

**RODRIGUES
THIRD REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Debate No. 02 of 2016

Sitting of Tuesday 10 May 2016

The Assembly met in the Assembly House,
Port Mathurin, at 10.30 hours

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

RODRIGUES REGIONAL

TUESDAY 10 MAY 2016

CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENT

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

MOTIONS

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS (*Written*)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

- (No. B/33) - “Unité sports pour tous” – objectives/major achievements
- (No. B/34) - Limon d’Or compound - Maréchal
- (No. B/35) - Local Entrepreneurs - Service Contract
- (No. B/36) - Small Man-made Passes – Linking Pointe la Gueule/Pointe Rond up to Cocos
- (No. B/37) - Assistance/Cattle, Goat & Sheep Breeders – Setting up of Integrated Farms
- (No. B/38) - Employment Relief Programme (ERP)
- (No. B/39) - Public Transport – Improvement of Service
- (No. B/40) - PRB Report – Outcome/Measures
- (No. B/41) - Community Schools - Anse Quitor and Baie Malgache
- (No. B/42) - Invest Hotel Scheme Projects
- (No. B/43) - Registration of Planters & Farmers
- (No. B/44) - Cultural Exchange Assistance Scheme
- (No. B/46) - Officers on Contract – Acting Island Chief Executive - *Withdrawn*
- (No. B/53) - Pig breeding – Sale/Export and/or from Rodrigues?- *Withdrawn*
- (No. B/55) - Lagoon and marine resources - *Withdrawn*

- (No. B/56) - Ambulance Drivers - *Withdrawn*
- (No. B/57) - Nine Year Basic Continuous Schooling Programme - *Withdrawn*
- (No. B/58) - Medical Doctors - *Withdrawn*

MOTION

The Commissioner responsible for Social Security, Employment, Labour & Industrial Relations, Consumer Protection and Trade Commerce & Licensing (Mr. L. D. Baptiste)

“This Assembly is of the opinion that, by virtue of section 31 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, there is passed the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations 2016”

QUESTIONS (Written)

- (No. B/45) - Goods Imported from Mauritius and Abroad
- (No. B/47) - “Unité de transformation de limon” – Gravieres
- (No. B/48) - Rehabilitation Works – Pointe Canon
- (No. B/49) - “Dominique Farla Centre” – Grande Montagne
- (No. B/50) - Loss of Blood/Other Tests Results – Measures Taken
- (No. B/51) - Road Traffic Accidents
- (No. B/52) - Red Beans in Rodrigues
- (No. B/54) - Vide reply B/52
- (No. A/1) - Lycee Agricole de St Joseph – Reunion Island
- (No. A/2) - Study Tour in India – 2016 – Agriculture in Rodrigues
- (No. A/3) - Construction of Respite Care Center – Piton
- (No. A/4) - Construction of Community Centers – Rodrigues

The Executive Council

(Formed by Mr. Louis Serge Clair, G.C.S.K.)

Mr. Louis Serge Clair, G.C.S.K.	Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Central Administration, Civil Aviation (Administration), Civil Status, Customs and Excise (Administration), Judicial (Administration), Legal Services, Marine Services (Administration), Meteorology (Administration), Education (Administration), State Lands, Town and Country Planning, Fire Services, Prisons and Reform Institutions (Administration), Agriculture, Food Production, Plant and Animal Quarantine, Statistics in respect of Rodrigues, Registration, Postal Services (Administration)
Mrs. Rose Marie Franchette Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K.	Deputy Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible Child Development, Family Welfare, Women's Affairs, Handicraft, Vocational Training, Information Technology and Telecommunications, Industrial Development, Cooperatives
Mr. Simon Pierre Roussety	Commissioner responsible for Infrastructure including Highways and Roads and Public Buildings and Utilities, Housing, Transport, Water Resources
Mr. Louis Daniel Baptiste	Commissioner responsible for Social Security (Administration), Employment, Labour and Industrial Relations, Consumer Protection, Trade, Commerce and Licensing
Mr. Ismael Valimamode	Commissioner responsible for Health (Administration), Sports
Mr. Jean Richard Payendee	Commissioner responsible for Environment, Forestry, Tourism and Marine Parks
Ms. Marie Rose de Lima Edouard	Commissioner responsible for Youth, Community Development, Library Services, Archives, Museum, Arts and Culture, Historical sites and Buildings

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr. Chairperson - Sooprayen, Mr. Soopramanien, G.O.S.K.
Clerk - Gopall, Mr. Navin
Deputy Clerk - Legentil, Miss Marie Lyndia Yannick
Serjeant-at-Arms - Constant Perrine, Mr. Stenio

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

“UNITE SPORTS POUR TOUS” – OBJECTIVES/MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

(No. B/33) **Mr. A. Edouard (Eighth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health & Sports whether, in regard to the “unité sports pour tous”, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the rationale behind same together with the objectives thereof and indicating the major achievements so far?

The Commissioner responsible for Health & Sports (Mr. I. Valimamode): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a “Sport pour Tous” Programme/Unit has been set up at the level of my Commission in 2014 in view of harmonizing the organization of sports activities having as main aim the development of healthy lifestyle among the Rodriguan Population. The programme comprises of the organization of recreative and adapted sports activities for all ages ranging from kids and youth to elderly.

The main attributes of the Unit is to organize an annual inter-village games with five preliminaries at zone levels culminating into a regional game. The Unit also advises and organizes specific activities in remote villages as and when required with a view to create opportunities for people of all ages to engage in physical and recreational activities. The Regional Games also include activities for athletes with special needs with a view to enhance their social inclusion in the community.

The ‘Sport pour Tous’ Unit has three axis of intervention namely, “Inter-Village Games”, ‘Physique dan Village’ and ‘Village on the move’.

“Physique dan Village” is a short programme of two hours, which aims at sensitising a particular village on the merits of practising sports and adopting a healthy lifestyle through good nutrition and the introduction of exercise to music. So far my office has organised five such sessions around Rodrigues.

The “Village on the Move” programme is organised on a half-day to one-day basis and involves the organisation of recreational and sport activities at zone level. The main objectives are to cluster several villages of the same region to promote healthy physical activities and positive leisure opportunities. The villages involved are normally within close vicinity thus at walking distances.

Moreover, the Inter-Village Games comprise the organisation of recreational and adapted physical activities with the participation of all villages of Rodrigues. The activities are organised with the full collaboration of the Rodrigues Council of Social Services (RCSS) and the contribution of all Village Communities around the island. Five preliminaries are organised at regional level, which will culminate to a final meet at the end of the year.

The general objectives of the Inter Village Games are to:-

- provide the Rodriguan population access to sports and physical activities regardless of age, sex, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status and physical or mental capability;
- highlight the contribution of regular physical activities associated with the reduction of non-communicable diseases and the promotion of physical and mental health;
- highlight the possibility for all individuals to practise sport discipline even with the basic infrastructure as opposed to elite competitive sport;
- to provide opportunities for family members to engage in physical activities during one and same programme, thus strengthening the bond and enhancing the foundation of constructive, positive..

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: On a point of order, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. May I request you to inform the Member, to kindly inform the Member to shorten his answer because it is question time, the Commissioner?

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, please. So far it is, the reply of the Commissioner is quite rational and the achievement is okay. You may continue.

Mr. I. Valimamode: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

- to provide opportunities for family members to engage in physical activities during one and same programme, thus strengthening the social bond and enhancing the foundation of constructive, positive human behaviour.
- to encourage villages to organise healthy physical activities at their level in preparation for the bigger games and in the same vein,

creating safe leisure activities for the population, as well as the promotion of ethical and moral values.

- to contribute to positive utilization of leisure time of the population at large.
- to contribute to the integration of all people including the handicapped and prevents isolation and alienation; and
- to serve as a preventive measure to combat anti-social behaviour by strengthening the bond of friendship between and within all villagers.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that last year, we have attracted a general audience of around 18000 people. This year, the aim is to sensitise up to twenty-five thousand people through our different programmes. Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish also to inform the House that, to ensure the sustainability of the programme, Sport representatives from all villages will be trained in exercise to music and yoga techniques before the end of this year to further enhance their capacity to organise activities at their respective village level. In view to foster the participation..

Mr. Chairperson: Commissioner shortens your answer now.

Mr. I. Valimamode: Yes, I shall end in a few minute. In view to foster the participation of the handicapped community, we will include social events for the handicapped during the final phase.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, to sum up, I would like to point out that the programme of 'sport pour tous', through the inter-village games and other activities had gathered much momentum and is strongly promoting the participation of all people in physical activities and adoption of healthy lifestyle. Moreover, I am informed that the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Mauritius is setting up a similar structure in Mauritius based on the success of our programme in Rodrigues.

I would like to thank the Rodrigues Council of Social Services for its collaboration and commitment. Special thanks goes also to our sponsors and my staff in general for their dedication and involvement and the implementation of such a programme which not only requires much more technical knowhow but also the complete involvement of the managing Unit. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, first of all, I would like to ask the Commissioner as from the reply that he just mentioned there is a unit called “Sports for tous” Unit at the level of his Commission. First of all, I want to know who man the unit and secondly, what are the designations of the officers who man the unit?

Mr. I. Valimamode: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the unit is manned by our personnel from my Commission and also one Sports Officer and others.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Yes, secondly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, being given that the annual game is being organised on a yearly basis, can we know from which Item Vote, the expenses is being met?

Mr. I. Valimamode: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Budget Item is from Promotion of Sports, that is, 2290094296104.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Can we know what is the rational between Organising “sport pour tous” and elitism in sports in Rodrigues?

Mr. I. Valimamode: In itself I mentioned, it is quite different from any sports.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: I want to know the rational, that is, what percentage compared from the budget allocated for the Promotion of Sports. What sum is being allocated for “Sport pour tous” and which sum is allocated to Regional Committees including elitism in sports?

Mr. I. Valimamode: I need notice of the question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Last question.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been able to have a look at the Item Vote - Promotion of Sports for 2012, 2013 and 2014. I have seen that there has been reallocation. There has been reallocation, major reallocation for this Item. First of all, who has performed the reallocation because it is more than 5% and according to law when it reached 5%, we cannot go ahead at the level of the Commission. Who has performed the reallocation and from which Item Vote?

Mr. I. Valimamode: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is a normal practice.

Mr. Chairperson: Next question, please.

LIMON D'OR COMPOUND – MARÉCHAL

(No. B/34) Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the Limon D'Or compound at Maréchal, she will, for the benefit of the House, state if it has ceased its activities and, if so, the reasons therefor and indicating as to why it is presently closed down?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner (Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to Limon D'Or compound Maréchal, I wish to inform the House that the Processing Unit is fully operational and has never had its activities ceased, except during the period December 2015–January 2016 where the building was under maintenance in view to be in line with existing norms and standards. I wish to inform the House that for safety precautions and to mitigate risks of food contamination with airborne pathogens and other foreign bodies, all the openings of the building have to remain closed during processing activities. Subsequently, if activities seem to be limited outside around the premises, please note that normal businesses and processing are taking place inside the building.

It is good to note that since January 2016, the Cooperatives based at Limon D'Or has been able to establish a long-lasting collaboration with Winners, which is one of the largest supermarket chains in Mauritius. In this respect, the Cooperatives have already shipped 2012 jars in March 2016 and another order of 1200 jars is due to be shipped next week on the next boat to Mauritius.

Please note also that over and above usual processing, the premise welcomes trainings in agro-processing sectors from different Commissions and other organisations. For instance, the Mauritius Research Council carries regular trainings for women producers in seaweed processing while the Commission for Agriculture in collaboration with the Lycée Agricole de La Reunion, delivers different trainings in agro-processing where young agro-processors are being targeted. Furthermore, 14 women who have recently obtained their pre-market clearances will use Limon D'Or shortly until their respective kitchens are up to norms. Therefore, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I can say that the kitchen is very active and is fully playing its role as a community kitchen and it is expected that the activities will reach its cruise optimum in the upcoming months.

Mr. J. Roussety: Can we know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because every day, every morning, every afternoon I go by the place by the road there and there is no activity there. Even though the Commissioner is stating that the unit

is fully-operational, this seems to contrast with the state of the yard. If there were people going there every day, there will be so much grass (like this). So, I think that the Commissioner is giving false information here when she is saying that the unit is fully operational. This is not true. Being given according to her, it was fully operational, can I ask her when was the last date, the unit was fully operational, opened (opened but according to her definition, closed)?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, le Membre peut dire ce qu'il veut, je confirme et je maintiens que le contrat avec Winners 2012 pots, où est-ce qu'on a fait ? Dans l'air? Dans l'espace? On la fait au Limon D'Or. On a eu un contrat. Moi-même j'ai vérifié, il y a un stagiaire, un STM, qui régulièrement va travailler avec les dames qui sont là-bas. Donc, il peut tirer la conclusion qu'il veut. C'est vrai, moi-même j'ai attiré l'attention des Officiers, j'ai dit que c'est important de maintenir la cour. Il faut comprendre que de l'herbe ça pousse tous les jours il y a la pluie. Est-ce qu'on va payer une personne tous les jours pour la maintenance de la cour ? Et on a même eu quelqu'un qui le fait chaque quinzaine. Il y a le nettoyage de la cour. Donc, je maintiens, il peut dire ce qu'il veut. Il peut insinuer ce qu'il veut. Je maintiens que le projet se fait, que le travail se fait. Donc, voilà.

[Interruption]

Mr. Chairperson: No comment, please. No comment! Anyway you can have supplementary questions but no comment for the time being.

Mr. J. Roussety: M. le president.

Mr. Chairperson: Have you a point of order, please? No.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay supplementary for you. You have a supplementary question.

Mr. J. Roussety: It seems because I am on my feet.

Mr. Chairperson: No, I am just asking you.

Mr. J. Roussety: No, you are arguing with a sitting Member, I allow you to argue.

Mr. Chairperson: Of course, I have the right to do it.

Mr. J. Roussety: You want to argue with a sitting Member, there is a standing Member. You have all the rights here, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. We know it. I am on my feet; it is supposed that I have a supplementary question.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, I know. Now you come with your supplementary question.

Mr. J. Roussety: I have allowed to argue with the sitting Member.

Mr. Chairperson: You have to allow me!

Mr. J. Roussety: Of course.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, you have to allow me!

Mr. J. Roussety: Yes, nobody is saying that I did not allow you.

Mr. Chairperson: The way you are saying it. You have to proceed with your supplementary question.

Mr. J. Roussety: You are now arguing with me for nothing.

Mr. Chairperson: Proceed with your supplementary now.

Mr. J. Roussety: This is what I am doing, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. J. Roussety: *Mamment.*

Mr. Chairperson: Please keep quiet now, you listen to the supplementary question of..

Mr. J. Roussety: *To pou montré-moi comment guété aster toi ? Ki to été toi ?* Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. *To trouve to manière to guete dimune toi ? Guete toi avant to guete to camwade.*

Mr. Chairperson: Please.

Mr. J. Roussety: Yes, I maintained, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. She can say what she wants. I have been there. The doors are always closed. If the doors are always closed, how do the workers get inside? By tele-transportation? Tele-transportation? Has he invented this in Rodrigues? The doors are always

closed. The unit seems in an abandon state. There is nobody opening, closing it every day. This is the fact. I do not know where she has been producing the.. what she has said has been produced there. My question is when was the last date the unit was functioning? Give me the last date.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, j'ai pas une date. Tous les jours le centre fonctionne. J'informe le Membre s'il n'est pas au courant que dans une production alimentaire, il y a ce qu'on appelle la marche en avant. On n'a pas le droit de passer n'importe où dans un centre de production alimentaire. Il y a des portes dédiées pour l'entrer. Des portes dédiées pour sortir. Si vous ne le savez pas, allez apprendre. C'est comme ça que ça fonctionne. Au contraire on a mit les nombres. Au contraire, vous aviez fait là, un éléphant blanc. On a fait le travail. Aujourd'hui, ça fonctionne comme il se doit, les nombres sont respectées, les portes n'ont pas le droit d'être ouvertes. Il a son collègue à côté de lui qui sait bien comment ça fonctionne dans un centre de production au niveau des aliments. Donc, au contraire on doit nous féliciter parce qu'on a pris le devant on a fait les choses comme il se doit. La maintenance qu'on a fait en décembre, c'est pour quoi ? C'est pour hausser le niveau du centre de production pour qu'on respecte les nombres et demain je suis sûre, on travaille là-dessus avec MSB. La MSB va venir pour certifier. On va avoir HACCP dans le centre. Si vous ne savez pas, allez apprendre !

Mr. J. Roussety: M. le président, je n'ai rien à apprendre de madame la Chef Commissaire Adjointe. Parce que c'est moi qui avais ouvert, inaugurer l'unité quand j'étais Chef Commissaire avec l'aide de l'Union Européenne et tous les équipements intérieures, M. le président. Maintenant, on vient nous dire, qu'on est à l'époque je ne sais qui, qu'on doit fermer toutes les portes pour pouvoir travailler à l'intérieure. C'est un mensonge ! Les portes, M. le président, donnent sur l'intérieure et les productions se font à l'intérieure des chambres sécuriser avec des panneaux aluminium, M. le président. J'y étais ! C'est moi qui l'ai inauguré, j'ai été là-bas et j'ai, à l'époque où on était c'était comme ça. Il n'est pas nécessaire de tous fermer, de barricader le bâtiment pour produire.

Mr. Chairperson: Put your question. You are not going to make a statement of it. What is your supplementary question?

Mr. J. Roussety: I am coming to it. You know you need to think and to support the argument and then to ask the supplementary question. Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, she is saying that we only built a building there. Can I ask her what has been done, what has been done in addition when they got the facility?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, beaucoup a été fait depuis qu'on a eu les facilités. Oui, ils ont achetés les équipements, tout le monde peut acheter les équipements. Ils ont eu le financement de l'Union Européenne. Tout le monde peut avoir aujourd'hui ça. Mais comment opérationnaliser ? C'était un éléphant blanc quand on était venu. En même temps, un éléphant blanc parce que ça ne fonctionnait pas, ça ne fonctionnait pas, ils avaient mis des gens politiquement là mais le travail ne se faisait pas. Et un jour s'ils reviennent ils vont rouvrir les portes, nous on a eu les recommandations des professionnelles.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: On a point of order, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The Member is, the Commissioner is, *li pé induire la Chambre en erreur*. Ce n'est pas des gens qu'on a placé là politiquement. Wills Roussety était un agent politique ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, beaucoup a été fait. Il y a eu une question..

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I rose a point of order.

Mr. Chairperson: What is the point of order?

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: The Deputy Chief Commissioner is misleading the House. Imputing motives or misleads the House.

[Interruption]

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Oui, M. le président, je disais, ils ont achetés les équipements, ils ont mis là. Au contraire il y a beaucoup d'équipements qu'on n'utilise pas. Il y avait même pas un projet qu'est-ce qu'on allait faire avec quoi. Nous on est venu avec les recommandations des professionnelles. On a haussé le niveau du bâtiment, on a mis toute les peintures qu'il faut. Il y a une question aussi de *food norms* pour les peintures. En même temps il y avait une question d'approvisionnement de l'eau. On a aussi et surtout le plus important, le *Pre-market Certificate*. On peut produire la quantité qu'on veut. On allait continuer à vendre sur le trottoir de Port Louis ? Aujourd'hui, on a fait, les producteurs qui travaillent au Limon D'Or, ils ont leurs *Pre-market Certificate*. C'est la raison pour laquelle, la raison, la condition sine qua non pour avoir les rayons, pour pouvoir vendre sur les rayons des supermarchés. Donc, on ne peut pas dire.. Vous avez acheté les équipements. Aujourd'hui, nous on rend opérationnel et de manière, surtout selon les nombres et de manières effectives.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, first of all, I want to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner what is the need of having so many doors there? This is the first question and secondly, what is the last time that she as Deputy Chief Commissioner has been to Limon D'Or at Maréchal?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, quel est le lien avec l'opérationisation? Je ne suis pas le Manager de Limon D'Or. Ce n'est pas mon rôle mais ce que je fais régulièrement, surtout il y a le STM, un garçon très sérieux qui travaille avec les femmes qui sont là-bas pour leurs aider. Chaque deux jour il y va, le matin. Moi je travaille avec lui pour assurer que les commandes qu'on a eues soient respectées. C'est ça le plus important. Et surtout aussi que quand il y a des fournisseurs qui fournissent des matières premières, les petits piments, du limons au Limon D'Or, je m'assure que le paiement soit fait comme il se doit, c'est ça et s'ils veulent poser la question pour quoi des portes, les portes sont faites pour s'ouvrir et fermer. Un jour quand ils reviennent ils vont les rouvrir s'ils veulent les ouvrir.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, you point towards me, you point towards the Minority Leader, then you point towards me again and then again to the Minority Leader. Which is which?

Mr. Chairperson: [..]

Mr. J. Roussety: Yes, thank you. On a tous entendus.

Mr. Chairperson: [...]

Mr. J. Roussety: I have difficult to follow you.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, try to follow me [...]

Mr. J. Roussety: I cannot follow someone pointing *gauche droite*.

Mr. Chairperson: [...]

Mr. J. Roussety: I have not been trained to follow this type of gesticulation.

Mr. Chairperson: [...]

Mr. J. Roussety: Yes, on a tous entendus ici que la Chef Commissaire Adjointe a dit qu'il y a certaines personnes avant, des dirigeants qui ont placés des gens politique dans cette unité. Est-ce que je peux lui demander si elle aura

assez de courage pour dire qui sont ces gens politique qu'on a placé au sein de Limon D'Or.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Je ne peux pas citer le nom de qui que ce soit. Eux ils savent qui ils sont mis là. Ce sont des gens, peut-être je peux juste insinuer, allait demander une personne dans votre partie politique qui était là, allé poser la question comment il était là.

Mr. J. Roussety: M. le président, ce n'est pas une réponse.

Mr. Chairperson: Minority Leader.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether the Limon D'Or is fully autonomous or whether any financial assistance is being granted to that enterprise and if so, since when? And the last time it was granted any financial assistance by RRA?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, en effet l'année dernière, j'ai pas les dates exacte, l'année dernière le Conseil a approuvé *a Financial Assistance* pour permettre, parce qu'on a eu le gros contrat de Winners, pour permettre à la Fédération des Coopératives qui est basé à Limon D'Or pour l'acquisition des pots, par exemple, et des matières première pour pouvoir approvisionner le marché. Je suis contente qu'aujourd'hui, puisque le contrat est maintenu avec Limon D'Or et les produits sont acheminés régulièrement à Maurice. Donc, on travaille à ce que donc, les Coopératives soient *fully autonomous* et j'espère, on a pas à remettre des fonds depuis que le Conseil a approuvé le financement, on espère que le travail va se faire bien et qu'on n'aura pas à injecté de l'argent de nouveau.

Mr. J. Roussety: M. le président,...

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, being given it is a Coopérative, I wonder how and why the RRA has decided to allocate such financial assistance. Can I know under what terms and conditions has this been done, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and to what amount? She did not mention to what amount, this Coopérative has been granted such assistance?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, this is normal practice. It is as if you are giving a grant to a Coopérative for operationalization. Le plus important, c'est que les procédures ont été respectées. Il y a un contrat, un MOU, signé avec la Coopérative, un contrat surtout bien mentionné qu'est-ce qu'on fait avec cette argent. Ben les procédures ont été suivies. Donc, si ma mémoire ne me fait pas défaut, c'était

un montant d'environ Rs 135,000 pour l'achat des matières première pour démarrer le projet avec Winners comme j'ai bien dis, mais toutes les procédures ont été suivis à la lettre et c'est une procédure normale. L'importance c'est que c'est fait dans la transparence.

Mr. Chairperson: Two last supplementary questions. One for.. Yes.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, je voudrai savoir du Deputy Chief Commissioner, qui est en train de contre expertiser *the day-to-day running of Limon D'Or to see whether food norms are being adhered to?*

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: En effet, c'est pas une question de contre expertiser mais il y a une question des suivies/d'accompagnement. Ce que j'avais oublié de dire, on a eu aussi le support de la FAO pour nous aider à mettre en place le protocole pour la production journalière. Donc, il y a le protocole, le protocole, c'est-à-dire, les proportions des matières premières, les étapes à suivre, comment bien le faire. Ce protocole a été défini. C'est un technicien de l'Agriculture, formait dans ce domaine qui régulièrement, une fois par semaine, va accompagner les entrepreneurs qui sont là pour être sûre que le protocole est bien respecté.

Mr. Chairperson: Last, [..]

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, being given that the Limon D'Or, the processing of the Limon D'Or in Rodrigues, it is a profit making business. First of all, what has happened, being given that at its opening there was an MOU between, how do we call it, Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Society, a company to manage the compound. What has happened to the MOU that has been signed earlier? And secondly, how come that a profit making business has been transferred to a cooperative?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, notre politique c'est de faire des Coopératives des *profit making businesses*. Au contraire, c'est ça notre objectif professionnaliser les Coopératives et ça existe dans tous les pays du monde. Les Coopératives se font du business. Avec le RTMC, effectivement, il y a un MOU qui avait été signé et là donc on à revoir les *terms and conditions* du MOU et on va résigner par rapport à tous les travaux qu'on a faits aussi au niveau du bâtiment. Donc, les MOU sera révisé très bientôt. On a déjà travaillé là-dessus. Il y a un petit comité RTMC et mon bureau pour élaborer les *terms of reference*.

Mr. Chairperson: Next question. First Island Region Member.

Mr. J. Roussety: B/36.

Mr. Chairperson: B/35? Okay.

LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS - SERVICE CONTRACT

(No. B/35) Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards local entrepreneurs in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, state if any service contract has been awarded to Consultants at the level of her Commission to assist them in writing their business plans and, if so, to give details thereon together with the terms of the contract and amount paid to date, if any?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission decided to recruit a pool of consultants to write bankable business plans with a view to increasing the probability of Rodriguan entrepreneurs in obtaining bank loans. It is good to note that a point was reached when the office of Invest Rodrigues, which is staffed by a single officer, was submerged with numerous requests from local entrepreneurs in view to assist them in the arduous process of writing their business plans.

This initiative for contracting Consultants was among one of main incentives announced in the Budget Speech in 2014 with a view to helping local entrepreneurs. My Office invited Expression of Interests (EOI) from Consultancy/Accounting firms and professionals to set-up branches in Rodrigues to help entrepreneurs in the business plan write-up process.

The EOI was advertised on Friday 07 November 2014 and was closed on the 21 November 2014. The EOI was publicised via RRA Websites as well as four local presses and one newspaper in Mauritius. Ten consultancy firms responded for the call among which none from Rodrigues. And, after an evaluation exercise, which was carried-out in December 2014, only three firms were retained, based on competences and acquired experiences among other pre-requisites criteria, namely:

1. BSP, Business Solutions Professionals Ltd;
2. KSI Ltd; and
3. Softskills Ltd.

All three above firms entered into agreement with the Commission as from February 2015 onward, renewable upon delivery of satisfactory services. The main conditions of the contracts are as follows:

- The Consultant was requested to perform the services through the signature of a contract during the period commencing 01 March 2015 and continuing through 30 November 2015 and from 01 December 2016 up to 30 March 2017 and any other period as may be subsequently agreed by the parties in writing.

Mr. Chairperson: Shorten your answer, please.

Mr. Chairperson: The consultancy firms also have the obligation to have a branch in Rodrigues with a view to offering better services to the beneficiaries.

Mr. J. Roussety: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have not heard about the amount paid to date, it is the last part in the question.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the RRA shall pay up to a maximum of Rs 15,000 as follows for each project write-up:

- 75% of the quoted rate for upstream associated services leading to the submission of a bankable business plan for each entrepreneurs and approved by an Evaluation Committee set up at Invest Rodrigues;
- The remaining 25% for support services to secure a loan from an accredited financial institution or bank; and follow up of the SME for a period of at least one month to set the enterprise, after the disbursement of the loan.
- The total amount paid for the project up to now is Rs 112,500.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, next question, please.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Yes, can the Deputy Chief Commissioner table the terms and conditions of the contract.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it was not requested in the question, so I do not have the document to be tabled now.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Please, can she table either today or at a later stage?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: If there is a question and we are requested to table the document, we will table the document.

Mr. Chairperson: Next question, please.

Mr. J. Roussety: B/36.

**SMALL MAN-MADE PASSES –
LINKING POINTE LA GUEULE/POINTE ROND UP TO COCOS**

(No. B/36) Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to small man-made passes in the lagoon such as the one linking Pointe La Gueule to Pointe Rond up to Cocos, he will, for the benefit of the House, state on his policy for the maintenance and cleaning thereof with a view of ensuring smoother navigation especially at low tide?

The Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others (Mr. R. Payendee): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the question of difficulty to navigate inside the lagoon at low tide has always been an important issue for me. I am also aware that fishermen use this limitation to do illegal fishing because they know it is difficult for the Fisheries Protection Officers or the Coast Guards to reach them. The dredging of these small passes will definitely help enforcing fisheries laws; help the movement of fishermen inside the lagoon, help the tourism sector through easy movement of pleasure crafts and at the same time protect the coral reef against soil erosion.

This is why Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that not later than the 27 of April, 2016, during the last meeting of the Rodrigues Fisheries and Marine Council we discussed a lot on this issue and my Commission is initiating procedures for the dredging of small passes, the priorities being as follows:-

- (i) Pointe L'Aigle, Diamand to Baie Malgache;
- (ii) La Queue Canal, Baie Malgache to Pointe Diable ;
- (iii) Pointe Manioque to Pointe Manne ;
- (iv) Pointe Rond to Grand Passage leading to Ile aux Cocos.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, discussions have also been held with the Mauritius Ports Authority for technical assistance given its experience in the matter. It is expected that when the estimated costs of the project and the scope of works are established, tenders will be launched immediately. This will definitely be helpful to all users of the sea especially at low tide.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Fisheries Protection Service has already identified a list of passes that have to be maintained and cleaned. My Commission will arrange for dredging depending on availability of funds. Necessary actions will also be taken for regular maintenance with the support of

owners of pleasure crafts, the fisher community and during octopus closed seasons. This will ensure that navigation in such passes remain practical all year round.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this affair of dredging is a big word; digging of the passes was done since colonial times. Why these small passes have been filled and silted is that they were not maintained. I do not think there is much necessity in having the Mauritius Port Authority etc., may be. But will the Commissioner ensure that the dredging of these passes is basically done manually. Manually one, because if we have a small dredger coming all the money will go to some big firms. And secondly, ensure that within the design, the concept of the project that the materials that are removed are carried to the shore. Because in the past what happened is that the dredgers put the materials on the banks of the two sides of the pass, of the *passage*, and then when there is a high tide, gradually it fills up.

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Member is well aware that it cost a lot to do these dredging but the question of taking.. manually it is okay, it is fine. We are working on that. Some places will be able to be done manually but when we look at some places, it is difficult to do it manually because the sand is quite loose and dangerous for the people working on that. And also, there is a question of taking, he said himself, question of taking the things on the land, how do we do that? How do we take the soil or the sand from the sea manually to take it to shore? Before it was being removed, yes, manually but the sand was put on both sides. But if you want to remove the sand and put it on the shore then it has to be done the right way using the right machines.

Mr. J. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has mentioned some passes in the North Western region of Rodrigues. Can I ask the Commissioner to state to this House what his Commission intends to do with those passes found in the southern part of the island?

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I shall be very happy to do all the passes. This is as I said from my answer, this is something, the issue that, you know, I have in head but the problem is some places is a priority on others. And if you look, in the south, for example, there are already existing passes which normally fishermen can use but of course, the Member is right that in the future all the passes, all the small passes are to be cleaned.

Mr. J. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has mentioned that this question is underway with Mauritius Ports Authority and other partners. If now that at the time that we are talking discussions are

underway when those passes will be attended to? Because those passes in the South, namely at Petite Butte, for example, at Baie Topaze where at low tide, fishermen encountered many difficulties to go through, to reach the place of work and back home, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. So, if now discussions are under way for the northern part of the island, I wonder and I would like to ask the Commissioner when his Commission is intending to attend to those passes there where those men-made passes have been dug manually for years?

