

## ANNOUNCEMENT

**Mr Chairperson:** A warm welcome to all the members present here after the little recess we have had. I hope that the debate will continue in a healthy manner as before. Can we now proceed?

## STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

### MAURITIUS – POLITICAL CHANGES

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I take this opportunity to make a statement concerning the political changes which have taken place recently in Mauritius and I hope that the distinguished members of the Minority will associate themselves with my colleagues and me on this message of thanks and support.

As you are all aware, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, KCMG, PC, QC has resigned as Prime Minister on Tuesday 30 September 2003 and Mr Paul Raymond Berenger, GCSK, was sworn in as new Prime Minister on the same day. Mr Karl Auguste Offmann, GCSK, has resigned as President of the Republic of Mauritius on Wednesday 01 October 2003 and Sir Anerood Jugnauth, KCMG, PC, QC will be sworn in as President of the Republic of Mauritius on the 07 October 2003.

These changes were planned beforehand and I would like to extend a vote of thanks and support to Sir Anerood Jugnauth, KCMG, PC, QC and the Prime Minister, Mr Paul Raymond Berenger, GCSK, on behalf of the Assembly. Both of them have been instrumental in the enactment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 which has given autonomy to Rodrigues within the framework of the Republic of Mauritius. Their dedication and determination to complete all the constitutional changes were greatly appreciated and their unfailing support and frequent visits to the island demonstrate their love and affection for the Rodriguans.

The past President, Mr Karl Auguste Offmann, GCSK, who signed the proclamation of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act will also be remembered for his full support of the changes which have occurred recently in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I request the Chair to transmit this message of thanks to Sir Anerood Jugnauth and the congratulations to the Prime Minister wishing him all success in his new responsibilities.

## **RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY - COAT OF ARMS**

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson Sir, I should like to make a statement on the Coat of Arms of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly which is going to be presented on the 12 October 2003. As you are aware, a Coat of Arms is the reflection of the achievement, vision, hopes and values of the people which it represents.

In the wake of the first anniversary of the establishment of Rodrigues Regional Assembly, a public competition had been launched for the design of a Coat of Arms for Rodrigues Regional Assembly which would be the symbol of the island of Rodrigues within the Republic of Mauritius.

After having examined the 44 entries received, the jury came to the conclusion that five participants had come up with an acceptable design, but none had satisfied all the criteria laid down. However, each of those five entries contained elements which, put together, could represent an ideal Coat of Arms for Rodrigues. The jury, therefore, unanimously decided not to award a first prize of Rs25,000 but to award a special prize of Rs10,000 to each of the five candidates who have all given their consent for the use of some elements of their respective designs towards the production of the final Coat of Arms.

The art work for the Coat of Arms has, therefore, been entrusted to a professional designer from Mauritius with the following guidelines -

- ♦ the elements from the five selected designs to be included in the final Coat of Arms;
- ♦ the Coat of Arms to contain the motto **"Travail, Solidarité, Fierté"**;
- ♦ the design to be representative of the historical, economic, social, cultural and natural aspects of Rodrigues.

Work on the final design is in progress in Mauritius. The motto was decided upon after exhaustive discussions with stakeholders who sat on the organising committee.

The Organising Committee was kept informed of all developments throughout.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson Sir.

**Mr Chairperson:** Chief Commissioner, in conformity with your wish and that of the majority side, I will direct the Clerk to convey the congratulations to both Sir Anerood Jugnauth and to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

### **STREETS/BRIDGES/SCHOOLS/PUBLIC SQUARES - RENAMING**

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, with your permission, Sir, I would like to make a statement to this House. Mr Chairperson, Sir, you will recall that almost one year ago we were celebrating the setting up of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. A system of government, whether a National or Regional one, cannot afford to forget the names of those persons in the past or present who have made history or who have contributed significantly to the development of Rodrigues.

In that context, the Organising Committee of “*La Journée de Rodrigues*” has recommended that certain streets, bridges, schools and public squares be named or renamed. The Executive Council at its meeting of Wednesday 01 October 2003, has endorsed the recommendations of the committee and I am pleased to announce that the following decisions have been taken -

#### **Roads/Streets**

1. The main road from Plaine Corail Airport to Port Mathurin via Marechal, Petit Gabriel and Mont Lubin will be named “**Route de L’Autonomie**”. The choice of the main road being named “*Route de L’Autonomie*” is obvious. Not only the road is the longest stretch of road in Rodrigues thus symbolizing “*cette longue lutte pour l’Autonomie*” but also is the backbone of our road network. By naming this road as such, we are also honouring the people of

Rodrigues for their long struggle and victory in making Rodrigues an autonomous island. This new status has indeed opened the way for the successful implementation of this road which exemplifies bold imagination, engineering skills and sound co-operation between the Rodrigues Regional government, the contractors, the engineers and the workers on site. Let us view “*La route de L'autonomie*” as one of the gateways to attain our objectives, an avenue for greater cooperation and success. May it long continue to promote the mutual interests of the people of Rodrigues autonomous island!

2. The street from Courts super stores through bridge to Mechanical Workshop, now known as Duncan Street, will be renamed as “**Rue Francois LEGUAT**”

Francois Leguat has carried out studies on the Rodrigues flora & fauna. As a naturalist he had his work published in Holland from where it filtered to other European Countries.

3. The street from Winston Churchill Bridge through La Résidence to CEB, now known as Jenner Street, will be renamed as “**Rue de la Solidarité**”. The name of “Solidarité” has been chosen as this shall be as from now the motto of all of us in order to progress in the future. We shall need to work hand in hand *dans la solidarité* to make Rodrigues more prosperous.
4. The street from Bachelors’ Flat through Cliderlex to Filling Station now known as Douglas Street will be renamed as “**Rue Max LUCCHESI**”.

Max LUCCHESI, better known as TITIOUNE, was the advocate of the poor planters and farmers. He defended their rights against the exploitation of unscrupulous traders. He was among the first to create trade unions in Rodrigues and has devoted his life to educate the Rodriguan to stand up for their rights.

5. The street from Victoria Street through Catholic Church, to Granary, now known as Ricard Street, will be renamed as “**Rue Mamzelle JULIA**”.
- Mamzelle Julia has been a social worker for over 50 years dispensing religious and moral education to the population,

especially to boys and girls who did not have a chance to attend school.

6. The street from Bon Marché Boutique to the Passengers Terminal Building now known as Ricard Street will be renamed as **“Rue Père Gandy”**. Who in Rodrigues does not remember Père Gandy, the father of education in Rodrigues? At those times where there was no secondary education, he conceived and put in place the “Pupil Teacher Scheme” to allow Rodriguan youngsters with only a Sixth Standard Certificate to attend Teachers’ Training College in Mauritius.

