

Minister's Statements and Speeches

YEAR 2023

PUBLIC BILLS

THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

(NO. VI OF 2023)

(16.05.2023)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2023) be read a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am pleased to introduce to the House, a bill that is slated be a precursor to Mauritius having its National Examinations Board for the secondary education sub-sector.

This Bill purports to amending the Education Act 1957 so as to set up a National Examinations Board for the organisation and conduct of examinations in designated subjects at secondary education level.

The Bill will also confer, upon the University of Mauritius, the power to award certificates of the National Examinations Board upon the latter's recommendations.

The National Examinations Board will, in collaboration with the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, conduct examinations in designated subjects listed in the Second Schedule of the Education Act.

The University of Mauritius will be the awarding body for a certification pitched at level 3 on the National Qualifications Framework. Thus, it will be at par with the School Certificate, the O-level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we must recognise that today, it has become fundamental for our education system to offer a diversity of subjects that are aligned with our contextual needs, subjects that empower our youth with the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to become responsible citizens of tomorrow.

We must agree that, the setting up of the National Examinations Board for the secondary sub-sector has become a requisite and is a strategic move that signals a new era on the Mauritian educational landscape.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to now, briefly lead the House through the Bill.

The Bill proposes an amendment to the Education Act 1957 by inserting after section 5, a new section 5D. Accordingly, the new section 5D referred to as the ‘National Examinations Board for the secondary education sub-sector’ spells out clearly the functions of the Board.

These *inter alia* cover –

- (a) organising and conducting examinations in respect of such subjects for the secondary education sub-sector as the Ministry may determine;
- (b) developing rules and regulations for such national examinations and assessments;
- (c) developing assessment frameworks and assessment syllabuses in the subjects listed in the Second Schedule;
- (d) conducting research on assessments for the secondary level;
- (e) partnering with relevant institutions, local and international, as may be necessary for the conduct of examinations, and also
- (f) establishing linkages with international bodies to undertake, *inter alia*, benchmarking of national qualifications.

This, Mr Speaker, Sir, would be a highly effective means for the National Examinations Board to establish a nexus with recognising examination bodies overseas whose expertise would be an asset in our quality assurance strategy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the governance issue is also highlighted with the membership of the Board at Clause 3. A Chairperson will be appointed by the Prime Minister. Other members of the Board will be persons with expertise in administrative, financial and technical aspects impacting the conduct of examinations. In accordance with Clause 4 of the Bill, these members will hold office for a period of three years and will be eligible for re-appointment.

At this point, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me inform the House that an amendment to the Bill has already been circulated and that I will during the Committee Stage, move for the following

amendment to Clause 4 subsection (4), whereby the words “subsection (3)(a) and (j)” would be deleted and replaced by the words “subsection (3)(j)”. The Minister responsible for the subject of Education will appoint 3 members having wide experience in the field of education and in examrelated issues.

At Clause 5 of the Bill, it is provided that the Secretary to the Board who will also be the custodian of all documentation related to the Board be a Public Officer. He will be assisted by a team comprising other public officers. That is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Examinations Board has been empowered at Clause 6 to enlist the services of such public officers and employees of other relevant institutions to assist in the proper discharge of its functions.

Other sections are those commonly and conventionally figuring in such Bills. These include the insertion of a new definition for the term “Senior Chief Executive” that will also be applicable to the main Act, in which to date, only the “Permanent Secretary” is defined.

It is also worth highlighting that, as examinations are traditionally viewed from the lens of confidentiality and, especially, trust, Clause 12 has been specifically inserted. This provides for members and officers of the Board to take an oath of secrecy with provision made for a fine not exceeding Rs200,000 and an imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years to any person flouting this sacrosanct principle.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me at this stage to guide the House on the role that the University of Mauritius will be called upon to play with the coming into operation of this Bill. The University of Mauritius is a reputed institution with the required experience and expertise as an awarding body.

The conferment of the new role under this Amendment to the Education Act will require consequential amendments to the University of Mauritius Act to include at –

- a) Section 2, the definition for the “National Examinations Board”;
- b) Section 4, a new object for the University to be an awarding body for the Secondary Education sub-sector in respect of the subjects listed in the Second Schedule to the Education Act, and
- c) Section 21, a new sub-clause to empower the Senate of the University to make Regulations in respect of the award of the above mentioned certificates.

The Senate of the University of Mauritius will thus have the additional responsibility of setting the rules for the examinations and validating the papers and the examination results through rigorous quality assurance exercises.

The Second Schedule refers to *Kreol Morisien* as being the first designated subject to be assessed under aegis of the National Examinations Board.

We will all agree, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a language is a fitting tool to build up the knowledge of learners, develop their intelligence and their ability to think critically. At the same time, the formal learning of one language always positively impacts on the acquisition of other languages as well. This is certainly true for all languages taught in our schools.

That being said, Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to briefly present a historical timeline regarding *Kreol Morisien* that has been designated as the first subject in the Schedule.

Members of the National Assembly will recall that *Kreol Morisien* was introduced as an optional subject in all primary schools, as from January 2012, in Grade 1 at par with other optional subjects.

The educational reforms led by my Ministry in 2016 brought in its wake the development of a New Curriculum Framework that took on board *Kreol Morisien* as an examinable subject. A first formal assessment of *Kreol Morisien* was conducted in October 2017. 2,480 pupils of Grade 6 entered for *Kreol Morisien* at the first PSAC Assessment. The performance after the first sitting stood at 79.6 %. Since 2017, *Kreol Morisien* is being treated at par with other optional subjects with respect to admission in Secondary Schools.

In view of the interest expressed by students, *Kreol Morisien* came to be offered in some 20 State Secondary Schools and 17 Private Secondary Schools in Grade 7 as from 2018. In April 2021, the first cohort of around 1,200 students reached Grade 9 and sat for *Kreol Morisien* at the first National Certificate of Education (NCE) assessment. The performance stood at 96.6%. In the Academic Year 2020-2021, a total of 19,890 pupils of primary schools studied *Kreol Morisien* while the figures for Grades 7, 8 and 9 in Secondary Schools stood at 5,935.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to inform the House that as far back as in 2018, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) engaged in discussions with Cambridge International Examinations (CAIE) for *Kreol Morisien* to be offered at School Certificate level in the CAIE system. Several reasons were put forward by CAIE to explain why they would not be able to offer *Kreol Morisien* at School Certificate level.