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I said that, yes even manually we will do it but the problem is we do not have the fund for till the end of this six-months budget but on the next budget starting in July this year, we have money. So, this is why we are working on it now. So, discussions is on the way depending on how much it costs and how much money is available, we will start the work. We will have to start the work and then we know when to finish. But until we start we will never know.

Mr. J. Roussety: Concerning the same issue, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, regarding the delimitation of these passes, I think the Commissioner is also aware of the fact that there is a lot of dangerous metallic poles to delimitate the passes and these are very old and at high tide the sea covers them representing a danger for boats and navigations. Especially now, we have fast speedboats at the Fisheries Protection Service and also for some tourism operators. Will he ensure that these old dangerous poles in the sea be removed and when the new passes, if they come into operation, the new passes be rightly delimited.

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this a decision from the Executive Council, we have already decided to demarcate these small passes, even if they are not that deep we have already started the work. We have already bought all the poles and all these will be removed. We have discussed with all the tourism operators who will help on that and we also mentioned that we are not only putting new poles but we will also put some reflectors on the poles so that the poles are visible at night. So this is a decision already taken and the work is underway.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: I want to make a plea to the Commissioner whether, he has said that, there is a problem of availability of fund, can the Commissioner put it as an emergency to look into this problem. We have the problem of tide. We have low tide and high tide, whether we can put a demarcation at different place in order that the fishermen know the exact height of the sea.

Mr. R. Payendee: You know, it is no problem with this. This is something which will not be with the poles that we are putting the poles at the

level of the sea. Of course, the poles will go beyond that but regarding the fund, I said that for the six-month budget till June we do not have money for that. But as from July this year this work can be done. This is why we are discussing with the Mauritius Ports Authority to get a machine to do that. If we get a machine then we will go faster and much better. Yes, but everybody, people have their way, you know, but this is our way of doing and this is how we will do it. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Minority Leader, please.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, unfortunately, I was absent and I missed the previous question, I do not know whether such has been asked. But being given that one of the priorities of the Commission of Environment is to make Rodrigues an ecological island, I have heard the Commissioner talking about discussions is under way. Can I ask him whether to be able to complete all the digging of all the passes he have just mentioned whether it is subject to an actual plan where the aspects of ecologies, supervision, sustainability and all these have been taken on board. And whether it is subject also to budget provision for these works, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the coming budget. Because I did not hear the Chief Commissioner in his Budget Speech mentioned about these projects. Can the Commissioner elaborate on that, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

Mr. R. Payendee: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner normally do not say everything that needs to be done in a budget. He says some main things as far as I know but this is not, you know, were not one of the main things. There have been lot of better things to say because he could have been talking for hours because, you know, there is a lot of thing to say. But regarding the ecological thing of it, side of it, of course, this Commission, we want to make Rodrigues always an ecological island. That is why we do not want to dig with hands like this and put the soil on the sides because the water will become turbid and it is not ecological to do this type of thing. That is why we do not want to create any *bassin la boue*. Of course, we do not want to create this. But we will take the sand on shore whenever possible and this is how we will be looking at the ecological side of things.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question, please.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, can I please. Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. R. Payendee: On a point of order. This Member used a word, which is non-parliamentary. Can I ask him to remove the word?

Mr. Chairperson: I was going to say this. I just heard what you just said. Please, withdraw your word.

Mr. J. Roussety: What I was saying was not addressed to any particular Member, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: You were looking.

Mr. J. Roussety: Yeah, you want us to engage into looking, saying, smelling etc. all the senses?

Mr. Chairperson: These words is not admitted in this Assembly..

Mr. J. Roussety: I repeat my word was not addressed to any particular Member.

Mr. Chairperson: This is not in this Assembly, you have to withdraw your word.

Mr. J. Roussety: This is my word. If you want to put me out, you can put me out. I cannot withdraw a word which was not addressed to a particular person.

Mr. Chairperson: This is my ruling.

Mr. J. Roussety: No, your ruling is wrong.

Mr. Chairperson: You cannot challenge my ruling. Either you withdraw your word or you leave this Assembly.

Mr. J. Roussety: You can throw me out, I am ready for it. I said *imbecile* but it was not addressed to any particular Member.

Mr. Chairperson: Either you withdraw your word or you leave the Assembly.

Mr. J. Roussety: I will leave this Assembly. It is better for me.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, I am waiting for you to leave the Assembly, if you want to go out. This is what I am telling you. Either, once again, either you withdraw your word or when I say you leave the Assembly, that is, you go out of this House.

Mr. J. Roussety: Can I know for how much time are you ordering out of the Assembly? Is it for the whole sitting?

[Interruption]

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: This is unfair, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: What is unfair? What I am saying?

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: No, no, no.

[Gap in recording]

Mr. J. Roussety: I am asking you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, without undue respect, are you asking me to leave the Assembly. I want to know on which ground? Because I have rights here as a Member as much as you have rights as a Chairperson, which I respect. My point is, I want to know on which ground are you asking me to leave this House?

Mr. Chairperson: Those words you just said.

Mr. J. Roussety: Which word is it?

Mr. Chairperson: You know the word.

Mr. J. Roussety: How can I know the word?

Mr. Chairperson: [...]

Mr. J. Roussety: We are not in a class, you know, we are in an Assembly. You are asking me to leave the House, for the whole day, for the whole term. Are you asking me to leave the House for the whole term until the elections? I get elected again or I am not.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, I will tell you, according to Standing Order 44.

[Gap in recording]

Mr. Chairperson: Wait, you may name such Member in which says Standing Order 45 does not applied. Since you withdrew, you removed, to withdraw your word. This is my ruling.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: *Est-ce qui line impute motives on the member ?*

[Gap in recording]

Mr. Chairperson: “*The Chairperson shall order any Member whose conduct is grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately from the Chamber during the remainder of that day’s sitting.*” This is my ruling.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on a point of order. I am not challenging you, Chairperson, but on a point of personal explanation.

Mr. Chairperson: You have got a point of explanation but I have already given my ruling.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: No, this is an Assembly, Chairperson. This is an Assembly. If the Member has impute motives on the Commissioner. You can name the Member. He has not put impute motive on the Member. No, no and he is in a sitting position. No.

[Gap in recording]

Mr. J. Roussety: You can have me remove [...]

[Gap in recording]

Mr. J. Roussety: [...] in the coming agenda of the Assembly, I remove the word *imbecile* but I repeat that it was not addressed to anybody here.

[Gap in recording]

Mr. Chairperson: Please, you removed your word, we can continue with our... Thank you. Next question, please.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: B/37. Thank you.

ASSISTANCE/CATTLE, GOAT & SHEET BREEDERS – SETTING UP OF INTEGRATED FARMS

(No. B/37) Mr. J. C. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to assistance to cattle, goat and sheep breeders for the setting up of integrated farms, he will:

- (a) state how the selection of beneficiaries thereof was made;

- (b) table the list of beneficiaries thereof; and
- (c) state the difficulties, if any, encountered by the beneficiaries thereof together with the remedial measures taken?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the provision of assistance to eligible cattle, goat and sheep breeders to set up integrated farms is an agricultural incentive scheme launched to professionalise livestock production which is respectful of the environment and to sustain the livestock sector through the implementation of the “*cut and carry*” concept. This is a budgetary measure announced in the Budget Speech 2015.

Mr. Chairperson: Chief Commissioner. There is a point of order, please.

The Chief Commissioner: Pardon?

Mr. Chairperson: There is a point of order.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, I have not heard.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think there is a problem with the microphone; I did not hear well what the Chief Commissioner is saying. I think there is a problem with the microphone.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, proceed Chief Commissioner.

The Chief Commissioner: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the selection was made in a systematic manner as follows:-

- (i) The Commission for Agriculture issued a radio communiqué in December 2014 to call for interest; and
- (ii) On 30 June 2015, information sessions were carried out with all the applicants who registered themselves in December 2014 to benefit from the Schemes.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the main requirements for the successful completion of an applicant's dossier were:-

- (i) evidence that the applicant is a self-employed breeder earning a living from cattle/goat/sheep rearing;
- (ii) a minimum of three years' experience in livestock rearing;

- (iii) project write-up showing willingness to rear animals in enclosed pastures/animal shed to practice “cut and carry”;
- (iv) proof of availability of the remaining funds required to set up their respective farm; and
- (v) submission of a valid quotation from a recommended supplier of imported breeds.

These requirements formed the basis of the selection criteria as well as:-

- (a) current stock and management practices;
- (b) target herd size with regard to only reproducers to allow the applicant to earn a living or raise his standard of living;
- (c) factors enumerated to improve farming practices; and
- (d) the age and occupation of the applicant and of his/her spouse/partner.

For the purpose of eligibility, field inspections starting on 17 August 2015 were carried out on the 118 applicants who completed their respective dossiers within the deadline of 24 July 2015. For the sake of equity, transparency and fairness the set of criteria as mentioned above was used throughout the whole selection process.

In September 2015, the respective team leaders of the technical section responsible for field inspections submitted their reports with the estimated cost of the requirements such as sheds, live animals, rain water collection among others of each applicant for the latter to set up his/her integrated farm as per specifications of the Agricultural Services.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in light of the reports submitted by the technical teams responsible for field inspections and for the eligibility criteria for selection of beneficiaries, the Departmental Head of the Commission for Agriculture recommended to select:-

- (i) the first 5 on the priority list for cattle;
- (ii) the first 10 on the priority list for goat;
- (iii) the first 10 on the priority list for sheep.

The recommendations were approved by the Executive Council in October 2015.

It is not ethical to table the list of beneficiaries for these schemes without the prior consent of the beneficiaries.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that during the implementation phase of the project, it was found that the costs of infrastructure were much higher than expected and that the costs of animals to be purchased were lower than expected. Some fine-tuning of the schemes was therefore effected to reflect the current market rate of inputs for a more effective implementation of the scheme.

The setting up of the integrated farms consists of an infrastructure and a pasture component. Almost all the beneficiaries have completed the infrastructure component up to 75% or more. Some nine beneficiaries have faced difficulties to start cultivation of fodder in their respective pastures due to the high cost of land mechanisation.

The Regional Government has just approved the redeployment of the Crawler Tractor D6 to the nine sites where pastures are to be set up under the Agricultural Incentive Scheme for derocking and uprooting works for the timely cultivation of fodder during the current rainy season.

Mr. Chairperson: Please, you have got long to go, you have to shorten your answer, please.

The Chief Commissioner: No. One, two, three. Okay? I am finished. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all the beneficiaries are doing their best to complete their respective projects. However, the problem of electricity supply at different suitable sites identified to set up farms is adversely affecting the timely implementation of their projects with regard to lighting and irrigation.

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly has already submitted an official request to the appropriate authorities for a request to connect them to the electricity network. This includes fixing of poles and other accessories at the Central Electricity Board's expense. Some beneficiaries also faced the problem of acquiring construction materials due to unavailability on the market. This is beyond our control.

The House may wish to note that all the Schemes aim at empowering people. They are encouraged to do their own procurement by following basic public procurement procedures:-

- (i) No Cash is handed over directly to beneficiaries.
- (ii) Procurement is made by the beneficiaries themselves based on the best quotation out of three.

- (iii) The supplier of building materials and labour submit their invoice to the Commission for settlement of claims which are verified and certified by the technical staff before payment is approved.

Mr. Chairperson: Please, wait.

[Gap in recording]

Mr. J. C. Agathe: First of all I want to ask the Chief Commissioner as regards to obtain the cattle, goat, sheep, where will they obtain these animals.

The Chief Commissioner: Either they bought it in Rodrigues or they can buy it from Mauritius also, you know. I have been told that there are a lot of cattle here, sheep, goats here in Rodrigues. And then for the sheep, they have sheeps at Ile aux Crabs and I think that with the service at the Agriculture they can have some help to know where to buy those cattle, those animals. And, I think that in Rodrigues there are enough animal to buy for rearing and their product project.

Mr. A. F. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has been talking about a technical team. Can he state the composition, first of all, of the technical team? Secondly, can he tell us who chooses the site for setting up of the different integrated farms? Because he has been talking about difficulties faced by farmers, so if you chose the wrong side this can lead of the crops, of the fodders not grown properly. So I would like to know from him who chooses the composition of the technical team.

The Chief Commissioner: Well, I do not know the name of the technical team but I know that everything is done in collaboration, the breeder and the technical officers, you know, everything. We do not impose them. *On n'impose pas et puis, ils choisissent où est-ce qu'ils veulent faire leurs élevages mais en même temps il faut que là où ils ont choisis il faut que vraiment il y est une visite par les Technicien Agricole, pour voir si c'est possible s'ils peuvent s'installer là. Et toute est fait en collaboration avec le Service. Alors, on travaille en collaboration, chacun ne fait pas de son côté. Nous sommes un service, nous aidons et c'est pourquoi nous essayons de former nos Techniciens à être au service des planteurs, des éleveurs et ainsi de suite, pour les aider to empower them. C'est ça qu'on veut dans cette île Rodrigues de demain.*

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Chief Commissioner, being given that the Executive Council has decided to help those

farmers by providing with the D6 machine for ploughing and de-rocking the land, I think this is not the end of the problem. I know that most of these sites chosen are found in regions where it is very dry. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether other assistance will be given to them in helping them in the growth of these fodder? Because if the season is dry so we know the fodder will not grow, will there be any irrigation assistance, one? And secondly, what type of fodder has been chosen to be grown in these different regions in order to suit these farmers in these particular regions so that they get a better output of these activities.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, comme nous avons dit, il y a des Techniciens qui s'y connaissent dans le fourrage et justement on a vu à Anse Raffin, il me semble, des villageois qui plantes plantent de l'herbe pour le pâturage. Donc, il y a des initiatives un peu partout et justement il y a aussi, c'est ce qu'on appelle aussi l'irrigation, c'est pourquoi on a parlé dans ma réponse la question d'électricité. On sait qu'il y a beaucoup qui rencontre d'électricité. Et on a également parlé justement l'eau du robinet qu'on donne aux consommateurs on a décidé qu'on peut donner cette eau là aussi aux planteurs et aux éleveurs. Donc, il y a toute une question de décision et quand on voit vraiment qu'il y a quelque chose qui cloche et nous au niveau du Conseil Exécutif on prend des décisions par rapport aux problèmes qu'on rencontre justement. Alors, à mon avis, ce D6 est en train, j'ai été voir un peu partout, est en train de faire du bon travail justement, un *derocking*, là où il faut on peut faire des pâturages, tout ça. Il y même du côté du Montagne Croupier et un peu partout à Montagne Cabris. Alors, ils sont en train de faire toute un travail, d'enlever les grosses pierres pour que vraiment la terre puisse être utilisée. Il faut utiliser le maximum possible de terre qui existe à Rodrigues. Alors je pense que, et aussi, M. le président, c'est que nous avons proposé, que les forêts, le Service des Forêts plantent des arbres comme des oasis. Qu'on ne fasse pas planter des arbres n'importe où mais là où il y a des pâturages, qu'on puisse arriver à planter des arbres pour attirer la pluie. Alors, le gros problème, mais bien sûre, c'est l'arbre qui attire la pluie. Alors, vous ne savez pas ce que c'est que l'humidité. L'humidité c'est quoi ? J'ai terminé, M. le président.

Mr. Chairperson: Two last question, please.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we see that some *pâturages communautaires* have been set up to enable these farms to operate on a cut and carry basis. Can the Chief Commissioner inform the House who are enforcing upon his zone to see whether they are in good fencing conditions? Because frequently we see that there are animals straying inside these zones causing much discrimination and discouragement among farmers.

The Chief Commissioner: Nous avons parlé, M. le président, de plusieurs pâturages, donc, à Deux Montagne, à Roche Bon Dieu, à Montagne Croupier et à Montagne Plate. Mais malheureusement, il y a à Petite Butte, il y a une Coopérative qui a pris un pâturage. Mais malheureusement, M. le président, c'est ce qui est important et très souvent qu'on sait que ces pâturages sont clôturés, c'est malheureux de dire, le vol, c'est malheureux. Et c'est pourquoi nous voudrions que là où il y a des pâturages que ce soit les éleveurs eux-mêmes qui prennent soin de ces pâturages, surveiller les clôtures. Il faut quand même une population qui est vraiment rempli de responsabilité. On est là pour servir le pays. Il faut qu'un éleveur puisse, là aussi nous disons souvent, pour qu'un éleveur puisse respecter la plantation d'un agriculteur. Il faut justement, mais là on est en train de préparer des règlements, on viendra avec ces règlements pour que justement que les animaux soient dans des parcs. C'est comme j'ai annoncé ici, que ceux qui nourrissent des animaux, les animaux doivent être dans des parcs. Il y a toute cette question justement du fumier, ça aussi il y a beaucoup de fumiers qui se perdent avec les animaux qui sont lâchés ici là-bas. Alors il nous faudra revoir Rodrigues dans les années à venir et quand on parle aujourd'hui l'agriculture bio et ainsi de suite. Il y a tout un travail qu'il faudra faire alors c'est pourquoi nous demanderons aux planteurs eux-mêmes de se grouper soient en coopérative ou en association pour prendre la responsabilité de ce pâturage.

Mr. Chairperson: Last que question, please.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Two in one, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. First of all I want to ask the Chief Commissioner is he aware that the beneficiaries are forced to purchase from a sole suppliers, forced to purchase, fencing all these from a sole supplier ? This is a first question. And secondly, the Chief Commissioner mentioned that the beneficiaries have to purchase cattle, goats on the local market. What has happened to the animals that have been imported to Rodrigues since last year, what has happened to these animals and in which conditions these animals grow up ?

The Chief Commissioner: Non, M. le président, c'est que les éleveurs ont la liberté d'aller acheter ces animaux là où ils veulent. Non, ils ne sont pas obligés d'aller là. Vous comprenez ? Deuxièmement, les animaux qui ont été importés sont vendus à des éleveurs, que ce soient des vaches laitières ou ainsi de suite. Même les animaux qui étaient là avant, qui était là, ces animaux aussi ont été vendus à des éleveurs dans le pays. Alors et aussi surtout les animaux importés sont d'une race assez rare à Rodrigues est justement, ces animaux sont vendus à ses éleveurs.

Mr. Chairperson: I request the Deputy Chairperson to take the Chair, please.

EMPLOYMENT RELIEF PROGRAMME (ERP)

(No. B/38) Mr. J. C. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Labour and Industrial Relations and Others whether, as regard the Employment Relief Programme (ERP), he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the number of beneficiaries under the Unemployment Hardship Relief and Social Aid who are now involved under the Employment Relief Programme, respectively, for each batch; and
- (b) the number thereof already converted into productive labour force contributing actively to the socio-economic development of Rodrigues and earning their livelihood independently?

The Commissioner responsible for Labour and Industrial Relations and Others (J. D. Baptiste): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Employment Relief Programme was first introduced in February 2015 when a first batch of 300 beneficiaries of Unemployment Hardship Relief (UHR) and Social Aid were placed in the programme on the basis of their priority date for registration for a period of one year which expired on 31 January 2016.

This first batch of the 300 ERP trainees comprised of 200 beneficiaries of Unemployment Hardship Relief and 100 beneficiaries of Social Aid. Upon completion of their programme in January this year, 242 trainees have indicated their interest to start an income generating activities as follows:-

Out of the 242 trainees who have shown their interest to start this income generating activity, 18 of them have already been converted into productive labour force. I am also informed that the 38 trainees who did not show an interest at all for any project are already qualified tradesmen and are entrepreneurs. So, they are already participating actively in the socio-economic development of Rodrigues. Consequently, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, out of the 300 trainees for the first batch of ERP, a total of 76 of them are already productive labour force and another one 23 of them are expected to become active labour force shortly, through the creation of their enterprises.

As regards to the second batch, there are again 300 trainees who are beneficiaries of Unemployment Hardship Relief (UHR). 200 befitting from UHR and 100 beneficiaries of Social Aid as it was for the first batch.

They have already started their programme on 02 January 2016. The programme will be completed by the end of January 2017. And the same methodology will be applied upon completion of their training programme in view of encouraging them to start an income generating activity.

My Commission is undertaking a survey to identify the sectors in which each trainee would want to venture at the end of the programme. At this stage we are therefore not in a position to provide further details for the second batch of trainees as requested in part (b).

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Yes, I have many questions on this issue. If you allowed me, I will ask one by one. First of all, I will ask of the Commissioner whether he has encountered any problems which the first batch of trainees during a meeting at Malabar.

Mr. J. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the answer is no.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: The answer is no, *hein*. Yes, the second one, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, out of 232, he just mentioned, yes, out of the 242, 18 only have been converted into, is earning a livelihood independently. Can he consider, the project as a success story ?

Mr. J. D. Baptiste: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because as I said right from the beginning of the project, we want people who are willing to opt for these productive activities, we are working with them. We do not want to force other people who do not like, do not want to do these businesses or activities. We do not want to force them. But what is most important as I have said 123 of them, 123 others are willing, still willing to consider to operate an income generating activity and they have already submitted their business plan which are now under consideration by an evaluation committee. So, we are expecting not only but it will be 18 plus 105 have, sorry 105 have submitted their project. So, 123 of them will choose this.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Yes, I said 18, he said 18. 18 out of 242. I do not bother about the 176 that your are mentionning. I want the Commissioner to say to this House whether 242 minus 18, it is 224. Whether the 24 persons who have not been earning their livelihood, whether they have been granted social aid or Unemployment Hardship Relief ?

Mr. J. D. Baptiste: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have made an arrangement so that for the time being they can also benefit from these social aid and UHR.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Can we know the number ? The number out of the 24 how many has already obtained their social aid or UHR ?

Mr. J. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I do not have the exact number but all those who have applied for social aid and UHR and who have not yet started their project they have benefited from their UHR or social aid.

Mr. A. F. Grandcourt: M. le Vice-président, je ne sais pas si j'ai bien entendu, le Commissaire a fait mention de 123 projets, c'est-à-dire, 123 UHR *beneficiaries* qui pense faire un projet, n'est-ce pas ? Mais, M. le Vice-président, je me rappelle, il y a une question qu'on a posée dans cette Assemblée et le Commissaire avait dit que 'on travail' et leur avait reproché à l'époque, on lui avait dit comment se fait-il qu'il y a déjà les UHR qui sont déjà, vous avez prit ces gens là, comment se fait-il que ce n'est que maintenant que vous allez travailler pour faire un projet. Et là on apprend après qu'ils ont terminé le cycle, c'est-à-dire, après un an ils sont toujours en train de décider s'ils iront de l'avant ou pas avec un projet, M. le Vice-président. *Where is the seriousness, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir ? What has happened ? Can the Commissioner tell us what has happened, what are the difficulties and what has happened between the time he answered the question and now since 123 are still willing ? Where is the motivation ? Where is the problem, Mr. Chairperson, Sir ? Where is his responsibility and why is it taking so much time for these people to choose to go ahead with a project on it ?*

Mr. J. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, during the course of the years, many of them have change their projects. And for me, the most important thing is the quality. We could have just given money to each and everyone, because the money is already available but as I mentioned from the beginning we want these people to succeed. It is better to take two years or three or four and ensure that once they get their project, they can really earn their livelihood. We do not want to see things that happened under the previous government. Go to Rivière Banane and see what happened to those people who have benefited from millions of rupees. We do not want just to give people money but we want people to get this money to carry out their business activities and to make it really profitable so that they can earn their livelihood. You can go to Anse Femy, Saponaire towards Anse Femy, go and find out those people who got Rs 500,000 under the previous regime and find out what is going on there and find out if there is any project overthere. Go to Nassola, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

That is why this government we are serious. We want people to succeed and we do not want to do things *au petit bonheur*.

Mr. J. Roussety: The Commissioner is always pointing to the previous government Rs 500,000 etc. Let me tell him he is to be blamed because it was a training programme and during the training these people should have been trained and the business should have been ready by the time they leave the programme. This is his responsibilities. This is what these people were told. He has failed in training these people and getting these people ready and when they leave they should have received their funds available. Their project should have been ready. If the project is not ready why have they brought quotation for animals, quotation for materials, etc. etc. When will the project be ready? In three years time! Do you want these people to starve? These people are starving, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. I want to know from him whether these projects should not have been ready by the time the traineeship of the trainees end? Whether they will have to wait for three years. Because this is irresponsibilities if they have to wait for three years.

Mr. J. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that the Member is completely wrong when he said that these people are starving. How can they starve if they are getting their social aid and UHR just as before the programme. But what is new, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I said money is available, projects are available but we cannot just accept anything for the sake of saying that I am happy that 200 trainees have got money and their projects and if they are not ready to start it. That is why there is a team from the Chief Commissioner's Office, from the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office who are accompanying these people and there is also a committee at the level of my Commission. The committee is working in straight collaboration with all the stakeholders to ensure as I have said that these are really project that will make these people empowered and become less dependent on government benefits.

Mr. A. F. Grandcourt: Yes, in the same line, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner in the answer he gave before he said, they have changed the project. The beneficiaries have changed their projects. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if the beneficiaries were well informed, *bien encadrer, M. le président, comment se fait-il qu'ils changent leurs projets ?* He is talking about a team, working with a team, *vous savez combien de projet ti piment, bassins 9 m³ sont encore pas installés, jeter comme ça, fencing là-bas, poteaux in jette dans bois. Vous savez combien de cas il y à Rodrigues, M. le Président ? Et puis le Commissaire vient nous dire qu'il veut du sérieux, il veut que les gens réussissent. Maintenant il pleut. Quand est-ce-qu'ils faut planter le petit piment ? C'est maintenant. Mais qu'est-ce qui va se passer après, M. le Président.* Where is a

seriousness? Where is a seriousness? And I want to know why these beneficiaries have changed their projects during the course of their training ?

Mr. J. D. Baptiste: The reason is simply because the training programme has been really fruitful and successful. Many of them has realised that what they thought would be a good project after the training programme, we have realised that they were wrong and they were told to prepare another project with the help of the different committees.

Mr. J. Roussety: I want to know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is contradictory, because we understand that during the project it was the time for the person to foredelay the concept of his project. During the time of the traineeship, it was during this time that the person should have formulated the concept assisted, trained for his project. And now the Commissioner, how many months after the end of the training he's coming to say that these people need to revise their projects, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Which is which? These people should according to their terms have identified, I have spoken to some of them, they should have identified which project they will go. So, I want to know why is it now that the projects are being reviewed and why so many procedures, committees etc. etc. ? These people they are interested to have their project, they are ready, most of them to go for their project.

Mr. J. D. Baptiste: I think I have already replied to what the Member is saying. But I just want to remind him that at the beginning he was quite sceptical that the project will fail and today he is now trying to gain some political capital gains but what is important as I have said they have submitted the business plan because we want to know also the seriousness of his project. For example, out of the 25 who have submitted projects in the service sector, project other than livestock and crop production, 23 of the projects have been found to be really sound and we can go ahead. But the two of them we should continue to help them. Because at the end of the day what is important, these people should be able to start a project which will be successful as I mentioned. If we have to review it three, four, five times we will have to do it and we will do it but at the end the result should be that they can earn their living. This is what is most important and this project is an ongoing project, we will continue to empower, we will continue to *encadrer* these persons, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: A last question for Mr. Agathe.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, from the speech of the Commissioner and what is happening outside there, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is very different. It is a very different. I shall tell you one case. There are many cases for social aid for these beneficiaries. We ought to have Rs 4,000 one year,

that is in 2014. Now they are earning only Rs 2000 instead of Rs 4000. Go and find. Secondly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to the new batch, to the new batch, they have to be trained on field, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. Is he aware that since first February, March, April and May, four months, those who have been posted at St. Gabriel, they called upon me, they said, they are *sarier l'herbes tous les jours, ça même zot travail*. These are training or they go and *tire caca vache tous les jours*. Is these works are training for them and to be skilled and earn a livelihood out of this? No, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Can the Commissioner go and make a survey in order to know where the ERPs are being posted because I understand that public officers they are relying on these ERPs to do their work.

Mr. J. D. Baptiste: We do not need to go for survey we already know where they are and we know what they are doing. And obviously once a week they have to follow a training course outside their place of work. But the member is wrong when he is talking about Rs 4000. Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on a personal point of explanation. He said that I am wrong. I shall tell him that I am right. Yes, we have facts, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. We have facts that these persons are doing these types of works at St. Gabriel or on the other RRAs site of work. We have facts.

Mr. J. D. Baptiste: Yes, I expect the member to come here with the facts because in no contracts there is nothing mentioned as Rs 4000. What I meant, the contract Rs 6000 have been mentioned plus travelling expenses but it happens that there are conditions and you should go through all conditions. It happens that he is someone does not come to work, he will earn less than Rs 6000 but there is nothing like Rs 2000, Rs 3000 and Rs 4000. I do not know where he got these answers.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Next question.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICE

(No. B/39) Mr. A. Edouard (Eighth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure & Others whether, in regard to public transport in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the measures taken being taken by his Commission since 2015 to date, if any, to improve the service thereof and, if so, the expected or observed impact thereon?

The Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure & Others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the comfort, well-being

and security of the users of public transport is of great importance to my Commission. To that effect, several measures have been adopted by my Commission with particular attention to the following aspects; upgrading of roads, provision of bus service to remote villages, strict monitoring of dedicated school services and increase in the number of Road Service License in Rodrigues.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, since 2015, my Commission has upgraded the roads from Baladirou to Mt. Goyaves, Patate Theophile to Coromandel, St. Gabriel to Petit Gabriel, which is still on going, Le Chou to Port Mathurin phase I and the road from Citron Donis to Eau Vannée and part of the Citron Donis Road which was not upgraded, are being upgraded now. Those roads are provided with bus routes and the upgrading of same is to improve public transport in these regions.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as from 2015, bus services have been extended to the villages of Le Chou and Dans Coco along routes 206 and 207 as follows: from Port Mathurin to Plaine Corail/Camp Pintade via Le Chou and from Port Mathurin to Plaine Corail via Dans Coco. The provision of these bus services has relieved the inhabitants of Le Chou and Dans Coco from walking long distances up to main roads to catch the bus to attend work, school, to visit their relatives at the hospital and have provided direct bus service to and from Port Mathurin to the villagers of Dans Coco.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with the help of the Police, students have been sensitized to make maximum use of the dedicated school buses allocated to their respective colleges in the afternoon specially at Mt. Lubin and Port Mathurin thereby solving the previous problem where students were returning home late not to mention the issues associated with the loitering of students at Mt. Lubin and Port Mathurin. Moreover, this has resulted in the availability of more seats on buses to other bus users after working hours.

Lastly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has invited interested members of the public to apply for the grant of six additional Road Service Licences. These applications received are being processed and the Rodrigues Transport Committee will be convened next month to allocate six additional bus licences to further improve the public transport service.

Mr. J. Roussety: Le Commissaire est connu pour être sur le terrain. Est-ce que je peux lui demander s'il a déjà observé la façon dont les étudiants sont transportés dans les bus Rodriguais et s'il sera d'accord avec l'expression "*sardines en boîte*"?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Oui, M. le Vice-président, c'est pourquoi nous avons demandé pour que la flotte de bus soit augmentée par six dans les mois à venir.

Mr. A. F. Grandcourt: M. le Vice-président, parlant des étudiants, est-ce que le Commissaire est au courant que les *bus pass* il y a certains étudiants qui ont eu leur *bus pass* expiré et qui n'ont pas été renouvelés jusqu'à maintenant, c'est-à-dire, mai. Ça aurait du être fait depuis janvier et je sais que la NTA est partie prenante dans ce processus de renouvellement. Il parle des mesures, oui, comment se fait-il que maintenant il y a des élèves qui doivent payer alors que le Gouvernement paye le *Free Transport for all students in the Republic*. *Why is it that now they are still paying to go to school and back, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. This is very serious. Yes, he is talking about the road and so on. This point is very serious. How come that they are still now.*

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I have not received official complaints that there is a problem on the bus pass of student but I will look into the matter tomorrow morning.