This House can just imagine what would have been Rodrigues today without the visionary approach to education of Father Gandy.

7. The road from Grand La Fouche Corail to Terre Borne will be named **“Route Jean Paul II”**

The name of “Route Jean Paul II” to that stretch of road is highly historical. Everybody would recall that huge mass celebrated by the Pope Jean Paul II at La Ferme in October 1989 where almost all the population of Rodrigues was present. Pope Jean Paul II was the first Sovereign pontiff to visit Rodrigues. The naming of that road will remind our future generation of that visit.

### **Bridges**

1. The bridge near Police Station will be named as **“China Bridge ”**  
The bridge at Pointe Monier was built by workers and engineers from the People’s Republic of China who also financed the construction. It is, therefore, right and as a gesture of recognition to name the bridge as **“China Bridge.”**
2. The bridge from Crève Coeur to Contour Oblas will be named as **“Watlace HANNING Bridge”**

Watlace Hanning was among the first to develop road communication and he built the bridge at Crève Coeur by filling up the valley. He also, amongst other things, created two scholarships for Rodriguan children to receive secondary education in Mauritius

## Schools

1. Roche Bon Dieu Government School will be renamed as “**Marc ETIENNE Government School, Roche Bon Dieu**”

Everyone in the village of Roche Bon Dieu has at heart the devotion of Marc Etienne known also as “*Hiloc*” in the field of social work. He has served several times as President of village Committee. He has also contributed a lot to the promotion of sports activities for young people in the village.

2. Port Mathurin Government School will be renamed as “**Basile ALLAS Government School, Port Mathurin.**”

Basile Allas was a very efficient teacher and commanded the respect of the local community and the Inspectorate of the Department of Education. He became the first Rodriguan to be promoted to the post of Head Teacher.

## Square

1. The square between Patrico Shop and Le Solitaire Printing Press will be named as “**Place Francois LEGUAT**”

The square has been renamed “Place Francois Leguat”. This is a logical sequence especially as the street passing through the square has also been renamed as “Rue Francois Leguat”

2. The Port Mathurin Bus Terminal will be named as “**Place de la République**”

Finally, one should not forget that Rodrigues remains part and parcel of the Republic of Mauritius. Rodrigues has to show to our fellow countrymen of Mauritius our dedication and profound attachment to the Republic without renouncing our specificity. The Republic of Mauritius has rightly acknowledged our specificity by granting us “maximum autonomie”. The naming of Port Mathurin Bus Terminal as “**La place de la République**” is a strong signal that is being sent to our brothers of mainland Mauritius. We are conveying our *grandeur d’esprit et grande sagesse* and at the same time acknowledging that we still form part of that Republic.

It is the policy of this regional government that the naming and renaming of roads, streets and other public infrastructures be a continuous process and not an *ad-hoc* measure. Ce n'est qu'un premier pas dans ce processus que veut le Conseil Executif de L'assemblée régionale pour mettre en valeur tous ces hommes et femmes qui ont marqué l'histoire de Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir I would like to thank you and this House for your kind attention.

*(Applause)*

## **RODRIGUES DAY – 12 OCTOBER**

**The Commissioner for Arts and Culture (Mrs A. Perrine-Bégué):**  
Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have not seen time go by but indeed, a whole year has gone down since the historical moment when trust was placed in Rodrigues to assume its own responsibilities in the administrative and political decisions.

This Assembly became a reality in this very House on 12 October 2002. In nine days hence, it will be D Day for the first anniversary of the accession of Rodrigues to the status of autonomy.

A time to remember, a time to stop and think of what has been achieved, and the challenges ahead. Time also to celebrate.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the 12<sup>th</sup> October, is, from now on, Rodrigues Day, a day which recalls liberty, struggle, development, responsibility and destiny.

That's why, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Regional Government has deemed it expedient to propose a programme of activities to illustrate the event.

You will recall that we had foreseen this historical happening when provision was made in the current estimates for this celebration. A Committee was set up to find ways and means of involving all sections of the population in the elaboration of the programme of activities. Although repeated invitations were extended to the minority group, they turned them down.

A first meeting was held on 26 July 2003 with all socio-economic partners in the way of participative democracy to discuss all issues pertaining to the celebration of Rodrigues Day.

An Organising Committee was then set up under my chairmanship and a wide sensitization campaign was spread across the island. Towards this end, Rodrigues was divided into four zones following the Youth and Sports Zoning System.

A programme of activities was then devised to embrace a maximum popular participation.

One of the most important decisions on the occasion of this anniversary is the creation of a civil heraldry which will be unveiled on 12<sup>th</sup> October. The Chief Commissioner has just given details about, “our Coat of Arms”.

Regionwise celebrations will include debates, exhibitions on the cultural, social and economic resources of the respective zones, whereas at island wise level, the main activities will include:

- ♦ popular festivities on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October at Mourouk such as regatta competition, final of sports competition, traditional dance and music;
- ♦ the re-opening of “*La Residence*” which will serve as the seat of the Executive Council;
- ♦ the twinning of Port Mathurin and Port-Louis;
- ♦ the inauguration of the new Passenger Terminal at Plaine Corail Airport.
- ♦ the unveiling of the commemorative plaque of the “*Route de l’Autonomie*” which runs from Plaine Corail Airport to Port Mathurin.
- ♦ a “*Défilé de Chars*” to illustrate the economic, social and cultural life of the island.

It is to be noted, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that distinguished personalities From Mauritius have been invited. These include the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers, Ambassadors and the Lord Mayor of Port-Louis.

For the first time in its history, Rodrigues will award certificates to deserving Mauritians and Rodriguans for their outstanding contribution in various fields thus shaping the destiny of Rodrigues and ours.

And I am proud to announce, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that this award will be a recurrent feature on ‘*every Rodrigues Day*’ from now on.

To conclude, may I congratulate my fellow citizens *qui ont démontré qu’ils ont le sens de l’histoire en se ralliant massivement derrière cette mobilization de ce premier anniversaire* .

To conclude, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I take this opportunity to say how proud I am to belong to this august Assembly and wish all my colleagues a happy anniversary.

