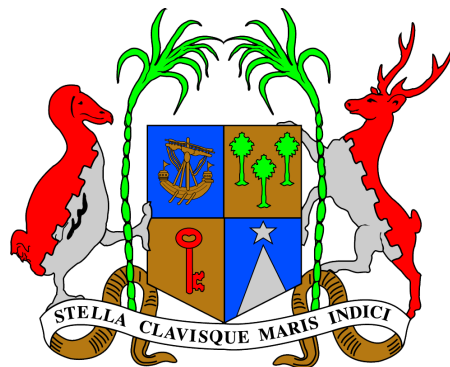


ARBITRATION UNDER ANNEX VII OF THE 1982 UNITED NATIONS
CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

v.

**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND**



MEMORIAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

VOLUME III

ANNEXES 81 – 177

1 August 2012

LIST OF ANNEXES

- Annex 1** United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV), 14 December 1960
- Annex 2** Robert Newton, Report on the Anglo-American Survey in the Indian Ocean, 1964, CO 1036/1332
- Annex 3** “British Indian Ocean Territory” 1964-1968, Chronological Summary of Events relating to the Establishment of the “B.I.O.T.” in November, 1965 and subsequent agreement with the United States concerning the Availability of the Islands for Defence Purposes, FCO 32/484
- Annex 4** Extracts from Non-Aligned Movement Declarations:
- NAM Declaration, “Programme for Peace and International Co-operation”, adopted at the NAM Conference held on 5-10 October 1964 in Cairo, Egypt, pp. 25-26
 - NAM Summit Declaration, 7-12 March 1983, New Delhi, India, para. 81
 - NAM Summit Declaration, 1-6 September 1986, Harare, Zimbabwe, para.137
 - NAM Summit Declaration, 4-7 September 1989, Belgrade;
 - NAM Summit Declaration, 1-6 September 1992, Jakarta, Indonesia, NAC 10/Doc.2/Rev.2, para.14
 - NAM Summit Declaration, 18-20 October 1995, Cartagena, Colombia, para.171
 - NAM Summit Declaration, 2-3 September 1998, Durban, South Africa, para. 227
 - NAM Summit Declaration, 20-25 February 2003, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, para. 184
 - NAM Summit Declaration, 11-16 September 2006, Havana, Cuba, NAM 2006/Doc.1/Rev.3, para. 155
 - NAM Summit Declaration, 11-16 July 2009, Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, NAM2009/FD/Doc.1, para. 213
 - NAM Ministerial Conference Declaration, 23-27 May 2011, Bali, Indonesia, paras. 260-262
 - NAM Ministerial Meeting Final Document, 7-10 May 2012, Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, paras 285-287
- Annex 5** Letter dated 14 January 1965 from the Counselor for Politico-Military Affairs at the US Embassy in London to the Head of the Permanent Under-Secretary’s Department, UK Foreign Office
- Annex 6** Letter dated 15 January 1965 from the British Embassy, Washington to the UK Foreign Office

- Annex 7** Letter dated 10 February 1965 from the Counselor for Politico-Military Affairs at the US Embassy in London to the Head of the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, UK Foreign Office
- Annex 8** Permanent Under-Secretary's Department (Foreign Office), Secretary of State's Visit to Washington and New York, 21-24 March, Defence Interests in the Indian Ocean, Brief No. 14, 18 March 1965, FO 371/184524
- Annex 9** Foreign Office Telegram No. 3582 to Washington, 30 April 1965, FO 371/184523
- Annex 10** Colonial Office Telegram No. 198 to Mauritius, No. 219 to Seychelles, 19 July 1965, FO 371/184526
- Annex 11** Colonial Office Telegram No. 199 to Mauritius, No. 222 to Seychelles, 21 July 1965, FO 371/184524
- Annex 12** Mauritius Telegram No. 170 to the Colonial Office, 23 July 1965, FO 371/184526
- Annex 13** Mauritius Telegram No. 175 to the Colonial Office, 30 July 1965, FO 371/184526
- Annex 14** Colonial Office Telegram No. 214 to Mauritius, 10 August 1965, FO 371/184526
- Annex 15** Mauritius Telegram No. 188 to the Colonial Office, 13 August 1965, FO 371/184526
- Annex 16** Record of a Meeting in the Colonial Office at 9.00 a.m. on Monday, 20th September, 1965, Mauritius – Defence Issues, FO 371/184528
- Annex 17** Colonial Office, Note for the Prime Minister's Meeting with Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Premier of Mauritius, 22 September 1965, PREM 13/3320
- Annex 18** Record of a Conversation between the Prime Minister and the Premier of Mauritius, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, at No. 10, Downing Street, at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 23 September 1965, FO 371/184528
- Annex 19** Record of a Meeting held in Lancaster House at 2.30 p.m. on Thursday 23rd September [1965], Mauritius Defence Matters, CO 1036/1253
- Annex 20** Record of UK-US Talks on Defence Facilities in the Indian Ocean, 23-24 September 1965 (FO 371/184529):
- List of Officials who took part in U.S./U.K. talks on Defence Facilities in the Indian Ocean, 23-24 September, 1965
 - Record of a Meeting with an American Delegation headed by Mr. J.C. Kitchen, on 23 September, 1965, Mr. Peck in the Chair, Defence Facilities in the Indian Ocean

- Record of a Meeting of U.K. and U.S. Officials on 24 September, 1965, to Discuss Draft B, Mr. Peck in the Chair, Defence Facilities in the Indian Ocean
- Summary Record of ‘Plenary’ Meeting between the United Kingdom and United States Officials (led by Mr. Kitchen), Mr. Peck in the Chair on 24 September, 1965, Defence Facilities in the Indian Ocean
- Note on Further Action

- Annex 21** Colonial Office Despatch No. 423 to the Governor of Mauritius, 6 October 1965, FO 371/184529
- Annex 22** Letter dated 8 October 1965 from the UK Colonial Office to the UK Foreign Office, FO 371/184529
- Annex 23** Foreign Office Telegram No. 4104 to the UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, 27 October 1965, FO 371/184
- Annex 24** UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, Telegram No. 2697 to the UK Foreign Office, 28 October 1965
- Annex 25** Mauritius Telegram No. 247 to the Colonial Office, 5 November 1965, FO 371/184529
- Annex 26** Minute dated 5 November 1965 from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Prime Minister, FO 371/184529
- Annex 27** Colonial Office Telegram No. 267 to Mauritius, No. 356 to Seychelles, 6 November 1965, FO 371/184529
- Annex 28** Foreign Office Telegram No. 4310 to the UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, 6 November 1965, FO 371/184529
- Annex 29** Colonial Office Telegram No. 298 to Mauritius, 8 November 1965, FO 371/184529
- Annex 30** Foreign Office Telegram No. 4327 to the UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, 8 November 1965
- Annex 31** UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, Telegram No. 2837 to the UK Foreign Office, 8 November 1965
- Annex 32** “British Indian Ocean Territory” Order No. 1 of 1965
- Annex 33** Foreign Office Telegram No. 4361 to the UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, 10 November 1965
- Annex 34** Colonial Office Telegram No. 305 to Mauritius, 10 November 1965
- Annex 35** UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, Telegram No. 2971 to the UK Foreign Office, 16 November 1965

- Annex 36** UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, Telegram No. 2972 to the UK Foreign Office, 16 November 1965
- Annex 37** Mauritius Telegram (unnumbered) to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 17 November 1965
- Annex 38** United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2066 (XX), 16 December 1965
- Annex 39** Despatch dated 7 January 1966 from C. G. Eastwood, Colonial Office to F. D. W. Brown, UK Mission to the United Nations, New York
- Annex 40** Despatch dated 2 February 1966 from F.D.W. Brown, UK Mission to the United Nations, New York to C.G. Eastwood, Colonial Office
- Annex 41** Letter dated 8 February 1966 from K.W.S. MacKenzie, Colonial Office to A. Brooke-Turner, UK Foreign Office, FO 371/190790
- Annex 42** UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, Telegram No. 1872 to the UK Foreign Office, 9 September 1966, CO 936/972
- Annex 43** UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, Telegram No. 1877 to the UK Foreign Office, 12 September 1966, CO 936/972
- Annex 44** Statement by Mr. Francis Brown in the Committee of 24: Mauritius, the Seychelles and St. Helena (Report of Sub-Committee I), 6 October 1966
- Annex 45** United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2232 (XXI), 20 December 1966
- Annex 46** Exchange of Notes Constituting an Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of United States of America Concerning the Availability for Defence Purposes of the “British Indian Ocean Territory”, in force 30 December 1966, 603 *U.N.T.S.* 273 (No. 8737)
- Annex 47** UK Mission to the United Nations, New York, Telegram No. 60 to the UK Foreign Office, 21 April 1967
- Annex 48** Minute dated 12 May 1967 from the Secretary of State for Defence to the Foreign Secretary, FO 16/226
- Annex 49** Minute dated 22 May 1967 from a Colonial Office official, A. J. Fairclough, to a Minister of State, with a Draft Minute appended for signature by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs addressed to the Foreign Secretary, FCO 16/226
- Annex 50** Letter dated 12 July 1967 from the UK Commonwealth Office to the Governor of Mauritius, FCO 16/226

- Annex 51** United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2357 (XXII), 19 December 1967
- Annex 52** Despatch dated 28 April 1969 from J. W. Ayres, Foreign and Commonwealth Office to J. R. Todd, Administrator, “BIOT”, FCO 31/2763
- Annex 53** “British Indian Ocean Territory” Proclamation No. 1 of 1969
- Annex 54** Note Verbale dated 19 November 1969 from the Prime Minister’s Office (External Affairs Division), Mauritius to the British High Commission, Port Louis, No. 51/69 (17781/16/8)
- Annex 55** Note Verbale dated 18 December 1969 from the British High Commission, Port Louis to the Prime Minister’s Office (External Affairs Division), Mauritius
- Annex 56** Pacific and Indian Ocean Department (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Visit of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, 4 February 1970, Speaking Note, 2 February 1970
- Annex 57** Despatch dated 24 March 1970 from A. F. Knight, Foreign and Commonwealth Office to J. R. Todd, “BIOT” Administrator
- Annex 58** Telegram No. BIOT 12 dated 30 May 1970 from the Governor of Seychelles to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Annex 59** Minute dated 5 June 1970 from J. Thomas (Defence Department) to J. W. Ayres (Aviation and Marine Department), UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 32/716
- Annex 60** “British Indian Ocean Territory” Ordinance No. 2 of 1971
- Annex 61** Despatch dated 3 June 1971 from M. Elliott, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to F.R.J. Williams, Seychelles, FCO 31/2763
- Annex 62** Despatch dated 16 June 1971 from F.R.J. Williams, Seychelles to M. Elliott, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, BIOT/54/61
- Annex 63** Despatch dated 2 July 1971 from M. Elliott, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to R. G. Giddens, British High Commission, Port Louis, FCO 31/2763
- Annex 64** Note from R. G. Giddens, British High Commission, Port Louis, 15 July 1971
- Annex 65** Despatch dated 26 May 1972 from J. R. Todd, “BIOT” Administrator to P. J. Walker, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 31/2763
- Annex 66** Letter dated 26 June 1972 from the British High Commission, Port Louis, to the Prime Minister of Mauritius

- Annex 67** Letter dated 4 September 1972 from Prime Minister of Mauritius to British High Commissioner, Port Louis
- Annex 68** Press Communiqué dated 9 February 1973, Prime Minister's Office, Mauritius
- Annex 69** Letter dated 24 March 1973 from Prime Minister of Mauritius to the British High Commissioner, Port Louis
- Annex 70** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 9 April 1974, Speech from the Throne – Address in Reply, Statement by Hon. G. Ollivry
- Annex 71** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 26 June 1974, Committee of Supply
- Annex 72** Memorandum by the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, "British Indian Ocean Territory: The Ex-Seychelles Islands", 4 July 1975
- Annex 73** Briefing note dated 14 July 1975 from John Hunt to the UK Prime Minister
- Annex 74** Office of International Security Operations Bureau, Politico-Military Affairs, United States Department of State, "Disposition of the Seychelles Islands of the BIOT", 31 October 1975
- Annex 75** Anglo/US Consultations on the Indian Ocean: November 1975, Agenda Item III, Brief No. 4: Future of Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches, November 1975
- Annex 76** British Embassy, Washington, November 1975, Minutes of Anglo-US Talks on the Indian Ocean held on 7 November 1975 (Extract)
- Annex 77** Record of Conversation between the UK Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Mauritius High Commissioner, London at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 8 March 1976 at 4 p.m.
- Annex 78** Letter dated 15 March 1976 from Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to the Mauritius High Commissioner, London
- Annex 79** Heads of Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Administration of the "British Indian Ocean Territory" and the Government of Seychelles Concerning the Return of Aldabra, Desroches and Farquhar to Seychelles to be Executed on Independence Day, FCO 40/732
- Annex 80** Telegram No. 43 from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the British High Commission, Port Louis, 19 March 1976
- Annex 81** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 15 March 1977, Speech from the Throne – Address in Reply, Statement by Hon. M.A. Peeroo

- Annex 82** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 8 November 1977, Reply to PQ No. B/539
- Annex 83** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 29 November 1977, Reply to PQ No. B/634
- Annex 84** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 5 July 1978, Committee of Supply
- Annex 85** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 11 April 1979, Speech from the Throne – Address in Reply, Statement by the Prime Minister of Mauritius
- Annex 86** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 10 July 1979, Reply to PQ No. B/754
- Annex 87** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 13 November 1979, Reply to PQ No. B/844
- Annex 88** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 20 November 1979, Reply to PQ No. B/967
- Annex 89** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 27 November 1979, Reply to PQ No. B/982
- Annex 90** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 13 May 1980, Second Reading of the Fisheries Bill (No. IV of 1980), Statement by the Minister of Fisheries and Cooperatives and Co-operative Development
- Annex 91** Mauritius Fisheries Act 1980, Act No. 5 of 1980
- Annex 92** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 26 June 1980, Interpretation and General Clauses (Amendment) Bill (No. XIX of 1980), Committee Stage, Statement by Sir Harold Walter
- Annex 93** Resolution on Diego Garcia, AHG/Res.99 (XVII), adopted by OAU Summit, 1-4 July 1980, Freetown, Sierra Leone
- Annex 94** Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 11 July 1980, vol. 988 c314W
- Annex 95** Extracts from Annual Statements Made by Mauritius to the United Nations General Assembly (Chagos Archipelago)
- Annex 96** Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 25 November 1980, Reply to PQ No. B/1141
- Annex 97** Extracts from the Mauritius Legislative Assembly, Report of the Select Committee on the Excision of the Chagos Archipelago, June 1983
- Annex 98** “British Indian Ocean Territory” Notice No. 7 of 1985
- Annex 99** Note Verbale dated 23 July 1991 from British High Commission, Port Louis to Government of Mauritius, No. 043/91

- Annex 100** Note Verbale dated 7 August 1991 from Ministry of External Affairs, Mauritius to British High Commission, Port Louis, No. 35(91) 1311
- Annex 101** “British Indian Ocean Territory” Proclamation No. 1 of 1991
- Annex 102** “British Indian Ocean Territory” Ordinance No. 1 of 1991
- Annex 103** Letter dated 1 July 1992 from the British High Commissioner, Port Louis to the Prime Minister of Mauritius
- Annex 104** Note Verbale dated 9 May 1997 from High Commission of India, Port Louis to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International and Regional Cooperation, Mauritius
- Annex 105** Letter dated 10 November 1997 from the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the Prime Minister of Mauritius
- Annex 106** Letter dated 9 January 1998 from the Prime Minister of Mauritius to the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
- Annex 107** Note Verbale dated 13 April 1999 from the British High Commission, Port Louis to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Mauritius, No. 15/99 and Speaking Notes, “Chagos – Inshore Fisheries Licences”
- Annex 108** Note Verbale dated 11 May 1999 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Mauritius to the British High Commission, Port Louis, No. 29/99 (1197/25)
- Annex 109** Note Verbale dated 1 July 1999 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Mauritius to the British High Commission, Port Louis, No.37/99 (1100/20)
- Annex 110** Letter dated 16 August 1999 from the Mauritius High Commissioner, London to Mr. G. Hoon MP, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Annex 111** Note Verbale dated 5 July 2000 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Mauritius to the British High Commission, Port Louis, No. 52/2000 (1197)
- Annex 112** Decision on Chagos Archipelago, AHG/Dec.159(XXXVI), adopted by OAU Summit, 10-12 July 2000, Lomé, Togo
- Annex 113** Note Verbale dated 6 November 2000 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation, Mauritius to the British High Commission, Port Louis, No. 97/2000 (1197/T4)
- Annex 114** Statement by Hon. A.K. Gayan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation, to the National Assembly of Mauritius, 14 November 2000

