, it has gone down to 63.4%. It is projected to go down to 60% in 2021 to attain our statutory level of 60% of GDP by 2021, as I have just said, hence, the decrease.

Just one little aside, it is not just Mauritius, because when we hear them talk - I will be honest with you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I went back to the Budget Speech and read and reread. I thought they have made a mistake. Have they lied in this document? Has the Statistics Office lied? Has the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development lied? Because this is what the Opposition is selling out there, a lie! A lie to people, a blatant lie by twisting and turning figures and saying things which do not exist!

So, after investing and after putting massive investment in fields such as water, wastewater, road, land transport, energy sector, social housing, community development, the Port, the airport, only to mention a few, including in Rodrigues and Agalega, investments are there. Obviously, things are going to improve.

And they accuse us of being thrifty; they accuse us of overspending! When you look at the United States, their public debt amounts to 77%; UK, their public debt amounts to 90%; Japan, 224%. Ireland, 70% and it goes on. And, here, where we are striving to bring down the public debt to 60% as soon as it is possible with early repayments in early 2015, in order to reduce the high level of debt in 2017, we are being told that we are not a responsible Government and that we are fooling people! Please! *Le peuple* is out there. And all those who are out there, *ne soyez pas tout ouïe à ce genre de bêtise, à ce genre de mensonge qui berne les gens, à les faire croire que noir et blanc est blanc et noir.* Because on that side of the House, anything goes, so long as the coffers are being filled in, so long as the dollars are coming, anything goes! That is not the case here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

We listened to them; we see one side of the story. We listened to the radios now. Of course, there is a moment for football but, when the moment comes for people to talk about

the Budget, it has been noted on major radios: where are those who do not like *l'Alliance Lepep*? We do not hear them on the radio about the Budget. Why? These so-called haters of *l'Alliance Lepep* are *quasiment absents*. Others in the House, criticising the Budget! Look around us! Wake up! *Réveillez-vous!* The election is not this year. The election, *couma nou dire, marker garder*, is not this year. It is one year before the election and you call it confetti? Wait for real confetti, then you will know the meaning of confetti and party!

The Budget is a bold and sound strategy put in place by this Government since we came into office and it is preparing the country to move forward with confidence despite various challenges facing us, both on the international and local fronts. Over the past years, we have set the scene to change the economic and infrastructural landscape of the country, unless we do not want to see all around us.

Everyone has just one agenda and it is work and work! That is all that you see around you and when you look round the country, it is like *un vaste chantier de construction*. Of course, they will not understand what work means because for them it is either djembe or Macarena or Roches Noires! So, how will they understand what real work means? And they dare treat this Budget as *du rechauffé*? They dare say that for this Budget? *Du rechauffé*? *Si c'est du rechauffé*, those measures should have been implemented. Have they been implemented? Where is the Ring Road? Have they implemented it? 10 years, have they implemented it? Where are all the other projects? Have they implemented it? Where is the development for the hawkers? Talking about hawkers, a lot has been said today about hawkers, so much sympathy for hawkers.

Indeed, we feel a lot for these hawkers, who are striving to earn their living and who will earn a living and with dignity and respect. It has been said that no provision has been made in the Budget for them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. But those who know and those who have followed have seen and have been in several meetings. And, in fact, it is not me saying that. Hon. Ameer Meea today talked about the Council's decision to allocate stall spaces to these hawkers for the sum of Rs4,000 each. I personally talked to the hawkers, they are quite agreeable because they realise this is not the *mirage* that was shown by the then MMM Party as a panacea for hawkers, that is, the Hawkers Palace. Do you know what has happened to the Hawkers Palace? One should ask oneself what has happened then, and who was the Mayor then of the City Council of Port Louis before we point fingers and say no solution has been found for hawkers.

Hon. Bodha has finalised, and I will not steal that part of him from his Budget Speech. I will leave it for him to talk about it in his Budget speech, about all the finalisation of his projects, both for *La Gare Victoria* and for *La Gare du Nord*, for the Immigration Square, because provisions have been made –

1. One may not see it in this year's Budget 2018-19 for the hawkers but provisions have already been made and a lot of land;
2. Government is not expecting developers to develop these areas;
3. Government is investing in terms of land. It is joint venture project. It is investing in terms of its land so that then the developers, the consortium will come and develop, and the project is almost being finalised and the things will materialise. And we will do it.

It is a project that was started when hon. Dr. Husnoo was here at that time. And he has followed in spite of what has been said. He has followed, we have all followed because *on a à coeur l'intérêt des marchands ambulants*. So, does this Government.

As I said, the country is now a vast *chantier du développement* and I will look at the different pathways that have been set in this Budget Speech of the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. Under the first pathway, provision is being made for our youths to get the right set of skills so that they are better equipped to integrate the world of work, *le monde du travail* of today and of the future. The creation of a fund to the tune of Rs1 billion and the wide array of measures to improve employability in terms of National Skills Development Programme, National Apprenticeship Programme, SME Employment Scheme where a sum of Rs14,000 shall be paid over a period of 2 years are simply catalytic.

These measures will address the mismatch previously referred to by one of the previous orators on the other side of the House. So, it is easy to talk about mismatch of skills and unemployment, but this mismatch, does it happen overnight? This problem that was created in the labour market, does it happen overnight? Yes, we can stand here and talk about mismatch. But for 10 years, what have you done about mismatch? Are there any measures in the Budget to address the issue of mismatch? No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! We had brought, not just workers, but our degree holders. Hon. Anil Gayan will recall, hon. Dr. Husnoo will recall, being Minister of Health. These not so young doctors, medical practitioners, who were forced to go and do masonry works, who were forced to go and work on the fields, who were

forced to go and be attendants. No disrespect to work in call centres; to work as taxi drivers. The list goes on.

You know what is worse! If we really care, when we hear the story, the heart breaking stories of those fathers who say: “We have raised our children. We have strived to give an education to our children. We have made them become doctors. Our pride! And look at what they are doing”. We do not demean the work, but a doctor should be at best to be a doctor. That is what he has been trained and educated to do. And this Government solved this problem and it is still dealing with that problem. And all these educational institutions, - we will come to that in a minute – D. Y. Patil College and the creation that it was about to create. We solved all these problems and we are now assisting to regularise. You know how many doctors have called me and said: “Madam, please help us because our poor sons, daughters have followed medical training and they are not being recognised because of D. Y. Patil”. That was the *mirage*. And today, we proudly say 400 medical practitioners have been employed in this Government. This is respect for people’s education and for people’s worth. This is working for people.

Now, if we look at what stride has been made in the Budget of equal significance is the new growth poles in respect of Artificial Intelligence, a step in the right direction in this new venture. Further measures to increase the capacity of the University of Mauritius to produce Computer Science and Software engineers and awarding scholarships in these fields of Blockchain Technology and AI will give the necessary boost to this new sector and create the appropriate environment for it to thrive. Of course, I will ensure that my Ministry will take its full count in involving more girls and women in those courses. Because, as it stands today, the engagement of women in the science field has not been done well enough.

Hon. Mrs Perraud likes the figure 2 for some reason. She keeps saying 2 years, 2 months, 2 this, 2 that. For 2 years, Minister of Gender, what has been done to empower the girls and to increase more girls getting involved in the field of scientific education? Nothing! And today under the Ministry of IT, the Mauritius Intranet Satellite Initiative led by the Mauritius Research Council, the MRC, operating under the aegis of that Ministry, has been selected for the third round of the United Nations for Outer Space Affairs and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency in Vienna.

Such ground breaking leap and that takes motivation, that takes vision, that takes a lot of thinking and that takes a lot of commitment; not stand here and do small politics and say

that a Budget - if I may get the right paper so that I do not misquote the figure - “a Budget of Rs17.2 billion for the sector of Education, only 2% for pre-primary education”. Maybe 2 is the limit but if you do 2% of Rs17.2 billion, it gives a much higher figure, and it is a consequential figure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And that is what has been dedicated for children in pre-primary school. And maybe whilst being focused on the number 2, hon. Mrs Perraud may have missed paragraph 176 of the Budget which says, and she says not one line for these children –

“For the youngest of our school goers, we are providing for the construction of 2 pre-primary units – one at Grand’ Baie and another one at Montagne Ory.”

We are providing the construction of two pre-primary units, one at Grand’Baie and the other one at Montagne Ory. And you dare say nothing has been done for these children! That is just part of it, of course! Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun will not stand here and talk for hours just only about that part of the Budget, but that does not mean it is not important and nothing has been done. In fact, all the primary schools now have a pre-primary unit.

In fact, I just recall, yesterday I went to a prize-giving in my constituency and as part of the sports activity, we not only had the primary, but we had the pre-primary altogether. And yet they said nothing is being done! Then, we have a management team which has been set up and they are in the process of recruiting for a Director. Recruitment for a Director goes by the way of advertisement. It goes in the newspapers and people apply. One should know - and maybe the *Petit Larousse va aider pour dire* - what is the difference between recruitment of a Director and appointment. There is a difference. The interviews are soon to be held.

Now, a whole team has been dedicated in the education sector for the awakening of pre-primary students to science. Nothing has been done for the first two years in the Ministry of Gender for Science. Yet in the Ministry of Education a lot has been done to ensure and encourage our young kids, young toddlers to get involved in scientific fields. Now, talking about psychologists, the psychologists, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for children are not based in the pre-primary schools, they are based in the Ministry of Education because that is the parent Ministry and they are sent in the different regions to attend to these pre-primary children. So, why is he coming here to say that nothing is being done and what about the psychologists? So, that is, again, misleading and erroneous to say such things in this House. Well, maybe now one should expect that we do cheap politics, be it on *la misère des enfants*, the most deprived ones and those poor children who are now starting in the ladder of education. *On ne*

fait pas la politique sur nos innocents. Spare our innocent children! Please respect our children! Do not do politics on their head! They do not deserve that. They deserve a cleaner and better politics.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Perraud, hon. Mrs Jadoo-Jaunbocus listened to your speech with attention and she did not interrupt you.

Mrs Jadoo-Jaunbocus: Talking about children, everyone in this House will agree with me that children are born savvy and smart and given the tools, they become IT literate. Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun has understood that a long time ago. They understand IT even before they can start walking. We cannot force them into traditional and conservative pedagogy all the time. The earlier we make use of IT in learning processes, the more our children will benefit. In this respect, the measures announced in this Budget Speech to train primary and secondary school students in coding is definitely a step in the right direction, and that once more will help in the future for mismatches that were referred to earlier on in this House.

I now wish to turn to food security issue. The innovative measures proposed in this Budget Speech will definitely contribute in boosting the sector. The package incentives, namely loan facilities at the rate of 3% for start-ups, younger entrepreneurs, especially women entrepreneurs, will no doubt greatly help those operating in that sector. Further, sheltered farming, rainwater, harvesting and measures aimed at promoting micro-gardens or even aquaponics signal a new area for our agricultural sector. This is a huge incentive again, especially for women who are at home. This is part of the re-engineering process of our economy with a focus on the application of smart techniques to increase productivity.

Now, tax exemption for an extended duration of eight years is also a welcome measure for start-ups. For SMEs, we know how the teething period is painful and such measures will definitely help to make that teething period more serene and prosperous. Women disproportionately face barriers hindering their access to finance that prevent them from participating in the economy and from improving their conditions of living.

Access to financial services, loan facilities and business facilitation can open up economic opportunities for them. For instance, we have the DBM loan facilities to a maximum of Rs1 m. to organic farms or even the Enterprise Modernisation Scheme to provide financing leased facilities to MSMEs with a turnover of up to Rs10 m. for the

modernisation of their plants and equipment are interesting measures to assist women entrepreneurs. I will ensure that information about this scheme and facilities are widely disseminated at the earliest through the National Women's Council and the National Women Entrepreneur Council operating under the aegis of my Ministry. This is to encourage participation of women in those sectors.

In fact, we have been hearing about what is being done there in the Ministry, The entrepreneur fair is for our entrepreneurs, whereas in the past, only one fair was being carried out per year, yielding of some Rs400,000 per year for the entrepreneurs. I can say in the last six months, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, we have organised no less than 15 fairs in less than six months, and in one of the fairs almost Rs900,000 for these women entrepreneurs.

So, these women entrepreneurs are being assisted and empowered in order to better themselves, improve themselves and grow in what they are doing. We cannot deny the difficulties faced by women entrepreneurs and with a view to moving on with technology, but with this Budget hinging very much on the importance of the technology, we are now developing an e-directory and an online boutique for our women entrepreneurs in the Council and in the Ministry. Of course, it will in time extend to all women entrepreneurs.

This project aims to empower women entrepreneurs and better promote their productivity with high sales and turnover. It has the objective to improve competitiveness and promote women entrepreneurs globally at the touch of a bottom.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, much has been said about the housing situation, that housing situation is at a very alarming rate, that there is a great problem of housing. Yes, that is undeniable; there is a great problem of housing. But just like the debt we inherited in 2014, again, we inherited a legacy with so many homeless and houseless people, with so many people who are squatting, that nothing has been done about it, with so many people who are living in just one CIS room with no facilities. Hon. Uteem, in his speech, made reference to problems in Vallée Pitot, the dire housing situations in Vallée Pitot, in Morcellement Manna. All across Port Louis, in fact, be it in La Cure, be it in Vallée des Prêtres, be it in Baie du Tombeau, in fact, the housing problem is a countrywide problem. But did it happen overnight? When we took office in 2014/2015, did we put these people on the road? No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! It is a legacy of the lethargy of the *maja karo* Government, which has left a legacy of people who are now homeless and rely on the State to assist them.

Of course, it is this Government which took the decision to build so many houses. I will not quibble about the figures. Let those who want to quibble, but, here, we are not quibbling in the schoolyard. Here, we are talking about serious business, about constructing houses for families. It is a serious matter. If those people who do not understand the meaning of families and a roof over their head, they will not understand what this Government is talking about. In any event, I went through the Budgets over the last 12-13 years and the reviews, and I kept looking and searching, and I searched and searched, and I could not come up with any incentives there to improve the condition of women. I did not come up with any measures to improve the conditions of our elderly. I did not see a single line on how to improve our vulnerable people's lives, except for pension, which is, of course, obligatory. So, other than that, I see nothing and no effort being made.