Mr. J. Roussety: Yes, as regards some students have not received their bus pass, only now they are starting to receive, some of them. As regards, the six road licences, which have been advertised. I have had a look at the application form and conditions for applying for these licences and one of these conditions is that the applicant must have a certain deposit of money or a bank guarantee which shows that he will be able that he will be able to buy the bus in case the applicant is being granted the licence. I would like to ask the Commissioner first, whether he is aware of this and whether he will see to it that all requirements in the application are being fulfilled for all those who will be granted the Road Service Licence.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Of course, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I will see to it that all that have been put in the application will be followed by.

Mr. J. Roussety: Can I know, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, how is the selection is going to be carried out, being given now that the Commissioner has stated that he is going to look into the issue. Does he has a particular role to look into the matter. I would like to ask him will he play a particular role in choosing the applicants. What is the process when the applications are received, once the applications are received, can he detail to this House, what will be the process of selection? I want to know.

[Interruption]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Mr. Roussety asks your question, please.

Mr. J. Roussety: Yes, I want to know from the time the applications are received, how the applications will be received, whether it will be sealed and everything and what will be the process, independent process, for the selection of the people who will get the licence.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: M. le vice-président, comme j'ai dis dans ma réponse, le mois prochain, le Rodrigues Transport Committee va être appeler pour sélectionner les nouveaux appliquants, les nouvelles personnes qui auront leurs licences. Mais comme j'ai dis je vais voir, je ne suis pas dans le comité mais je vais voir que tous ce qui a été écrit sur la formulaire soit respecter. Parce que moi je ne suis pas dans le comité. C'est le Chef de Département qui est le Chairman de Transport Committee. On ne va pas faire comme ça a été fait auparavant.

Mr. J. Roussety: What will be the process so that someone receive from the NTA letter that you have been allocated a permit. What will be the process? How will the selection be made?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: It is an established process, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. J. Roussety: But I want to know, I have not finished with my question. Thank you. I want to know there is an established process, can the Commissioner tell us for members in the house and the public also will know, there is the press here, what is this established process?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, once again I repeat I am not in that committee, I will not interfere in the committee as this has been done in the past.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Mr. Spéville.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner, we have some buses aging more than 15 years carrying passengers which are having their breaks faulty to time and this is causing much fears among passengers. Can the Commissioner inform the House whether he is aware of the situation and what is being done at the level of his Commission, namely the Road Safety Committee and the NTA to make public transport safer by having more road worthy buses on our road?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: M. le Vice-président, je suis au courant de cette situation avec les bus qui sont agés de plus de 15 ans et dès que nous recevons des plaintes de la part des passagers, nous appelons les propriétaires de ces bus pour qu'un *fitness test* soit fait sur ce bus. Mais aussi, il y a une dizaine de personnes qui ont demandé à ce que leurs bus soient remplacés et ils ont écrits à la Commission pour avoir un incentive s'ils devons prendre des bus neuf concernant le incentive qui se donne à Maurice.

Mr. A. F. Grandcourt: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he is aware according to the conditions attached to the application of road service licence, whether he is aware that applicants from Mauritius also can apply for the said licence in Rodrigues?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, and the committee will have to look into the matter so that Rodrigues, Rodriguans applicants have the priority.

Mr. A. F. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, how is it, the Commissioner is confirming that he has left the application opened for everybody in the Republic of Mauritius. And what are the conditions that you ave a certain amount of money. The applicants from Mauritius, they have the money compared to those who are willing to apply for a licence in Rodrigues. How come that the Commissioner, he comes here, he is confirming that and why is it that in the exercise, one of the conditions, he has not put restricted to Rodriguans applicants only. Why is it, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? Because we know in Rodrigues we should give priority to the Rodriguan applicants as he rightly said so. How is he going to refrain or disqualify any applicants from Mauritius, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, since he has left the application opened?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Rodrigues Transport Committee will have to do their jobs so that Rodriguans can have the priority not to let others come to buy buses.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner aware that there is a tendency now prevailing in the industry of transport in Rodrigues? Most of the Rodriguan buses is being owned by Mauritian coming from Mauritius. Is he aware of this, first? What is his policy about this issue and secondly, how many owners have been suspended for the year 2015 or ..?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: M. le Vice-président, nous sommes au courant de cette situation et nous sommes en train d'étudier cette genre de pratique qui se passe à Rodrigues maintenant.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, being given that ..

[Interruption]

The Deputy Chairperson: Mr. Rosaire asks your question, please.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, being given that transport for old aged people is free, can I ask the Commissioner whether he is aware that people from L'Union and part of Mont Charlot is paying transport, taxi to travel in Rodrigues?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that is why we are constructing road from Le Chou to Port Mathurin to have a bus route there. But for the time being we cannot have the bus to travel there because of its dangerous route.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Can the Commissioner see to it that arrangement is being made so that these people, who voted for him are refunded their money back.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: I will not answer to this, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

The Deputy Chairperson: Next question.

PRB REPORT – OUTCOME/MEASURES

(B/40) Mr. A. Edouard (Eighth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Pay Research Bureau (PRB) Report published in April 2016, he will state:

- (a) the outcome thereof for Rodrigues and the new implications, if any, for the public administration of the island; and
- (b) the measures taken, if any, for the effective implementation of the different recommendations thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the last Pay Research Bureau (PRB) Report 2016, both the Management and Unions submitted a common memorandum to the PRB with proposals that were considered to improve the Civil Service in Rodrigues. Some of the proposals have been considered and are included in the report. Some 17 new grades have been created for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Several proposals

regarding condition of service and changes are included in the general report for the whole of the public service.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that other proposals which have not been considered by the PRB would be resubmitted to the PRB in line with the publication of an Addendum Report to the 2016 PRB Report before 30 September 2016 for reconsideration.

The increase in salary and allowances will entail an additional monthly budget of about Rs 6 m. and arrears on salary payable to public officers for period January to April 2016 will cost around Rs 24 m.

As regards, to part (b) of the question, the RRA stands guided by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms Circular Note No. 6 of 2016 dated 07 April 2016 which are summarized as follows :

- (i) Signature of Option Forms in two originals by every officer to enlist those who has opted for the revised salaries and conditions of service.
- (ii) Conversion of salaries to be effected in accordance with the conversion table provided and paid along with May 2016 salary together with arrears of salary due since January 2016.
- (iii) New scheme of service as well as those which are to be revised in the context of the implementation of the PRB Report 2016 to be submitted to the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms by Monday 16 May 2016.
- (iv) Allowance not covered by the PRB Report 2016 and still justified to be submitted to the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms for approval.
- (v) All cases considered to be genuine errors and omissions or alleged cases of anomalies are to be submitted to the PRB through the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms within three months as from the date of approval of the Report.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the above guidelines have been circulated to all Departmental Heads who have been requested to stand guided accordingly and to submit required information within the different deadlines. Moreover, a Departmental Implementation and Monitoring Committee under the

chairmanship of the Island Chief Executive and comprising all Departmental Heads will be set up to ensure the effective implementation of the Report.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Yes, can we know, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, whether Performance Management System will be put into practice according to the PRB Report?

The Chief Commissioner: *Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. I think the PMS is very important for what we call travail productif et aussi responsable de chaque fonctionnaire. C'est très important. Il y en a qui sont contre mais à mon avis aujourd'hui la promotion et même la qualité du fonctionnaire est jugé par un PMS. Et ça, c'est très important quoi qu'il y a des syndicats qui sont contre mais il faut quand même que les fonctionnaires puissent savoir que pour accéder à une promotion il doit y avoir un rapport sur lui par son travail. Et c'est ça qui est très important à mon avis, notre fonction public doit sortir de l'amateurisme pour entrer dans le professionnalisme. Et c'est ça justement cette île Rodrigues de demain. Evidemment nous avons l'autonomie, il nous faudra montrer que cette autonomie à tous son sens dans le service public et ça c'est très important.*

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Is the Commissioner aware that being given that PRB we have posts, we have funded position also and we have the Rodrigues Regional Assembly are encountering problems with writing the Scheme of Duties of officers. Is the Rodrigues Regional Assembly with the coming into force of the PRB have enough personnel in order to work out the Scheme of Duties of new post or funded post ?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le Vice-président, jusqu'à maintenant le Scheme of Duties est travaillé à Maurice. Il y a Mme. Allas qui est là-bas et qui a fait un bon travail mais comme j'ai dit ici le PRB a autorisé qu'il y a un comité sous le Island Chief Executive et le Departmental Head et d'autres peut être les syndicats et ainsi suite pour pouvoir voir justement, c'est vrai, il y a des nouveaux postes mais il faut inclure, c'est à ce comité de voir des postes vraiment où il faut de faire un travail qui peut permettre à Rodrigues d'être plus autonome et ça c'est très important. Mais il faut savoir qu'un Scheme of Duty est examiné par le Ministère de Service Public. Et c'est ça qui est important. Mais nous disons aussi qu'il faut qu'il y est, par exemple, Mme. Daniella Allas qui est en formation en Australie et lorsqu'elle va retourner elle va être cette personne à la tête de l'Administration qui va justement travailler dans ce sens. Elle va apporter un plus justement à l'Administration autonome de Rodrigues.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, is the Chief Commissioner aware of the grievance of Trade Union regarding the salary for

Rodriguans being given that they have work a tripartite committee that has been set up in Rodrigues, is he aware of the grievance? Has the grievance of the Trade Unions being transmitted to the relevant authorities?

The Chief Commissioner: J'ai dit ça dans ma réponse. Il y a des points qu'on a soumis au Rapport PRB ça n'a pas été retenu. Et là on va revoir justement parce qu'il y aura la possibilité d'ici septembre de soumettre ces propositions qui n'ont pas été retenu par le PRB. Et c'est comme ça peut être dans ce comité qu'on va mettre en place, on va inviter les Departmental Heads, les syndicats et autres pour essayer de revoir tous cela s'il faut aller de l'avant. Et moi je pense puisqu'à Maurice aussi il y a eu des plaintes au niveau qu'il soit des syndicats. Il y a même à Maurice, il y a des syndicats qui dit qu'il faut revoir complètement le PRB ainsi de suite. Mais je pense qu'il faut écouter les syndicats, écouter ceux qui représentent la fonction public que faire, et là justement j'ai annoncé, il y a des nouvelles propositions qu'on va revenir avec ces nouvelles propositions pour le rapport de l'Addendum en septembre 2016.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: With these words, I suspend the House for one hour for lunch.

At 12.30 the Assembly was suspended for one hour for lunch

On resuming at 13.30 hours with the Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Chairperson: Nest question. Mr. the Eighth Island Region Member.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS - ANSE QUITOR AND BAIE MALGACHE

(No. B/41) Mr. A. Edouard (Eighth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to Community Schools in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state where matters stand in relation to the setting up thereof at Anse Quitor and Baie Malgache and indicating the cost estimates for the projects together with the number of new posts to be created as result thereof, if any?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the concept of Community School has always been a high priority on the agenda of the present Regional Government. The construction of Community Schools is in line with the vision and conviction of this Government to seek all opportunities so as to promote quality education for our school children. Attending a Community School in proximity to their home, will help them to spend less time in either walking or travelling to and from school.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there are presently three Community Schools in operation at Araucaria, Mont Charlot and Montagne Goyaves. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the quality of results produced by our children attending Community Schools has proved how beneficial this concept is to the community.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as mentioned in my last budget speech, a fourth Community School is being set up in the Region of Anse Quito. For the time being, children around this area are attending Grand La Fouche Corail Government School, which is under heavy pressure.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that the Construction of the Anse Quito Community School has already reached an advanced stage. The school will be operational as from January 2017. I am also informed, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the contract amount for the construction of Anse Quito Community School is Rs 50,815,788.30 inclusive of VAT.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards the Construction of the new Community School at Baie Malgache, it is worth mentioning that the school will accommodate pupils from the surrounding villages, that is part of Baie du Nord, Anse Goëland, lower part of Montagne du Sable and Baie Malgache. A site has already been identified and the Consultant has duly submitted the preliminary layout for the project. The estimated cost of the project amounts to date to Rs 55 m.

I am informed, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that both new Community Schools will start operating as a one-stream school in a first instance. Additional posts will be created to staff the school adequately and appropriately, that is, at the level of Headmasters, Deputy Head Masters, Educators, School Clerks, Senior School Caretakers, School Caretakers, General Workers, ICT Support Officers and Security Guards.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in view of the opening of the two new schools, necessary actions have been taken well in advance with regard to the recruitment of teaching staff.

Presently, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, 40 Trainee Educators are following the Teacher's Diploma Programme (TDP) at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE). Out of the 40 Trainee Educators, a first batch of 10 will complete their training course in July 2016 and will be able to staff Anse Quito Community School in 2017.

The second batch of 30 Trainee Educators who have been recruited at the beginning of this year will complete their training in 2017 and by the time the Community School at Baie Malgache will open its doors, the services of adequate teaching staff will be available.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is the Chief Commissioner aware that as from now there is a shortage of full-fledged teacher or I do not know, Educator or teacher, full-fledged teacher or educator whether according to the trend of sending trainees to Mauritius he will meet the demand for the oncoming opening of Community Schools.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are aware of that. We have just employed, what we called, Supply Teachers. I had a meeting with the Supply Teachers, it is about 13 Supply Teachers to teach in different primary schools where there are no teachers.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Can we know being given that we are going to construct Community Schools whether the schools will be supplied in the first instance, with Supply Teacher and according to the Education Act which class will be allocated with Supply Teacher according to Education Act?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I said in my reply for Anse Quitor, for Baie Malgache, the teachers have already been recruited. They are following courses at the MIE and teachers who will come from the MIE for the Anse Quitor. And there are also teachers in 2017 for the Baie Malgache Community School, you know. And the Supply Teachers now who are receiving a training they will, especially small classes, grade I, grade II and grade III, not CPE classes.

INVEST HOTEL SCHEME PROJECTS

(No. B/42) Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards Invest Hotel Scheme projects or any other project involving long term rental or sale of built-up property in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, give information on each project under consideration including the name of the promoters, location and extent of land together with the status of the projects?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have to inform the House that the Executive Council at its meeting held on Friday 13 February 2015 has decided to approve an adaptation of the Invest Hotel Scheme (IHS)

existing at National Level for a new Invest Hotel Scheme Certification taking into consideration the specific context of Rodrigues.

The Invest Hotel Scheme (IHS) was designed to promote foreign direct investment in Mauritius and to provide a source of funding for hotel developers to implement hotel projects. The core principles of the IHS were maintained. The Guidelines have been reviewed in light of the fact that most lands in Rodrigues are State Land. The IHS as an investment promotion tool should be geared towards supporting the development of the hotel sector in Rodrigues rather than being a pure instrument to maximize profit making in the property sector.

That is why the Executive Council has recommended that the scheme be used preferably for extension of existing hotels. One of the rational of such a restriction is to ensure that the promoter has proven experience in hotel management in the specific context of Rodrigues and has the capacity to ensure the successful running of the IHS.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have to inform the house that since 2012, the Commission for Lands has received three requests for the issue of an Invest Hotel Scheme (IHS) certificate.

- (1) SAKOA Hotel (Rep. by Mr. Seewoosunkur JHUBOO)
 - Project: Construction of 12 villas on existing lease at Pointe Longue
- (2) MCCL and Solaways Ltd - (Rep. by Mr. Gaetan ARMOOGUM)
 - Project: Construction of 50 new Villas
- (3) Splendour Investment (Rodrigues) Ltd
 - Mr. William AUGUSTE; Locality: Pate Reynieux

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the status of the above mentioned projects are detailed below:

SAKOA Hotel - (Rep. by Mr. Seewoosunkur JHUBOO)

Project: Construction of 12 additional luxury villas on existing lease.

Locality: Pointe Longue

Extent of Land: 24, 238 m² already leased

The application is still under consideration and no decision taken.

MCCL and Solaways Ltd - (Rep. by Mr. Gaetan ARMOOGUM)

Project: Construction of 50 new Villas

Locality: Pointe aux Sel

Extent of Land: 50A

The promoter has been informed on 06 January 2016 that Invest Hotel Scheme (IHS) in Rodrigues is applicable for hotel expansion project to enable incumbents to secure funding for the renovation and expansions of their hotels. Hence, the project has not been considered.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as far as the status of the project of Splendour Investment (Rodrigues) Ltd. is concerned, I have to inform the House that the project is being considered under the revised Invest Hotel Scheme (IHS) project in Rodrigues. The project, which is located at Paté Reynieux, Mourouk, consists of the implementation of an Invest Hotel Scheme with the development of 76 hotel rooms over an extent of state land of 29,810 m². A letter of intent has been issued with several conditions. Once all the conditions will have been complied with by the promoter, a lease will be drawn up.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, allow me to repeat it again, the concept of IHS is not something new that my government is now introducing. The former government has approved more than three (3) IHS projects in Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as far as the status of the project is concerned:

- i. Approval of the Board of Investment has been obtained on 31 March 2015.
- ii. A letter of intent has been issued on 04 September 2015.
- iii. An application for Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) has been submitted by the promoter.

Mr. J. Roussety: Can we know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we understand that these hotel rooms will have some foreign ownership, something like that, can we know what will be the legal status in terms of ownership of the property of adapted IHS scheme for Rodrigues. Is this Regional Government going to enter into history as being those who have sold public property, government land to foreign owners whereas they vehemently opposed that Rodriguans become owners of their leased land, residential leased land. And now they are in catimini selling Rodrigues.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, j'ai lu ça dans un journal. Nous ne sommes pas en train de vendre nos plages. J'ai vu ça dans un journal. Nous ne sommes pas de cette mentalité capitaliste. Nous ne voulons pas vendre notre terre. Alors qu'auparavant on a eu un cas, on a eu un cas à St. François

Eco Rod où justement on a empêché le contracteur, le promoteur d'utiliser le IHS qui existait avant. On a dit non ! On parle les nouveaux, les hotels qui existent déjà et qui peuvent étendre. Ils sont déjà là. Ils sont déjà là. Ils ne sont pas des nouveaux comme les Eco Rod à St. François. On a vu, il voulait commencer, vendre des chambres au début même, on a dit non et on ne veut pas ça. Mais il faut que l'extension q'un hôtel puisse étendre et là ils peuvent appliquer s'ils le veulent. Mais déjà là, le bail il est sur le nom du prometteur et il peut étendre. On a mentionné des cas ici, il y a eu SACOA. Il y a une demande à Pointe au Sel, on a dit non. Non on ne veut pas ça. C'est les hôtels qui existent déjà et qui étendent leurs hôtels. C'est ça justement, il y a une grande différence. Alors, non nous ne sommes pas en train de vendre nos plages. Si je savais j'aurais apporté cette affaire là. Vendre nos plages, non, non, non. C'est pourquoi, moi je dis, M. le président, nous avons pris une bonne décision d'éliminer cet IHS qui justement un nouvel hôtel, construire justement pour vendre les chambres, l'hôtel, je ne sais pas moi.

Mr. J. Roussety: M. le président, permettez-moi. Quel est la différence entre vendre des chambres, le mot est sorti du Chef Commissaire, lui-même, vendre des chambres. Il admet. On n'est pas en train de vendre des plages, on est en train de vendre des parties de Rodrigues parce que si je comprends bien dans ces hôtels qui sont des endroits privé, *gated*, des étrangers vont acheter des villas qui seront à eux et qui seront par la suite gerer par les hôtels quand ils ne sont pas là apparemment. C'est ce qui s'appelle vendre Rodrigues. On est en train de prendre des terrains, pas des terrains qui existent pour l'hôtels, des terrains additionel, on a dit là. Combien d'arpents ? On parle de 50 arpents, etc. Combien d'arpents ? Plusieurs arpents de terrain. Le Chef Commissaire qui defend les Rodriguais pour quoi ne pas donner ces terrains 1000 m³, par exemple. Regardez ce que font des gens qui ont des gîtes, tous ces petites gens qui ont implémentés leurs projets, des jeunes Rodriguais, des Rodriguais, même parfois chez eux, et qui on maintenant..

Mr. Chairperson: Put your question, please. Now you come with your question.

Mr. J. Roussety: ..des business qui marchent. La question, pour quoi ne pas prendre ces terrains, les parceller d'une façon touristique dans une façon correcte est donné aux Rodriguais au lieu de donner au gros étranger.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, nous venons de donner une cinquantaine de permis à des Rodriguais pour des gîtes, pour leurs maisons qui peuvent accueillir des touristes. Mais ça se fait, M. le président. Cela se fait, M. le président. Mais c'est celui qui a déjà un hôtel et qui étendre justement mais la terre n'est pas à lui. La terre n'est pas à ce monsieur qui achète. La

terre n'est pas à lui qui achète les chambres. Ça existe un peu partout. Il vient tout les ans justement là pour passer ces vacances là dans cet hôtel justement et il est nourri par l'hôtel, vous savez là il paye aussi pour sa nourriture. C'est ça qu'on dit. On ne vend pas. C'est comme dans l'Eco Rod. Eco Rod c'est ce qui s'est passé, on a vu il y a un agent immobilier qui est venu, présenter le terrain, il voulait faire un hôtel où on peut vendre et chacun a son petit bout, ainsi de suite. On a dit non. Non, on n'a pas. Mais par contre, on encourage, quand on regarde là on vient d'approuver 46/50 projets, des petits, des Rodriguais qui se lance dans le... Ah ben, oui, s'il y a des nouvelles demandes. Et nous même nous on encourage les Rodriguais. Et même, vous savez, M. le président, on reçoit des gens qui sortent d'ailleurs qui veulent faire venir des gîtes à Rodrigues, on dit non. Pour quoi ? Et quand on regarde les plans, ce n'est pas des gîtes, c'est un bâtiment, deux chambres c'est tout, pour venir ici simplement passer le temps. On dit non ! D'abord la terre aux Rodriguais. Tous ces gens là qui viennent là, la terre aux Rodriguais. Que se soit dans un village, que se soit partout, à Rivière Coco ou partout on a vu on a donné des permis justement à des Rodriguais dans les gîtes ou bien les maisons, ainsi de suite, tout ça, ça se fait. Au contraire, nous encourageons les Rodriguais à se lancer dans le domaine du tourisme pour que le touriste qui vient ici, justement il connaît la culture du pays, il aime habiter chez des gens, c'est ça justement.

Mr. J. Roussety: M. le président, ils ont l'habitude de dire gouverner c'est prévoir, ils ont aussi l'habitude de dire respecter les Rodriguais c'est lui dire la vérité. La vérité c'est que des étrangers vont avoir des droits de propriété sur des villas ou des chambres d'hôtels, peu importe, à Rodrigues et se sont les gens en face de nous qui sont en train de permettre cela. Combien de gens même à l'étranger ou à Rodrigues, aujourd'hui les Rodriguais réalisent la valeur d'un produit touristique. Et un projet touristique est beaucoup plus attrayant quand vous vous trouvez à proximité ou sur une plage. Votre produit touristique est beaucoup plus attrayant. Maintenant au lieu d'empower les Rodriguais et de donner cela à des Rodriguais. Le monsieur il parle d'Eco Rod, on parle aussi, regarder en face de de l'autre côté de la route, je ne vais pas citer le nom, l'hôtel Téchoma, on a donné nous à des Rodriguais. Ils sont faits leurs projets, ils sont à cinq minutes de la plage de St. François, la plage d'Anse Ally et ils ont là. Ma question, qui n'a pas été répondu et qui à un trait *ownership of these villas*. On va vendre. Le IHS, tel monsieur va prendre 50 arpents il va faire son IHS parce qu'il a un hôtel, il va donner, vendre. Comment cela va se faire ? Le Rodriguais lui s'il a un terrain, il a un bail ? Comment légalement l'Assemblée Régional a prévu, légalement comment le statue de l'investissement de la propriété de la personne qui va acheter ces villas va être au niveau de Rodrigues ?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je pense que c'est clair et net. La personne qui achète la villa, le bail n'est pas sur son nom. Le bail est sur le nom du propriétaire de l'hôtel. Non, il n'y aura pas un bail. Il n'aura pas un bail. C'est ça justement, il faut faire des conditions par rapport à notre IHS scheme. Vous comprenez là. Non le monsieur qui sorte ailleurs qui vienne acheter une chambre, non, il n'aura pas la terre. La terre appartient au propriétaire de l'hôtel. Alors, c'est facile de comprendre. Ne nous prenez pas pour des imbéciles. Vous comprenez, M. le président. C'est ça qu'il voulait dire.

Mr. J. Roussety: Personne ne prend personne pour un imbécile.

The Minority Leader: *Mr. Chairperson, Sir, le Chef Commissaire n'a pas été très précis tout à l'heure quand il a mentionné qu'il fallait aussi donner la chance aux Rodriguais. Puis-je vous demander whether the policy has already been decided by his Commission as regards to gîtes et table d'hôtes etc. ? Because this is what he mentioned he has just given some 50 permits. Right ? Now in order to give these chances to Rodriguan promoters, because it is clear that as from now on only existing hotels can benefit from IHS and no more new hotels will be able to benefit from that. Being given that he wants to give these same facilities to Rodriguans whether he has already decided on a specific policy where this facility will be extended because it will have to amend. Because do not forget it is a national policy in their hotels scheme. He has to replicate the same in Rodrigues, he has to modify certain parts of the scheme so as to meet the Rodriguan context.*

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, depuis que nous sommes là, il y a beaucoup de Rodriguais qui ont lancé des gîtes. Ils préparent leurs projets. Ils viennent, ils demandent tel terre à tel et tel endroit. Et cela se fait. Et cela se fait. Au contraire, nous encourageons les Rodriguais à faire des gîtes, des chambres d'hôtes et ainsi de suite. Vous comprenez la ? Et c'est ça justement, quand vous regardez cette liste des Rodriguais qui ont eu leurs permis. Il faut voir il y a des maisons. Je connais même une dame qui à sa maison et qui a amélioré sa maison et qui a fait de sa maison des chambres d'hôtes, gîtes tout ça. Ça existe, M. le président. Les Rodriguais pas juste pour les touristes, pour d'autres projets aussi le Rodriguais demande la terre pour faire tel ou tel projet au niveau de l'agriculture, au niveau de l'élevage pour le petit et moyenne entreprises. C'est ça justement, M. le président.

Mr. J. Roussety: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Je vais revenir sur la question que j'ai posée malheureusement, je n'ai pas eu de réponse claire. Un investisseur étranger il va investir dans un IHS à Rodrigues, comment se matérialise sur papier au bureau de l'enregistrement, par exemple, ou je ne sais

pas comment qu'est-ce qu'il reçoit, quel titre il reçoit. Il met un million de dollars, je ne sais pas combien, tant de million de roupies, qu'est-ce qu'il reçoit dans le IHS en tant qu'investisseur ? Il reçoit un bail ? Il reçoit un certificat ? Un acte de naissance, un passeport ? Qu'est-ce qu'il reçoit ?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, évidemment il nous faudra travailler et c'est pour quoi qu'on a eu toutes ces demandes. J'ai cité toutes ces demandes. Et à ce moment là nous on va voir, vous savez là, il faudrait voir comment au niveau, est-ce qu'il faut l'enregistrer ce monsieur là qui vient pour assurer une chambre d'hôtel ? Est-ce qu'il faut l'enregistrer ? Alors ça il faudrait voir selon la loi et nous allons travailler tous cela avec notre Legal Adviser.

Mr. A. Edouard: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the following to the Chief Commissioner. It seems that the Minority is making as if this government is selling all lands in Rodrigues ?

[Interruption]

Mr. Chairperson: Sit down and you too sit down. You are the first but you are not the one who is going to give the ruling. Now, you wanted to ask a question, is it? I did not catch your mind. Because to be as fair as possible I will ask two last supplementary questions. One for Mr. Perrine and one for them. Yes, and say that I am partial then.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether there are hotel projects in the region of Anse Nicholas and Baie du Nord and tell us if this project, if ever, will form part of this IHS project scheme or any other scheme?

The Chief Commissioner: I need notice of the question. I do not have the names whether they are in this region or the scheme there. I need notice of the question.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question, please.

Mr. A. Edouard: May I ask the Chief Commissioner whether the Splendour project was issued with an IHS certificate in the past and who was the Commissioner for Lands at that time?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the ex-Chief Commissioner himself has started to approve IHS project in the past. He has even personally approved an IHS for the Splendour project on the 28 May 2010.

However, we came into power ... when this project shall be linked to existing hotels, that is, Mourouk Ebony and shall be considered as an extension of the existing hotel. Name of the shareholders, Mr. William Auguste, Director. Mr. Louis Clifford Doger Seneck and members, the shareholders. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have also to inform the House that the Commissioner for State Lands has convened approval in principle on 28 December 2011 to the Board of Investment

Mr. J. C. Agathe: On a point of order. Yes, my point of order, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in this House I will call upon you to call on any Member to refrain from saying names of persons here. Names.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have also to inform the House that the Commissioner for Lands has convened approval in principles on 22 December 2011 to the Board of Investment to grant an IHS certificate for the setting up of invest hotel scheme to Eco Rod Ltd. at St. François. And when we came they came with the project and we did object to this project to be an invested hotel scheme.

Mr. J. Roussety: On a point of explanation, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if you will allow me. According to Standing Orders. You will not allow me my point of explanation.

[Gap in recording]

Mr. Chairperson: I have already said to the Minority Leader to proceed.

REGISTRATION OF PLANTERS & FARMERS

(No. B/43) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to registration of planters and farmers carried out in 2015 and 2016 in Rodrigues by the Commission for Agriculture, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table on the:

- (a) number thereof registered per category per electoral region;
- (b) number of permits and/or leases issued to those concerned, if any; and
- (c) eligibility criteria to obtain a lease or permit as stated above?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that following the registration exercise by the

Commission for Agriculture in October and November last, 3182 farmers including breeders and bee keepers registered themselves with the Commission. I am tabling the number of registered farmers per category per electoral region.

In regard, to part (b) of the Question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the process for the issue of Agricultural Permits to farmers has already started. We are proceeding on region wise basis. However, priority will be given to Farmers Card holders. At present, the survey exercise is being carried out in Region 1. The whole survey exercise around Rodrigues is expected to be completed by the end of this calendar year. Moreover, the House may wish to note that Agricultural Incentive Schemes beneficiaries have already been issued with their permits. Furthermore, in order to give a boost to the professionalisation of the agricultural sector, all these trainees following the “*Brevet Professionnel Agricole*” will be given their respective permits in the days to come.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as of date, only 126 agricultural permits have been issued to farmers card holders out of which 53 are planters of Rivière Banane valley and 73 are beneficiaries of 2015 Agricultural Incentive Schemes. The long outstanding requests have also been issued with an Agricultural Permit as well as one Cooperative Federation for pasture development.