*(Applause)*

**Mr Chairperson:** No more statements? Can we now move to the next item on the Order Paper?

## MOTION

### LICENCES – ISSUE - REGULATIONS

**The Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Licensing (Mr N. Lisette):** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name which reads as follows -

*"That this Assembly is of opinion that in accordance with Sections 26 (3) (b) (i) and 31 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, there is passed the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (licences) Regulations 2003." As per Annex.*

This is a motion which is self explanatory. It takes into account the Standing Orders of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Rules which

provides that Regulations required to be made under section 31 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, Act No. 39 of 2001 shall be introduced by way of motion.

Section 31 of the Act No. 39 of 2001, provides that the Regional Assembly may pass measures in the exercise of its powers conferred by the Constitution and for the purpose of discharging its functions under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. This section also provides that these measures shall be known as the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Regulations in relation to the matters for which it is responsible under section 26.

Section 26 (3) (b) (i) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act provides that “no person shall carry out, in Rodrigues, any activity specified in the Eighth Schedule of the local Government Act 1989 unless he has obtained a licence to that effect from the Regional Assembly and paid such fees as may be prescribed by the Regional Assembly”.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the Commissioner responsible for Trade, Commerce and Licencing, I am extremely honoured to move the motion before the House. This is actually the second time that regulations are being passed in the Assembly as regards licences. The first one was passed in December last.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, since my coming into office, I have set a comprehensive *modus operandi* and simplified procedures as far as possible for the issue of licence and for the payment of fees. This has been reflected in the smooth going process during the renewal of licences which were done lately.

One year has already elapsed since the setting-up of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and more than six months gone since the adoption of the first Regulations. During that time, more than 30 licences were issued. These include licences for operating activities such as general retailer, job contractor, hawkers on motorcycles, butcher’s shop and hairdressers. I am very pleased to state that obtaining a licence is no longer a burden as long as one fulfils all required recommendations and conditions that are required.

This is very important for providing a conducive environment for the flourishing of small enterprises and commercial activities in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, there are various trades and activities mentioned in the schedule to these regulations which may affect public security, public health and public order. I may mention at the very outset that the trades and activities affecting public security and order are put under the control of the Commissioner of Police or as the case may be for Rodrigues, the Chief Officer of Police. This means that those activities will require the favourable recommendations of the Chief Officer of Police before the licence is issued. Furthermore, certain activities will require the approval and recommendations of other authorities such as fire services, departments of Health and environment which once more aim to safeguard public safety and health.

At present, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, only 45 licences are pending at my Commission and are awaiting clearances from the different authorities. This once again shows the effectiveness of the system set up at my Commission. One of the objectives of this present regulations is to bring about minor amendments as regards the last one because I believe that *‘des retouches aux règlements et à la lumière des observations faites et aux faiblesses identifiées après presque une année de fonctionnement, ne feront de mal à personne.’*

Mr Chairperson, Sir, when I passed the Regulations last year, I indicated clearly that there was no increase in fees and dues payable. The regulation was to set a legal framework and to regulate certain trades and activities in the interests of the public of Rodrigues. I even mentioned that an increase in fees was to come. I quote –

«Obviously there will come a time when the need to increase the fees and dues will be strongly felt. At this particular state of our mandate, emphasis is being laid on the creation of a welcoming and conducive environment for investors both locally and from abroad. »

This second regulation principally aims at reviewing and revising the fees which are actually being paid. In Mauritius, it is a common practice for the Municipalities and District Councils to review their fees periodically. I have been informed that the actual fees payable in Rodrigues were not revised for more than a decade. I firmly believe that it is high time for these fees to be reviewed and revised to meet the new economic environment prevailing in the island. It is a fact to each and everyone that due to inflation

and to other variables in the economic sector, there comes a time that the amount of fees appears to be meaningless. For example, the yearly licence fee for obtaining a general retailer (non-foodstuffs) is only Rs122, this is being

increased to Rs1000. Likewise, the yearly licence fees for operating a night club increases from Rs1744 to Rs5000.

There is a need to start building up revenues for the Rodrigues Consolidated Fund. However, it is to be noted that the fees payable for carrying out traditional activities such as manufacture of handicraft products, breeder of pigs and cattle have been kept quite low.

The amount of fees collected for the payment for the period October 2002 to February 2003 was estimated to be about Rs15 000. It is without doubt that the increase of fees that the Regional Government is proposing will help to collect more revenues for the Rodrigues Consolidated Fund which will obviously be used for providing other basic services and carrying out other developments by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to the population. I would like, however, to assure this Assembly and the population that care has been taken to ensure that the fees prescribed do not exceed those from the Municipalities and District Councils in Mauritius.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, before coming up with the proposal of the increase in licence fees, we have analysed the impact on the economy, the demand for licences, the profitability of these activities, compare same with municipalities and District Councils having more or less the same economic atmosphere, the size of the market and, above all, the services that is being offered by the authorities. I would like to make an appeal to the population and to the stakeholders of the commercial sector that the concept of autonomy should not be considered lightly. There is of course an essential need for a *relance de l'economie*. If the Regional Government is doing its best for providing better facilities to the population, there is a price that goes with it- like it is always said-----*value for money*. This is why I have no doubt to state that we rely on the understanding and co-operation of the population.

Before I end, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to point out that in the First Schedule and Second Schedule, the Coat of Arms of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly which is going to be unveiled on October 12 will be affixed in the top left corner of these Schedules.

With these remarks, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I commend the motion to the House.

Thank you.

*(Applause)*

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.**

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, anybody would want to intervene in the debate. Yes, Minority Leader.

**The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety):** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at the beginning, I would like, with your permission, to join the Chief Commissioner in extending the congratulations of the Minority group to the new government of Mr Paul Béranger and to say ‘thank you’ to Mr Karl Offmann who has been there for our swearing in ceremony and also to the forthcoming new President. So, we would like to join the Chief Commissioner in expressing our congratulations and allegiance to the national government in Mauritius.

**Mr Chairperson:** Same will be done together.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Concerning the motion, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have been very much surprised by one thing. It is normal for the Commission for Trade to review the Regulations, the rates payable each year for the different licences listed in the first schedule of the Regulations. However, we are surprised by the fact that the first regulations which were introduced on the 27 December 2002 did not make provision for any change. Then just a short time later, they come back with new regulations, but most of all with exorbitant, very high increases in the rates payable yearly. For example, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, agent in land and building, the former yearly rate, that is that prevailing now one is Rs2500 per year. They are proposing to bring it to Rs50,000, Mr. Chairperson. I don’t know what is the exact job of an agent in Land and building. But we fail to understand why an increase of 1900 % should be made on that item. And the increases, Mr. Chairperson, Sir are general. However, when we look at some items e.g. professionals, architects, engineers, notary public, all these – a friend of mine will speak on this afterward – have remained constant more or less about Rs2500. If we are speaking of attracting investors, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Rs1000 for somebody to pay, some people might say it is nothing per

year. But we must take the relative impact of this on those who have to pay it. We take a very small shop, in a remote village in Rodrigues - General Retailers shop working in a village - which was paying Rs122 and which must now pay Rs1000, that is, an increase, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, of 720 %. In which country can we increase licences by 720% in six months? These, Mr.