So, when we come up and say that in order to ensure that everybody has a roof over their head, now we are going to say *monter en hauteur n'est pas bien*. So, which is better? Staying in a CIS room which is going to be blown over - it's like the big wolf which comes to *les trois petits cochons* and I help, and I help, and I blow and I blow your house! Because what has been done to these people? They have come and they puffed and they blew away these people's houses because all the money that was supposed to go into construction has gone into the coffers! All these Rs220 m. and so many that we do not know have not been spent on people who deserved it to construct their house. *Mais est-ce qu'ils savent c'est quoi construire une maison ? Kass ene lakaz*, yes, because the husband is *chauffeur bus*, yes *nou kapav kass so lakaz! Mais construire lakaz*, do they know? Do they know the meaning of that in the previous Government?

So, now we are being criticised because we want to expedite matters, we want to build houses for them, but for the sake of criticising, they fail to see in what conditions these houses will be built. They fail to see the forward-thinking Government and the hon. Minister of Finance who has provided and ensured that all these constructions will have all the facilities that modern constructions should have such as crèches, recreational areas, living space and, of course, there will be syndic. But, please tell us where, in what complexes there are no problems of syndic. We just have to ensure that we deal and respect the conditions and ensure that all the *règlements* are being respected.

Now, let me turn, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to law and order. Law and order is very important, especially from the angle where I am, because not only is crime being combatted, but when crime is being combatted, then what happens is that we have a safer Mauritius, we

have safer families, and I have to mention the praised provisions that are being made. And, of course, they will be subject to Fire Arms Act, Regulation for those who are selling, for those who are buying and for those who are using. But *suffit de dire* the increased CCTV cameras, recruitment of 200 Women Police Constables, all these will help in this situation and for families, especially for women who need to go and report matters in Police Stations, to have more women in those Police Stations.

Now, may I turn to measures relating to my Ministry. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I stand here flabbergasted and shocked to hear hon. Mrs Perraud say she does not see anything new in this Budget for gender. I am shocked because this Budget places a whole chapter on gender equality, a whole pathway on gender equality, and this Budget talks about mainstreaming. A new, a groundbreaking measure, innovative, historical measure, and one feels to say that! Then, what have we been doing for the last magic two years in that seat, in that Government, if we fail to see that? We only see shelters? And I will come to shelters in a minute. We do not see anything, but that! Come on!

Gender equality, of course, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, does not happen by itself. It happens when there is the political will, and the political will was there in 1982. The living legend, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, his farsightedness, created a Ministry dedicated to women. He was the one to create that Ministry and almost half a century down the line, 24 years later, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth dedicates for the first time ever - and it's not me saying that, it's just not *le peuple*, because that, they will call the common people saying that.

I have talked to representatives of Embassies; I have talked to representatives from overseas, I have talked to those watching people for gender rights. All of them said this is groundbreaking and it is the first time that they have seen so much commitment towards gender balance, more opportunities for women, girls, such respect to women. Respect, a word which is much liked by the other side, but which is not appreciated by the other side! Respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because on this side of the House, we, a Minister like hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, yes, he will make women become women tycoons, but not through planting *cotomili*, not through only getting in duty free percentages of what is being put there for sale, not with only a certain category of women, compliant to certain demands, who will get outlets in all the big shopping centres. No! True women empowerment is found here, where a whole chapter talks about that.

I am told that I have to rush, but I have a few more things to say. So, I will rush through them very quickly. When we talk about gender equality, I dare say it is only smart policymakers who realise that gender equality has to become the essence, and if there is one word I will use, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to qualify this Budget Speech is that it is a gender responsive Budget.

If someone who sits at the head of the PAC does not see that, if someone who has sat for two years in that Ministry does not see that, they will never see. As I said, the Budget has fallen in the *basse-cour*. They are so busy running for their lives that they cannot decide what gender responsive budgeting means. Smart budgeting imposes an obligation on each Ministry to ensure that their budget planning is gender sensitive and responsive. Do we know what that means? No, we will not know, because what do we care? Because *on fait de la politique sur le malheur des autres*. This is what we care about. And I will come to that in a very short minute; the minute is becoming shorter by the second.

Gender equality, I have to say, is not just a question, is not a gift to a woman, it is her right, it is a human right. All the Conventions say it, everyone says it across the whole world, and if we do not appreciate what is being done to raise Mauritius on the African Gender Development Index Report, then we will never understand the meaning. Two years, 20 years, will still not be enough, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Now, talking about farsightedness, the Gender Equality Bill has been announced and the Prime Minister has shown his commitment so much so that he has included it in his Budget Speech, and that means that it will come. And watch out, it will come. We like it or not, it is going to come.

Now, let me very quickly talk about the allocation of Rs200,000 for gender mainstreaming in each Ministry and the gender focal points in each Ministry. Yes, hon. Mrs Perraud is not impressed at all with it. Why? Five Ministries have Rs200,000, *point à la ligne!* So, it is not new because five Ministries have it. No! Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo fought to have it for all the Ministries because it was on a pilot project. Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo ensured that for the whole year, it was implemented and that sum of money was applied. It is just not a question of giving Rs200,000 to each Ministry, it is ensuring that their policy is geared to gender mainstreaming, to being gender responsive, to being gender sensitive.

That is what is being given, and this sum has been maintained. If one does not know the value of it, so how can one be impressed by it? You have to know and understand. Then you will be impressed by it. When the hon. Prime Minister maintains it to this year, one has not read also in the Budget that he will ensure that it will be applied. So, he will ensure that the sum has been used as it should be. But if one does not understand why it was given, so how would one understand why it should be maintained for this year. It could have easily been said that it was given last year; so you are all now in the mainstream. *Comme on dit, on est branché sur Gender* and that it should not be allocated, and yet it was reallocated.

Now, very quickly, I will talk about the advances made by the National Women Council. I will talk about the advances made by the National Women Entrepreneur Council. Time is ticking; *même Cendrillon so soulier fini fonn at midnight!* It is three minutes past midnight, and I do not claim one! Far from it! But what I have to say...

(Interruptions)

I will disappear in a minute! It's already tomorrow! There is so much to say about the 14 weeks of maternity leave after less than 12 months' service; the minimum wage that was brought and now the tax incentive. Everybody has been talking about tax incentive in a very cursory manner that it has reduced tax. But do we realise the implication of Rs18,000 per person earning up to Rs50,000? For a couple, do we realise how much money that means? Do we realise the incentives of how it will increase *le pouvoir d'achat* of people so that the lives of family will be improved?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot respond lengthily about shelters, but I will say one thing. The shelters themselves were a legacy that we received. It was set up; it was created. We inherited the shelters. Do not forget, two magic years that hon. Mrs Perraud has been there. Yet, when she left the Ministry, there are problems. And she dared say nothing was implemented! May I ask something? You ask for a report, you leave the children in misery and you wait for a report or you start acting straightaway? A wise and caring person would start acting straightaway notwithstanding having requested and asked for a report! A wise and caring person! We care so much that we landscaped a garden with no boundary walls! Let the children loose in Pointe aux Sables! If they cross the streets and kill themselves, who cares! *J'ai mis mon jardin là, c'est tout!* No! We have to erect the boundary walls. We are not pocketing money. We have to erect it.

A hon. Minister who takes two years just to obtain a lease from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, I do not believe that! I have worked with hon. Soodhun. It does not take two years. So, if we could achieve just that in two years, do you expect us to build a boundary wall in two days? Hon. Mrs Perraud, be patient! I have not been there for two years, not even one year. Let us wait; we are working. We care for the interests of these children. We all have children and we care for their interests.

And for the *puces/punaises* story, my dear hon. Mrs Perraud, your informer should have informed you that, first of all, and as Minister of Gender to encourage taking pictures in shelters, this is against the law, because you have not been authorised, and you know the law. You should have not encouraged such practice. You should have come straight to me, as I did; I came back to this Parliament and told you the situation as to what we are doing with the company to treat the *puces* and *punaises*. We do not encourage people to take pictures secretly of shelters. Tomorrow, what other pictures will these people take, I wonder!

If people in there cannot be trusted and take pictures out, this is very serious, because they are failing to protect children in there. And for your dear informer, yes, those children were not on their beds for two days. Why? It is because there was precisely debugging and spraying of pesticides. We are not so inhuman as to put children to sleep with the bugs and the pesticides. Now, if you dare call your informer and ask for more pictures, you will see, Madam, that they are back in their beds. Much money has been applied to improve their condition.

Let's talk about colours. We do not paint the town blue or orange or red. The colour was a colour which was inherited, whatever colour it was. You had two years, dear former Minister, to change the colour. Two years, you could not paint the wall blue or whatever colour you would think appropriate and you tell us in six months we have not done it. And you dare tell us you care about these children! You left these children, 60 children, and we had to de-crowd. And we are still de-crowding. We go to a staircase which is so dangerous. We go to so many things which have to be redone. We go to a shelter in Cap Malheureux which has to be closed. A former *DWC atelier* converted into children shelter, and you say you care! You care only for Pointe aux Sables! You do not care for Cap Malheureux? You do not care for Goodlands? Care for the children of Mauritius! We care for all the children of Mauritius, equality with parity and we do not do politics on the back of children.

Yes, the Children's Bill is coming and I cannot end before talking about the Children's Bill. Yes, the Children's Bill is coming, but I am not taking two magic years for the Children's Bill. I challenge anyone who will say the Bill is ready because your own officers have said that the Bill has come back dismantled and we had to start all over again! The Bill is not ready yet, but it will be ready and it will not take two years. I guarantee that. I have the support of the hon. Attorney General that it will not take two years. The Bill will come and the Bill will be passed in Parliament. And now we expect, of course, very low comments on the Bill. I do not care. I will come with this Bill with the support of everyone in this House, for those who care for children.

We have incidents of children leaving the shelters. But we have had incidents not just today, not just yesterday, not just the day before; we have been having incidents for a long, long time. We have been having incidents and we are doing our utmost to improve the lives of these children. And you should know full well and be honest to the cause that the children that are put in the shelters of the Ministry are the children that not even the NGOs would take, but us, at the Ministry, *on ne fait pas de triage parmi les enfants. Que ce soit Cap Malheureux, que ce soit Pointe aux Sables, que ce soit Goodlands, les enfants sont les enfants de l'île Maurice. On ne fait pas de triage!*

We care for these children and Rs60 m. has been allocated to build a model shelter. We talk about inclusiveness. Do we even know the meaning of that? When I came in the Ministry, mentally ill children, mentally, psychiatrically disturbed children have nowhere to go. Probably because they do not live along the road of Pointe aux Sables maybe, that is why they do not have anywhere to go! But now we are working, and if you will look at today's newspaper, there is an advertisement for psychiatric nurses, specialist nurses to work with these children so that they are not running from pillar to post. That is called caring for children. And, yes, we care! This Government cares. We care for the respect of women. We care for the well-being of children - if I don't sit down very soon, no one will care to listen to me.

So, I have to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ramano!

(00.11 a.m.)

Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): M. le président, fidèle à mon habitude et aussi par respect pour cette Assemblée, je me limiterai aux dispositions prévues dans le présent budget.

Merci de me donner la possibilité d'intervenir sur le Budget 2018-2019. M. le président, aucun budget ne peut être totalement mauvais ni totalement bon. Il nous convient de l'apprécier selon les objectifs fixés, les problèmes et les défis à faire face, les opportunités à saisir et, bien sûr, les obstacles à surmonter.

Je compte analyser le budget à la lumière du programme gouvernemental, de ce qu'il reste de l'alliance Lepep, qu'il faut le dire, et le reconnaître, a été plébiscité par la population sur la base d'un programme.

Je commenterai aussi la performance du gouvernement, de ce qui est préconisé par Vision 2030.

L'île Maurice est toujours pris dans le piège du '*middle-income trap*'.

Bien que ce problème a été abordé dans le *Three Year Strategic Plan*, aucune mention concrète n'est faite dans le Budget 2018/2019 de la manière et de la date qu'on compte sortir du *middle-income trap*. On nous propose des mesures dans le court terme avec, semble-t-il, l'échéance électorale en tête, ou encore des mesures de complaisance comme si les indicateurs sont au vert ou encore tout est pour le mieux. Cela, à mon avis, est grossièrement irresponsable, M. le président, et je vais le démontrer. Tout ce qui risque de rendre le gouvernement impopulaire est tout simplement reporter à plus tard, ou tout simplement ignorer. Cela relève de l'irresponsabilité.

M. le président, prenons le cas de la récente augmentation du prix de l'essence. Tout le monde fut pris de court par l'augmentation massive et sans précédent du prix de l'essence. Nous savons tous que le prix est tributaire de la structure du prix pratiqué et qui est sous le contrôle du gouvernement. Le tollé soulevé, les partis politiques élèvent la voix. Les associations de consommateurs, en l'occurrence l'ACIM, fait une demande pour une manifestation. La police, fidèle à son rôle d'exécutant du gouvernement, met de l'avant toute sorte de *delaying tactics* avant de donner la permission pour manifester. La municipalité de Port Louis qui se croit être le propriétaire du Jardin de la Compagnie refusa toute permission de manifester. Pour combien de temps le gouvernement pratiquera-t-il la politique de l'autruche face à l'indignation de la population ?

Nous connaissons tous la règle de base d'un régime fiscal. Elle doit être équitable, la notion de justice sociale ne doit pas être ignorée, elle doit s'assurer que les personnes taxées sont en mesure de payer, la question de proportionnalité, la certitude des chiffres, sont autant de facteurs nécessaires pour une bonne pratique fiscale. Et le tout doit être intégré dans l'administration économique du pays. Toute personne sensée sera d'accord que l'augmentation massive ne représente aucunement ces règles de base de la taxation. La récente baisse suivant le budget est tout simplement insuffisante. La refonte du *Price Mechanism Structure* est un *must*. On est en train de taxer un produit qui est déjà taxé. Il n'y a pas lieu d'être un expert pour savoir que la différence qui existe entre le prix CIF à R 19 et le prix à la pompe d'environ R 50 est imputable au gouvernement qui a une marge de manœuvre évidente pour revoir la structure du prix.