The CAIE informed that they only offer the inclusion of a qualification syllabus when they themselves are involved in the development of the curriculum. Further, they claimed to have no expertise in *Kreol Morisien* and that the corpus of literature available in *Kreol Morisien*, according to them, was minimal. Finally, CAIE was sceptical regarding the sustainability and the cost-effectiveness of *Kreol Morisien* as a subject at Cambridge School Certificate level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the face of the refusal of CAIE to offer *Kreol Morisien* as an examinable subject at SC level and in view of the legitimate expectations of students having studied *Kreol Morisien* for 9 years to pursue their studies beyond Grade 9, a Ministerial Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of the hon. Prime Minister to look into the ways and means of unfurling *Kreol Morisien* at the upper secondary education level as an examinable subject.

I must here applaud the work done by the Ministerial Committee under the Chair of the hon. Prime Minister, which came up with a number of recommendations –

- 1) The first one being to offer *Kreol Morisien* as an optional subject at Grade 10 Level as from May 2021;
- 2) The second one related to the setting up of the National Examinations Board, and
- 3) The third one concerned the offer of *Kreol Morisien* as an examinable subject at the end of Grade 11 leading to a National School Certificate in *Kreol Morisien* awarded by the University of Mauritius. This certificate, Mr Speaker, Sir, will be pitched at Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework that is, it will be at par with School Certificate, the O-Level. A credit obtained in KM will also be reckoned for the purpose of promotion to Grade 12.

This year, there are 209 Grade 11 students who have opted for *Kreol Morisien* while in Grade 10 we have 785 students studying *Kreol Morisien*. The number is likely to be on the rising curve in the years to come.

I would like to stress here that the Cambridge School Certificate and the National School Certificate in *Kreol Morisien* issued in the same examination series will be deemed to have been taken at one and the same sitting.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the fulfilment of its obligations, the National Examination Board will enlist the active collaboration of established institutions namely, the University of Mauritius, the Mauritius Institute of Education and the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate. And, Mr Speaker, Sir, we expect that work will be carried on smoothly by these institutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I said it earlier, the setting up of the National Examinations Board for the Secondary Education sub-sector is a landmark and a strategic move that signals a new era in our educational sector.

My Ministry is strongly concerned about ensuring that standards are kept high and that the credibility of the National Examination Board is never questioned. Indeed, all institutions concerned by this initiative, namely the University of Mauritius, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate and the Mauritius Institute of Education are all well-established institutions that are of high repute in our educational system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are going to get it right. I now commend the Bill to the House, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management (Dr. A Husnoo) seconded.

(3.57 p.m.)

Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Merci. La ministre a essayé d'apporter un peu d'éclairage sur l'organisation des examens du *Kreol Morisien* au niveau de la Grade 11 car jusqu'ici, c'est la confusion totale. Or, des zones d'ombres persistent et suscitent pas mal d'interrogations ; je m'explique.

L'objet du projet d'amendement de *l'Education Bill* est justement la création d'une *National Examination Board* pour l'organisation des examens pour les étudiants en Grade 11 et la remise de diplômes dans cette matière par l'université de Maurice. Jusqu'à présent, le *Kreol Morisien* est le seul *designated subject* en vertu du projet de loi dont la seule matière affectée dans le court terme. Voyons d'abord le contexte : en 2021, il y a eu un fort plaidoyer en faveur du KM en 10^e année comme *examinable subject* pour le *Cambridge School Certificate* éventuellement.

Pendant longtemps, les réactionnaires ont voulu faire croire qu'en introduisant cette langue, on allait faire une faveur à une communauté spécifique ; hors tel n'est pas le cas. Le KM est la première langue parlée et comprise par la majorité des Mauriciens. C'est donc sur

une base de droits humains que le KM se doit de trouver sa place qui lui revient dans nos institutions scolaires. Face à la pression populaire, le gouvernement a ainsi prit la décision le 13 mai 2021 en conseil des ministres d'offrir KM au niveau du *School Certificate*. Finalement, le KM a fait son chemin jusqu'en Grade 11.

C'était un grand progrès pour la république de Maurice en termes de droits linguistiques et culturels. Toutefois, la ministre de l'Éducation a avancé plusieurs raisons pour dire que *Cambridge* n'a pas accepté d'offrir KM au niveau du *School Certificate*. Ces raisons sont restées très douteuses et suspectes pour les différents partenaires du secteur éducatif et les militants des droits humains.

En attendant, les éducateurs du KM sont laissés à eux-mêmes. Ils n'ont aucun soutien des autorités et créent eux-mêmes leurs propres programmes et continuent à faire leurs classes. Contrairement aux autres matières, à ce jour, les étudiants n'ont pas de *specimen paper* pour se préparer aux examens. Pas de *mock exams* à hier, et le comble, c'est qu'il n'y a aucune communication officielle faite aux établissements scolaires sur l'entrée à l'examen pour le *Cambridge School Certificate* sur la manière de procéder pour l'inscription des candidats au KM, alors que les inscriptions aux examens ont effectuées pour d'autres matières.

La question qui demeure dans le milieu est : qui va préparer ce *specimen paper* ? Le *MES*, the *University of Mauritius* ou le nouveau *NEB* ? Nous allons revenir à ce fameux *National Examination Board (NEB)* un peu plus tard. C'est l'incompréhension totale pour les étudiants et les enseignants et un manque de respect de la part du ministère. Il y a un sentiment de discrimination et d'injustice. Le Mauricien du 03 mai cite une institutrice qui traduit les appréhensions et les inquiétudes de ses élèves, je cite –

« Mes élèves me demandent comment sera le papier d'examen? Quand on va pouvoir pratiquer? Mais je n'en ai aucune idée. Ils ne comprennent pas pourquoi leurs camarades qui ont choisi les autres langues peuvent déjà pratiquer des questionnaires et ainsi se préparer aux examens ? Ils se sentent lésés et sont conscients qu'ils ne prendront pas les examens dans les mêmes conditions. C'est *unfair*. »

A hier matin, M. le président, des profs qui enseignent en Grade 11 ne sont pas au courant de ce qui se passe. Les autorités avaient deux ans pour se préparer, mais rien n'a été fait. Il n'y a que le *textbook*. Maintenant, aujourd'hui, c'est le branle-bas de combat et la cacophonie totale.