- Annex 115** Letter dated 21 December 2000 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation, Mauritius to the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
- Annex 116** Letter dated 6 July 2001 from the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation, Mauritius
- Annex 117** OAU Council of Ministers, Decision on the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, CM/Dec.26 (LXXIV), 5-8 July 2001, Lusaka, Zambia
- Annex 118** Letter dated 14 May 2002 from the Prime Minister of Mauritius to the President of the United States
- Annex 119** Letter dated 8 July 2003 from the Director of Overseas Territories Department, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to the Mauritius High Commissioner, London
- Annex 120** Letter dated 13 August 2003 from the Director of Overseas Territories Department, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to the Mauritius High Commissioner, London
- Annex 121** “British Indian Ocean Territory” Proclamation No. 1 of 2003
- Annex 122** Letter dated 7 November 2003 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation, Mauritius to the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
- Annex 123** Joint Statement Issued on the Occasion of the Visit of the Prime Minister of Mauritius to India, 19-24 November 2003
- Annex 124** Letter dated 12 December 2003 from the Minister responsible for Overseas Territories, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation, Mauritius
- Annex 125** Hansard, House of Lords, 31 March 2004, col. WS62, Statement of Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean
- Annex 126** Note Verbale dated 14 April 2004 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations, New York, to the Secretary General of the United Nations, No. 4780/04 (NY/UN/562)
- Annex 127** Note Verbale dated 20 April 2004 from the Mauritius High Commission, London to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ref. MHCL 886/1/03
- Annex 128** Note Verbale dated 13 May 2004 from UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Mauritius High Commission, London, No. OTD 016/05/04

- Annex 129** Letter dated 22 July 2004 from the Prime Minister of Mauritius to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
- Annex 130** Letter dated 22 October 2004 from Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Regional Cooperation, Mauritius to the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
- Annex 131** Mauritius Maritime Zones Act 2005
- Annex 132** Letter dated 1 December 2005 from the Prime Minister of Mauritius to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
- Annex 133** Letter dated 4 January 2006 from the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Prime Minister of Mauritius
- Annex 134** Note Verbale dated 26 July 2006 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations, New York, to the UN Secretary General, No. 4678/06
- Annex 135** Letter dated 13 December 2007 from the Prime Minister of Mauritius to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
- Annex 136** Note Verbale dated 20 June 2008 from Permanent Mission of Mauritius to the United Nations, New York to the Secretary General of the United Nations, No. 10260/08 (NY/UN/395)
- Annex 137** Joint Communiqué, Bilateral talks between Mauritius and the UK on the Chagos Archipelago, 14 January 2009
- Annex 138** “Giant marine park plan for Chagos”, The Independent, Sadie Gray, 9 February 2009
- Annex 139** Note Verbale dated 5 March 2009 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 2009(1197/28)
- Annex 140** Note Verbale dated 13 March 2009 from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius, No. OTD 04/03/09
- Annex 141** Note Verbale dated 19 March 2009 from the United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations, New York to the Secretary General of the United Nations, No. 26/09
- Annex 142** Note Verbale dated 10 April 2009 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 1197/28
- Annex 143** National Assembly of Mauritius, 14 April 2009, Reply to PQ No. B/185

- Annex 144** Preliminary Information Submitted by the Republic of Mauritius Concerning the Extended Continental Shelf in the Chagos Archipelago Region Pursuant to the Decision Contained in SPLOS/183
- Annex 145** Note Verbale dated 6 May 2009 from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius, No. OTD 06/05/09
- Annex 146** Cable from US Embassy, London, on UK Government's Proposals for a Marine Reserve Covering the Chagos Archipelago, May 2009: Mauritius Application, 20 December 2010, Annex 2
- Annex 147** Note Verbale dated 9 June 2009 from Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations, New York to the Secretary General of the United Nations, No. 107853/09
- Annex 148** Joint Communiqué, Second round of bilateral talks between Mauritius and the UK on the Chagos Archipelago, 21 July 2009, Port Louis, Mauritius
- Annex 149** Declaration of Nueva Esparta, 2nd Africa-South America Summit, 26-27 September 2009, Isla de Margarita, Venezuela (extract)
- Annex 150** Note Verbale dated 5 November 2009 from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the British High Commission, Port Louis, No. 46/2009 (1197/28/4)
- Annex 151** Note Verbale dated 10 November 2009 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 1197/28/10
- Annex 152** UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Consultation on Whether to Establish a Marine Protected Area in the "British Indian Ocean Territory", November 2009
- Annex 153** Note Verbale dated 10 November 2009 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the British High Commission, Port Louis, No. 48/2009 (1197/28/10)
- Annex 154** Note Verbale dated 11 November 2009 from the British High Commission, Port Louis, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius, No. 54/09
- Annex 155** Note Verbale dated 23 November 2009 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 1197/28/10
- Annex 156** Letter dated 15 December 2009 from the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius

- Annex 157** Letter dated 30 December 2009 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
- Annex 158** Note Verbale dated 30 December 2009 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 1197/28/4
- Annex 159** Letter dated 30 December 2009 from the Mauritius High Commissioner, London to *The Sunday Times*, published on 10 January 2010
- Annex 160** Written Evidence of the Mauritius High Commissioner, London, on the UK Proposal for the Establishment of a Marine Protected Area around the Chagos Archipelago, to the House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs
- Annex 161** Note Verbale dated 15 February 2010 from British High Commission, Port Louis, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius, No. 07/2010
- Annex 162** Letter dated 19 February 2010 from the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, Mauritius to the British High Commissioner, Port Louis
- Annex 163** Letter dated 19 March 2010 from the British High Commissioner, Port Louis to the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, Mauritius
- Annex 164** Note Verbale dated 26 March 2010 from British High Commission, Port Louis, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius, No. 14/2010
- Annex 165** UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Press Release, 1 April 2010, “New Protection for marine life”
- Annex 166** “British Indian Ocean Territory” Proclamation No. 1 of 2010
- Annex 167** Note Verbale dated 2 April 2010 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the British High Commission, Port Louis, No. 11/2010 (1197/28/10)
- Annex 168** African Union Assembly of Heads of States and Government, Decision on the Sovereignty of the Republic of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, Assembly/AU/Dec.331(XV), 27 July 2010, Kampala, Uganda
- Annex 169** Hansard, House of Commons Written Answers, 21 October 2010
- Annex 170** African Union Assembly of Heads of States and Government, Resolution adopted at the 16th Ordinary Session,

Assembly/AU/Res.1(XVI), 30-31 January 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

- Annex 171** Hansard, House of Commons Written Answers, 16 May 2011
- Annex 172** Letter dated 20 October 2011 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
- Annex 173** Letter dated 21 March 2012 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius to the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
- Annex 174** Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 and China on the occasion of UNCTAD XIII, 21 April 2012, Doha, Qatar
- Annex 175** Hansard, House of Lords Debates, 11 June 2012, c149W
- Annex 176** National Assembly of Mauritius, 12 June 2012, Reply to Private Notice Question
- Annex 177** National Assembly of Mauritius, 10 July 2012, Reply to PQ No. B/457

ANNEX 81

Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 15 March 1977, Speech from the
Throne – Address in Reply, Statement by Hon. M.A. Peeroo

EXTRACT

145 Oral Questions 15 MARCH 1977 Oral Questions 146

If not, will he take immediate steps to remedy the situation.

Mr. E. François : Sir, the "Calimaye" as well as the wall stands on the private property of Beau Champ Sugar Estate. Government authority was not necessary for the erection of the wall, because, under the law, an owner can enclose his property without asking for Government permission.

FOREIGNERS — GRANT OF MAURITIAN NATIONALITY

(No. B/74) **Mr. B. A. Khodabux** (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister whether he will give the names of all foreigners who, since March 1968, have been granted Mauritian nationality stating in each case the grounds on which naturalisation was granted.

The Prime Minister : Seven hundred and nineteen foreigners, who satisfied the provisions of the Mauritius Citizenship Act, 1968, have been granted Mauritian nationality since 1968. The list of names is being compiled and will be laid in the Library as soon as it is ready.

TRANQUEBAR — CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

(No. B/75) **Mr. R. T. Servansingh** (Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Local Government whether he will use his good offices with the Administrative Commission of the Municipality of Port Louis to set up forthwith a children playground in the Tranquebar area.

Mr. Espialler-Noel : Sir, the creation of a recreation complex in the Tranquebar area has already been envisaged and steps are being taken to acquire the necessary land.

VALLEE PIOT — WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/76) **Mr. K. Bhayrat** (First Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Power, Fuel & Energy whether, in view of the great inconvenience caused to the inhabitants of the Vallée Piot area through a deplorable water supply, he will use his good offices with the Central Water Authority to provide an individual water pipe to every householder of the locality.

Dr. Busawon : Sir, some inhabitants of Vallée Piot area have constructed their houses up the hillsides and it is difficult to convey water to these individual households by gravity pressure. The C.W.A. is however making designs for water to be supplied generally to the area by means of pumps. In the meantime, water supply to the area is ensured by tankers.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE — ADDRESS IN REPLY

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the following motion of the hon. First Member for La Caverne and Phenix (Mr. R. Purryaq) :

"That an Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor-General in the following terms :-

'We, the Members of the Mauritius Legislative Assembly here assembled, beg leave to offer our thanks to Your Excellency for the Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to us on the occasion of the Opening of the First Session of the Fourth Legislative Assembly.'

Question again proposed.

→ **Mr. A. Peeroo** (Third Member for La Caverne and Phenix) : M. le président, on a eu l'honneur à la dernière

147 Speech from the 15 MARCH 1977 Throne 148

séance de ce Parlement d'écouter attentivement les discours prononcés jusqu'ici. Alors qu'il est encourageant de constater que des critiques constructives ont été faites en vue d'améliorer le sort du peuple mauricien, il a été cependant décourageant, dirai-je, d'entendre certaines critiques injustifiées de la part de l'Opposition concernant l'état d'urgence, l'existence de la démocratie dans notre société, et surtout concernant le problème de Diégo Garcia.

Sir Satnam Botell : On a point of order, Sir, last time the adjournment was proposed by the hon. First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes (Mr. Bérenger).

Mr. Speaker : I had overlooked that for which I apologize. But now that the hon. the Third Member for La Caverne — Phenix has started, I will call the hon. the First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes immediately afterwards.

Mr. Peeroo : Je dirai même, M. le président, que les critiques du chef de l'Opposition ont froissé la surenchère. Je relève de son discours certaines critiques injustifiées concernant, comme je viens de dire, l'état d'urgence, Diégo Garcia, et la démocratie si elle existe à Maurice ou non. Tout d'abord, je m'attaquerai à cette critique particulière du chef de l'Opposition concernant l'incompétence du Gouvernement. Nous devons analyser les faits, les réalisations du Gouvernement dans le passé, surtout l'accomplissement du plan 1971 à 1975 pour savoir si le Gouvernement n'a rien fait, si le Gouvernement est incompétent.

Mr. Speaker : We are not discussing whether the last Government was competent or not, we are discussing whether this Government is competent, so that we might forget all about the past.

Mr. Peeroo : M. le président, si j'ai fait mention du passé, c'est pour m'en servir comme base, pour revenir sur les questions qui se trouvent dans le discours du Trône. Nous savons que notre société évolue, et toute société qui est vivante, toute société qui évolue est une société qui connaît des problèmes. L'île Maurice n'est pas une exception. Donc, nous devons nous attendre à ce que notre société connaisse des problèmes, et notre devoir ici est d'aider le Gouvernement, d'aider le pays à trouver des solutions à ces problèmes. Nous savons aussi qu'après l'indépendance notre pays a hérité d'un système que je qualifierai de colonial, un système qui doit être définitivement réformé afin que les aspirations légitimes du peuple soient satisfaites. Mais, quelle a été la politique du Gouvernement après l'indépendance ? Je dois dire ici que le Gouvernement a pour suivi une politique réaliste mais tout en tenant compte des réalités et des besoins de notre pays. Il n'y a pas lieu pour moi, M. le président, de parler des détails, mais je dirai que dans toutes ses entreprises le Gouvernement a réalisé des réussites. Si je viens de dire que nous avons des problèmes, nous sommes conscients dans le Gouvernement que ces problèmes sont difficiles, mais nous pouvons garantir au peuple de ce pays que le Gouvernement actuel est disposé à travailler avec courage et détermination pour trouver des solutions justes afin que nous puissions créer une société où chaque Mauricien aura une sécurité concernant l'emploi, le logement, l'éducation, et ainsi de suite.

M. le président, le chef de l'opposition a parlé de l'incompétence du Gouvernement. Cette critique, il me semble, est facile. Il est facile de critiquer, il est facile de dire que ce pays connaît des problèmes, mais jusqu'ici l'opposition

149 *Speech from the Throne* 15 MARCH 1977 150

n'a pas donné des solutions à nos problèmes. Mais, M. le président, nous pouvons en prenant compte, je dirai, des événements économiques dans le passé, voir si notre pays est dans la bonne direction. On sait très bien que les gens qui demeurent dans l'oisiveté critiquent toujours ceux qui vraiment travaillent et connaissent les difficultés dans l'action. Le Gouvernement s'efforce de résoudre les problèmes, mais par contre il y a des gens qui se tiennent sans rien faire et qui critiquent le Gouvernement. Le Gouvernement est disposé à accepter des critiques, comme mon ami, le Premier député de Phœnix et La Caverne a dit. Nous sommes ici au Gouvernement disposé à accepter les critiques, mais les critiques, je le répète, doivent être constructives et non pas destructives.

M. le président, je prendrai un peu de temps pour être pour parler de nos difficultés. Nous avons une population de 850,000 âmes, et une qui augmente par 17,000. En 1960, la population a connu une augmentation de 3%, mais par contre avec une politique réaliste et clairvoyante du Gouvernement, nous constatons qu'aujourd'hui le taux de naissance est de 2%, c'est-à-dire il y a une réduction sensible de naissances à Maurice, c'est-à-dire 1%, ou une réduction de 50% en ce qui concerne les naissances pendant une année. Donc, avec une population de 850,000 âmes, comme je viens de dire, M. le président, et une qui augmente par 17,000 par an, la tâche du Gouvernement n'est pas facile. Nous devons tenir compte des réalités. Je viens de dire que notre tâche ne serait pas si difficile, car nous savons au Gouvernement que le peuple est derrière nous et le peuple est disposé à coopérer afin de mettre fin à la politique de destruction lancée jusqu'ici par l'Opposition.

151 *Speech from the Throne* 15 MARCH 1977 152

d'un nombre maximum d'emplois pour assurer une vie décente à nos jeunes de moins de 15 ans. Il est à noter, M. le président, que le secteur agricole est un domaine où on ne peut pas créer plus de 2% d'emplois. Dans ce secteur un peu plus d'un pour cent d'emplois est créé, par contre je constate avec satisfaction que le Gouvernement a choisi le secteur industriel pour investir afin de créer plus d'emplois et nous savons que dans ce secteur beaucoup d'emplois ont été créés. En 1974, le Gouvernement a aidé à la création de 30,000 emplois. Nous ne prenons pas compte du nombre d'emplois créés dans l'industrie sucrière, je dis seulement 30,000 dans les industries, dans les usines, 9,000 ont été créés dans la zone franche et 12,000 emplois ont été créés dans les petites industries, les petites usines et les "cottage industries."

Avec toutes ces réalisations, M. le président, je vois fort drôle comment le chef de l'Opposition a pu qualifier ce Gouvernement d'incompétent, comment se fait-il que le chef de l'Opposition n'a pas pris en considération les réalisations du Gouvernement, un Gouvernement qui se lance toujours dans la bonne voie de créer d'autres emplois. C'est difficile de digérer cette critique à l'effet que ce Gouvernement est incompétent. S'il l'est, le temps dira, parce que les réalisations du Gouvernement nous permettent d'espérer qu'il en fera mieux dans l'avenir. Je saisis cette occasion pour dire que notre Gouvernement ne va jamais abdiquer devant ses responsabilités envers le peuple et ses responsabilités envers la nation mauricienne, malgré l'obstruction systématique de l'Opposition pour embarrasser le Gouvernement dans plusieurs secteurs. Nous sommes dans une position difficile. Nous reconnaissons que notre tâche n'est pas impossible, mais nous ferons notre mieux pour déjouer les manœuvres immorales de l'Opposition.

Notre but c'est de créer une société juste, une société socialiste, mais pas une société qui tolère les réactionnaires, et une société au visage humain.