With regard to part (c) of the Question, I am informed that an Agricultural permit can be obtained through written application for either a fresh permit or renewal of an expired one. The eligibility criteria are as follows:

- (i) certification by the Agricultural Research and Extension Services that the applicant is a genuine planter/breeder;
- (ii) the applicant is already cultivating or rearing livestock on a plot of land;
- (iii) for large agricultural projects, the applicant must submit a feasible project write-up.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is clear that out of 3182 registered farmers only 126 according to the Chief Commissioner, those already possessing a card have been given these permits. Can I ask him in doing such a survey what was the objective of the Chief Commissioner when he did that survey being given that now he knows how many intended farmers are willing to have a valid permit in order to do their activity. This is question one, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Second question, may be I shall ask two in one. When we look around in Rodrigues there are many many parcels of lands which is unoccupied/abandoned, can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether he has made

a survey to know whether these lands, abandoned lands, whether their owners already possessed any permit and if so, why are they not occupying the land and he is going to give permit to new applicants.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, il y a des planteurs et des éleveurs qui sont venu enregistrer. J'ai dit le nombre, 3182 et que le Service Agricole la section terre est en train justement, a partir de ces 3182 aller sur le terrain pour aller voir ces personnes qui ce sont enregistrés est-ce qu'ils ont un bout de terrain, est-ce qu'il travail sur ce terrain et c'est ça. Parce que nous sommes en train de préparer ce que le FAO nous demande de faire, d'avoir des données de tout ce qui concerne les terres agricoles. Et c'est à ce moment là, ils sont en train de faire le travail dans la Région 1 et qui va terminer à la fin de l'année. On va commencer 2, 3, 4, 5, et 6 et tout ça. Parce qu'il nous faudra à ce moment là savoir exactement si la personne dans les 3182 et ils sont en train de travailler ou ils ont abandonnés le terrain. Et c'est ça qu'il faut faire. Cette enquête est aussi en train d'être fait par les officiers de l'Agriculture et ils nous ont dit à ce moment vraiment c'est un gros travail. J'en ai parlé à l'Island Chief Executive si on peut avoir une autre équipe encore avec des équipement qu'il faut pour faire ce travail là pour aller beaucoup plus vite. Mais ceux qui ont déjà reçu la carte, la carte de planteur, ce sont des gens déjà là qu'on a visité et qui ont fait une demande de renouvellement, qu'on a visité et qui en train vraiment de travailler la terre. On ne peut pas donner un permis à quelqu'un un terrain agricole à quelqu'un qui ne travail pas la terre. Il faut vraiment voir attention que les gens jouent avec pour savoir qu'ils sont en train de travailler la terre. Et c'est comme ça justement on est en train de voir aussi quel sont les terres qui sont abandonnées. Et ça c'est très important c'est vrai il y a beaucoup de terre qui sont abandonnées. Des personnes qui partent pour Maurice tout ça. Je dois signaler qu'il y a des personnes qui sont partis pour Maurice et qui retournent pour travailler la terre. Ils aiment ça. Quand ils ont été à Maurice ils ont vus là-bas ce n'était pas comme Rodrigues et ils veulent travailler la terre. Alors c'est pour quoi justement il nous faudrait renforcer cette équipe de techniciens agricole. Ils sont pour l'instant cinq ou six pour aller sur le terrain, pour aller voir tout cela. Merci.

Mr. A. F. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether those who are registered as both planter and breeder whether they will be granted a permit, an agricultural permit because since we see in the Table 2, we have a goat scheme, cattle scheme, sheep scheme those people have been granted a permit. And since we also know that the Chief Commissioner in the past stated those mixed breeding, those planters and breeders both they will not be considered as or their cases will not be taken on board. He stated that in the past. His policy was clear about that. I would like to ask him whether those people who are registered as planter and breeder

whether they will be granted a permit and whether there has been a change in his policy.

The Chief Commissioner: Non, M. le président, c'est que nous avons ces personnes qui vont sur le terrain pour voir le terrain, il faut arpenter le terrain et c'est pour quoi il y a des équipements avec eux. Parce que sur le permis il faut mettre la quantité de terre. Le permis, vous comprenez là. Il y a des fois je vois les permis agricole dans le passé on a mit 3000 m³, 10000 m³. Il y a un politicien qui a eu 8000 m³, des trucs comme ça. Non, M. le président, il faut quand même mesurer la terre. Il faut mesurer la terre pour qu'on puisse avoir Monsieur un tel a vraiment tant de terre, tant de mettre carré. Et c'est ça qui va aller sur son dossier parce qu'il faut ça pour avoir une carte de planteur ou d'éleveur.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is the Chief Commissioner aware that during the registration of cards when the communiqué was sent on radio, there was a long queue of people, a sum of Rs 300 was collected for each, for agriculture and for farming, Rs 200, Rs 200, yes. Now, the Chief Commissioner is saying that we are going to enquire whether the person do possess a land. How come, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, first of all, we have already taken money from these planters or farmers and now we are going to enquire what will happen to the amount of money that have been collected by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly?

The Chief Commissioner: Il me semble, M. le président, c'est pour la carte. Les Rs 300 c'est pour la carte, il me semble. De toute façon, *we take notice of the question, thank you.*

The Minority Leader: M. le président, il faut qu'on soit vraiment conscient. Il y a un vrai désordre à Rodrigues. D'ailleurs, le Chef Commissaire lui-même il a dit, il y a des personnes qui sortent de Maurice, ils n'étaient pas dans le pays maintenant vu qu'ils entendent dire qu'on va faire un nouveau recensement pour savoir, attention qu'ils soient enlever de leurs terres alors ils retournent à la quatrième vitesse à Rodrigues pour venir travailler. Et puis dans peu de temp après vu qu'ils ne vont pas pouvoir produire dans la terre ils vont repartir à Maurice. M. le président, dans plusieurs endroits à Rodrigues, on la déjà dit avant, il y a des personnes qui ont clôturés des arpents, plusieurs hectares de terre, on ne sait pas si ces terres sont légale ou non. Mais moi je voudrais lui demander, *for the purpose of this activity that he has just carried out to register farmers and planters what criteria is being used to classify a planter and a farmer, to differentiate them, whether both are being considered in one permit, planter and farmer or separately, because we have been receiving complaints that some planters that have been asked to give Rs 200 for*

having a card then they have been called again to give another Rs 200 to possess a second card. So, they do not even know which is which. There should be a clear policy on that, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Can the Chief Commissioner elaborate on that?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, il est sûr et certain que pour donner une carte il faut contribuer. Il y a la carte du planteur et il y a aussi la carte de l'éleveur. Alors ces personnes qui sont en train d'aller sur le terrain, c'est un gros travail. Il faut qu'il voit vraiment quel est le type d'élevage que ce monsieur est en train de faire, comment il fait son élevage, s'il a un parc ou ceci ou cela ou bien s'il a un petit pâturage. Tout ça il faut voir, c'est un gros travail. Je suis obligé de le dire c'est un gros travail et ça va prendre du temps. Mais c'est pour quoi les personnes qui m'ont rencontré la fois dernière ils m'ont dit leurs difficultés. Ils voudront avoir plus de personnels dans cette équipe pour que le travail aille beaucoup plus vite. Il y a même des gros équipements à transporter ainsi de suite, il y a la question du transport, il y a tout ça. C'est vrai il y a des travaux qui auraient dû être fait depuis bien longtemps mais malheureusement la FAO qui va nous aider au niveau du cadastre agricole nous demande il faut faire ça, faire ça et faire ça. Donc, la FAO qui est en train de nous suivre dans tout ce travail de recensement des terres agricole et d'élevage.

Mr. Chairperson: Respected Members, may I draw your attention to Standing Order 24 on personal explanation:

- “(1) By leave of the Chairperson, a Member may make a personal explanation, although there is no question before the Assembly, but no controversial matter may be brought forward, nor may debate arise again upon the explanation.*
- (2) The precise contents of the proposed personal explanations shall be submitted in advance to the Chairperson to ensure that they are appropriate.”*

Thank you. Next question, please.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME

(No. B/44) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner responsible for Arts & Culture and Others whether, in regard to the Cultural Exchange Assistance Scheme, she will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the groups or individual artists, if any, invited to perform abroad since its implementation to date and to table their names together with a copy of the invitation therefor;
- (b) the ceiling of financial assistance allocated to eligible applicants; and
- (c) the mode of selection thereof and indicating the eligibility criteria, if any?

The Commissioner Responsible for Arts and Culture (Ms. M. R. Edouard): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, having noted the increasing demands for assistance for cultural exchanges abroad, my Commission has decided to come forward with a Cultural Exchange Assistance Scheme.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Cultural Exchange Assistance Scheme was launched on Thursday 07 April 2016 with the objectives of encouraging artists to develop a research culture, to enroll for festivals and to make Rodrigues more visible. The aim of this scheme is also to enable local artists and groups to have access to international platform, to showcase their productions and to promote the unique cultural identity of Rodrigues in friendly overseas countries. The closing date for the submission of completed application is scheduled for Friday on 27 May 2016. The project will thus be evaluated and approved in June 2016. No group or individual artist has therefore benefited from the Cultural Exchange Assistance Scheme as at date, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

With regard to part (b) Mr, Chairperson, Sir, assistance under this scheme represents up to 50% of the total cost of return economy class air ticket up to a ceiling of Rs 150,000 which will be restricted to participation of internationally established cultural shows and events and the scheme will also provide for air tickets for a maximum of 10 artists from Rodrigues-Mauritius and Rodrigues.

With regard to part (c), Mr, Chairperson, Sir, a committee has been set-up to evaluate the applications received and submit recommendations to the Commission. The application will be considered on a case-to-case basis and the eligibility criteria are as follows:

- (i) The applicant should be of Mauritian Nationality performing in Rodrigues;
- (ii) A certificate of Registration as Artists with the Commission and/or with RMS should be dated at least three months prior to the application;

- (iii) The name of the 'Commission for Arts and Culture' should appear in all publicity materials related to same;
- (iv) The grant is meant to showcase their productions in established international festivals at renowned International venues;
- (v) The grant caters solely for inter-island (Rodrigues/Mauritius/Rodrigues) and international travel costs as support for participation and performance in international cultural shows only;
- (vi) Documentary evidence of participation in the event will have to be submitted. In case of non-participation owing to the fault of participants, the latter will have to reimburse the total amount of the grant within a mutually agreed time-frame with the Commission;
- (vii) This Commission will also be responsible for payment of the air tickets only for approved applications. All formalities/arrangements should be undertaken by the applicant/s himself/themselves;
- (viii) Financial and other contributions received by the applicant and his own contribution should be specified along with the breakdown of full cost of participation in the event;
- (ix) The artists should provide a report on their participation and the assistance will be granted every three years;
- (x) Preference will be given to projects which will impact on raising the profile of Rodriguan works and artists and which are original and of quality.

Mr. Chairpersons, Sir, the applicant will be requested to submit as I said previously:

- i. Portfolio, financial breakdown, quotations and, receipts;
- ii. Letters of invitation will have to be provided to the Commission and of course, upon completion of tour, the artists will have to report back.

I wish to draw the attention of the House that the scheme will be renewed throughout the the year to ensure maximum participation of artists. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: May I inform the Respected Members, that questions B/53 and B/55 have been withdrawn. Minority Leader, proceed please.

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we all know that culture is a very complex and dynamic process. The scheme is Cultural Exchange Assistance Scheme, that is, it is opened to every aspect of arts or whether is it to a specific art project? This is one question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. How can the Commissioner identify what aspects will be considered in identifying the cultural identity of Rodrigues which will be use to access potential beneficiaries by the committee that will be put in place. I do not know whether it is clear. The scheme is for cultural exchange. When we talk about culture, it is a very complex and dynamic process. Therefore, in her reply the Commissioner has not specified on any specific aspects of art that will be used. Is it on any aspects of art, any group which have the potential to express artistic shows with Rodriguan identification elsewhere, is it that?

Ms. M. R. Edouard: Being given that culture is dynamic as you put it rightly, it is to be put forwards also that art is so vast so we are welcoming any forms, any fields of arts, writing, drama, painting or whatever. So, at the moment, that they have are able to present vividly the Rodriguan culture. And indeed, there are aspects in our culture that are unique to Rodrigues and I think it is not comparable to anywhere else. So, these is the landmark that we are going to consider while evaluating the proposal for exchanges.

The Minority Leader: One more supplementary question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Being given that this scheme has been mentionned in Budget Estimates 2016-2017, can I ask the Commissioner whenever any such request will be approved and under which Item Vote will the expenses be met?

Ms. M. R. Edouard: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it has to be highlighted that throughout the years since 2012 we are in power various artists have been able to go through exchanges. The reason why this scheme cropped up and indeed when the applications will be there, the funds will be readily available to the artists as and when required as specified in the budget.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Can we know from the Commissioner, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the same scheme exists at the level of the Ministry of Arts and Culture in Mauritius and Rodriguans used to obtain funds from the Ministry of Mauritius. I would ask the Commissioner whether now it is advantageous for the Rodriguan? This is the first one. And whether Rodriguans can still obtain funds from the national ministry?

Ms. M. R. Edouard: As you have seen the scheme is quite different from that of Mauritius because the Mauritian one is called the International Grant Scheme. And as I said in my answer, no it is not the same thing, you should have listened carefully. What happen is that the scheme as I said it promotes a culture of research among artists. And when I say research, it means that they have to find ways and means to tab funds and ways and means to find festivals. So, I think that it is a plus for Rodriguans to take advantage of this one. I said a plus.

Mr. Chairperson: Questions B/56, B/57 and B/58 have been withdrawn. Please Minority Leader.

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I come again with my question because I did not have the right answer. The Commissioner did confess that since 2012 many artists requested for financial help for exchanges abroad. That is why precisely she came with that scheme. When it is mentioned in the new budget Mr. Chairperson, Sir, provision for finances should have been made in the budget. But there is no specific provision. That is why I asked her, whenever the scheme will be ready, under which item vote it will be paid.

Ms. M. R. Edouard: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I maintained again that whenever the demand will be there, the artists will be helped. Because we have started to help irrespective of the presence of the scheme, we have already helped. They may not be happy with the answer but that is the answer I have to provide. Thank you.

OFFICERS ON CONTRACT – ACTING ISLAND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(No. B/46) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to Officers on contract in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, he will:

- (a) state if the Acting Island Chief Executive, presently in post, has been recruited on a contractual basis and, if so, indicating the starting and ending date of the contract period;
- (b) table a copy of all the contract/s signed between the Acting Island Chief Executive and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, if any; and

- (c) state and table the qualifications of the Acting Island Chief Executive together with the salary obtained since his assumption of the office thereto to date?

[Withdrawn]

PIG BREEDING – SALE/EXPORT AND/OR FROM RODRIGUES?

(No. B/53) Mr. F. A. Grandcourt (Third Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to pig breeding, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the measures taken, if any, to encourage the sale or export thereof in and/or from Rodrigues?

[Withdrawn]

LAGOON AND MARINE RESOURCES

(No. B/55) Mr. J. S. Swee (Seventh Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to lagoon and marine resources of Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the measures, if any, taken or being envisaged for the protection thereof?

[Withdrawn]

AMBULANCE DRIVERS

(No. B/56) Mr. J. D. Speville (Second Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health and Sports whether, in regard to Ambulance Drivers posted at his Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the number of established posts for the year 2016-2017 and indicating the number thereof that have retired or will retire for the years 2015 to 2017;
- (b) the number of officers, if any, performing the duties of Ambulance Drivers at the Commission although not being promoted to such post; and
- (c) on his policy, if any, to maintain a stable ratio thereof in view of the increasing demand for transportation of patients by ambulance to and from the Hospital and Health Centres in the island?

[Withdrawn]

NINE YEAR BASIC CONTINUOUS SCHOOLING PROGRAMME

(No. B/57) Mr. J. D. Speville (Second Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to Nine Year Basic Continuous Schooling Programme more specifically the first batch taking part in the Primary School Achievement Certificate Examination in 2017 in Rodrigues, he will state:

- (a) where matters stand with regards the Report of the Technical Committee concerning Rodrigues in relation thereto and to table same;
- (b) where matters stand as to the training of educators therefor and indicating the number thereof together with their respective course contents; and
- (c) on the mode of assessment of the Primary School Achievement Certificate Examination and indicating who will be assessing the pupils for the modular and written assessments, respectively?

[Withdrawn]

MEDICAL DOCTORS

(No. B/58) Mr. J. D. Speville (Second Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health and Sports whether, in regard to Medical Doctors in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if there have been any offers for the recruitment thereof overseas and, if so, indicating the actions initiated, if any, by the Commission in relation thereto?

[Withdrawn]

Mr. Chairperson: Please, questions time over. Yes, Chief Commissioner.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 9(3)

The Chief Commissioner: With your permission, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that all businesses on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provision of Standing Order 9(3).

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

MOTION

The Commissioner responsible for Social Security, Employment, Labour & Industrial Relations, Consumer Protection and Trade Commerce & Licensing (Mr. L. D. Baptiste): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move to the Motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

“This Assembly is of the opinion that, by virtue of section 31 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, there is passed the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations 2016”

The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure (Mr. S. P. Roussety) rose and seconded.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this present Regional Government is marking the course of time by introducing for the first time, a comprehensive and holistic legislation relating to the Consumer Protection to better regulate the prices of controlled commodities in Rodrigues for the benefit of our consumers. This move is of huge significance, as we are further strengthening the autonomy of Rodrigues, through the decentralisation of power from Port-Louis to Port-Mathurin. Today this is also a historical moment for me, as you can understand; this is my first Regulation as Commissioner for Consumer Protection.

The main object of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations 2016, is to provide for a modern and appropriate legal framework, which will respond more rapidly/efficiently to the changing needs of the business environment in Rodrigues and at the same time to further enhance and promote the welfare of the consumers.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, fixing of prices as it is today, involves a very long and painful process, which penalises both the traders and consumers. On one hand, it results in undue delay for traders to obtain their permit to sell (a permit

issued by the commission to allow them to dispose of an imported consignment of controlled goods); but while on the other hand, consumers cannot buy such products though they are available in the warehouse and hence, causing some sort of artificial shortages.

I have received several representations and complaints from the consumers, from Consumer Association (Association des Consommateurs de l'Ile Rodrigues) and traders concerning these issues. And in this respect, I had several meetings, several working sessions with officers of my Commission and other stakeholders to identify the weaknesses, which are preventing us from fulfilling our objectives of efficiently and effectively controlling the prices of essential commodities in Rodrigues.

During this process, I have personally witnessed the complexities of the subject matter, as there are several legislations, including the Consumers Protection Act, its various subsequent regulations and other regulations that need to be taken into consideration concurrently and their shortcomings.

Consequently, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I had fruitful discussions with the Minister of Trade, Commerce and Consumer Protection in Mauritius to find out ways and means to address these issues. This has resulted in the preparation of a first draft of this regulation by officers of my Commission with the collaboration of their counterparts of the ministry. This draft was subsequently fine-tuned and finalised by the Legal Adviser of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and duly vetted by the State Law Office. I am delighted that we have been successful in meeting the challenge with the introduction of these regulations to this August Assembly today for debate and approval.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, allow me to give a brief historical background of these different laws enacted, governing the fixing of prices in Rodrigues, to enable us to understand better the need and the urgency of coming with the proposed regulations. In so doing, I will highlight their various weaknesses followed by a synoptic overview of the proposed regulations in view of addressing the weaknesses.

First of all, we have the Supplies and Control Act, and its subsequent Regulations, which was introduced by Government of Mauritius 1974. The main objective was to consolidate existing laws pertaining to the Control of Supplies in the Republic of Mauritius. However, price Control was really implemented in Rodrigues in June 1977 with the coming into force of the Price Control (Rodrigues) Regulations made by the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection by way of Government Notice GN 108 of that same year. This law puts an obligation on importers of controlled commodities in

Rodrigues to submit returns and other related documents in respect of controlled goods imported from Mauritius for the fixing of prices of such commodities.

Concurrently in the year 1977, the Rodrigues Commodities Prices Regulations of 1977 were introduced to empower the Minister responsible for Commerce and Consumer Protection to fix the maximum wholesale and retail prices of control goods for Rodrigues. The same Regulations was then repealed in 1983, with the introduction of the Sales Tax Act; and was replaced by the Rodrigues Supplies (Control of Prices of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) Regulations made under the Supplies Control Act of 1974. This Act was in turn repealed with the promulgation of the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act in the year 1998 and this Act is still in force and it provides for the prices of controlled commodities in Rodrigues to be fixed by the Minister responsible for Commerce and Consumer Protection.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is worthy to note that, the advent of the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act 1998 has repealed the earlier Supplies Control Act of 1974. However, all the regulations, which have been made under the (repealed) Supplies Control Act, remain in force and, are deemed to have been made under the new Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act of 1998.

All these Regulations were subsequently reviewed to adapt to the new environment of commerce and trade in the island of Mauritius. But unfortunately, the regulations specific to Rodrigues, that is the Price Control (Rodrigues Regulations 1977 – GN 108) was not updated and is still in force to date. This means that the maximum prices of controlled goods for Rodrigues are presently being fixed by the Minister responsible for Commerce and Consumer Protection on the basis of regulations which date as far back as 1977, that is some 39 years back and which no longer responds to the new challenges that have emerged in the commercial environment of Rodrigues.

As at present, the several legislations, which regulate the prices of controlled commodities for Rodrigues, are as follows:

- The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act-Section 3 and First Schedule of Part II;
- The Price Control (Rodrigues) Regulations 1977 - GN 108 of 1977;
- The Rodrigues Consumer (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) Regulations 1998;

- The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Fresh and Chilled Fish) (Maximum Price) Regulations 2003 made by the Minister under section 3 and 35 of the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies control) Act 1998; and
- The Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer protection-Fixing of price of Fish) Regulations 2008, which were passed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and reprint by the direction of the then Chief Commissioner (which is anyway not in order according to section 3 of the Reprint of Laws Act, which stipulate that the Prime Minister can make reprint by direction to the Government Printing).

Indeed, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this legal framework is too much fragmented and dispersed with the result that the laws are difficult to be implemented and enforced in as much as they contain various weaknesses, which prevent an effective and efficient control of consumers.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are now facing with the urgent need to address the following issues:

- (i) Prices of controlled commodities in Rodrigues are being presently worked out by the Price Fixing Unit of my Commission and sent to the Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Consumer Protection for the fixing of prices by way of regulation made by the Minister. This system involves lengthy procedures that lead to long delays before the price of a given controlled commodity fixed by the Minister becomes a force of law (it takes actually about 25 days to fix such products and before it used to take even months);
- (ii) Contravention cannot be established against traders selling controlled goods in respect of which returns of costs have not been submitted due to weaknesses in the Price Control (Rodrigues) Regulations 1977 – GN 108;
- (iii) The prices of Controlled goods imported from countries other than Mauritius cannot be fixed, as there is no legal provision in this respect;
- (iv) The provisions are made only for goods, which are imported by sea and not by air;
- (v) The price of fish as an essential commodity in Rodrigues cannot be fixed due to serious shortcomings in the Rodrigues Regional

Assembly (Consumer Protection – Fixing of Price of Fish)
Regulations 2008.

On this count, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I must draw the attention of this House that Section 7, of the said Fish Regulations revokes the (Rodrigues Fish and Chilled Fish (Maximum Price) Regulations 2003 made by the Minister. This is not legally in order because the Rodrigues Regional Assembly does not have the power to revoke a regulation made by a Minister.

Worst, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when the Fish Regulations were passed by the previous Regional Government, necessary arrangement was not made with the concerned Ministry in Mauritius for the Minister to make appropriate Regulations to remove fish in the list of controlled commodities under the First Schedule Part II of the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act of 1998. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the fixing of price of fish is still legally under the control of the Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Consumer Protection in spite of the said coming into force of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection – Fixing of the Price of Fish) Regulations 2008. So, this is a very serious issue and becomes even more problematic when there are two laws for the same purpose with conflicting penalty for a specific offence.

Under the RRA Act Fish Regulations 2008, the penalty for selling fish at a price higher than that fixed is a fine not exceeding Rs 10,000, while under the 1998 Act, the penalty is a fine not exceeding Rs 100,000 and imprisonment not exceeding three years for a first time offender. So, therefore, officers have big difficulties, in fact, cannot even enforce this law properly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as a caring Government, we are bringing remedial measures by way of an appropriate legal framework that treat the matter holistically for the betterment of our consumers. In this perspective, the proposed Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations 2016, in pursuance to section 75B (1)(b) of the Constitution and section 31 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act of 2001, purports to address these issues.

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly is empowered to pass Regulations for matters pertaining to its areas of responsibilities under section 26 of the RRA Act. Also we should keep in mind that it cannot conflict with other existing legislations in Mauritius. The subjects of trade, commerce and consumer protection are areas of responsibilities of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. And in view of discharging these responsibilities efficiently allow me, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to highlight the main objectives of the proposed regulations:

- (i) to empower the Commission responsible for Trade, Commerce and Consumer Protection to discharge its duties and responsibilities more efficiently and effectively as conferred to it by the RRA Act;
- (ii) to enable a better control of the prices of controlled commodities in Rodrigues;
- (iii) to empower the Commissioner responsible for Commerce and Consumer Protection to fix the minimum price of controlled commodities in Rodrigues;
- (iv) most importantly to reduce the time frame in the fixing of these prices; and
- (iv) to put an obligation on importers of controlled goods imported by sea or by air from the island of Mauritius and other countries to submit returns for the fixing of prices.

The proposed Regulations make sufficient provisions in order to achieve these objectives.

Regulation 2 empowers the Departmental Head of the Commission for Consumer Protection or any officer designated by him to be the authorised Officer to enforce these regulations. As at date, this power rests with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for Commerce and Consumer Protection.

Regulation 3 provides for the sale of controlled commodities at a maximum wholesale and maximum retail price, and prohibits traders to sell these commodities at a higher price.

Regulation 4 compels importers of controlled goods to submit all relevant details relating to any controlled commodity, within a specific time frame not exceeding 7 days, from the date of landing in Rodrigues to enable the fixing of prices within the least possible delay.

Regulation 5 empowers the Commissioner responsible for Commerce and Consumer Protection to amend and fix the list of controlled commodities in Rodrigues. It will enable the fixing of prices in a reduced period of time from 25 days presently to about 11 days. This power is actually restricted to the Minister.

Regulation 6 empowers the Departmental Head of the Commission responsible for Commerce and Consumer Protection to issue permit to sell of controlled commodities without which traders cannot sell their goods. This will enable a better control and enforcement by Consumer Protection Officers.

Regulation 7 establishes the offences and defines the penalties in case of breach of these Regulations.

And finally, Regulation 8 revokes the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer protection-Fixing of price of Fish) Regulations 2008. This regulation also caters for a transitional provision to enable all maximum wholesale and retail prices, which have been fixed by the Minister up to now to remain in force in the event these regulations come into force.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I must point out here that certain strategic commodities having national importance, such as cement, dual purpose kerosene, flour, liquefied petroleum gas and rice are not included in this transitional provision as they will continue to be fixed by the central Government. These goods, which are crossed subsidised, are sold at the same price in Rodrigues as in Mauritius.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as indicated earlier, there is an urgency for these regulations to come into force as soon as possible because of the negative bearing of the long delay in the fixing of prices on both traders and consumers.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are expecting that the proposed regulations may come into force by the beginning of July 2016 after its approval by this Assembly and if there is no negative resolution at the level of the National Assembly.

The Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Consumer Protection, has already agreed to make the necessary amendment to the Consumer Protection Act and other related legislations as deemed appropriate by way of regulations to remove the list of controlled commodities listed in the First Schedule of the proposed regulations from the Rodrigues Consumer (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) Regulations 1998.

In the same vein, necessary arrangements is being made at the level of my commission to consolidate the Price Fixing Unit in terms of staffing to enable a smooth implementation of these regulations, particularly with respect to the fixing of prices of controlled commodities. I am confident that these regulations will be an important tool for the protection of our consumers and facilitation of businesses.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, before I conclude, allow me to express my gratitude to my Departmental Head, Officers of my commission, particularly those of the Consumer Protection Unit and The Price Fixing Unit, the Legal Adviser of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Minister and Officers of the Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Consumer Protection and the State Law Office for their precious collaboration and contribution in the preparation and finalisation of these Regulations.

I also wish to thank the Clerk and staff of the Assembly. My special and heartfelt thanks go to Chief Commissioner for his precious and continuous support as well as my colleagues of the Executive Council and the backbenchers for their collaboration in the presentation of these regulations today.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with these words, I command the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations 2016 to the House for approval.

[Applause]

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the problem of price-fixing in Rodrigues dates since a long time. The Commissioner has rightly said it is his first and maybe last... No, it is true. It is his first and maybe also his last Regulation that he will present in this House. *Non, ça se voit, M. le président.*

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when we look at the objectives set by the Commission in coming up with this Regulation, that is, to strengthen the law enforcement, duties of the Consumer Protection Officers, promote consumer protection in Rodrigues, consolidate legal framework and so on, enable the Commission to fix the prices of controlled commodities within the least possible delay. The Commissioner has set the target as by July 2016. And, he said that it will reduce the time frame for price-fixing from 25 to 11 days. That is very good if he can be able to do so.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according the Customer Charter of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection, and I do hope that his Commission too, has got a Customer Charter, one of its mission is to provide information to consumers on price, evolution on commodities throughout the Price Observatory. If we want to improve in price-fixing in Rodrigues, I think there should be a need to set up a Price Observatory in Rodrigues. And, I did not hear the Commissioner mention about this. Second, to provide an

interactive communication platform for the Information, Protection and Education of consumers.

In Rodrigues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, sometimes, at times, rarely, we hear some people from *Association des Consommateurs* intervened on the radio about problems faced by consumers of having commodities at a fixed price. Sometimes, people, consumers do not know at all what are the exact prices of some commodities sold on the market. This means there is an absence of communication between the Commission and consumers. And, here, again, I do not see how this Regulation caters for such issues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

One great major problem that has always been faced by his Commission is at the level of the Price-Fixing Unit. There is a lack of staffing there, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I heard the Commissioner mentioning about increasing staffing at his Commission in order to meet his objectives. And, I wonder if now he is passing this Legislation in here, we are in May, June, July. In two months, he will implement this Regulation and I wonder how he will be able to increase the staffing at the level of his Commission in order to reach the objectives that he has just set out.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all these are things that at first sight, tell us that this Regulation has come up very hastily and we know why. Because he is here since 2012 and today, we are in 2016 and it is only now that he has been able to come up with such legislation. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is true that it is high time that the controlled prices of goods that are sold on our market, the price-fixing be met by Rodrigues, itself.

I think everybody will agree with that. But, when we see that the Regulation makes provision that by the time this Regulation will come into force, part 2 of the First Schedule of the Act will be repealed because it will be done by Rodrigues. And, I have encountered that in the First Schedule, part 2, there are some 18 commodities out of which, six will remain under the purview of the Ministry. It is said in the Regulation. But whereas in the Second Schedule of the Act, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is a list of goods in respect of which there is a maximum mark-up which is still under the responsibility of the Ministry. But these goods, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, which are sold on our local market, let me list some of them: exercise book for example, infants food, paints, pharmaceutical products, pressure cooker, soap detergents and so on.

I wonder why all these, instead of only the First Schedule, why not, because since the Minister is prepared to make the necessary amendments of the Act, the National Law, why is it that the Commissioner has not looked into all the other goods that we have difficulties here in price-fixing in Rodrigues, that

all these goods also fall under the purview of the Commissioner through this Regulation so that consumers in Rodrigues be more advantageous in having goods at better prices because at times, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there are scarcities of different commodities in Rodrigues. Sometimes, it is because of importers that face difficulties in Mauritius. These goods are not available in the right moment on the local market. So, there is a whole mess.

I think that by coming up with this Regulation, we need to include more other goods to be fixed by the Commission in Rodrigues. These goods also appear in the list of goods in the first, second and Third Schedule of the Act. Then, by looking closely at the Regulation, I have noted, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, certain things that should have been inserted or redefined for example. The main purpose of this Regulation is (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations. I think in the part for interpretation, there should be explained the word "maximum price". I think it should appear in the part for interpretation.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I had a question which has not been replied today concerning Value Added Tax. I have been made aware that in Rodrigues, some of the goods that we have on our local market are subject to VAT twice. Is it true or is it not true? I do not know. That is why I had a question on that. I think that when we look closely at the way certain goods are being sold here, the margin of profits, the difference in prices of different commodities or different wholesale and retail shops, this gives us an indication of why there are so much differences in these prices. Is it because of fret? Is it because of the origin of imports of these goods?

One importer tells me that one container of goods from China to Mauritius costs less than one container of goods from Mauritius to Rodrigues. And, at the end of day, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is the consumer who pays the price of all these. I think when we come up with a legislation, in order to look, to alleviate all the burdens of price on consumers; we have to look at all these different aspects.