Chairperson, Sir, are not correct and I believe should be modified. The Commissioner has been speaking of inflation. When I intervened on the budget, I spoke about the need of building appropriate statistics for Rodrigues. I don't know what has been his indicator of inflation for Rodrigues, because as far as I know, there is no inflation rate for Rodrigues. There is a national inflation rate for the whole country, for the whole nation, and if the Commissioner is basing himself on the national inflation rate to say that prices have increased in Rodrigues and to justify the increase in licences, that is wrong, just as, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we cannot compare the impact, the incidence of the licences in Rodrigues to the municipalities who have the same economic structures in Mauritius. Which municipality in Mauritius has the same economic structures as those in Rodrigues? The municipalities in Mauritius operate in the macroeconomic structure of Mauritius. They have interaction with other municipalities, other sectors. There are various industries, various pillars of the economy. But here in Rodrigues we don't have anything? We have tourism only which is developing; fishing is declining; agriculture is declining. So, we cannot say that the economic structure is the same or is comparable to that of Mauritius.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are not against the principle of increasing licences. We are not against that principle. But we are against the extent of these increases, the percentage change. You cannot make abrupt changes. We are not moving from centrally-planned as it was the case in Europe after *La chute du communisme. On ne va pas faire de la transition économique drastique.* So, there is need of taking into account certain variables, the changes, the increases in general and mostly concerning people who are working in traditional jobs – retailers, agents etc should have been gradual, for example, a licence of Rs120 should not be increased to Rs1000. The majority can say at the end of their mandate, that is, in 2007 - if they reach that date – they propose it to reach Rs1000. It could be Rs122, we will bring it to Rs400; the following years to Rs600, Rs800 and then Rs1000. If these rates are changed like that, it is going to make people work their mind and they would say that they are being taxed too much; and this is against one of the canons of taxation.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, so the increases might disrupt the community's ability to pay, that is, both traders and professionals who have to pay for these licences, and create the feeling that we in this House are increasing revenue by all means. The question is not to increase revenue by all means, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. There is also the question of controlling expenses. The question of controlling government expenditure, far from expenditure into e.g. what is going on since one year: "*les fetes*" etc and we are sending

the wrong signal; this majority, is sending the wrong signal only to the expansion of the economy. I have noticed in the new schedule that only small entrepreneurs will be affected by this increase, an increase of 700 %, whereas the Notary Public who is a professional and who makes a lot of money everywhere in the world, their licence is being decreased from Rs4000 to Rs2,500. Where is the logic?

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the licence of a Notary public is decreased: from Rs4000 to Rs2500. For General Retailer, *ti dimoune*, their licence is increased, from Rs122 to Rs1000 where is the logic, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I have gone through the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> classifications. I would like to understand, Mr. Chairperson Sir, the classification. We could not express our views on the first for reasons that you know. There is a sort of haphazard classification of traders, for example, you have Beauty Parlour and then there is Beauty Salon; and the rates are different. I don't know; whether women here would be able to explain the difference between Beauty Parlor and Beauty Salon. For me those who attend these services regularly, I don't see why it is necessary to discriminate and put different rates. We should, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, have produced a structure of licensing by sector, for example, the different licences that we need in agriculture, in tourism, in export, in hardware, etc. So, the structure of these licences is, I believe, a bit not serious; and even the documents which have been transmitted to us, there is no page number, no section in the schedule, no classification. How are we going to know which licence to apply for? It should be clearer for members of the public; if they want to engage in tourism, for example, it should be straightforward; all the licences concerning tourism should have been under one heading: Tour Operators, Car Rental, hotel, restaurant, etc.

Firstly, we believe, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the amounts of these licences – we are for these new Regulations – are too high; and secondly there should have been consultation on the ways to present them. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, one of the principles, one of the guidelines which public decision makers use to examine a system of rates, of levying tax is what has

been described as the canons of taxation which were first elaborated by the father of political economy – Adam Smith. Although taxes have changed, a great deal of these principles still remain good today. Smith says: “A good tax should have the following characteristics: first, equitable that is a good tax or fee payable to the government should be based on a person’s ability to pay; second, it should be economical”. What we are proposing here is economical; it is not expensive to administer; it is convenient; we go and pay it at the Government Office, etc.; it is certain. So, equitability, economy,

convenience and certainty. By certainty we must know who is going to pay the tax; taxpayers must know how much they have to pay and when. But the first principle of equity is not being respected, because we believe that – and so do the population and the community of traders, I have spoken to a number of them - that jumping from Rs122 to Rs1000 in six months is not correct. This is in six months in violation of the principle of equity, asking somebody, for example, in a remote village who is making Rs1000 profits per month to pay a fee of Rs1000; this is reducing his income.

Second, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a fiscal system should be judged on the welfare principle, that is, the extent to which the taxes are received back by the taxpayer as services and on the principle of least aggregate sacrifice, that is, that inconvenience is minimized and welfare maximized. These people, in simple words, are paying a fee of Rs1000. What do they receive from the government? What services do they receive e.g as far as training is concerned? What facilities does the major category - the general retailers, the others also that are concerned - get? What compensation - it is not direct but indirectly – do they get for paying taxes in their profession, in their activity? So, they are making a sacrifice and they don’t see what they are getting in return. This is why, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we would move for amendments when the time will come.

Another example of increases - I have worked the increases - pharmacy from Rs1162 – to Rs2000; agents in animals - Rodrigues is an animal production island - from Rs292 to Rs2000. This is how they are encouraging farming! Dealer, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in fishing nets and equipment, *équipement pour la pêche*, goes up from Rs122 per year to Rs1500, that is, an increase of 1130%, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Driving school, there are only 2 here, Mr. Chairperson, Sir - I don’t know whether they are targeting some specific person. - goes up from Rs1500 to Rs3000, 100% increase. How do you think that person would manage? And what would be the impact of the creation of new drivers? Concerning *boucher*, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the fee goes up from Rs14 to Rs350. In general, Mr.