M. Jéganuth : Soyez moins ridicule.

M. Peetro : Je répondrai au commentaire du chef de l'Opposition seulement par ceci "rira bien qui rira le dernier."

Maintenant passant à l'item de Diogo Garcia, M. le président, c'est un problème qui concerne tous les Mauriciens, je dirai même ce problème a un aspect assez triste et malheureux parce que là aussi on a dit que le Gouvernement n'a rien fait concernant la démilitarisation de l'océan indien. Tout d'abord je dirai que notre ministre des affaires étrangères lors de la conférence des pays non alignés, a soulevé la question et a exercé des pressions diplomatiques, et aussi lors de la conférence de l'OUA à Maurice, le Gouvernement a tout fait pour soulever l'opinion mondiale sur ce problème. Mais on critique très souvent le Gouvernement. On a voulu faire comprendre à la population que le Gouvernement est responsable de la vente de Diogo. Mais il y a une explication. D'après un principe de droit international, mes collègues de la profession qui sont de l'autre côté sont au courant qu'un article a été publié dans *Modern Law Review* No. 30 ou 31, un article écrit par le professeur de Smith, qui a pour titre "*Constitutionalism in Mauritius*". Dans cet article, M. le président, un point de droit international a été mentionné. La première question qu'on doit se poser est celle-ci : quand la vente de Diogo a été faite, à cette époque là, est-ce que l'île Maurice était indépendante ? La réponse est clairement non. Ce Gouvernement qui vous

153

Speech from the

15 MARCH 1977

Throne

154

diées, est responsable de la vente de Diégo Garcia n'était pas le Gouvernement d'un état souverain. On ne peut pas donc blâmer ce Gouvernement. Mais je dois donner l'assurance à mes amis de l'opposition que des efforts sont déployés afin de voir que l'océan indien soit une zone de paix.

Je viens de mentionner l'intervention et l'action mauricienne lors des conférences de pays non-alignés et aussi l'action du Gouvernement mauricien lors de la conférence de l'Organisation de l'unité africaine. Les efforts du Gouvernement dans ce sens continuent parce que il y a encore des pressions diplomatiques qui sont créées auprès de certaines super-puissances.

M. le président, je passe maintenant à une certaine critique du chef de l'opposition qui a dit que dans ce pays, où l'état d'urgence existe, on semble-t-il il n'y a plus de démocratie. Tout d'abord je dois dire que tout mouvement organisé et enregistré conforme à la loi est libre et enregistré conforme à la loi est libre de publier ce qu'il veut, et tout groupe d'individus, de travailleurs est libre de s'organiser en syndicat. Et ces gens qui disent qu'il n'y a pas de démocratie dans ce pays, savent très bien qu'ils sont libres d'organiser des meetings privés et des meetings publics et même des rassemblements, et je dirai même que cette liberté est tolérée jusqu'à tel point qu'ils sont libres de publier des critiques à l'égard de ceux qui permettent cette liberté. Je dois dire aussi, M. le président, que l'état d'urgence existe sur papier. En pratique, les libertés fondamentales du peuple sont là, parcequ'elles ont été expliquées et traduites par des élections municipales à venir aussi bien que par les récentes élections générales. D'ailleurs s'il n'y avait pas de démocratie dans ce pays, comment donc expliquer

la présence de cette opposition dans cette assemblée.

M. le président, il y a un problème que les consommateurs sans distinction de classe connaissent dans ce pays — on avait tout dernièrement parlé de l'augmentation concernant le prix du pain. Sur ce point je dirai en toute franchise et sincérité que je suis d'accord avec le premier député de Quatre Bornes (M. Bérenger) quand il a parlé sur le prix du pain. Personnellement je ne suis pas d'accord avec une augmentation de prix sur le pain parceque quand l'augmentation a été recommandée, (une augmentation de deux sous), la première question qu'on devrait se poser est la suivante: quels chiffres avait-on considérés pour recommander une telle augmentation? Et nous savons très bien que parmi les membres du Gouvernement, il y a un qui fait tout son mieux pour prouver qu'on peut vendre le pain à dix sous et en même temps réaliser un profit. Je suis, M. le président, contre l'augmentation de prix sur le pain.

Concernant l'augmentation de prix sur le poisson frigorifié, il a passé de Rs. 2.40 à Rs. 2.90. Cette augmentation est injustifiée. D'autre part, il est nécessaire, étant donné les circonstances, que les prix soient contrôlés strictement. M. le président, hier j'ai été au marché de Rose Hill pour acheter deux livres de poisson. On m'avait demandé Rs. 6 le livre quand nous savons très bien que le prix de poisson est fixé par le Gouvernement à Rs. 4.50. Ce que le marchand m'avait dit: 'Nous pas vende deux livres faire prix, nous vame prix qui nous contrain'. Sur ce problème, j'ai formulé des critiques mais il y a aussi une solution. Je préconise, M. le président, l'amendement des lois dans ce domaine et il faut aussi donner plus de pouvoirs aux officiers

155

Speech from the

15 MARCH 1977

Throne

156

du ministère des prix et créer une escouade pour contrôler les marchands qui exploitent le petit peuple. Et je suggérerai également la création d'un comité populaire de surveillance pour surveiller à ce que les marchands, qu'ils soient grands ou petits, n'exploitent pas la population, ou les consommateurs. Quand j'ai parlé du comité populaire, M. le président, je n'ai pas voulu dire milice populaire. Ici au Gouvernement, si nous faisons des critiques, nous disons quels sont aussi les solutions parceque je répète, M. le président, nous critiquons pour construire non pas pour détruire. Quand j'ai parlé du comité populaire, M. le président, j'ai voulu dire, un comité composé de membres du public, des volontaires disposés à aider le ministre ou le ministère des pêcheries parceque surveiller à ce que l'exploitation est éliminée dans le pays n'incombe pas seulement au Gouvernement ou au ministre mais aussi incombe à la population, parceque le ministre ou le Gouvernement ne sont pas seulement responsables de ce que la population subit mais il est le devoir de tout un chacun, de tout Mauricien de coopérer, de collaborer afin que l'exploitation d'où qu'elle vienne soit éliminée.

Il faut encourager la construction mais non pas à St. Jean ou dans d'autres coins de l'île Maurice qui doivent être réservés pour l'agriculture, parceque comme je viens de dire, notre pays est un pays agricole. L'agriculture, c'est l'épine dorsale de notre économie.

Ce que je préconise, M. le président, c'est la refonte des lois concernant la planification et de créer des zones industrielles, des zones réservées purement à l'agriculture et des zones résidentielles. Par exemple, M. le président, passant par la nouvelle route, on voit des petites collines qui sont vraiment improductives dans ce sens qu'on ne peut pas les cultiver. Quoi faire avec eux? Ce que je suggère, c'est développer ces collines afin d'encourager les gens à aller construire des maisons là-dessus ou au pied de ces collines, afin de préserver nos meilleures terres.

Et concernant le transport, M. le président, je félicite le Gouvernement pour avoir pris la décision d'accorder des permis à tous ceux qui veulent rouler des autobus. Mais je dirai que cette mesure n'est pas une solution. Cette mesure, je vais la qualifier, comme étant un palliatif. Tôt ou tard, dans cinq ou dans dix ans le problème va apparaître de nouveau parceque quand ces gens qui dans l'avenir recevront des permis pour faire rouler des autobus arrivent à trouver qu'ils font des pertes, ces gens là vont se grouper en compagnie et ce sera la même situation que nous avons aujourd'hui. La solution, je la dirai avec franchise, c'est la nationalisation de l'industrie du transport. Mais je dois dire, M. le président, que la nationalisation ne vient pas de l'opposition, d'abord parceque dans le programme gouvernemental du parti travailliste, dès 1945, nous avons parlé de nationalisation mais nous devons dire que

Il y a un autre problème, M. le Président, qui jusqu'ici a été ignoré et ce problème concerne la planification du pays. Quand nous allons vers Curepipe, passant par St. Jean, nous voyons avec regret aujourd'hui que nos meilleures terres sont vendues à des gens qui veulent construire des maisons. Par contre, il est connu de tous que ce pays est purement agricole, que nous ne pouvons pas sacrifier nos meilleures terres; si nous voulons encourager les gens à construire des maisons, il nous faut les encourager à le faire dans des zones où les terres ne sont pas fertiles, ne sont pas productives. Dans ces sites ou ces endroits là, il nous

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ANNEX 82

Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 8 November 1977,
Reply to PQ No. B/539

3177 *Oral Questions* 8 NOVEMBER 1977 *Oral Questions* 3178**SALE OF CEMENT — CONTROL**

(No. B/535) **Mr. S. K. Baligadoo** (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister for Prices & Consumer Protection whether he will exercise strict control on the sale of cement with a view to avoiding black marketing; and whether he will make a statement thereon.

Mr. Virah Sawmy: Sir, an enquiry was conducted last week at the Mauritius Portland Cement Co. Ltd. and at the level of the main cement distributors in Port Louis, and checks were also made in different localities of the island concerning the sale of cement.

The enquiry indicates that the supply of cement currently distributed on the local market is sufficient to satisfy the demand for that commodity, without giving rise to any black marketing opportunities.

I would like to invite the hon. Member to refer to my Ministry the case of any member of the public who may be finding difficulties to obtain cement. I can assure the hon. Member that every assistance will be given to him and others in the same situation.

ASSISTANCE TO BUS INDUSTRY

(No. B/536) **Mr. A. Asgarally** (Fifth Member for Montagne Blanche and G.R.S.E.) asked the Minister of Works whether he will make a statement on the form of assistance, technical or otherwise, he has already given and which he proposes to give to the bus industry.

Mr. Bussier: As from June 1976, no Customs duty is levied on bus chassis, as well as on complete buses, provided the buses are licensed by the Road Traffic Licensing Authority.

3179 *Oral Questions* 8 NOVEMBER 1977 *Oral Questions* 3180**DIEGO GARCIA —
ANGLO-AMERICAN TREATY**

(No. B/539) **Dr. J. B. David** (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister whether he will say if

- (a) Government proposes to question the Anglo-American treaty over Diego Garcia; and
- (b) there are any immediate or far reaching possibilities for Mauritius to get Diego Garcia back.

The Minister of Finance: Sir, taking all factors into consideration, the way of trying to recuperate Diego Garcia is by patient diplomacy at bilateral and international levels, and no opportunity is lost by the Government towards this end.

**COMMERCIAL RELATIONS
WITH SOUTH AFRICA**

(No. B/540) **Dr. J. B. David** (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of External Affairs, Tourism & Emigration whether he will say if Government proposes to sever all commercial ties with the Republic of South Africa.

Sir Harold Walter: Such action to be effective, pressure should be exerted by the international community as a whole and, to this end, Government has diligently and consistently been calling for global trade sanctions against South Africa both at the UN and at the OAU.

**RESEARCH CENTRE —
HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE OF
MAURITIUS AND OF THE
INDIAN OCEAN**

(No. B/541) **Dr. J. B. David** (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre

Bornes) asked the Minister of Education & Cultural Affairs whether he will say if he proposes to create a Research Centre to study the History, Art and Culture of Mauritius and of the Indian Ocean.

Mr. Jagatsingh: Sir, this project will be studied in the light of the report of a UNESCO Consultant who is arriving shortly to advise on its elaboration.

**APPLICATION BY POLITICAL
PARTY TO USSR EMBASSY FOR
FINANCIAL OR OTHER ASSISTANCE**

(No. B/542) **Mr. C. Guinbeau** (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister whether he will make a statement on the action he proposes to take following the publication in *Le Carnéen* of the 21st October, 1977 of a letter addressed by a political party to the USSR Embassy applying for financial or other assistance.

The Minister of Finance: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to P.Q. B/230. In this particular case I am sure the public will draw their own conclusions.

**AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE —
PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION
ABOUT MAURITIUS**

(No. B/543) **Mr. C. Guinbeau** (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister & Minister of Information & Broadcasting whether he will give the name and status of the official correspondent of Agence France Presse in Mauritius and state what measures he has taken with the "Agence" to prohibit the publication of erroneous information concerning Mauritius.

ANNEX 83

Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 29 November 1977,
Reply to PQ No. B/634

3513

Oral Questions

29 NOVEMBER 1977

Oral Questions

3514

short services to Chemin Grenier and Chamouny. However, the service provided by the Company is unsatisfactory and the Manager of the Company has, on two occasions, been summoned to appear before the RTLA and has been warned that the Company should improve its service. Should the service provided by the Savanne Bus Service continue to be unsatisfactory, the Road Traffic Licensing Authority will consider whether the Company's road service licences on that road should not be revoked.

In the meantime, in order to ease up the transport difficulties along this route, short term road service licences have been issued to five individual bus owners to operate six buses between Curepipe and Baie du Cap.

**DIEGO GARCIA —
MAURITIUS JURISDICTION OVER
SURROUNDING WATERS**

(No. B/634) Mr. A. Darga (Fourth Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister whether he will say if the British Government has recognised the jurisdiction of Mauritius over the waters surrounding Diégo Garcia.

The Prime Minister : The British Government has since July 1971 recognised the jurisdiction of Mauritius over the waters surrounding Diégo Garcia.

**DIEGO GARCIA —
LANDING RIGHTS, CESSION ETC.**

(No. B/635) Mr. A. Darga (Fourth Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister whether, in regard to Diégo Garcia, he will —

- (1) state if Mauritius has retained its landing rights over the island ;

- (2) say if there has been any breach of the agreement reached in 1965 when the island was detached from Mauritius ; and

- (3) consider the advisability of laying now before the Assembly a copy of the Minutes of Proceedings of the meetings when negotiations were held regarding the cession of the island and all the correspondence relating thereto.

The Prime Minister : Sir, the reply to parts one and two is generally negative because it is not our territory, although the plea was made during the Constitutional Conference that any plane in difficulty should get the right of landing. Hence there is no breach of any agreement.

As regards the third part, it will not be in the public interest to do so.

WORKERS' EDUCATION UNIT

(No. B/636) Mr. A. Darga (Fourth Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether, in respect of the Workers' Education Unit, he will state :

- (1) when it was set up ;
- (2) the nature of the work performed by it ; and
- (3) the reasons why duly recognized trade unions have not been consulted in connection with its activities and associated therewith.

Mr. Mohamed : Sir, the Workers' Education Unit was set up in September and is doing the spade work for the

3515

Oral Questions

implementation of some of the recommendations formulated by an advisory committee appointed by me and nine of the thirteen members union representatives. The latter question does not arise.

**MAURITIUS FEMALE CITIZENS'
DIVORCE AND CUSTODY**

(No. B/637) Mr. S. Cziffri (Member for Stanley and Moka) asked the Prime Minister whether he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation with a view to enabling female citizens of Mauritius to enter divorce and custody proceedings on the same basis as male citizens not being in Mauritius.

The Prime Minister : Sir, female citizens of Mauritius have the right of the Courts to institute proceedings for custody of children, even if their husbands are not domiciled in Mauritius.

As regards divorce cases, the proposed amendment of the law has been envisaged and will be introduced at the same time as the other amendments to the Civil Code.

WOMEN STATUS

(No. B/638) Mrs. S. Cziffri (Member for Stanley and Moka) asked the Prime Minister whether he will lay before the Assembly the actions taken by Government to improve the status of women in Mauritius since our participation in various international conferences and the International Women's Year.

The Prime Minister : Sir, the report is being compiled and will be laid before the Assembly as soon as it is ready.

ANNEX 84

Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 5 July 1978, Committee of Supply

EXTRACT

2993 Motion 5 JULY 1978

mettre de l'ordre dans sa propre maison avant de se lancer dans des campagnes nationales.

J'ai terminé, M. le président.

On the Assembly resuming, with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Order 10(2)

The Prime Minister : Sir, I beg to move that Government business be exempted at this day's sitting from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

Consideration of Vote 15-1 Ministry of Power, Fuel & Energy was resumed.

Dr. K. Coomjian (Third Member for Quarter Militaire and Moka) : Sir, I would also like to refer to item 15-1.15 *Contribution to National Antiwaste Campaign*. Sir, in view of the fact that water to-day is a very scarce commodity, I think that there is no doubt that all types of campaign should be launched in Mauritius so as to make the people become conscious as to the importance of water.

However, Sir, last year I referred to this very item and I said that at Pilon du Milieu for example, where we have a reservoir which is supposed to contain water, we had lots of equipment which had been lying idle for the last four or

2994 Motion

five years; in fact if anyone would care to go to the place, he will still find the same situation there.

However, Sir, we have lots of dams, of reservoirs, plenty of water which is in fact not being used for the welfare of the people. Here, Sir, I would like to refer to La Digue Valetta which is on the way from Quarter Militaire to Curepipe. There it is said that we have got perhaps millions of cubic gallons of water. However the water is not being used. What I would have suggested is that such places where we already have a good reserve of water and places which get sufficient rainfall and where often when rain falls too much, the dams overflow and cause a lot of damages to the crops in the vicinity, I would have suggested to the hon. Minister that such places should be located and reservoirs built where water could be stored and used in times when it is in short supply.