Après le budget, malgré les grandes déclarations du ministre du commerce, comment se fait-il que le prix de l'essence et du diesel a été revu à la baisse sans aucune recommandation de *Pricing Committee*, ou encore sans la moindre réunion de ce comité, et on parle d'indépendance du *Pricing Committee*. Le *Pricing Committee* est-il un jouet entre les mains du ministre des Finances. Cela est dangereux pour la démocratie et pour la bonne gouvernance des institutions et pour l'indépendance de ce même *Pricing Committee*. Le *Pricing Committee* est aujourd'hui un *rubber stamp*.

Dans cette saga pétrolière, on ne peut passer sous silence le rôle infect de la MBC/TV et radio. Nous sommes en 2018, les *Spin Doctors* en communication du PMO et de la MBC croient toujours pouvoir manipuler l'opinion publique,

Après la baisse annoncée dans le budget suivant la hausse massive, la MCB s'empresse à aller faire du micro-trottoir pour refléter le sentiment de satisfaction dans la population. Et, bien sûr, comme par magie, aucune des personnes interviewées n'avaient des réserves, aucune personne interviewée n'a critiqué la structure de prix ou encore la torture infligée aux consommateurs par la STC avec des réserves accumulées sur le dos des consommateurs.

M. le président, cette scène nous rappelle l'histoire d'*Animal Farm* de George Orwell, où toutes les poules sont venues confesser un crime qu'elles n'avaient pas commis. '*Pursuing notre transformative journey*' avec la MBC. Est-ce que la MBC aujourd'hui est une image de ce gouvernement ? Cette saga pétrolière nous a démontré autre chose, M. le président. Quel a été l'agenda, le programme de ce gouvernement pour diminuer notre dépendance sur le *fossil*

fuel depuis les élections de 2014. Quelle a été notre politique de diversification en matière de production énergétique. Là nous explorons une occasion à diminuer notre déficit du compte courant qui est largement attribuable à notre importation massive des produits pétroliers.

Year in year out, M. le président, on nous annonce le *big bang* en ce qui concerne la diversification de l'*Ocean Economy* en matière de production énergétique. Mais nous sommes toujours enclins à gaspiller nos ressources sur les *low-value products* qui font un tort immense à l'environnement.

Sous les gouvernements précédents, Maurice s'était fixée comme objectif de générer 35% de ces besoins énergétiques à travers des énergies renouvelables. Plusieurs pays qui ont exploré ces avenues bien après nous ont augmenté la part des énergies renouvelables dans leur production énergétique. Ici, à l'île Maurice, nous nous efforçons chaque année dans ces *middle-income trap* parce que ce gouvernement a fait de sa survie politique une priorité. Les problèmes l'attendent et chronique du pays s'aggravent d'année en année. Jusqu'à présent, on est à seulement 21% de notre consommation énergétique à travers l'énergie renouvelable. L'industrie de la canne à sucre est une source d'énergie renouvelable.

On n'est pas en train d'inventer la roue. Les petits planteurs sont laissés dans une fatalité et sont laissés à une mort certaine. On doit avouer que nous avons un bilan honteux en termes de diversification de notre industrie cannière. La production énergétique est certainement une des options. Cela nécessitera une plus grande production de la canne. Le ministre de l'Agriculture est aujourd'hui incapable de chiffrer les arpents de cannes qui sortiront de la plantation de cannes pour faire de la place aux PDS, aux *Smart Cities* et autres morcellements grâcement alloués aux propriétés sucrières sans avoir à payer de *Land Conversion Tax*, s'il vous plaît.

A l'île de la Réunion, à côté les entrepreneurs sont à produire des sacs en plastique biodégradables et de l'énergie. Pourquoi ne pouvons-nous pas en faire de même à Maurice ? Il fut un temps où l'île Maurice était reconnue comme une référence dans la production à moindre coût. Avons-nous le courage aujourd'hui de reconnaître que nous avons eu tort de laisser nos *prime agricultural lands* sous l'emprise d'une spéculation foncière sauvage. Depuis 2017, nous le savons tous, c'est la fin de l'ère de quotas. Les usiniers, les planteurs, les laboureurs, les artisans ont besoin des réponses. Le gouvernement est venu de l'avant avec un *Joint Technical Committee* où des représentants des ministères sont parmi les rédacteurs

d'un rapport incendiaire. Aujourd'hui, l'enfant est né, le rapport est publié, les acquis des travailleurs sont menacés, et personne ne veut assumer la paternité de ce rapport.

Encore pire, M. le président, le présent budget fait une abstraction totale de l'industrie de la canne. Peut-on imaginer ce *transformative journey* sans l'industrie sucrière ?

M. le président, permettez-moi d'aborder des paramètres qui sont d'importance pour évaluer la santé économique du pays, la croissance économique du pays. Le gouvernement nous a archi répété que leur objectif est le deuxième miracle économique. Ce slogan ronflant semble-t-il a disparu du discours de ce gouvernement. Pourtant la Vision 2030 nous affirme que le pays s'est fixé comme objectif une croissance de 4,5%. Vision 2030 souligne aussi le fait que de 2009 à 2015, le taux de croissance moyenne est de 3,7%. En fait, quand la croissance mondiale a été de 3,8% à Maurice, la croissance a été de 3,5% sous le présent gouvernement. La croissance n'a été que de 3,1% en 2015, 3,6% en 2016, 3,5% en 2017.

A souligner, M. le président, que 25 pays africains affichent une croissance supérieure à Maurice pendant ces trois dernières années, un rang que le gouvernement semble avoir oublié.

Quand on entend le ministre des Finances parler de porter Maurice à un *high-income status*, on est en droit de douter avec un tel bilan. Lord Desai, *ex-Vice-Chancellor* de la *London School of Economics* est chargé par le gouvernement à chapeauter l'activité Fintech, est catégorique, au train où vont les choses, le *high-income country status* est impossible avant cinq ans.

En termes de dollars américains, nous n'avons pas fait d'énormes progrès. À un taux d'échange donné en 2014, notre *income per capita* avait atteint 10,000 US Dollar. Mais en 2015, selon Vision 2030, notre *income per capita* était de 9,780 US Dollar. Avec une projection de R 432.7 milliards en 2018 l'*income per capita* sera de 10,000 US Dollar, soit le même niveau qu'on était en 2014. Avec l'appréciation du dollar intentionnel, il est clair qu'on n'atteindra pas les 12,360 US Dollar fixés pour l'année courante.

L'investissement et l'épargne, les parents pauvres du bilan de ce présent gouvernement, M. le président. Plusieurs études ont démontré que Maurice a le potentiel d'un taux de croissance à 5%. L'investissement en pourcentage du PIB a été de 17%. Le PIB a besoin d'un taux de 25% pour être dans la fourchette de 5% à 6% de croissance. Autre élément à considérer le *capital investment*, autre preuve de *mismanagement* de ressources.

Dans le dernier budget, le ministre des Finances a alloué R 18 milliards. Malgré les annonces en grande pompe, les projets d'infrastructures d'envergure tardent trop.

À titre d'exemple, le Phoenix Flyover Bridge est resté au stage d'une très belle maquette. Pourquoi cela, M. le président ? Quelle stratégie cette lenteur est censée satisfaire ? Les bouchons et *le trafic jam* à la longueur des journées, rien de concret comme solution après quatre ans ! La question qu'on est en droit de se poser est: sommes-nous en train de retarder le *Decongestion Programme* pour légitimer le *Metro Express* ?

Autre exemple, regardons ce qu'il advient aujourd'hui de la NTC. Pratiquement plus d'investissements substantiels, idem pour les recrutements à la NTC. Est-ce que le *Metro Express* demande à ce qu'on laisse pourrir la situation ? Des R 18 milliards du budget de capital *earmarked* seulement la somme de R 13,5 milliards a été injectée dans l'économie. Pour masquer cet *underspending* la somme de R 2 milliards est maintenant budgétée à l'*Environment Fund* au lieu du *Consolidated Fund*.

Le *savings* - autre indicateur, M. le président. Il y a une stagnation générale du taux de *domestic savings* à 10,5% du PIB. Aucune mention dans le budget comment renverser cette tendance à la baisse. Toutefois ce *shortfall* est compensé par le *foreign savings*. Cela est dangereux dans la structure du *wealth ownership* des *domestic assets* dans le pays.

Employment rate, il faut le dire, la création d'emplois est un des rares secteurs qui affichent une tendance positive. Le taux d'*unemployment* à 9% 10 ans de cela est à 7,1% aujourd'hui. Il y a de bonnes raisons de croire que cette tendance s'accroîtra. *The devil is in the details*, M. le président. L'héritage est lourd pour les générations à venir. Le secteur privé a créé très peu d'emplois ces trois dernières années. Le nombre de sans-emploi est absorbé par des *training programmes* temporaires initiés par le gouvernement.

La force policière atteindra bientôt 13,000 personnes, pour la norme internationale, ce ratio est élevé en tenant compte de la population du pays. Une hausse d'emplois dans la fonction publique n'affectera en rien la croissance du pays. Le taux du chômage dans la tranche d'âge de 16 à 25 ans est un sujet de grande préoccupation.

Autre index international est l'*International Reserve*. La réserve en devises a augmenté à 11 mois du coût d'importation. Certaines personnes applaudiront. Mais les analystes de l'économie vous diront que la norme internationale est de quatre mois des importations. Bien qu'il nous appartient à prévoir des chocs financiers internationaux, il est de notre devoir de nous assurer qu'une trop grande réserve en devises n'entraîne pas une

roupie forte, et par la même diminuer la compétitivité du secteur manufacturier, qu'il faut le dire, est un autre parent pauvre de ce budget.

M. le président, je me suis attelé dans cette partie de mon discours à souligner l'importance de prendre en considération des fondamentaux, des paramètres, des indicateurs lorsqu'on analyse un budget. Tout législateur qui se respecte doit reconnaître que la permanence de l'État est une règle de base pour assurer le progrès et encore la démocratie d'un pays, et quel que soit notre bord politique.

Qu'en est-il de la pension de vieillesse? Le vieillissement de la population, l'affermage, parlons plus de l'arrimage d'une CWA en déclin. L'industrie sucrière attend des réponses, M. le président. Diminuer le taux de la taxation, diminuer le prix du gaz ménager, jouer au Père Noël aux frais de l'État, c'est de tomber dans la facilité. Il nous appartient d'aborder l'avenir avec un devoir de vérité à la population. Ne soyez pas surpris d'apprendre que nous sommes le 27^{ème} pays en Afrique en termes de croissance selon le *Global Finance*, 21^{ème} mondiale selon l'*Heritage Index*, 71^{ème} de l'*Income Per Capita* comme un pourcentage du PIB, *Ease of Doing Business*, nous sommes *below the benchmark* des *top 10*. Faire le budget d'un État, M. le président, c'est bien plus que d'être populaire.

M. le président, j'ai quelques questions à poser et je souhaite que bienveillamment les techniciens du ministère des Finances qui sont présents, apporteront éventuellement des réponses à travers leur *parent Ministry*. M. le président, au paragraphe 240 du budget, mention est faite de la nécessité de canaliser les fonds destinés aux *NGOs* à travers la *National CSR Foundation*. Nous savons tous que la *National CSR Foundation* travaille sur ce qu'on appelle des *programme-based* ou des *project-based*. Il existe aujourd'hui des *established NGOs* comme L'ACIM, le *Mauritius Family Planning* et autres qui dépendent des *grants* de leurs ministères respectifs. Par exemple, la *Mauritius Family Planning* dépend du ministère de la Santé. Ces *established NGOs* ont des *fixed costs* comme l'allocation des bureaux et des staffs attitrés. Mon appel au ministre est de faire la distinction entre ces *established NGOs* avec des objectifs définis, qui pendant des années dépendent de leur ministères respectifs, pour leurs *grants*. Ils ne peuvent être mis sous le même enseigne que les *NGOs* avec des projets ponctuels.

M. le président, je souhaite attirer l'attention du ministre des Finances de la mesure annoncée au paragraphe 289 préconisant une réduction de l'*income tax* de 15% à 10% pour ceux qui ont un salaire annuel de R 305,000 à R 650,000. M. le président, l'idée est d'avoir

une taxe progressive. Il est important que les techniciens des Finances s'attellent à s'assurer que cela ne cause pas d'injustice pour ceux touchant plus de R 650,000. Je m'explique.

Pour quelqu'un qui touche R 655,000 avoir, par exemple, bénéficié d'une augmentation de R 5,000, se trouvant en termes absolus avec une taxe de R 98,250 soit 15% de R 655,000, alors que son augmentation sur l'année a été de R 5,000 seulement ! Cette même personne lorsqu'il avait un salaire de R 650,000 n'avait payé que R 65,000 de taxe à 10% en termes absolus. Et cela représente une différence d'environ R 30,250, alors que son augmentation a été seulement de R 5,000. Il serait plus juste, M. le président, qu'un taux progressif soit appliqué comme suit : de R 305,000 à R 650,000 un taux de 10% et de R 650,000 *onwards* un taux de 15%.

M. le président, je me réfère maintenant à la mesure annoncée au paragraphe 194 du budget: *“consumers and business will fully benefit from the loan facilities offered by commercial banks without necessarily having to finance part of the property upfront.”* Déjà dans le budget 2013, le ministre des Finances d'alors, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval avait annoncé: *“banks will only require 5% as minimum downpayment on the purchase of a property. This means that banks will advance loans up to 95%.”*

Malgré la bonne volonté affichée à cette époque, aucune banque n'a été en mesure d'appliquer cette mesure. Aucune banque! D'une part, la Banque de Maurice donnait des directives contraignantes et d'autre part les banques sont toujours libres de déterminer à la base *l'évaluation report des assets*, le *repayment capacity* des emprunteurs, de fixer quelle sera la part de contribution des clients. Même aujourd'hui, aucune provision légale ; je le répète, M. le président, même aujourd'hui, aucune provision légale ne peut forcer les banques à financer à hauteur de 100%.