Chairperson, Sir, on the other side we see that licence fees of attorneys, architects, accountants, cold storage, printers are decreased - from Rs1000 to Rs500. However, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I don't see why the fees to be paid by professionals should remain at Rs2500. We will propose amendments to the third schedule of the regulations regarding fees payable per year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, Chief Commissioner.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is a motion which will have an impact on the overall economy of the island and is a precursor to the economic policies that the Executive Council would be inclined to take in furtherance of our mandate and our pledge to accelerate the economic development of the Island. During the debate on the last budget estimates, I stated that emphasis will be laid on infrastructure and services.

However, it has to be acknowledged that we are still within the first year of this new autonomy status and up to now a lot has been done by this regional government by way of both infrastructure and procedure in that respect. By this motion, at the instance of the Commissioner for Commerce, Trade and Industry, emphasis is now being laid, firstly on the establishment of a more extensive list of professional and trade activities that the regional government will facilitate and secondly on the fiscal policy, that is, the setting up of a sustainable revenue to meet gradually the expenses incurred, either recurrent or capital, in the provision of basic services to our people.

Section 50 of Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, as subsequently amended by the Finance Act 2002, bestows on this assembly the possibility not only to collect revenues such as fees, dues, rates and receipts on public utilities or public services but to administer these as well in Rodrigues. It is in these respects that the Executive Council is actually showing its concern. Turning to the 3<sup>rd</sup> schedule to these regulations, I have to stress that the list of activities is in line with those of the municipalities in Mauritius. This list is extensive having the widest coverage of the possible trades and professional activities. As yet we do not have stakeholders involved in all those activities. But it is our expectations, being given that this business atmosphere is actually being improved, that prospective investors, professionals, the inhabitants of Rodrigues will be attracted to all these fields. It is to be noted that most of the fees and dues have been revised. The Municipalities in Mauritius, I am informed, proceed to make a

review of the fees at least yearly. In Rodrigues no review has been made over more than twenty-five years, such that some of the fees actually appear meaningless having regard to the high inflation rate. The income earning capacity of those engaged in those activities and rate of return on investment, for example, the actual yearly fees for retailers, amount to only Rs122, that is, roughly ten rupees per month. This is cheap indeed and it is a far cry that a rise up to Rs80 per month is unreasonable having regard to all the factors aforesaid. One should not lose sight of the need to boost up the revenue of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly which I may add is imperative. Bearing all these in mind, I join the Commissioner for Commerce in commending the motion to the House.

Concerning the remarks made by the Minority Leader, we, members of the majority, are going to study these amendments and perhaps we'll ask for the suspension of the ...

*(Interruptions)*

We will see whether some mistakes have occurred. So, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are going to - I don't know whether any member will intervene - we may suspend for lunch. We will resume after lunch. We are not going to propose many amendments. The Commissioner will propose some amendments, but we are going, as in a democracy, to study the amendments of the minority and see whether some mistakes have occurred. If this is the case, we are going to see all this here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, let us have something clear. Is the Chief Commissioner moving for the suspension of the Assembly or will he rather wait until tea break in order to discuss further?

**The Chief Commissioner:** We are going on and in the course of the debate I will do so.

**Mr Chairperson:** Thank you. So, we proceed with the debate. Anybody from the other side, yes?

**Mr. Emilien:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Sorry for my voice. It is a pleasure for me to share my views on the Rodrigues Regional Assembly licences Regulations 2003. I heard the Commissioner for Trade and Commerce say that we'll have to bring up revenue for the Rodrigues

Consolidated Fund. Of course no country can afford to give revenue without taking, it's a give and take process. But there is a way of doing so.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir at the very outset, my feeling, after reading these Regulations, is that, they have been worked out for well-off people leaving the poor segment of the population *sur le K.O comme on di.t*. I will give you examples. My colleague, the Minority Leader, has talked about increases that he considered as not correct. I will give you some examples where licences of professionals, people earning thousands of rupees have not been increased. We have, for example, attorneys, accountants, architects, agents in locally registered motor vehicles, etc. - the list is very long; I can table the list later on - contractor for the hiring of pleasure boats - we all know who are involved in these activities. They are not the young fishermen, the young labourers, but they are people who are well off, whereas on the other hand, we have also noted a considerable decrease in the licence fee of a Notary Public from - Rs4000. to Rs2500. I don't know if it is a mistake, but it seems very odd to me Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Manufacturer of food items having employees, there is a decrease from Rs2800 to Rs1,000. I can't explain myself whereas fishing is a very important economic activity in Rodrigues. Those dealing with fishing equipment, the licence has gone up to Rs1500 going from Rs122 to Rs1000. I remember I requested the majority group here to let fishermen fishing off lagoon to have mobile phones at a reduced price just to help them. Now what do we see? Their licence has gone up from Rs122 to Rs1000. Of course, they are not going to pay for it, but we all know who will pay. The price of this licence will reflect on the price of these fishing equipment: hooks, fishing lines and whatever. Who will pay? It will be the consumers, *ti malheureux!*

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we all know that the public sector is almost inexistent in Rodrigues. Job creation is almost nil. People are endeavouring to get a decent living by doing all sorts of jobs. I have in mind someone using his bicycle to sell bread every morning, in a very cold winter morning under rain, under whatever difficult climatic conditions. These people will have to pay a licence of Rs300. His counterpart, the one owning a van, that is, he is well-off, he sells more bread; he covers a larger area of the island, he generates more profits; he will have to pay only Rs200 more than that poor guy selling bread on his bicycle. It's unfair! We've got to bring up revenue, but there is a way of doing it. Alcohol is a very big problem in Rodrigues which has always existed. Lack of entertainment has always been cited as one of the major causes of this situation. If one has to introduce coin operated machines in Rodrigues, he will have to pay a licence of Rs5,500 per machine.

The manager of a cinema hall will have to pay Rs1,500., whereas one who wants to introduce coin-operated gaming machines will have to pay Rs5,500 per machine. Is it fair? I don't think this is fair.

*(Interruptions)*

*D'accord pas mette licence pou li quand zotte pas envie li vine dans Rodrigues.*

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the central government intends to convert Mauritius into a cyber island. Every effort is being made to implement the policy of "*une famille, un ordinateur*". We want to introduce computers in every family. I.T has been introduced in our private schools for school children to be I.T literate. I myself was expecting to have some incentive as far as the sale of computers, computer components are concerned. Here, we have licence fees for retailer of computer hardware Rs2000, computer software Rs2,000. I'm here making, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a fervent plea to the Commissioner for Trade and Commerce to kindly review this and to combine computer hardware and software under one and same licence. This will have an impact on the price of these components. We want our people to be I.T literate, so we must give them the opportunity of being so.