Secondly, we know, even last year I said it, we have got two big rivers, GRNW and GRSE. It is a pitiable sight to see that every day, every hour, millions of gallons of water are going to the sea without any effort from the Ministry to stop this and to use the water for purposes for which it can be used. In fact, Sir, we know that the industrial zone right now is making use of water which is already chlorinated and purified for domestic purposes. I feel that the Ministry could consider building a few reservoirs on the sites of GRNW and water could have been pumped from the river and utilized for the EPZ there. Beside this, Sir, when we are talking about an anti-waste campaign and we are spending Rs. 20,000, I think it is not a bad idea but first and foremost the Minister and the Ministry should give the example and even the other institutions which are concerned with water. As the

2995 Motion 5 JULY 1978

hon. Member who has spoken before me has said, we have got lots of leakages in the pipes in Mauritius. It is indeed a fact and I feel nobody can deny it that most of our piping system around the country was laid 30, 40 or perhaps 50 years ago. And most of these pipes leak, they have become defective and this causes loss of a lot of water, wastage of water. Therefore, I say, we have our mass media, we have the TV, we have got the press and in fact if the Government is interested there are so many avenues which can be used to make the public become conscious of the necessity for water and thereby to caution the people to waste less water so as to have more water in times of need.

Sir, here I find that we have in fact a lack of planning. If we look at La Nicotière, we have got plenty of water and most of the time even there the water is not used for the purpose it should have been. We have the dam at Valetta, we have the dam at Pilon du Milieu and these dams have plenty of water but the water is not being used for the proper purposes. Hence, what I would have said, is that in the Ministry, when we are spending about Rs. 40m., I would have perhaps liked the Minister to take note of it that in the future it would be senseless for us to come every year in the budget speech and at the Committee of Supply stage, and talk about the defects, to come and talk about the propositions when we are sure every year to find the same situation. We talk a lot about administration and planning, every year we criticize administration and planning, but when we come to Parliament we find the situation is still the same. So, in this connection, Sir, I would like the Minister to take note and just as it is the practice in the British and other Parliaments, once a Minister gives his assurance on a certain thing he should see to it that

2996 Motion

that particular thing is done. And we have seen when we have been voting for the other Votes here in this House, in Committee of Supply many Ministers have come and said all right the matter will be looked into and the situation will be remedied. But however we have got an experience of one year and we find that this in fact is not done.

So, Sir, what I would have said is that together with these Rs. 20,000 that are voted for an anti-waste campaign, the Government should make proper use of the mass media and the Government should also make proper use of the available stock of water so as to allow this water to go to the people. What is happening in fact is that in the towns the situation is already calamitous and in the rural areas it is equally calamitous. It is shocking to know — I live in a village where we have got a river, where we have got plenty of water and the water could have been used for better purposes but in the village where I live, Sir, I am sorry to say that ten years after independence, the water which is flowing in the pipes refuses to fall in the taps of the people and more so, if you have got an installation to have your bath in a bathroom, the water will never follow the normal course. It is shocking, Sir, that ten years after independence, the people on one side are having numerous difficulties and on the other we have got a Ministry but yet there is no planning, there is no proper administration of it and, every year we are coming here to talk on the same matter. I would have liked the Minister to take note of what I am saying and to see that next year when we come on the budget speech, at least something will have been done.

M. Simonet : M. le président, je voudrais parler à l'item 15-1.16. Puis-je attirer l'attention du ministre sur le

3113

Motion

5 JULY 1978

Motion

3114

under items 21-1.1(7) and (8). I make a suggestion to Government that all the existing shells which are being sold be purchased and stored if necessary even if it costs some money to Government in order to prevent our having to say "I had those shells before". I am told by people who know the matter very well that the trading of sea shells is causing a tremendous harm to our sea shell resources.

Mr. Boodhoo : Mr. Chairman, I shall be very brief. I shall speak on items 21-1.1(1) and 21-1.1(30). I would have liked to congratulate the hon. Minister for his special efforts for (1) wiping out almost all the bantians who were selling fish at exorbitant prices in the country and (2) creating various cooperative societies for fishermen.

Now, at item 21-1.1(30) I have already brought various suggestions, how to reorganise this Ministry. I would have liked to point out that the sum voted for this Ministry should be increased. The fishing industry if well developed will become the third main industry of this country.

Mr. Gungoosingh : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am speaking under item 21-1.1(1). I am making a request to the hon. Minister to have a station opened at Bambous Virieux so as to have a better control on illegal fishing.

The Minister of Fisheries : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to thank all my Friends for their encouragement. Even my hon. Friend, the First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes has realised that a very good work is being done in my Ministry and the First Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac too.

Well, according to our plan, in the near future we shall be able to control illegal fishing in our lagoon by means of dynamite and other means. You know, Sir, presently, as the law is, anyone may go in any place with a contractor's permit, and he may buy dynamite but instead of using the whole lot, he spares a few and he sells it to unscrupulous amateurs, not genuine fishermen. Because those who fish illegally are not genuine fishermen because genuine fishermen know that when they use dynamite it is going to destroy the very habitat of the fish and it will be very difficult for them one day to have enough fish. Well, this the Government is taking into consideration and they will hear about it soon.

In connection with underwater fishing, you know, Sir, according to the amendments which will be presented here and which this House will have to approve, many clauses in our Fisheries Ordinance will be amended. To begin with, the use of dynamite, underwater fishing, the collection of sea shells will be prohibited. But one request I would make the day I said that underwater fishing will be stopped, an hon. Member of the Opposition, came with a delegation of underwater fishermen, requesting me, if possible, not to introduce that measure. I am not going to divulge his name. If anyone would like to have it privately, I will tell him. But I ask hon. Members please not to interfere the day this amendment will come in front of the House. So, underwater fishing will be banned, control of the use of dynamite will be stricter.

The hon. First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes has said that fish will no more be available in our lagoon. Sir, I do not agree because there are

3115

Motion

5 JULY 1978

Motion

3116

different species of fish that are found in our lagoon. They are not there all the year round. They come here only at a certain time of the year. To give you an example, sardines come here only in the months of May, June, July and they return to the place where they live.

Therefore, there are many species of fish that come here at a specific period of the year. The point is that our lagoons are full of fish and the amount of reserves that are under our control and through the policy that the Ministry is executing, there is no risk of the total disappearance of fish. But I am sure the amount of fish available in our lagoon is increasing, if we compare the statistics of the catch that we had last year and that we have had this year.

Now, in connection with Saya de Malha, I gave an answer to a parliamentary question asked by one of my Friends and I am sticking to that answer but at this stage we cannot say anything but let the House rest assured that everything is following the proper course.

In connection with the exploitation of tortoises and other industries at Tromelin, well, there is a proper forum for Ministers where they debate this, it is the Council of Ministers. I think at this stage it is being considered thoroughly and when the time comes, Members of the House will get the opportunity to learn about it.

Well, Sir, the Third Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue said when I went to St. Brandon, I invited a few friends. As I have said previously, when I will move to another island I will make it a duty to select a few friends who would like to go there. But one thing they must bear in mind. Your constitution must be very strong otherwise it is very difficult to resist seven days' travel at sea!

And in connection with the patrol boat, the hon. Member need not worry. When I returned from Korea I said that we are getting this and that. We have received part of it and I am sure the rest will follow.

In connection with Chagos, as the Prime Minister said, we have fishing rights. And let it be known to the House that one of our fishing vessels, the Nazareth went to fish in that particular region but the type of fish which is caught there, Sir, is not sold here in Mauritius being given that we Mauritians like a different type of fish, while fish that we get from St. Brandon. Therefore, as Mauritians, we like fish from St. Brandon.

But there are other types of fish like vara vara that they get and it is not consumed by Mauritians, and the proprietors of our companies are not interested in catching the fish which are found in abundance there. The last time when a few tons were brought, they were salted instead of being sold to the public. But there are other species that could be caught and converted to be sold perhaps to other countries. But the point is that the fishing rights are still there and our companies are free to go and fish there.

My hon. Friend the First Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac made a suggestion that the Budget of my Ministry should be increased, it is noted and next time I hope that it will be done.

Sir, I think these are all the points that have been raised by my hon. Friends.

Vote 21-1 Ministry of Fisheries (Rs. 5,425,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 22-1 Attorney General's Office was called.

ANNEX 85

Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 11 April 1979,
Speech from the Throne – Address in Reply,
Statement by the Prime Minister of Mauritius

EXTRACT

401 Motion 11 APRIL 1979

However, after the Commission has reported, nothing prevents any hon. Member to put down a question to inquire about the Government's intentions about laying the report on the Table of the Assembly.

MOTION

Speech from the Throne —
Address in Reply

Order read for resuming the adjourned debate on the following motion of the hon. First Member for Curepipe and Midlands (Mr. P. Simone):

"That an Address be presented to His Excellency the Acting Governor-General in the following terms:

"We, the Members of the Mauritius Legislative Assembly here assembled, beg leave to offer our thanks to Your Excellency for the Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to us on the occasion of the Opening of the Third Session of the Fourth Legislative Assembly."

Question again proposed.

M. P. Bérenger (First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes): M. le président, on me dira peut-être qu'il est de la nature même des discours du Trône de ne pas coller à la réalité de la situation dans laquelle se trouve l'île Maurice. Cela ne m'empêchera néanmoins pas de dire pour commencer, M. le président, que le discours du Trône prononcé le 27 mars dernier par le Gouverneur-Général n'a véritablement rien à voir, ni avec la situation dans laquelle se trouve actuellement notre pays, ni avec les solutions qui, du point de vue de l'opposition, du point de vue du MMM devraient être apportées d'urgence à ces problèmes. Mon discours, M. le président, va s'axer sur quatre volets: la situation économique d'abord. A l'inverse du *Leader* de l'opposition, qui

402 Motion

avait commencé par les affaires étrangères, je commencerai, moi, par la situation économique, pour passer ensuite à l'éducation, à la politique intérieure, et quatrième donc, à la politique étrangère avant, en conclusion, de suggérer ce qui de notre point de vue, pourrait s'avérer être des solutions à la situation actuelle.

Lorsque, je commence par la situation économique, M. le président, ce n'est pas sans raison, c'est parce que véritablement de mon point de vue, ce devrait être la situation économique actuelle du pays et l'avenir économique du pays qui devrait avant tout retentir notre attention, l'attention de cette Chambre, comme l'attention de la nation tout entière. J'estime, en effet, M. le président, que non seulement la situation économique actuelle est-elle catastrophique, mais j'estime, ce qui est encore plus grave, que l'avenir est terriblement sombre.

Je commencerai, M. le président, par le chômage. Je vous rappelle que dans son dernier discours du budget l'année dernière, le ministre des finances lui-même était venu dire que le chômage était redevenu à l'île Maurice, la priorité des priorités. Dans l'intervalle, depuis ce discours du budget, donc, non seulement l'emploi n'a-t-il pas progressé, mais au contraire l'emploi a régressé. Des licenciements ont eu lieu dans l'industrie sucrière, dans l'industrie du thé, dans la zone franche, dans le commerce, et même dans l'industrie de construction. De mon point de vue, donc, M. le président, lorsqu'à la page 2 du discours du Trône le Gouvernement déclare tout simplement dans une situation d'emploi aussi explosive, aussi catastrophique, que "*my government's main objectives remain the continued growth of our economy and the fulfilment of our employment objectives*" il passe complètement à côté du problème.

403 Motion 11 APRIL 1979

car le drame est que les "*employment objectives*" du Plan de Développement 1975-1980 sont absolument dépassés et qu'il ne s'agit plus en fait de "*continued growth of our economy*", en particulier, de "*continued growth of employment*" mais au contraire d'une situation où le chômage malheureusement progresse. En attendant donc, de venir aux moyens de créer de l'emploi à l'île Maurice, je commencerai mon discours en insistant cette année, M. le président, sur le fait que, comme l'a dit mon collègue, Sylvio Michel, dans une motion déposée en son nom, nous estimons de ce côté de la Chambre, j'estime en particulier qu'il est absolument essentiel et urgent de mettre sur pied dans les plus brefs délais un système d'allocation chômage. Je me permets de rap- peler à la Chambre qu'en 1971 la Chambre avait nommé un *Select Committee* qui avait soumis son rapport intitulé "*Report of the Select Committee on the Setting up of Unemployment Benefit Scheme*". Déposé en mai 1971, ce rapport, comme nous le savons tous, est demeuré lettre morte, et je ne prétends nullement que ce rapport devrait aujourd'hui être mis en pratique. Je rappelle cela à la Chambre uniquement afin que nous ne répétions pas cette erreur de nommer un *Select Committee* qui produirait un rapport, rapport qui disparaîtrait dans un tiroir, dans un ministère quelconque. Nous savons, M. le président, alors qu'il nous avait été dit lorsque le *National Pension Fund* avait démarré, les officiels du Gouvernement, ceux du ministère de la sécurité sociale, et même ceux du Gouvernement, nous avaient donné l'assurance que des années durant, le *National Pension Scheme* travaillerait à perte, que durant des années, le Gouvernement aurait à verser des subsides, si je puis dire, au fonds de pension national. Or, il s'est avéré que ces prévisions des experts du Gouvernement, ces

404 Motion

prévisions du secteur privé se sont avérées complètement fausses. En quelques mois, le *National Pension Scheme* a réussi à mobiliser des fonds considérables, que dix millions de roupies, par exemple, soient prêtées à la *Mauritius Housing Corporation*. Ma suggestion c'est qu'à partir de cette base posée par le *National Pension Scheme*, si nécessaire en augmentant de, disons, 1 ou 2% la contribution des employeurs, à partir de la base posée par le *National Pension Scheme*, avec, si nécessaire, une légère augmentation des contributions, qu'un vrai système d'allocation-chômage qui se grefferait sur le *National Pension Scheme* pourrait être développé. Malgré, donc, l'expérience malheureuse du *Select Committee* de 1971, je suggère au Gouvernement devant la montée du chômage constatée par le ministre des finances lui-même, dans nos circonscriptions par tous les députés de cette Chambre, je suggère que le Gouvernement nomme un *Select Committee* de cette Chambre pour se pencher à nouveau sur "*the setting up of an Unemployment Benefit Scheme*" et qui se penche donc sur le fonds de pension national et propose quelque chose de concret, quelque chose de positif mais en même temps quelque chose de réaliste au Gouvernement et à la Chambre.

Le deuxième point sur lequel je m'entreprendrai concerne l'inflation. Là encore, M. le président, le discours du Trône passe complètement à côté de la situation réelle. Le discours du Trône dit ceci, en termes d'inflation, "*Price control will remain a priority of my Ministers*". En fait, nous savons, M. le président, qu'en cette année 1979, l'inflation depuis janvier a réagi sous un nouveau coup de fouet. Dans le seul mois de janvier 1979, le coût de la vie a augmenté de 2,3%.

449 Motion 11 APRIL 1979 Motion 450

pas tomber d'accord, l'*Industrial Relations Commission* devra se servir d'un *secret ballot*. Mais ce n'est pas *compulsory*, et la Commission des relations industrielles a jugé qu'il serait trop politique de faire un tel vote par bulletin secret. C'est pourquoi nous, nous estimons qu'il faudrait imposer cela, il faudrait empêcher quelque manipulation, quelque pression politique que ce soit, permettre aux travailleurs d'exprimer leur choix. Cela vient rejoindre, je le dis surtout à l'intention du ministre des finances cette fois-ci, mais aussi le Premier ministre. Il faut bien réaliser comment fonctionnent les choses. Si un syndicat est reconnu, il est à la table des négociations, il est amené à prendre connaissance des faits, des réalités, on lui soumet des *balance sheets*, il discute des *balance sheets*, etc. mais quand un syndicat, comme la *Sugar Industry Labourers' Union* et la *Union of Artisans of the Sugar Industry*, est systématiquement boycotté, alors qu'il était reconnu et qu'il est toujours majoritaire, ce syndicat ne peut pas dialoguer avec le patronat, quelle est la tentation ? La tentation est naturellement de demander des augmentations de salaires fortes puisqu'on n'est pas devant les faits, on ne discute pas les *balance sheets*, on n'a pas des réunions régulières avec le patronat. Et dans le cas de la fermeture de Solitude et de Réunion la réaction immédiate des syndicats, qui ne discutent pas avec le patronat, la réaction immédiate est de dire non tout de suite avant même d'avoir pris connaissance des faits. Alors, j'estime donc, que l'*Industrial Relations Act* doit être amendé, et qu'une clause doit prévoir que dans les cas de *recognition* un *secret ballot* tranchera, permettra aux travailleurs de se prononcer.

