

GENERAL ISSUES

YEAR 2009

TOPIZE, JOSEPH REGINALD (KAYA) – MONUMENT (31/03/09)

(No. B/55) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the 10th anniversary of the death of Joseph Reginald Topize, also known as Kaya, he will state if Government will consider the advisability of erecting a monument in his memory for his contribution to the development of our local music and the creation of the Seggae Music.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, we fully recognize the contribution of Joseph Reginald Topize, also known as Kaya, in the promotion of our local music. I am thankful to the hon. Member for the question and wish to inform him that, in fact, my Ministry has received several suggestions, both locally as well as from Mauritians abroad, for honouring this prominent Mauritian artist who is renowned as the pioneer of Seggae music.

In the wake of the construction of the Nelson Mandela Centre for African culture, we have envisaged to include an element to give due recognition to the artist.

Moreover, my Ministry is giving serious consideration to the work and contribution of Kaya and to explore the best way to recognize the life and work of the artist. I would welcome all suggestions from any hon. Member to that effect. Of course, Mr Speaker, Sir, this will be done in consultation with the family of the artist.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a timeframe, whether a committee has been...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: As short can be.

Mr Barbier: Will the hon. Minister also consider the advisability of putting to contribution the MASA?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have mentioned all the stakeholders.

**NELSON MANDELA CENTRE FOR AFRICAN CULTURE –
CONSTRUCTION (31/03/09)**

(No. B/59) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether in regard to the project for the construction of a building to house the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that a first tendering exercise for the construction of the building to house the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture at La Tour Koenig was carried out in August last year.

The exercise was unsuccessful as by the closing date of 03 October 2008, only one bid was received for the project and the price quoted was around 72% more than that estimated by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping.

Taking into account the big difference between the estimated price and the bid price and the fact that it was not possible to really assess the competitiveness of the bid as there was only one submission, the Central Procurement Board recommended that a re-tendering exercise be carried out.

Tenders have been launched anew in March 2009. The closing date for the submission of bids is 07 April 2009

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MAURITIUS SOCIETY OF AUTHORS – MONEY COLLECTED, ETC.

(No. B/117) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Mauritius Society of Authors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Society, information as to –

- (a) the total amount of money collected by the Society for calendar year 2008 thereof, and
- (b) the amount of money paid
 - (i) to foreign organisation
 - (ii) local artists, and
 - (iii) the Mauritius Revenue Authority on behalf of the local artists.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Mauritius Society of Authors operates on the basis of a financial year running as we know from July to June, but as the question relates to calendar year, the full information requested is being compiled and will be laid in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as possible.

ORAL HERITAGE – PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION (07/04/09)

(No. B/138) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether he will state if a repertoire of our Oral heritage has been carried out and, if so-

- (a) by whom and
- (b) the measures put in place for the preservation and promotion thereof.

Reply: Before replying to this question, I would like at the outset to clear one issue to avoid any confusion.

Oral heritage, is, in fact, only one component of a broader process known as “*Intangible Cultural Heritage*”. The 2003 Convention for the “*Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*”, to which Mauritius is a party, defines Intangible Cultural Heritage as the *practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and*

skills, that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.

According to the Convention, Intangible Cultural Heritage is manifested in the following domains -

- (i) Oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- (ii) Performing arts (such as traditional music, dance and theatre);
- (iii) Social practices, rituals and festive events;
- (iv) Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- (v) Traditional craftsmanship.

In Mauritius, we have inherited substantial age-old traditions and rituals from our ancestors pertaining to the birth of the child, his first day including the giving of names, songs and other rituals in connection with marriage ceremonies, forms of original sega and other forms of communications regarding costumes and food items for particular occasions.

These constitute an invaluable treasure, which needs to be safeguarded. In this respect, a comprehensive inventory has to be carried out to identify those Intangible Cultural Heritage that are worthy of being listed on the National and World Heritage lists.

The National Heritage Fund which, operates under the aegis of my Ministry and is the national body to handle heritage issues, is presently working on a project to compile an inventory, as comprehensive as possible, of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Mauritius and Rodrigues as well.

However, pending the finalization of that inventory, I am informed that there are several other institutions closely linked to heritage issues, which are already working for the preservation and promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

I am tabling a list of these institutions and their achievement in this field. The national inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage Project by the National Heritage Fund will integrate all the works carried out so far. It will also identify and capture other areas of Intangible Cultural Heritage not yet covered.

With regard to the Preservation of these works, I have to inform the House that all information collected is being preserved in the following forms – written, audio, visual and digitalized, as appropriate. Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage has already started and is an ongoing process as just mentioned earlier.

As far as promotion is concerned, same is being done through: -

- (i) Publications, seminars, conferences and survey reports;

- (ii) Documentaries and radio programmes conducted jointly with the MBC;
- (iii) Heritage information have been and is being integrated in the school curriculum of students;
- (iv) The organisation of activities in collaboration with socio cultural organizations on sirandanes and folk songs.

Once the National Inventory is completed, I intend to formulate a long-term strategy for the promotion of Intangible Cultural heritage in a structured manner.

ENTERTAINMENT SECTOR – SALARY SCALE STRUCTURE (14/04/09)

(No. B/211) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the entertainment sector, he will state if Government will consider introducing entertainment laws and, if so –

- (a) when;
- (b) it is proposed to work out a salary scale structure for the sector.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr.Speaker, Sir, I am aware of problems prevailing in the entertainment sector due to the absence of a legal framework. The quantum of pay to performing artists in the entertainment sector is a matter of great concern to me. In fact, it has come to my knowledge that there exists some sort of exploitation of artists going on in that sector.

I wish to inform the House that my Ministry with the assistance of UNESCO and the Mauritius Research Council is presently conducting a study on the Cultural Industry in Mauritius. The study comprises *inter alia* the status of our Cultural Industry including the entertainment sector and recommendations for improvement. The findings will enable us to introduce appropriate measures for the development of the sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the final report of the study will be ready by June this year. The recommendations of the study will be validated after consultations with all stakeholders.

I cannot at this point in time pre-empt the recommendations but what I can say is that when an emerging economic sector grows and reaches a certain level, it becomes imperative to have a legal framework to regulate it. This legal framework may also include the question of remuneration of artists and which can only be in line with the new philosophy of the new labour legislations.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell the House whether he

is in possession of any draft of the copyright law emanating from the stakeholders such as MASA, the Police and the Customs?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, we are working very actively on that.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will agree with me that there should be a contribution of the Ministry of Tourism because in many cases this is where the cultural industry thrives? As he rightly pointed out, there is a lot of exploitation. For example, many of those Sega dancers are getting up to Rs100 for the show, and there are even minors. Something can be done there. There is a lot of scope of what can be done in the cultural and tourism industry.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I fully agree and, as I said, we are going to consult all stakeholders.

Mrs Perrier: Is the hon. Minister aware that children are often used for entertainment, especially in the tourism sector? Will the hon. Minister cater for this aspect also in the new regulation?

Dr. Bunwaree: Certainly, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give us an idea when all of these measures are going to be in force?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I said that we have to wait for the report, which I expect to get at the end of the month of June, and then we will have a meeting with the stakeholders. The hon. Member can rely upon me to go as quickly as possible.

HAJJ MISSION 2008 & PRE-HAJJ MISSION 2009 (14/04/09)

(No. B/239) Mr S. Lauthan (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Hajj pilgrimage, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Islamic Cultural Centre, information as to-

(a) The composition of the -
Hajj mission 2008;

Pre-Hajj Mission 2009 and

(b) The remedial measures he proposes to take to avoid any shortcomings for the forthcoming Hajj.

Reply: (The Minister of Housing and Lands): The Hajj Mission of 2008 was composed as follows-

Mr Nazeer Abdus Samad

Mr Abdullatif Yusuf

Mr Atchia Aboo Bakar
Dr Farhad Kauroo
Mr Badullah Twaher
Mr Aboo Bakar Manjoo
Mr Swadeck Somally
Mr Mamood Hosenbaccus
Mr Dawood Beg
Mr Salim Pirbacosse
Mr Neenoth Imran
Mr Saumtally Shawkat

Regarding pre Hajj Mission 2009, I wish to inform the House that I shall myself lead the delegation which will also comprise of Mr Habibullah Sayed Hossen, Special Adviser to me on Hajj Matters and Mr Hassen Beebeejaun, representative of Air Mauritius.

With over 3M pilgrims converging to the Holy Mosques of Makkah and Madinah over a short period of time and accommodated in limited space at the Holy sites at Mina and Arafat, problems are bound to arise.

Over the past years and specially for Hadj 2008, there has not been any significant shortcomings. In fact, there was no fatal casualty at the Jamarat. This has been the result of the continuous upgrading of the conditions in the Hadj cities and Holy sites by the Saudi Authorities and strict monitoring by our Hajj Mission.

In fact, strict control is being exercised this year on operators to ensure that the Hajj Pilgrimage proceeds smoothly.

**THE CENTRE DE LECTURE PUBLIQUE ET D'ANIMATION CULTURELLE
BILL (No. II of 2009) (21/04/09)**

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources

(Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Speaker, Sir, the purpose of the Bill is to set up the 'Centre de Lecture Publique at d'Animation Culturelle' (CELPAC) in order to encourage and promote reading through artistic, cultural and educational activities especially among those persons for whom access to reading activities is practically inexistent.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 1994 and 1997 my Ministry signed two Conventions with *the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) formerly known as the *Agence de*

Coopération Culturelle et Technique (ACCT) to set up a network of *Centre de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle* known as CLAC in the rural areas in Mauritius and Rodrigues with a view to providing library facilities, promoting cultural activities and sensitising the population on a wide array of topics and themes of common interest and also on the ills affecting the society. The cultural activities include conferences, theatrical and musical performances, training sessions in drawing and painting as well as workshops on literacy and story telling.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the CLAC project which started in 1994 has now a network of 16 units -12 in Mauritius namely at Rivière du Rempart, Grand' Baie, Triolet, Montagne Longue, Saint-Pierre, Bel-Air, Mahebourg, Chemin Grenier, Grand Bois, Abercrombie, Cottage, and Petite Rivière and four in Rodrigues at Grand Montagne, Malabar, Rivière Coco, et La Ferme. Apart from cultural activities, the CLAC units place at the disposal of CLAC users a wide range of books, magazines, and newspapers. The public response has been very good and it is even envisaged to extend the network to other remote areas.

The CLAC project receives support in the form of reading materials, equipment and part funding from the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* while the Mauritian side provides premises, human resources, logistics and funding for artistic and cultural activities. The CLAC is being managed on a cost-sharing basis.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the 12 CLAC in Mauritius operate in buildings placed at our disposal by: the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart and the Black River District Councils and the four in Rodrigues within the premises of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. The centres are operated by staff of my Ministry, the Sugar Industry Welfare Fund, the Black River District Council and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

These centres are responding to the literary needs of the inhabitants of the rural communities. Each CLAC is equipped with a collection of more than 3000 books and these are issued continuously with newspapers and magazines. Cultural activities are organised either within CLAC premises or in space provided by the other supporting Ministries and District Councils. The CLAC project has been very successful. Just as an indication, the number of subscribers and users have, on an average, increased by almost four-fold in a span of five years. This is a positive signal as there is a perception that Mauritians read less.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2007 the OIF, informed of the imminent termination of the CLAC programme and proposed to integrate Mauritius within its programme '*Appui aux Politiques Nationales de lecture Publique* requiring the CLAC to be converted into a new structure, namely the *Centre de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle* (CELPAC).

This proposal of the OIF was made in view of its satisfaction with the performance of CLAC in Mauritius. In this context, the OIF has proposed to disburse an amount of euros 170,000, that is, around Rs8 m. over a period of three years to set up the new structure.