Plusieurs questions restent à poser –

- a) Comment sera le questionnaire?
- b) Combien de papiers sont prévus?
- c) Quel est le modèle qui va être utilisé?
- d) Quand est-ce que les *mock exams* vont être soumis? Ils sont censés être soumis ce mois-ci.
- e) Quand va-t-on faire le *training* pour la correction des épreuves ?
- f) Des questions également sur le KM en HSC car les étudiants devront bientôt faire le choix des matières. Le KM sera-t-il offert au niveau principal ou subsidiaire?
- g) A-t-on commencé à travailler sur le *syllabus* et les manuels afin que tout soit prêt à la rentrée 2024 ?
- h) Le gouvernement prendra-t-il la disposition d'offrir le KM comme sujet de bourse avec la liste de combinaisons de sujets?
- i) Est-ce que le KM est offert dans les académies ? Si non, pourquoi ?
- j) Le certificat de Cambridge mentionnera-t-il le *Kreol Morisien*? Ou est-ce qu'il y aura un certificat séparé pour le *Kreol Morisien*? Est-ce qu'il y aura deux certificats? Un certificat délivré par *Cambridge* et un autre par l'université de Maurice ?
- k) Est-ce que le résultat du KM sera inclut dans le certificat de *Cambridge* ou est-ce qu'il y aura un certificat séparé ?

C'est la confusion totale !

Le Dr. Jimmy Harmon, directeur adjoint et responsable du SeDEC, a rédigé un papier sur les amendements à l'*Education Act*. Il se pose des questions sur l'élaboration du *National Higher School Certificate*. Je cite –

« De nombreuses questions subsistent concernant la tenue du premier examen du *National School Certificate* et la suite qui lui sera donnée, » écrit-il.

Il se demande ainsi qu'elles ont été les dispositions prises pour offrir le KM en Grade 12 à la prochaine rentrée scolaire et se demande si le gouvernement donnera la possibilité au KM d'être un *scholarship subject* comme c'est le cas pour d'autres langues à Maurice.

Ce projet de loi concerne uniquement le *Kreol Morisien*. Pourquoi un projet d'amendement à la loi alors que pour le français, par exemple, qui ne relève pas non plus de *Cambridge*, il n'y a pas eu d'amendement alors que le contexte est le même pour les deux sujets, les deux matières ? Venons-en maintenant à la création du *National Examination Board*.

Sous ce projet de loi, le *NEB* aura la responsabilité d'organiser les examens, de préparer les questionnaires et d'organiser la correction entre autres, mais avec quel personnel et quelle expertise et surtout quand? Le temps presse, M. le président. Commentant la création du *NEB*, le Dr. Harmon s'interroge, je cite –

« Pourquoi mettre sur pied un *National Examination Board* alors que la *MES* organise des examens depuis des années? »

C'est vrai. Pourquoi ne pas confier ces examens au *MES* qui a déjà le personnel, les compétences et l'expertise? Qui siégera sur le *board*? Le projet de loi stipule que le *board* sera présidé par une personne nommée par le Premier ministre. Pourquoi le Premier ministre? Il y aura également le *Supervising Officer* et deux autres représentants du même ministère. Quels sont les qualifications du *Chairperson*? Qu'est-ce qui fait croire que ce ne sera pas encore un agent politique, un copain, une copine, et en plus, ils auront la responsabilité de la préparation des papiers d'examens? Pourquoi est-ce que c'est le ministre qui va décider du montant des allocations des membres? Est-ce que le *PRB* n'a pas déjà fixé les allocations pour les membres du *board*? Quid du *MES* étant donné que le *National Examination Board* assumera les fonctions déjà effectuées par *MES* et autres institutions existantes ? En effet, la loi régissant le *MES* spécifie clairement ses fonctions à la section 4 –

“*The objects of the Syndicate shall be to –*

(a) *organise and conduct such examinations as may be directed by the Minister (...)*

(c) *award certificates; and*

(d) *co-operate with other examination bodies.”*

Le *MES* est le seul organisme à gérer les examens nationaux et internationaux. Désormais, il y aura deux organismes ! Donc, il y a duplication. Pourquoi deux institutions avec les mêmes objectifs ? Est-ce qu'il y a là un agenda caché ? Est-ce que l'agenda serait de tout contrôler et de ne rien laisser à Cambridge ? Aujourd'hui, on commence avec le *Kreol Morisien* ; demain ce sera au tour d'autres matières. Il n'y a aucune raison pour un organisme parallèle au *MES*. Pourquoi ne pas créer une unité spéciale au sein du *MES* pour l'organisation du *KM* ? On éviterait ainsi de gaspiller l'argent des contribuables.

En même temps le *MES* devrait faire preuve de plus de rigueur. On se souvient de ce cas d'un employé du *MES* pris en flagrant délit avec des papiers d'examen pour les épreuves

du PSAC qui aurait eu lieu quelques jours après et dont l'enfant, paraît-il, devait prendre part aux examens. C'est un scandale qui a fait grand bruit au sein du MES. Qu'est-t-il arrivé par la suite ? Nul ne le sait. Il y a eu des fuites des papiers d'examens. Certes, cela ne veut pas dire que l'on ne peut pas faire confiance à tous les mauriciens et les mettre tous dans le même panier. Il y a des patriotes capables et intègres mais c'est ce gouvernement et les institutions sous son contrôle qui n'inspirent pas confiance.

Je conclus en disant ceci : c'est un véritable manque de respect non seulement envers les étudiants et les enseignants mais surtout vis-à-vis du KM, langue de tous les mauriciens. Cela en dit long sur l'état d'esprit de ce gouvernement. On comprend mieux maintenant ces tergiversations autour de l'introduction du KM au Parlement et cela démontre encore une fois l'incompétence au sommet. Gérer un examen aussi important avec une telle nonchalance est sans précédent. C'est l'inquiétude, le stress, l'angoisse et l'incertitude pour les étudiants en grade 11 optant pour le KM comme matière. A hier, encore une fois, toujours pas de code pour l'enregistrement au niveau du *School Certificate*. Il aurait fallu négocier avec Cambridge pour la préparation des examens. Malgré le fait que Cambridge ait commis quelques erreurs, les mauriciens font encore confiance, font plus confiance en cette institution. Si nous ne sommes pas satisfaits avec Cambridge, il nous faut commencer à penser à d'autres options. À un certain moment, il était question de l'*International Baccalaureate*. Pourquoi ne pas y réfléchir sérieusement ? En attendant, il faut confier la responsabilité de toute la question du KM au MES en collaboration avec Cambridge.

J'en ai terminé.

4.11 p.m.

Dr. Mrs D. Chukowry (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to bring my humble contribution on the Education (Amendment) Bill.

Mr, Speaker, Sir, pour répondre à l'honorable Arianne Navarre-Marie, je voudrais dire que le *Kreol Morisien is not a partisan issue, it is an issue that affects all of us regardless of our political affiliations*. Le *Kreol Morisien* ne touche pas une communauté mais toute la nation mauricienne ! Le *Kreol Morisien* est ce que nous avons tous en commun.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: C'est ce que j'ai dit !