Je passe au quatrième volet de mon intervention, M. le président, la politique étrangère, sujet sur lequel s'est étendu

hier le président du parti travailliste. Là, comme l'a dit le *leader* de l'Opposition, il fait nul doute que les intentions déclarées dans le discours du Trône sont plus que louables. Participer à fond au fonctionnement de l'OUA, la libération du continent africain, participer à fond au mouvement des pays non-alignés, "*work closely with its neighbours*", faire de l'Océan Indien une zone de paix, participer au dialogue ou plutôt à l'affrontement Nord/Sud au profit du sud sous-développé, participer aux discussions ACP/CEE au profit des pays ACP, tout cela est plus que louable. Ce que nous nous considérons obligés de rappeler, c'est que la réalité contredit cela. Malgré que le Parti travailliste, à travers son président et son secrétaire général, ait demandé à participer à la conférence des partis et organisations progressistes des îles du sud ouest de l'Océan Indien. Malgré le récent voyage du Premier ministre et d'une délégation ministérielle en Libye, malgré la déclaration positive — et je félicite le Premier ministre de l'avoir faite, rapidement hier — en faveur du peuple palestinien, nous sommes obligés d'attirer l'attention sur un certain nombre de contradictions, et sur un certain nombre pour nous de positions qui ne sont pas acceptables. Je pense que certains sont en train d'essayer de changer la politique étrangère du Gouvernement. Très bien, très louable effort qui se traduit par les mots utilisés, donc, dans le discours du Trône. Mais, les mentalités ne changent pas aussi facilement, et certaines réactions que nous avons vues ici même ces derniers jours nous permettent de le constater. En effet, prémièrement, au moment même où le discours du Trône déclare que l'île Maurice va participer pleinement au mouvement des pays non-alignés, au moment même où l'île Maurice établit des relations diplomatiques avec Cuba, au moment donc où mon ami l'ambassadeur posté à Tana-

451 Motion 11 APRIL 1979 Motion 452

native, Cardozo, viendra visiter l'île Maurice, c'est précisément à ce moment que le ministre des affaires étrangères a choisi, il y a à peine quelques jours, pour s'attacher à Cuba, pour poser la question "Cuba non-aligned ?" sur un ton agressif qui n'était pas nécessaire dans ce contexte. Nous savons tous que Cuba a les positions que Cuba a. La coïncidence veut que le mouvement des pays non-alignés se réunissent au sommet cette année à Cuba. Nous demandons de ce côté de la Chambre que le Premier ministre se rende à Cuba pas parce que c'est Cuba, mais parce que c'est la conférence au sommet des non-alignés. Ils se réuniront ailleurs à un autre moment. Si on s'y rend pour critiquer le non-alignement — ce n'est pas aussi simple que ça — mais l'alignement de Cuba, faites-le, si c'est votre conviction, faites-le, c'est la note que Cuba n'est pas suffisamment non-aligné, mais ne boycottez pas, et n'attaquez pas sans expliquer Cuba au moment où vous établissez des relations diplomatiques officielles. Je dois faire remarquer que cela, que quand même l'île Maurice aura fait bien du chemin — je regardais ce matin même, j'ai oublié d'apporter le journal en question, je crois que c'était à la veille de l'élection partielle de Vacas-Phoenix, une belle photo dans le journal travailliste "*Nation*" une photo de Guy Simon, ministre des affaires étrangères des Seychelles, de moi-même, et moi je suis entre Guy Simon et un ami personnel à moi, Cardozo, qui est ambassadeur à Madagascar de Cuba et qui sera donc accrédité auprès de l'île Maurice, et toute une tartine, "Subversion dans l'Océan Indien", et le pauvre Cardozo n'en a pas cru ses yeux lorsque je lui ai porté le journal, "le pauvre Cardozo qui est l'agent numéro 1 de la désattribution communiste", tout ça aujourd'hui est réduit à quoi ? Heureusement à rien du tout dans la mesure où ce sera, ce même

désattribution professionnel qui va venir à l'île Maurice représenter officiellement le Gouvernement de Cuba.

Deuxième point où nous constatons un désaccord ou plutôt une contradiction...

The Prime Minister : Avec Georges Marchais aussi.

An hon. Member : Marchais a demandé le retour de Tromelin, ne parlez pas de Marchais ! Marchais est le statilisateur !

Mr. Bérenger : I'll come to that.

J'en viens au deuxième point, le Moyen Orient. Oublions les faux pas passés, ce n'était pas des faux pas dans la bonne direction, plutôt dans la mauvaise direction mais oublions cela. Oublions les félicitations, l'appui officiel à Camp David, au voyage de Sadate à Jérusalem etc. Ça c'est le passé. C'est avant le grand voyage en Libye. Oublions aussi les félicitations exprimées au pauvre Bhaktar en Iran. Oublions cela, venons à la situation actuelle où le ministre des affaires étrangères a jugé bon de déclarer — pour une fois il a essayé de ne pas dire beaucoup, il a dit une petite phrase, naturellement pas la bonne — que le traité de paix qui vient d'être signé est un pas dans la bonne direction. Chaque ministre a la dignité qu'il a. La déclaration d'hier du Premier ministre, je laisse le soin au ministre des affaires étrangères de la comparer au pas dans la bonne direction qu'il avait jugé nécessaire de prendre à peine une semaine plus tôt. Mais enfin, dans le Moyen Orient le tir est rectifié. C'est très bien mais j'espère quand même que ce ne sera pas simplement quelque vœu pieux, qu'une déclaration comme ça. Le Gouvernement devrait faire tout ce qu'il peut aux Nations Unies, à l'OUA, ici-même vis-à-

453 Motion 11 APRIL 1979

vis des Etats Unis pour obtenir d'abord que tous les territoires occupés par Israël après 1967 soient évacués, que Jérusalem en particulier retourne à son statut d'avant 1967, que le peuple palestinien ait un état, ait une terre, ait un pays à lui. J'estime donc qu'il faut que le Gouvernement, quoique l'île Maurice soit un petit pays, fasse pression dans cette direction. Sur l'océan indien, nous considérons choquant de ce côté de la Chambre qu'après les événements en Iran, le Président René d'un tout petit pays de moins de 100,000 habitants, comparé à notre pays d'un million d'habitants, que le Président René le premier ait réagi et envoyé un message au Président Carter pour protester contre la décision américaine d'intensifier sa présence militaire, pour demander qu'il n'y ait pas une nouvelle flotte de guerre américaine posée dans l'océan indien. Le Président René du petit pays seychellois a le premier réagi. Le Président Ratsiraka a réagi lui aussi et a envoyé lui aussi un message de solidarité au Président René et est intervenu auprès du Président Carter mais l'île Maurice n'a pas réagi à ce jour. Aucune réaction, la servilité habituelle ! Là je suis obligé de venir m'entendre quelque peu sur ce que le président du parti travailliste a dit, sur le cours d'histoire absolument faussée que le président du parti travailliste a jugé utile de nous faire hier. Je n'avais pas l'intention de m'entendre là-dessus mais le président du parti travailliste l'ayant fait, je suis obligé de réfuter ce qu'il a dit et de mettre les faits devant la Chambre.

Le président du parti travailliste est venu nous dire, en quelques mots, d'abord en 1965 le Gouvernement mauricien d'alors, le parti travailliste essentiellement, ne pouvait rien faire. Deuxièmement, qu'il avait été entendu dès le départ, que le Premier ministre et le ministre des finances avaient compris dès le départ, qu'il s'agissait

Motion 454

d'une base de communications, un point c'est tout et ensuite, à partir de petites coupures de différents journaux il a essayé de prouver que le parti travailliste a pris position comme il fallait le prendre en ce qui concerne l'océan indien. Je regrette, mais cela n'est pas la vérité historique. Revenons donc aux choses sérieuses. 1965, l'archipel des Chagos est détaché de l'île Maurice de même que certaines îles seychelloises pour former le *British Indian Ocean Territory*. Ce n'est pas sérieux de réagir à partir de coupures de presse. Lisons plutôt ce qui est déclaré à l'Assemblée Législative le 14 décembre 1975 en réponse à une question de Monsieur J. R. Rey, Monsieur Robert Rey donc, qui n'est pas présent, député de Moka à cette occasion. J'ai pris cela au Secrétariat il y a déjà plus de cinq ans parcequ'entre temps nous nous sommes renseignés, — le Secrétariat de la Chambre nous l'a communiqué "Extract from Debates of 14th December, 1965. Mr. Forger on behalf of the Premier and Minister of Finance tabled a reply to a parliamentary question." Donc ça c'est sur le premier point que le Gouvernement ne pouvait rien faire, que Diégo et les autres îles ont été détachés et que nous ne pouvons rien faire. Le ministre qui remplace donc Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, pas encore "Sir" en ce temps là, dépose sur la table la réponse à la question et il dit ceci : "In reply to a parliamentary question, the Secretary of State made the following statement in the House of Commons on Wednesday November the 10th, "With the agreement of the Governments of Mauritius and the Seychelles new arrangements for the administration of certain islands were introduced by an Order-in-Council made on the 8th November."

Voilà la vérité et d'ailleurs le Premier ministre l'a dit ici, je le citerai tout à

455 Motion 11 APRIL 1979

l'heure. Je le répète "With the agreement of the Governments of Mauritius and the Seychelles etc." L'accord du Gouvernement mauricien a été obtenu, le Gouvernement d'alors, le Gouvernement du parti travailliste. Premier point donc, cela. Le premier ministre a eu le temps : 1965, 1967, 1968, 1969 on n'entend pas grand-chose sauf en ce qui concerne le PMSD — je viendrai là-dessus tout à l'heure. Mais finalement à l'Assemblée, le 26 juin 1974 en réponse à Dev Virah Sawmy, dans cette Assemblée même, le Premier ministre, Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam parlant de Diégo Garcia, dit ceci : "The Government of Mauritius was nevertheless informed after we had discussed in England that this had taken place — c'est-à-dire le détachement des îles — and we gave our consent to it." Les mots prononcés par le Premier ministre dans le Hansard officiel. "It was not done like this. But the day it is not required it will revert to Mauritius. But Mauritius has reserved its mineral rights, fishing rights and landing rights — je vendrai là-dessus tout à l'heure, dans une réponse à une question parlementaire il répond exactement le contraire, il y a peine quelques mois — landing rights and certain other things that go to complete in other words some of the sovereignty which obtained before on that island. That is the position. Even if we did not want to detach it I think — un Premier ministre parlant de l'intégrité territoriale de son pays — even if we did not want to detach it — avant il a dit "we gave our consent to it" catégoriquement — even if we did not want to detach it I think from the legal point of view Great Britain was entitled to make arrangements as she thought fit and proper. This in principle was agreed even by the PMSD who was in the Opposition at the time and we had consultations etc." D'abord, il vient dire catégoriquement que le parti

Motion 456

travailliste donna son *consent* au détachement de ces îles et en fait de quelle loi parlons-nous ? Vous n'avez peut-être mais ça fait des années que j'ai demandé au secrétariat de cette Chambre de me faire avoir copie. C'est à partir de ce petit bout de papier. C'est tout le texte de loi qui a permis au Gouvernement britannique de détacher tous ces territoires de l'île Maurice. C'est tout. Le *Colonial Boundaries Act* de 1895 et que dit le *Colonial Boundaries Act* ? "Alteration of boundaries of Colony: Where the boundaries of a Colony have etc etc." on peut changer "provided (2nd clause) that the consent of a self-governing Colony shall be required for the alteration of the boundaries thereof". En d'autres mots, non seulement le Gouvernement, le parti travailliste d'alors avait les moyens même légaux de protester mais ce n'était pas une protestation légale qui s'imposait. C'est en fait une protestation politique et le Premier ministre a au moins en la décence de dire qu'il donna son *consent*. D'après mes renseignements c'est uniquement le Premier ministre et le ministre des finances qui furent associés aux discussions avec le Premier ministre d'alors, Sir Harold Wilson. Donc, le point-clé c'est qu'ils donnèrent, le parti travailliste donna, son *consent*. Mais je vais plus loin. Puisque le Premier...

The Prime Minister: We had no choice.

Mr. Bérenger: You had a choice.

Mais je vais plus loin. Après que le 27 avril 1975, lorsque les Anglais s'en vont, on a honte en relisant tout ça. Seulement le président du parti travailliste choisit les journaux qu'il lit. "Maurice regrette le départ des Britanniques" En Avril 1975, lorsque les Britanniques quittent le HMS Mauritius et s'en vont. "If

457

Motion

11 APRIL 1979

Motion

458

is a tearing away of hearts", a déclaré hier Sir Seewoosagur, Premier ministre en invoquant le retrait du HMS Mauritius. Sir Seewoosagur a déclaré qu'il aurait souhaité qu'une telle décision ne fût prise. Ce n'est pas *Le Militant* ou *Le Peuple*, mais *Le Nation*, journal travailliste qui rapporte les cérémonies déchirantes "a tearing of hearts". Ça, c'est le 27 avril 1975, quelques mois plus tard — puisque le président du parti travailliste aime collectionner les coupures de journaux, le 26 septembre, 1975 "Conférence de Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam à Londres". Je cite *l'Express* du 26 septembre 1975. Titre : "La Grande Bretagne a le droit de construire une base à Diégo" Texte : "La Grande Bretagne a le droit souverain de faire construire dans l'îlot de Diégo Garcia une base aéro-navale pour le compte des Etats Unis." Le reste suit. "Mais tous les pays riverains de l'océan indien espèrent qu'il sera possible de transformer cet océan en une zone de paix, a déclaré mercredi le Premier ministre, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam" rapporte l'AFP. En d'autres mots, il reconnaît le droit souverain aux Anglais de faire ce qu'ils veulent de Diégo Garcia et ensuite on va venir nous citer je ne sais combien de bouts d'interviews racolés ci et là. Voilà les faits. On ne peut pas résumer qu'en 1965 ces îles furent détachées de l'île Maurice "in agreement with the Labour Party, with the Government" d'alors, que le Gouvernement avait les moyens non seulement politiques mais légaux de le contester et qu'ils ne l'ont pas fait.

Maintenant je passe au deuxième point que il fut toujours clair au dire du parti travailliste, qu'il ne pouvait s'agir que d'une base de communications. Lisons le même texte que *l'Acting Prime Minister*, l'hon. Forget, déclare à cette Chambre.

It continue "It is intended that the islands will be available for the construction of defence facilities by the British and U.S. Governments". Des 1965, dès le 14 décembre 1965. Et plus loin "If the British Government decides that the Chagos Archipelago is no longer required for defence purposes, the islands will be returned to Mauritius." "Communications", cherchez où vous voulez, il n'y a pas, on ne parle pas de "Communications Centre". Le texte officiel lu par l'*Acting Prime Minister* ici parle lui-même de "defence purposes". D'ailleurs, j'ai pris la peine de relire tous les journaux de l'époque. A partir du 9 août, le *Mauricien* pose des questions "La question d'une base anglo-mauricienne à Diégo serait actuellement la clé de notre avenir constitutionnel". Le 5 octobre, feu Jules Kénié déclare à propos de la base "Je ne sais rien qui puisse être publié. Les conclusions sont au stade confidentiel." Déclaration de feu Jules Kénié au journal *Le Mauricien*. Il y a plus : le 6 novembre, meeting PMSD du 5 novembre, rapport le 6, à Rose Hill, le cite tel quel ce que *Le Mauricien* rapporte : "Un membre du public — 1965 toujours là, toujours en pleine conférence constitutionnelle — Charles Gaetan Duval parle. Un membre du public : Parlez-nous de la base. Quelqu'un qui crie dans la foule. Monsieur Duval dit qu'il ne peut révéler les secrets du Conseil des ministres. "Personnellement, Monsieur Duval n'est ni contre les Américains ni contre les Anglais. Il réclame d'ailleurs une forme d'association, l'installation d'une base n'est pas sans risque mais il se déclare d'accord pour une base si d'abord ils obtiennent un prix de sucre et deuxièmement un contingent d'émigrants. Donc, le PMSD lui-même reconnaît que c'est d'une base qu'on parle et que cela présente des dangers pour l'avenir mais on est encore en train de marchander

459

Motion

11 APRIL 1979

Motion

460

émigration, quota de sucre. Ça continue et, au cours d'une conférence de presse que tient le PMSD immédiatement après la rupture de la coalition d'alors le 12 novembre, Conférence de Presse du PMSD, "Je tiens à déclarer", Jules Kénié parle, rapporté par *Le Mauricien* "Je tiens à déclarer de la façon la plus formelle que le PMSD n'est pas contre le principe de céder les Chagos, ou que le principe de céder les Chagos, ou que cet archipel devienne un centre de communications pour faciliter la défense de l'Occident — et là on joue sur les mots — le PMSD en approuve le principe ; il est en désaccord sur les termes et les conditions de cette cession". Duval, comme toujours, les pieds dans le plat ajoute, Duval est lui aussi d'accord en principe et ajoute, "Si l'Angleterre et les USA... n'avaient pas d'argent, l'île Maurice leur aurait donné la base." Qu'on ne vienne pas fausser les faits historiques. Tout cela montre que non seulement le parti travailliste, mais que le PMSD aussi était parfaitement conscient que c'était une base *for defence purposes* et pas seulement de communications et que, il y a eu en fait un faux pas historique — cela arrive à tout le monde, on peut demander que le manque d'expérience entre en considération mais qu'on n'essaye pas de fausser la vérité jusqu'à la fin de l'histoire finalement. Tout à l'heure j'en tendais le ministre des affaires étrangères dire "Correct, Correct" quand je lisais, le Premier Ministre disant à la Chambre ici le 26 juin 1974 que l'île Maurice avait gardé ses *landing rights*, entre autres, à Diego Garcia. En réponse à une question parlementaire ici à la Chambre, Question B 635, de l'hon. Amédée Darga, qui demande "... state if Mauritius has retained its landing rights over the island, state if there has been any breach of agreement etc." Le Premier Ministre lui-même répond "Sir, the reply to parts 1 and 2, c'à.d. *landing rights*, is generally

negative, because it is not our territory although the plea was made during the constitutional conference, that any plane in difficulty should get the right of landing; hence, there is no breach of any agreement". "It is not our territory; we don't have landing rights", et puis ici, on nous dit "correct, correct" comme si l'île Maurice avait gardé ses *landing rights*.