In addition the OIF also intends to equip the CELPAC with pedagogical tools such as computers, CDs, DVDs, games and cinema kits.

However, the proposals of the OIF was conditional to the new venture being operated by specific independent structure responsible for the promotion of public reading as is the case in other countries like Burkina Faso, Burundi, Haiti, Lebanon, Madagascar and Mauritania. According to the OIF, CELPAC is an improved tool for the promotion of grassroot level. The culture of reading will thus be given a new boost.

To give effect to the new proposal from the OIF for the integration of Mauritius in its new public reading programme, that is, *Appui aux Politiques Nationales de Lecture Publique*, and to provide for the affairs of the new structure to be managed by an independent body, prerequisites of the OIF, it has become necessary to set up this new structure by way of an Act of Parliament.

Accordingly, Mr Speaker, Sir, in response to the requirements from the OIF, my Ministry has worked out the draft CELPAC Bill based on the model of the President's Fund for Creative Writing in English. With this proposed model, the CELPAC will be managed by a Committee established under an Act, instead of its management directly by my Ministry, as is presently the case. The personnel, logistics, and running costs will continue to be provided by the same public authorities. Additionally, besides receiving donations and grants from the OIF, the CELPAC will be in a position to tap other sources.

Coming to the Bill itself, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to point out that its main provisions focus on the objects of CELPAC, namely –

- (i) make reading materials easily accessible to the public;
- (ii) encourage and promote reading, and
- (iii) organise artistic, cultural and educational activities

In order to fulfill its objects effectively, the CELPAC will, besides reading materials, also lend audiovisuals to its subscribers. Moreover, the CELPAC network will gradually be extended by the opening of new centres both in Mauritius and Rodrigues. Activities such as lectures, seminars and conferences in artistic, cultural and educational fields will continue to be included in the programme of CELPAC. CELPAC will maintain its collaboration with the OIF and cooperate and establish links with other institutions having similar objects

to those of CELPAC.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bill provides for the CELPAC to fix and levy fees or charges and raise funds and incur expenditure.

The CELPAC will be managed by a committee comprising a Chairperson, representatives from my Ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the Ministry of Local Government, Rodrigues and the Outer Islands, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, the National Library, L'*Alliance Française*, a local writer and a person having experience in matters related to artistic creativity and cultural events.

Mr Speaker, Sir, presently the personnel of CLAC units work under the supervision of an Adviser, Mrs Chasle, who is the *Responsable Nationale* and a Culture Officer acting as the CLAC Coordinator. Given that the running of the CLAC programme has been a success, the present arrangements in terms of personnel will be maintained. The set-up will further be straightened with the coming into force of the CELPAC.

In fact, the legislation provides for the Supervising Officer of my Ministry to designate a public officer to be the Officer in Charge of CELPAC and such number of public officers as the committee may require in the performance of its functions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, once the CELPAC Bill is passed, a new Convention will be signed between the OIF and my Ministry for the implementation of this new venture.

This Government Mr Speaker, Sir, is perfectly aware of the importance of inculcating reading habits in the Mauritian population and has thus committed itself vis-à-vis the OIF to enact the CELPAC legislation. Government considers reading an important skill that needs to be developed particularly in children because it fuels their imagination, encourages quick learning, widens their views, expands their horizons and stimulates their curiosity. It is therefore imperative for children to know that reading is not only essential for survival in the world of schools and universities, but in adult life as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, reading should be viewed as a pleasurable activity, which expose people to a wide range of vocabulary and opportunities like developing one's self confidence and public speaking skills.

Moreover, as children tend to imitate the world around them, carefully chosen

stories and books not only have a position influence on them but also sensitise them to cater for the needs of others. For example, books can encourage children to develop moral values such as being more cooperative, sharing with others, being kind to people and animals or respecting the environment.

Reading can also enhance children's social skills. Although reading is essentially pictured as a solitary activity, in certain circumstances reading can be a socialising activity. For example, a parent or grandparent reading a story aloud, can be a great opportunity for adult and child to share some quiet and relaxed quality time together, away from the rush and stresses of the business of daily living. They can spend a few minutes of precious time by sharing ideas that are contained in the story.

Parents need to inspire their children to read. There are so many ways in which reading can be an important source of knowledge and pleasure that can last a lifetime. This desire to read should at all times be nurtured in children.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, despite all the advantages that reading brings, yet it is unfortunate that today's generation seem to prefer the digital culture to the writing and reading culture. Nowadays it is a pity that children spend more time watching television, browsing the net, downloading games or films, text messaging and on audio and e-books. Research has shown that there is a decline in reading habits among the youngsters. This has led most children with learning disabilities to have problems with reading and related language skills. Children with poor reading skills end up receiving poor grades, get easily distracted and frustrated, have behaviour problems, seem to dislike school and often fail to develop to their full potentials.

Our children need help to develop the ability to read so that they can comprehend subjects better at school.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is why Government is laying much emphasis to boost up reading habits in the Mauritian population. The CELPAC, like the CLAC, will continue to play a crucial role in carrying out an aggressive campaign to motivate people and students from all corners of Mauritius, particularly the rural areas to make optimum use of CELPAC. Just as the CLAC, the CELPAC will continue to be stuffed with a whole gamut of reading materials such as books, magazines, *bandes dessinées* and audiovisuals that will suit the tastes of one and all. The magic of reading opens up a whole wonderful world full of literature where adults and children can enjoy side by side.

The aim of the Government is to instill in the population, particularly the most vulnerable groups of the society, a sense of discovering pleasure in reading and widen their knowledge in different fields.

My Ministry with the collaboration of the Early Childhood Care

and Educational Authority has initiated a programme specifically to sensitise kids of preprimary schools on the importance of reading. This will help bridging the gap between the levels of pre-primary and primary schools children.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to boosting up reading habits among primary level students, the CELPAC will be called upon to organise training workshop with primary school teachers and Parent Teachers Associations found in the CELPAC vicinity, with a view to sensitising them on the benefits of a reading culture and to show to them how to arouse the interest of a child to read through the organisation of a cultural activity.

As such, Mr Speaker, Sir, CELPAC will continue to organise cultural activities at their respective centres –

- to mark important events such as National Day, Abolition of Slavery, Christmas, *Journée de la Francophonie*, World Theatre Day, World Book Day, *Fête du Pain*, Dance Day and Music Day,
- to hold talks on important subjects such as *la Francophonie*, the Lomé Convention, the ACP and SADC groups of countries;
- to sensitise the population on social problems affecting the society like negative effects of smoking and taking illicit drugs, health problems such as SIDA;
- to hold exhibitions on the lives and achievements of important personalities like Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and
- to organise various types of competition such as reading poem, painting, song, dance and quiz.

The OIF lays emphasis on the holding of cultural activities as it helps to attract a great number of people towards the reading centres. Apart from enjoying the show, the inhabitants are invited to effect a guided visit of the centre to sensitise them on its aims and objectives. In so doing, the centres welcome new adherents while retaining the existing ones.

M. le président si vous permettez, j'ajouterais maintenant quelques mots en français.

L'Organisation Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie (OIF), qui vient de fêter ses 36 ans, a, comme objectif principal, la promotion de la langue française dans les 63 états et gouvernements qui constituent son espace géographique.

La francophonie qui se veut un espace de partage culturel a pour but de préserver et promouvoir la diversité culturelle dans tout l'espace francophone. Je dois souligner que le projet CLAC à Maurice a rencontré un grand succès grâce à l'appui de l'OIF. Je tiens à remercier l'OIF pour son soutien au programme CLAC et aussi son apport dans

l'implantation de la nouvelle structure CELPAC et sa dotation en termes d'équipements et de financements.

Le CELPAC, M. le président, offre un éventail de services propres à promouvoir le plaisir de lire à travers un fonds important d'ouvrages soigneusement sélectionnés par les services de l'OIF (encyclopédies, dictionnaires, romans jeunes et romans adultes, bandes dessinées pour jeunes enfants et adolescents, livres éducatifs et ouvrages de références tels que livre de cuisine, de couture, de jardinage, etc). Complémentairement, car, bien sur, rien ne saurait remplacer l'objet-livre, CELPAC offre des services propres à promouvoir le plaisir de lire à travers des animations culturelles autour du livre. Ces animations sont ponctuelles et ont pour but d'attirer des lecteurs potentiels et de garder ceux déjà inscrits ; elles sont d'une grande importance et très appréciées de la population.

Comme vous le savez, M. le président, la lecture est la clef du développement humain. Elle stimule et renforce notre pensée et doit être pratiquée dès la petite enfance.

Ainsi, dès son plus jeune âge l'enfant exposé à la lecture trouvera dans les fables, contes et légendes racontés à voix haute par ses parents, ses proches et ses enseignants des valeurs morales qui stimuleront son imagination et lui permettront de devenir un citoyen à part entière.

M. le président, je souhaiterais terminer mon discours en citant Jean de La Bruyère, un grand penseur et écrivain français du 17^{ème} siècle.
Je cite –

‘Quand une lecture vous élève l'esprit, et qu'elle vous inspire des sentiments nobles et courageux, ne cherchez pas une autre règle pour juger l'ouvrage ; il est bon, et fait de main d'ouvrier’.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr Faugoo rose and seconded.

(5.20 p.m.)

Mr G. Guinness (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Mr Speaker, Sir, we all agree that we must encourage reading in the country. We all agree that from the very early childhood, we must encourage preprimary children to read books, novels, poems. When the Minister was introducing the Bill, he said that the CELPAC, that is, the Bill, which is in front of the House, was a recommendation made by the OIF in the year 2007, whereby we had some 170,000 euros, that is, Rs8 m. which will be spent over the three coming years towards the conversion of the existing CLAC into a structured organisation, that is, the CELPAC. But I am afraid, Mr Speaker, Sir, that

we have been a bit slow in this endeavour. Let me remind the Minister that when he mentioned year 2007, there was a Cabinet decision on 15 December 2006 - nearly two years ago - wherein it was clearly stated that Cabinet has taken note that the CLAC would be converted into the *Centre de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle* following a recommendation by the OIF, initiator of the CLAC project. In the communiqué of 15 December 2006, it was said –

“As the project is being phased out, and in view of the satisfaction expressed by OIF on the status of the project in Mauritius, the OIF has proposed to integrate Mauritius within the countries benefiting from its programme “*Appui aux Politiques Nationales de Lecture Publique*”.

These 170,000 euros would be spent over a three-year period and would be operated by a specific structure. The communiqué of the Cabinet even stated that among other countries that will benefit, there were Burkina Faso, Burundi, Haïti, Lebanon, Madagascar and Mauritania. Therefore it is good, even though we are late by so many years, that now we are coming with this Bill to convert the CLAC into CELPAC with a structured organization. Later on I will talk about the composition of the Board, whether it is a good thing to have a Board of only civil servants when we are talking of bringing reading towards the people in the rural areas. But before I go further, I see that the objectives of CELPAC are more or less the same objectives that CLAC project had. But

I don't understand why one of the objectives, which was in CLAC, does not appear in the Bill. The objective reads thus –

“to provide facilities for the development of the rural community in the fields of education, health, technology, literature, etc.”