Cela est peut-être vrai pour la DBM, cela est peut-être vrai pour la *Mauritius Housing* qui dépend uniquement du gouvernement, mais les banques privées n'ont aucune obligation à respecter cela parce que c'est contraire au droit à la propriété privée. C'est autant plus vrai pour le business. Parce qu'il faut bien le souligner, cette mesure gouvernementale, qui est annoncée dans le présent budget, fait la part belle, supposément, à l'acquisition des *property* pour les personnes, pour les individus, et aussi pour les business. Pour les business, c'est d'autant plus grave. Le critère d'opération des banques est d'autant plus sévère. Pour les business, chaque banque est libre d'*assess* la viabilité des *business plans*, et j'ai bien peur, M. le président, que cette mesure sera lettre morte.

M. le président, permettez-moi d'aborder ici un élément qui est le signe d'accomplissement d'une vie ; le signe de la réussite sociale, qui est l'acquisition de son terrain, la possibilité d'avoir un toit pour soi. Tous les gouvernements successifs, depuis l'indépendance jusqu'aujourd'hui, se sont rendus à l'évidence que l'embourgeoisement des Mauriciens, gravir l'échelon social, la réussite sociale ne se fait pas du jour au lendemain. C'est tout un processus qui concerne l'éducation, l'épargne, le dur labeur d'une génération à une autre. Mais avant tout, ce qui est le plus important c'est que le rôle des gouvernements successifs ne s'est pas limité à un rôle de spectateur. Le gouvernement a un rôle de régulateur.

Mais pour passer d'un pays à faibles revenus en 1968 à un pays à hauts revenus par tête d'habitant, il faut que le rôle de l'État soit interventionniste. Je m'explique, M. le président. Nous avons adopté l'économie du marché, le système capitaliste, certes, mais il ne faut pas avoir honte ; la particularité du pays, la sensibilité de la population, la précarité de la famille mauricienne fait que le rôle du gouvernement doit être interventionniste.

Un des signes de l'intervention de l'État a été l'introduction du *Welfare State* et sa sauvegarde par les différents gouvernements. Pourquoi le *Welfare State* ? C'est de reconnaître que le Mauricien mérite une protection de l'État pour atteindre un niveau de vie décent. Cette intervention de l'État a permis à de nombreux Mauriciens au bas de l'échelle et de la classe moyenne de devenir propriétaires de leurs terrains et de leurs maisons. Ces mesures sont nombreuses. On a eu des logements sociaux, des prêts à des conditions avantageuses, des morcellements *VRS*, le *first-time buyer* qui permet l'exemption de la taxe sous certaines conditions lors des premières acquisitions. Ces mesures sont un *must* car le Mauricien moyen mérite une protection de l'État pour pouvoir acquérir un terrain, pour pouvoir acquérir un logement décent.

Autre intervention de l'État, a été, M. le président, la promulgation du *Non-Citizen Restriction Property Act*. Pourquoi cette loi à la source, M. le président ? C'est parce que l'offre du foncier, l'offre de la terre est limitée. Il convient de donner priorité aux Mauriciens. C'est aussi parce que le Mauricien moyen n'a pas et n'aura pas les moyens pour concurrencer les étrangers venant des pays à hauts revenus. La loi de l'offre et de la demande ne sera jamais appliquée indistinctement aux étrangers et aux Mauriciens. C'est la mauvaise économie ; c'est la mauvaise théorie, M. le président. Il ne faut pas être un expert ou un consultant de l'immobilier pour reconnaître cela. Il suffit de vivre avec la réalité mauricienne, que ce soit dans les villes ou dans les villages.

On a assisté à l'introduction du *Business Facilitation Act* ; on a assisté à l'introduction de l'*Investment Promotion Act*. Toutes ces lois, M. le président, dans un souci d'accueillir des étrangers avec une certaine compétence, avec un certain revenu. On a introduit dans le passé le concept de l'*Integrated Resort Scheme*, avec des conditions spécifiques quant aux superficies de terrain à être vendues, quant au prix, avec un seuil à respecter. Ensuite, nous avons eu le *Real Estate Scheme* où possibilité a été donnée aux propriétaires de terrain de moindre envergure d'avoir accès à la clientèle étrangère, mais toujours avec des conditions imposées par le *Prime Minister's Office*, avec des conditions imposées par le *BOI*.

Permettez-moi de citer le ministre Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo lors de la présentation de son Budget 2015-2016 -

“We are deeply concerned with the adverse impact of IRS and RES projects on our society. (...) The most serious is that many of these projects (...) have become enclaves, which constitute a serious risk to the very fabric of our society. (...) Our aim is to ensure inclusive development, (...) doing away with gated communities and providing for a wide range of living, employment and leisure opportunities to both locals and foreigners.”

Sortant de sa méditation politique, le ministre des Finances d'alors doit se rendre à l'évidence aujourd'hui qu'on continue à créer de véritables ghettos pour les riches. Et cette mesure budgétaire qui a été annoncée dans ce présent budget, M. le président, nous fait peur. Moi-même, en tant que professionnel de l'immobilier, cela aurait dû me réjouir, mais cela me fait peur, M. le président. Bien que je ne sois pas totalement contre l'idée de la possibilité d'achat par les étrangers, dans les cas spécifiques, il nous appartient en tant que législateurs de déterminer dans une politique d'aménagement du territoire dans le long terme des régions spécifiques - je dis bien des régions spécifiques du pays - où le *Property Development Scheme* ou encore les *Smart Cities* peuvent être aménagées. Nous avons un devoir vis-à-vis de la population locale de protéger la spécificité culturelle de nos quartiers dans les villes et dans les villages.

Les récents amendements de ce gouvernement au *Non-Citizen Restriction Property Act* permettent aux étrangers, détenteurs ou pas d'un *Occupational Permit*, d'un *professional licence* ou l'*Investor's licence*, n'importe quel étranger, sans le contrôle à priori du *Prime Minister's Office*, de faire une application au *BOI* pour acquérir un appartement dans un complexe qui fait plus de *ground plus 2*. Le dernier amendement du *Non-Citizen Restriction*

Property Act ne fait aucune obligation de conditions sauf que le projet doit être *ground plus 2*, avec un prix minimum de R 6 millions.

Un autre amendement, M. le président, concerne les *business and commercial premises*, et tenez-vous bien, sans aucune restriction en termes de prix pour les *commercial premises*. C'est quoi des *commercial premises* ? Ce sont tout simplement des locaux commerciaux qui ont eu une licence du *District Council* ou des municipalités. On parle ici des tabagies, des boutiques de quartiers, des vidéos clubs, des *filling stations*, des snacks. C'est le bilan de ce présent gouvernement. Pour les *commercial premises*, il n'y a aucune condition attachée, M. le président. Allez voir ce qui se passe dans les quartiers de Flic-en-Flac, de Rivière Noire, de Grand' Baie, dans votre circonscription, M. le président, de Trou aux Biches où des petits commerces sont aujourd'hui accaparés par des étrangers. Pour les *commercial premises*, il n'y a aucune restriction de prix. Est-ce qu'on se rend compte aujourd'hui de la menace que cela représente pour les Mauriciens qui doivent faire face à ce type de concurrence ?

Le FDI est un indicateur important de la santé économique d'un pays. Nous le savons tous. Quels types d'investissements aux capitaux étrangers préconisons-nous ? L'entrée de nouvelles technologies, des emplois durables, un *know-how* managérial, non pas des *one-off transactions* que représentent les transactions immobilières.

Aujourd'hui, avant de se vanter d'avoir attiré des capitaux étrangers, le FDI R 13,6 milliards en 2016, R 14,2 milliards en 2017. Mais de ces chiffres-là, M. le président, il faut se rendre à l'évidence qu'en 2016, de ces R 13,6 milliards, R 9,9 milliards proviennent uniquement de l'immobilier. De ces R 14,2 milliards en 2017, R 8,7 milliards provenaient uniquement de l'immobilier. Le *manufacturing sector* ne représente que 0,8% du FDI. On parle de '*Pursuing our Transformative Journey*'. Il n'y a pas de quoi se vanter, M. le président. Ce gouvernement a failli dans sa tâche d'encourager les investissements productifs de capitaux étrangers. Bien au contraire, il n'est pas exagéré aujourd'hui de dire que les Mauriciens risquent de se retrouver comme des étrangers dans leur propre pays.

M. le président, donner la citoyenneté à un étranger relève toujours d'une décision sujette à des conditions strictes. Même la citoyenneté pour des raisons économiques sous, par exemple, l'*Investment Promotion Act*, a toujours été sujette à une contribution en termes de *know-how*, d'investissement et de professionnalisme dans un domaine particulier. Venir proposer la citoyenneté contre paiement de R 17 millions pour un passeport, R 36 millions

pour la nationalité Mauricienne n'a rien d'une idée de génie '*to meet capital projects and public debt repayments*', comme mentionné au paragraphe 109 du budget.

Ce gouvernement visionnaire n'a rien trouvé de mieux pour payer la dette publique. Quelle que soit notre appartenance politique, on doit reconnaître qu'aucun gouvernement n'est tombé dans une telle facilité, dans une telle légèreté sous prétexte de renflouer les caisses de l'État. Cette décision est non seulement dangereuse, elle est indécente. Elle est insultante pour la population locale. Elle est menaçante pour la paix sociale du pays.

Donner la nationalité Mauricienne à quelqu'un, c'est lui donner le droit de tout citoyen du pays. Il aura le droit de vote ; le droit de bénéficier du *Welfare State*. Si on a la nationalité Mauricienne, on a droit à l'éducation gratuite, santé gratuite. Et pourquoi pas la pension de vieillesse ! Le gros du danger viendra avec la possibilité d'acquérir toute superficie de terrain dans n'importe quel coin et recoin des villes et villages du pays. Il n'y a pas lieu d'être expert pour savoir que priorité sera donnée à l'étranger qui proposera un prix plus cher que le Mauricien.

Les auditeurs ont bien ri lorsqu'ils ont écouté le ministre Sinatambou à la radio, pour dire que le vieillissement de la population est un sujet préoccupant. Et pour pallier ce problème, on vend la nationalité Mauricienne.

Le comble, M. le président, on parle de vieillissement, mais au paragraphe 111 du budget, il est dit -

"Government will also offer a new package of fiscal and non-fiscal facilities to attract foreign retirees."

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Thierry Henry! Please!

(Interruptions)

Yes, hon. Minister, you may take your point of order!

Mr Sinatambou: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is not what I said on the radio. The hon. Member should not mislead the House!

The Deputy Speaker: I take note of same!

Mr Ramano: Ce que je dis, M. le président, c'est que le ministre a dit que le vieillissement de la population est un sujet préoccupant et pour pallier ce problème, il y a lieu d'encourager des personnes à acquérir la nationalité Mauricienne.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Thierry Henry, allow me to listen to the speech of hon. Ramano!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Henry, out!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Henry, out!

(Interruptions)

You have to behave if you want to address the Chair! I order you out!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ramano, please resume!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ramano: M. le président...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry, I order you out!

Mr Ramano: M. le président, au paragraphe 111 du budget...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry, I order you out!

(Interruptions)

Allow me to listen to the speech!

(Interruptions)

I know how many minutes the hon. Member has been sitting here today. He comes here only to disturb other hon. Members who are addressing the Chair!

Mr Ramano: M. le président, merci. Donc, le comble, M. le président, est qu'on parle de vieillissement, mais au paragraphe 111 du budget...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry, I order you out! I suspend the sitting for ten minutes.

At 00.47 a.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 1.13 a.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Thierry Henry!

Mr Henry: M. le président, je présente mes excuses à l'honorable Kavidass Ramano d'avoir interrompu son discours.

The Deputy Speaker: Et à la Chambre également.

Mr Henry: Et à la Chambre également.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Thierry Henry, your apologies are most exceptionally accepted and this is intended to be a warning to all hon. Members. All hon. Members have equal rights, nobody has a lesser right or a greater right than any others, especially even if a hon. Member has no party, even if he is standing alone in this Assembly, he can or she can rely on the Chair that he will be treated fairly and his voice will be heard and I will see to it that he is not disrupted in his speech to address this Assembly.

Hon. Ramano, please resume from where you stopped.

Mr Ramano: Merci, M. le président, je me sens rassuré.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, j'étais sous l'item – le vieillissement de la population. Le vieillissement de la population, M. le président, est un sujet de préoccupation pour le pays comme c'est un sujet de préoccupation pour le gouvernement. Mais pour dégourdir un peu l'atmosphère, je souhaite citer le paragraphe 111 du budget –

“Government will also offer a new package of fiscal and non-fiscal facilities to attract foreign retirees.”

Il semble, M. le président, que le gouvernement a découvert un nouveau filon des vieux pondeurs et pondeuses étrangers qui viendront résoudre le problème de vieillissement de la population dans le pays. M. le président, les députés de l'opposition ne sont pas les seuls à critiquer ouvertement le danger de cette mesure. Il y a les journalistes, il y a aussi des économistes de renom comme Pierre Dinan qui a déclaré, je cite –

« En tant que citoyen mauricien, je suis très mal à l'aise avec le fait d'octroyer la nationalité mauricienne à travers notre passeport et je suis contre l'apport d'argent. Du point de vue économique, cette mesure fait croire que Maurice est un pays largement dépourvu de ressources. Certains tous petits États insulaires ont adopté cette politique parce qu'ils n'ont pratiquement pas de ressources. Ce qui n'est pas notre cas en 50 ans d'indépendance, nous avons pu mettre en avant nos ressources et nous aspirons à devenir un pays à hauts revenus. »

M. le président, le progrès d'un homme, le progrès d'une femme, d'un gouvernement, le progrès d'un pays ne se construit pas uniquement en vantant ses qualités ou ses vertus, mais aussi en faisant preuve d'humilité, d'honnêteté, pour identifier et reconnaître ses erreurs parce que vendre le passeport et la nationalité mauricienne est bien plus qu'une erreur, c'est une menace pour le pays. M. le président, sous le titre - *Moving Mauritius on the Fintech Journey*, mention est faite que la FSC mettra en place « *guidelines on investment in crypto currency* ».