Le député Finlay Salese, Question B/510 "Will the Prime Minister give a list of all territories which constitute the State of Mauritius". Je me demande si le Premier Ministre, je sais qu'il est débordé de travail, mais avant de mettre des choses parcellées sur papier, est-ce qu'on ne peut pas réfléchir ? On lui demande une liste "of all territories which constitute the State of Mauritius" et il donne la liste, "Round and Flat Islands, Rodrigues, Agalaga, Tromelin, Cargados Carajos Archipelago", et Chagos Archipelago pas question. Vous savez que le Brandon etc. Lui, en tant que Premier Ministre il donne une réponse parlementaire, il exclut lui, Diego Garcia alors qu'il dit ailleurs que cela nous sera retourné lorsqu'on n'en aura plus besoin. En d'autres mots, he builds up the case against the return of Diego Garcia to Mauritius. Naturellement Sir Harold Walter n'a pas manqué lui aussi une occasion de mettre les pieds dans le plat. Autre question, cette fois-ci, de James Bury David, président du parti travailliste, Question B/760, asking "the Minister of External Affairs whether he will consider the advisability of arranging for a delegation of members of the Legislative Assembly to visit Diego Garcia. If not, why not ?" "It is hardly possible to arrange any sort of visit to any territory which is not within this country's jurisdiction". Donc ce n'est pas notre territoire, c'est en dehors de notre juridiction. Je laisse au prési-

461 *Motion* 11 APRIL 1979 *Motion* 462

dent du parti travailliste le soin de se retrouver. Pour conclure, je rappellerai pour ceux qui nous disent qu'on n'a pas vendu Diégo Garcia, je rappellerai que le *Financial Return*, c.à.d. le *Financial Report* — je crois que tous les membres savent que chaque année il y a les *Estimates*, et puis après une année d'exercice financier, l'*Accountant General* dépose son rapport pour l'année écoulée, il certifie que les sommes ont été dépensées ; telle somme, telle somme etc. Il certifie, en tant qu'*Accountant General*. Dans le rapport de l'*Accountant General* donc, pour l'année 1965-66, *Statement (G) Capital Revenue, Head L15 Miscellaneous — Sub-heading 4 — Sale of Chagos Island — 40 millions of rupees*. Donc, le Gouvernement lui-même, dans ses propres comptes financiers, a fait inclure 40 millions de roupies, représentant *the sale*, la vente, pas la cession, mais *the sale*. Donc je crois, M. le président, qu'il était nécessaire d'être un petit peu long, pour bien préciser les choses, et je crois que l'heure est arrivée pour le parti travailliste, au nom du bien du pays, et de son intégrité pour une fois, de faire son *mea culpa* et de se joindre aux autres pour obtenir que la base de Diégo Garcia, soit démantelée tout de suite et que l'île de Diégo Garcia soit rendue à l'île Maurice dans les plus brefs délais.

Pendant que je suis sur cette question de l'océan indien, je parlerai aussi donc de Tromelin, et de Saya de Malha rapidement. Dans le cas de Tromelin, nous nous élevons contre la déclaration faite par le Ministre des affaires étrangères. Nous ne pouvons pas accepter sa suggestion d'un tribunal international — je me demande si le Premier Ministre lui a donné le feu vert pour ça — nous sommes ici au cœur de l'océan indien ; Madagascar est à côté, les Seychelles sont là ; il y a une géopolitique explosive dans notre

région que le président du parti travailliste lui-même souligne le premier. La géopolitique, la décolonisation exige que ces îles soient rendues à Madagascar ou à l'île Maurice. Dans le cas de Tromelin, Madagascar a reconnu officiellement que Tromelin devrait retourner — à moi le Président Ratsiraka a dit " Nous n'allons quand même pas nous battre entre nous. L'important est que la France ne reste pas dans cet océan indien à travers des mini-colonies pareilles ". Le Président Ratsiraka m'a dit à moi donc, " Maurice revendique Tromelin, nous revendiquons Les Glorieuses, Bassas da India, Juan de Nova ". Est-ce que nous pouvons accepter que sur la base de pseudo-légalisme, la France transfère Madagascar à partir de tout un chapelet d'îles. Ce n'est pas sur le terrain légal qu'il faut se battre ; même le terrain légal est solide ; mais ce n'est pas sur le terrain légal qu'il faut se battre, mais sur le terrain géopolitique, sur le terrain diplomatique. Je demande donc au Gouvernement, de faire un pas dans la bonne direction pour de vrai, pour une fois de corriger le tir, de ne pas suivre cette ligne d'un tribunal international, avec un juge international etc. mais plutôt de s'associer aux Seychelles, à Madagascar, au Mozambique, à la Tanzanie, aux pays de la région, pour exiger que Tromelin soit rendu à l'île Maurice et que Juan de Nova, Bassas da India et Les Glorieuses soient rendus à Madagascar. Il est révoltant que tout à l'heure — encore une fois c'est la nature profonde du réactionnaire qui parle, il est étonnant qu'un moment où Ratsiraka prend position officiellement en faveur du retour de ces îles à Madagascar et à Maurice, au moment où Georges Marchais, Secrétaire-Général du Parti Communiste français, à la Réunion — vous savez que Tromelin dépend de la Réunion administrativement, le Préfet de la Réunion administre Tromelin, notre

463 *Motion* 11 APRIL 1979 *Motion* 464

territoire — Georges Marchais vient faire la leçon à Sir Harold Walter, à la Réunion — et lui se permet ici au lieu de se servir de cet argument, au lieu de prévoir l'avenir où il est inévitable que la Gauche arrive au pouvoir en France, à ce moment-là il faudra déterrer cette déclaration du Secrétaire-Général du Parti Communiste et le lui mettre sous le nez pour obtenir que Tromelin nous soit rendu. Au lieu de cela, on se moque de Georges Marchais, on fait de l'ironie aux propos de Georges Marchais. Donc, nous demandons en ce qui concerne Tromelin, que le Gouvernement ...

(*Interruption*)

Mr. Bérenger : If you don't even know what you say, it's not my fault.

Sir Harold Walter : Je n'ai rien dit.

M. Bérenger : Pour une fois je vous félicite.

Je passe maintenant à Saya de Malha. Sur Saya de Malha, j'ai entendu avec intérêt, lorsque mon collègue Doongoor parlait, j'ai entendu avec intérêt, quoique cela n'a pas été rendu public, le ministre des affaires étrangères dire, " D'après ce que les Soviétiques ont déclaré ..." Qu'ont déclaré les Soviétiques ? Nous avons dénoncé les Soviétiques. Je me souviens d'un grand placard sur neuf colonnes dans *Le Militant* — Pillage des bancs de Saya de Malha et de Nazareth — Les coupables : Coréens, Japonais, Soviétiques " C'était resté dans la gorge des Soviétiques, en passant. Qu'ont dit les Soviétiques ? Les Soviétiques ont dit " Nous pêchons sur Saya de Malha ; en dehors de la zone des 200 milles ". Or tout le monde sait, enfin, plutôt dans le Gouvernement, très peu savent mais tout le monde ailleurs sait que quand

on mesure la zone de 200 milles ...

(*Interruption*)

— je vais vous prouver comment vous ne savez pas, dans quelques minutes — quand on mesure la zone de 200 milles à partir d'Agaléga, dernier territoire mauricien, le territoire mauricien le plus rapproché des bancs de Saya de Malha, lorsqu'on mesure la zone de 200 milles, nous coupons à peu près un dixième des bancs de Saya de Malha, moins d'un dixième. Tout le reste tombe en dehors de la zone des 200 milles. Quand on coupe 200 milles, à partir de Coetivy, la dernière île seychelloise la plus rapprochée des bancs de Saya de Malha, on coupe encore un plus petit bout, presque rien des bancs de Saya de Malha. Ce qui veut dire que la vérité, est que 90 p. 100 des bancs de Saya de Malha tombe en dehors des 200 milles. Qu'est-ce que nous sommes en train de dire ? Nous sommes en train de dire nous, que l'île Maurice et les Seychelles ont des revendications sur les bancs de Saya de Malha, en dehors des 200 milles, non pas en se basant sur le concept des 200 milles mais sur le concept du plateau continental et des eaux historiques, du droit historique sur certaines eaux de cette région, mais malheureusement la vérité nous oblige de reconnaître que nous avons démenti par les Nations Unies. La conférence n'a pas encore terminé ses travaux. Mais je pense que le ministre des affaires étrangères est suffisamment informé pour savoir que le concept des 200 milles est accepté, ça, c'est un acquis, quoique ce ne soit pas encore officiellement dans un texte des Nations Unies, mais tout le monde l'accepte, cette zone. Mais les deux autres concepts du plateau continental et des eaux historiques ne sont pas encore

473

Motion

11 APRIL 1979

Motion

474

région de l'océan indien, mais en même temps nous disons que ce pays ne sortira pas — et cela le discours du Trône aurait dû l'avoir dit clairement — ce pays ne sortira pas de la situation présente s'il ne prend pas un nouveau départ. Pour cela pour nous, quelles conditions doivent être remplies ? D'abord, je le répète, que l'exemple vienne d'en haut, réduire le nombre de ministres, réduire symboliquement ne serait-ce les salaires des ministres, abolir les privilèges de *duty free*, éliminer les scandales, révoquer les nominations scandaleuses dans les ambassades, arrêter les ingérences politiques dans l'administration, le protectionisme, la politique des petits copains. L'exemple doit d'abord venir d'en haut, chaque jour que nous perdons est un drame pour le pays. L'exemple vient d'en haut d'abord. Deuxièmement, il faut un Gouvernement en lequel d'abord les syndicats se reconnaissent, il faut un placement qui révoquera l'IRA, qui le remplace par un texte de loi permettant la démocratie industrielle, qui reformera les entreprises, qui donnera le vrai pouvoir aux salariés, troisièmement, cela vient rejoindre ce que mon Collègue, Rajeev Servansingh avait dit sur le *self-reliance*, troisièmement il faudra promouvoir un nationalisme sain, mobiliser un peuple, une nation, en marche vers un avenir. Quatrièmement, qu'il faut qu'il y ait étape par étape avec les nationalisations, les réformes fiscales, la démocratisation et la décommunalisation de la vie politique en général, il faut qu'il y ait un programme socialiste sur lequel n'est que dans ces conditions que, de notre point de vue, on pourra parler de relance de la production, de relance de la productivité. Nous constatons malheu-

reusement que le Gouvernement actuel ne peut pas le faire. Je le dis avec beaucoup de chagrin dans le cœur, nous constatons aussi qu'il nous serait impossible nous autres d'entrer au Gouvernement actuel et de réussir à faire cela. Nous entrerions au Gouvernement pour devenir des ministres, nous ferions certainement mieux que la plupart des ministres, certainement, mais le pays ne prendrait pas un nouveau départ, il n'y aurait pas cette relance, ce nouveau départ du pays. C'est pourquoi nous disons nous entrons au Gouvernement, cela ne change en rien fondamentalement au sort du pays, c'est pourquoi nous resterons donc dans l'Opposition. Mais nous demandons au Gouvernement soit de prendre ce chemin, mais nous considérons qu'il ne peut pas prendre ce chemin, nous considérons qu'il est condamné, qu'il est prisonnier de ses choix politiques qu'il est prisonnier de ses différences de classe, donc qu'il ne peut pas le faire. Donc nous considérons le cœur lourd, que dans le pays la situation va aller s'envenimant, chômage, endettement, dévaluation possible, explosion sociale, dans un an, deux ans, trois ans. C'est dramatique, mais nous sommes en train d'évoluer à rebours de la situation 1969/70 où le chômage était explosif, la situation était catastrophique, le prix du sucre nous a permis d'aller vers une situation d'emploi, de création d'emplois et de chômage camouflé, parce que cela aussi il faut le dire le prix du sucre nous a permis de camoufler le chômage avec des baisses de productivité qui s'ensuivent, aujourd'hui nous sommes vers la catastrophe. C'est pourquoi non pas au nom du parti, mais au nom du pays, nous estimons étant donné que nous sommes persuadés que le Gouvernement ne peut pas sortir le pays de la situation où il est, ne peut pas lui permettre de prendre un nouveau

475

Motion

11 APRIL 1979

Motion

476

départ, nous considérons que nous ne pouvons pas déterminer vis-à-vis de notre moral vis-à-vis de nos engagements, vis-à-vis du pays, et vis-à-vis de l'avenir de ce pays, que nous ne pouvons pas entrer au Gouvernement parce que nous étouffons dans un carcan qui mène le pays vers la catastrophe, nous estimons étant donné que le Gouvernement n'a plus véritablement une majorité, étant donné les méthodes abjectes dont nous venons d'être témoins, et qui font qu'à Beau Bassin/Rose Hill ce qui se passe, met en jeu l'avenir du pays lui-même, est extrêmement grave pour tout le pays, et nous considérons troisièmement étant donné la situation dramatique qui se développe du côté de l'économie, du côté de l'éducation, et en termes de politique intérieure aussi, nous estimons qu'à ce stade il serait préférable de permettre à la population mauricienne de se prononcer. Qu'on aille donc à de nouvelles élections générales, que la population se prononce, d'un côté ou de l'autre, son verdict finalement aura force de loi et au moins, le pays, soulagons-le, pourra respirer après cela.

Voilà donc ce que nous estimons de ce côté de la Chambre ce que j'estime — j'ai été très long — de ce côté de la Chambre que ce discours du Trône devrait contenir, mais que malheureusement il ne contient pas.

Merci, M. le président.

→ Mr. C. Mouta (First Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue): Mr. Speaker, Sir, of course, I shall not be as long as my Friend has been. I shall try to be as brief as I can and before I begin my speech, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to congratulate the Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka for his last intervention because I consider his intervention to be an able one, a clear

one and a courageous one. Sir, in fact too much has been said upon our foreign relationship. The hon. First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes had spared no effort to speak on Tromelin, Diego Garcia and so on.

I am aware that my hon. Friend, the First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes is not a lawyer but he is flanked on all sides by fairly good lawyers. For the hon. First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes to have said legally, to have insisted at least, if legally enough Mauritius and the people of Mauritius through its representatives could have protested against the incidence of tearing away Diego Garcia, Sir, anyone with an inkling of international law, not I mean, public international law which has to do with conflict of laws, having to do with marriage etc. I am saying, Sir, anyone with an inkling of public international law would ask oneself the question: was Mauritius at that particular moment in our history a sovereign territory? Mauritius was not independent. Mauritius was a dependent land and legally speaking part of the extra territorial basis of U.K. At that moment in our history, we had two courses to follow. We could either have followed the legal procedure that is attended upon by the force of negotiation at diplomatic levels or we could have, as a people, declared war and opened war against Great Britain. We had only two courses open to that island which is a very small one at that, either we follow diplomatic courses at procedural levels or we declare war against Great Britain. And at that time guerilla warfare and all that was not yet imported into our local political parlance. In my opinion the people of the day who had limited powers because powers were being wielded from Westminster, the

477

Motion

11 APRIL 1979

Motion

478

men of the day did what they could. They had a very narrow space to manoeuvre. They did not have the opportunity to do otherwise; they were not speaking as representatives of an independent nation.