The Minister, himself, said - I heard him well - that CELPAC will organise talks, lectures, seminars on themes like HIV and AIDS, on health and technology issues. This was one of the objectives in CLAC, which I do not see in this Bill. When we see the objects of CELPAC, this has been deleted completely despite the fact that the Minister said that it would deal with the sensitization programme of the population on health problems.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have one staff, and we have been told that most of the CLAC centres are found in social centres, but we know also that social centres are not that conducive to reading. We have quite a good number of activities going on around; there are people going in and out in these centres, and therefore it is not so conducive to reading. These CLAC centres have remained, for a number of years, as the Gian Nath Computer Centre. It was a good idea to have introduced it. But it has taken more time to make it operational. Therefore, as far as CELPAC is concerned, we must give a proper training to the people who are working there. We must think about providing appropriate buildings. Money has to be set aside for appropriate buildings in rural areas. And I think

we must take on board the local authorities and the district councils, which can provide assistance to the CELPAC Board in providing appropriate buildings, which are conducive to reading, activities dedicated only to CELPAC. As it is now, all sorts of activities are carried out in these CLAC centres during the whole day. I think we must take on board the district councils, which can provide assistance in this field.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister has said that more CELPAC centres will be set up in several areas. We must think of those really deprived areas where people do not have the means to travel long distances. The Ministry of Finance, has identified, in its eradication of absolute poverty programme, 229 areas where deprived people live. The officers operating these centres should move towards these people. While organising cultural and educational activities, they must go towards these people. Instead of the people coming in the centres, I think there is a need for CELPAC to be more proactive; they should go towards these underprivileged areas, where there are poor people who do not have the means to travel in order to go to these centres. The Minister has said that there has been an increase, but he has not given the figures as to how many adults, teenagers, young children regularly go to these centres. For example, if we see in Madagascar - I went on the web to see how CLAC is operating there - in the year 2007, 250,000 people benefited from the CLAC activities there. In Niger, 3,500 women and children living in underprivileged villages benefited from the activities of CLAC centres.

The Minister did not give the number of people - if he has the statistics on a yearly basis - young, adults, children who go to these CLAC centres. We must be more proactive and set up these CLAC centres in the deprived rural areas. We must also take on board the different NGOs because you have good NGOs in rural areas willing to work for the advancement and the promotion of education, for the promotion of cultural activities. I think CELPAC should take them on board, should ask for their collaboration so as to do good jobs. We have also the different cultural centres that have been set up in Mauritius, namely, the Tamil Cultural Centre, the Telugu Cultural Centre, etc. We must work in close collaboration with all these centres.

As far as the composition of the Board is concerned, I see representatives of different Ministries, but we don't have stakeholders, for example, the representatives of these cultural centres who can help in organising cultural activities, as one of the functions of CELPAC is to organise cultural activities. There is no representative from the Association of Professional Librarians who could have formed part of this Board

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to benefit from the aid of the OIF,

I think it is high time that CLAC be converted into CELPAC. The Minister has said that CELPAC will set up more centres in rural areas, this is good. But we must make sure that we set up good centres, that we go towards

the people mainly in deprived areas so as to encourage more reading. Throughout the country, but mainly in the rural areas, we can feel that there is a need for the setting up of such centres so as to encourage reading and to encourage people to participate in cultural activities. These days when there is nothing to do, people just get into all sorts of *fléaux*, like alcohol, drugs, etc. These centres, if used judiciously, I am sure, will eliminate these *fléaux* in our society.

Thank you.

(5.34 p.m.)

Mr M. Peetumber (First Member of Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac): Mr Speaker, Sir, I situate the CELPAC Bill in the context of democratisation in the field of education and culture. Similar to the construction of the junior secondary schools in the 70s, the decision to grant free secondary education in 1977 which was another step in the same direction and to round it off, the granting of free transport to the students community way back in 2005. I, for one, have got a very positive bent on mind where appreciation is due, where praise is due, I make it a point to place on record my appreciation and congratulations for the efforts that are being done to extend these reading facilities to the rural areas or to those areas where such facilities do not simply exist. So, of course, I'll seize this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for coming up with this measure and, in the same breath, all his close collaborators who have spared no efforts in taking decisions that go in the right direction to democratise this culture of reading, not as the Minister mentioned, as provided by CLAC in ten or twelve centres, but they are even more ambitious to extend these facilities in those areas where such facilities simply do not exist.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the objects of the *Centre de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle* Bill are to encourage and promote reading especially where reading centres are practically non-existent, to make reading materials easily accessible to the public. I would like to underscore the words 'easily accessible to the public' and to promote artistic, cultural and educational activities are indeed commendable ones. By creating a reading culture in every important centre of the country, Government is giving an important signal to the population to return to the basics. In an era of liberalisation and globalisation, our traditional way of life is threatened with erosion. We are leaving no stone unturned, Mr Speaker, Sir, to overcome this digital divide. Nevertheless, even within the framework of a society governed by information technology, the book remains and preserves its importance for its intrinsic virtues. There is a wealth of human intelligence that lies in man's imagination, a word which is not heard very often nowadays; the imagination, which is enriched by reading has a creative energy, which construes new people, new emotions through fiction. The adolescence world must be made up of the real and the fanciful, the rationale and the supra rationale. Our schools must develop the taste for reading in our youth. It is not enough to feed our adolescents

exclusively on a diet of knowledge meant to be examined. Our teachers must assume their role as leaders for character formation. Reading builds character, because it helps to have access to the best minds that have found the best course. However, Mr Speaker, Sir, reading can be beneficial to our adolescents in more ways than one, even from the examination point of view. To start with, reading consolidates language acquisition which is the *sine qua non* condition for success in our education system. Reading gives us the power to juggle with words, to express our emotions effectively, to give our ideas with precision and accuracy and to ventilate our thoughts powerfully. These are the qualities that the examiners look for in the answers of students. Besides, to secure maturity, to acquire wisdom, to gain knowledge, to keep abreast of the ways of the world, to understand human nature, to come to grips with the complexities of life, we cannot depend exclusively upon our first-hand experiences.

This is so, because our life span of say 60/70 years will be too short a period of time to accumulate first-hand experiences relating to all kinds of situations people are normally confronted with in life. It is equally impossible to acquaint ourselves, through first-hand experiences, with brave warriors, eminent statesmen, renowned social reformers, astute politicians, reputed economists, mighty kings, celebrated scientists, inspired researchers and the like. Such characters are more often than not, Mr Speaker, Sir, outside the range of our daily experiences. So, we must necessarily resort to vicarious experience. What is vicarious experience? It is learning through the experience of others. In this case, it is learning through the experience of the authors, the playwrights, the columnists, the critics, the caricaturists who, in many cases, symbolise the loftiest minds with the most elevated thoughts. So, exposure to a whole gamut of characters from various walks of life and to complex life situations, depicted in works of literature can only enhance our experience and wisdom and make us more alert and richer on the cultural plain. Stripped of such inter-actions and exposure, we may be likened to the frog which, confined to the well since birth labours on the delusion that the well is the entire universe and that no life exists beyond the well. This is the limitation or the inadequacy of the frog, which suffers from a very restricted vision in view of the claustrophobic world to which it has been confined since the start of its existence. What is true for the frog, Mr Speaker, Sir, can also be true to an extent for the individual who is totally cut off from the works of literature, from the world of books, newspapers and magazines.

Mr Speaker, Sir, pleasure, entertainment, amusement, excitement, thrill cannot be derived merely by watching a Liverpool, Manchester United, Chelsea or Arsenal Football Match nor by viewing Amitabh Bachan, Shahrukh Khan, Jim Carrey or Brad Pitt. It can well be achieved by reading Swift's 'Gulliver's Travels', Robert Greene's 'Power', Shiv Khera's 'No Freedom is Free' or 'You Can Win', Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', Milton's 'Paradise' or lightest stuff like Tintin, Oui-Oui, Les Quatre As, Lucky Luke, among others. Books, Mr Speaker, Sir, can be a source of real entertainment and pleasure. They can keep us away from a world of stress and strain and can be a real boon in our lives.

Mr Speaker, Sir, through this Bill, Government is linking up areas in Mauritius and Rodrigues where reading centres are non-existent. While poverty has always been treated from an economic angle and never from a cultural viewpoint, we are bridging another important gap to alleviate cultural poverty. We are attending to the cultural enrichment of those localities, which are cut off from the culturally more advanced parts of the country.

Let us understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, today, the think global and act local philosophy has given way to think local and act global attitude. We must be deeply rooted in our culture, but we should behave like citizens of the world, the universal or international men, someone who has transcended the barriers of ethnicity, geographical considerations or religious fanaticism. The *Centre de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle* will create the link between the local and the global. This is the mark of cultural enrichment. Native culture is the lifeblood of our identity, but if we want to survive in today's globalised world, we cannot rest content with an ethnocentric or even national culture. Culture is that osmotic agent, which attracts congenial elements of different cultures, and transforms them to make them its own. Our Mauritian culture has absorbed many foreign cultural trades and yet it has not lost its intrinsic quintessential identity. The CELPAC will expose our culture to the francophone culture and, through it, to other cultures. We are better Mauritians, in spite of our exposure to our cultures; we have chosen to remain Mauritian.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would hasten to add, it is a beautiful thing that all these efforts have been put up by the Minister, the Ministry, the officials, the close collaborators. A lot of efforts have been invested into this exercise. It is important that all these efforts bear fruits. It is important that all the efforts that are put up to extend certain services to the general public, to the inhabitants of the rural areas, are executed in the sense that these services, these facilities are taken advantage of by the inhabitants who are targeted by this Bill. I understand that if these facilities are already there in the rural areas or in those areas where they simply do not exist at the moment, if we do not resort to a sensitisation campaign, if we do not increase the awareness of the people that such facilities are there, and the people in question do not take advantage of these facilities, this will result in a waste: waste of human resources, waste of financial resources, waste of materials that will be needed to make these centres operational. A word of caution here; when all this is being done, it is equally important that we launch a sensitisation campaign to increase the awareness of the people regarding the existence of these facilities in those areas. Not only adolescents, not only school children, but, as the Minister rightly pointed out himself, these facilities must be extended to the population in general. We should not only encourage school children, the adolescents to improve their minds and bring about larger horizons. All the inhabitants, all the population should be encouraged to read and take the advantages that are put at their disposal. I understand that some kind of effort will be done in this direction, so that people who are targeted

take advantage of these facilities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, no place in Mauritius is so unimportant as not to find itself in the mainstream Mauritian culture. The Labour Party has been instrumental in bringing about an equitable progress at all levels in Mauritius, be it in terms of infrastructure, in the field of education or industrialisation, in all forms of progress; every little town or village has known advancement. The CELPAC adds yet another jewel to the crown. This is precisely why I congratulate the Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources and, by extension, the Prime Minister and the Government, for presenting the CELPAC Bill to this august Assembly.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(17.50 p.m)

Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands): M. le président, le projet de loi qui nous est présenté aujourd'hui au Parlement, se situe, à mon humble avis, dans la juste logique de la continuité des choses.

Après le CLAC, le Centre de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle, qui a vu le jour dans les années 90, place maintenant au CELPAC, le Centre de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle qui, à travers ce projet de loi, vise deux principaux objectifs. Le premier est celui d'encourager et de promouvoir les pratiques artistiques, culturelles et éducatives en créant au besoin les centres de lecture dans des endroits où ceux-ci n'existent pas.

Deuxièmement, initier et promouvoir la coopération avec des partenaires qui partagent ces mêmes objectifs, principalement ici, l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie.

Ce partenariat, avec l'OIF, M. le président, est révélateur de plusieurs choses, notamment de la considération dont jouit notre République au sein de cet organisme par rapport à la diffusion de la langue française, car si l'OIF a choisi d'aider notre pays, ce n'est certainement pas par hasard.

La popularité de la langue de Molière au sein de notre République, l'utilisation quotidienne et quasi-spontanée que nous en faisons, avec bien sûr des expressions et des locutions qui nous sont propres et propres à notre particularité insulaire et mauricienne, qui la rendent si attachante et si unique, sa présence presque tangible dans les mots de la langue créole largement inspirée – vous le conviendrez et tout le monde ici j'en suis sûr - du français, fait de notre peuple un vecteur privilégié de la diversité des expressions culturelles et de leur protection, telle que ratifiée par les pays membres de l'OIF à travers la Convention Internationale sur la protection et la promotion de la diversité des

expressions culturelles entrée en vigueur le 18 mars 2007. Cette Convention prévoit en effet d'intégrer la culture dans le développement durable.