Un phénomène mondial, M. le président, qui prend une ampleur alarmante et qui mérite une attention particulière du gouvernement en place. Je parle ici, bien sûr, du *blockchain* ou la *crypto-monnaie* et le *cryptocurrency* en anglais. La banque de Maurice, M. le président, qui est la garante de la stabilité de la monnaie mauricienne, de la monnaie quelle que soit sa forme est aujourd'hui bizarrement silencieuse, après avoir tiré la sonnette d'alarme en deux occasions en ce qui concerne la crypto-monnaie.

Le 18 décembre 2013, et le 09 août 2017 quand à la volatilité et le *risk element* d'une façon très explicite - *The Bank wishes to inform the public that one coin and other crypto currencies are not issued or guaranteed by the Bank. Users of crypto currencies are exposed to risks. The public is advised that exchange platforms for crypto currencies are unregulated.* Au mois d'octobre 2017, M. le président, la SBM prend à contre-pied la banque de Maurice et annonce même un partenariat avec la compagnie *SALT* qui est le *Secured Automated Lending Technology*, qui permet aux clients pas seulement de se servir du *BitCoin* et du *Ethereum ether*, deux des *crypto currencies* mais aussi pour servir comme collatéraux, comme garantie pour les loans.

Les *crypto currencies* comme garantie pour des facilités bancaires, il n'en existe aucune provision légale dans le pays, M. le président. Nous parlons ici, M. le président, de la deuxième plus grande banque du pays avec 25% des parts du marché avec des subsidiaires au

Kenya, Madagascar, l'Inde, SBM Group est listée au *Stock Exchange of Mauritius* et à environ 1700 actionnaires étrangers ou nationaux. M. le président, après les épisodes du Bramer Bank et de la défunte MPCB, ni le gouvernement du pays ni les *taxpayers* mauriciens ne peuvent continuer à jouer au Père Noël au *toxic loans* et aux garantis bidons qui ont failli pousser le pays à la faillite.

Les crypto-monnaies, M. le président, ont la particularité de ne pas être régulées par des organismes d'État et elle assure l'anonymat de leurs utilisateurs. Les risques qu'elles peuvent servir aux activités illicites comme le blanchiment d'argent ou le financement du terrorisme sont bien réels.

Dans une réponse suite à mon PQ, dans un *written reply* en date du 14 Novembre 2017, le ministre des Finances déclara, *inter alia* –

« *The Committee on Payment and Market Infrastructures of the Bank for International Settlement (BIS) which, in its membership, includes the Bank of England, Bank of Canada and Federal Reserve Bank, has issued a paper on Central Bank-issued digital currency - a framework that will make transactions transparent as opposed to those made by any anonymously issued cryptocurrencies.* »

On the other hand, Central Banks of Canada and Sweden have tested practical uses of central bank-issued digital currencies.

À Maurice, dans l'absence d'un cadre réglementaire légal adéquat régissant la crypto-monnaie, la réglementation *Sandbox* a été adoptée par l'*Economic Development Board* voté le 19 juillet 2017. Et ce *Sandbox*, M. le président, malheureusement, semble devenir le fourre-tout par excellence. Tout à l'heure, mes amis députés, les parlementaires ont souligné ce rôle de super ministère, de *Superman* de l'*Economic Development Board*. L'*Economic Development Board*, à travers le *Sandbox*, est devenu ce super ministère qui se donnait le rôle de palier les lourdeurs administratives ou encore, tenez-vous bien, l'absence des lois existantes pour les *start-ups*.

La vocation première du *Sandbox*, M. le président, il faut le dire, consiste à plonger les jeunes entreprises de technologies dans un bac à sable où elle expérimente leurs activités en étant pour un temps exempté d'obligations réglementaires. Les professionnels sont sceptiques quant à la possibilité du *Sandbox* de gérer ce *Fintech World*. Ramesh Caussy, une des fiertés mauriciennes, opère aujourd'hui dans le grand secteur au niveau mondial. Je cite –

« Malgré l'apparence d'ouverture que laisse présager le *Sandbox Licensing* en tentant de protéger les espaces sans régulation qui pouvaient nuire à l'île Maurice ou à sa réputation, est-ce que l'île Maurice dispose des compétences pour le filtrage des dossiers. François de Senneville, partenaire responsable de l'Afrique, du Cabinet *Fieldfisher*, Paris, est sceptique quant à son efficacité. Je ne suis pas sûr de saisir totalement ce que le concept *Sandbox Licensing* apportera de plus sauf à créer de l'incertitude qui vendrait complexifier la vie des affaires. »

M. le président, le *Fintech*, le *cryptocurrency*, dépasse une simple transaction à travers le *blockchain*. On parle aujourd'hui de donner le *cryptocurrency* comme collatéral, comme garantie pour des emprunts.

M. le président, le *cryptocurrency* dépasse une simple transaction à travers le *Blockchain*. On parle aujourd'hui de donner le *cryptocurrency* comme collatéral, comme garantie pour les emprunts, comme le fait la SBM. Les professionnels ne sont guère rassurés que les garanties sont protégées sous le *Securities Act*.

L'honorable ministre des Services Financiers, depuis novembre 2017, a annoncé en grande pompe que la Banque de Maurice, la FSC et d'autres institutions travaillent dans un cadre régulateur. Après sept mois, les professionnels du secteur attendent toujours le fameux rapport. Le *Fintech and Innovative Driven Financial Services Regulatory Committee* a siégé pour la première fois le 09 février 2018. Nous sommes au mois de juin et toujours aucun rapport de ce comité, M. le président.

Il faut se rendre à l'évidence qu'en l'absence d'un cadre régulateur, il y a tout lieu de donner toute son importance au signal d'alarme des banques centrales, de la Chine, par exemple, de la France qui ont attiré l'attention de tout un chacun sur la volatilité des cours et de l'absence de toute protection légale. À cet effet, M. le président, le Président Macron, lors d'une conférence à Paris, a mis en garde contre le risque que la crypto-monnaie soit utilisée comme financement des organisations terroristes.

A souligner aussi qu'en mars 2018, les ministres des Finances du G20 ont refusé de considérer le *Bitcoin* et autres crypto-monnaies comme des monnaies souveraines et appellent à lutter contre le blanchiment et le financement du terrorisme.

M. le président, après chaque hausse des actions, des portefeuilles d'investissement, comme ici, la crypto-monnaie, il y a un engouement. C'est la nature même de l'humain. En

2017, le prix du Bitcoin est passé de 985 US dollars en janvier 2017 à 19,186 US dollars à mi-décembre 2017. C'était le décollage du *initial coin offering*.

M. le président, la crypto-monnaie n'est pas une mode, n'est pas un *fashion* financier mais bel et bien aujourd'hui un moyen de paiement et de spéculation, sans l'autorité d'aucune institution régulatrice. Je ne porte pas maintenant, M. le président mon chapeau de professionnel ou mon chapeau d'investisseur, mais j'assume mes responsabilités en tant que parlementaire. La crypto-monnaie concerne la sécurité des transactions et la fiscalité. Il faut savoir évaluer quelle sera le volume de la *tax evasion* que nous devons subir dans les semaines ou dans les mois à venir, M. le président. Nous sommes en train de parler du blanchiment d'argent. Il y va de la réputation de l'économie mauricienne et aussi de la lutte contre le terrorisme. Mon appel : *A call for extreme caution !* L'État doit intervenir pour réguler ce secteur, M. le président.

M. le président, permettez-moi d'aborder, ici, le projet de *Safe City* qui fut annoncé, une première fois, lors de la présentation du précédent budget 2017-2018 où un chiffre de R 440 millions a été annoncé. Le projet est annoncé à nouveau dans le présent budget, mais aucun chiffre n'a été annoncé. Les seuls éléments annoncés dans le présent budget est l'installation de 4,000 *intelligent surveillance cameras*, 4,500 *trunking smart handsets*, 500 *trunking vehicle radios* et un *Emergency Response System*.

M. le président, comment peut-on parler de *Pursuing the Transformative Journey*, sans une culture de transparence, d'*accountability*, de bonne gouvernance? Pourquoi autant d'opacité? L'argent des contribuables n'est pas notre propriété, qu'on soit plébiscité par les mauriciens.

Je termine là-dessus, M. le président. Il y a des règles de base de gestion financière à respecter et non pas tomber dans une phobie sécuritaire. Je l'ai dit, le budget 2017-2018 annonce un budget de R 440 millions pour *implement le Safe City Project*. L'appétit vient en mangeant, M. le président !

Suite au PQ que j'ai le 15 mai 2018, on apprend maintenant que c'est un projet qui sera basé d'une *operating list* sur 20 ans. On engage R 17 milliards et 13 millions de US dollars pour l'année courante, 18,9 millions de dollars par année pendant 7 ans et 23,9 millions de dollars du 8^{ème} au 20^{ème} année !

Rien que pour la location, - tenez-vous bien - M. le président, des *intelligent cameras*, nous parlons d'un chiffre de R 17 milliards. Plus de R 17 milliards sont dépensées

sans appel d'offres. On engage la population pour une période de 20 ans. Nous ne sommes pas au bout de notre surprise, M. le président. Le gouvernement s'est porté garant pour le *loan* qui a été contracté par le *Mauritius Telecom* avec l'*Exim Bank* de Chine. Quel est le montant du *loan* qui a été contracté par le *Mauritius Telecom* à l'*Exim Bank* de Chine ? Une opacité totale, M. le président ! Quelle a été la garantie donnée par le gouvernement mauricien pour le *loan* contracté par la compagnie privée du *Mauritius Telecom* ? Une opacité totale, M. le président ! Quelle est la part de responsabilité de la compagnie Huawei vis-à-vis du gouvernement mauricien ? Une opacité totale, M. le président ! Quelles sont les personnes et quelles compagnies seront responsables de la collecte des informations de ces *intelligent cameras*, du traitement des informations qui seront collectées par ces *intelligent cameras*? Une opacité totale, M. le président ! Où seront stockées les informations recueillies ? Est-ce que ce sera dans le pays, ici, à Maurice ou bien au siège social de la compagnie Huawei en Chine ? Une opacité totale, M. le président !

Poursuivons ce *Transformative Journey* ensemble, M. le président ! Nous savons tous le tollé soulevé avec l'affaire des cartes d'identité. La collecte et le stockage des informations privées ont fait l'objet d'un procès devant la Cour Suprême par l'honorable Premier ministre lui-même. En quoi la collecte et le stockage des informations dans le projet de *Safe City* est différent de ce projet actuel ?

M. le président, est-ce que notre agenda, notre soif de défense des droits est différent qu'on se trouve de ce côté de la Chambre ou de l'autre côté du gouvernement. La population demande des réponses. On ne peut violer sous le couvert d'une phobie sécuritaire, violer impunément la vie privée, le droit de mouvement, le droit d'association et les droits fondamentaux des Mauriciens.

M. le président, que savons-nous de la spécification des équipements qui seront fournis par la compagnie Huawei. Je demande à être contredit. Je souhaite entendre des arguments réfuter mes affirmations, que ces équipements, tenez-vous bien, M. le président, permettront le *Facial Identification* que ces caméras seront pourvues de micros, capables de couvrir un rayon de 50 mètres à la ronde. Je demande à être contredit, M. le président. M. le président, la population a besoin de réponses. C'est notre devoir vis-à-vis de la population.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. I have waived the previous order. Hon. François, please !

(1.30 a.m.)

Mr J. F. François (First Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. M. le président, je voudrais commencer mon discours d'abord en m'inspirant de la réalité de la politique gouvernementale pour changer la vie de la population, comprendre et maîtriser ses aspirations.

La question qui se pose est: quelles sont les aspirations pressantes de notre peuple aujourd'hui? Je dirais que ce présent budget représente la vie, les défis et les ambitions de notre République pour les mois aussi bien que les années à venir. Ce budget apporte des éléments essentiels et reflète la participation et la voix de la population et surtout de l'écoute du gouvernement.

Je constate une volonté collective pour faire avancer la République, cette République que nous voulons tous bâtir ensemble.

M. le président, avant d'aller plus loin, permettez-moi de citer une phrase de l'économiste Joseph Stiglitz, qui disait, et je cite -

«Le succès du développement n'exige pas seulement une vision et une stratégie; mais il faut convertir les idées en projets et en politique.»

Et c'est exactement ce que fait l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, Premier ministre et ministre des Finances, le gouvernement central aussi bien que le gouvernement régional OPR à Rodrigues. Je saisis cette opportunité pour féliciter l'honorable Premier ministre, ministre des Finances et du Développement économique, en mon nom personnel et au nom du peuple de Rodrigues, ce peuple que je représente fièrement ici.

Le thème du budget national 2018/2019 présenté par l'honorable Premier ministre est intitulé : « Poursuivre dans la voie de la transformation », et en parallèle, celui du Chef Commissaire de Rodrigues, Serge Clair, est intitulé : « Le Rodriguais, catalyseur de son développement ». Des synergies qui existent bel et bien entre ces deux gouvernements au sein de la République.

Le ministre des Finances a commencé par tracer les voies de la transformation et inclut la jeunesse de la République avec un regard vers l'avenir. Ceci dit, il faut une prise de conscience différente en rapport avec notre temps, tout en s'inscrivant dans la continuité de la construction de notre société. Une construction, toutefois, selon quelle vision sociétale ? Une

vision sociétale prenant en compte la dimension non seulement économique, environnementale et sociale, mais aussi celle où l'homme est au centre de toutes nos actions.

Vous savez, M. le président, cela m'interpelle profondément en tant qu' élu du peuple quand un citoyen manifeste ses sentiments en disant que la société mauricienne est malade, en citant, par exemple, l'ampleur du fléau de la drogue. Quelle réflexion pouvons-nous faire aujourd'hui? La société mauricienne a-t-elle besoin d'un sursaut moral du peuple ?

M. le président, un des principaux défis de notre temps aujourd'hui est de vivre, travailler, et agir ensemble pour le bien commun. Je suis conscient que nous vivons dans une société qui nous contraint parfois au silence pour ne pas bousculer certaines habitudes latentes face à certaines démagogies, surtout au niveau de la politique. Une nouvelle prise de conscience est nécessaire dans ce sens.