In this island, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we all know that the most common licence is General and Consolidated Retailer. Consolidated Retailer has disappeared from this list. We don't know why, may be there is a reason because General Retailer's licence has been split into different ones. The guy who is operating now a General Retailer's shop pays Rs240., if I am not mistaken, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Now he will have to pay Rs1000 as licence fee for retailer of foodstuffs and non-foodstuffs. Everybody knows that cooking gas is sold mostly everywhere. People can't afford, like in Mauritius, to buy cooking gas at filling stations; we've got only one filling station and it is in Port Mathurin. I can't come from Ile Michel to buy cooking gas at Port Mathurin. So, retailers' shops sell cooking gas in Rodrigues. This guy will have to pay an additional fee of Rs200...

*(Interruptions)*

It is not much for you! Licence fees for retailers of beer, cider, rum and other beverages: Rs1500. These people are actually paying Rs242; they will have to pay Rs1500. Do you think, my dear members, that this will be possible for these people? They are trying to earn a living for their family; and now instead of giving a boost we are *comme on dit mettre les batons*

*dans leurs roues.* According to me, this is not correct. We want to have a literate population - failure at CPE level turns around 40% every year - we should have encouraged reading. Those selling books paid Rs292 as licence fee. Now they will have to pay Rs1,000; and we know - it's a fact - that people in Rodrigues do not buy lots of books. These people do not sell many books; they don't sell thousands of books as we can see in Mauritius.

We can't just copy what is being done elsewhere; we have to be realistic. There are many things I can't understand, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, but I will give one example. For a long time there are people who are building boats in Rodrigues. We have boats built with planks, wood, fibre glasses. How can we charge someone selling bread on his bicycle Rs300 as licence fee and no licence fee for the boat maker, who is earning thousands of rupees? What are you people doing in this country? I can't understand. How do you want to earn money in the Consolidated Fund? By picking up money from the poor people's pocket? No, it is not the right way of doing things. I don't understand why there is no licence for boat builders.

The Chief Commissioner has suggested that we'll have, with your permission, of course, to study some shortcomings in the Act. There are other fields of shortcomings - if I can express myself like this, but Mr. Chairperson, Sir, one thing before ending because it seems very odd to me, I don't understand. In part II of this Act at paragraph 5, it is said "for any enclosure approved by the Regional Assembly Engineer (...)". This seems a bit odd to me, because I know that we had a Resident Engineer, but I can't understand concerning the Regional Assembly Engineer. Maybe the Commissioner will enlighten me on this issue. I don't know whether the Town Engineer is now being called Regional Assembly Engineer.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the minority group has studied carefully these regulations. We are agreeable with some items, but not with all; that's why I welcome the proposal of the Chief Commissioner to study anew these regulations.

Mr. Chairperson, I thank you.

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, may we have a last intervener?

**Mrs Perrine-Bégué:** Mr. Chairperson Sir, I would like to support my colleague, Commissioner for Trade and Licences. These revised regulations submitted to the Regional Assembly are very pertinent as regards the economic development in Rodrigues. The increase in rates of licences means that more funds will accrue to the general revenue of the island to be used

for the welfare of the public at large. It must also reflect the administrative load and cost of control of the economic activities. Regarding the increase of rate of licences criticised by the minority, we must understand that the cost of living has grown up. The Minority Leader talks about abrupt changes in the prices. He must take into account that rates for licences have not been changed since a quarter of a century. The licence fee for a retailer is Rs10 per month; with these new regulations he or she will pay less than Rs100 per month on his/her profit. I wonder what equity the minority is talking about! For the minority, increase in rate of licences will automatically provoke price increases, this is false, at least, for a large number of basic commodities which are still controlled to protect the poor in Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Minority Leader is speaking of dealer in land. Is he aware of the cost of land today? We are talking about millions. The average man and woman today in Rodrigues cannot afford to buy a square foot of land; and as Commissioner responsible for poverty, eradication of poverty, I would like to say that some dealers in land - not all of them - have exploited the poor people in Rodrigues for years. It is true Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the Commission for trade and licences receives applications, issues licences and has the responsibility for the management of the industrial development of the island. However, it is the strategy of the whole of the Executive Council, through the activities and programmes of its different commissions, to lay down the capacity building to stir up the economic will of a maximum of our citizens. As far as my Commission is concerned, the economic environment of women is a top variety; and I understand that more than 50% of the applicants for trade licences are women. Some of these women are already professionals while others need to be supported in their endeavour.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as announced on 08 March last, on the occasion of the International Women's Day, my Commission is setting up a Women's and Empowerment Unit which will involve an advanced training programme to encourage women entrepreneurship. Is it not a strategy, Mr. Chairperson to eradicate poverty? For when we are talking of women, we are not only talking about 50% of the population but also of the whole Rodriguan family. With the advent of the autonomy, the management of revenue through related regulations should bring about more professionalism in economic and financial practices. Entrepreneurs have to meet the expected standards and, consequently, consumers will be better protected. The fact that the number of applicants for licences keeps on increasing confirms the public interest for private enterprise and that, contrary to what is being said in this

House, the economy is moving steadily forward. This augurs well for the future and goes a long way in the direction of the O.P.R's policy. I would wish here to quote the Chief Commissioner, Mr. Serge Clair that « *Le secteur public n'est pas le seul et ne doit pas être le seul pourvoyeur d'emplois et que l'investissement passe aussi et surtout par le secteur privé* ». Talking about the facilities that the Minority Leader mentioned, we

can give the assurance that the public will not be left alone but will receive our full support in their economic endeavours. We have been forward looking and one stop-shop has already been set up at the Commission for Trade and Licences. This arrangement.....

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on a point or order. Section 38 of our Standing Orders - Relevancy in debate. We have Mr. Chairperson, Sir, examination of regulations for levying of fees. In my opinion the Commissioner is not being relevant; she is going away from these regulations. She is making a re-explanation of measures; she is talking about the one stop-shop, policies of her Commission, which is not related to this debate. We invite you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to instruct her to stick to the matter concerned.

**Mr Chairperson:** I have followed closely the speech of the Commissioner for poverty and I should say that all the references made are in relation to the regulations, in structure and deal with the policy of increasing the activities and in fixing the prices. So, I will ask the Commissioner to proceed.