Or, quoi de mieux que la lecture pour propager la culture, M. le président? La lecture est non seulement un soutien efficace pour l'éducation d'un peuple, mais elle est aussi un des moyens les plus fructueux de conserver la mémoire du monde, de la propager, de la partager avec les autres. Elle ouvre la voie à l'égalité des chances dans un monde qui, malgré nos lois, en souffre cruellement.

Les vertus de la lecture, M. le président, ne peuvent être mises en doute. La lecture est à l'esprit ce que la nourriture est au corps. Quand elle est de bonne qualité, elle le nourrit, le fortifie, le rend apte à se surpasser. Lire permet aussi d'augmenter son vocabulaire, d'avoir plus d'aisance, de dialogue, d'entamer une conversation, de développer un esprit critique et d'analyse, et j'en passe. Pour toutes ces raisons, et pour bien d'autres, nous ne pouvons qu'approuver cette initiative qui vise à étendre les centres de lecture et d'animation culturelle à travers tout le pays.

Il serait en effet hypocrite de se voiler la face. De nos jours, il existe un grand nombre de personnes vivant dans notre société pour qui l'accès aux livres pour le plaisir demeure un luxe qu'ils ne peuvent se permettre. Des jeunes, pour qui la lecture, en dehors des livres de classe, est non pas interdite, mais, du moins, presque du domaine de l'inaccessible. D'abord, par rapport à son coût ; un bon livre de nos jours coûte cher. Vous n'êtes pas sans savoir que le prix des livres peut être très onéreux et, qu'avec la situation économique, les priorités de beaucoup de familles sont autres, mais aussi, et souvent également, par rapport à la difficulté d'accès aux centres de lecture publique qui se trouvent principalement en zones urbaines. Car, quoi qu'on le dise, M. le président, et je prends en cela ma propre circonscription comme exemple, il est difficile pour un habitant de Dubreuil, par exemple, de payer plus de R 80 pour un transport - un seul aller-retour - rien que pour se rendre à Curepipe et consulter un livre à la librairie Carnegie, bibliothèque pourtant ouverte à tous.

En ce sens, M. le président, le CELPAC viendra corriger une anomalie. A sa manière, le CLAC a accompli un très bon travail préliminaire. Dans les régions où il a été implanté – et le ministre l'a dit tout à l'heure - ce programme a connu un franc succès.

La lecture, mais aussi l'animation culturelle autour du livre suscitent un enthousiasme qui ne s'est jusqu'à présent, fort heureusement pas démenti. Ce n'est pas Mme Chasle, responsable nationale du CLAC, une des chevilles ouvrières de ce projet, dont le travail force l'admiration, que je tiens publiquement à féliciter, qui dira le contraire.

En effet, M. le président, les quelque trois milles livres de chaque centre du CLAC sont utilisés quotidiennement par les habitants des localités qui les abritent. Pour parodier Victor Hugo « On accomplit de délicieux voyages, embarqué sur un mot ». De

même, les ouvrages disponibles au CLAC font chaque jour des heureux qui découvrent outre le plaisir de lire, tout un monde de connaissances.

Le livre est en cela un outil magique, un outil de liberté qui permet également une plus grande ouverture sur le monde du réel comme de l'imaginaire. Lire c'est être curieux. Et la curiosité ouvre les yeux sur tellement de choses. Chacune de nos lectures laisse une graine qui germe, disait Jules Renard. Et qui sait en quoi cette graine peut se transformer?

C'est pourquoi, M. le président, j'en viens à la clause 4 du projet de loi ci présenté qui veut encourager les activités artistiques, culturelles et éducationnelles à travers la lecture. Il serait bon, M. le président, que ces centres puissent également promouvoir non seulement la culture d'autres pays mais aussi des éléments locaux. En cela, je sous-entends la promotion d'auteurs mauriciens dont bon nombre écrivent en français, création qui va dans le sens de la promotion francophone et épouse parfaitement les objectifs de la Francophonie, un des principaux soutiens de ce projet. Je fais un appel en ce sens au ministre. Nous avons, à travers ce projet, une occasion unique de promouvoir les livres de nos auteurs locaux qui souffrent si cruellement de sous-exposition au palmarès des oeuvres littéraires. En cela, le CELPAC serait une opportunité non négligeable de consolider et de propager la réputation de nos auteurs sur notre propre sol et dans tous les coins et recoins de l'île. On pourrait imaginer encore mieux, qui sait ! Quand on a encore la capacité de rêver et les moyens de concrétiser le rêve, tout est possible. Cependant, M. le président, une autre interrogation me vient à l'esprit, notamment par rapport à la clause 10(1) de ce projet de loi qui stipule –

“The Supervising Officer shall designate a public officer to be the officer in charge of the CELPAC”

Dans cette phrase, c'est le mot '*designate*' qui m'interpelle. M. le président, un projet tel que celui-ci, pour être mené à bien, doit être pris en charge par une personne qui possède bien sûr les qualifications requises pour cela. Il s'agit ici de mener à bien un projet qui comprend la prise en charge quotidienne de nombreux centres, – le nombre n'est pas mentionné – et cela dépendra certainement du financement obtenu, mais il est fort à parier que, vu le nombre de régions qui ne compte aucune librairie publique, que ces centres peuvent être nombreux.

Or, nulle part dans la section 10, il n'est stipulé les qualifications et les compétences professionnelles de celui ou celle qui sera en charge de la politique quotidienne du CELPAC. Si on traite ce projet avec le sérieux qu'il mérite, pourquoi laisser ce choix à une désignation et non pas à une candidature ouverte, même si cette ouverture doit se limiter aux officiers de la fonction publique, avec des critères de qualifications et compétences bien définis ?

Nul doute que cette opportunité donnée à ceux qui se sentent aptes à diriger un

projet de cette envergure serait un bon pas dans la consolidation de la foi en l'efficacité de la loi sur l'égalité des chances – *l'Equal Opportunities Act* - votée dans cette même Chambre il y a quelques mois de cela, et sur laquelle ont débattu un grand nombre de mes collègues présents aujourd'hui même dans cette Chambre.

Une désignation et la non définition de critères de sélection du candidat choisi reviendraient, M. le président, à concéder ou du moins à créer la perception que ce choix peut être réduit à une appréciation subjective, voire préférentielle d'un candidat au détriment d'un autre plus compétent qui n'aurait pas eu la chance de faire acte de candidature pour le poste. Il serait souhaitable, en ce sens, que cette clause soit revue afin d'ouvrir des possibilités au ministère, à travers le *Supervising Officer*, d'opter pour le meilleur candidat possible.

Pour conclure, M. le président, nous réitérerons ici notre soutien à ce projet. Comme tous les autres avant nous et comme nous l'avons dit, nous sommes en faveur de tout ce qui promeut le goût de la lecture, mais aussi son accessibilité auprès de la population mauricienne, du plus jeune au plus âgé. Espérons que nos suggestions, notamment par rapport aux auteurs mauriciens et à la désignation de la personne en charge du CELPAC, seront prises en considération.

Je vous remercie.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like, first of all, at the outset of the summing-up speech, to thank the Members on both sides of the House for their contribution and, of course, for their keen interest and positive intervention on this Bill.

I am happy to note - as I was expecting, in fact - that unanimity has prevailed and how could it be otherwise on the necessity to accede to this request of the *Organisation Internationale De La Francophonie*, to convert the (CLAC) *Centre de Lecture et D'Animation Culturelle* into the (CELPAC) *Centre De Lecture Publique et D'animation Culturelle* by way of this legislation.

I appreciate the cooperative spirit of hon. Members in this endeavour. Mr Speaker, Sir, all of us have felt the level of consciousness of Members, of the dire necessity to extent library facilities particularly in the rural areas of the country. This endeavour will not only encourage students from pre-primary to tertiary levels but also - as has been said by my friend, hon. Peetumber - the adult population to have access to different types of reading materials, to enhance the general knowledge; reading and writing skills and also to undertake research work. I am sure, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the enactment of *CELPAC*, coupled with - as you felt it from the speeches of hon. Members - a proper sensitisation campaign, it will boost up the reading capacity of our rural population essentially, but also the population in general I must say, to the extent that Mauritius can aspire to become a 100% literate island in the years ahead. Efforts will be optimised. The House can rely upon me to attract the public towards the library materials

of each *CELPAC*, that is, books, reference materials, magazines, newspapers, *IT* and audio equipment as well.

To respond, Mr Speaker, Sir, to a few of the queries or questions put during the course of the speeches of hon. Members, I am fully aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we cannot have it all over the island. In fact, we are going to try to extend as far as possible, but there could be difficulties for people to have access to the centres. We are going to take this as one of the priorities when we decide where and how we are going to allow this *CELPAC* to be implanted and to operate. The question was raised I think by hon. Guinness about the social welfare centres not being conducive. We thought about it. In fact, people before me thought about it; they exist, either in social centres, in a separate corner or in a specific room. This is the way that those who have been responsible for the setting up these centres have tried to give them some possibilities to be conducive to reading. Of course, it is a question also of finding means to be able to do it. We will try to speak to the Local Authorities whenever possible, and try to improve whenever they are going to set up these and use these criteria to give the people a specific and appropriate place where reading is, in fact, more conducive.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think hon. Guinness spoke about the lateness in coming with this project, but I must say that, in fact, the structure proposed by the Mauritian Authorities to the *OIF* to give autonomy to *CELPAC* had to receive the agreement of the *OIF*. The *OIF* was more inclined at the beginning, for the setting up of a new parastatal body, which would have required much more funding. So, we had to take all of this into consideration; it is not a question of doing it on purpose, but we had to consider all this and when we were ready we did not lose time to come forward.

There was a question raised also by hon. Guinness about the number of users. I can give the figures - we got them. For the year 2007, there were 137,645 users and for the year 2008 there were 154,629 users. I said in the Second Reading of my speech that the number had increased within the last five years forefront. So, you get an idea. In fact, I must congratulate Mrs Chasle who has been the responsible person. She has been working very actively and everybody is happy with what she's doing. In fact, she will continue to do the work with, of course, the new structure. I wish to take this opportunity to thank her and congratulate her as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a question of Board Membership also that has been raised. I must say that besides the Board, the *CLAC* is managed by a *comité de soutien*. I mentioned it very briefly in my speech just now - in fact, *CLAC's* works with the NGOs. We will be surprised to see the interaction of the NGOs and *forces vives* of the region wherever *CLAC* is implanted. We are going to continue with this close collaboration and it will be further strengthened. I will do all I can to make it as strong as possible and as interactive as possible.

The National Library, Mr Speaker, Sir, is represented on the Board. Insofar as cultural centres are concerned, the point was made, I think, by hon. Guinness. We have to agree that there are too many cultural centres for them to be represented individually or even by small groups. But the representative of the Ministry of Culture, in fact, covers the large spectrum and conveys the responsibility of cultural centres on the Board. The question of qualification or competence of the officer-in-charge was just raised by hon. Mrs Martin. She can rely upon us that we are going to find the most competent person. In fact, she has been so appreciative of Mrs Chasle. She can rely upon us that the work will continue in the same direction with the whole *CLAC* Board and the *comité de soutien* working together where people can deliver the goods.

Mr Speaker, Sir, insofar as training to officers of the centres is concerned, I must say that this is provided by the *Organisation Internationale De la Francophonie*. A senior official of this organisation comes to Mauritius quite occasionally for that specific purpose. Besides, the *Responsable Nationale* and the *CLAC* coordinator also provide training to the *CLAC* officers. And there also, it is a point that is very interesting and important and I would like to inform hon. Members that I will give my special attention to this question of training, because I really believe in it. There is also consultation with all stakeholders, staff, district council officers and others. There have been lots of discussions with them for the implementation of this Bill. We also want it to be a financially like structure. This is one of the reasons why we have come forward with the way it has been drafted and the presentation we have made.