(Interruptions)

Dr. Mrs Chukowry: Alors arrêtez avec votre politique de bas étage !

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! What is happening here?

Dr. Mrs Chukowry: I wish ...

Mr Speaker: I have given the floor to one person only!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Je n'ai jamais dit ça, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Somebody will rebut. This is not debate in Parliament. You can't stop an orator. Somebody else will rebut. You continue!

Dr. Mrs Chukowry: Thank you.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: She is not telling the truth.

Dr. Mrs Chukowry: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to express my full ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: She is not telling the truth.

An hon. Member: *Met li deor!*

Mr Speaker: You ...

An hon. Member: *Met li deor!*

Mr Speaker: You have ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Dire n'importe quoi !

Mr Speaker: Hon. Navarre-Marie, you have to listen to me. You don't have the right to talk, to make other speeches in Parliament once you have finished with your debate. You participated in debate and now debate is finished for you. Let the hon. Member ... **Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Elle ne peut pas dire n'importe quoi.

An hon. Member: Same for you!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Navarre-Marie, don't go beyond my ruling. You know what is waiting for you. The population is listening to you.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: To you as well!

Mr Speaker: You can't become an orator and now you debate when another orator is talking. You can't do that!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Don't shout at me!

Mr Speaker: This is not the issue! This is me!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: This is the issue!

Mr Speaker: This is ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: You don't shout at me!

Mr Speaker: I am asking you to withdraw from the Chamber. You are going too far!
Please, withdraw!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: You keep shouting!

Mr Speaker: Withdraw from the Chamber!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: You keep shouting like a dog!

Mr Speaker: Withdraw from the Chamber! The population is listening to you!

An hon. Member: To you as well!

Mr Speaker: You want to invent Parliament!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *Kapav tret ene madam koumsa ?*

Mr Speaker: You finished your speech; let the orator speak.

An hon. Member: *Pa pe get madam la!*

An hon. Member: *Kan madam, ki arive?*

An hon. Member: *Pena respe!*

An hon. Member: *Dir li respe Speaker?*

Mr Speaker: This is Parliament! One by one!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: You are bullying women parliamentarian!

Mr Speaker: No! You are preventing another woman! One woman presented the policy; another woman is speaking and this is what you are doing!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: She is not telling the truth!

Mr Speaker: You are bringing down the dignity of women!

An hon. Member: *Laont lor li, laont!*

Mr Toussaint: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. I think I heard the hon. Member, Mrs Arianne Navarre-Marie, say that you are shouting like a dog. I would like you to clarify this, please.

Mr Speaker: Oh!

If you said that...

(Interruptions)

If you...

(Interruptions)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: What did I say? What did I say? What did I say?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: One by one! Hon. Member you don't have the floor. I am talking to you. If you said that, please withdraw that and you withdraw from the Chamber.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: What did I say?

Mr Speaker: I will check on that ...

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Yes, check it.

Mr Speaker: But for now you withdraw from the Chamber.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *Pena respe ! Koz menti!*

An hon. Member: *Deor!*

Mrs Navarre-Marie: *Mo atan twa deor la !*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! That was a sense of humour. Stop with that! What you are saying, I take it as a sense of humour, but don't go beyond that. That was a sense of humour. Okay, now you continue!

Dr. Mrs Chukowry: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to express my full and unreserved support for the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2023) as this piece of legislation has the potential to transform the education system in Mauritius and provide a better future for our children.

The focus of the Bill is the setting of the National Examinations Board and confers powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education subsector on the recommendations of the Board.

Kreol Morisien features as one of the subjects. *Kreol Morisien* is being given further recognition through the process and testifies strongly its importance within the pedagogical and curricular premises of our domestic education policy. This is a crucial step towards improving the quality of education in Mauritius and ensuring that our students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the global economy.

The establishment of a centralised National Examinations Board will provide a standardised system of assessment and evaluation that will create a fair and consistent education system for all students. The Board will develop and administer national-level exams, regardless of the school they attend. This system will ensure that all students are subjected to the same standard of assessment and evaluation, which will ensure that the quality of education is consistent throughout the country.

Additionally, the proposed Board will play a vital role in providing recognition of qualifications. With a centralised system of assessment and evaluation, it will be easier to assess the qualifications of students and compare them against a standardised benchmark. This will be especially beneficial for students who may have completed their secondary education in remote or less privileged areas. The standardised system will ensure that their qualifications are recognised at the same level as students from other regions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I firmly believe that the establishment of a National Examinations Board can bring significant benefits to the education system. One of the most significant advantages of such a board is that it can help reduce the workload on teachers, thereby enhancing the quality of education and improving the overall efficiency of the system.

Currently, teachers are burdened with the responsibility of preparing and grading exams, which can be a time-consuming process. This workload often takes away from the valuable time teachers could be spending in the classroom, engaging with their students and

imparting knowledge. The establishment of a National Examinations Board will significantly reduce the burden on teachers as they will no longer have to spend time creating and grading exams.

With a centralised board responsible for assessment and evaluation, teachers can focus more on delivering high-quality education. This will lead to a more efficient and effective education system as teachers can concentrate on teaching instead of administrative tasks. The result will improve learning outcomes for students as they will benefit from the undivided attention of their teachers who will have more time and resources to invest in their learning.

Furthermore, the establishment of a National Examinations Board will create a more consistent and equitable system of assessment and evaluation. Standardised exams, developed and administered by the Board, will ensure that all students are subjected to the same standard of assessment, regardless of their school or location. This will create a level playing field for all students and ensure that their achievements are recognised at the same level. This, in turn, will improve the overall quality of education in the country.

Conclusively, the establishment of a National Examinations Board will bring significant benefits to the education system. By reducing the workload on teachers and creating a more consistent and equitable system of assessment and evaluation, we can create a more efficient and effective education system that provides high-quality education to all students. It is my hope that we can work together to establish this institution and create a brighter future for our youth.

Furthermore, conferring powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector on the recommendations of the Board is a crucial step towards recognising the achievements of our students. Mr Speaker, Sir, currently, there is no standardised system of certification in the secondary education sub-sector, which can lead to inconsistencies in the recognition of qualifications. With the University of Mauritius conferring certificates, all students will have access to a recognized and respected qualification that can open doors to higher education and employment opportunities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the education system in Mauritius is undoubtedly the backbone of our country. Education is the cornerstone of any progressive society and it is through education that individuals can become responsible, productive members of society. The importance of education in driving economic and social development cannot be overstated. It is the key to unlocking the potential of our country and our people.