Sir, even if those men wanted to go before an international forum, we know what the International Court of Justice is, apart from declaratory judgment, apart from the fact of giving legal opinions on certain factual data — we know, going to the International Court of Justice would not have meant much; but it is very good to stand up, to speak up and to say that it could all have been done in a better way. I am only saying at least the hon. Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes, in an attempt not to defend certain people, but to state history in its right perspective, has made certain quotations from certain valuable newspapers, the hon. Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes has tried and successfully so, I believe, to situate the problem in its real perspective. No one in Mauritius, no one on this side of the House is happy with the actual predicament in the Indian Ocean. What should be congratulated is the fact that at least in 1964/65, we were not sovereign, we were not independent. Things were forced upon us but to-day we have taken conscience of it all. The Prime Minister again and again has made public statements, both local and abroad about our position in this country. We want the Indian Ocean to remain a lake of peace, not an American lake nor a *mare sovieticum*.

I am not going to labour the Diégo Garcia problem. Anyone in this country would have done what these men did at that time, unless it were a revolutionary party which would have taken to guerilla

warfare. And there can be no guerilla warfare in this country. All our mountains are naked and bare. A simple helicopter would catch all the guerillas of this country. There are no objective conditions for guerilla in this country. So I am speaking to my ex-associates. In 1965 what would they have done if they were in the shoes, in the skin of the actual Prime Minister? No more, no less but I am not going to labour a point which the hon. Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes has already done so well.

Sir, the hon. First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes has mentioned the problem of the Middle East. We are all aware that the Palestinian cause is a genuine one, it is a cause to be supported; but as a back bench of this Government, being free to speak my personal opinion, I am saying in trying to reach a peaceful solution in the Middle East, there must be compromise on either side.

It is not a question where one side is going to invade another side to its last entrenchment. I am saying that in the Middle East, there must be a vision based on compromise, on tolerance and on mutual understanding. Although we are not 100 per cent in agreement with the Peace Treaty, I repeat, Sir, although we may not be hundred per cent in agreement with the Peace Treaty of Egypt and Israel, yet one must be bold, must be courageous enough to say that Mr. Sadate, at least one man rising against a world of many, has had the courage to take the first step. I am not congratulating him for what he did. Still less am I condemning him. But I am finding out a fact that at least Mr. Sadate of Egypt took the first step. Whether he will be thrown into the dustbin of Middle East history, I do not know, Sir, but I for one, without

479

Motion

11 APRIL 1979

Motion

480

engaging this Government, speaking as a backbencher, I say that I believe in a moderate attitude towards critical problems. Sir, when you have got a crisis, it is not a man with high fever who will come and solve the critical situation out of it. It is a man with a cold head. It is a man with some moderation. Everywhere in the world where moderate men have come towards crises, they have solved critical problems; but where people with high political temperament based on ideological extremism have tackled such problems they have only grafted upon one problem, a thousand ones more.

I am saying, I for one, I am not condemning Mr. Sadate. I am not congratulating him but I am saying he took the first step and others now may do the rest and finish the arduous jobs. Perhaps better than he did, perhaps he has not been reasonable at all, but follow him at least in that pursuit of peace.

Sir, having listened to the hon. First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes one would be tempted to think that we are living in a continent, full of mineral wealth, thinly populated, almost in a cold region, one would think that Mauritius is not Mauritius but we are living somewhere in a quiet cool corner with a high standard of living as in Europe. But this country, Sir, is poor, very poor. Apart from sugar, we do not have anything in terms of economic productivity. Our tea is not in economic terms, a productive commodity. Apart from sugar, we have no underground wealth. We have no mineral resources. We are walking on one leg, a monocrop economy based on sugar. We are being visited by cyclones, if not by anti-cyclones year in year out. We are a tiny speck of a country. We are small. We are not

larger than Surrey in England. And if you take a few golf courses in England, that would be enough to make Mauritius. We are not living in a big continental mass of land. It is a tiny speck. We are devoid of mineral wealth, underground resources, only sugar and this is battered by cyclonic occurrences year in and year out. And what is worse, Sir, we are living in the midst of a fragile society made up of multi-racial components.

If you have all these problems and then you have a bomb in it called literacy, — we have given free education. Our people are the most literate people in Africa. You are poor, you are overpopulated, you are small, and you are highly literate. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is no wonder that this country despite its poverty, despite its thinness is considered to be the fourth or the fifth richest country in Africa after South Africa, Libya, Gabon, and Nigeria. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, this country despite its physical thinness, its poverty of natural resources, its over-population, its multi-racial social texture, is fourth or fifth of the richest country in Africa after South Africa, Libya, Gabon and Nigeria, and to whom does the credit go? Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now the hon. First Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes was speaking about the POA. But, Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are lawyers on the other side who have studied the Public Order Act. The Public Order Act does not cut only on one side. If somebody with a legal understanding reads the Public Order Act, even the Chief Justice and the Prime Minister can be arrested under the Public Order Act. I challenge any lawyer in this country to tell me if according to the Public Order Act the Chief Justice cannot be arrested in his slippers, and the Prime Minister in his pyjamas. This is in the Public Order Act. I have studied it many times. So, when

ANNEX 86

Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 10 July 1979,
Reply to PQ No. B/754

3871

Oral Questions

10 JULY 1979

Oral Questions

3872

Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Health whether he will say if patients attending rural dispensaries are given in regard to dental care the same facilities as are available to patients attending Curepipe dispensary.

Mr. Teeluck : Sir, dental care is not provided in dispensaries but in dental clinics. Dental care is provided at the Curepipe Dental Clinic and not at the Curepipe Dispensary. Dental care and dispensary services in Curepipe are provided in separate buildings which are at close proximity.

VILLAGE COUNCILS — TELEPHONE SERVICE

(No. B/746) Mr. R. K. Gungoosingh (First Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister whether he will say if telephone services will be provided to all the village councils where no such service is available at present.

The Prime Minister : Sir, the development programme of the Telecommunications Department includes the provision of telephone services to all the Village Council areas as soon as this becomes technically possible.

Mr. Boodhoo : As a supplementary question, Sir, is the Rt. hon. the Prime Minister in a position to tell the House how long will it take to provide each Village Council with a telephone ?

The Prime Minister : I cannot say at present.

CYCLONE GERVAISE VICTIMS — RIVIÈRE DES CROËLES AND OLD GRAND PORT

(No. B/747) Mr. R. K. Gungoosingh (First Member for Vieux Grand Port and

Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Housing, Lands and Town and Country Planning whether he will say when houses for Gervaise victims of Rivière des Croëles and Old Grand Port Villages will be built.

Mr. E. François : Sir, construction in these localities is programmed to start in May 1980.

SLAVE HOUSING ESTATES — FERNÉY AND ROSE BELLE — ROADS

(No. B/748) Mr. R. K. Gungoosingh (First Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister and Minister of Social Security whether he will use his good offices with the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund to have the roads along the housing estate of Fernéy and Rose Belle repaired.

The Prime Minister : Yes, Sir.

FOOTBALL GROUNDS — BON ACCUEIL AND CAMP ITHIER

(No. B/749) Mr. D. Gungah (First Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister for Employment whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Development Works Corporation, information as to the cost of the football grounds constructed by the Corporation at

(i) Bon Accueil and

(ii) Camp Ithier respectively.

Mr. Sacaram :

(i) Bon Accueil Football Ground —
Rs. 553,956.05

(ii) Camp Ithier Football Ground —
Rs. 981,261.98

3873

Oral Questions

10 JULY 1979

Oral Questions

3874

MARE LA CHAUX SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE — VOLLEY BALL PITCH

(No. B/750) Mr. D. Gungah (First Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister and Minister of Social Security whether he will arrange for the installation of electric bulbs around the volley ball pitch situated at Mare La Chaux Social Welfare Centre.

If so, when and if not, why not.

The Prime Minister : Sir, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee will consider any such request provided a formal application to that effect is submitted by the Social Welfare Committee of the locality through the Social Welfare Commissioner.

FOOTBALL GROUND — LALMATIE

(No. B/751) Mr. D. Gungah (First Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will state if the construction of the football ground at Lalmatie will start immediately after the present sugar cane harvest at Lalmatie.

If not, why not.

Mr. Ramelunni : Sir, the construction of a football ground will be started once the permission to enter the land is obtained after this crop season.

DIEGO GARCIA — CESSION TO THE U.K.

(No. B/752) Mr. H. Boodhoo (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Prime Minister whether, in regard to the cession of Diego Garcia to the U.K., he will state :

(i) if the islands were required by the British Government for communication purposes only and not for military purposes ;

(ii) if the Government had to opt for either the Independence of the country or the cession of the islands ;

(iii) the reasons why the islands were sold without prior consultation with the public or their representatives ;

(iv) if the British Government informed him of the lease of the islands to the Americans for use as a military base at the initial stage and, if not, will he state if he made representations with the British Government after this came to his knowledge ;

(v) where, when and with whom were the negotiations carried out ; and

(vi) whether he will lay before the Assembly a copy of the contract, if any.

The Prime Minister : Yes, Sir. The answer is as follows :

(i) for communications and defence purposes ;

(ii) no ;

(iii) Government Ministers and the Opposition then in post were consulted ;

(iv) No. We were informed of the intention of the American Government to construct a naval communications facility there ;

(v) in London in September 1965 with the British Colonial Secretary ;

3875 *Oral Questions* 10 JULY 1979*Oral Questions*

3876

(vi) no. There was no contract as such in as much as Diégo Garcia was part of the colony prior to independence and the Colonial power only excised it at such time.

Mr. Boodhoo : As a supplementary question, Sir, is it a fact that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister was informed by the British Government while negotiations were going on, that the base would be an Anglo-American venture, and if not, when did the Rt. hon. Prime Minister come to know about it?

The Prime Minister : We only came to know much later.

Mr. Michel : I would like to know from the Prime Minister whether he will say how he intends to recuperate Diégo Garcia from the British and the Americans?

The Prime Minister : We will organise a fleet expedition.

DIEGO GARCIA — SALE PRICE

(No. B/753) **Mr. H. Boodhoo** (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Prime Minister whether he will make a statement on the discrepancy between the sale price of Diégo Garcia as disclosed by the British High Commission in India in 1976 i.e. £ 5 million, and the amount accounted for i.e. £ 3 million.

The Prime Minister : Yes, Sir. As far as the Government is concerned, there is no discrepancy in the figures relating to the detachment of the Chagos Archipelago. The Government received £ 3 million from the British Government.

3877 *Oral Questions* 10 JULY 1979*Oral Questions*

3878

(ii) In September 1972, a sum of £ 650,000 was accepted by the Government for the rehabilitation of the displaced inhabitants;

(iii) Yes, the islands would be returned to Mauritius if the need for the facilities there disappeared. Furthermore, the benefit of any minerals or oil discovered in or near the Chagos Archipelago would revert to Mauritius;

(iv) The islands are used for communications and defence purposes. In many international forums the Government made the point that it would not like the islands to be used as a military base, equipped with nuclear weapons. The Government maintains that the whole of the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace.

Mr. Boodhoo : As a supplementary question, Sir, in view of the fact that we have preserved the civil rights, will the Rt. hon. the Prime Minister consider the advisability of sending a delegation comprising Members from both sides of the House to inspect and report back on the islands?

The Prime Minister : We have no jurisdiction over it, Sir.

Dr. David : Mr. Speaker, apart from the fleet expedition which is, according to us, but a joke, will the Prime Minister tell us what he seriously intends to do to recuperate Diégo Garcia?

The Prime Minister : I have already replied to that.

Mr. Boodhoo : I have another supplementary question: is it a fact that

after 50 years of the signing of the contract, the islands will be returned back to Mauritius in case the super powers do not need them, as revealed by the reply to a Parliamentary Question in the House of Lords?

The Prime Minister : If talking and doing were the same things, Sir, the dogs of Turkey would be butchers.

Mr. Bérenger : As a supplementary question on that matter, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister how he reconciles the following statements or answers: to-day he has said that the islands will be returned to Mauritius once the Americans and the British no longer need them; secondly he has said that we have no jurisdiction on these islands; so that's why a delegation cannot go; in this House to P.Q. No. B/510 set by my Colleague Salesse, asking what islands form part of the State of Mauritius, he states that the Chagos Archipelago is excluded; but, again to P.Q. No. B/760 set by the hon. David, the hon. Minister of External Affairs replied that this territory is not within this country's jurisdiction; whereas, to P.Q. No. B/634, the Prime Minister replied that the British Government has, since July, 1971, recognised the jurisdiction of Mauritius over the waters surrounding Diégo Garcia. Can the Prime Minister tell us how he reconciles those different statements, and whether, since we have jurisdiction on the waters surrounding Diégo Garcia, it is not possible for a delegation to go as near as the shore of these islands?

The Prime Minister : Well, we may have to swim it.

Mr. Dyalah : As a supplementary question, of the total amount of £ 3 m. paid as compensation by the British

3879 *Oral Questions* 10 JULY 1979*Oral Questions* 3880

Government could we know from the Prime Minister the total amount paid until now to the ex-Diégo Garcians?

The Prime Minister : I need notice of that question.

Mr. Bhayat : As a supplementary question, Sir, will the Rt. hon. the Prime Minister inform the House whether we have retained mining rights and fishing rights over the waters surrounding Diégo Garcia?

The Prime Minister : I have already given a positive reply to that.

Mr. Bhayat : I want to have a precision — whether they are the rights themselves, or whether they are the beneficial rights? There is a fundamental difference. What I want to know is whether we have sovereign mining rights and fishing rights, or whether we have merely the beneficial rights?

The Prime Minister : We have the right to prospect and we have the right to whatever accrues from it, I presume. But this is a matter which was taken up and I was told that we could not prospect for the time being.

Mr. Béranger : I put a supplementary question a few minutes ago — as I said, the Prime Minister said since July 1971 the British Government recognises the jurisdiction of Mauritius over the waters surrounding Diégo Garcia. Is the Prime Minister aware that, on the 26th June, 1974, in this very Assembly, he made a statement that — I am quoting Hansard, page 1947 of the 26th of June, 1974 — I quote the Prime Minister : "Mauritius has reserved its mineral rights, fishing rights and landing rights."

The Prime Minister : We have.

Mr. Béranger : What is the problem, therefore, of a delegation landing, within its right, on those islands?

Dr. David : Mr. Speaker, we've had but jokes, timid and half-answers concerning Diégo Garcia. Can this House have a serious statement from the Prime Minister as to what Government proposes to do for the recuperation of this island?

The Prime Minister : I have just said : You must send a fleet there perhaps.

An hon. Member : This is not serious, from a Prime Minister.

Mr. Michel : I would like the Prime Minister to say when those persons who have not yet been compensated will receive their due.

The Prime Minister : It is already in the process of being done.

Mr. Béranger : Will the Prime Minister say whether he is satisfied that the British Government has met the full cost of the resettlement of Mauritians who were living in the Chagos Archipelago?

The Prime Minister : The matter is still being pursued, Sir.

GOVERNMENT SHARES IN STATE COMMERCIAL BANK, DBM AND BANK OF MAURITIUS

(No. B/755) Dr. N. Beedassy (First Member for Vacocas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Finance whether he will state the percentage of shares held by Government in the following Banks :

(1) The State Commercial Bank

3881 *Oral Questions* 10 JULY 1979*Oral Questions* 3882

(2) The Development Bank of Mauritius; and

(3) The Bank of Mauritius.

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo :

(1) 75%

(2) 93.6%

(3) 100%

Mr. Boodhoo : In view of the fact that Government owns 75% of the shares in the State Commercial Bank, will the hon. Minister inform the House of the reasons why, despite other replies on para-statal bodies by other hon. Ministers, and despite one of his replies in or about 1973 on the State Commercial Bank, he refused to reveal any information on the Bank at the last sitting?

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : I have already answered that question last time.

Mr. Béranger : As a supplementary question, Sir, will the Minister of Finance tell us whether he has received from the Ministers on the PMSD side letters or notification in any other form, that they disagree with the State Commercial Bank extending financial help to the Flacq/Long Mountain Bus Service because, in their opinion, this is either illegal or incorrect.

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : I have not received anything.

Mr. Boodhoo : In view of the fact that Government holds the majority of shares in the State Commercial Bank, will the hon. Minister agree that it is indecent to hide information?

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : I have no further statement to make, Sir.

Mr. Bhayat : As a supplementary question, Sir, will the hon. Minister inform the House who owns the remaining 25% of the shares?