Before ending, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to say two things, one to correct a possible misinterpretation. We should not believe that CLAC, or CELPAC now, is going to cater only for the French Language. Cela est très important. Il faut savoir, qu'afin de respecter la diversité culturelle et linguistique de nos populations, et conformément au desiderata de l'OIF, elle-même, nos centres, outre un important éventail d'ouvrages en Français, offrent une sélection de livres dans toutes les langues pratiquées sur notre territoire, telles que l'Anglais, le Créole, le Mandarin, l'Urdu et l'Hindi. Bien entendu, il y a une concentration en Français parce qu'on est aidé par la Francophonie, mais ce n'est pas limité à la langue Française. Le nombre d'ouvrages, répertoriés dans les langues que je viens de mentionner, dépendent bien souvent du lectorat de l'endroit où se trouve implanter un CLAC. Par exemple, les livres d'Abercrombie ne seront pas les mêmes que ceux de Bel Air, ou ceux de St. Pierre. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous avons également un système de rotation des livres entre les différents centres. Ces ouvrages, M. le président, soigneusement sélectionnés, sont achetés par mon ministère qui dispose d'un budget mise à la disposition du CLAC, bientôt CELPAC, pour leur acquisition. Il s'agit principalement d'auteurs Mauriciens et on va continuer d'aller dans ce sens.

Je remercie l'honorable Madame Martin pour avoir fait le point en ce qui concerne les autres auteurs, Anglais et Américains, pour les ouvrages en Anglais. La Chambre peut compter sur le gouvernement pour faire la part belle aux auteurs locaux

qu'on voudrait encourager autant que possible.

I think there is also the question of involving the education sector, which hon. Guinness has raised as a critical point. In fact, the thing is that education and culture are under the same Ministry now. First of all, the education system is taking on board cultural activities. The hon. Member himself is a teacher and educator, he must be knowing that there is, since the month of January this year, a renovation that has started in schools where there is an activity period for educators and all resourced persons to be called upon to go for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, like theatre, music and art. In fact, arts and culture are being used as a medium to improve the level and standard of education in our schools. So, *CLAC* is going to be more - as has been mentioned by members - interactive with NGOs, *les forces vives* and the local population around the place where *CLAC* or *CELPAC* is implanted to give them more energy to work in that direction. The education will, of course, continue to go in the same line, as I have just mentioned. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure that the enactment of this Bill is going to be a good thing for education in general and reading in particular. I must make it very clear that in addition to library facilities, the cultural component will be maintained and further strengthened so as to encourage interaction in the community, as I have just mentioned. Insofar as the *comité de soutien* has been very helpful in providing the support in the organization of cultural activities in *CLAC* centres when it was existing until now, and the managing committee of *CELPAC* will see to it that this arrangement is consolidated as cultural events attract both readers and nonreaders of those who are unrolled at the *CLAC*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, competitions and initiation sessions will continue to be held to popularize games that will be available to *CELPAC*. Additionally, audiovisual materials, I repeat, I mentioned it at the beginning, would be another means to attract *CELPAC* users as these will provide to leisure, education, information and culture. Other ways to democratize information will also be through Internet and IT facilities. Nowadays, it is a natural evolution for all libraries to be equipped with such facilities and it will be ensured that each *CELPAC* will be supplied with such equipment.

Last but not least Mr Speaker, Sir, the *CELPAC* will serve as a springboard for projects at community development. Information relating to health, education and environmental problems amongst others will continue to be disseminated to the public through its various centers existing and those which will be set up in the near future. This is yet, Mr Speaker, Sir, another vivid example to demonstrate the firm wish of the Government to facilitate access to reading materials to the most vulnerable groups of our society in particular. Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed

The Centre de Lecture Publique et D'Animation Culturelle Bill (No. II of 2009) was considered and agreed to.

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

On motion made and seconded, the Centre de Lecture Publique et D'Animation Culturelle Bill (No. II of 2009) was read the third time and passed

MALCOM DE CHAZAL TRUST FUND – BOARD COMPOSITION & MEETINGS (23/06/09)

(No. B/599) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Malcom De Chazal Trust Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to the –

- (a) composition of the Board, and
- (b) number of meetings held by the Board, since July 2005 to date.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Malcolm de Chazal Trust Fund Board has not been reconstituted since July 2005.

When the new Government assumed Office in 2005, it was decided to review the constitution, functioning and operation of the Cultural Centres and other cultural institutions and this was contained in the Government Programme.

In this context, a Ministerial Committee was set up to look into the matter and advise Government.

As regards Cultural Centres, as we know, an interim decision has been taken. As regards other centres, such as the Malcolm de Chazal and the Basdeo Bissoondoyal Trust Fund Boards, my Ministry is actually working on a repertory of all renowned Mauritians who have marked the arts and culture space in Mauritius with a view to finding ways and means to perpetuate their memories, philosophy and works for future generations and will come up with an appropriate framework for that purpose.

The reconstitution of the Malcolm de Chazal Trust Fund Board and the Basdeo Bissoondoyal Trust Fund will be considered in the same wake.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am a bit surprised to hear this answer and the ease with which it is said. It is through an Act of Parliament that we have got the Malcom De Chazal Trust Fund as well as the Basdeo Bissoondoyal Trust Fund. It is nearly four years now and nothing has been done and there are people who are attached to this Trust Fund. They don't know where they are going. There are grants – I suppose – from Government which are being given to these Funds. Are we interested to know what is happening with these Funds?

Dr. Bunwaree: I understand the hon. Member. As I have said, it was in our Programme.

There are other Mauritians who also have to be honoured. This is why I am waiting for the repertory to come and then we will see.

(Interruptions)

This is the decision we have taken. To be fair to the hon. Member, of course, this should not prevent Mauritians in any way, even my Ministry, to honour Malcom De Chazal in various other means. But, a decision would be taken very soon. Since I have taken Office, I have asked at least for that repertory to be carried out. Work is being done on that. It is nearing completion; I am waiting for that and then we will come forward. If there is the need to do as we have done for the cultural centres to appoint the Board, and if I see that there is no other way for them to perform actively, I'll do it. But then, I want to get this repertory to know how many such Mauritians should also be honoured in the same way.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, must I take it from the hon. Minister that since he has not completed the list of those he thinks have to be honoured, namely people such as Malcom De Chazal or Prof. Basdeo Bissoondoyal, we have to keep what has been decided concerning these people aside, until the Ministry has completed his list? It is as if those two persons do not deserve, until the list concerning others is being completed.

Dr. Bunwaree: No, this is the question of constituting the Board. But, we don't let the work be affected. The Ministry is seriously looking into that. In fact, we can organize all the functions that are supposed to be taken care by the Board and this can continue, and should.

Mrs Labelle: I am sorry, one last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. I was just looking again at this Malcom De Chazal Trust Fund Act. There is nothing that we can do without the Board and the hon. Minister is fully aware, because there were letters from his Ministry. Since 2003 and 2006, every action that was asked, it was replied, ok, please wait until the Board is constituted.

And now, the hon. Minister is telling me that something can be done. There is nothing that can be done without the Board and the Minister is fully aware. Is he aware of these letters?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer! Does he agree with this?

Dr. Bunwaree: What I have said is that my Ministry can allow activities and the functions of the Board to be carried out.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.30 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/600, B/601, B/612, B/629 and B/634 have been withdrawn.

VIEUX GRAND PORT – NAVAL BATTLE – COMMEMORATION (30/06/09)

(No. B/683) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to Vieux Grand Port, he will state if Government has engaged into discussions with interested parties, with a view to commemorating the naval battle that took place thereat and, if so, the outcome thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, in 2006, Government had set up a Ministerial Committee under the Chairmanship of the Vice-Prime Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications to look into the preparations of the commemoration of the bicentenary of the Naval Battle of Grand Port in 2010. I was a Member of the Ministerial Committee and, subsequently, I chaired an Organising Committee to work out the detailed proposals for activities to be organised for the occasion.

Regarding the question of discussions with interested parties, yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have had wide consultations with a good number of stakeholders, both local and foreign, including the French Government, the St. Malo authorities and many Embassies in Mauritius to enlist their participation for the commemoration of the bicentenary of the Naval Battle of Grand Port in 2010. The list of stakeholders is too exhaustive to mention them by name. Furthermore, I have personally invited suggestions

from the public at large through the press. I have received a number of proposals and many of them have been taken on board to make this historic event a resounding success.

A website in respect of this event will be launched shortly. The recommendations of the Organising Committee which had been approved by the Ministerial Committee were agreed by Government on 05 June 2009 and were made public on the same day. May I inform the House that the activities will be scheduled over a few months in 2010, and will coincide with the FIFA Soccer Cup to be held in South Africa, during which period we believe a number of extra tourists are expected to visit Mauritius. We would also wish the commemoration to bring us extra tourism mileage, especially at this difficult juncture.

Different sub-committees are working on individual activities and a Steering Committee under my chairmanship will steer the whole project. I welcome suggestions from the hon. Member, as well as other Members of the House who could be interested in this national project of importance.

Mrs Martin: I thank the Minister for his answer. I would certainly give him suggestions with regard to that. But, I wanted to ask him whether the Steering Committee which he has mentioned will take that into account and would be an umbrella organization to help all the other sub-committees? Has it already been put in place, if yes, may we know how it is going to proceed?

Dr. Bunwaree: We are in the process of putting it in place. In fact, the core group has already been set up. And, of course, as and when if we have to enlarge, we will.

Mr Bérenger: This is going to be an event of historical dimension. Have there been any changes in the Organisation Committee? Can we know as at now who is the chairperson and the members?

Dr. Bunwaree: The Organising Committee was set up by the Ministerial Committee. In fact, I am chairing the Organising Committee. Insofar as members are concerned, I will have to look into that and then I can submit the names later on the Table of the Assembly. But, I am chairing it myself.

Mr Dowarkasing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the same breath, would the hon. Minister consider the fact of upgrading the historical spots in Ferney, which is the neighbouring village specially regarding the first landing station of the Dutch and where the first sugar cane were grown?

Dr. Bunwaree: In fact, a survey has already been carried out and all the locations have already been identified and with the help of the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism there is a programme of upgrading of many of these sites going on.

Mr Rucktooa: The hon. Minister just said that we have an exhaustive list of parties? Is the French Government participating to the maximum?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, even financially.

Mr Rucktooa: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the battle there was a winner and a loser.

The Deputy Speaker: Put the question, hon. Member!

Mr Rucktooa: The question is: In commemorating this Naval Battle, will there be any problem with our relationship with the French Government?

Dr. Bunwaree: In order not to allow confusion to reign in the Assembly, I have to remind the hon. Members that the Naval Battle of Grand Port was the one and only battle which was won by the French in the Napoleon era and Mauritius was taken over a few months later by the British in another attempt. So, there is no problem with the French Government. In fact, they are most happy that we are organising it here and they are even participating financially.

Mr Bérenger: May I take that point? That was a very special naval battle. I know of no other naval battle throughout the world where guns were firing on British ships from the shore and the hills. So, there was a winner and a loser, *mais bien serré la course là*. So, I hear a lot of bias in favour of the French. Granted they won that and it is on *l'Arc de Triomphe* more or less the only naval battle. But I think we should take on board our UK friends also, I do not think we should be that biased in favour of France and of the French authorities.