That is why I would ask the Commissioner to go again at the different problems that consumers are being encountered here, try to talk again with the Minister in Mauritius, look at the different goods which are listed in both the first and second and even the Third Schedule and to see which goods can be put in those list of goods that are to be fixed in Rodrigues. And, to be able to give more autonomy as the Commissioner has said, to Rodrigues, I wonder about the establishment of a Code of Practice as specified in section 5 of the maximum recommended retail price of the Act. It is specified in the Act but what about in Rodrigues according to this Regulation? And, another question is about the maximum price which the Minister... Yes, I have so many notes here.

The Minister is empowered to make Regulations concerning the maximum price of goods which now will fall under the Commissioner. Once again, I urge the Commissioner to consult whether; any consultation has been made prior to the coming of this Regulation to the House with the *l'Association des Consommateurs de Rodrigues*, with all the other stances where consumers are concerned and to see what are the different problems that consumers are being encountered in Rodrigues with regards to the supply of goods. Because sometimes, we can have one type of good during this shipment and it lasts for some months and after that, you do not have it again. They tell you that importers have not imported these goods. So, there is not a variety of choices for consumers as it should be.

I think all these should be addressed by the Commissioner if he wants all the objectives that he has been just specified that he can reach them in the time frame he has put forward by coming up with this Regulation, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I will not be long because there are some amendments that I think are important to put in these regulations if it has to be voted. And, this will be dealt with our Committee Stage. And, then, we will be able to vote or not unless there are amendments. I thank you for your attention, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

[Applause]

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. *Je me joins au Minority Leader pour dire que this piece of Legislation, au fait, oui, ça tombe bien. C'est bien de venir avec new regulations to control the price of commodities and mostly when it comes to Maximum Price Fixing of certain commodities as listed in the regulation itself at schedule 1 which is really good. When we look at it like that, it is a really good work. We see that okay, we can say that okay, it falls at a really good time. And, I will be very specific about the good time. But, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I also have reservations concerning this piece of regulations. When we talk about Maximum Price Fixing, we also see it is the title of the Regulation.*

It is for Consumer Protection. It is the consumer. At the end of the day, the one to benefit most from this type of regulation should be, must be, if I have to say so, must be the consumer. However, when the Commissioner started talking about his Regulation as he has so wisely said it, his Regulation, I have not really heard about how really these regulations are going to benefit the consumers. He has made mention about lessening the time, the length, to cater for the negative bearing of long delays for both traders and consumers when it comes to having the price of the commodities known and being sold. But at the

end of the day, we still do not know by how much these prices will be after the Regulation.

Of course, I know. It will be coming in place in July but we would have loved to hear, as a Consumer, we would have loved to have heard the Commissioner mention that nowadays, at the present time, let us say, fish is being sold at this price and, with these regulations, we are thinking about bringing the price of fish to so and so price. Maybe it is a bit early but at least, letting us know. Is it going to be higher or is it going to be lesser than what is being marketed nowadays? Because we have to know that when we talk about maximum price, I am no economic student but I have done a bit of homework.

When we talk about maximum price and when we talk about a regulation for Consumer Protection, it implies that somewhere, if the Commissioner is coming with that Regulation, it implies that the present market clearing price of products is too high and that we need to reduce this price for the benefit of consumers. I have not heard him talk about that at any point in his intervention. And, most of the time, when this happens in any Government, because we know that all Government around the world, all Government have as main concern, price control because it is a necessity to be able to protect the consumers and to make sure, to avoid monopolistic exploitation of consumers or for other reasons that we have to control prices.

However, I have not heard the Commissioner mention at any point in time about that. And, it is true as I was saying; it is true that he has identified foodstuff because most of the time, when we talk about maximum price control, it concerns foodstuff. Foodstuff which is the basic commodities that people need and this is where we are going to control the price. I have also heard the Commissioner talk about the historical moment that he is marking now. It is true. It is really historical and as I have mentioned earlier on, it came at a very good time maybe for him but he has to know how to exploit it. Maybe he has missed out on that part or he is making as if he does not know what he is doing but he knows very well what he is doing.

As he mentions history, historical moment, in fact, history has shown that throughout, *depuis les ages*, when a Government comes forward with such a piece of regulation, it has either been during the war when it has been the need for rationing, *pour mettre en place* a system of rationing of commodities or a Government will come forward with the piece of regulation for maximum price when we are closing up to election. It is in history. It is historical as he says himself. It is historical.

So, I want to know now, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, whether, really, this piece of Regulation is being made to benefit our consumers here. That is, all Rodriguans confused, or is it being made just *pou fer la bouche doux, pour dire aux gens*: Look! I have brought the price of such and such commodities; I have regulated such and such commodities, the price of such and such commodities. Because the Commissioner has been here since 2012: he mentioned thoroughly during his intervention about the Fish Regulation, the price control for fish which is not good, which is not legal.

What has the Commissioner been doing all this time, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? From 2012 to 2016, as soon as he came into power and he realised that this piece of regulation was illegal, I, in his place, I would have said let us go, let us pass new regulations to ban that one because it is illegal and let us come forth with new regulation. It is only in 2016 when we know that D-day is closing up, that we come here with this piece of Regulation/Legislation and saying that we want to control the prices of some commodities. I am happy but at the same time, as I say, I have my reservations.

To come back to the Maximum Price Fixing exercise, normally, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has talked a lot about his Regulation is going to cater for the negative bearing of long delays for both traders and Commissioners. The Minority Leader has just mentioned it earlier on. We already now have problems with some commodities.

Par exemple, on va dans une boutique aujourd'hui, on a une marque de lait bien spécifique. Je ne vais pas faire de la publicité pour citer le nom. Une marque de lait X, je commence à acheter et à consommer marque de lait X, quand mon stock se termine, je repars à ce même endroit et il n'y a plus *the* marque X, il y a maintenant Y, il y a Z, il y a je ne sais pas quoi.

Moi, je pense qu'avec *this piece of Regulation*, on fait face à ce problème-là très, très régulièrement que ce soit pour le lait de bébé qui est encore plus important. Parce que les enfants, on commence avec quelque chose, après, il faut changer parce que tout simplement *out of the blue*, on nous dit: *out of stock, we do not have this milk anymore, so, you need to revert to another milk*. For kids, it is not easy.

So, what I am saying is that with the Maximum Price Regulation, maybe we are... Je ne dis pas que ça va arriver. Je ne veux pas être l'oiseau de mauvaises augures *but normally, this might be the case that now; we are going to face other forms of shortages*. Le Commissaire lui-meme, a parlé de *artificial shortages* parce que les produits sont là, sont arrivés, sont *in the wholesalers' there but they cannot sell it because they do not have the price*.

Now, we would have the price but there will not be enough of these products, most probably to be sold on the local market. Why? Because when manufacturers and suppliers would find out that they will not make that margin of profit anymore on whatever product, on milk powder, on, I do not know, whatever it is, canned meat or canned fish, they will import it less and less. Qui va fournir suffisamment de ces produits-là *at a low margin of profit*? Qui travaille pour ne pas faire de profit dans le commerce? Il n'y a personne. Donc, qui va continuer à importer ces produits-là s'ils ne vont pas faire *a great profit margin*?

Donc, là, on va voir qu'à cause de cela, on pourrait faire face à un shortage of certain of these products which have been identified. I am talking and the Commissioner knows it if he has done Economy, I am sure he knows what I am talking about. This might lead to a shortage of certain commodities because of the profit margin.

Maintenant, imaginez-vous, quelqu'un, il a été pendant longtemps *sole importer of milk, for example*. Il va devoir trouver d'autres produits pour importer pour pouvoir faire profit. Donc, ça, pour moi, c'est à prendre en considération. Là, je dis au Commissaire, à prendre en considération et veiller à ce qu'il n'y ait pas de problème parce que, M. le président, *we do not have any...* On n'a pas le pouvoir, nous, de contrôler *the supplies of these products*. Les manufacturers, they are not here in Rodrigues. *We cannot control them. We cannot see to it that these products are being supplied effectively in a very effective manner* et que la population, et que les consommateurs, à la fin de la journée n'en souffre pas.

We lack control over the production of the list of products identified here. So, it will be... We have to be very, very careful so that at the end of the day, we do not have a shortage of different commodities. Because when we talk again, when we talk about Maximum Price Fixing, we are here to ensure that these commodities, the selected commodities, they are in abundant supply for the consumers to have access to.

So, I would urge the Commissioner to make, to see to it that this issue does not crop up, *que demain, après demain*, on ne se revoit pas avec shortage of these specific products because of the issue of profit-making aspects in commerce. So, these are 'summarises' because, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would also like to point out that if the Commissioner, if the Government who have decided to bring forth this Regulation does not pay much attention to what have been talked about, what will happen in the future would be for the Government, itself, either to subsidise certain of these commodities, they will have to spend

more money in the future or to come with new or other regulation to control the price, further control the price of commodities such as cost control or universal price fixing, different possibilities.

They will have to come up with it if they are not very careful with shortages which might be caused by the manufacturing and the supply of these goods. That is one. Another thing that the Commissioner has also mentioned clearly because he is on delays, he said that the 25 days now, which is being used now for clearing of products, will be reduced to at least 11 days. The person who imports has already seven days for all the paperwork after receiving their consignments and everything. To fill out all the forms, they have got seven days.

So, already, seven days taken. We also know that coupled up to these seven days, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there will be the clearance of these documents which will take a few other days. Maybe that is what made the Commissioner came up to 11 days. Fine, fair enough. But, we also know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that at present, there is a situation which is being used at the moment at the level of the cargo handling *au moment de débarquer les conteneurs, c'est que les wholesalers, les personnes qui ont importé des items de Maurice, ils doivent attendre le départ du bateau pour avoir accès à leur conteneurs.*

Déjà, le bateau arrive, le bateau passe deux à trois jours au quai pour débarquer et embarquer. Ça fait déjà trois jours. Après avoir fait ça, la personne doit maintenant aller chercher son conteneur, qui peut prendre aussi deux à trois jours dépendant de là où est placé le produit, si c'est au fond, si c'est au bout, si c'est à gauche, à droite.

Those who have been in this hassle, they know well what I am talking about. It might take about five days, maybe more, before they get, they actually acquire their consignment, check it, verify and see to it that everything is in order to be able to fill out these administrative papers. So, I do not know the delays whether, it will be reduced or not. So, I hope so that it will be reduced because there is this practical issue which is presently that people are facing right now.

Là, je n'invente rien. C'est là, c'est aujourd'hui, c'est ce qui se passe. Maintenant, est-ce que cela ne va pas revenir à presque 25 jours encore, là, je ne sais pas. Donc, j'espère que vraiment, il y aura this reduction of time in the delay, that people can get it. *The Minority Leader also mentioned about communicating prices. I have to also mention that part too,* rajouter sur ce que le *Minority Leader* avait dit, qu'il faudrait que les gens sachent comme je disais, je l'avais dit aussi au début, il faudrait que les gens puissent savoir exactement

quels sont les prix, que ça soit affiché ou encore vulgarisé à travers la radio et qu'il y ait des sessions d'information surtout pour les villages un peu plus retirés de Rodrigues.

Imaginez-vous une petite boutique à je ne sais pas, moi, Camp Pintade, ou je ne sais pas où ça, si la personne sait très bien que... Il y a des personnes qui sont honnêtes mais on sait aussi qu'il y a d'autres qui voudraient faire du profit. *They are in commerce.* Il sait très bien que le lait doit se vendre à Rs250 le sachet mais lui, il dit :

'Qu'est-ce que je fais avec mon transport, moi ? Comment je vais *account for that ? I have to pay for transport to get it from Port Mathurin to come to Camp Pintade. So, how do I cater for all these?* Donc, je vais vendre mon sachet de lait à Rs255 parce que personne ne sait quel est le prix d'un sachet de lait.'

Donc, est-ce qu'il y aura, est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous rassurer que les consommateurs seront bien informés sur le prix de ces items qu'il a mentionné dans son règlement et qu'il y aura aussi suivi et bien sûr par les officiers qu'il y aura *enforcement* suivi comme le Minority Leader avait mentionné auparavant, un suivi très rigoureux pour assurer que partout dans l'île où on va, on trouve que ces items-là, ils sont pareils, *same price everywhere.*

Coming to the Regulation, itself, in the interpretation, we have seen mentioned 'authorised officer'. But, however, it says that 'authorised officer' means 'any public officer designated by Departmental Head'. Any public officer means that it can be an officer of another Commission, also. Or, is it only public officers within the Commission of Consumer Protection and Social Security? Who is this 'authorised officer'? Because there, 'any public officer' is very vague, is very vast. It can include anybody in the public body. So, we are not very specific, here. And, this authorised officer, what is he to do or she to do? It is mentioned nowhere in the regulation what will be the powers or the attribution of these authorised officers?

What will be the role of the Protection Enforcement Officers then? If we are going to identify authorised officers and what are they going to do, I would like, maybe the Commissioner can answer me at a later stage. I have also a bit of concern when it comes to on page 3, paragraph 5, for the purpose of paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4: The Departmental Head will require important whatever to submit information as he considers necessary and may, therefore, require for the person to bring other necessary information.

Là, je pense aussi qu'il faut que ça soit vraiment, que les *Departmental Heads* soient vraiment consciencieux et qu'il y ait un travail vraiment honnête qui soit fait. Parce que là, on peut vraiment aller vers des *issues*, entendre des gens venir se plaindre après que : '*Ah, untel a fait ça ! Il a eu son truc, son permis vite fait. Moi, j'ai fait la même chose, même procédure, même étape et moi, je ne l'ai pas eu.*'

J'espère qu'on ne va pas entendre ces choses-là parce que là, c'est un peu vague, la façon dont a mis. C'est comme si c'est laissé *at the wings and wishes of the Departmental Head to decide and the person is to be really rational and impartial in his decision*. Mais là, quelqu'un qui n'est pas très ça pourrait mal utiliser ce paragraphe-là. Là, je voudrais quand même qu'il y ait un peu plus de discrétion par rapport à paragraphe 5 à la page 3. Donc voilà. Et puis, par rapport au...

Voilà, the powers of the Commissioners also, since it is up to the Commissioner. On a dit for the purpose of these Regulations, it is the Commissioner who amends the maximum wholesale and retail prices. So, I would like to know whether, the Commissioner, himself, will fix the prices by himself. So, he decides a price, the price for canned fish will be so and so. Is it the Commissioner who decides upon these prices? Because here, again, it is a bit...

C'est un peu subjectif si c'est le Commissaire qui décide, est-ce qu'il y aura, le Commissaire va décider en concertation avec les consommateurs, avec les traders, avec les officiers de sa Commission ou est-ce que c'est tout simplement le Commissaire, il décide : voilà, je viens avec ma liste, je dis que tel, tel prix, il va décider et *be specific* et puis après, il va faire la notice dans la gazette, *gazetted all these prices. So, how is this going to be done ?*

On n'a pas eu trop d'explication par rapport à ça, comment on va identifier ces prix-là. Est-ce que ce sera par rapport au prix qu'on a là ? Est-ce que c'est je décide comme ça parce que c'est pour améliorer *the level of living of people* ? Comment on décide ? Comment on arrive à fixer ce prix pour *these different products identified* ? M. Payendee, quand quelqu'un est en train de parler, s'il vous plait, restez tranquille, écoutez et laissez les autres écouter. Merci, merci, *Mr. Chairperson, Sir*.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes ?

The Deputy Chairperson : M. le président, je vous remercie de me donner la chance de m'exprimer lors de ce débat sur le *Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations 2016* qui vise à

fixer un prix maximal en gros et au détail pour certaines commodités largement utilisées par les Rodriguais. J'aimerais apporter une précision en ce qui concerne le lait en poudre dont parlait le membre. Ma lecture de la *First Schedule* me fait comprendre que les produits mentionnés sont déjà fixés. Donc, je ne vois pas l'intérêt de faire un truc là-dessus.

J'aimerais d'emblée féliciter le Gouvernement Régional OPR et le Commissaire Louis Daniel Baptiste, responsable de la protection des consommateurs pour l'intérêt démontré à l'égard de la protection des consommateurs à Rodrigues en promulguant ces règlements. Laissez le marché libre de réguler à Rodrigues les prix qui seront appliqués aux consommateurs ne produisent pas les effets escomptés comme dans d'autres pays pour des raisons bien évidentes. Donc, le manque de concurrences, l'entente tacite qui existe entre certains groupes sur le prix à pratiquer en sont des exemples.

Certains détaillants déplorent même que certains grossistes vendent les produits au prix détails à Port Mathurin même. Ces pratiques ne laissent pas le choix aux détaillants dans les villages autour de l'île. Ainsi, dans beaucoup de ces villages, les produits comme couches et papiers hygiéniques se vendent à des prix fixes quelle que soit la marque. Et que dire des prix parfois démesurés de la vente du poisson, M. le président ? Ces règlements prévoient, M. le président, la révocation du *Rodrigues Regional Assembly Consumer Protection Fixing of Price of Fish Regulation 2008*.

Avec ces règlements, le prix du poisson a été fixé mais force est de constater que les dispositifs qui sont en place ne sont pas efficaces. Devant cette situation, l'intervention du Gouvernement Régional arrive à point nommé. Avec ces règlements, le Commissaire pourrait faire évoluer la liste de marchandise qui se vende à prix fixé notamment le beurre, le fromage, de l'huile comestible, le lait en poudre entre autres. Et par la même occasion, renforcer les dispositifs de contrôle et travailler à mettre en place un dispositif plus efficace en ce qui concerne la vente de poisson à Rodrigues.

Dans un autre volet, M. le président, ces règlements nous montre une des innombrables possibilités de la loi de l'autonomie, le *RRA Act*. En effet, alors qu'auparavant, les procédures pour la fixation des prix prenaient quelques 25 jours, maintenant, cela, d'après le Commissaire, prendrait une dizaine de jours ou plus. Donc, ainsi, un pouvoir qui était dans les mains d'un Ministre à Maurice est transféré dans celles du Commissaire à Rodrigues pour plus d'efficacité et une prise en compte des spécificités de Rodrigues qui ne sont pas les mêmes que celles de Maurice. Pour les raisons énoncés si dessus, M. le président, j'accueille favorablement ces règlements et je vous remercie.

[Applause]

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I understand the pride, the joy, the emotion of the Commissioner. But, for me, this Regulation, the presentation of this regulation is an example of a failure, an example of one of the worst Regulations that have been introduced in this House and, it is up to the image of this Regional Government. Amateurism and incompetence, Mr Chairperson, Sir and the mentality that they know all. *Zot kone tou !* And, the rest, we throw away, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. From the first reading, the first observation, today, in Rodrigues, what do we see ? Fresh fish has become a taxable good. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, page 6 of the Regulations, fresh fish has become a taxable good in Rodrigues.

If this is not a failure, if this is not incompetence and amateurism and I do not know what again, what is it, Mr. Chairperson, Sir ? How can we explain that today, fresh fish has been classified under taxable goods ? Fresh fish means fish coming from the sea, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Should I congratulate him ? Should I congratulate the Regional Government, the OPR ? Regional Government, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The regulations, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is the issue of fresh fish which is under First Schedule. Fresh fish is under taxable goods. Whether, we will let this go, first. Now, this is the first failure.

The second failure concerns fresh fish also. We are not speaking of fishermen, here. We are not speaking of *bayant*, of fish dealer, *bayant* and fishermen. We are speaking of importer, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The regulations speak of importer. Importer means any trader who brings or causes to be brought controlled goods in Rodrigues. Controlled goods, now, what does controlled good means ? Controlled good means any good specified in the First Schedule and, fish... Look at us, do not look at the officers. And, fish is under the First Schedule, which means that fish sold by all those fishermen around Rodrigues and the *bayant*, all the fishermen community, this is an insult, an insult against all those fishermen and their work, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

They have not even been considered in these Regulations and the Commissioner auto-congratulates himself, that he has repealed the Consumer Protection Price of Fish Regulation. What are you speaking about ? You are speaking about legal terms, this Regulation is not valid. The authority for that would have been a statement from the State Law Office from the Parquet saying this is not valid, you should do that. Where is it ? Where is your authority ? Mr. Chairperson, Sir, so, today, the fishermen have disappeared. The rights of consumers to buy fish have disappeared because he is repealing the price of fish, Fixing of Price of Fish Regulations, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Fish is now considered...

Fresh fish in Rodrigues, these regulations do not speak of fresh fish caught around the coast by fishermen, here. Fresh fish, the price of fresh fish, of imported fresh fish only is fixed because it means importer. Importer is someone who is importing, means any trader who brings or causes controlled goods into Rodrigues. This means that only fresh fish brought into Rodrigues by an importer maybe by plane, by an importer, the price of this will be fixed, not the price of fish caught in the lagoon by local fishermen. This is the definition of this. This is the reading of these Regulations unfortunately, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Whereas... This is not the end of the story, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. This is not the third thing.

My friends, please note down. First thing was fish is now a taxable good. Second thing, fish will be imported only by importers. Fish fished by fishermen are no longer fixed. It is not under these Regulations because by the definition of importer, you have said only goods imported by the importers are fixed in the First Schedule, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. What do we have in this Regulation which has been criticised here ? We have a number of things to protect buyers of fish, to define *ça*, inspection and seizure etc. The Commissioner may amend the price of fish. But most importantly, in the schedule, we have the categorisation into three categories of fish which are sold. And, the Commissioner today, just writes off all these three categories for which the prices of fish are fixed.

Trois catégories zété, there is only fish and, it is for imported fish. Category one, *grade ene*, Capitaine from the lagoon, *Carangue etc.* Rs40. *Cordonnier batardé*, *cateau*, *licorne* Rs30. *Sap sap*, *lion*, *lune*, *breterre*, *caranda*, *lalo*, *lansan*, *pavillon etc.*, *requin*, *vieil gris*, c'est-à-dire *beng*, *la raie* Rs25.

Where is this categorisation ? *Alors, nek repeal ? Nek pren la nek dir repeal ?* Section Regulation 8. Regulation 8 speaks of revocation. They are revoking this. So, we are causing to disappear this categorisation of the sale of fish. This is why I say this is a failure and these Regulations should be removed immediately, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. It is an incompetence.

It is grossly ill-prepared and is not correct from a legal point of view because according to these Regulations, there is no provision in it to fix price of fresh fish caught in Rodrigues. Because this Regulation in the schedule, the schedule has made fish first taxable, second, has made fish fixing of price only concern imported goods, not local fish. You cannot, in the present reading of this, you cannot fix the local price of fish caught : *poisson la seine*, *poisson*

casier etc. You cannot fix this. My friends will agree with me. This is the reading of it.

You can only according to the Regulation, fix the price of imported fresh fish because you have defined importer means any trader who brings or causes to be brought controlled goods in Rodrigues and controlled goods are defined as any goods specified in the First Schedule that is, brought by the importer. So, I think the Commissioner has got my point. There are three; I would say lethal issues which we cannot vote regulations like this. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is a failure from the part of the Commissioner.

A big failure where, these Regulations will be subject to challenge in any Court of Law by anybody who does not respect for example, the price of fish which will be fixed. You cannot, you will not be able to enforce this because it does not concern an importer and it does not concern an imported commodity. So, what do we do ? Are you agreeing to remove the regulations and I sit down or as usual, *vous allez insister, persister et foncer* ? *M. le Président*, the Fixing of Price Regulations 2008 are repealed ? And, we have been speaking about conflict of laws. Has the advice of the State Law Office been sought ? These are our points, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. These are our points and I think that these points should be carefully studied by the Commissioner and then, we may have his position. But I have known them, they will carry on.

If they carry on, we will challenge this. We will tell people that they have removed the fixing of price of fish. I hope everybody has grasped. There is a two-step, a three-step reasoning. It is not difficult to understand but the thing is as such. Generally speaking, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when we have this Regulation, what have we seen in this Regulation ? The Regulation, not other terms, itself. From what we know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all countries in the world today are promoting free trade. That is, we must remove trade barriers, price fixing, import quotas, import permits etc. All this must be removed. We agree on this.

However, because of our context, there is need because of abuse by some traders, there is need to fix because there is not much competition in Rodrigues. There is need to fix certain prices and it is good that we review the regulations from time to time. But, the Commissioner has failed to explain this, the rational behind price fixing in Rodrigues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and today, what do we see ? What do we see? For example, all sorts of procedures, all sorts of papers will have to be furnished and this will result in delay, more work for the officers and this is merely again an administrative regulation.

One example would have been, for example, to say the price in Mauritius, the price in Rodrigues cannot exceed a certain percentage. And, this Price Regulation, it does not say for how much time a notice will stand. When the calculation is made, every time there are papers to be filled here, every time the importer brings milk, every time a good which is controlled, prices are fixed, every time the goods are brought, every time we have to calculate it ? It is not mentioned what is the onus on the importer. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, okay ? And, if we look at the Regulations, Regulation 3 (1), it says that there is a notice :

'The maximum wholesale and maximum retail prices at which non-taxable goods specified in Part II of the First Schedule may be sold shall be those specified in the second and third columns of the notice as published under the Third Schedule.'

What do we have in the Third Schedule ? In the Third Schedule, we have taxable goods. And, the taxable goods are only defined in the Third Schedule as butter and margarine, canned fish, canned meat, etc. There is no provision in these regulations to provide for different prices, for different rates, names. For example, different trade names of butter and margarine : Flora, Lora *je ne sais pas quoi* etc. Butter and margarine only can be fixed, taxable good, not the different trade, not *la marque*. Edible oil, *combien de catégories d'edible oil on a ? On a*.

Mais le Commissaire ne va pas fixer un prix pour chacun d'après le *schedule here*. Il va fixer un prix que pour *edible oil*. Donc, un seul prix pour tout, je ne sais pas si c'est par litre etc. Ça, c'est des lacunes encore. Parce que les *Regulations* ne prévoient pas une différenciation pour les différentes *trade names*, des différentes *trademarks*. Voilà, *trademarks of edible oil, of milk, of I do not know what*. So, this is ça. *The same thing for 3 (2) and in 3 (3) :*

'No trader shall sell or supply any controlled good at a price higher than... [the price] specified in the Third Schedule.'

Again, fishermen have become traders because fish, unless fresh fish is in it, we speak of imported fresh fish. Have fishermen become traders ? Are they to be considered as traders today ? Because fish is in it. *'No trader shall sell'*, it means supply any controlled goods; *ça veut dire* fish is included. What about the *bayants* ? The *bayants*, themselves which, I think, there are Regulations for them ? Come on, let us be serious. Submission of return, relevant Bill of Lading, fret forwarding vouchers, etc. specified in sub-part (b) of part 1 of the Second Schedule. *Ale roder*. Part (b), sub-part (b) of part 1 of the Second Schedule. *Ale roder*. All this is bureaucracy, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. And, in a

small island like Rodrigues, Regulation 4 (4) : *'The Departmental Head may refuse to act on any documents specified in paragraph... ' sa, sa, sa, sa.*

You know how is it in Rodrigues ! *Ou koné lote coince lote !* You know, documents may not be available. The trader has bought milk from China, juice; I do not know what from anywhere, edible oil from Singapore, from Malaysia. He does not have the information. He does not have the price. So, the Departmental Head can refuse to act on any documents specified unless the document is duly filled or certified or authenticated. *De l'huile sorte Malaisie, comment pou ale authentifier so prix ?* This is bureaucracy, complicating things, complicating things unnecessarily. Instead of having things cleared, you are going to have things more complicated.

They are reinforcing bureaucracy, reinforcing the delays when we know traders, here, when they bring for example, cheese, milk, all these which prices are fixed, sometimes, they have to wait for three months, five months, six months for the price to be fixed. And, in the meantime, the product has expired or there is a shortage on the market and they cannot sell because the maximum price has not yet been fixed. Why have you not put a delay on the Departmental Head, on yourself and the officers? You say the importer shall come before seven days.

Why do you not say if you do not fix the price after 15 days, the trader can sell at the price he thinks fit ? But let us put this in it for the protection of the consumer, for the trader. If there is a shortage of certain category of goods, in some Government Departments, you have a certain period to deal for it. If you do not deal for it, let them sell it until you fix the maximum price. This would help eliminate unnecessary delays. *D'accord?* So, the powers of the Commissioner, *d'accord, etc.* Permit, we are now introducing import permit. This is a very dangerous thing when we know the weight of political involvement here. Bureaucracy.

Why do we need a permit to import goods? Let them import, anybody can import. A small trader in Nassola, he wants to import his milk, he wants to import any good which is under these, he can import! Today, he can import. There is no need for a permit to import milk. We know there are a lot of examples of small retailers going to Mauritius to buy their goods themselves. Now, they will need a permit. The Departmental Head may grant to the importer, a permit to sell or regulation. Where is the example of the permit? In which form is this permit? There should be a schedule showing what is the form of this permit. *C'est ça*, a schedule. Example of the permit, where is the permit? Permit. Departmental Head....sell a permit... *which has been determined under Regulation 5.*

'No importer shall in respect of a consignment of controlled goods, distribute, sell or supply the goods unless he holds the permit specified...'

Eh ou la! You are complicating things! These things are for colonial times. We do not need permits today to trade between countries. You can import, export. It should be free. You are restricting unnecessarily and this will kill business in Rodrigues. You have already killed business in Rodrigues, the ease of doing business. You have already killed much of it. Now, you are killing it again. You are burying it deep under the ground. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, deep under the ground. The Commissioner has been speaking about we have made Regulations which are in conflict with... Regulation. But what is he doing in Regulation 8 (2)?

'On the date of coming into operation of these regulations, every maximum wholesale [...] price fixed by the Minister [etc.] shall be deemed, except for bread, cement [etc.] to have been fixed by the Commissioner.'

But you are stepping in the shoes of a Minister. And, then, you tell us we have made ça! You can do this because it concerns Rodrigues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. So, you criticise us for something and then, you do the same thing.

Donc, voilà, M. le président. Des règlements avec des erreurs grossières qui démontrent un amateurisme et une incompétence dans la préparation de ce règlement que le Commissaire est venu... Je respecte sa joie et son enthousiasme à venir présenter ce règlement mais comme j'ai dit, selon moi, il y a des erreurs fatales dans ses règlements. Le *Fish Control Regulations 2008* sont *revoked*. Mais maintenant, il va avoir un vide dans la fixation des prix pour le ça. Ça veut dire que les *bayants* peuvent vendre leurs poissons à n'importe quel prix parce que *it is not an imported good*. Et vous pouvez compter sur nous pour aller leur expliquer ça. Parce que si vous faites des erreurs pareilles et vous ne voulez pas rectifier, on va dire à la population vous avez *revoked*.

La pauvre dame qui va venir acheter le poisson à Baie du Nord, à n'importe où, à la pêcherie, on peut dire voilà, ça a été voté par le Gouvernement de Chef commissaire 2008. Voilà. Et vous, vous allez dire ça a été *repealed*? *Catégorie de poisson tirée, prix poisson tombe dans imported goods. If you want to vote it, you can vote it. But mo sagrin sa boug pou ale la cour pou Commission.*

Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, so, these are the shortcomings, the big shortcomings. And, this is why I am not going to vote from this side, I am not

going to vote. We have left open for every Member, here, but I will invite the Commissioner to stop the debate here, to postpone maybe and go for the amendments and save...*sauver la face*. Merci.

[Applause]

Mr. Chairperson: I suspend the Assembly for 20 minutes.

At 16.03 the Assembly was suspended for 20 minutes.

On its resumption at 16.26 with Mr. Chairperson in the Chair.