In this context, the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2023) is a vital piece of legislation that seeks to further enhance the quality and relevance of our education system. The Bill aims to establish a National Examinations Board and confer powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector on the recommendations of the Board. This is a significant step in the right direction to ensure that our educational system remains competitive and relevant in the 21st century.

The importance of education in driving economic growth and development is well-established. According to the World Bank, every additional year of education can increase an individual's earnings by 10%. In addition, a study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) found that education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty, improve health outcomes and promote social inclusion.

Furthermore, education is essential for the development of critical thinking skills which are crucial in the current knowledge-based economy. Critical thinking skills enable individuals to analyze complex issues, evaluate evidence, and make informed decisions. These skills are essential in today's world, where technology and innovation are constantly changing the way we work and live.

The Education (Amendment) Bill is a crucial step towards ensuring that our education system remains relevant and competitive in the 21st century. The establishment of a National Examinations Board will provide a standardised system of assessment and evaluation for students in the secondary education sector. This will help to ensure the quality of education and the recognition of qualifications. With a centralised board, all students will have an equal opportunity to succeed and be recognized for their achievements.

Moreover, conferring powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector on the recommendations of the Board will help to standardise the certification process. This will ensure that all students have access to a recognised and respected qualification that can open doors to higher education and employment opportunities. This can lead to increased social mobility and better life chances for our citizens.

The establishment of the National Examination Board will provide a uniform and standardised approach to the examination process, ensuring that all students are evaluated on a level playing field.

Standardised assessments are essential for the effective evaluation of educational system and they have demonstrated to be reliable and valid measures of student achievement. Standardised assessments help to ensure that students are being evaluated on the same attributes and skills regardless of where they attend school. This, Mr Speaker, Sir, promotes fairness and equal opportunities as well as accurate rate assessment of students' performance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Examinations Board will be responsible for setting examination standards and guidelines for all secondary school students in Mauritius. This will help to ensure that all students receive a high quality education and that their achievements are recognised on a national level. The Board will also help to identify areas where improvements can be made, such as curriculum development or teachers training.

Furthermore, the National Examinations Board will provide a central point for collation and analysis of examination data which will enable educators and policymakers to make informed decisions about the education system. This data can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the system as well as trends and patterns in students' achievement. This information can help to guide policy decisions and to ensure that resources are being used effectively to improve the education system.

The conferral of powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education subsector on the recommendation of the National Examinations Board is a significant step forward for the education system in Mauritius. This reform will bring many benefits to the education system in the country as a whole.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this reform will strengthen the credibility and recognition of certification awarded in the secondary education subsector. Currently, the quality of education and the value of certificate can vary between schools. By having a standardised approach to examinations and certification, this will ensure that all students receive a high-quality education and that their achievements are recognised and valued.

This reform will additionally open up new opportunities for students to pursue higher education and career opportunities both locally and internationally. The certificates awarded by the University of Mauritius will be recognised by universities and employers around the world, providing greater opportunities for our students to further their education and careers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our Government is deeply committed to ensuring that our education system is accountable and able to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The establishment of

a National Examinations Board is an essential step towards achieving this goal. The Board will bring greater accountability to the education system, ensuring that all schools are held to the same high standards.

Mr Speaker, Sir, currently, there are significant disparities in the quality of education provided by different schools, which can lead to disparities in student achievement.

Furthermore, the National Examinations Board will create a more transparent and accountable education system. The Board will be responsible for developing and administering national-level exams, which will provide a standardised benchmark for assessing student achievement. This will make it easier to assess the quality of education provided by different schools and hold them accountable for their performance. Schools that consistently perform poorly on these exams will be identified and provided with additional resources and support to help them improve.

By creating a more accountable education system, the National Examinations Board will help to raise the overall quality of education in the country. The Board will ensure that all students are well-prepared for the challenges of the 21st century, equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's rapidly changing world.

In conclusion, the establishment of a National Examinations Board is an essential reform that will bring greater accountability to the education system. By ensuring that all schools are held to the same high standards, and that students are evaluated on a level playing field, we can create a more transparent, equitable, and effective education system.

Furthermore, this reform will also benefit the economy of Mauritius. By providing a high-quality education to our students, we will be producing a skilled workforce that is able to compete in the global marketplace. This will attract investment and create new job opportunities leading to economic growth and prosperity for the country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot stress enough the importance of investing in our education system. The Education (Amendment) Bill is a crucial piece of legislation that will have a significant impact on the future of Mauritius and its citizens. The establishment of a National Examinations Board and the conferral of powers upon the University of Mauritius to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector are steps in the right direction towards building a better future for our country.

Education has been and always will be a cornerstone of a prosperous and civilised society. As Aristotle once said, –

“Education is the best provision for old age.”

With this Bill, we are investing in the future of our children and our country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, education is not just about imparting knowledge, it is also about instilling values such as critical thinking, empathy and social responsibility. By investing in our children's education, we are investing in the future leaders of our nation.

To end, I wish to congratulate hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for bringing to the House the Education (Amendment) Bill. Let us not miss this opportunity to invest in our children and their future. Let us support the Education (Amendment) Bill and work together to build a brighter future for Mauritius.

Thank you for your attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Tour!

(4.35 p.m.)

Ms J. Tour (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): M. le président, malgré tout le pessimisme de l'intervenante qui m'a précédée, l'honorable Arianne Navarre-Marie, je préfère voir le côté positif de cet amendement et ce qu'il va représenter pour notre langue maternelle.

Et justement, il était temps, M. le président, de concrétiser un nouveau pas dans la reconnaissance de notre belle langue créole. Je dirais même qu'il était grand temps de renforcer sa présence dans notre système éducatif afin de donner toutes les chances de succès à nos enfants. La réussite scolaire, tous les pédagogues du monde le savent, passe par l'utilisation de la langue maternelle dans l'éducation.

Voici, donc, encore une mesure historique que notre gouvernement souhaite amener et que cette auguste Assemblée s'apprête à voter. Je vais parler ici, M. le président, de l'*Education (Amendment) Bill 2023* qui va introduire le *Kreol Morisien* comme matière d'examen dans le secondaire. Pour ma part, j'ai particulièrement à cœur de défendre ce projet d'amendement qui va renforcer notre mauricianisme, à commencer par les compétences éducatives de nos enfants.

Le *Kreol Morisien*, notre belle langue maternelle est parlée dans pratiquement toutes les maisons de Maurice. Aussi, nous devons consacrer tous nos efforts, M. le président, à lui donner la place qu'elle mérite dans l'éducation de nos enfants qui sont les acteurs du monde de demain.