Permettez-moi maintenant, M. le président, de parler brièvement sur certains secteurs du budget. D'abord, l'environnement. Il nous faut travailler vers un élan de solidarité écologique à travers un dialogue environnemental continu. C'est là que je me rejoins au ministre des Finances et l'appel du Pape François, pour une éducation à la responsabilité environnementale, pour encourager des comportements qui ont une incidence directe et importante sur la préservation de l'environnement. Le Premier ministre a annoncé un '*excise duty*' de R 2.00 sur les *containers* en plastique, les *take-aways*, et d'autres plastiques non-biodégradables.

Je partage qu'au niveau de Rodrigues, le gouvernement régional veut bannir complètement l'utilisation de ces produits en plastique. On propose même de remplacer les pailles en plastique par des pailles en bambou ou en papier pour boire '*ene de l'eau coco*'. M. le président, notre République devra s'engager à l'objectif de 100% d'emballages recyclables pour les produits alimentaires.

Recently, was debated the National Environment Fund. The hon. Minister of Finance is right to provide Rs2 billion in the National Environment Fund, which is a green investment fund inspiring solutions to climate change. I endorse that decision, as rightly pointed out by hon. Dayal, following the requirements to meet our Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) climate change pledge at COP21 in Paris in 2015, and Mauritius, the delegation under the leadership of hon. Dayal did a very great job there. Isn't it hon. Dayal?

Further, the INDC mentioned that the low-lying areas of the Republic of Mauritius, in particular, Agalega, is consequently vulnerable to sea level rise, and Rodrigues is more

exposed to long periods of water scarcity. In that regard, I appeal that the National Environment Fund caters for both Rodrigues and Agalega, as per our INDC.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to Clean Up Mauritius, I have to say, it saddens me to see that there is still too much solid waste around Mauritius, as a result of a ‘throwaway culture’, despite the good efforts of all concerned authorities, *et c’est vrai, trop beaucoup de saleté dans la nature*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are happy that the people of Rodrigues fully appropriate our ecological vision for Rodrigues, and are adopting the theme “*Si to Contan to Pei Rodrigues Garde li Propre*”. Here, I call to each and every citizen of the Republic to adopt the moral attitude that our environment is our common home.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will propose that the National Assembly thinks of setting up a Climate Change Caucus as climate change has become a pressing issue for our Republic and the world today. A Climate Change Caucus; this is the trend on international front. Maybe too much caucus, but this is a pressing issue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government is supporting families as they invest in a housing unit. The motto “*Enn Fami Enn Toit Ene Bon Lacaz*” meets the vision of societal well-being, space management and community protection and the fight against poverty. I have seen in the Budget potential applicants earning up to Rs10,000 monthly, for the grant of the casting of roof slabs for families, are simply happy that the grant will be increased from Rs75,000 to Rs100,000. I am informed that in Rodrigues, the Commission responsible for Housing will adjust and align its Roof Slab Grant Scheme accordingly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, talking about housing and poverty alleviation, allow me to pay tribute to a Rodriguan social worker, late FockSeng HoTunam, who just passed away, the founder of the NGO Solidarity Rodrigues, here in Mauritius, for all his endeavours in favour of my Rodriguan sisters and brothers domiciled in Mauritius.

Our youth is our future, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Coming to the youth employability policies, our Republic badly needs a “youth professional entrepreneurial culture”. I have to refer as well to the provision of Rs1 billion to target some 14,000 unemployed through the various approach which is simply the way forward and historical, be it under the National Skills Development Programme (NSDP), YEP, SME Employment Scheme and others. And I have to request for a significant quota for Rodrigues youngsters to broaden this new youth entrepreneurial culture in Rodrigues as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, food security remains a point of concern for our Republic. The decision to set up 100 farms under a Sheltered Farming Scheme, targeting young graduates, is the way forward again for a new breed of entrepreneurs. What about the financial access at DBM and MauBank at a concessional rate of 3 per cent, and exemption from tax for the first eight years? This is wonderful, and it is a great opportunity for our young graduates.

As far as road safety is concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government has the responsibility to maintain its vigilant and proactive position on road safety. However, every road user must take the personal responsibility for his own safety and the safety of others using our roads. I welcome the zero tolerance of alcohol in the blood that will be applied to any drivers on our roads. Is this a tough decision? Yes, it is! It has to be like that, and that is the way to be!

The law must also be amended for bicycles and electric scooter riders to mandatorily wear helmets.

Coming to the Police, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is announced that 1,000 additional Police Constables will be recruited, and, as usual, I plead for a fair quota for our potential youngsters from Rodrigues.

I seize this opportunity to humbly request the Commissioner of Police as well and concerned officers to look into posting back to Rodrigues young Police Constables who want to go back to Rodrigues to reunite with their family or to create a family after they have finished their training courses here.

The Rodrigues Police Department requires additional logistics for all stations as well as logistics for the New Disaster Management Centre under construction at Mt Plaisir.

I plead that Police Officers from Rodrigues continue to have the opportunity for international exposure, especially for Police Officers of a higher rank.

And, I dream, to see soon, at least, a Rodriguan Police Officer of a higher rank, doing a good job in Rodrigues, be promoted to the rank of Deputy Commissioner of Police.

I am pleased to note that there is a provision of Rs2 m. to start the construction of a National Coast Guard Post at Plaine Corail.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have raised concern here with regard to free legal aid and legal assistance for my fellow citizens from Rodrigues.

I am glad to see that the hon. Prime Minister has increased the income threshold for eligible persons from Rs10,000 to Rs15,000 monthly.

With regard to bedridden persons under Basic Invalidity Pension Scheme, the increase of Rs500 for Carer's Allowance from Rs2,500 to Rs3,000 is most welcome, but could be passionately increased. Let me explain why. I am aware of many families who are experiencing the burden to pay two carers, one during the day and the other one at night to look after their old age persons despite being paid only Rs2,500 for only one carer.

Coming to Health, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many projects were announced by the hon. Prime Minister as well as by hon. Dr. Husnood, Minister of Health and Quality of Life. For Rodrigues, I acknowledge the preparation of a Master Plan for the development of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a landmark hospital project. I only hope that the Central Government will seek and secure the required finance shortly for the implementation of the Master Plan. For example, to increase bed capacity from around 180 to 450 beds and the setting up of a Cardiology Department and other modern infrastructures.

In addition, the announced e-health national project will be in line with what Rodrigues Regional Assembly proposed in its Budget proposals as well. I also urge that the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Commission for Health in Rodrigues looks into reviewing the protocol for our patients' transfer to Mauritius for treatment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, provision is being made for replacing the Land Administration and Management System (LAVIMS) hardware and software, to use new technology to be hosted on the Government Cloud as mentioned by hon. Minister Jhugroo. I will again request the hon. Minister to include Rodrigues in the Terms of Reference for the consultancy services in that regard.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Education has been sufficiently canvassed by hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun and hon. Mrs Perraud. But, insofar as education is concerned for Rodrigues, I only want to highlight the achievement of one of our HSC Laureates from Rodrigues, Ms Emma Perrine. She matched the best students in our Republic. Today, as a role model, she has instigated a "Stronger Culture of Yes We Can Attitude" amongst our youths, in line with our nation building tasks and development missions for Rodrigues.

In Rodrigues, insofar as educational infrastructure development is concerned, we are doing well. So many colleges, community schools, pre-primary schools are under construction.

M. le président, j'ai parlé de l'éducation, maintenant permettez-moi de commenter spécifiquement sur Rodrigues. S'inspirant de la confiance que je ressens, avec le slogan '*OPR nou la et nou pou toujours la*', le gouvernement régional OPR donne la chance au peuple de Rodrigues et à chaque Rodriguais/Rodriguaise de réussir.

Je suis satisfait de constater que le gouvernement régional OPR, en partenariat avec le gouvernement central mettent l'emphasis sur la justice sociale, la prospérité économique pour la transformation de Rodrigues et d'offrir un choix au peuple de Rodrigues.

M. le président, de par son statut autonome, vécu en 2001 sous le gouvernement de Sir Anerood Jugnauth et de Paul Bérenger, je réitère ma profonde conviction que l'émancipation et le développement du peuple de Rodrigues se passent à Rodrigues et non ailleurs. Mais cette démarche suscite tout un changement de perception par rapport à l'avenir. Rodrigues dispose des richesses et valeurs telles que le savoir vivre ensemble et la protection de notre environnement, je le redis.

M. le président, je répète, Rodrigues n'est pas Maurice. On ne veut pas que, demain, Rodrigues soit comme Maurice. C'est pour cela qu'on prend des décisions qui sont parfois impopulaires, mais fondamentales pour l'avenir.

Pendant que l'OPR, le gouvernement régional, aborde ce présent mandat régional avec du positivisme, le pessimisme ou la négativité ne peut pas être la voie de l'avenir et la réussite de Rodrigues.

Je dois souligner que toutes personnes, surtout les politiciens qui ont un discours contraire à l'avancement de Rodrigues nuisent à son développement et sa réputation. A l'exemple de l'actuelle Opposition régionale Rodriguaise qui est toujours en perte de vitesse grandissante, et c'est confirmé lors de leur dernier *meeting* national un mois de cela devant seulement 75 *dimounes*. *Batt la mok !*

M. le président, je tiens à rassurer la Chambre et toute la population de la République, que l'OPR est, et reste un vrai garant du développement de Rodrigues et de son peuple dans le sérieux et en toute transparence. Je dis haut et fort, ici, dans cette Chambre, ceux qui sont corrompus n'ont pas leur place dans la gestion du développement de Rodrigues.

Revenant sur les mesures budgétaires, je souligne que dans le respect du fonctionnement de l'autonomie de Rodrigues, l'honorable Premier ministre n'a pas cité toutes les mesures pour Rodrigues qui sont énoncées dans les détails dans le budget adopté par l'Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues.

Les projets sont déjà inscrits dans le *Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP)*. Je note des projets, tels que le logement, le secteur de l'eau, l'éducation, la formation, le développement du Port, la santé, entre autres.

L'honorable Premier ministre a mis l'emphasis sur deux grands projets de développement qui révolutionneront la vie des Rodriguais, tant sur le plan économique, social et politique, dont un parc technologique avec l'arrivée du câble optique MARS et le développement de l'aéroport de Plaine Corail. *I will come back to that later in more details.*

Concernant la baisse du prix des produits pétroliers, on nous a publiquement insultés à Rodrigues face à la motion du *Leader* de l'Opposition, présentée, ici, à l'Assemblée nationale.

M. le président, l'annonce de l'honorable Premier ministre, et les prévisions budgétaires pour les baisses des prix ont répondu carrément à la mesquinerie politique de ces politiciens à Rodrigues. Il faut souligner aussi que le gouvernement central subventionne le carburant et d'autres produits pétroliers pour Rodrigues, qui passe de R 70 millions à R 104 millions.

Il faut mentionner aussi qu'un *Finance and Audit (Rodrigues Subsidy Account) Regulations 2018*, a été récemment créée à cet effet pour les subsides sur le gaz et les produits pétroliers, le subside sur le riz, la farine et le ciment. De plus, le budget maintient le subside sur le *Special Holiday Package, Airfare from Rodrigues, Handling Charges of the Cargo Handling Corporation, CEB Tariffs*, entre autres.

Mais, M. le président, un des éléments qui nous préoccupent toujours à Rodrigues c'est le coût très élevé de la vie, comparé à celle de Maurice. Conscient qu'il y a des efforts qui sont entrepris, je pense qu'il faut aller encore plus loin dans cette démarche pour y remédier. Mais quand-même, j'ai l'immense plaisir de constater que le budget de Rodrigues ait atteint la barre de R 5 milliards pour la première fois, dont R 3.5 milliards pour l'Assemblée régionale de Rodrigues et sous les ministères et autres départements cela représente un montant de R 1.5 milliards. Alors qu'à Rodrigues, le leader de la minorité, a parlé d'une baisse dans le budget de développement de Rodrigues, une baisse dans le budget de Rodrigues. «*Et mo kwar mo bisin donne li enn cours Mathématiques* ». L'ironie du sort, mardi dernier à la télé, l'opposition Rodriguaise, est venu dire à la population, que le budget est satisfaisant. «*Budget la bon* ». Quelle contradiction ! Et aller comprendre ces gens-là. Je pense que ce Budget et l'attention du gouvernement central dans la confiance envers Rodrigues «*ine abasourdi zot*»

M. le président, ceci-dit, permettez-moi de référer à Confucius et je cite –

“Il n’y a que deux classes d’hommes qui ne changent jamais de conduite : les plus sages, qui demeurent parfaits quoi qu’il arrive, et les plus insensés, qui ne veulent ni s’instruire ni se corriger”.

Et je crois que la deuxième correspond très bien au leader de la minorité de Rodrigues.

La NDU, quel bon travail par mes collègues PPS. M. le président, je suis fier d’annoncer qu’au niveau de Rodrigues, pour la première fois, la NDU qui opère sous ma supervision comme PPS, a déjà complété cinq projets de drains qui sont fonctionnels notamment à Port Mathurin Phase 1, Lataniers, Petit Gabriel, Allée Tamarin, St Gabriel-Pas Jérôme et un pont à Fond Baie Aux Huitres. Pour cette année financière, nous finalisons la construction des projets de drains et de ponts dans des villages très affectés pendant les récentes grosses pluies notamment à Camp du Roi, Anse Ali, Grand la Fouche Mangles, Rivière Cocos, Phase 2 de Port Mathurin et Port Sud Est, très attendu par les villageois et je leur rassure que « *Kan Nou Dire Nou Faire* » Ce présent budget prévoit de nouveau une somme de R 50 millions pour les projets de drains à Rodrigues.

As I said earlier, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to stating further on the construction of a New Runway at Plaine Corail Airport and the landmark Technopark Project.