**Mr Perrine-Bégué:** Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Talking about facilities, the Minority Leader asked about the facilities that the economic operators are getting *en contre-partie*. We can give the assurance that the public will not be left alone, but will receive our full support in their economic endeavours. We are being forward looking and a one stop-shop has already been set up at the Commission for Trade and Licences. This arrangement will facilitate administrative procedures, reduce bureaucracy and cope with the accelerated demand for licences and be more democratic. The concept of a *guichet-inné* is contained in our electoral manifesto. Moreover, we are not only managing more effectively and supporting the public, but we are also concerned with quality control. Contacts have already been established with the Mauritius Standards Bureau and a desk will be set up.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to conclude I would invite potential licensees among the unemployed who are waiting for a job to give serious thought to

enjoying the facilities that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly under the Funding Agencies are providing to them. They will have to network with others and take the risk of starting a business as the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

**Mr Chairperson:** Before I suspend the Assembly for fifteen minutes, is there any intervener from the minority side?

**Mr J. Roussety:** Not now but maybe afterwards.

**Mr Chairperson:** Is there anybody from this side who will want to address the House? Yes, Minority Leader, I understand you want to say something.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I was telling you that some members on this side may wish to speak afterwards, not now.

**Mr Chairperson:** We are proceeding on the main motion. So, it is time now for members to speak on the main motion and then amendments may be forthcoming afterwards. So, if ever there is anybody who wants to address the House on the main motion, he can do so now. We have the Commissioner for Trade and Commerce.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to react to what we have heard in this Assembly. From the very outset, I would like to point out that the philosophy of the Regulations that I am presenting today is based on three (3) three main points: value for money - my Commission is giving a good service; we are increasing funds, revenues for the consolidated fund; and the third philosophy is for encouraging investors and professionals to invest in I.T.

When the Minority Leader commented on the budget speech last time, he said that the majority, the Regional Government, is spending too much, does not have any philosophy as far as revenues are concerned. From his speech that he made, there are three words that keep coming invariably into my mind. These words are senseless, the remarks are not warranted and they are not based on logic. I am giving the reason why I am using these terms. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as far as I know this Regional Government cannot sing incantations and have money coming from the sky. So, as I have said the philosophy for increasing the revenues is very important,

because this Regional Government relies a lot on the participation of the population for increasing revenues, for providing basic services and getting money to be used for other developments in the island. There have been many comments made as regards general retailer. It has been said that the licence fee for general retailer is increasing from Rs122 to Rs1000, they are saying that it is a big increase. The minority may come here and comment that there has been an increase in fees on this and that item; they can keep on commenting from morning till afternoon...

*(Interruptions)*

They are not right, because increasing the fees from Rs122 to Rs1000, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, first of all, it is not a burden for the person who is paying the fee, because he can pay it in two equal instalments. It is clearly indicated in the regulations that the person will pay the licence fee in two equal instalments. This means Rs500 for the first six months and Rs500 for the next six months. In addition to this, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, *cinq cents roupies divisées par six* will make about Rs48. and Rs48 divided by 30 will make about Rs3.00 per day. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am going to ask one question: can't a shopkeeper afford to pay Rs3.00 out of his profit per day? They are saying that Rs1000 is a burden. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is it a burden for a shopkeeper today to pay three rupees out of his profit?

As regards the comment made concerning the notary public, I stress on it here, it is not a mistake, it is a policy, a right one; and I am going to explain why. It has been the policy of this Regional Government that all professionals have to pay a yearly fee of Rs2500. The licence fee for architects and attorneys is Rs2500. For notary public also it is Rs2500; it is not a mistake. They are saying that these professionals are having a lot of money. Why is it Rs2500 and not higher? It is because we are focusing on Rodriguan students who want to enter this field at the university level.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Order, please! Order, please!

**Mr Lisette:** We know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that there are many Rodriguan students who want to enter fields like: architect, advocacy, attorney, notary. So, I think that the fee that we are charging here will encourage these persons when they will come back to set up their private enterprises. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, everything for them is political! A comment has been made concerning driving schools. The yearly licence fee

for driving schools is Rs3,000, it has increased from Rs1,500 to Rs3,000. And they are saying that we are targeting a specific person. Let me tell you Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that that particular person they are talking about is charging, I think, Rs325 for one hour's driving lesson.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Order, please, Order please!

**Mr Lisette:** This means Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that in one day's work, that person carrying out that particular activity can pay for his licence.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it has been stated that we should have done categorization of activities under agricultural, tourism or whatever it is. But let me assure this House that the regulations that I have passed here are in alphabetical order. What is the point of coming up, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with categorization under specific items, that is, tourism on one side, commercial activities on one side and agricultural activities on one side? This is in alphabetical order and I should point out here also that the services that are being provided by my Commission, as I have said, are very effective. This means that any person who wants to have a licence, he can come at my Commission level and have all the required information that he needs. So, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the point of categorizing sector-wise does not hold.

As regards the point raised, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the increase in fees will have a bad effect on the consumers, this is a very bad concept. How can an increase in fees lead to an increase in prices since most of the prices that we have here are fixed by the Price Fixing Unit? This means, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that an increase in licence fees will never result in an increase in prices of items, because most basic commodities are fixed by the Price Fixing Unit. So, this point, I should say, does not stand.

As regards the comment made with reference to the making of boats, one member said that this item does not appear in the Regulations. But I should say that I have made provision for that in the Regulations, because it is clearly stated therein "workshop not elsewhere classified". So, if a person is involved in the manufacture of boats and if this is not in the Regulations, the item "workshop not elsewhere classified" deals with it.

So, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, after listening to the minority, I think that they have come here for the sake of commenting only; and I should say

again, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the criticisms and the remarks made on the Regulations that I have presented in the Assembly are senseless; they are not based on objective factors and they are not warranted.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I thank you.

**Mr Chairperson:** I have been informed that some members will move for amendments to the motion. Can we now proceed with the amendments?

**Mr. Lisette:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that the word ‘licensing’ in Regulations 5 and 9 be left out and replaced by the word ‘competent’. These amendments are necessary so that the law conforms to interpretation of terms in Regulation 2.

**The Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.**

*On question put, the amendment was agreed to.*

**Mr Lisette:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that the word “Issuing” in the title, in the signatory in the second schedule be left out and be replaced by the word “competent”. It is a clerical mistake and does not purport to change the substance.

**The Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.**

*On question put, the amendment was agreed to.*

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that in the third schedule under heading “a” item “Agency for Import and Export” the corresponding amount of Rs5,000 be left out and be replaced by yearly fee corresponding to it of two thousand rupees (Rs.2,000).

**Mr Jabeemissar rose and seconded.**

*On question put, the amendment was defeated.*

**Mr Chairperson:** Any amendment to “b”?

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, under the heading “d”, dealer in fishing nets and equipment, I move that the amount ‘Rs1,500’ yearly fee be deleted and be replaced by Rs500.