The Commissioner for Environment and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee): M. le président, merci de me donner la chance de participer à ce débat. J'avais déjà préparé quelque chose mais en écoutant les membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre, ça me donne un peu de frisson et l'envie de répondre un petit peu ce qu'ils ont dit. Je vais commencer par le membre Roussety parce que c'est encore chaud dans ma tête. La première chose qu'il a dit, c'est que ce règlement, c'est *one of the worst Regulations* comme si qui a été passées dans cette Assemblée. Mais ce langage-là, on a archi entendu. Moi, je me souviens encore. Je suis sûr que beaucoup de personnes ici se souviennent d'*Octopus Regulation* où on a dit : « *C'est quoi ça ? Regardez cette loi, ce règlement de deux pages, n'importe quoi ! It is the worst !* »

Mais aujourd'hui, est-ce que c'est toujours *the worst*? Je ne vais pas répondre, je vais laisser les membres de l'autre côté répondre eux-mêmes. Il y avait aussi la question de *fresh fish*, est-ce que c'est *taxable good* ou pas. Mais le membre doit apprendre encore parce que le *fish* est considéré comme *taxable good* oui mais c'est *zero rated* mais c'est *taxable* au cas où vous ne savez pas. Et puis, il a parlé aussi comme si *we have revoked the Fish Regulation* et on a retiré tout ce qui est catégorisation du poisson : grade 1, grade 2. Mais, M. le président, on n'a pas mis le prix du poisson dans ce règlement. Tout va venir après.

Le membre, Lordana était un peu pressée. Elle voulait voir tout ça dans le règlement. Mais non ! Mais non ! Ça viendra. Mais quand on va calculer le prix du poisson, la catégorisation va entrer en jeu. C'est ça qui va nous permettre de calculer. On va dire le capitaine est Rs50. Sur quoi on va se baser pour dire capitaine, Rs50 ? Bien sûr ! Mais on n'a pas besoin de dire pour comme si dénigrer quelques poissons et dire que celui-là grade 1, grade 2, grade 3, grade 4. Mais on va utiliser quelque grade pour donner quand on va calculer le tout. Et puis, le membre Roussety parlait aussi de *schedule*, comme si

imported. Mais je n'ai pas vu sur la loi, je ne sais pas si je me trompe, sur le règlement où il y a écrit *schedule of imported goods* !

C'est dit *First Schedule*, c'est tout. Et *First Schedule*, la liste, je ne suis pas un avocat, mais le peu de connaissance que j'ai dans ce domaine, je vois que c'est dit *schedule* si les commodités, *the goods that fall under this schedule will be taken by this Regulation*. Il n'y a pas lieu de dire *imported* ou pas mais quand il parle de *imported*, dans la loi est écrit : *canned meat, canned fish, canned sausages, canned poultry*. Mais rien n'est dit que ça doit absolument être importé. J'ai entendu... Non, pas forcément !

Le papa d'un membre de l'autre côté vient de me dire l'autre jour il va mettre du jambon dans les boîtes bientôt. C'est une innovation extraordinaire ! Mais ce ne sera pas... Ce sera la viande en boîte mais pas besoin d'être importé. Donc, il n'y a pas question *imported*... *Eh, mo ti écoute toi, écoute moi !* Il n'y a pas question de *imported*, pas *imported*. La loi s'applique sur ce qu'il y a écrit dans le truc. Et puis, on parle de *traders*. *Traders* comme si... Est-ce qu'un *fishmonger* est un *trader* ?

Yes, he is a trader ! Because he is selling fish ! The fisherman, himself, is a trader. Tout ce que vous avez dit là, c'est du... Je ne sais pas. Et puis, plus important, un membre de l'autre côté, le membre Roussety, professeur en économie, qui est en train maintenant de parler aux enfants, expliquer c'est quoi l'économie, et je ne sais pas où il n'a pas compris que le statistique est important dans l'économie. Je ne sais, moi. Si on est... Je ne suis pas économiste. Je n'ai pas étudié ça mais je pense le peu de connaissance que j'ai dans ce domaine me permet de penser qu'on a besoin.

Mais où est-ce qu'on trouvera ces statistiques si on libéralise, on dit tout le monde, vous commandez ça, n'importe qui commande n'importe quoi ? Et c'est quoi ce pays ? Où un pays il n'y a pas de permis ? Et c'est là que je revois quelqu'un qui disait à l'époque : « *Ki pou fou ek la loi, fou li dan bois ! Bisin fou la loi dans bois !* » Exactement la même chose. Donc, pour conclure, je pense que tout ce qui a été dit par le membre Roussety, c'est juste qu'il n'a pas peut être bien préparé son truc. Et je pense que tout ce qui a été dit est caduc et il n'y a rien à voir qui peut empêcher cette loi de passer même si on sait que si on veut, on ne veut pas, la loi va passer. Et puis, il y a le membre Lordana Meunier qui a dit un truc horrible. Pour moi, c'est horrible.

Elle a dit qu'elle a peur que si on dit aux gens, il n'y aura pas une marche de profit assez intéressante, le produit ne va pas venir à Rodrigues. Mais c'est grave ! Qu'est-ce qu'elle est en train de dire ? Est-ce qu'elle n'est pas en train de dire qu'il faut mettre 100% sur le lait pour que le lait arrive à Rodrigues et

que même si le consommateur là, si on doit utiliser ça dans les campagnes, tout ça, est-ce que le membre, le Rodriguais, le consommateur, il faut qu'il paye Rs200, 200% le prix de lait tout simplement parce que le lait doit venir ? Mais si on veut plus de lait, on achète une vache, je pense. Sinon, c'est quoi, l'autonomie ? C'est dépendre de moins en moins de l'île Maurice !

Un jour, si le bateau ne vient pas, comme dit le Chef commissaire, qu'est-ce qui va se passer ? Mais nous, on travaille dans cette direction. On est en train de... Avec les *schemes* qui sont mis en place par l'agriculture, tout ça, on pense qu'un jour le lait ne doit pas venir à Rodrigues. Ce ne sera pas un problème. Ça ne doit pas être un problème dans... Et puis, elle voulait que... Elle parlait de bateau, de temps que ça prend pour débarquer mais elle n'a pas vu ! Il y a des gens qui ont des yeux pour ne rien voir. Elle n'a pas vu le développement du port, qu'est-ce qui se passe dans le port !

Bientôt, ce ne sera plus ! Ce sera chose du passé. Même le jour que le bateau arrive, d'après ce que j'ai entendu, on pourra aller dans le conteneur, retirer parce que c'est plus grand. C'est nous, bien sûr, le Gouvernement en place, qui a pris les précautions pour que le port soit plus grand, plus d'espace pour le conteneur. Et je vois là, je ne sais pas où je suis en terme de nord-sud mais si je regarde à côté, là, à ma gauche, je crois que je vois des conteneurs là. Normalement, les conteneurs qui doivent arriver sur le bateau vont rester là pour que les autres puissent... Il y a du développement dans ce port !

Donc, cette question si le Commissaire a dit que définitivement, il y aura moins de temps et c'est qu'il sait de quoi il parle. Et puis, il y a toute cette question de 'il fallait mettre beaucoup de produits, plus de produits', vous n'avez rien compris ! Vous n'avez rien compris parce que dans la loi, il est dit on peut ajouter, retirer, augmenter le prix, diminuer le prix. Mais c'est ça, cette loi ! Mais avant d'aller plus loin, il faut mettre ce *legal framework* en place. Et c'est ça qu'on est en train de faire. Et c'est ça que mon collègue, que je félicite, est en train de faire. Donc, après avoir répondu à ces petits trucs qui apparemment, des gens ont utilisés, beaucoup de courage, de force comme s'ils ont tapé, ils ont marqué un but, maintenant je vais passer à ce que j'avais préparé pour le... Et ça, ça va être en anglais.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let me congratulate my colleague, Commissioner for Consumer Protection, Mr. Louis Daniel Baptiste for coming forward with such important Regulations with the main objective to protect the consumers living in Rodrigues against the uncontrolled rise in prices of some important commodities which are highly used by the inhabitants of this island. My thanks go also to all these people who, in one way or another, contributed to the production of these Regulations.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, these Regulations open a lot of doors which were up to now closed. Instead of having one Regulation for fish, one for cheese, one for milk etc. etc., my colleague has found it necessary to have one Regulation, which not only covers the imported goods listed in the First Schedule, but also provides room for easy amendment to include or remove goods in the future and also easy amending for retail and wholesale prices of these goods. This action reflects the vision of the Chief Commissioner, *ki pou arrive Rodrigues dans 5 ans, 10 ans, 25 ans, 50 ans*. We have to cater for this.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let me give an example where these Regulations... Somebody wanted an example; I will give one where, these Regulations can be useful in the future. Actually, the price of octopus is not fixed and we all know what is happening with the price of this commodity on the local market. These Regulations will make it easy to add octopus for example to the list of goods with a fixed wholesale and retail price in the future if need be. I say if need be. I am not saying we will do it. I am saying if need be. It has to be recorded like this.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, these Regulations give a lot of powers to the Commissioner and the Departmental Head of Consumer Protection of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, which was until now under either the Minister or the Permanent Secretary for Consumer Protection in the mainland of Mauritius. This action shows that being an autonomous island; a lot of decisions have to be taken in Rodrigues for the benefit of the people living here especially because the consumer protection falls under responsibilities of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, section 8 of the Regulation stipulates that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Consumer Protection (Fixing of Price of Fish) Regulations 2008 are revoked. I have gone through the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Consumer Protection (Fixing of Price of Fish) Regulations 2008 and also through the debates from the Hansards, and I have concluded that the Regulations had to be amended anyway and now, it is the right time for this.

The Consumer Protection (Fixing of Price of Fish) Regulations 2008 cater for only the control of retail prices of fish but everybody knows that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has issued many fishmongers license as a means of job creation and also to prevent Rodriguans from losing time sitting on the coast waiting for fisherman to come and to get fish. We all know that time is precious these days and losing time is losing money.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let us do a small thinking to show the limitations of the Fish Regulations 2008. If the retail price of 'Capitaine', for example, a fish which is used, normally fished in Rodrigues, is Rs 60 per pound, the fisherman is supposed to sell the fish to fishmongers at Rs 60. This is legally what is stipulated in the Regulation. If this is the case, what will be the profit? And, then, the fish monger will have to sell it for Rs 60 because it is fixed, Rs 60. So, what will be the profit of the fish monger? How will he earn a living from this? This is why Mr. Chairperson, Sir, fishmongers keep selling the fish at the Consumer Protection... for only the control of retail prices of fish but everybody knows the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has issued... I am going back to the... No, let me remove this page. It is a repetition. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let us do a small thinking to show... They printed this twice. This is why, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, fishmongers keep selling the fish at an illegal price of their choice to consumers. From the debates I read, I came across someone saying that with regards to fishmongers, I quote:

'The fishermen have said that they should be allowed to make their own deal with the different fishmongers who are regular buyers of fish with others irregular and they want to have the possibility to make their own deal with the fishmongers as regards to the price of fish'. End of quote.

But Mr. Chairperson, Sir, who pays for this deal? You make deal. Somebody makes a deal and the consumer pays? Who pays for this deal, for the price of fish in a system where the retail price of fish, only the retail price is fixed? It is either the fisherman or the members of the public.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we as a caring government, cannot let this state of things happens. With these new Regulations, there will be a fixed price at which fishermen can sell their fish to fishmongers and a fixed price at which fishmongers can sell the fish to the consumers. So, this will be controlled. This action will make everybody happy, the consumers as well as the fishmongers. At least, the price of fish will be controlled.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the then mover of the Consumers Protection Fixing Price Regulations, rightly said, I quote: *'The Regulations will be tabled here and published in a Government Gazette and anybody who has the Majority can change this regulation at any time, amend all the provisions or even amend the schedule'*, end of quote. This is what we are doing, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Thank you.

[Applause]

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. First of all, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will have to thank all those who have intervened before me and I will start, Mr. chairperson, Sir, by making reference to a quotation which I have just obtained last night and this citation delighted me since I am of the view that it is that way that Rodriguan should behave. Most of our Rodriguans are so compassionate. Even in difficult times, they did not respond. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the quotation was from Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of United Nations where, it is stated that he always called the youth to, I quote, I will speak it loudly: *'Raise your voice, challenge your leaders, help to make your leaders to be accountable for your own future'*.

This is what we are doing, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. We have to raise our voice! Since we are in a democracy, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have to challenge our leaders. We have to make our leaders accountable for our own future. Because, from what we are doing today, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, referring to Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations, our future, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, will tell later, our son will tell later whether, we are on the right side or we are on the wrong side, whether what we are doing, here today, is in favour of the consumer or not.

En écoutant quelques membres, surtout le Commissaire Payendee, comme s'il avait un rotin, il aurait dû venir ici nous *rotinier* pour avoir osé dire la vérité, M. le président. Il faut accepter de dire, d'entendre la vérité. En écoutant les opposants, en écoutant, nous sommes là, nous sommes des amis, nous sommes en train de dire des choses qui, demain... Aujourd'hui, vous n'allez pas avoir si jamais on avait raison ou bien on est en tort. Mais demain, l'avenir nous dira si jamais on est à tort ou on avait raison.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the importance of winning this Regulation to this House is quite fundamental and acceptable. I, myself, was astonished while observing the Government Gazette. Here it is, I have two Government Gazettes in front of me; one for canned fish, for the maximum price for canned fish and the second one, it is infant milk powder and also, the price of petroleum products. When I have been able to have a look at the regulations, downstairs, I see that it was made by the Minister and this one is stated here made by the Minister on 02 February 2016. This is what I have obtained here; a Government Gazette, it is in the library.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when we have a look at the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, section 32, Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, it is mentioned that References to Ministers and Departments. I quote what is stated here in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act:

‘Any reference in any enactment or other document to –

(a) a Minister; or

(b) a government department,

whether by name or in general terms, shall, for the purpose or in consequence of the exercise by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly of any of its functions and duties in relation to Rodrigues, be construed as being or including a reference to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.’

In the Fourth Schedule of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Rodrigues in the areas of possibilities to be exercised by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, Consumer Protection, we have full autonomy on the issue of Consumer Protection. What do we do now, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? Because, the act, itself, it is stated to you, it is construed as in the law, in the act, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. We do have the power! We are not going now to look and find the powers. We do have the power! The Commissioner does have the power; the Departmental Head also has the power. Now, what we are doing now?

We are duplicating the work because now, we are making another regulation. If this is the case, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what are we going to do with the Commission for Public Infrastructure in relation to roads? Are we going to make a regulation for routes? Are we going to make another regulation for sports and are we going to make regulations for all these areas of responsibilities where, we have already acquired autonomy in it? No, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. We already obtained autonomy in these areas under the Fourth Schedule of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. No need. There is no need to go and find for autonomy again. We already have autonomy in these areas of responsibilities.

Now, Mr. Chairperson, Sir... *Penkor compren? Li enan l'autonomie déjà ladans!*

[Interruptions]

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Nous avons déjà l'autonomie!

Mr. Chairperson: Proceed.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if we want to take our responsibility in making our own regulations in respect of which maximum wholesale and maximum retail price to be imposed, can we know why some

items will have to remain with Mauritius? If you want to come with these Regulations, why now, you are going to, some prices, according to section 8 (2) of the Regulations, you look on 8 (2) of the Regulations, you will see that some items such as bread, cement, dual-purpose kerosene, flour, liquefied petroleum gas and rice also, will remain under the authority of the Minister. How come? If you want to introduce another regulation, we understand, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the Commissioner will not have autonomy in fixing the price of rice, LPG gas, bread, flour. But, you will agree with me, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that according to a Public Notice of Number 3, this one, it is under the signature of the Departmental Head.

It is dated number 3, Public Notice Number 3 of 2013 dated 12 February 2013 under the signature of the Departmental Head, has brought to the attention of the public and traders of the list of goods in respect of which maximum and wholesale and retail price are fixed. This is the duty of the Departmental Head. He has already done it! It has been affixed in a public notice where it is stated what is the maximum price for... You have a list of 17 items. I will remind you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we do not have only the 17 items here! We have had previously, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a long list of goods. But, we, when we were in power, we used to bring the list to liberalise the price and now, the number of items remaining is 17. At that time, we reduced the number of control price. At that time, we have nails, a long list of prices. Now, it has been shortened to 17 and later, I will come, referring to what Mr. Roussety and Mrs. Lordana was arguing about.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Regulation should include, if we want to put our own Regulations, it should include all the components of the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Controlled) Act. Let us take, for example, the first thing, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. We have the issue of maximum price, the maximum mark-up. Where is the maximum mark-up in the Regulations? There is no maximum mark-up. There shall be in the regulation, a maximum mark-up and the maximum mark-up, we cannot go and say today, the maximum mark-up is 6%, another day, the maximum market is 12% and so on. And, this, the powers of the Commissioner should establish a Code of Practice as regard to the mark-up. Because, in order that a standard, a Code of Practice should be established by the Commissioner. And, now in the Regulations, the Commissioner wanted to have powers for...

Look at the powers of the Commissioner. For the purpose of this Regulation, the Commissioner may amend the maximum wholesale and retail price. What is the purpose of a Departmental Head? Is it its duty to amend this? It is the duty of the Departmental Head after having consulted all the

components inside the Regulations. The Commissioner may amend. Look at what is being said here at 5 (3):

'The Commissioner may amend the First Schedule...' It shall be the Commissioner may by regulation, not by himself, may by regulation, amend the First Schedule, not by himself. And, the Commissioner should establish according to the law, a Code of Practice so that a maximum mark-up is being established on the goods which are controlled. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at the time where the world is developing what we call E-commerce, at the time where E-solutions all that...

I will quote a small country, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Estonia. In Estonia, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Estonia enjoyed a wide range of E-solutions which such as those as facilitate voting in an election from the comfort of your living room. Instead of going to different *salles de votes*, *vous restez à la maison*, *vous n'avez qu'à* tick which candidates you want to vote. Finding income tax return in just five minutes without leaving the house and signing legally, binding contract over the Internet.

Furthermore, Entrepreneurs can register their business in 20 minutes, check vital company, property and legal records online and even integrate their own E-culture service which those offered by the state. Now, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, being given that E-solution, E-commerce has been set up, here in Rodrigues, what are we going to do? What are we going to do, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? According to section 4, look what the importers of controlled goods have to do. First of all, the first thing that he has to do, *'Every importer shall, not later than... from the date of landing of controlled goods imported, submit to the Departmental Head, in respect of each type of controlled goods...'* written in part...here. How do we call it? Part one, return, one page, two pages, three, four, five, six pages. This is the first thing.

And, secondly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the relevant invoices, they have to include the invoices, the relevant Bill of Landing, Bill of Parcel, Bill of Entry, Letter of Credit and any other bank document, the Fret and Insurance Vouchers, all these, they have to submit along and it is as if the importers have to fill a book like that, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. It is better that we do it through the e-filing, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, through the Internet, it is better. Second thing, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, will the importer of goods... Look at section 4 of the Regulations. *'Every importer shall, not later than 7 days from the of landing of controlled goods imported, submit to the Department Head, in respect of each type of controlled goods...'*

Therefore, each time the importer has to submit all these documents, if the price remains the same, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if the price is unchanged, no change in the return, what will happen? Will he act accordingly, mandatorily, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, here because every importer shall... This means that they importer, even if the price remain unchanged, we have to fill; you have to continue to fill in the returns. They have to continue to fill in the returns, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. This is cumbersome! This is cumbersome for the importer of goods and this is not good.

If we want to help, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if we want to help people, we cannot put cumbersome regulations on people so that people are afraid, to make people afraid of any regulation. We have to make it very simple and we have to facilitate the importers so that they feel very happy, keen to submit these returns. But, if we go along to the number of returns that we have to submit, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this will discourage people to fill these returns. And, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to the act, what we have said, there is the description for authorised officers but unfortunately, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, inside the regulation, there is no... What are the powers of the authorised officers? What are they allowed to do?

Let us take for example, powers of search, inspection of documents, seizure, warrant obtained from Magistrate, return of goods and documents, protection of liabilities. Is there anything mentioned here, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the Regulations related to what are the powers, what are the duties of the authorised officers. Nothing. There is nothing. There is nothing in the Regulations. And, when you go in Court, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when you go in court, you will have questions in Court. How are they going to answer? And every time, when any person is being prosecuted in front of the Court of law, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there would be no case to answer because the regulation has been wrongly drafted.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am very delighted today to have among the audience, my Principles of Commerce past teacher. I will not tell the name. She already knows. Thanks to her, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been able to master some important principles in the function of commerce. I always said it in this House, once you are a Commissioner, you remain a Commissioner. Once you are a teacher, you remain a teacher.... If I am wrong today, I will call upon my teacher to correct me outside. In commerce, the chain of distribution starts from the producer or even by the manufacturer and ends with the consumer. That is, you have the manufacturer, you have the wholesaler, you have the retailer and at last, you have the consumer.

From the chain of distribution, one will notice that it is the consumer who will bear the costs of all the charges imposed. Let us take the case of Rodrigues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. How many retailers do we have from the goods... We import the goods from Mauritius. When it arrives in Rodrigues, how many retailers do we have? We have one in Port Mathurin. We have one in a van. We have another one in a shop. We have a long list of retailers and every retailer, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, even if the good is fixed, imposes a certain profit margin upon the consumer, even if the good is fixed. Later, I will come with the difficulties faced by the officers of the Consumer Price Control, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Even the fish, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let us take fish, *Cordonier*, for example, at seaside, from the fishermen, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, *Cordonier* is being sold at Rs 40, fixed price. Rs 40 and what prices is it sold at Mont Lubin? Every Commissioner passes through Mont Lubin. What price do they practice in Mont Lubin? Rs 70, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a controlled price, a fixed price. What is more important in this, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Regulations or the one who will go to implement the Regulations? Is the way we implement the Regulation which is important? We can do everything that we want and we have affairs with officers. I will not tell.

Unfortunately, the Commissioner was not here. I will not tell things but we know what we have in order to control the sellers of fish. You have the officers of the Fisheries Department. We have coastguard, we have Price Control Unit, we have police officers and the price remains the same every day, Rs 70 even at my place, Rs 70 even if it is a fixed price, controlled price? The way we control it, the mechanism to control that the maximum price is being imposed on the consumers is very important, how to control it. And, earlier in the years 1980s-1990s, we have prices practised in Port Mathurin and ex-Port Mathurin.

Fortunately, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we do have van who goes to ex-Port Mathurin to sell, to deliver these goods fortunately. But, unfortunately, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the price is not fixed even if there is a maximum price for it; we pay a different price in ex-Port Mathurin. Even if vans, we have different deliveries being done at ex-Port Mathurin, the price is higher, there. And, you will see most of the people from ex-Port Mathurin came to Port Mathurin to buy their goods by themselves.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when we have a look at all these problems faced by the consumers, *qu'est-ce que nous avons, nous, au niveau de Rodrigues pour contrôler les prix? Qu'est-ce que nous avons? Nous avons* the Price Control Unit, we have Price Fixing Unit, we have Metrology and the office of Consumer

Price Unit is at the Family Planning building, the office of the Price Fixing Unit is at the MSC Building, the office of the Metrology is in Mauritius. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as you see the structure, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly should arrange themselves so that there is a proper structure in the Price Mechanism, so that there is a one-stop shop for these. They have the office of Price Control, you have the office of Consumer Protection, we have the Metrology housed in a common building and we have a head on the top, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

How will they, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, organise themselves so as to satisfy the consumer? How many officers do we have at the Consumer Protection Unit? – Three Officers. And, the three officers, they have to go on field, not only in Port Mathurin. They have to go around the island, three officers and, they have to prosecute, they have to go to Court. And, if they do not prosecute, there is something wrong with the law. According to my opinion, according to information I have gathered, it is the Police who prosecute but the office of Consumer Protection cannot be judge and parties together. They cannot be judge and parties.

There must be prosecution being carried out by the Commission but at the same time, they cannot be judge and parties in doing such things, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. But, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what is important in Rodrigues? According to the Regulation, what we are making here, today, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at the end, the Regulation should be to the betterment of the consumer and not... *et non pas le contraire, M. le president. Avec ces mots, M. le président, je m'arrête ici parce que je vois qu'ils sont un petit peu fatigués.* Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

The Commissioner for Youth and Others (Ms. M. R. Edouard): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, thank you for giving me the floor to intervene in this Assembly on the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations 2016. Before I indulge in my speech, I would like to raise certain points highlighted here by some Members on the other side of the House but I think my colleague, Commissioner Payendee, has been able to clear matters exceptionally with reference to certain comments regarding traders, fishermen and so on.

What attracted my attention is that the Member Roussety qualified this Regional Government in relation to the Regulations as '*amateur*', as '*incompetent*', '*failed*', these are the words that were used to qualify us on presenting this Regulation. And, of course, he is very courageous to say that he will tell the people of Rodrigues that this Government is removing X and Y parts of this regulation. This is very courageous because I would not personally

have dared said such things especially if they are seated on the other side of the House and we are seated on this side of the House. And, then... Yes, indeed. And, what happens is that talking about amateurism where actions speak more than words and this is testified here by this Regulation which caters more for the welfare of the people than for anything else.

Indeed, what this Member, I think, can be telling the people is that the OPR Government *ine gagne vitesse de croisière* as he clearly stipulated in the 01 May gathering at Anse aux Anglais. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have listened to the Member Meunier who seems to be very confused in her arguments about the Regulation, about the price-fixing, about why we should be having price-fixing but a quotation highlighted attracted my attention about this Regulation. She stated that the Regulation is illegal. I would like maybe in a nearer future that she enlightens the House on this issue how the Regulation is illegal because it is new to me. On the side of the Member Agathe, we see that his speech is centred more about the issue of power, power here, power there, power for X, power for Y.

So, I think that we know what is in their minds especially when some people, again, are courageous to say that they have a higher order, higher level of thinking. So, I wish to go deeper into my speech and congratulate my colleague, Commissioner for Protection of Consumers, who has brought this decisive and important Regulation in this Assembly which I think will bring along changes in the consumption trends and by.... changes in the production and consumption of local products. Community welfare is our core preoccupation as it is underpinned by the presentation of this Regulation. Undeniably, introducing maximum pricing on basic necessities and leaving prices of some of the goods liberalised may favour entrepreneurship and local production and consumption. *Rodriguais kapave. 'Rodriguais bisin aprane compte lor manze ki sorti dan so la terre.'*

This is our motto and this is the motto that we will continue to promote in this population. This is possible through the fixing of maximum prices for the animal feed. In so doing, the Regional Government is ensuring that basic needs are accessible to each and every one while encouraging that local production and consumption of alternatives are found locally. The Regulation which focuses on a specified list of products is an invitation to the community for creativity and local production. Moreover, it is an invitation to consume responsibly and to develop family budgets that casts away wastage. Protecting consumers also implies that the latter takes responsibilities that are attached to it.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, after the introduction of the ground-breaking regulations in the context of the Octopus Closure, the banning of plastic bags, child mentoring, this Regional Government through the Commission of Protection of Consumers, furthers the construction of the autonomy through the introduction of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations 2016. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, more importantly, the construction of autonomy is enhanced here by the decentralisation of power from Mauritius to Rodrigues. The fact is that power that once rested with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Protection of Consumers is now devolved to the Departmental Head for consumer protection. In doing so, Rodriguans are better empowered to empower their officers to enforce the Regulation.

In addition, the Commissioner for Consumer Protection is also empowered to amend and bring changes to the list of controlled goods hence, reducing the timespan that is, that can be leading to more effectiveness and more efficiency. The Regulation, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, also caters for supervision and monitoring the impacts or an outcome of maximum pricing and, the task of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is to ensure that these parameters and frameworks are respected and safeguarded. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Coat of Arms proudly floats the three words '*Travail Fierté, Solidarité*'.

As a matter of fact, these regulations being debated in this Assembly today materialise the solidarity of the OPR Government to the people of Rodrigues and to promote its welfare. Protecting consumers entails to protecting our community at large inter alia protecting our elderly people, our youth, our children and the underprivileged. The population will enjoy stable prices and the Regulations will be an opposition to all forms of exploitations irrespective of high demand and supply shortages.

Interestingly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, these Regulations are a mean to combat the in form of malpractices and abuse that are detrimental to consumers. Maximum pricing enables the authorities to control not only the prices but also the above-mentioned through the intervention of the local personnel available at the level of the Commission. NGOs also like the *Association des Consommateurs* that aims at protecting consumers is also invited to act as a watchdog to ensure the rights of consumers are respected and that consumers have adequate information in a timely manner.

En somme, M. le Président, l'autonomie de Rodrigues est porteuse d'action politique, économique, sociale et culturelle. Ce règlement renforce donc le fait que l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues est au service de la créativité et du bien-être de toute la population Rodriguaise.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are strategically engaged as architects of change and development and to promote consumers and the community at large as valued and valuable partners. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, like suggested in the last budget speech, the Consumers Protection Maximum Price Regulation is the overarching framework for the foundation of a fairer society, stronger economy and allowing a development *à visage humain*. We are pursuing modernisation while maximum chance is given to the people to be active participants and stakeholders. They may also be able to determine what the Rodriguans need, taking in consideration the Rodriguans' specificities.

M. le Président, nous sommes un Gouvernement toujours en action. Il y a un dicton qui dit *'l'effort commence par un état d'esprit'*. Nous avons la volonté et la motivation de protéger les Rodriguais et ce règlement cadre dans cette grande vision et cet état d'esprit constructeur est innovateur. L'autonomie, c'est l'aboutissement et le départ d'un long parcours pour la prise en charge de Rodrigues par les Rodriguais. Ce règlement dessine et transforme le visage de Rodrigues et la société Rodriguaise. Du côté du Gouvernement OPR, *nou met* le développement de tout l'homme et de tous les hommes au centre de *nou* préoccupations.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, once again, I wish to to applaud the initiative of my colleague, Commissioner for Protection of Consumers, Mr. Louis Daniel Baptiste, for demonstrating the capacity of Rodriguans to determine and take actions to better the life of Rodriguans in this autonomous context. So, I fairly recommend this Regulation the House. *Continuons la construction de l'autonomie dans la solidarité*. With these words, I thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

[Applaud]

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to intervene on this piece of legislation today or maybe tonight where, we have been talking a lot the protection of consumer in Rodrigues. But, in fact, we have not heard much about the consumers, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. We have heard a lot about technicality of the piece of Regulation. We have been talking about conflicts between different pieces of Regulation. We have been talking about the powers of the Minister and the powers of the Commissioner.

We have been talking about a lot of things that according to me, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the mostly concerned are the consumers of Rodrigues who badly need to be protected. Because the consumers of Rodrigues, at times and, it happens very often, they pay a very high price for commodities coming from

abroad specially. And, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what is astonishing is that in some places, in some vicinities in Rodrigues, the same commodity is sold at different prices in the same village, in the same community, same commodity is sold at different prices. And, officers from the Price Control Unit are not to be blamed, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

My colleague, Mr. Agathe, talked about that earlier. We have only three officers to cover the whole Rodrigues in so far as price control is concerned. And, it is not a surprise to me that whenever some of those office of these three officers, they pay a visit to traders in different localities of Rodrigues, very often, the trade premises are closed. People have already got the message '*ban la pé vini, ferme la porte partout*'. It is not a surprise to me, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. That, I would like... It is not my habit to respond to what others say that something that Commissioner, my good friend, Sir Richard has said, has astonished me. Commissioner Payendee, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, said that licensors have been given to many fishmongers and this has allowed consumers not to waste time waiting for fishermen to come ashore with their catch.

Does Commissioner Payendee know how much this costs to the consumer? The difference in prices between the fishermen and some fishmongers, not all. Thanks God, not all. It was fixed but it was not abide to. In some places, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the profit margin of some Commissioners on half kilo of fish is not less than Rs 20 to Rs 25, half a kilo, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. So, and these are illegal prices practised every day all over Rodrigues. Every day, all over Rodrigues, I repeat, and the poor consumers pay for that. The poor consumers of Rodrigues, the pay for that, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. And, I am happy to note that some powers will be delegated from the Minister in Mauritius to Rodrigues.