The Technopark Project will unleash creative potential and leapfrog traditional industrial development to creating new opportunities for private investment and employment in the field of ICT. The Technopark will include some elements of a Technopole. Rodrigues is now embarking in a New Digital Revolutionary Era with the advent of the Mauritius and Rodrigues Submarine Cable System (MARS), which is due to land in Rodrigues by March 2019. The Technopark will be constructed by RRA in partnership with Landscape Mauritius, in the village of Baladirou. From what I understand, the Technopark is based on the Ebene-City Model, which I guess, will require investment to the tune of more than Rs200 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one additional element is that the future Technopark tenants can have a choice of at least 2 different service providers for redundancy purposes and different contention service based on Internet requirements. Rodrigues will be connected to two cables, namely the MARS and another private initiative IOX, as mentioned by hon. Sawmynaden, Minister for ICT. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I feel very sad, when I hear the Minority leader of Rodrigues, questioning why the RRA is engaging with two

Internet Service Providers for Rodrigues. And they are even talking about IT hedging. Unbelievable! We are having two cables connecting Rodrigues and they are asking whether we are going IT hedging in Rodrigues. And I do hope that this Digital Revolution will also allow Rodrigues to mark history by proceeding with modern trends such as e-elections. Why not? E-elections, why not we start doing that in Rodrigues?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the field of SME to curb a problem of a lack of appropriate infrastructure, an SME park will be constructed by Landscape Mauritius at Oyster Bay, Rodrigues for some 40 entrepreneurs. And Rodrigues wish also consolidate the services offered to the entrepreneurs on the occasion of the revamping of SMEDA by hon. Bholah, which was created before the advent of the autonomy, which should now be aligned to the Regional Assembly.

A Smart SME Village was launched in 2015 by hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, the then Minister of Finance at Malabar for different services, departments to better coach and handhold our entrepreneurs. I am informed that 5 staffs of SMEDA Rodrigues, will be redeployed to the Regional Assembly as from 01 July this year. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to harmonise the works of Invest Rodrigues, SMEDA and SME Mauritius, I hope that the proposal to vest the SMEDA building into RRA will be finalised shortly for the full implementation of the Malabar SME Village Project.

Runway of Plaine Corail Airport, a new runway. I am pleased to note that the hon. Prime Minister and the Central Government is highly committed to invest an amount of Rs3.2 billions for the construction of a new runway at Plaine Corail Airport - 2.1 km long and works are due to start by mid-2019. This is a remarkable decision for such a landmark project to improve air connectivity, tourism development and socio-economic conditions in Rodrigues Island. I understand that this year all studies in relation thereof, which is normal, shall and will be completed, for works to start in mid-2019 *pour nous kapav donne premier coups de pioche*, where Rs800 m. have been planned for financial year 2019/2020 by Airport of Mauritius Ltd. And it is worth to be noted that the passenger terminal at Plaine Corail Airport has already been extended and is operational.

Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien, Rodrigues will host two activities for the IOG 2019, namely Athletics, semi-marathon, and Judo *par équipe*, which requires the upgrading of Malabar Gymnasium and Camp du Roi stadium, with some transitional infrastructures which

need to be looked into. I can assure hon Toussaint, Minister of Sports that the people of Rodrigues and athletes, *nou pou la*.

Foot and Mouth Disease, the resumption of movement of livestock from Rodrigues to Mauritius is a huge encouragement to our local economy, following a decision by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Regional Assembly. A few bio-security protocols still need to be adhered to, for example -

- (a) animals to be imported shall be solely meant for slaughter purposes at the central abattoir, and I have to say that people in Mauritius want to buy cheaper and high quality meat from Rodrigues. And I think it is a moral obligation of Mauritius to buy livestock from Rodrigues instead of going to South Africa or Madagascar.

I will conclude in one minute.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Mauritius Shipping will acquire a new multipurpose passenger cum livestock cum cargo vessel with a capacity of 700 containers to ensure safe and timely transportation of fuel and food to Rodrigues. I welcome this proposal for the replacement of Mauritius Pride, especially on the Rodrigues-Mauritius route.

Chagos, last on my list. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we continue to extend our full support from Rodrigues to Government efforts led by the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor for the completion of the decolonisation of Mauritius to exercise our sovereignty over Chagos Archipelago.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as cited under the Blue Economy headings, allow me to also wish a fruitful achievement for Central Government submission of an additional 180,000 Km², through the Department of Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration to the Commission of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for the Extension of the Continental Shelf in the Region of Rodrigues.

To conclude, in pursuing our transformative journey, this Budget is the way forward with purpose and positive action. This Budget is the way forward for us to pursue our efforts towards an economy, an environment and a society, which are sustainable, productive and inclusive. Let us all work together with full confidence. Let us keep our vision towards the future and move forward together. Let us together, as a nation, continue improving the lives of one and all, especially our youths and our children.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to thank the hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the Rt. hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Minister Mentor, and the Minister Mentor's Office, Ministry of Defence and Minister for Rodrigues and staffs, all my hon. colleagues, PPSs, Ministers, the Executive Council of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly under the leadership of Chief Commissioner Serge Clair, the Financial Secretary and his staff, international partners such as AFD, EU, UNEP/GEF, Région Réunion, the NDU staffs in Port Louis and in Rodrigues for their support.

I end up by quoting late Abdul Kalam, former Indian President, and I quote -

“It is the Government's job to bring smiles on the faces of millions of people by enacting appropriate policies and laws and facilitating societal transformation.”

With this note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your kind attention.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Having waived the previous order, the floor is yours hon. Thierry Henry!

(2.06 a.m.)

Mr T. Henry (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): M. le président, ce budget pour moi ne répond pas aux attentes de la population. C'est un budget à demi-cuit, préparé par des novices dans une cuisine mal éclairée.

Après la lecture de ce budget, mes amis de l'autre côté de la Chambre sont sur un petit nuage et croient que tout va bien dans le meilleur des mondes. Mais, M. le président, je me charge de les ramener sur terre pour qu'ils voient la réalité en face.

Ce budget purement électoraliste a complètement ignoré les plus grands défis auxquels notre pays aura à faire face dans un avenir proche, notamment le secteur sucrier, l'industrie du textile, le secteur de l'industrie concernant la conserverie des poissons. Les plus grosses usines menacent de fermer. Comment peuvent-ils croire que tout va bien pour notre économie ? Soyons sérieux ! Ayez le courage de venir avec des mesures concrètes pour booster notre économie.

M. le président, je voudrais maintenant répondre aux critiques de certains honorables membres du gouvernement concernant l'opposition et surtout l'honorable leader de l'opposition.

Pour répondre aux critiques de l'honorable Lesjongard envers l'honorable leader de

l'opposition, je n'ai qu'une chose à dire. On n'a qu'à voir son parcours politique pour savoir quelle importance on doit accorder à ses propos. Quant à l'honorable Rutnah, son discours est comme ces calculs de génie. Complètement à côté de la plaque ! A l'honorable Dr. Husnoo, il ferait mieux de s'occuper à rehausser le niveau des services hospitaliers au lieu de venir critiquer l'opposition. A mes deux collègues amis, l'honorable Jhugroo et l'honorable Hurreeram, je leur dirai tout simplement qu'ils sont mal placés pour venir parler des élections de Quatre Bornes. Ils n'ont même pas eu le courage de présenter un candidat. Quand ils oseront mettre un candidat en face de l'opposition, nous en reparlerons.

(Interruptions)

En ce qui concerne l'honorable Koonjoo, je pense qu'il n'y a pas grand-chose à dire à part que la façon qu'il occupe son ministère laisse à désirer, et je parle du secteur de l'aquaculture que je vais élaborer dans un instant. Quelle catastrophe ! Tout dernièrement, 15,000 à 20,000 ombrines - le nombre exact n'a pas pu être chiffré - ont envahi les lagons du Sud de Mahebourg à Trou d'Eau Douce. Cette espèce de poisson est un danger pour notre flore et faune marine, car c'est un poisson carnivore qui détruit tout sur son passage. Silence radio sur cette évasion de nos lagons ! Que voyons-nous ?

L'honorable ministre a de plus gros projets sur la côte ouest de notre pays. Il est déjà incapable de gérer les fermes du sud. Que va-t-il se passer sur les projets de plus grande envergure ? L'honorable ministre ne va-t-il pas mettre en péril l'écosystème et l'industrie touristique avec les requins dans cette région de l'île très fréquentée par les touristes et les Mauriciens ? Je ne suis pas contre l'aquaculture. Je pense qu'il serait plus judicieux de déplacer ces sites hors de nos lagons, comme cela se fait en Indonésie, au Panama, en Floride ou à Hawaï. Les requins, M. le président, ont toujours été présents dans nos eaux, mais ils ne se sont jamais aventurés dans nos lagons et aussi près de nos côtes. Est-ce une coïncidence si les requins dans certains lagons riment avec aquaculture ?

Une autre mesure, M. le président, dans le budget, attire mon attention. Je voudrais aussi exprimer ici mon profond désaccord avec la décision du gouvernement de permettre à de grosses compagnies étrangères de pêche de venir pêcher dans nos eaux territoriales avec soi-disant l'obligation de vendre leurs poissons sur le marché local. Cette décision va encore pénaliser notre industrie de pêche qui est déjà très mal en point. Qui en fera les frais ? Les petits pêcheurs bien sûr !

Les medias internationaux ont fait état d'un trafic lié à ce sujet. *France 24*, dans une émission, parle de tests ADN faits sur des poissons. Ces poissons qui avaient supposément été pêchés en Amérique provenaient en fait de l'Océan Indien. Suite à cette émission, les sénateurs Américains ont demandé une investigation profonde pour mettre fin à ce trafic. Et nous, qu'allons-nous faire pour contrer tout cela ? Et tout cela a été raconté dans le *New York Times* du 13 juin 2018, M. le président.

Parlons maintenant des mesures annoncées dans ce budget pour les jeunes afin qu'ils puissent trouver facilement du travail. Je pense surtout à ces jeunes qui sont encore des étudiants et qui se retrouveront bientôt sur le marché du travail. Il faut avant tout qu'ils puissent étudier dans des universités dignes de ce nom, dans un environnement sain, bref, dans un cadre aux normes internationales. Malheureusement, M. le président, rien dans ce budget ne fait mention de ce problème qui doit être traité en urgence. Je fais, donc, un appel au Premier ministre et ministre des Finances pour qu'il porte une attention particulière à ce problème. Il y va de l'avenir de nos jeunes.

M. le président, je voudrais dire quelques mots sur la vente de la nationalité du passeport mauricien. Je ne vais pas m'attarder sur ce sujet. Dans un discours pertinent, l'honorable Adrien Duval nous a parlé des risques que cela pourrait avoir sur notre économie. Nous sommes fiers d'être mauriciens. Notre identité nationale n'est pas à vendre.

Nous refusons que notre pays soit un refuge pour toutes sortes de malfrats, d'escrocs, de personnes qui veulent s'échapper au fisc de leur pays. La saga Sobrinho, M. le président, a suffisamment nui à la réputation de notre pays sur le plan international. Elle a aussi suffisamment dévalorisé nos institutions et nos plus hautes instances. Je fais ici un appel au sens patriotique de tous les membres de cette Assemblée. Soyons de vrais patriotes et disons non à cette mesure.

M. le président, je vais maintenant aborder un sujet qui me tient à cœur - l'art et la culture -, qui mérite beaucoup plus d'attention. Ce ministère est un bateau sans capitaine. Pour preuve, l'amateurisme du ministre lors de l'organisation du 50^{ème} anniversaire de notre indépendance. Heureusement le ministre Bodha a été propulsé à la tête du comité d'organisation, volant ainsi la vedette à un ministre quasi inexistant.

Ce qui est encore plus triste, M. le président, est l'annulation, cette année, d'un évènement artistique rassembleur qu'est *Porlwi by Light*. L'année dernière, nous avons pu admirer les talents de plus de 250 artistes, peintres, chanteurs, sculpteurs, etc. Et cette édition

a attiré plus de 300,000 visiteurs. Un grand nombre de commerçants, de restaurateurs, même des marchands ambulants ont pu profiter de cet évènement. Cette annulation aura certainement une répercussion négative.

Revenons maintenant sur les mesures annoncées en grande fanfare dans le budget 2017-2018. Dans le budget, le ministre avait promis d'intégrer les artistes dans l'économie mauricienne, de créer des emplois. Les artistes attendent toujours. Il avait aussi dit qu'une de ses premières mesures serait de mettre sur pied un *National Arts Fund* pour financer les activités culturelles; R 50 millions allaient être déboursées. *Enkor pé atann !*

Le ministre avait aussi annoncé la construction d'une médiathèque - *zéro plombage !* Il avait aussi promis la création d'un Village des Artistes à Rivière Noire. Anne, ma sœur Anne, ne vois-tu rien venir ? Je continue. Le secteur privé était supposé développer un « *Art Zone* » pour aider les artistes locaux à promouvoir leurs œuvres. Un palais des arts et de la culture allait être construit à Côte d'Or, Highlands. Rebelote, absolument rien de tout cela n'a jamais vu le jour, alors que nos artistes ont absolument besoin d'une salle pour organiser toutes sortes d'évènements, M. le président.

Le *Loto Fund* devait financer la réhabilitation de 14 sites historiques et culturels. Rien, M. le président ; rien n'a été fait. Effets d'annonce, manque de respect envers le peuple ! Cette année-ci, nous n'avons eu rien que des paroles. Rien n'a été chiffré. Le monde de la culture mérite mieux que cela, M. le président.

Dans son rapport pour 2018, intitulé « Re-penser les politiques culturelles », l'UNESCO recommande aux pays membres, je cite -

«(...) soutenir des systèmes durables de la culture et d'aller vers l'économie créatrice et l'éducation culturelle. »

Nous ne voyons rien de tout cela dans ce budget. En parlant de l'UNESCO, j'aimerais bien faire une parenthèse dessus. Le ministre, notre ministre de la Culture était parti à l'UNESCO pour une réunion de travail bilatéral. Mais notre ministre a eu une réunion avec qui ? Un chef de section. Même pas un Directeur ! C'est ça notre ministre de la Culture ! C'est une honte ; c'est une honte, M. le président !

M. le président, je ne continuerai pas à être seulement négatif, j'ai aussi des propositions.

Mr Roopun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I, on a point of clarification, inform my hon. friend that I have had a meeting with no other than the Director General of the UNESCO when I went there.