**Mr Agathe rose and seconded.**

*On question put, the amendment was defeated.*

**Mr Emilien:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know if we can go back to (b) because I was waiting for you to call for (b).

**Mr Chairperson:** I did.

**Mr Emilien:** Did you call for (b)?

**Mr Chairperson:** I asked whether there is any amendment to item (b). As no amendment was moved, I have called item (d).

**Mr Emilien:** So, it means that we can’t go back to (b) now.

**Mr Chairperson:** You are right. Is there any amendment?

**Mr J. Roussety:** Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Under item ‘driving school’ under (d), I move that the amount payable yearly be Rs2,000 instead of Rs3,000. I move that the amount ‘Rs3,000’ be deleted and be replaced by ‘Rs2,000’.

**Mr Jabeemissar rose and seconded.**

*On question put, the amendment was defeated.*

**Mr Emilien:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that under item (d) ‘dealer in computer software only’ and ‘dealer in computer hardware only’ be combined under one heading and that the fee remains the same, that is, Rs2,000 for both hardware and software.

**Mr Chairperson:** I have to inform you about a very important practice of this House. Before moving for any amendment you have to inform the Chair first. I don’t have any notice of your amendment, but I’ll use my discretion to allow this proposal. So, let me have your proposal for amendment, please.

**Mr Emilien:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I move that under heading (d) ‘dealer in computer software only’ and ‘dealer in computer hardware only’ be combined under one and the same heading ....

**Mr Chairperson:** Which heading are you referring to?

**Mr Emilien:** Heading (d), Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, you want them to be combined.

**Mr Emilien:** Combined under one heading or deleted and have another one: ‘dealer in computer software and hardware’ and the licence fee Rs2,000..

Mr. Christian AGATHE rose and seconded

**Mr J. Roussety:** These traders are doing both. They are also selling components in software. These are two complementary goods. When they sell hardware, they must sell computer software also. Hardware is the material that is hard, all the physical elements of a computer. Software for those who don’t know, is the programme. They are sold together; it means that we do not need a licence for hardware and another one for software. We cannot separate items like that. Consumers will go to the computer specialist for both hardware and software. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I hope, at least, this is understood on the other side of the House.

**Mr Chairperson:** Your proposal is to have the fee set at Rs2000.

**Mrs Perrine-Bégué:** Mr. Chairperson, on this point I would like to say that there is may be an aspect of this type of economic activity that the minority group is not taking into account. For investment in hardware we need much more money than for investment in software so that the poor Rodriguan who would wish to invest into software may have the opportunity to do so when these two licences are separated.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I...

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, you have to ask for special leave.

**Mr J. Roussety** Yes, of course, if you would allow me, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**Mr Chairperson:** Why do I have to give you special leave.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I believe that what the Commissioner said is wrong.

**Mr Chairperson:** You may proceed.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson Sir, when we speak of hardware, we are not speaking of a whole computer. A diskette reader which is a hardware costs Rs700. A CD-Rom writer costs Rs3000. So, a retail dealer in hardware does not mean the whole computer; it can be a cable which costs Rs250. If somebody goes to Microsoft office to buy any software, we believe that these should be available together. I'll give you an example where hardware and software go together. There are certain hardware items, for example, certain elements, certain cards which need software to be installed. So, if we are going to buy the card or the physical item at a place, and then move to another place to buy the software, that would not be right, because hardware and software go together. This is my point.

*On question put, the amendment was defeated.*

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson Sir, under the heading (g) - General Retailer, I move that...

**Mr Chairperson:** There are no amendments to (e), (d) and (f). So, we move to item (g).

**Mr J. Roussety:** Under General Retailer (non-foodstuffs), I move that the amount of Rs1,000 provided in the schedule be deleted and be replaced by Rs350.

Contrary to what the Commissioner for Trade was imputing to me, I never said that we should increase drastically. I said that the increase should be gradual. Now it is Rs120; increasing it to Rs350, I believe would be fair. We should not divide the licence payable per year by the number of days, because the person does not pay it per day; he pays it yearly; and it is when he pays the fee that he feels the burden really. When the person will take Rs1,000 from his pocket to pay, it is then, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that he will have to bear the burden. The Commissioner was speaking of no incidence on prices, of course, it will have no incidence, because most prices are fixed. But this will discourage new traders to engage themselves in business. If the fee is low, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, or is increased gradually, then you will get new traders. The Commissioner spoke of inflation. As far as I know we don't have 720% rate of inflation. Any increase should not be *en déphasage avec le taux d'inflation*. *On peut prendre, le taux d'inflation de Maurice,*

*mais 720 % augmentation pou General Retailer - de R 122 à R 1000 - c'est quand même exagéré. Je ne dis pas qu'ils ne pourront pas payer R 1000, but we say that it must be gradual. So, we believe that it can be increased to Rs350 this year and then there is an increase each year until it reaches Rs1,000 in five years. We should not, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, think that only these trade classifications, these professionals will fill in les caisses du gouvernement régional O.P.R.*

**Mr Jabeemissar rose and seconded.**

*On question put, the amendment was defeated.*

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I'll insist and I move that under General Retailer (Foodstuffs), the amount of Rs1,000 be deleted and be replaced by Rs350.

**Mrs Meunier rose and seconded.**

*On question put, the amendment was defeated.*

**Mr J. Roussety** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that under General Retailer (non-Foodstuffs and Foodstuffs) the amount of Rs1,000 be deleted and replaced by Rs350.

**Mr Agathe rose and seconded.**

*On question put, the amendment was defeated.*

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, under the heading N.

**Mr Chairperson:** So, we can move directly to N.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I move that under "notary public" the amount of Rs2,500 be deleted and be replaced by Rs5,000.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Jabeemissar rose and seconded

*défanne zotte même!*

*On question put, the amendment was defeated.*

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, under the heading “night club keeper”. I move that the amount of Rs.5000 be deleted and be replaced by Rs3,000 because Rodrigues is traditionally a dancing country.

**Mr Jabeemissar rose and seconded.**

*On question put, the amendment was defeated.*

**Mr Chairperson:** So, I take it that there are no further proposals for amendment. So, I will put the question.

*"That this Assembly is of opinion that in accordance with Sections 26 (3) (b) (i) and 31 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, there is passed the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (licences) Regulations 2003."*

Those in favour say aye, those against say no; the ayes have it.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 21 October 2003 at 10.30 a.m.

**The Deputy Chairperson rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*At 12.45 hrs., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 21 October 2003 at 10.30 a.m.*