Dr. Bunwaree: I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for putting this question. In fact, I mentioned in my reply that many embassies - I did not say the French embassy only - have been contacted and are still involved in the project and UK is one of them. So, let me give the names of the embassies, that is, the countries that are going to be involved because over and above the battle, we are extending it to all people who came to Mauritius in those days. So, we have France, of course, United Kingdom, India, China, Australia, Mozambique, Pakistan, South Africa, Senegal, Seychelles, Madagascar, Egypt, Oman and the Netherlands.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Minister who is the coordinator at the level of Government or the Ministry for this project? Mauritius will be organising that event. I think the image of the country should be preserved. If you'll have somebody with his image especially of lots of things of the past, so, we'll appeal to the Minister to have the right person with a clean image.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is quite clear hon. Bhagwan.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I mentioned in my reply that a website is going to be launched shortly where all the information will be obtained, but the coordinating person is the Director of the Culture Division of my Ministry.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Last question hon. Martin.

Mrs Martin: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has any idea of the cost of this commemoration and who is going to bear the cost as well?

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, the cost is being worked out. In fact, it will cost some money but there will be some way. Tickets will be sold to tourists when they are going to visit the places because we are going to have exhibitions. We are going to have, in the programmes, the reconstruction of an old town of Grand Port, an old town of St Malo. So, they will have to come and visit; there will be film shows also. So, there will be some revenues also. I do not think we are going to have problems on that aspect.

MAHEBOURG VILLAGE – HISTORICAL SITES (30/06/09)

(No. B/692) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Mahebourg Village, he will state if appropriate measures have been taken for the promotion thereof, in view of its historical importance and, if so, give details thereof.

The Minister of Local Government, Rodrigues and Outer Islands (Dr. J. B. David): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question. In view of the fact that according to provisions of the Local Government Act, the village of Mahebourg falls under the jurisdiction of the Grand Port/Savanne District Council and also as member of the Inter-Ministerial Committee set up under the chairmanship of my colleague, the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources to organise the forthcoming celebration of the commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Naval Battle of Grand Port next year.

I am informed that the Culture Division of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources in collaboration with the National Heritage Fund has already identified some 20 sites and buildings in the village of Mahebourg in view of their historical importance and in the light of the forthcoming celebration to commemorate the Bicentenary of the Naval Battle of Grand Port next year. A list of these historical sites is being laid in the Library of the National Assembly.

I am also informed that the National Heritage Fund is presently undertaking research on the cultural and historical significance of these sites and buildings which will be preserved and upgraded. Furthermore, the issue of a publication and the production of a documentary film on these sites and buildings are envisaged in the context of the commemoration of the Naval Battle.

COPYRIGHT ACT – AMENDMENTS (30/06/09)

(No. B/698) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources whether, in regard to the proposed amendments to the Copyright Act, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, my Ministry is already in consultation with the State Law Office for the drafting of amendments to the Copyright Act on the basis of recommendations received up to now.

However, a study on the Mauritian Cultural Industry has been commissioned by my Ministry and the University of Mauritius with the support of UNESCO since 2006. The report, which is an outcome of extensive consultations with the community of artists, performers and creators, will be submitted to my Ministry, I understand, today. It is most probable that certain recommendations for proposals will have to be considered while amending the Copyright Act.

This may require further amendments to be prepared or amendments to the amendments already submitted to the SLO.

Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to ensure compliance to international standards of the Intellectual Property Rights, the Board of Investment has agreed to arrange for the urgent services of an expert from Singapore to expedite matters.

All the recommendations will be taken into consideration while finalising the draft amendments to the Copyright Act.

In view of the multifaceted dimensions and complications of the issues involved like Information and Communication Technology, Intellectual Property Rights requirements, use of internet and border control measures, just to mention a few, the amendments will require some more time to be finalised.

I can assure the House that the amendments to the Copyright Act are high on Government's agenda, and we are doing our level best to finalise same within the shortest possible timeframe.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is not the first time we hear such a speech from the Government side. It's a long time now since the artists are waiting for the amendments to be brought to this Act. I am happy that the Minister has mentioned the IT problem, as we know today we have so much music which is being downloaded from the internet. An artist is having nothing for this type of transaction, if I may express so. Now, it is the moment to give us a time frame, and tell us when finally this Act or amendment will be brought to the House for a debate.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned, there are amendments which have already been submitted to the State Law Office. But I must inform the House that I have, myself, questioned many of these amendments when I took office. I just mentioned the complications that can arise, and I don't want to have a *travail baclé*. This is a very, very important issue. I want to go as quickly as possible, but I must be given some indulgence. I am going to go as quickly as possible, and do a very beautiful piece of work.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Minister say that, probably, today or in a few days, he is going to receive a report from the University of Mauritius on cultural affairs in general, having an impact on the proposed amendments to the Copyright Act. Will this be made available to Members and to artists? It is no top secret, and I think it will provoke a debate.

Secondly, I heard that we are receiving assistance from Singapore in such matters. Why Singapore, of all places, when we are dealing with cultural matters?

Dr. Bunwaree: It is not only a question of matters, because the most important part of it is the difficulty that has arisen, I must say, with the problems accompanying the IT and Communication Technology. As hon. Barbier mentioned, this is the real crux of the matter. On the other side, we are waiting for the report on the cultural industry from the University of Mauritius. I don't think this is going to hamper on the work that is in progress, but we believe that when the report will come, there could be important issues that are raised in this report that will have to be taken on board. But, the most important part is coming from the IT matters. So, we are looking into all this, and when the report comes from the cultural industry, I personally would wish to have a whole national debate on that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

MERCHANT NAVY CLUB – PULLING DOWN (07/07/09)

(No. B/746) Mr J. C. Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources whether he is aware that the Merchant Navy Club is being pulled down and if so, will he state if -

- (a) it forms part of the buffer zone of the Apravasi Ghat, and
- (b) any objection has been received in relation to the said pulling down.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was made aware of the pulling down of the Merchant Navy Club by the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund on 20 June 2009.

Following a site visit effected by officers of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund at the Merchant Navy Club on 20 June 2009, the reasons put forward by the Mauritius Sailors' Home Society, the managing body of the Merchant Navy Club, for this demolition, were that the building was in a derelict state and was on the verge of collapsing and had become a threat to the immediate neighbourhood and environment. Consequently, this situation had left them with no option but to demolish the structures that had already fallen apart, the more so as the building was not insured, as no insurance company was willing to provide a cover due to its derelict state.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund has confirmed that the land on which stands the Merchant Navy Club forms part of the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat.

Regarding part (b) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer is no. However, on 11 June 2009, after having been verbally informed by a member of the Seafarers Welfare Fund of the sale and demolition of the Merchant Navy Club, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund informed my Ministry of same and lodged an objection to the Municipal Council of Port Louis, through a letter dated 12 June 2009, expressing its deep concern thereto, and requested the Municipality to take action to prevent the demolition of that building in view of its historical value.

The Municipal Council of Port Louis, replying to the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund on 24 June 2009, informed that the Council had taken cognizance of the partial demolition of the Merchant Navy Club with much regret, and that the Council did not receive any request for demolition nor had it authorised same. The Council also indicated that it had no enforcing power to prevent any further demolition, and informed the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund to apply to the Supreme Court for an injunction prohibiting any further demolition of the Club.

I am further informed that the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund has sought legal advice on the course of action to be followed. The legal advice obtained is to the effect that the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund has no *locus standi* to go for prohibition of demolition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as matters stand, it is most unfortunate that we have not been able to prevent the demolition of the historic building. This is due to the time taken for the preparation of the Planning Policy Guidance. As Minister responsible, I have given

instructions for the speedy implementation of the Planning Policy Guidance for the management of the buffer zone.

The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund is presently working on the Planning Policy Guidance for the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site, with the support of a South African Heritage Consultant, Professor Karel Bakker. I am informed that about 80% of the works have been completed. Professor Bakker is expected in Mauritius on 19 July 2009 to finalise the document. During his visit, he will hold a consultative meeting with the stakeholders of the Buffer Zone to sensitise them on the very purpose of the Planning Policy Guidance. Upon finalisation of this document, the buffer zone will be declared a heritage area, and any development within that area will be controlled.

In the meantime, on 16 July 2009, a booklet on the buffer zone of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site will be launched to sensitise the stakeholders and the public in general about the Planning Policy Guidance applicable in the buffer zone.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Merchant Navy Club was set up as far back as 1857, when the Finance committee of the *conseil législatif de Maurice adopta cette recommandation et vota 5,000 piastres pour l'institution de la* Mauritius Sailors Home Society qui avait eu la responsabilité de tout mettre en place. Ce Merchant Navy Club fut créé par le gouvernement mauricien de l'époque, à travers le conseil législatif. Etant donné cette situation, pourrais-je savoir si le gouvernement n'a rien à dire par rapport à cette démolition qui est maintenant en cours, étant donné que c'est un projet qui fut mis en place par les autorités gouvernementales d'alors ?

Dr. Bunwaree: It is most unfortunate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I have tried to give all the information that I have concerning this sad incident. Of course, there is a void, because of this planning guidance not having been prepared yet, and we are doing our utmost best to go as quick as possible.

To reply to the question the hon. Member, I can inform the House that the Ministry is working in close collaboration with all the stakeholders, to see what is the best that we can do to try to do some sort of repair, if not, at least, for the memory to stay there.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has confirmed that the Merchant Navy Club falls within the buffer zone. Will the Minister agree with me that, obviously what should have been done a long way back after the UNESCO had approved this site and Le Morne would have been to produce regulations, prohibiting the action, demolition, whatever action within the buffer zone?

Can we know why this was not done? Better late than never! Are we going to do that urgently, have regulations published in the Government Gazette to protect the buffer zone of Aapravasi Ghat and of Le Morne?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a very complicated matter because we have the guidelines set up by UNESCO. We have also to work on the document that I have just mentioned and we have had to take the consultancy of a foreign expert to help us. It is still not ready. I have said 80% of the work is done and we are expecting to finish it as soon as possible, but I do agree with the hon. Member that we have to do something urgently.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister, at least, give us an indication of the extent of the buffer zone around the Aapravasi Ghat?

Dr. Bunwaree: I cannot give an indication of the extent of the buffer zone offhand. But, I think it is approximately two kilometres around the Aapravasi Ghat.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the view of the fact that the hon. Minister said that the Aapravasi Ghat did not have the *locus standi* to challenge the demolition of the monument, may we know who has the *locus standi* to challenge the demolition of any national monument, so that such blunders do not happen in the future?

Dr. Bunwaree: I did not get the gist of the question.

The Deputy Speaker: Maybe, we could allow him to repeat it. Yes, hon. Bodha?

Mr Bodha: May we know who has the *locus standi* to challenge the demolition of any national monument in the future?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: Aapravasi Ghat? I cannot say who has got the responsibility. We are looking into all the aspects, not only for the Aapravasi Ghat, but for Le Morne and the other heritage sites as well.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Government see to it with the promoters or the owners, or even through the Municipality which is the local authority that insofar as reconstruction, at least, the architectural design be made in such a way as to make it - not as it was before, but at least to keep the architectural design - as it was originally as far as possible?

Dr. Bunwaree: I think I have replied already. I have said that we are trying to see what can be done to at least to keep the memory of the building.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that problems regarding

demolition have to be - especially national monuments - urgently addressed. May I ask the hon. Minister what are the immediate measures that he is envisaging in order to prevent the recurrence of such happenings?

Dr. Bunwaree: Once the policy guidelines are obtained, then there will no difficulties. We are going to have regulations as the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned and then there will be the implementation. We will make sure that we enforce whatever is in the guidelines.

Mr Lesjongard: In his reply, the hon. Minister stated that the building was pulled down and the reasons being the poor condition of the building and the danger it represented.

Can we know whether there was an expert assessment regarding the condition of the building and whether when the Municipality of Port Louis was informed that the building was being demolished, the city engineer submitted a report to confirm the condition of the building?