Cet amendement, M. le président, prévoit justement d'introduire un nouveau *Schedule* à l'*Education Act*, petit en apparence, certes, mais immense dans ses implications et il sera, je le pressens déjà, une locomotive pour beaucoup d'autres mesures allant dans le même sens.

En effet, cet ajustement de l'*Education (Amendment) Bill 2023* viendra à lui tout seul 'mauricianiser' notre système d'éducation et en particulier, notre système d'évaluation et ce sera fait d'une pierre deux coups. D'abord, par la création d'un Comité national d'examens qui va délivrer les diplômes localement, ce qui est déjà une grande première dans l'histoire de l'éducation à Maurice. Et en plus, c'est une nouvelle matière d'examens qui va être également créée, j'ai nommé donc, M. le président, le *Kreol Morisien*.

Voilà donc un amendement majeur et décisif qui comportera plusieurs implications en amont et en aval. En effet, l'introduction des examens pour la matière *Kreol Morisien* sera un maillon important du système éducatif qui permettra une continuité de la scolarité. En amont de la mesure, nous devons nous rappeler que c'est en 2012, il y a dix ans, que le *Kreol Morisien* faisait son entrée à l'école primaire comme matière optionnelle et dès la rentrée de 2012, un peu plus de 3000 parents avaient déjà choisis l'option *Kreol Morisien* pour les enfants en première année. Puis, le *Kreol Morisien* a été introduit comme matière au secondaire avec les cours de fondations.

Notre amendement d'aujourd'hui, M. le président, s'inscrit donc dans une perspective historique. Après l'introduction du *Kreol Morisien* comme matière enseignée dans le primaire et dans le secondaire, c'est une suite logique et naturelle que d'en faire une véritable matière d'examen. Cela va encourager d'avantage de parents et d'élèves à prendre le *Kreol Morisien* comme option puisque cette option permettra désormais d'obtenir des points aux examens.

Et vous remarquerez, M. le président, qu'il ne s'agit pas pour ce gouvernement de tirer la couverture à lui. Il n'est nullement question pour nous de nier la contribution du précédent gouvernement qui a introduit le *Kreol Morisien* à l'école. Nous ne sommes pas là non plus pour écraser ce que les autres ont fait de bien avant nous.

Cette nouvelle mesure d'introduire le *Kreol Morisien* comme matière d'examen démontre la volonté du gouvernement pour faire passer en premier l'intérêt de la population et le bien-être de ses citoyens. Le gouvernement va toujours privilégier la continuité des affaires de l'État, pas comme certains antipatriotes que je ne vais pas nommer mais que nous connaissons bien et qui ne cessent de dénigrer et de détruire rien que pour le plaisir.

Je vous disais donc, M. le président, que la langue créole fait désormais partie intégrante du cursus scolaire aux élèves depuis dix ans. L'heure était venue de consolider cette avancée en l'inscrivant aux examens au niveau secondaire. C'est un pas de géant que ce gouvernement s'engage ainsi à faire et sa portée sera gigantesque pour la 'mauricianisation' de notre système éducatif.

Il est indéniable, M. le président, que l'introduction du *Kreol Morisien* aux examens est une grande avancée pour lui donner le statut de langue qui lui revient de plein droit. Faire du *Kreol Morisien* une matière d'examen, c'est le hisser au niveau de langue d'enseignement au même titre que toutes les autres langues telles que l'Anglais, le Mandarin, l'Arabe ou l'Hindi. C'est aussi valoriser la position du *Kreol Morisien* parmi les différentes langues utilisées à Maurice.

Nous parlons tous plusieurs langues, toutefois, le *Kreol Morisien*, c'est la seule qui est vraiment comprise par tous. C'est notre langue maternelle, c'est notre expression naturelle et c'est celle qui nous permet de verbaliser nos pensées, nos émotions, nos connaissances comme aucune autre langue ne peut le faire.

On retiendra également que l'enseignement de la langue maternelle comme matière validée par un examen permet à l'élève de mieux valoriser les connaissances implicites ou informelles acquises dans son environnement de tous les jours. L'élève qui possède des compétences en *Kreol Morisien* pourra maintenant les faire valoir dans son parcours scolaire et ainsi maximiser ses chances de réussite aux examens.

En d'autres termes, cet amendement va créer une opportunité supplémentaire de passer avec succès les examens pour tous les enfants qui choisissent cette option, car nos élèves, M. le président, sont intelligents et notre *Kreol Morisien* est une source précieuse qui est encore à peine exploitée de savoir cognitif qu'il convient de valoriser dans leur patrimoine éducatif.

Cet amendement, M. le président, va donner au *Kreol Morisien* la chance d'avoir sa place sur un certificat, d'être inscrit en bonne et due forme sur un certificat. Nous le savons

tous ce que cela représente de nos jours d'avoir un diplôme. Nous pouvons déjà visualiser ici la fierté que ce sera pour les élèves ou pour leurs parents lorsqu'ils obtiendront un diplôme en *Kreol Morisien* avec distinction. Oui, ce sera une fierté pour tous les élèves, parents, professeurs et même pour la nation Mauricienne. Une très belle façon, M. le président, d'honorer notre langue maternelle !

En aval de la mesure, il faut également considérer que le *Kreol Morisien* comme matière d'examen pourra encourager d'avantage de vocations. Ce sera non seulement une porte grande ouverte vers le développement des études créoles mais cela va contribuer également à créer de nouveaux postes d'enseignement.

Quelle belle reconnaissance au passage, M. le président, pour tous les militants de la langue créole ! Cet amendement introduisant l'option *Kreol Morisien* comme matière d'examen est une façon pour le gouvernement de reconnaître leurs efforts. Avec cet ajustement, nous pouvons mesurer le chemin parcouru en grande partie grâce à eux. Quel plus bel exemple pour montrer que notre gouvernement travaille toujours main dans la main avec la société civile, les citoyens et les intellectuels qui œuvrent pour le bien commun !

En tant que député de la circonscription No. 4, je souhaite moi aussi saluer leur engagement et leur dévouement, tous ces militants de la langue créole, je veux leur adresser mes chaleureuses félicitations et tout mon support pour cette cause qui est mon engagement de chaque jour, que ce soit auprès de mes mandants et de leurs enfants, que ce soit dans cet hémicycle ou sur le terrain international lorsque je suis emmenée à représenter Maurice à l'étranger.

M. le président, notre belle langue maternelle a dû affronter bien des obstacles sur le chemin de la reconnaissance jusqu'à présent. Bon nombre de '*créolo-sceptiques*' se demandent jusqu'à maintenant à quoi peut bien servir l'enseignement du *Kreol Morisien* à l'école. Nous comprenons leurs doutes et leurs réticences, surtout avec la chape de plomb des préjugés qui ont pesé de tout leur poids sur le destin de notre langue maternelle pendant longtemps.