Every Rodriguan should be proud of it but I think that the feeling of Commissioner Baptiste when talking emotionally about the historical moment he is living by presenting this piece of Legislation, I am happy for him. Of course, it is a sort of pride that I do not think we should seek for pride out of it. We should only seek for the protection to lighten the burden of the consumers in Rodrigues. This should be the top priority of this piece of Legislation. But, of course, he has come with the piece of Legislation for the first time of his mandate and it is a happy moment for him. Let us hope that this happiness will *rejaillir sur les consommateurs de notre chère île Rodrigues*.

M. le Président, Commissioner Rose de Lima Edouard just mentioned *l'Association des Consommateurs de l'île Rodrigues* which according to her and I agree with her, should act as a watchdog. Of course, especially that they get grant from public funds. It is an NGO which receives grant from public funds.

I will use the time of the House to tell a story, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a short story but a true one, something that happened in Rodrigues. We all know that there was the time that cement, we had frequent scarcity of cement in Rodrigues and especially at the end of the year in November and December. Cement was sold at prices *inimaginable, à des prix exorbitants*.

Someone bought cement which was sold at, I suppose Rs 140 a bag. He bought it from a trader for Rs 170 and that particular guy, he went to see the President, the then President of the *Association des Consommateurs de l'île Rodrigues*, I am not telling the date, the year just to safeguard that person because I do not like to give names or to give hints where people can go back to those people. *Se pas peur, se ene question de principe. Sak dimoune enan so valer dan so lavi. Korek, mett to lunette.*

You know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that consumer, he went to see the then Chairman of the *Association des Consommateurs de l'île Rodrigues* explaining the problems he has encountered with that trader and do you know what that Chairman told him? "*Bonom, sa boug la ene gros morceau sa, pa pou kav fer narnier.*" Can we realise for two seconds the feeling of that consumer having heard that from the mouth of the Chairman of an association which is supposed to act as a watchdog as the Commissioner just said and who is supposed to protect the consumer from those traders and to hear that? And, in fact, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at that time, at that particular point in time, that trader was really a "*gros morceau*". But, if he had taken his time to move towards the Chairman of the Association, in that, he was expecting some *soulagement*. He was expecting that at least he could have bought his bag of cement he needed to complete its house at the regulated price.

But, unfortunately, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, why am I talking about this here today? It is because this NGO receives money from public funds and as such, they are accountable and the Commission for Commerce, Trade etc. should have an eye on what they are doing, I suppose, according to my humble opinion, should know what they are doing. I am not saying that they are not doing their job but things like this should not recur, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Because as I said earlier and, I repeat, I will never seize to repeat it, consumers in Rodrigues need to be helped. Because we have some traders, fortunately not all of them, some traders, they use a very excessive price, *met la main à la gorge pour tuer le consommateur de l'île Rodrigues, M. le Président.*

Nous savons tous, que les marchandises viennent de Maurice et qu'il y a des frets additionnels mais quand même, il y a certains commerçants qui utilisent des prix vraiment exorbitants et on ne peut pas expliquer. Moi, je n'arrive pas à expliquer le fait que dans un même village, certains produits

contrôlés dont les prix sont contrôlés, se vendent à différents prix dans différents lieux de commerce. M. le Président, j'ai dit au début de mon intervention que je ne vais pas être long. Peut-être avec l'âge, je suis un peu fatigué aussi. Je crois le commissaire Ismaël qui... On est sur la même longueur d'onde. On est à peu près du même âge. M. le Président, je m'arrête ici. Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

[Applause]

The Deputy Chief Commissioner : M. le Président, c'est pour moi un honneur, *it is a pride in fact*, de m'associer comme mon collègue, le Commissaire Baptiste l'a dit, à ce règlement, une fierté parce que nous venons aujourd'hui et de nouveau prouver au peuple que nous continuons à les mettre au centre de nos préoccupations. Une fierté aussi parce que nous continuons notre action gouvernementale comme proposée dans notre manifeste à la page 47 du chapitre 25 où nous parlons du coût de la vie et de la protection des consommateurs. À la page 47, nous parlons premièrement de mettre en place un plan de subvention sur les matériaux de construction. Nous l'avons fait. Mettre en place un plan de subvention sur les matières premières pour les PME. Le budget de cette année fait provision pour cela.

Nous parlons de revoir les produits dont les prix doivent être fixés. Nous le faisons à travers ce règlement. Nous avons mentionné dans notre manifeste comment on va travailler de concert avec le Bureau des Statistiques Centrales pour revoir les modalités par rapport au panier de la ménagère. Ce travail se fait. Il y a les officiers qui sont venus et il y a un travail. Les résultats vont suivre. Nous avons parlé qu'on va encourager, nous avons dit que nous allons encourager la population à consommer Rodriguais. Nous le faisons. Nous avons dit que nous allons renforcer la *Consumer Protection Unit* pour avoir un contrôle plus efficace à travers l'île. Le travail se fait et en dernier, nous avons aussi pris l'engagement envers les consommateurs, envers la population pour développer des programmes d'éducation et de sensibilisation continue pour les consommateurs. Ce sont des choses qui se font.

Donc, je pense que nous avons toutes les raisons pour être fiers de ce règlement que notre collègue, le Commissaire Baptiste est venu présenter devant cette Assemblée aujourd'hui. Nous sommes aussi confiants dans ce que nous faisons. Lorsque je me réfère à une session de l'Assemblée tenue ici le mardi 08 juillet 2008, une session au cours de laquelle il y avait une question posée au Chef Commissaire d'alors par rapport à la fixation des prix à Rodrigues. Et, pour citer que quelques mots, en effet, dans toute la question, on parlait justement de ce délai. Quand il y a un prix qui est fixé, il faut toujours... Il y a les procédures. Il faut que le travail se fasse ici, on envoie à Maurice. On

avait même mentionné des dates. Un produit fixé le 29 mai pour après le 18 juin, on envoie à Maurice et attendre pour les résultats pour savoir, que le prix soit ressenti dans la population. À cette époque, le Chef commissaire d'alors avait dit, nous étions dans l'opposition :

« They were in Government for four years. They could have changed the regulation to take advantage of the powers under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act in order to improve the situation ».

What have they done ? Nothing. Et nous, on revient, aujourd'hui, c'était en 2008, pourtant le budget, le discours budget avait mentionné aussi qu'on va travailler pour protéger davantage les consommateurs. On ne l'a pas fait et aujourd'hui, quand le Commissaire Baptiste vient de l'avant avec ce règlement, moi je m'attendais à ce que les membres de l'opposition, surtout l'ancien Chef commissaire qui avait parlé de ce règlement comme un projet que le premier Gouvernement Régional n'avait pas fait, je pensais qu'il allait dire ouf au nom des consommateurs. Il est venu pour trouver les *lethal points*, les points fatals d'après lui que le Commissaire Payendee est venu prouver que ces *lethal points*, en vrai, ils ne sont pas nécessairement, ce n'est pas vrai que ce sont les *lethal points*. Au contraire, on a pu démontrer qu'il y a eu une méconnaissance aussi de certains dossiers quand on a parlé des prix du poisson. Or, le poisson est toujours catégorisé comme *taxable* mais *zero rating*.

Donc, je pense que c'est important qu'on continue à apprendre, nous tous. Moi aussi, j'ai appris quelque chose de ça. Donc, on ne peut pas venir dire... Et pourtant, on nous traite d'incompétents, on nous traite d'amateurs, d'*immature* et pourtant... Oui, immaturité et incompétence, ce sont les mots qui ont été utilisés. Et pourtant, voilà, si eux, ils avaient fait preuve de plus de compétences, ils ont été là, ils auraient pu venir de l'avant avec ces projets de loi surtout pour mettre le peuple en avant. M. le Président, l'objectif même de ce règlement, à mon avis, en tant que Commissaire Responsable du Développement de la Famille, c'est d'abord pour hausser le pouvoir d'achat des ménages et élever le niveau de protection des consommateurs.

Aujourd'hui, M. le Président, c'est une continuité de ce que nous avons promis surtout quand je parle de hausser le pouvoir d'achat des ménages et élever le niveau de protection des consommateurs. Pourquoi? Nous avons commencé avec le subside sur le riz et la farine. Le Commissaire Baptiste, dans son introduction, a parlé de toute une liste de produits fixés maintenant. Et, bien sûr, ce règlement va nous permettre de continuer ce processus de fixation des prix mettant au centre les consommateurs mais pas au détriment des commerçants parce que nous croyons aussi dans le business. Il faut une balance

et tout ça va se faire dans ce principe de démocratie participative que nous, au niveau de l'Assemblée Régionale, nous avons toujours prônée.

C'est-à-dire, ce n'est pas parce que dans le papier, il est mis que le commissaire va le faire que le commissaire va s'asseoir tout seul dans son bureau et décider des prix du poisson, d'autres enraies ou d'autres produits. Ce sera des choses qui vont se faire en consultation, en concertation avec les associations, avec les officiers, avec les consommateurs. Qu'est-ce qu'on voit aujourd'hui, M. le Président ? Aujourd'hui, si je prends l'exemple d'un produit de base, le dentifrice qui était avant fixé et qu'en 2008, eux, ils ont enlevé, donc, ce produit de base, libéralisé.

Aujourd'hui, au nom de cette libéralisation, de ce prix de ce produit de base, 125 ml de dentifrice est vendu à Maurice à Rs60 et aujourd'hui, le Rodriguais le paye à Rs75. M. le président, pour le papier toilette, au nom de la libéralisation des prix, le consommateur mauricien le paye à Rs80, Rs90 et le Rodriguais le paye pour un paquet de six, Rodrigues le paye à Rs120. Donc, le *water colour*, un produit que tous les enfants, les écoliers utilisent, aujourd'hui, à Maurice, c'est à Rs195 et à Rodrigues Rs....

M. le président, une question de marque mais je pense que les Rodriguais et aussi doivent pouvoir utiliser les bonnes choses. On ne va pas contrôler tous mais on pense que si on veut élever le niveau de protection des consommateurs et surtout si on veut faire plus de justice aux Rodriguais dans la logique de continuité territoriale, nous avons le devoir de venir de l'avant avec des mesures, des règlements qui viennent aider le consommateur dans sa vie quotidien. Et c'est ça, l'objectif même de cette loi.

C'est-à-dire, cette loi aura une répercussion directe sur les ménages, sur la famille, sur le panier de la ménagère. Et c'est là, je pense, qui fait un peu plus peur à certains membres de l'opposition quand j'ai entendu parler Mme Meunier qui dit que dans beaucoup de pays, les lois qui viennent pour protéger, pour fixer des prix, ces lois-là viennent en temps de guerre ou en tant d'élections. Non, on n'est pas encore en tant d'élections. Il nous reste du temps mais nous sommes à un moment où nous avons un travail à faire, nous avons pris l'engagement auprès de la population et nous allons le faire.

M. le Président, ce travail avec lequel mon collègue vient de l'avant rentre aussi dans tout cet esprit de la continuité de la construction de l'autonomie. L'autonomie qu'on a eue en 2002 n'est pas un processus statique. C'est un processus dynamique. Au fur et à mesure, nous avons besoin de construire cette autonomie à travers des règlements, à travers des décisions que nous prenons dans l'intérêt de Rodrigues et des Rodriguais. Ce que nous avons

entendu aujourd'hui par plusieurs des intervenants, c'est beaucoup plus une peur, c'est beaucoup plus de la démagogie pure et simple.

Quand quelqu'un de l'autre côté a parlé du nombre de jours que le bateau arrive, on doit attendre pour avoir la liste, pour avoir les produits, d'après la personne, d'après le membre, ça va avoir un impact sur le délai pour fixer les prix. Ça donne l'impression aux consommateurs qu'on doit attendre qu'on ait tous les marchandises et que le consommateur les porte sur son dos pour aller au niveau du bureau. Ce n'est pas ça, M. le Président. Il y a tout ce qu'on appelle le *packing list* qui vient avec les produits. Une fois que le commerçant a acheté ses produits, il a sa liste, il a ses prix et c'est important. On a parlé d'incompétence et d'amateurisme.

Si on veut rendre les commerçants, les businessmen professionnels, c'est question de documentation. Ces documents sont importants, ces preuves sont importantes pour les statistiques mais aussi pour qu'on puisse au niveau du bureau faire des choses dans la transparence. Ils ont fait, ils ont démontré des préoccupations par rapport à sa. S'il n'y a pas des documents, demain, ils vont dire tout et n'importe quoi. Donc, beaucoup de démagogie. On a parlé... Le format, s'il faut demain changer, si on trouve que c'est lourd, ce sont des choses... Demain, il faudrait, s'il faut les changer, on va les changer pour assouplir les procédures s'il faut mais au moins, donnant la chance à ce règlement de faire ses preuves.

Aujourd'hui, avec ces règlements, on marque d'une pierre blanche la contribution surtout, M. le Président, très important, on vient démontrer, on marque d'une pierre blanche l'histoire Rodriguaise. Mon collègue a parlé de la loi de 1977. Beaucoup d'entre nous n'était même pas encore née. Aujourd'hui, il vient de l'avant avec cela pour montrer que c'est l'intérêt d'abord du Rodriguais qui est le plus important. Et c'est vrai, moi aussi, j'avais noté les mêmes points. Mon collègue, le Commissaire Payendee avait parlé, quand on a parlé, aujourd'hui, on laissait des gens faire le business, pas de permis, c'est exactement la sensation que j'ai eue et je me souviens j'étais de l'autre côté quand on avait dit «*ki pou fou ar la loi, fou la loi dan coin*».

M. le Président, c'est important de contrôler. On ne va pas contrôler pour contrôler mais je pense que dans un pays où il n'y a pas de contrôle, il y a l'anarchie, où il n'y a pas règlement, ce sera la loi de la jungle. M. le président, moi je vais dire qu'il était plus que temps que ce règlement vient pour les Rodriguais. Je suis confiante que même si c'est vrai on est tous d'accord que si on a plus de main, on peut faire plus de choses mais je pense aussi quand on a des fonctionnaires de qualité, on veut faire des belles choses. Nous connaissons

la capacité de travail du bureau, de la personne qui est responsable de ce dossier au niveau de la Commission.

Nous croyons que la mise en œuvre de cette application en juillet 2016 cette année dans deux ou trois mois, sera une réalité avec son engagement, avec l'engagement de ces officiers et que surtout aujourd'hui, on va tirer un trait sur ce système archaïque qu'on a hérité, que Rodrigues a hérité depuis quand même des années par rapport à la fixation des prix à Rodrigues. Dans le discours budget de cette année, le Chef commissaire a fait mention de l'observatoire des prix qui, pour moi, est un outil qui va venir appuyer ce règlement. Pourquoi ? Parce que l'observatoire des prix va permettre à la commission de rester en communication constante avec la population pour donner des informations sur les prix des produits dans les différentes régions et ainsi, leur éduquer davantage et leur permettent de prendre des décisions qu'il faut.

M. le président, je ne vais pas être long. Juste pour dire que le membre Agathe a posé des questions. Quant à la liste, je crois qu'il y a six produits qui d'après lui, est resté au niveau de la loi à Maurice. Pour fixer des prix, c'est juste une question de *cross subsidy* que mon collègue a bien parlé au début même quand il parlait de la loi. Donc, il y a beaucoup d'incompréhension ou bien peut-être de démagogie comme je disais avant, peut-être parler, être contre juste parce qu'on est dans l'opposition au lieu de venir appuyer surtout pour mettre en avant l'intérêt de Rodrigues. Et moi, je félicite de nouveau mon collègue, le Commissaire Baptiste pour le travail qu'il a fait avec les officiers et je profite aussi pour faire un appel à L'association des Consommateurs comme l'a si bien dit le membre Émilien, c'est une association qui a pour mandat de travailler auprès de la population, de les aider.

Donc, je fais un appel pour qu'ils continuent toujours à placer l'intérêt du peuple Rodriguais au centre, au cœur même de leurs actions. Donc, félicitations encore une fois et je souhaite que très, très bientôt, tous les Rodriguais vont pouvoir prendre avantage et surtout ressentir l'impact de cette même décision que nous avons eu le courage de prendre aujourd'hui et surtout qu'aujourd'hui, on veut que les familles avancent. Si on veut que les familles avancent, il faut leur donner les moyens et c'est un outil aujourd'hui concret pour donner plus de moyens aux familles Rodriguaise d'avancer. Donc, félicitations à mon collègue, Commissaire Baptiste, et bon travail à tous ces officiers surtout pour la mise en place de ce système dans l'intérêt de la population de Rodrigues.

[Applause]

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Merci, M. le président, de me donner l'opportunité de dire quelques mots sur cette loi, *Regulations*, que le Commissaire Baptiste a

présentée aujourd'hui. Tout d'abord et avant tout, je voudrais féliciter ces officiers qui depuis de nombreuses années se dévouent corps et âme pour pouvoir faire fonctionner ce département malgré les critiques vents et marées, malgré le manque de staff, ils ont fait preuve de persévérance parce que au final, je pense qu'ils aiment le pays d'abord avant leur intérêt personnel.

M. le président, cette loi, ce *Regulation* qui a été présentée aujourd'hui dans cette Chambre, personnellement, je pense que ce projet de loi a été comme si quelque chose à la va-vite, a été présenté à la va-vite comme s'il y a quelque chose qui presse, le temps qui presse. Pourquoi ? Parce que regardez, j'ai là, la décision du Conseil Exécutif du 29 avril dernier où on a fait mention des objectifs principaux de ce projet de loi qui entre autres, a souligné, *I quote* :

«Enable the Commission for Trade, Commerce and Consumer Protection to discharge efficiently and effectively its duties and responsibilities conferred on it and section 26 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 in terms of consumer protection.»

Il y a deux autres encore, deux autres objectifs *«...provide more consolidated solid framework that will strengthen the law enforcement, duties of consumer protection officers and promote consumer protection in Rodrigues. »* Et troisièmement : *« ...enable the Commission to fix the prices of controlled commodities within the least possible delay »*. Unquote. Et aujourd'hui, après une dizaine de jours, moins d'une dizaine de jours, on a ce règlement présent dans l'Assemblée. Je sais que ça a été un travail de longue haleine. C'est vrai parce que nous aussi, dans le passé, on a eu des difficultés pour préparer des lois etc. Nous savons comment ça se passe mais quand même, j'ai l'impression, moi, j'ai la perception que ce projet est en projet, je vais le redire, à la va-vite.

M. le président, revenons à cette loi elle-même. Concernant la présentation de cette loi, *Regulations made by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly under section 75 (b) etc.*, mais on n'a pas fait mention d'une loi mère qui guide ce (*Consumer Protection*) (*Maximum Price*) *Regulations 2016*. On n'a pas fait mention. Alors, selon moi, peut-être que j'ai tort mais je pense que non, j'ai raison. Selon moi, on aurait dû faire mention de la loi mère qui dirige, qui guide ce projet de loi qui est présenté aujourd'hui dans cette Assemblée.

Je pense personnellement qu'il s'agit de *Consumer Protection Price and Supplies Control Act* de 1998. Pourquoi je dis ça, M. le président ? Parce que très souvent, le Chef commissaire et tant d'autres encore nous disent qu'il faut innover, Mme la Commissaire des Arts et de la Culture, qu'il faut innover, qu'il faut de la créativité et il faut être plus '*professionnalisme*'. M. le président, j'ai en ma possession une loi qui a été faite/présenté dans cette Chambre en 2007.

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly Tourism Regulations 2007, je pense que tout le monde a une copie de cette loi, de cette *Regulation* qui a été présentée ici, M. le président. Je ne dis pas je vais comparer mais je vais démontrer comment, si cette *Regulation*, si l'ensemble des membres du Gouvernement avait pris la peine de préparer cette *Regulation*, ça aurait été quelque chose de plus sérieux et mieux apprécié par les membres de l'opposition et de la population. M. le président, le *Tourism Regulations 2007*, je vais reprendre les mêmes phrases.

'Regulations made by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly under section 31 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 and section 129 (3) of the Tourism Act 2006'. Unquote.

C'est fait mention directement, M. le président, parce qu'il faudra, moi je pense qu'il faut penser. Ce projet de loi a été fait pour nous, les membres de l'Assemblée, oui, bien sûr pour le public en général mais pour aussi ce petit commerçant qui n'a pas fait des grandes classes. Il faut absolument que lui aussi, il comprenne ce qui se passe dans cette loi, ce qu'il y a dans cette loi et vers qui tourner si jamais il y a un problème, vers qui se référer si jamais il veut avoir un peu plus d'éclaircissement mais là-dedans ça n'a pas été fait mention et ça s'arrête avec le *Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act* tout court et c'est terminé. Dans l'interprétation de ce projet de loi, M. le président, il y a plusieurs choses qu'ils ont fait mention dedans, plusieurs points, plusieurs mots, plusieurs phrases, plusieurs titres, plusieurs *'word'* comme on dit qui auraient dû, selon moi, être présents dans l'interprétation.

Encore une fois, je me base sur le *Tourism Regulations* de 2007 et je constate qu'on a mentionné le *Rodrigues Regional Assembly* dedans, on a mentionné le *Rodrigues Regional Assembly* mais à aucun moment dans le *interpretation*, nous avons expliqué c'est quoi l'Assemblée. *What is the Assembly?* Y compris *the Act itself*. Quelles références faisons-nous ? Avec qui ? Avec quelle loi faisons-nous cette référence ? *Is it Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act or the Consumer Protection Price and Supplies Act of 1998?* Ça aurait dû être mentionné dans l'interprétation de ce projet de loi.

M. le président, quand j'avance, je regarde *Interpretation for "Departmental Head" means the Departmental Head of the Commission...*. *What Commission? What Commission, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? What Commission are we making reference?* J'avance, importer. Regarde, ce sont des petites fautes bêtes mais qui prouvent, qui disent que ce projet a été fait à la va-vite et qu'il y a un manque de sérieux dedans. *"Importer" means [trade] who brings, or causes to be brought, controlled goods into Rodrigues...*

Tout à l'heure, quand on va leur d'amender ça, ils vont nous dire non, c'est correct. Vous comprenez ? Même si on dit, même si on prend le temps d'étaler des tas de choses, on sait que tout à l'heure quand on va dire voilà, il faut amender ça, ils vont dire non. *Laisse coumsa mem*. Mais c'est pour ça que des fois, on préfère ne rien dire pour qu'ils partent avec leurs tas de fautes dans ce qu'ils font. C'est la même chose qu'on a eue, M. Payendee concernant le *Octopus Closed Season*. On vous a prévenu. Pour le projet de dessalement, on vous a prévenu qu'il faut faire attention telle ou telle affaire. Vous n'avez jamais écouté mais pourtant, regardez ce tas de problèmes que vous avez eu. *Non-taxable goods, we are making reference to what Act ?* Pareil, ce n'est pas explicite, M. le président.

Le petit consommateur, le client, le petit boutiquier, il doit savoir. Moi je pense que, en ce faisant, c'est pour ça, j'appuie et je dis clairement qu'il y a un manque de sérieux, un manque de professionnalisme dans cette affaire. Pourtant, le Chef commissaire le répète tous les jours : « *we should be professional, more professional* ». Mais aujourd'hui, avec tous ses ratures dans ce projet, cela démontre que ce projet de loi a été préparé... Je ne dis pas les fonctionnaires parce que le Commissaire a la responsabilité ainsi que vous, le Conseil Exécutif, a la responsabilité de vérifier tout ça avant de présenter tout ça à l'Assemblée. C'est votre responsabilité et non pas les fonctionnaires. Eux aussi, ils ont leur part de responsabilité mais c'est vous le responsable des '*policy*'.

M. le président, je reprends le point *Submission of Returns*, section 4 (c). Je ne sais pas si j'ai tort ou j'ai raison mais j'ai cru comprendre, j'ai cru lire '*the relevant Bill of Lading*'. J'ai demandé à plusieurs personnes, j'ai consulté plusieurs dictionnaires ici, à la maison, Internet, *Bill of Lading*, je ne sais pas ce que c'est. *Peut-être, mais dans mo dictionnaire, pa exister mot 'lading'*. *Mo pa koner kot ine dir sa*. Donc, M. le président, peut-être, je dis bien peut-être. Et puis, concernant *the powers of the Commissioner*, comme j'ai dit au début, il y a cette affaire de *interpretation*. Il y a beaucoup de choses qu'il fallait mettre dans le *interpretation* avant de *proceed with the Regulations*, M. le président, que je vois dedans, il y a des tas de ratures. D'accord ? Et après, autre chose pour terminer avec cette loi.

À la section 8, '*On the date of coming into operation of these regulations, every maximum wholesale and retail price fixed by the Minister in respect of goods under Part II of the First Schedule of the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act and the Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) Regulations 1998 shall be deemed, except for bread, cement, dual purpose... [and] to have been fixed by the*

Commissioner'. Enfin, je ne sais pas, peut-être que j'ai tort mais moi, j'aurais préféré mettre *after '1998 shall be deemed', to have been fixed by the Commissioner except for bread, butter etc.* Ça, c'est ma façon de voir les choses. Peut-être que j'ai tort mais, M. le président, c'est ma façon de voir les choses.

M. le président, le Chef commissaire nous parlait souvent de démocratie participative. En regardant ce projet de loi, je sens qu'il n'y a pas eu de démocratie participative et en voyant le comportement de ces membres de l'autre côté, je dis, écoute, c'est préférable qu'on reste à la maison, on ne dit rien. Quand on veut apporter des idées, on préfère ne rien dire parce qu'à chaque fois, c'est la même chose. *Weh, nou pli koner etc.* Laisse les avec leur ça. M. le président, je vais revenir sur un autre point : *staffing*. M. le président, pour mettre en place ce projet de loi, c'est-à-dire pour donner un peu plus de force, moi, j'aurais préféré voir le Commissaire venir dire que voilà, *ok*, je vais ajouter encore quelques staffs pour justement l'implémentation de ce projet de loi qui pour eux, selon eux, *se ene pierre blanche*. Mais quand on veut marquer l'histoire avec une pierre blanche, il faut le faire dans son ensemble et non pas une partie.

Trois membres, trois staffs pour contrôler Rodrigues, pour faire tous les travaux qu'ils doivent faire et en même temps, faire ce qu'il doit faire avec tout ce projet de loi qui va être en vigueur incessamment. M. le président, ça fait 14 ans que ces personnes-là travaillent de cette façon, 14 ans mais il est temps. Après 14 ans d'autonomie, on est toujours bébé ou bien on a grandi ? Mais il faut quand même penser à ces personnes-là, à alléger leur fardeau. Il faut des staffs, *additional staffs* pour pouvoir faire mettre en place tout ce que le Commissaire et l'ensemble du Gouvernement veut mettre en place.

À Maurice, on a plusieurs départements avec plusieurs staffs, des centaines et des centaines mais quand est-ce qu'on va passer à la vitesse croisière comme a dit la Commissaire ? Quand est-ce qu'on va donner plus de moyens, plus de staffs à ce département pour qu'au moins, ils puissent faire leur travail comme il se doit ? M. le président, pour moi, c'est un manque de respect envers ces personnes. On vient ajouter encore le fardeau. On dit : « *faites ce que je vous dis et taisez-vous* ». Alors que ce n'est pas de cette façon-là que les choses vont avancer. M. le président, moi, je pense que ce projet de loi doit être amendé parce que comme j'ai bien souligné... Et puis, une dernière chose.

On n'est pas là pour démontrer notre capacité, pour venir faire des démonstrations de « je peux faire ceci je peux faire cela ». Non, M. le président. On est là pour faire avancer notre pays tout simplement. C'est ça selon moi mais il y a certains, ici, qui prétendent, viennent démontrer on peut

faire quelque chose, on peut faire ceci, on peut faire cela. Non ! Il faut, comme on l'a dit souvent, il faut penser au pays d'abord. Donc, sur ce, je vais terminer ici en vous remerciant et en remerciant aussi tous ces personnes qui ont parlé avant moi. Je remercie sincèrement les staffs de cette Commission qui travaillent d'arrache-pied pour faire avancer le truc malgré le nombre restreint de personnels. Merci, M. le président.

SUMMING UP

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Allow me, first of all, to thank all the members of both sides of the House who have contributed, who have participated in this debate and I understand that at some points in time, we had some fruitful, some important issues which have been raised but at times also, we have heard certain people, certain Members talking about things which are completely irrelevant and few points which I think that these are not issues. I think what is more important, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is that this Regulation in itself, as rightly said by the Member Emilien, is very technical, maybe complex but the end result is that it will lead to a certain form of decentralisation where, Regulations were formerly made in Mauritius by the Minister and now, it will be here.

The power will rest with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly through the Commissioner Responsible for Consumer Protection and obviously, the end result is that this is definitely a very important step towards enhancing and promoting the welfare of consumers. I was shocked, I must say, it was pitiful to hear a former Chief Commissioner who, at a certain point in time, was also responsible for consumer protection, talking about certain issues which personally, I was not expecting from him being my colleague, he was my colleague at Grande Montagne College and I know him very well.

I was shocked to hear certain points raised by him and it was, I think, not correct to qualify this piece of Regulation as being prepared with amateurism, lack of professionalism and so on and so forth. Because maybe, first of all, I must say that the officers of my Commission have worked very hard since 2013 and that is why to some extent, it has taken so long for us to introduce it in this Assembly today. But, it was somewhat unanimous that this Regulation is important for Rodrigues and it has to be passed though some Members do not want to admit same. I wish here to quote what was mentioned in the budget speech 2009 by the then Commissioner, Chief Commissioner and Commissioner for Consumer Protection.

'M. le Président, au niveau de la fixation des prix réglementaires, nous avons reçu plusieurs plaintes des commerçants et boutiquiers en ce qui

concerne les retards dans la fixation des prix de certains produits. Dans le but de résoudre ces problèmes, nous comptons introduire dans cette Assemblée, les Price Control Regulations, ce qui nous permettra de fixer les prix localement et plus rapidement dans l'intérêt de toutes les parties.'

This is what we are doing today, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I cannot understand why he is criticising this Regulation. Maybe the name is not the same but the objectives are the same. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are not putting additional burden as some Members are trying to make us understand. We are not putting additional burdens on importers because these are things that they are used to do. We are not bringing something new, additional, which will cause harm or which will make it difficult for them to submit all these returns. We are just trying to reduce, as I have said, the delay, that is why it is important for this Regulation to come here in Rodrigues.

As regard to certain remarks made by Member Roussety, I think maybe *l'amertume, c'est que* we are repealing the Fish Regulations 2008. But, we will be able through this Regulation, to fix the prices of fish, to determine the different categories of fish because it is already... Yes, it is defined, it is how things are done and we cannot just look at this Regulation itself. We have to see the whole piece, the whole Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act. We do not just see this piece of Regulation. It is related to an... law and I think it is clear; we are not here to repeat things that are already available in another law, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. But, it is a pity when he is challenging all the work done by officers, by the Legal Adviser better by the State Law office where he is questioning whether, fish is taxable or not. It is, yes.

The Value Added Tax... in fact in the Fifth Schedule, section 11, if you do your homework well, you will see that 2 (o), fish is included as a taxable good but it is zero rating but it is taxable, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. So, I see no point of saying that we should remove fish from these. But then you should go to the definition. Go to the definition of fish, you will see that it includes fresh fish. Now, concerning imported products, I think that there is also a question of misinterpretation. The Member was trying to interpret this Regulation. When he talks about importer, when he talks about controlled goods, I think that he should go and read it properly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

When we talk about controlled goods, we are talking any goods specified in the First Schedule. So, all the goods in this schedule are controlled goods. But, we have not mentioned that, it has not been specified in this Regulation that these are imported goods. There is a difference between imported goods and controlled goods. Here, the list relates to controlled goods. Now, if you go to this Regulation 3, maximum prices, we can set the maximum price and no

trader shall sell or supply any goods controlled at a higher price than that specified in the Third Schedule. So, we have, we can fix the prices even for local products. We can include it in this list.