Dr. Bunwaree: I do not think that they had time to do it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because I mentioned the dates. In fact, the Aapravasi Ghat reacted immediately as they got the first verbal information and then the Municipality of Port Louis was informed. They tried – I believed - to do what they had to do but, unfortunately, it went so quickly and no permission was asked for. In fact, no permission is supposed to be asked for demolition of buildings, but it so happened.

Mrs Perrier: The hon. Minister mentioned the historical dimension of the building. Can he confirm whether the Heritage Trust Fund was aware of the pulling down and did they give their view on that demolition?

Dr. Bunwaree: No, I think in the main reply I have given already the reply to this question.

Mr Barbier: Is the hon. Minister aware that this institution, if I may say so, was set by the State, as far back as 1857, and that now since 2001/2003, there have been two attempts by some *gros requins* to try to take this site and to have some very important commercial buildings on this site? So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister state whether there is any project which has already been earmarked to be set on this site and, if so, by whom, and who are behind this project?

Dr. Bunwaree: We do not have all these details, but we have opened a line of communication with the stakeholders to see to it that whatever developments take place on the commercial aspects that there is some sort of corporate social responsibility, in fact, to keep the memory of this building.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In the past, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when Le Nef was demolished, it was then built up again. Is there any possibility, in this particular case, to get the building rebuilt?

Dr. Bunwaree: I think that on three occasions I have replied to this question, but I can still say that we are trying to see in what way we can, at least, keep the memory of this building in the same place.

INDIAN RESORT HOTEL, POINTE SUD-OUEST, LE MORNE – TAXI-DRIVERS (07/07/09)

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member of Savanne & Black River): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I address my intervention to the attention of the hon. Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources, because this is a matter which concerns Culture.

I am the mouthpiece of 26 taxi drivers who are operating in front of the Indian Resort Hotel, at Pointe Sud-Ouest, Le Morne. These 26 drivers are regrouped in the Indian Resort Taxi Drivers' Association. They have set up a kiosk where they can shelter themselves when they are waiting for clients to come during their spare time. This kiosk has been set up on a plot of land opposite the entrance of the hotel and, at one time, the Beach Authority has requested these taxi 129 drivers to move away so as to dismantle this kiosk. These taxi drivers have apprised the Beach Authority of the situation and they have appealed to the Beach Authority to understand their situation, that they have constructed this kiosk as a shelter when the weather is not so good and it rains. As I said, this kiosk was being utilised by them just to protect themselves from bad weather. This is the situation for these 26 drivers. In fact, this kiosk is opposite the taxi-stand at Le Morne Pointe Sud-Ouest public beach.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must confess the Beach Authority has been very understanding. I have a letter with me dated 16 June 2009, where the Beach Authority says, I quote –

“In view of the above, the Authority does not raise any objection for the erection of this kiosk since it is not causing any inconvenience to the beach users. However, you are hereby informed to approach Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund for appropriate clearance and approval as the structure is found in a buffer zone.

Your attention is also drawn that the kiosk should be purely on a temporary basis and in case the Authority is envisaging to implement any project or development on this beach, you will be requested to shift to an alternate place.”

So, the Beach Authority has understood the plight of these 26 taxi drivers, Mr Deputy

Speaker, Sir and has been very kind and sympathetic to the request of these 26 taxi drivers who are earning their living honestly. It is only because of the weather that they have to shelter themselves under this kiosk which they have built with the help of the hotel. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they have also written to Miss Stephanie Anquetil, the Chairperson of Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund. They have brought this situation to her attention, that this kiosk is being used for the purpose of sheltering themselves from strong the sun and rain and also for the purpose of having their lunch.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will be grateful, if permission could be granted to use the same kiosk for the time being till any other projects be set up at the existing site by competent bodies. A letter to that effect has been addressed to the Chairperson of Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund on 28 January 2009. I am urging the hon. Minister responsible for Culture to see to it if he could intervene and accede to the request of these taxi drivers, who, as we all know are already facing other problems these days and this ban on them will worsen their difficulties and will cause undue stress to them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am appealing to the hon. Minister if he can prevail over the Chairperson of the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund to allow these 26 taxi drivers who are operating in front of the Indian Resort Taxi Drivers' Association to allow them to leave this kiosk as it is, so that they can use it, as I said earlier on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to shelter themselves more particularly in case of bad weather . I make an appeal, therefore, to the hon. Minister to be sympathetic to the request of these 26 taxi drivers who are operating, as I said, in front of the Indian Resort Hotel.

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(8.07 p.m.)

Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listened with much attention to what has been said by the hon. Member of the Opposition, hon. A. Ganoo. In fact, being sympathetic is, of course, one good thing, but we have also to be alert to the conditions which are set by UNESCO because, as we know, this land is very special. In fact, we had the opportunity this morning of talking about the buffer zone in Port Louis. There also there is a buffer zone. This matter, in fact, has been brought to my attention a few months ago. This construction has been there since the month of January this year. The matter has been raised. In fact, it has been brought to my knowledge by hon. Dr. Babajee in the first instance, I must say, where he was also asking me to be sympathetic. Then, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee came to me for the same problem. In fact, she also asked me to be

sympathetic and now, hon. A. Ganoo is asking me to be sympathetic. I must say Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we have to look at the facts and then we have to take a decision which would be in the best interest of one and all.

I must inform the House that Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund Act 2004 provides for the Trust Fund to manage, regulate and administer all developments, works and activities within the Le Morne Cultural Landscape which is now a World Heritage Site as we all know, and we are proud of it. Specific regulations have been promulgated in September 2007 under the Planning and Development Act for the control of development within the landscape, but we call the Planning Policy Guidance to Le Morne Cultural Landscape.

This document provides specific guidelines that ensure the protection of the landscapes integrity and authenticity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Indian Resort Taxi Drivers Association has erected a wooden kiosk with corrugated iron roof and with concrete platform at Le Morne Pointe Sud- Ouest public beach without any consultation and prior approval from Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund and the National Heritage Fund. This structure falls within the buffer zone of the landscape. I am informed by Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund that they have not received any request from the Indian Resort Taxi Drivers Association operating at the Indian Resort hotel for that kiosk which is on a public beach. In fact, there is a letter which the hon. Member has mentioned from the Beach Authority. It says that, *à priori*, there is no objection, but as the hon. Member mentioned it himself, it is stated in the letter that clearances have to be obtained from Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund for the approval of any structure which is found on the buffer zone.

But that Trust Fund has not given any clearance or approval. This is where matters stand. I must say that, given that Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund has the obligation to manage the Le Morne cultural landscape, the Indian Resort Taxi Drivers Association was requested by the Beach Authority, therefore, to approach the Le Morne Trust Fund and ask for appropriate clearances which, as I have said, have not been obtained. A request has been made to the Ministry of Local Government by the Beach Authority. After looking into the matter, it has asked for the structure to be removed on the beach as it will hinder the development of the buffer zone. They respect structures that have to be respected on that zone. Every year we have to reply to UNESCO.

They look at what is happening. I must say that in certain countries, structures - for example, a bridge in Germany - have had to be dismantled. This is the situation. I would wish to be sympathetic, but how are we going to reply to UNESCO? What explanation will we give?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is where I will ask the three hon. Members to work at least

once together and try to convince that hotel. It is the duty of the hotel to find a shelter for the taxis which are supposed to be attached to it. The hon. Member certainly knows that the hotel is being difficult and, in fact, this is what had caused the problem. The request has been made and action has also been initiated for the hotel to provide shelters for the taxi drivers. We are trying to make the hotel understands and if we find a solution, we will be able to settle the whole problem to the satisfaction of one and all. The hotel will have to agree. In my constituency, there are hotels and taxis attached to them. They have shelters for their taxi stand. We have to work in that direction. The matter is not closed, that shelter will have to be removed, unfortunately. I am sorry for that but, at the same time, we will try to find another solution for these taxis drivers.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

At 8.14 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 14 July 2009 at 11.30 a.m.

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14/7/09

MAURITIUS SOCIETY OF AUTHORS - ROYALTIES

(No. B/864) Mr J. C Barbier (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the royalties obtained by the Mauritius Society of Authors from international sister societies, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Society, information as to the amount thereof received over the past five years, indicating -

- (a) the names of the persons who have benefitted therefrom and the respective amount received, in each case and
- (b) how the outstanding amount has been used.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA) that royalties collected from international sister societies over the past five years amount to Rs 5,446,754.99. An amount of Rs 4,175,725.84 has already been paid to the rights owners over the last five years. I am tabling the yearly breakdown.

MASA has confirmed that there is a remaining balance of Rs 1,271,029.15 which shall be distributed as per normal practice to the rights owners members of MASA in the next distribution exercise of this financial year, i.e before end of December.

As regards part (a) of the question concerning the names of right owners and the amount received, I am advised by MASA that it is not in the interest of the right owners for the names and amounts to be made public. When sister societies submit their list, the local beneficiaries are already mentioned therein and disbursement is made accordingly.

SIR HARILAL VAGHJEE – DEATH COMMEMORATION (21/07/09)

(No. B/894) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to Sir Harilal Vaghjee, he will state if Government will consider erecting a bust in the yard of the Government House, to pay tribute to him as the first Mauritian Speaker, on the commemoration of his 30th death Anniversary.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, Government fully recognises the valuable contribution of all Mauritian personalities who have marked the history of Mauritius in an indelible way. My Ministry is currently working on a project to honour such personalities.

As a matter of principle, the families of the personalities concerned are first consulted and if they are agreeable, my Ministry starts the process with the approval of Government.

Sir Harilal Vaghjee is certainly one of those personalities worthy of being honoured. It is precisely to pay tribute to him that the Hall at the New Government Centre situated in the compound housing our Parliament has been named Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall. Should the family be agreeable to have his bust erected, Government will be too glad to undertake the project.

Discussions have started with them.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has made reference to a project, in general, for illustrious Mauritians and so on. Is the hon. Minister aware that, for example, in the lobby of the Lok Sabha in India are present paintings or busts of Parliamentarians and, therefore, in the case of Sir Harilal Vaghjee, this should be considered, because he was the first Speaker? Therefore, can I request the hon. Minister to delink these things and to look into the possibility of us having eminent Parliamentarians of the past present somewhere in the compound?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that for Sir Harilal Vaghjee, there has been some sort of confusion in the minds of certain people because when we looked into the problem - not now, but since some time - we were left under the impression that he himself did not want these types of things, but we have been speaking to the family and we believe that for the erection of the bust it will be ongoing. We will take on board what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is mentioning.

Mr Speaker: Bear in mind that the Leader of the Opposition has said it should be an eminent Parliamentarian! You have to bear this in mind!

Mr Bhagwan: I thank the Minister and I know for sure that the family would be most

agreeable. Can I appeal to the hon. Minister, this year is a very special year, it is the 30th death anniversary, that if the family is agreeable, which I think so, everything will be done to expedite matters before the end of this current year?

Dr. Bunwaree: We are going in that direction.

Mr Bhagwan: I had a visit this morning to the Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall, Sir, and I'll invite all the Parliamentarians to do so. Can I state to the hon. Minister who is responsible for the buildings that there is no name? Nobody knows whether it is Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall. There is no photo. The Hall itself has been converted into more than a kitchen. I have been there this morning. Can I appeal to the Government to have at least a fresh look, to have a signboard, to have a photo of late Sir Harilal Vaghjee in the Hall?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME – CULTURAL TROUPES/INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS – SELECTION (21/07/09)

(No. B/936) Mrs S. Grenade (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources whether, in regard to the cultural exchange programme between his Ministry and the foreign countries, he will state the mechanism that has been set up for the selection of troupes or individuals.

Reply: There is no specific mechanism for selection of cultural troupes or individual artists under the Cultural Exchange Programme.