The Deputy Speaker: The House takes note of same. Please resume!

Mr Henry: Enfin, si l'honorable ministre veut s'exprimer, mais moi j'ai ça sur papier, M. le président. L'honorable ministre n'a été reçu que par un chef de section...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker : Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Henry : Exactement ! Dans vide ! Comme les promesses faites dans le budget de l'année dernière, les paroles, que les paroles !

(Interruptions)

J'ai aussi des propositions à soumettre à l'honorable ministre. Il faut revoir le tarif des discussions qui est de 68 sous.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval, hon. Patrice Armance do not engage into crosstalking, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Roopun, please !

Mr Henry : J'ai aussi des propositions à soumettre à l'honorable ministre. Il faut revoir le tarif des diffusions.

(Interruptions)

S'il vous plaît, M. le ministre, permettez-moi de terminer mon discours !

(Interruptions)

Non, ne partez pas, j'ai quelques documents pour vous ! Il faut revoir le tarif de diffusion qui est de 68 sous, M. le président. Ridicule ! Même pas le prix d'un pain ! Biscuits sûrement, mais le pain non ! Il faut mettre en place un système de quotas pour protéger les artistes locaux. Il nous faut absolument mettre en pratique les recommandations de la Convention de Rome.

Monsieur le ministre, si vous voulez bien m'écouter !

Toute la politique culturelle de ce pays demande à être revue. Et dans ce but, la création d'un d'Art Council est une nécessité, M. le président. Un système de compensation doit être mis en place pour protéger nos artistes de la *private copying*. Je vais déposer un document concernant une étude faite sur ce sujet dans une trentaine de pays qui ont mis ce système en application. J'aimerais déposer ça pour l'honorable ministre.

(Interruptions)

Mais c'est vous le ministre, pas l'honorable Baboo !

(Interruptions)

Non ! Mais quand même je fais mon devoir ! Je dépose le document, si jamais l'honorable ministre est intéressé, il peut le lire.

(Interruptions)

M. le président je demanderai au ministre de prendre en considération toutes mes suggestions et de lire ce document avec attention, car il est plus que temps qu'il se mette sérieusement au travail.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker : Hon. Abbas Mamode !

Mr Henry : M. le président, je vais terminer en disant quelques mots sur ma circonscription. De belles promesses ont été faites, mais que du vent ! Je citerai comme exemple la couverture de la foire de Plaine Magnien qui se fait toujours attendre.

L'éclairage des terrains de foot de Trois Boutiques et de Grand Bel Air ! *Zero plombaz !*

La promesse de la création de plage artificielle à Remy Ollier à Mahebourg Waterfront, *dans vide !*

La construction de la foire de Mahebourg, encore une fois, M. le président, *zero plombaz !* Ce qui est encore plus inquiétant...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker : Order !

Mr Henry : Ce qui est plus inquiétant, M. le président, les trois régions qui ont été indiquées comme étant des zones à haut risque d'inondation, notamment Trois Boutiques, Cité Paul Langlois à Plaine Magnien et Ville Noire attendent toujours que des mesures concrètes soient prises pour la sécurité des habitants de ces régions.

La construction d'un nouveau Village Hall à Ville Noire, rebelote, M. le président !
Zéro plombaz, encore une fois !

Dans ce budget, l'honorable ministre parle de faire de Mahebourg un village touristique. Très bonne idée ! Mais si cette promesse va subir le même sort que les promesses que je viens d'énumérer, ce sera qu'un effet d'annonce. Rien de concret, comme toujours !

En conclusion, M. le président, je mets au défi ce gouvernement noyé dans des scandales, dans des allégations de corruption, avec beaucoup d'incompétence, de dissoudre ce Parlement et d'organiser des élections générales dans les plus brefs délais. Nous verrons alors s'ils ont toujours la confiance de la population comme ils le prétendent.

Merci, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker : Hon. Oree !

(2.29 a.m.)

Mr G. Oree (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after debating on the budget for nearly a week, it is really difficult for any hon. Member of this House to add new elements, and especially at this time. However, let me start by mentioning that I salute the hon. Leader of the Opposition, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. He is a real gentleman.

(Interruptions)

Allow me to quote what he said about this Budget, and if I am mistaken, I hope hon. Mrs Perraud will correct me. I quote –

‘The good, the bad and the ugly were present on Thursday. I will concentrate obviously on the bad and the ugly.’

At least, he recognises the good measures. Hon. Mrs Perraud is so worried and doubtful concerning our education system and inclusion. Let me mention that we have three laureates in Roche Bois and one at Triolet. And they are *ti-dimounes* ! There is one doctor in

my Constituency, Dr. William, still a *ti-dimoune* and he is working in a public hospital; he was recruited through the PSC. This is not inclusion?

Truth is endless and divine; truly speaking this is a very good Budget. I can understand the situation of the hon. Members on the other side. Their task is not easy this time. Hon. Shakeel Mohamed declared that he is a real patriot. He is not here, but I know he will be viewing this. He is a real Mauritian. He went on saying that he always puts his country first; this is absolutely false. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can prove it in less than one minute. When the whole nation was celebrating our 50th Anniversary and chanting '*la main dan la main*', hon. Shakeel Mohamed was never among the chorus. Instead, this great patriot came up with a fake motion against the President just on the eve. That caused a lot of unnecessary tension during the celebration.

In contrast, his Leader, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam suspended all his political activities for that very important occasion. A real patriot would have never done this. The motion could have been presented before or after, so he cannot give us any lesson on patriotism.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say that I was very delighted to hear hon. Shakeel Mohamed uttering a few words in Hindi, and hon. Ms Sewocksingh speaking in Bhojpuri. I must mention that our grandparents, including those of hon. Dr. Boolell also came from India. Hon. Shakeel Mohamed repeated the following several times when hon. Osman Mahomed was delivering his speech: '*baap ka maal, baap ka maal, baap ka maal.*'

He wanted to say that this Government is making ill use of public funds. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to tell him the following in the same Indian language, I hope hon. Dr. Arvind Boolell would not mind.

First one:

'Jo Nandanee lekar oure gayi, tha kiska maal?

Baap ka maal!

Second:

Kahaan se aya coffre mein itna maal?

Baap ka maal!'

Hon. Dr. Boolell aggressively raised several issues, but almost nothing on budgetary measures. I would like to remind him that Mauritius and India have blood relationship, and

both are members of the Indian Ocean Rim for Regional Cooperation. Mauritius has always maintained good diplomatic relationship with India, China, European Countries, and others. This must be consolidated.

Hon. Adrien Duval limited himself to citizenship and passport, and not a word on his constituency. Bravo to hon. Toussaint and PPS Aliphon. Some of them have adopted the blame game on Ministers, who are their direct rivals. As far as hon. Reza Uteem is concerned, he chose not to hit below the belt, but to unbelt his opponent during the match, and resorted to personal attack eventually.

I want to draw the attention of hon. Adrien Duval and also hon. Thierry Henry that Mauritius is a democratic country, freedom of Press exists, private radios and social media, always highlight alarming situations, but we never heard anything alarming in the health sector. He never came up with any specific PQ, or raised any matter during Adjournment Time. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, many financially well-off patients, including Members of Parliament go for treatment in public hospitals. This is not to save money, but because of the standard of the service.

Hon. Duval mentioned that the granting of citizenship to foreigners will reduce local land owners. Let me tell him that local landlords can become richer also. Moreover, with more FDI, there will surely be higher growth and more job opportunities. With decent job and decent pay, one can always find a decent lodging, and the underutilised plots of land would never solve our problems.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is now termed as the Singapore of Africa. Singapore is smaller in size and has a population of more than three million. The right decision was taken at the right time under the right leadership. Actually, almost no one is homeless over there. Hon. Thierry Henry, do you think Singapore would have reached that level of development without opening up its economy? Never! Hon. Ezra Jhuboo mentioned that some projects were left aside by this Government. This is absolutely true, but he is only concentrating on the 5%, what about the 95%? The island is actually experiencing infrastructural developments so much so that there is a pressure on the supply of construction materials in some places.

I also disagree with hon. Ezra Jhuboo that most of our economic indicators are in red. We all know that his favourite colour is red and only red, but he must not mislead the House.

Most economists and even foreign observers know that our macroeconomic indicators are slow, but steadily improving.

The major issues of BAI are behind us. The Bagatelle Dam is completed and functional. Our public enterprises are on the right track. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government is pursuing its mission even though some chose to run away.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is said that rough seas make tough sailors, this is the case with this Government and our Prime Minister, we are not afraid of any tsunami now. Hon. Jhuboo and even the hon. Leader of the Opposition seems to be pessimistic concerning our tourist industry. Let me tell them that almost all our hotels were fully booked, and even apartments were not available for local people in December last. The situation was the same in Rodrigues. Hon. Jhuboo is a well-known player in this sector, and he knows exactly what I mean. It is unfair to say that this Government is neglecting the tourism industry, which is the main pillar of our economy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many Members of the other side argued that our rupee has depreciated, but this is not because of us. It is due to market forces. Let me inform that depreciation of the local currency is not totally harmful to any economy. India, Bangladesh and China have weak currencies, yet they are recording the highest economic growth rates in the world. Even SSR devalued our rupee twice in the years 70's. Some Members are worried about our foreign debts. But let me tell that no foreign institution or Government gives any line of credit or loans without considering the repayment capacity. We are getting financial aids, because of our good economic performance, good governance, and because loan providers trust this Government.

On the other hand, our reserves are significantly increasing. I also want to reassure hon. Baboo that it is not the culture of this Government to sell its territories or any island. In fact, we are struggling hard to reclaim our lost territory, namely Diego Garcia. I do agree that there are imported seafoods on our market, but this is because of the Competition Commission and Competition Act.

Our economy has been democratised. We have very few sole suppliers of particular goods or services. This is for the betterment of consumers. Free and fair competition is beneficial. So, large varieties of seafood and other consumer goods in our supermarket are not problematic. Instead, there are wider choice, price competition and more promotion. This

is, in no way, in comparable to our brand new airport, left for the monopoly of one and only one *marchand cotomili*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to emphasise firmly that this Budget consists of solutions for most pressing problems that our country is currently facing. It contains bold and daring measures to curb most of these problems. If problems are real and solutions are real, so how the budget can be a fake and basely one. The Prime Minister has adopted a problem solving approach.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is in fact a very palatable Budget. It has the just balance between human and capital development. Once again, our Prime Minister has demonstrated that projects are important, but the more important fact is that they effectively address the real needs of citizens.

Eventually, our Prime Minister demonstrates that he is really different. Hon. Ramful was comparing leaders of this House. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to stress on the main fundamental difference that exists between all political leaders of the Opposition side and hon. Pravind Jugnauth. Others can always sacrifice their basic principles, followers, Members, and even their Motherland for personal gain and fame. But hon. Pravind Jugnauth is ever ready to sacrifice himself, his life, his position and his family for the interest of the country and party. He has demonstrated that he is not afraid to take bold and even politically unpopular decisions for the welfare of people and the nation. He needs not prove anything more. Mauritius knows his seriousness, decision-making ability during tough time, and his work ethics. The fact is that Mauritius needs him to lay a solid foundation for a great future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will take only two minutes. We have just celebrated the 50th anniversary of our independence. Accordingly, I wish to pay tribute to all our ancestors, political leaders and freedom fighters. They have transformed our island, tiny one, into an economic giant in the region. We are lucky to have among us a leading example of such a great personality, namely Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

Let me remind everyone in this House that some experts predicted that our country would go to doom, but after independence, we achieved boom! Also, all Mauritians must never forget that the most talented political party of this country was against our independence. Today, it is our duty to consolidate the future of our economy and social harmony for a bright future.

And to end, I am proud to say that I know students who are not of Muslim faith but they fast during Ramadan. I know people from different ethnic groups going for pilgrimage at Grand Bassin and Père Laval. This is Mauritius! All flowers are beautiful, some are more beautiful than others, but none is more beautiful than a bouquet.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Oree,...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Oree, I understand *cotomili* means *podina*, *coffre* means *tijori*, *neta haune ka sawal*, *tijori mein kitna maal*, *janta ya baap ka maal*. Hon. Soodhun!

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not going to move in other language. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the House later today Saturday 23 June 2018 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Roopun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned. Matter at adjournment time...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea!

MATTER RAISED

MOTORCYCLES - MODIFIED SILENCERS

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, tonight I am raising a very important issue which

relates to the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development. It concerns the problematic issue of modified motorcycle silencers.

I have raised this issue on several occasions in the House, even during the last mandate and I recall that the first time I raised it in the House was in 2012.

As I said, it is a very serious environmental issue as it causes so much harm, discomfort, nuisance and problem to many people around the island, but, more specifically, in Port Louis. I recall that at a point in time, it was question of amending the law in order to cease those who were repeatedly contravening the law.

Up to now, I am afraid to say that there have not been any drastic positive changes to this problem. Also, I recall that during one of my Parliamentary Questions, the hon. Minister explained that there was no need to use any sound meters because just to modify any silencers; it was enough to say that there was a contravention. Wherever there is any silencer that was modified, it meant there was a contravention that could be established.

So, what I wanted to say is that since the law has not been amended, the problem is still here. We are still facing this problem. As I said, more specifically in Port Louis. So, I will urge the hon. Minister so that as normally the Police or the Police of Environment, if I am not wrong, from time to time, organise operations for alcohol test at night. I think that operations to check all these motorcycles emitting loud noise should be organised on a regular basis, so that with time we could tackle this problem seriously, which, as I said earlier, is a very important environmental issue.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Noise pollution problem, hon. Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development!

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr E. Sinatambou): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, I did state in a parliamentary reply to a question asked by the hon. Member.

Indeed, it is not a matter for the Ministry of Environment. The matter is governed by the Road Traffic Act and it is a matter for the General Police. The *Police de l'Environnement* can be of assistance. What I propose to do is to discuss the matter with the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport and the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor so that they can see how to address the issue more comprehensively.

Thank you, Sir.

At 2.49 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Saturday 23 June 2018 at 11.30 a.m.