There is nothing wrong, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because in fact, this issue personally, I put lots of questions when we were finalising this Regulation for fish specifically because at the certain point of time, even I, had raised this issue. But as I said, and I will like here, to thank once again the Legal Adviser because he has made really a great job. He had consultations. I have to tell the Member as he said that this has been done with amateurism. Another one has said that it has been done *à vitesse à la va-vite*. Since 2014, 10 meetings between the Legal Adviser and the State Law office to finalise this. Two meetings between Legal Adviser and officers of the Ministry plus Commission altogether. Five meetings between the Legal Adviser and officers from my Commission.

So, we have looked into all the details of this Regulation and today, I am confident and I am sure that this is one of the best pieces of Regulations introduced in this House, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. And, we will be able to most importantly... We could have made, we could have added so many things but to start with, we wanted something that we will be able to implement, that we will be able to enforce. We cannot just add a list of so many products and then, we do not have the capacity in terms of staffing or expertise to enforce these Regulations. Now, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, for the process of fixing of prices itself, the process, it is clearly defined for imported products. I think the Member Meunier was talking about how to fix these prices.

At times, there might be shortages, artificial shortages because the profit margin is too low or something like this. But I must inform the house that while determining the wholesaler's and retailer's profit, there are so many elements which are being taken into consideration and that is why it is important to have an Analyst. The Analyst at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce will continue to help us in this process pending the filling of the vacancy which is already funded at the level of my Commission for the post of Trade Analyst. While determining the profit margin, they will consider for example, the cost of operation for both wholesaler and retailer. We have to consider the lifespan of the commodity, whether it is fast-moving or slow-moving items.

We also have to make comparative analysis of the prevailing market margin, earns by wholesalers so that they can have at least a fair margin of profit. Because we should also remember that we have to protect, we have to encourage, we have to create also a good environment to encourage traders also to carry on businesses because there is also an issue of employment. So, Mr.

Chairperson, Sir, we have taken into account all these different aspects, all these elements, the element of staffing. I think that the Commission and Mrs the Officer in Charge of the Consumer Protection Unit, I must say it today, is one of the best officers of the Consumer Protection Affairs of the Republic of Mauritius.

I am saying, yes, and I know what I am saying because she has even raised an issue. There was a problem of the implementation of a specific law in the Republic of Mauritius and she has raised the issue with the Ministry and we have received from the State Law office, they have confirmed that it is true what she has raised and there should be an amendment of the law to make it applicable. That is why, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am really delighted today that we have done a very great job with all the officers of the Commission of the Price-Fixing Unit. And, the Price-Fixing Unit itself, as I can say, we already have the cadre in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly who will be able to perform these duties.

Just by the way, it is important to note that the most important part of the job, of the process for the fixing of prices, are carried out by officers of my Commission, all the basic calculations, all these groundwork are carried out here in Rodrigues and simply, they are sent to Mauritius and it is the Minister who at the end of the day, will have the right to sign this Regulation and this power now will come here in Rodrigues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. So, I think that we have not so many lessons to take from the other side of the House because... Yes, I am not saying it... No, because the way you were treating, I must say, some officers even maybe some people here and the way you are saying that we have to go and write a new Regulation and something like this, it means that obviously... Yes, some people were treating officers like you know, doing things without professionalism and all.

So, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when we talk about, someone was talking about fishermen, yes, as I said, we should look at this Regulation as a whole. If we go to the Consumer Protection Act, when we talk about trade, manufacturers, manufacture, production, distribution, sale, transfer, all these, when they deal with goods, so, fishermen also, they are traders. So, we can fix but for fixing of price obviously, of fish, we will do it here at the level of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Yes, it is clear that we can do it. It is clear and we have already obtained the clearance for it and it is in order, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. And, obviously, we are not here to control all the goods. We are only here to ensure that essential commodities, basic commodities are made available in Rodrigues at a reasonable price.

It should be as far as possible, be aligned to those in Mauritius or at least a very small margin and also, obviously, we should encourage competition. But, as someone rightly pointed out, we can realise that for cases of goods which are not controlled, at times, there is still a very big gap, big margin between the selling price in different regions of the island and at times, within the same village also. That is why to address the issue, the Minority Leader talked about *Observatoire des Prix*. The Commissioner has already announced in his budget speech for 2016/2017 that we will set up this *observatoire*.

This will be a very important tool to give information to consumers because we will provide information as regards to all those products which are widely consumed and which are not fixed obviously, we should provide information available as regard to the different range of prices available. Because for example, for the price of salt, I have seen personally between Port Mathurin and Grande Montagne, some places, there can be a difference of Rs 8 to Rs 10 on the same type, same pack of salt. So, consumers should be informed about all these so that they can make better choices, they can obtain their product at a better price.

So, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that my colleagues have all raised the positive bearing that this Regulation will have now in Rodrigues. And, obviously, I am very confident that we, here, as politicians, we, here, as responsible and caring Government, we will ensure that all, what is written here are being put into application, are being enforced so that it does not become just a piece of word, a piece of Regulation but it should be felt by the consumers and this should really become a Regulation whereby, consumers, will feel that it was worth passing here. And, for fish, I confirm that by the end of July at most, there will be a new price list for fish which will be published with the different categories and this will be worked out with all the stakeholders of the Fisheries Protection Unit, of the Consumer Protection Unit, the Consumers Association and it will be here in Rodrigues and legally, it will be applicable and I am sure that what all he has said are wrong.

Yes, obviously, all stakeholders including representatives of fishermen, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. By the way, we already had a first consultation but by the time we have been able to come here with the Regulation, the prices that we have discussed and agreed, will now already be obsolete because obviously, we will have to consider the actual prevailing market price and come up with some sort of *compromis* for the benefit of one and for all. So, I think that it is obvious this Regulation will be voted by the majority, by all the Members if they like their country, if they like Rodrigues, if they like the consumers and this will be for all of us and not only for this Government. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

[Applause]

COMMITTEE STAGE

Mr. Chairperson: Page 1. Page 2.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like you to clarify something. I understand that we are at the Committee Stage here. I would like to know whether, our Standing Orders provide for Committee Stage for Regulations because this is a Motion and I believe the stage now is for the Motion to be voted. There is no procedure for us to go on Committee Stage on a Motion for a Regulation. Committee stage, Standing Order 54 is for Bills. This is not a Bill, here. We can provide Bills but this is not a Bill. This is a Regulation. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: As you see, we have to scrutinise the Regulation. It has become a practice since 2012. So, we can move on. Yes, page 2. Page 3. Page 4. Page 5. Page 6. Page 7. Page 8. Page 9. Page 10. Page 11. Page 12. Yes, that will do for the Committee Stage.

REPORT STAGE

On the Assembly resuming with Mr. Chairperson in the Chair, Mr. Chairperson reported accordingly.

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 12 July 2016 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The House stands adjourned.

At 18.35 hours the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 12 July 2016 at 10.30 hours.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

GOODS IMPORTED FROM MAURITIUS AND ABROAD

(No. B/45) **Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader)** asked the Commissioner Responsible for Trade, Commerce and Licensing and Others whether, as regards to goods imported from Mauritius and abroad for sale in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the main reasons, if any, as to why there is a difference in the prices of those commodities sold in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues; and
- (b) on the price control mechanism now in force for price fixing in Rodrigues?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the main reason explaining the difference in the prices of commodities sold in Mauritius and Rodrigues is related to the additional costs associated to the transport of the goods to Rodrigues. These cost elements include:

- (i) Agent's Commission
- (ii) Transport to Container Park in Mauritius
- (iii) Dock and Landing charges in both Mauritius and Rodrigues
- (iv) Freight and Bunkers Adjustment Factor
- (v) Documentation Fees
- (vi) Transport to warehouse in Rodrigues
- (vii) Trader's margins
- (viii) Mauritius Port Authority Fee

As regard to part (b), the maximum price mechanism is used to control the prices of certain commodities in Rodrigues.

These prices are fixed under the Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) Act, and give the Minister responsible for Commerce and Consumer Protection the power to fix the prices of these commodities for Rodrigues.

This procedure is quite lengthy and lead to delays in the fixing of prices. I am presenting the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Consumer Protection) (Maximum Price) Regulations today itself in view of remedying this problem.

“UNITE DE TRANSFORMATION DE LIMON”
– GRAVIERS

(No. B/47) **Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the “*unité de transformation de limon*” at Graviers, she will state:

- (a) if this ambitious project has received the support of different funding agencies/government bodies and, if so, to give details thereof and to table same; and
- (b) where matters stand as at to date in relation thereto?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, the Graviers Lime Processing Unit was set-up following the recommendation of FAO Smartfish to set-up a processing unit at the source of the raw material which the fresh lemon. This would have reduced the inconveniences and save costs to the beneficiaries to travelling from Graviers to Limon D’Or for processing.

In the same instance, a group of youngsters in the region of Batatran approached my Office for support as they wanted to initiate a project based on lemon. In this perspective, the two projects were merged and thereby became the lime processing unit.

Composed of eight active members, the Rodrigues Lime Juice Cooperative Society Ltd will be involved in the extraction of concentrated juices. On the other hand the Graviers Multi-purpose will use the by-product extraction that is the pulp, for fermentation and to send to Limon D’Or for further extraction:-

The project has received support from the government as well as from two other main donors including:-

- (1) The GEF/SGP
- (2) The FAO – Smart fish project

The following two Cooperatives have obtained financial support under the GEF/SGP initiatives:

Name of Beneficiary	Grant Amount Received (MUR)			Main Purpose of the Grant
	GE F/SGP	RRA	FAO	

Graviers Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd	1,537,500	5,517,947.24	1,500,000	• Eradication of Piquant Loulou (Accacia Nilotica) over a surface area of 10,000m² • Setting of an organic lemon orchard over the above area • Capacity building of cooperative members on business management and entrepreneurship • Installation of photovoltaic cells. • Construction of the plant
Name of Beneficiary	Grant Amount Received (MUR)			Main Purpose of the Grant
	GE F/SGP	RRA	FAO	
Rodrigues Lime Juice Multi-purpose Cooperative Society Limited	1,541,550	517,000		• Acquisition of some processing equipment • Capacity building of cooperative members on business management and entrepreneurship • Research & Development
Total	3,079,050	6,034,947.24	1,500,000	10,613,997.24

- It is to be noted that all the above grants were credited on beneficiaries' own bank accounts and are being managed by the beneficiaries themselves.

As regard to part (b) of the question, Mr. Chairperson Sir, Le Domaine de Labourdonnais has already ordered 15 T of concentrated lime juice with the cooperative on an initial basis. The cooperative is currently finalising the acquisition of equipment notably the acquisition of cold rooms that were completed on the 22 of April 2016 and the commissioning of PV cells which was done on the 4 of May 2016. The processing unit is operating on a pilot basis. As per information gathered from the planters of Graviers, the next big lemon harvest will occur by end of June 2016. Hence, it is expected that by the beginning of July, the first batch of lime juice shall be shipped to Mauritius.

REHABILITATION WORKS – POINTE CANON

(No. B/48) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner Responsible for Arts & Culture and Others whether, in regard to rehabilitation works at Pointe Canon, she will state:

- (a) if any agreement/Memorandum of Understanding has been reached between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the “Vicariat Apostolique de Rodrigues” therefor and, if so, to give details thereof and to table a copy, if any; and
- (b) the amount of money earmarked therefor and indicating the item vote from where the sum will be allocated?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Canon of Pointe Canon is listed as National Heritage under the National Heritage Fund Act 2003. The site also consist of other historical tangible heritage, namely, the bunker, gun outpost, various stores near the canon, the officer's building. It is also made up of a religious tangible heritage, namely, the statue of Virgin Mary, sitting areas and stage and the celebration of the Assumption Day are held by the Catholic Church. It is also a tourist site which is visited regularly by tourists.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, an Agreement was signed between the Vicariat Apostolique de Rodrigues and the Commission for Arts and Culture on 03 February 2016 for the Provision of a Government Grant to the Vicariat for the upgrading works at Pointe Canon historical site, Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the upgrading works at Pointe Canon is implemented with with the following objectives:

- (i) Historically, Pointe Canon with its dominating vantage point over Port Mathurin and Pointe Venus had been chosen by the British as a strategic defense position. Hence, the big canon and the various bunkers/stores which form part of an important heritage to Rodrigues' own history.
- (ii) From a religious point of view, Pointe Canon, also known as Marie Reine de Rodrigues, is an obvious point of gathering for the Rodrigues population who converges to Pointe Canon on August 15th for Assumption Day, hence the statue of 'la Vierge Marie', on its proud pedestal, which occupies an important part of this Pointe Canon site.
- (iii) Culturally, the Pointe Canon site will attain a level of great cultural importance with the upgrading works which are being planned. The purpose of these works is to restore back this site to life for all Rodriguans all year round.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the scope of works comprises of:

- (i) The restoration of the historical "Assets" that include:
 - the canon
 - the bunkers
 - the gun outpost
 - the various stores near the canon
 - the larger main store which may be used as an information centre for the site, other outpost and bunkers in the surrounding region.
- (ii) The provision of 3 view point kiosks – one of the kiosks will accommodate at its lower level a store for a main platform.
- (iii) New toilets will be erected in the compound of the existing community centre.
- (iv) The provision of simple footpaths through the site which will serve as a jogging track, and also become the logical links of all the elements of the Pointe Canon site.

- (v) Simple landscaping works provided with emphasis on endemic plants, trees and shrubs is intended to maintain the site as natural as possible.
- (vi) The site and community centre will be secured with new fencing all round wherever necessary.
- (vii) The provision of “gradins” seating using the natural slopes of the site using the least amount of concrete as possible.
- (viii) The provision of a permanent canopy structure over the existing platform for religious events.
- (ix) The provision of signage and informative sign boards and maps to explain and link up all the historical sites in the region.
- (x) The rehabilitation of the existing Community Centre compound.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is paramount to point out that the conditions of grant is governed by Government Circular on Financial Instructions, No 2 of 2014: Administration of Government Grants under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development which stipulates the following, *inter alia*:

- (a) The Vicariat shall furnish such information with respect to its activities as the RRA may require. In this regard, proper books of accounts shall be maintained and made available, on demand, to the RRA or its authorized representative(s).
- (b) All applications for funds throughout the fiscal year shall be supported by relevant documents including both financial and non-financial data, such as:-
 - (i) a revised estimate of expenditure and revenue for the fiscal year;
 - (ii) cash flow statement for last 12 months;
 - (iii) cash flow forecast for the period to the end of the fiscal year;
 - (iv) bank statements showing bank balances in respect of bank accounts held by the Vicariat; and
 - (v) a progress report on delivery of outputs/services.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the work has started in March 2016 and the duration of the work will be approximately 365 days.

I am hereby tabling a copy of the MOU as requested in part (a) of the question.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regards to part (b) of the question , the project cost is estimated at Rs 9,257,500 and the Executive Council of the RRA at its meeting held on Friday 04 December 2015 has decided to approve the provision of a grant of Rs 8 m. for the implementation of the project

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, an Advance payment of Rs 500,000 representing 6.25 % of the grant has already been disbursed by the RRA to the Vicariat prior to commencement of works. Thereafter, subsequent payment shall be based on progress of works. Disbursement of fund shall be subject to submission of:

- (i) Application for payment from the appointed Contractor/s through the Vicariat;
- (ii) the corresponding Certificate of Payment issued by the Engineer and/or Architect; and
- (ii) Progress Reports.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the project will be financed under voted item 8105 – 31112011, ‘Museum Archives and Art Gallery’ over two financial year, that is, January – June 2016 and July 2016 – June 2017.

**“DOMINIQUE FARLA CENTRE”
– GRANDE MONTAGNE**

(No. B/49) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member) asked Commissioner Responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to the “Dominique Farla Centre” at Grande Montagne, he will state:

- (a) if same has been vested/allocated to any organization apart from the forestry department and, if so, to give reasons therefor; and
- (b) if the Forest Guard/s and /or Officers posted thereat have been transferred elsewhere and, if so, the reasons therefor and indicating the new location of the office ?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to Part (a), I am pleased to inform the House that the Executive Council at its meeting held on 21 December 2012 has approved the request of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation for the management of ecotourism and educational activities in the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve for a ten year period. The Dominique Farla Interpretation Centre has been upgraded recently and the ecotourism project was launched on the 28 February this year.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Grande Montagne Nature Reserve is the place that can demonstrate that it is possible to convert an exotic forest into a native one in a short amount of time. This adds up to the tourist's attraction of the island.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, before this project was initiated, Grande Montagne which is the best place on Rodrigues where one can see the native flora and fauna of Rodrigues, was visited by tourists free of charge and sometimes with the service of a forestry guide.

It is therefore logical that in view of undertaking such activities at the nature reserve, the Louis Dominique Farla Centre, which is still the property of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, has been put at the disposal of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation to run eco-tours, as per the 'Policy and Procedure' document drafted by the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and presented to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on the 25 June, 2015.

This ecotourism project, fully supported by the Executive Council, has been set up with the primary objective of raising revenue from guided eco-tours to invest in the long-term restoration of the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve to make the reserve financially self-sustaining.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let me inform the House that the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation has been working in close collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Forestry Services in the restoration of the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve for over 20 years and it has colossal experience in working in that reserve. Over the last 10 years, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation has sourced and injected over Rs 20 m. in restoration efforts in the Nature Reserve, planting over a hundred thousand endemic and native plants and recruiting five full time Labourers from the locality in the process.

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation also has an active Environmental Education Programme in which the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve and Dominique Farla Information Centre are integral educational components.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the House should be made aware that even the previous regime had a policy of transferring the management of Louis Dominique Farla Centre, not to the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation but to Discovery Rodrigues Co Ltd for ecotourism activities. Site visits were carried out by the then Minister for Rodrigues, the Commissioner for Forestry Services and the Commissioner for Tourism in 2010-2011 in that regard. My Commission has seen it better to do so with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation in view of its wide range of experience in the reserve in order to continue the good conservation works that it has done to protect the reserve and our biodiversity by using the revenue generated.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b), being given that the "Dominique Farla Centre" is being used by the Staff of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, following the launching of its ecotourism project, the management of Forestry Services has decided that the only Forest Conservation and Enforcement Officer (FCEO) who was working there, be transferred to the Forestry Head Office at Solitude to avoid a waste of human resources. The competencies of the officer are more effectively being used at Solitude because she is no longer performing guided visits on Grande Montagne Nature Reserve.

The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation is currently manning the Information Centre from Monday to Friday between 08.00 hours and 15.00 hours running fixed eco-tours from the Centre on a daily basis, Monday to Sunday at 09.30 hours. The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation is also maintaining the Centre; however, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Security Guard is still present on the site every night.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the light of what I have said so far, it is important to stress that the Grande Montagne Nature Reserve and the Dominique Farla Centre are still the properties of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. It is only a collaborative arrangement with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation for the management of the nature reserve. If this is successful, we shall consider extending the initiative to other reserves in view of making them self-financing through ecotourism. The policy is that rather than having the Rodrigues Regional Assembly doing everything, we will use the expertise of NGO's to co-manage our resources, which will continue to be the property of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and under the control of the Commission.

LOSS OF BLOOD/OTHER TESTS RESULTS - MEASURES TAKEN

(No. B/50) Mr. A. L. Emilien (Fifth Island Region Member) asked Commissioner Responsible for Health and Sports whether, in regard to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) if there has been any case reported, from January 2016 to date, for loss of blood or other tests results made at the laboratory thereat or the central laboratory of Candos Hospital and, if so, the number thereof; and
- (b) the measures taken or being envisaged to remedy same, if any?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to present the following figures to the attention of the House:-

The total number of tests performed by the laboratory at Queen Elizabeth Hospital for the past four years are as follows:-

2012	-225,453
2013	-239,272
2014	-265,883
2015	-326,195

As such, Mr. Chairperson Sir, you will concur that with such consequent number of test being performed on a yearly basis, there might be a small number of results which may be misfiled. However with regard to part (a) of the Question, I wish to inform the House that based on information gathered, there are no official reported cases of loss of blood or tests results reported from January 2016 up to now. However, if some patients do not get their results while attending their appointments, a copy of same is normally available at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Laboratory.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, with regard to part (b) of the Question, I wish to inform the House that as announced in the last budget speech, my Commission is working on a pilot project for the computerization of the records system in the Health Sector. In a first instance, the network will link Queen Elizabeth Hospital to the two Area Health Centres namely La Ferme and Mont Lubin and eventually to the 14 Community Health Centres.

Therefore Mr. Chairperson Sir, results of tests as well as the patients' files will be more readily available at all times.

Moreover, as you are aware, my Commission is decentralizing the laboratory services to Mont Lubin and La Ferme Area Health Centres. As such,

the laboratory at Mont Lubin is already equipped to perform basic tests and same will be available at La Ferme after the renovation works.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

(No. B/51) Mr. A. L. Emilien (Fifth Island Region Member) asked Commissioner Responsible for Public Infrastructure and Others whether, in regard to road traffic accidents in Rodrigues, he will:

- (a) obtain, for the benefit of the House, from the relevant authorities, information as to the number thereof officially reported since January 2015 to date and indicating the number of fatal ones, if any;
- (b) state the measures taken or envisaged by his Commission in collaboration with other partners, if any, to bring down the number thereof; and
- (c) state on its economic impact on the island?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that from January 2015 to date 226 road accidents have been reported; of which 6 were fatal.

With respect to part (b) of the question, every month I preside the Road Safety Committee with Officers of my commission, the Officers of the National Transport Authority with the collaboration of the Police Road Safety Unit to have a view overall on the road safety every month.

The following measures have been taken by my Commission and the Police Service to reduce the number of accidents:

- (i) Humps have been installed at locations known to be prone to road accidents such as Palisade Road where there have been eight fatal accidents.

Palisade Road was one of the most dangerous roads until we installed three humps.

Since the installation of same at Palisade on the 10 September 2015, no accident occurred there.

Other humps have been installed at Port Mathurin, Accacia and Oyster Bay and Jean Tac. Works Order will be issued to install

additional humps at La Ferme, Ile Michel, Terre Rouge Camp du Roi, and Oyster Bay, Petit Gabriel, Alimenta Junction- Port Mathurin, English Bay near Cemetery. Terre Rouge near “Centre des Femme”, Pointe L’herbe, Mont Lubin, Quatre Vents, Papayes, Fouche Corail, Corail Petite Butte and Mangues.

- (ii) Placing of streetlight at dangerous curves and dark spots;
- (iii) Regular anti speed campaigns are being carried out around the island;
- (iv) Regular Alcoltest campaigns at strategic locations;
- (v) Sensitisation campaigns on road safety measures through the media at schools and village levels.

I attended a consultative workshop on National Road Safety Strategy for Mauritius along with two officers of my Commission and it is proposed to organize a similar workshop for Rodrigues to sensitise stakeholders to make the road safer and reduce the number of accidents.

With respect to part (c) the economic impact of road accident has not been worked out for Rodrigues.

RED BEANS IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/52) Mr. A. L. Emilien (Fifth Island Region Member) asked Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to red beans in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the total area of land presently under cultivation therefor;
- (b) the facilities made available to the planters thereof and indicating the expected yield for the present season; and
- (c) if the whole harvest thereof will be purchased by the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company Ltd., or any other agency at an already agreed price?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, with your permission, I am going to reply to B/52 and B/54 together as they both deal with the same subject matter, I am informed that the estimated area of land presently under cultivation of local red beans is about 55 hectares. In the western region alone some 40 hectares are

already under bean cultivation so far there has not been any report from bean growers regarding effects of drought.

As regards part (b) of the question, members of this House will recall that the Rodrigues Regional Government Programme 2012-2017 provides at paragraph 43 for the promotion of sustainable agriculture.

The focus is the development of areas where Rodrigues already has a cutting edge and products which have a niche market.

The 2015 Budget Speech translated this into a quantifiable and achievable project which consists of increasing red beans production by least 20 tons through the physical upgrading of the Baie Malgache Valley. It has been found that 30 hectares of land would be required to produce the extra 20 tons of red beans. Baie Malgache Valley will have its "*retenue collinaire*" by early next year to mitigate the problem of water shortage for irrigation.

The various facilities made available to planters are as follows:-

Earlier this year, some 17 planters benefited from a subsidy of 75% up to a maximum of Rs 100,000 for the purchase of power tillers.

My Government has just introduced an incentive scheme for local red bean planters since the month of April 2016 with a view to keep on increasing the production of this food crop which has a guaranteed market.

A mechanisation subsidy for land ploughing and furrowing to the tune of Rs 2000 per arpent has been put in place.

Another scheme for the setting up of local red bean seeds production has just been approved for the provision of a one-off grant up to Rs 300,000 per arpent to eligible applicants for the production of at least 5,000 kg of bean seeds yearly.

An investment of Rs 3 m. was earmarked in September 2015 to proceed with an off-season trial planting of the local red beans on five hectares on a research basis in three different regions with different agro-climatic conditions with the collaboration of experienced bean planters.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, as was the case for the past years, red beans seeds are being put to sale through the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Co. Ltd (RTMC) to all bean growers at a subsidised rate of Rs 25 per pound instead of Rs 100. As regard yield, subject to favourable climatic conditions, it is

expected to be around 100 tons if the targeted total area of 104 hectares is cultivated.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, the RTMC is offering a floor price of Rs 150 per kg to bean producers for their harvest. In 2015 the RTMC put on sale some 10 tons of locally produced beans. As we are operating in a free market environment, bean producers are free to sell their produce in bulk to any other competitor offering a higher price or in retail directly to consumers.

BEAN PLANTERS – WESTERN PART

(No. B/54) Mr. F. A. Grandcourt (Third Island Region Member) asked Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to bean planters in the western part of the island, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the actual state of growth of beans in that area; and
- (b) the measures being taken by his Commission, if any, to compensate for any loss incurred by the planters due to drought conditions?

(Vide reply to PQ B/52)

BREVET PROFESSIONNEL AGRICOLE (BPA) – LYCEE AGRICOLE DE ST JOSEPH – REUNION ISLAND

(No. A/1) Mr. J. C. Agathe (First Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the placement/training of trainees of the *Brevet Professionnel Agricole* (BPA) at the *Lycee Agricole de St Joseph*, Reunion island, he will:

- (a) table for each group-
 - (i) the list of trainees and the officers who accompanied them thereat;
 - (ii) the approval letter from the Prime Minister's Office with regard to the mission and the accompanying officers; and
 - (iii) the facilities in terms of stipend, board and lodging given to any person/s by the Regional Government accompanying the trainees thereat;

- (b) state if any incident occurred with one trainee on his arrival at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport and, if so, to table a copy of the official incident sheet occurring thereat together with the explanation of the trainee concerned; and
- (c) table a copy of the mission report, if any?

Reply: Placement of trainees of the “*Brevet Professionnel Agricole (BPA)*” at the Lycée Agricole de Saint Joseph, Reunion Island.

The First Batch of 11 trainees proceeded to Reunion Island from 29 January to 12 February 2016.

The Second Batch of the remaining 11 trainees had their placement in Reunion Island from 03 to 17 April 2016.

They were accompanied by the Acting Senior Analyst of the Economic Planning and Monitoring Unit (EPMU) of the Chief Commissioner’s Office. Being a public officer, the approval of the Prime Minister’s Office was obtained.

She was paid the necessary allowances as a public officer. The list of trainees cannot be tabled as they are private individuals registered with the “*Lycée Agricole*”, St. Joseph of Reunion Island.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that one trainee faced an unfortunate situation with the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) at the SSR International Airport on his way back to Rodrigues from Reunion Island. He wrote to the Commission for Agriculture on 20 April 2016 to inform that he was retained during his transit in Mauritius because officers of the MRA found a toy pistol with plastic projectile make Elite in his luggage the importation of which is prohibited under the Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) Regulation 1999 and for which he had to give a statement and pay a fine of Rs 2,156.

As this placement was not a mission, no report needs to be submitted. The report of each individual trainee forms an integrated part of the final assessment by the “*Lycée*”.

**STUDY TOUR IN INDIA – 2016
– AGRICULTURE IN RODRIGUES**

(No. A/2) Mr. J. C. Agathe (First Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked Chief Commissioner whether, with regards to the study tour in India for the year 2016 for people involved in agriculture in Rodrigues, he will:

- (a) state who will be financing the tour and indicating its objectives and expected output;
- (b) table a list of all participants and how the selection thereof has been made;
- (c) state if a Service to Mauritius (STM) intern is accompanying the participants instead of an Officer from the Commission of Agriculture and, if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) state if the approval of the Prime Minister's Office was sought and obtained and, if so, to table same and indicating the item vote from which such expenses will be met together with the estimated amount earmarked therefor?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, the study tour is being carried out in the context of the bio-farming project.

In December 2015, the Chairman of the Steering Committee set up by the Prime Minister at the Prime Minister's Office – Private Office on Zero Budget Natural Farming headed a delegation in Rodrigues comprising his Excellency Mr. Jagdishwar Goburdhun, Ambassador of Mauritius in New Delhi and two officials from the Kamal Narayan Jamnallal Bajaj Foundation.

During the mission, the potential for Rodrigues to promote natural inputs in sustainable agriculture in the field of fertilizers and water management were looked into together with the farmer's community already involved in natural farming. The representative of the Foundation invited a delegation of up to 20 farmers accompanied by three to four officers for an exposure visit to Wardha, State of Maharashtra, India. Wardha is one of the many district where Zero Budget Natural Farming has been successfully implemented and has made wonders improving livelihood of over eighty hundred thousand families in six hundred and one villages.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, this visit has not yet been finalised. We are still at the planning stage.

All the established procedures will be followed “*en temps et lieu*”. It is premature at this stage to give any details thereon.

CONSTRUCTION OF RESPITE CARE CENTER – PITON

(No. A/3) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked Commissioner Responsible for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the construction of a Respite Care Center at Piton, he will state on the objective/s thereof and indicating the status of the work in progress together with the expected completion date thereof and to table a copy of the plan showing the front, rear and side view of the building?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the main objective of the Respite Care Centre which is presently under construction at Piton is to provide temporary residential facilities to disabled and bedridden elderly persons whose carers need to be absent from home to deal with other family matters or who simply need to take a break to be able to continue to take care of the elderly persons. The centre will also provide training facilities that will target all people dealing with disabled elderly particularly those benefiting for the carer’s allowance.

The construction of the Centre started on 4 September 2015 following the award of contract to Bolah Jeetun & Co. Ltd for the sum of Rs 29,005,938.25. As at end of April 2016, the project has reached 63% completion. The contractual completion date is scheduled for 04 July 2016.

In the meantime my Commission is preparing a Management and Operation Plan which will define the eligibility criteria, the operation and management of the centre and the protocol to be adopted in accordance with the Residential Care Home Act.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling a copy of the plan of the building showing its front, rear and side view as requested.

CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY CENTERS – RODRIGUES

(No. A/4) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked Commissioner Responsible for Community Development and Others whether, in regard to the construction of community centers in Rodrigues, she will state on the ongoing projects in relation thereto and indicating if her Commission is embarking on any new projects this year and, if so, to give details thereon?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the following Community Centres are being constructed under full contract under the supervision of Servansingh Jadav & Partners Consulting Engineers Ltd. namely Pavé La Bonté and Coromandel.

The construction of Pavé La Bonté community centre was awarded to PAD & Co. Ltd. in July 2015 for the sum of Rs 6,547,899.90 (inclusive of VAT). The completion is now scheduled for the end of May 2016.

The construction of Coromandel Community Centre by Safety Construction Ltd. has started in February 2016 and is expected to be completed in July 2016 and the cost of the centre is Rs 9,121,069.75 inclusive of VAT.

New community centres will be constructed at Palissade, Petit Gabriel, Terre Rouge and Accacia. The design and drawings are being prepared under the Global Consultancy Services – Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in addition the above, two community centres, Montagne Tonnère and Citron will be constructed on a self-help basis whereby my Commission will provide materials and grant through Rodrigues Council of Social Service for part payment of labour and the community will provide labour. Citronelle A and Mt Fanal Community Centres as well as Dans St Pierre Women Centre have been constructed on this basis.