The selection of cultural troupes or individual artists to give performances in foreign countries is made by my Ministry in consultation with the respective missions in Mauritius and

our missions overseas. The selection is based on the following criteria –

- (i) nature of festivals/events;
- (ii) cultural background of countries hosting festivals/events;
- (iii) number of performers required;
- (iv) musical and dance style requested by host countries;
- (v) availability of the artists during the period concerned, and
- (vi) financial considerations.

Based on the above criteria, my Ministry ensures that a maximum number of artists have the opportunity to perform in foreign countries under the Cultural Exchange Programme.

However, it is to be noted that some countries clearly specify the style of dance/musical groups needed and in some cases even the names of groups are indicated.

We also have cases when cultural troupes or artists have made requests for performance overseas which have received positive reply from host countries. In such cases, as stipulated under the Cultural Exchange Programme, we provide the air tickets and all other costs are borne by the host country.

As for foreign cultural troupes visiting Mauritius under the Cultural Exchange Programme, in certain cases we indicate the style of music/dance group needed for specific festivals, like we request specific style for Divali, Eid, etc., otherwise the sending countries just inform us of the groups coming to Mauritius.

BUILDINGS - PATRIMOINE NATIONAL (20/10/09)

(No. B/978) Mrs M. Martin (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the buildings listed as *patrimoine national* which have been renovated since 2005 to date, he will state if any of them has had its original structure modified and, if so, indicate the –
(a) reasons therefor, and
(b) purposes thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that apart from a specific case concerning the Dr. O. Beugeard Government School which was partly demolished in 2007, none of the buildings listed as National Heritage which have been renovated since 2005 to date, has had its original structure modified.

The Dr. O. Beugeard Government School, also known as Edith Cavell Government School, will be restored and refurbished to preserve its original characteristics. Works will be conducted under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping in close collaboration with the National Heritage Fund which has already approved all the drawings and proposals for the renovation.

Mrs Martin: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. May I ask him, when I speak of modification of the existing buildings, I also speak of the interior of the building, has there not been any building listed as *patrimoine national* where the inside of the building has been modified, not the exterior, but the inside?

Dr. Bunwaree: Which building?

Mrs Martin: I am asking precisely the hon. Minister...

Dr. Bunwaree: If a proper question is put on one specific building, I may come forward with it, because, generally speaking this is the reply that I have given.

Mrs Martin: Can the hon. Minister say whether the list of the existing buildings is updated and, if yes, at which frequency?

Dr. Bunwaree: I can mention because there are not too many buildings which have been renovated since 2005 and then if the hon. Member has specific questions she can come next week with them. Martello Tower, La Preneuse, Government House, Port Louis, General Post Office, Aapravassi Ghat, Dongeon, St. Louis and Citadelle. These are the lists of buildings which have been renovated since 2005. Now to go into the details of the interior and so on, if specific questions are put on one of these building, I will reply with pleasure to the House.

Mrs Martin: The Minister has just mentioned La Citadelle and he has said that the interior has been modified. Can I ask the hon. Minister, before modifying the structures, whether the stakeholders have been consulted and whether they agree to this?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't know whether they have been consulted or not, but they must have been aware. In fact, for La Citadelle, additions have been made to address the issue of water leakage within the stone walls of La Citadelle. These, I am informed, are reversible.

The National Heritage Fund which has the responsibility of overseeing all these additions has authorised the additions and has made a detailed documentation of the site before they started the works and will carry out another similar exercise after completion of the works.

Concerning the question of all stakeholders, whether discussions have taken place, I will have to look into the matter, but I am almost sure, they must have been made aware.

Mrs Martin: The interior, for example, of La Citadelle has been modified also to accommodate commercial shops, I believe. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this does not, in fact, put into jeopardy, the original cachet of La Citadelle itself?

Dr. Bunwaree: I will have to transmit this question to the National Heritage Fund, but I can give the assurance to the House that they work with seriousness, they know what they are doing. But if there is a particular point that is being raised by the hon. Member, I will take it into consideration and see what has been the outcome.

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND HUMAN RESOURCES - MR
Y. R. – APPOINTMENT (01/12/09)**

(No. B/1297) Mr Y. Varma (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether he will state if one Mr Y. R. is employed as Adviser at his Ministry on a contractual basis and, if so, indicate his –

- (a) terms and conditions of appointment;
- (b) qualifications;
- (c) area of speciality for which his services have been retained, and
- (d) occupational experience.

(Withdrawn)

**PROF. BASDEO BISSONDOYAL TRUST FUND & MALCOLM DE CHAZAL
TRUST FUND – BOARD (01/12/09)**

(No. B/1266) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the proposed appointment of the Board of the Professor Basdeo Bissoondoyal Trust Fund and of the Malcom de Chazal Trust Fund, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, Government will soon be coming with a policy decision on how best to commemorate the memories of important local personalities. In reply to PQ No. B/599, I informed the House that my Ministry was working on a repertory of all renowned Mauritians who have marked the arts and cultural space in Mauritius with a view to finding ways and means to perpetuate their memories, philosophy and works for future generations and the idea was to come up with a proper framework for that purpose.

I am glad to inform the House that after consulting different stakeholders, my Ministry has received proposals for some 50 important personalities who have marked our history in an indelible way.

My Ministry is now working on a new framework to perpetuate the memories of our illustrious *filis du sol* or *fille du sol* and, in the meantime, we are considering the reconstitution of the Boards of both institutions, i.e. the Prof. Basdeo Bissondoyal Trust Fund and the Malcolm de Chazal Trust Fund.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he will wait for the completion of this list of 50 personalities to constitute the Boards of these two Trusts?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have said, in the meantime, we are considering the constitution of

both institutions. I think that by the end of December it would have been done.

Mrs Labelle: Last time, the answer was that they were considering the constitution of the Board. So, after some months, that's why I am asking whether it is something to be done right now, because this was the same answer some months before.

Mr Speaker: The Minister has said by December it will be done.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT –BENEFICIARIES

Debate no 25 of

0/12/05.

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(No. A/7) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the “Support Foreign Professional Travel” Programme, he will state the –

- (a) names of the artists who have benefitted therefrom, and
- (b) details of the benefits.

Reply: As at today eight artists have benefited from the International Development Grant as follows -

1. Bongarçon Stephen Rolph who participated in the third edition of the international platform of contemporary dance in November 2009, Maputo The outcome has been international exposure in a cultural event including 26 countries and participated in creative dance workshops. In fact, the outcome can also be expressed in gold as Bongarçon Stephen Rolph lead a group to the *6ème Jeux de la Francophonie* and brought back gold medals and has put Mauritius on the world cultural map. Bongarçon benefited from an

International Travel Grant of Rs 33,000 and an International Collaboration Grant of Rs 19,000.

2. Aubeeluck Nalini who participated in October 2009 in London in a workshop and fusion performances with foreign artists in connection with the preparatory activity in connection with Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games 2010. I am glad to inform the House that such participation if found acceptable by the organisation may eventually lead to the selection of Nalini's group to perform for the Opening Ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games to be held in London. Nalini Aubeeluck benefited from an International Collaboration Grant of Rs 150,000 and an International Development Grant of Rs 100,000.

3. Françoise Thierry Didier is participating in a training in Dramatics at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique, Paris. This Institution is one of the highest in France.

Françoise Thierry Didier has benefited from an International Travel Grant of Rs 20,600 and an International Collaboration Grant of Rs 150,000.

The outcome, is improving dramatic skills and international exposure for the artist. Back home we may request him to share with others on his return.

4. Victoire Donovan Rolph is attending training at Ecole Atelier Rudra Bejart, Lausanne, Switzerland, in Modern Dance. This Institution is also one of the best in Switzerland. Victoire Donovan Rolph is the first Mauritian to get admission there. He has benefited from an International Travel Grant Rs 35,000 and an International Collaboration Grant Rs 150,000.

The outcome, is the skills improvement and international exposure which we will be able to share with others on his return.

5. Honore Stephano (known as Menwar)

This is a Group Participation in the Moshito Music Conference and Exhibition 2009, a show case Concert to promote music at Music Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2009.

He has benefited from an International Collaboration Grant Rs 100,000

The outcome, is the International exposure for the artist and moreover Menwar is the Mauritian Porte Drapeau of our traditional music.

- (a) Vadamootoo Nathalia is presently attending a workshop on script writing “Les Ecritures du Réel” pour Documentaire et Magazine, at Ecole National Superieure Louis Lumière, France. Ms Vadamootoo Nathalia has benefited from an International Travel Grant of Rs 40,000 and an International Collaboration Grant of Rs 150,000. You will agree with me, that this initiative will help boost up our Cinematographic Industry.
- (b) Aniff Hosanee has been invited to participate in the 8th Bridge Asia Contemporary Art Exhibition in October 2009 at the China Printing Museum, Honqzhou, China and Chinese Wood Printing. Aniff Hosanee is a reknown artist with several years of experience. He is benefiting from an International Collaboration Grant of Rs 99,800. The participation of Mr Hosanee in Chinese wood craft and printing will benefit the local artist community as this style can be developed in Mauritius. His knowledge can be shared among local artists.
- (c) Brabant Lina Veronique Stephanie participated in the I-Trotra 2009 – Contemporary Dance Festival in October 2009 in Madagascar and has benefited from an International Travel Grant of Rs 39,400. The participation of Ms Brabant, will help to promote and upgrade the level of contemporary dance in Mauritius. Moreover, the artist was given the chance to perform along other artists of International repute at the festival from more than ten countries.

Debate no 35 of (21)
04/12/09.

**INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION
GRANTS - BENEFICIARIES**

(No. B/1315) Mr J. C Barbier (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West)

asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources whether, in regard to the international travel and the international collaboration grants, he will state the –

- (a) artists who have benefitted therefrom, and
- (b) amount of money they received, indicating for which project and the outcome thereof.

Reply: The scheme was set up to enable performing artists to gain international exposure that includes training, collaboration with artists of international repute and to market their works. The components of the grant are as follows:

- An International Travel Grant of up to 50,000;
- An International Collaboration Grant of up to 150,000
- A Marketing Development Grant of up to 100,000.

and artists are eligible for not more than two grants at a time.

As at today eight artists have benefited from the International Development Grant and I am circulating the details.

However, I wish to mention two beneficiaries, namely -

- (i) Bongarçon Stephen Rolph who participated in the third edition of the international platform of contemporary dance in November 2009, Maputo

The outcome has been international exposure in a cultural event including 26 countries and participated in creative dance workshops. In fact, the outcome can also be expressed in gold as Bongarçon Stephen Rolph lead a group of dancers to the *6ème Jeux de la Francophonie* and brought back gold medals and has put Mauritius on the world cultural map..

- (ii) Aubeeluck Nalini_who participated in October 2009 in London in a workshop and fusion performances with foreign artists in connection with the preparatory activities in connection with Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games 2010. I am glad to inform the House that such participation if found acceptable by the organisation may eventually lead to the selection of Nalini's group to perform for the Opening Ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games to be held in London.

The House may wish to note that the grant amount is disbursed in three installments as follows: -

1st installment of 50% upon approval of project;

2nd installment of 30% upon completion of project; and

3rd installment of 20% upon submission of a report on completion of project.

Disbursement is made to suppliers of services and not directly to the artist as far as possible.

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20/3/10

COMMITTEE STAGE

The Minister of Education, Culture and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not propose to move today for the Second Readings of -

- (i) The Arabic-Speaking Union Bill (No. II of 2010);
- (ii) The Bhojpuri-Speaking Union Bill (No. III of 2010);
- (iii) The Creole-Speaking Union Bill (No. IV of 2010), and
- (iv) The Mandarin-Speaking Union Bill (No. V of 2010).

(8.34 p.m.)