Rappelez-vous que dans un passé pas si lointain, M. le président, on ne disait même pas 'langue créole', on disait 'patois'. La question du *Kreol Morisien* à l'école a fait couler beaucoup d'encre et occasionner des débats houleux. Certains pensent même qu'elle a été la pomme de la discorde.

Je répondrais donc, M. le président, qu'il est temps d'enterrer la hache de guerre autour de la langue créole. Il nous faut changer d'approche sur la question et nous avons déjà changé d'approche sur la question. Avec cet amendement qui donne une vraie liberté aux parents, nous sommes dans la réconciliation de tous les points de vue car le *Kreol Morisien* en tant que matière optionnelle d'examen est aussi une façon de respecter pleinement la décision de tous ceux qui veulent la choisir comme option.

Quant à tous ceux qui ont choisi l'option *Kreol Morisien* pour leur enfant, ils auront la possibilité de continuer sur cette lancée et, comme nous l'avons dit tout à l'heure, de couronner ce choix par un diplôme en bonne et due forme.

Et vous remarquerez au passage, M. le président, la démarche progressive qui est adoptée par ce gouvernement ; une démarche progressive et progressiste. Aller pas à pas, mesurer le chemin parcouru avant de prendre d'autres décisions qui ont une importance pour l'avenir de notre jeune nation tout en s'appuyant sur les avis éclairés de nos pédagogues, de nos intellectuels et de nos militants, loin de toute considération démagogique ou partisane. C'est une marque de sagesse qui fait la spécificité de ce gouvernement et qu'il convient de saluer ici.

Enfin, cet amendement est une étape, je dirais même plus un *milestone* qui nous permet de regarder avec confiance et optimisme vers l'avenir. Il sera important et utile de mesurer les effets dans le temps de cette nouvelle mesure afin de continuer à renforcer le statut de notre *Kreol Morisien* et de son inclusion dans l'espace public. Et vous pouvez compter sur moi en tant que députée pour continuer à militer fidèlement pour cette cause. En ce qui me concerne, ma porte sera toujours ouverte, en tant que députée de la Circonscription No. 4, pour tous ceux et celles qui veulent s'exprimer sur la question, pour tous ceux et celles qui veulent construire la nation mauricienne de demain dans la fraternité, dans la discussion sincère et dans l'action collective.

M. le président, j'ai récemment participé à un atelier de travail en Afrique du Sud et j'ai remarqué et cela m'a frappé d'ailleurs de constater que les différents pays de la SADC chantaient leur hymne national en langue maternelle. Qu'il nous soit permis de rêver ou de souhaiter ici, M. le président, d'un hymne national, chanté en *Kreol Morisien* dans les fonctions officielles par nos élèves et par tous les mauriciens. C'est une matière de réflexion que j'aurais aimé suggérer humblement car je pense que notre hymne national entonné dans notre langue

maternelle, on pourra pleinement ressentir et exprimer sa signification dans toute sa profondeur.

Et comme on dit, M. le président, *a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step*. Pourquoi ne pas envisager qu'un jour les débats de cette auguste Assemblée se fassent en créole ? Et d'ailleurs, il y a eu pas mal de requêtes dans ce sens. Bien sûr, il ne convient pas de brûler les étapes. On sait que tout cela demande beaucoup de travail et de préparations et le gouvernement est bien conscient qu'avant d'en arriver là, il y a un bon nombre d'étapes à franchir et cela passe par un système éducatif. C'est donc ce pas en avant que nous franchissons aujourd'hui avec cet amendement.

Pour finir, M. le président, je souhaite beaucoup de bonheur et de succès à tous les élèves, à tous les parents et tous les enseignants qui choisiront le *Kreol Morisien* comme option au secondaire une fois cet amendement décisif validé par cette auguste Assemblée car, je ne doute pas, M. le président, que tous les honorables membres ici présents, sachant mettre de côté leurs considérations politiques, seront convaincus du bien-fondé et de l'importance de cette mesure historique.

Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for 30 minutes.

At 4.51 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.49 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated! Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. A. Boolell (First Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): Mr Speaker, Sir, I gladly accept the invitation extended to all of us. Let me be the first to accept the invitation extended to us by hon. Ms Tour to have a frank and candid discussion. She spoke with candour and I am sure she will appreciate that we can have a frank and candid discussion on issues which can be sensitive, but which need to be highlighted.

The issues which we need to take up which are relevant to the Bill are –

1. the role of the MIE and MES with the setting up of the National Examination Board which unfortunately duplicates and overlaps;
2. the Technology Education Stream, which I am sure subjects in relation to the stream will eventually be in the Schedule, and

3. the merits of vernacular, *Kreol Morisien*, as a mother tongue based by the world programme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the debate would have been historical and the amendment to this Bill would have been historical if we were to exceptionally debate this issue in creole. We have heard so much about the landmark and historical dimension of the Bill and it is a historical moment, but there are some important questions which need to be asked. After all, we are going to solicit clarity and certainty.

Let me first of all remind our friends what they have said. Everybody has talked of level playing field, a parity of esteem. I will ask a basic question as to the definition of the secondary education subsector, of course. Does the subsector stop with *Kreol Morisien* or does it certainly invite others to stake a claim, because this is Mauritius; the buck does not stop. The Bill certainly has its merits, and its merits far, far outweigh any of the demerits. But you cannot stop Mauritius being what it is, a world in miniature, and everybody will say that he or she has a claim to state.

Now, let me also put another question. If a student takes the optional subject *Kreol Morisien* at HSC, will he be able to compete for the laureate exams? I am yet to hear from the Minister, although in her Second Reading, the hon. Minister did not elaborate, and important questions have been asked by hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie. One may argue that she reacts with her guts, but she spoke eloquently and did highlight issues which are very relevant.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I take it for granted that in relation of what I have said, that there is going to be level playing field and parity of esteem. This will not simply be an optional subject, but it will be a subject which will at par and will enable the student to level up. I hope and I am sure there is good reason for levelling up. Before I come to specific matters in relation to the role of the MIE and MES, the Technology Education Stream and merits of vernacular, I have taken note of what the hon. Minister has stated that this subject is now examinable at the upper secondary educational level, following recommendation made by experts and the number of students taking creole language is likely to be on the rise.

But this Bill is with uncertainty and this uncertainty needs to be cleared because we have to make sure that there is clarity as we cannot introduce a sensitive piece of legislation, an amendment being brought to the education where there is cloud hovering.