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : As far as I can recollect, I think it is the Development Bank of Mauritius. It is a private company under the Companies Ordinance.

AMBASSADOR OF MAURITIUS IN CAIRO — FURNITURE-ETC

(No. B/756) Dr. N. Beedassy (First Member for Vacocas and Floreal) asked the Minister of External Affairs, Tourism and Emigration whether, in regard to the purchase of furniture, kitchen utensils, household materials for the Ambassador of Mauritius in Cairo in 1976, he will :

(1) give a list thereof;

(2) state the amount paid therefor in (a) U.K. and (b) Mauritius;

(3) say whether a whole set of furniture is still in store and not put to use in Cairo, and if so, will he make a statement thereon.

Sir Harold Walter :

(a) & (b) Sir, the information is being circulated. (*Appendix VII*)

(c) No, Sir.

OCCAM & OAU CONFERENCE — VEHICLES PURCHASED

(No. B/757) Dr. N. Beedassy (First Member for Vacocas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister whether, in regard to

ANNEX 87

Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 13 November 1979,
Reply to PQ No. B/844

4837 *Oral Questions* 13 NOVEMBER 1979 *Oral Questions* 4858

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO — MAURITIUS RIGHTS

(No. B/844) Mr. H. Boodhoo (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Prime Minister whether, in regard to Chagos Archipelago, he will state if the islands still form part of the Mauritian territory and, if not, will be

- (1) give the reasons therefor; and
- (2) say if Mauritius has reserved its rights on the natural resources thereof and whether a study of those resources has been made, and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister : Yes, Sir. The answer is as follows :

- (1) the Chagos Archipelago was excised from Mauritius before its Independence.
- (2) the benefit of any minerals or oil discovered in or near the Chagos Archipelago will return to Mauritius. No study has been made of these resources.

Mr. Boodhoo : Can the Right hon. the Prime Minister say what steps Government has taken to exploit the natural resources of the island ?

The Prime Minister : We have had no opportunity.

Mr. Jugnauth : Does Government intend doing so in the near future ?

The Prime Minister : If there is a client, yes perhaps.

Mr. Boodhoo : Will the Right hon. the Prime Minister consider the advisability

of sending a Parliamentary delegation to the islands ?

The Prime Minister : The island does not belong to them.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK DRAW

(No. B/845) Mr. R. K. Gungoosingh (First Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Finance whether, in view of the fact that the Post Office Draw is sponsored by Government, he will say what measures he intends to take to protect depositors against the effects of the devaluation of the rupee.

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : Sir, the Post Office Draw has been introduced to encourage people to save. The prizes are of fixed amounts but are subject to review periodically. They are not, however, linked with the parity of the Mauritian rupee.

Mr. Boodhoo : Does not the hon. Minister think that Government should give special privileges to the depositors to motivate others to have recourse to this system ?

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : The rate of interest has been raised from 7.5% to 9%.

GENERAL MANAGER, CWA

(No. B/846) Mr. R. K. Gungoosingh (First Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Power, Fuel & Energy whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, the following information in respect of the present General Manager of the Authority :

4859 *Oral Questions* 13 NOVEMBER 1979 *Oral Questions* 4860

- (1) the monthly salary and fringe benefits, if any, drawn by him; and
- (2) the total expenditure incurred on his missions overseas since his appointment to-date.

Dr. Busanwan : Sir, the gross monthly salary drawn by the General Manager of the Central Water Authority is Rs. 6,935. Further the General Manager is entitled to the following benefits :

- (i) the free use of a car
- (ii) the service of a driver
- (iii) a monthly petrol allowance of Rs. 400
- (iv) a rent free telephone and fifty free calls.

The total expenditure incurred by the present General Manager on overseas missions is Rs. 41,383.30.

CWA — PROGRAMME FOR IMPROVEMENT OF WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/847) Mr. R. K. Gungoosingh (First Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Power, Fuel & Energy whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain the following information from the Central Water Authority in regard to its programme for the improvement of water supply in Mauritius, constituency-wise, since the appointment of the present General Manager :

- (1) whether the Authority proposes to issue a progress report;
- (2) the criteria used for establishing priorities; and

- (3) the total expenditure incurred.
- Dr. Busanwan : Sir, the information is being compiled.

(Vide Appendix VII of Debate No. 31 of 27.11.79)

ERECTION OF TENT, ON MR. PADYA'S PREMISES — USE OF CWA LABOUR AND EQUIPMENT

(No. B/848) Mr. R. K. Gungoosingh (First Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Power, Fuel & Energy whether he will, for the benefit of the House, ascertain from the Central Water Authority, in respect of the erection of a tent on the premises of Padya, the former Director of the Meteorological Services, if labour and equipment belonging to the Authority were used.

If so —

- (1) on whose instructions; and
- (2) whether he will impress upon the Authority the necessity of conducting an enquiry into the matter, and, if not, why not.

Dr. Busanwan : Sir, the Central Water Authority is carrying out an investigation in that matter.

Mr. Boodhoo : Will the hon. Minister say whether he will lay a copy of the report of that Commission ?

Dr. Busanwan : I'll look into it.

PRIME MINISTER — ALLOWANCES FROM PUBLIC FUNDS

(No. B/849) Dr. N. Beedassy (First Member for Vaccaas and Floreal) asked

ANNEX 88

Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 20 November 1979,
Reply to PQ No. B/967

5023 *Oral Questions* 20 NOVEMBER 1979 *Oral Questions* 5024

Mr. Jagatsingh : The hon. Member is quoting from the Constitution. As far as I know, I sought legal advice and this is the advice I have got and I have given to the House.

CHA HOUSES — ALLOCATION

(No. B/964) Mr. O. Gendoo (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Housing, Lands & Town & Country Planning whether, in regard to the allocation of Central Housing Authority houses, he will state :-

(1) his policy ; and

(2) if priority will be given to the eligible persons living in Plaine Verte and Camp Yolloff for houses built there.

Mr. E. François : Sir,

(a) the policy is laid down in a paper which is being circulated.
(Appendix VIII)

(b) This policy will be followed strictly.

CONSUMER COOPERATIVES

(No. B/965) Mr. O. Gendoo (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister for Prices and Consumer Protection whether he will say when essential commodities will be delivered direct to consumer co-operatives and give a list of those commodities.

Mr. Virah Sawmy : Sir, delivery will start as soon as the financial and other arrangements are completed. The essential commodities will include to begin with rice, flour, sugar, edible oil, laundry

and toilet soap, split peas and eventually cement and iron bars.

"NO PARKING" AREAS — PORT LOUIS — TOWING AWAY OF VEHICLES

(No. B/966) Mr. O. Gendoo (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Works whether, in regard to the proposed towing away of vehicles on "No Parking" areas in the commercial centre of Port Louis, he will say what decision has been taken following the recommendation of the Joint Traffic Committee of the Municipality of Port Louis.

Mr. Bussier : Sir, the matter is being discussed with the Police authorities and the Ministry of Finance, in as much as it involves purchase of new equipment and recruitment of additional personnel.

Mr. Gendoo : Does the hon. Minister think that the towing away of vehicles will improve the traffic conditions in the centre of Port Louis ?

Mr. Bussier : This is being done in many countries.

DIEGO GARCIA — RETURN TO MAURITIUS

(No. B/967) Dr. B. David (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the fact that the militarization of Diego Garcia is a serious threat to peace in the whole of the Indian Ocean, he will state :

(1) if there are any indications that Diego Garcia will soon be returned to Mauritius ;

5025 *Oral Questions* 20 NOVEMBER 1979 *Oral Questions* 5026

(2) whether he will show greater political will to recuperate Diego Garcia and whether he will make a statement thereon ;

(3) whether he has already discussed the Diego Garcia issue with the United States Government ;

If so, what has been the outcome of the discussion.

If not, will he initiate immediate negotiations thereon and, if not, why not ; and

(4) whether he will say when and with whom he last discussed the Diego Garcia issue and with what result.

The Prime Minister : Yes, Sir. The answer is as follows :

(a) The islands will be returned to Mauritius if the need for the facilities there disappeared. How soon this will be done, I cannot say.

(b) The Government believes that the best way of trying to recuperate Diego Garcia is by patient diplomacy at bilateral and international levels, and no opportunity is lost towards this end.

(c) The United States Government is aware of our stand on this issue and we shall no doubt press our view point when opportunity arises.

(d) It is difficult to give precise dates, but whenever opportunity arose, discussions took place with the United Kingdom.

Mr. Béteanger : Sir, the last part of the question was whether he will say

when and with whom he last discussed the Diego Garcia issue. Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm that he discussed that issue this morning with Vice Admiral Foley who has just flown to Mauritius in a military plane ?

The Prime Minister : My hon. Friend is full of irrelevances, Sir.

MULTINATIONALS OPERATING IN MAURITIUS

(No. B/968) Dr. B. David (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Finance whether, in regard to the multinationals operating in Mauritius, he will state —

(1) their names ;

(2) the names of the members of the Board of Directors of each company ;

(3) the goods they produce and the countries where they are sold ;

(4) the nature of the control exercised by Government thereon ; and

(5) the amount of money which they took out of the country for each of the years 1975 to date.

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : Sir, the information is being compiled and will be circulated as soon as possible.

PRIME MINISTER — PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS 20.11.79

(No. B/969) Mr. G. Folker (Third Member for Grand Baie and Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister whether he will give a list of his public engagements for Tuesday 20th November, 1979.

ANNEX 89

Mauritius Legislative Assembly, 27 November 1979,
Reply to PQ No. B/982

5165 *Papers Laid* 27 NOVEMBER 1979 *Papers Laid* 5166

Mr. Peetro : Sir, I am investigating this matter with the Chairman of the Commission.

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : The matter will be looked into.

COMMODITIES — REDUCTION OF SUBSIDIES

(No. B/978) Mr. A. Darga (Fourth Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Ma-gnien) asked the Minister of Finance whether he will state the commodities on which subsidies have been recently reduced and the amount involved in each case.

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : Sir, I take it that the Hon. Member is referring to reduction in subsidies made since the introduction of the Financial Programme agreed with IMF. Subsidies have been reduced only in the case of rice and the amount involved is estimated to be about Rs. 33 million.

Mr. Boodhoo : As a supplementary question, Sir, while reducing the subsidy, did not the hon. Minister realise that the poor working class would be the most affected one ?

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : That does not arise out of the Question.

Mr. Asgarally : Could we know from the hon. Minister whether the reduction of subsidies is one of the conditions imposed by the IMF in the package deal ?

Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo : I have already stated that.

Mr. Boodhoo : Is the hon. Minister in a position to inform the House whether big poultry breeders and shipping companies buy our subsidised commodities at the same price ?

TAXI LICENCES — ISSUE 1975 TO-DATE

(No. B/979) Mr. A. Darga (Fourth Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Ma-gnien) asked the Minister of Works whether he will give the number of taxi licences issued each year from 1975 to date.

Mr. Bussier : Sir, the information is being compiled by the RTLA and will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Baligadoo : Will the hon. Minister say whether he will list the licences on a regional or district basis ?

Mr. Bussier : I will look into the matter, Sir.

Mr. Brenger : Will the hon. Minister confirm to the House that, in no case, does he, personally, ever interfere with the RTLA as far as the granting of taxi licences is concerned ?

Mr. Bussier : There is absolutely no difficulty in giving that undertaking.

Mr. Michel : I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has received requests from taxi-drivers to grant them two gallons of petrol at a reduced price ?

Mr. Speaker : This does not arise under the Question.

SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT PLACES OF WORK — REGULATIONS

(No. B/980) Mr. A. Darga (Fourth Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Ma-

5167 *Papers Laid* 27 NOVEMBER 1979 *Papers Laid* 5168

gnien) asked the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations whether he will say when he proposes to implement the new Safety, Health and Welfare at Places of Work Regulations which were approved by the Labour Advisory Board on 29th September 1978.

Mr. Peetro : Sir, the Labour Advisory Board submitted recommendations which had to be closely examined and processed. This exercise will be completed next month and the regulations will then be issued.

DIEGO GARCIA AND CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO — EXCISION

(No. B/981) Mr. H. Boodhoo (First Member for Riviere des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Prime Minister whether, in regard to the excision of Diego Garcia and the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965, he will state

(a) where and when Cabinet Ministers and the Opposition were consulted; and

(b) whether members of the P.M.S.D. and the I.F.B. gave their consent thereto and, if so, when and where.

The Prime Minister : Yes, Sir. The answer is as follows :-

(1) The consultations were held both in London and Mauritius in 1965. Before the final stage the PMSD walked out of the Constitutional Conference, although at that time there was a Government of national unity in Mauritius.

(2) Both the PMSD and the IFB formed part of the Government when the decision was taken in 1965.

Mr. Boodhoo : Is it not a fact that secret negotiations were carried out initially between the British Government and the Prime Minister in the hotel where he was staying ?

The Prime Minister : No, Sir.

The Leader of the Opposition : Is it not a fact that, when the IFB was consulted, they were told that only certain facilities for communications were going to be granted to the British Government ?

The Prime Minister : So, we were informed.

Mr. Boodhoo : Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the excision of the islands was a pre-condition for independence and, if not, can he state the reasons why he, personally, gave his consent to it ?

The Prime Minister : There was no such question, Sir.

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO — EXCISION

(No. B/982) Mr. H. Boodhoo (First Member for Riviere des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Prime Minister whether, in regard to the excision of Chagos Archipelago from our territory, he will state :-

(a) whether the archipelago was included in the deal of £3 m with the British Government ;

(b) when the excision took place ;

(c) whether any Cabinet Minister or Government official visited the archipelago and, if so, will he

state his name, status and the date on which the visit took place and, if not, why not ; and

- (d) whether compensation to the inhabitants concerned was included in the deal and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister : Yes, Sir. The answer is as follows :-

- (a) The amount of £3 m. was meant for the implementation of development projects in Mauritius.
- (b) 8th November, 1965.
- (c) As far as our records show, no such visit had taken place.

- (d) At the time of the excision, it was agreed that the cost of resettling the inhabitants would be the responsibility of the British Government.

Mr. Boodhoo : Is it a fact that the islands were first sold to the British Government, and it's only later, after the inhabitants protested, that negotiations were opened with the British Government for their compensation ?

The Prime Minister : I cannot say. At this late stage, I need notice of the question.

Mr. Boodhoo : Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House when and where did negotiations take place concerning compensation to the inhabitants of the islands ?

The Prime Minister : It's difficult to say, but as far as I remember, I think it was a Committee that discussed the matter with the British Government.

- (b) to support the stand taken by the Malagasy Republic at the recent OAU Summit Conference to protest against the use of the island by France.

The Prime Minister : Sir, the need to claim compensation does not arise as Mauritius benefits from the meteorological data emanating from Tromelin.

As regards the second part, I am informed that the question of Tromelin was not specifically discussed at the recent OAU Summit.

Mr. Boodhoo : Is the Rt. hon. the Prime Minister in a position to inform the House whether the French Government has set up any military installation on the island and, if not, can he say what steps Government is taking to exercise control over the island ?

The Prime Minister : I cannot answer questions like that, because I am not aware of anything there.

Mr. Boodhoo : Is it not a fact that the French Government has declared Tromelin a "*Département français*" and, if yes, since when is the Prime Minister aware of it ?

The Prime Minister : I am not aware of it.

The Leader of the Opposition : May I ask the hon. the Prime Minister whether, by his answer, we are to understand that the Prime Minister does not know what is taking place in all the territories outside Mauritius and belonging to Mauritius ?

The Prime Minister : I am not aware of it personally, but I will enquire.

Mr. Boodhoo : Will the Rt. hon. the Prime Minister agree that it is strange and mysterious for a super power, with whom the Rt. hon. the Prime Minister has intimate and close fraternal relations, to take possession of the island without the Mauritian Government even knowing it ?

The Prime Minister : If it is the morality of certain Governments, what can I say ?

Mr. Boodhoo : Will the Rt. hon. the Prime Minister state whether, in view of the fact that we have an international figure as the State Security Adviser, he will send him to Tromelin Island to have first-hand information of the situation there ?

The Prime Minister : It is not his job, unfortunately.

Mr. Bérenger : Is the Prime Minister aware that first, the French Government is considering exploiting nodules that have been found lately in the 200-mile economic zone around Tromelin Island ? And, second, is the Prime Minister aware that the French Government is granting authorisation to foreign fishing vessels to fish in the 200-mile economic zone around the same Tromelin Island ?

The Prime Minister : We can do the same, I suppose.

PRIME MINISTER DECORATION "GRAND CROIX DE L'ORDRE DU MERITE" OF CENTRAL AFRICA

(No. B/984) **Mr. H. Boodhoo** (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac) asked the Prime Minister whether, in regard to the decoration of the