Now this Bill, as I say, is a Bill with uncertainty over the customised system of education and the question that I put is: is it deliberate to bamboozle the nation? You cannot stop our

friends from MIE and MES to ask basic and relevant questions. Many feel that the MIE and the MES are under siege because of encroachment and their mission, vision and mandate are shaken and disturbed. Their role cannot be simply one full of sound, and mind you, fury will be unleashed. Staffs have expressed deep-seated concerns and moral has started to sigh.

MIE is the training arm of education and develops national curriculum, which is validated by expert of relevant bodies. It has a head of curriculum. Now, the Minister has to spell it out and say loud and clear that the National Examination Board, which is the awarding body and operates under the aegis of the University of Mauritius. Some may argue that the buck should have stopped there. However, the object is to amend the Education Act to provide for the setting up of a National Examination Board for the secondary education subsector.

If I refer to the object of the board, the function of the board shall be to organise and conduct examination in respect of such subjects for the secondary education sub-sector as the Minister may determine. That is why I say Creole language which we all are in favour, which today is an examinable subject, is not the only subject which will be in the Second Schedule. And the Minister has to spell it out very clearly, because as I said, you cannot stop people claiming their state and Mauritius being what it is - a multiracial, multi-linguistic country, people will ask for the pound of flesh and we cannot remain insensitive or indifferent. So, that is why I say, despite the certificate of urgency, this Bill should have been well disseminated. There should have been wide discussion at the bar of public opinion. As I said, people working in relevant institutions like the MIE and the MES, feel that the rights and obligations, which they have, are not being fully taken on board.

So, that is why I put the question: why the duplication when the responsibility could have been entrusted to a reliable, tested, trusted body like the MES which benchmark with the best? Be it *Alliance Française* or the entrance exams to be admitted in overseas universities in US and elsewhere or sitting for scholarship awards, MES is the entrusted party and partner of choice and it has established links with reputed examination syndicates. It has delivered on commitments and honour its obligation vis à vis examination bodies and it has never erred and has always erred on the side of caution and like Caesar's wife above suspicion. In fact, Cambridge has erred and I remind the House that Cambridge has erred in relation to HSC exams over time zone.

So, the amendment, Mr Speaker, Sir, to the Education Act to make *Kreol Morisien*, an examinable subject with award of certificate at Secondary Education level, I agree, we have no

qualms over that. It is a level of process but why should the conduct of exams not entrusted to the MES? I mean we all have heard of the merits of this Bill, yes, there are a few merits when I look at Section 5D (2). It makes provision for assessment frameworks and assessment syllabus in *Kreol Morisien*, languages listed in the Second Schedule but there was a blatant omission. It is only now that this is being corrected and there have been fair points raised by hon. Marianne Navarre as a syllabus...

An hon. Member: Navarre-Marie.

Dr. Boolell: Navarre-Marie.

Mr Toussaint : *Li pou enkoler.*

Dr. Boolell: No, no, she will not. Mrs Arianne Marie-Navarre, okay?

An hon. Member: Navarre-Marie...

Dr. Boolell: Mrs Navarre-Marie. Alright she is a friend, you know. Don't you worry about that!

(Interruptions)

No, she will not.

So, about the syllabus, unfortunately, it is without a tail or head and the students who are going to be assessed, feel at a loss. I am glad that this shortcoming or anomaly is being addressed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Cabinet approved the set up of the technology education stream on 03 June 2022. The Minister has yet to inform the House if amendment to education regulations will follow shortly to include examination of the technology education stream by the National Examinations Board with the University of Mauritius as the awarding body. And the object of the technology education stream is to cater for employable skills, hence on like design and technology. It is an applied system and it is a good thing but we have to be informed as to whether it is an alternative pathway, which we are told it is, to O-level Cambridge offered to Grade 10 students or what we call Form IV, and after two years, Grade 10 and Grade 11 students of this stream will continue the learning pathways in the Institute of Technical Education and Technology and they will complete two more years there. So, they end up with an equivalent G13 or HSC certificate and of course they will go to Polytechnics and then to a

university. These have been spelt out. I have stated earlier, and it was a Cabinet decision. Fair enough! There is no problem but I will come back.

Is MES being deliberately undermined to make room for the National Examinations Board? Not only have we heard complaints from Staff of the MIE and the MES, but there has been hue and cry from parents that standards are falling and they are very worried. So, the Minister has to spell these out. I can understand that in her Second Reading, probably she did not have time to do so but I hope when she will make her concluding remarks, all these issues will be raised.

Now, if the objects of the National Examinations Board were an awarding body under the aegis of the University of Mauritius, but perception and reality would be one and the same. Section 6 (b) and (c) say it all. As I have said, I acknowledge that the Bill makes great strides to forge nationally identity and give a sense of belonging but the uncertainty over the exams body has to be overcome.

Vernacular language, I agree, is the springboard for quality education; it is empowerment and equity. Notwithstanding an examinable mother tongue, there is no premium education if cognitive and psychomotor development is not hand in glove. The Deputy Prime Minister is not here but he would recall that as former Minister of Education, UNESCO gave substantial resources to consolidate the process of making *Kreol Morisien* the springboard of enhancement. The Nation has to acknowledge of the tremendous contribution made by academics like Prof. Hookoomsing, Mr Dev Virahsawmy, Prof. Tirvassen, Dr. Carpooran and Dr. Harmon and many likeminded to promote the Creole language.

The making is never an ending process but the odds of prejudice are still stacked. This Bill, of course, helps to overcome subject that there is proper implementation of bilingual program to reach out to traditionally left behind by submersion schooling using a single foreign language. Had the Minister understood much earlier the importance and relevance of vernacular as the powerhouse of education, there would have been no genocide or outrageous failure of primary and secondary education. It would have been spared of uncalled criticism by World Bank which, of course, has reduced this regime to a ... without a figure. Of course, the only factor which remains constant is change. I am not saying that one big swallow makes spring; I agree that for the child to blossom, the system has to be an all-encompassing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Seychelles has begun to query the effectiveness of teaching in mother tongue-based language. There has been an on-going debate in relation to its merits but its merits

far outweigh any demerit and success cannot be gauged on the promotion of vernacular alone. It is multifactorial but the weightage of mother tongue as a catalyser to ignite the faculty of early cognitive processes cannot be taken lightly. The environment has to be conducive for the child to make the most of opportunities knock.

I will refer to a policy paper by UNESCO to promote the use of native language in schooling for quality education. In short, what the paper says, it emphasises the significance of mother tongue-based bilingual programme for educational quality. Language is a key factor in communication and understanding, and using the learner's first language to teach, beginning reading and writing skills along with academic contents, offers significant pedagogical advantages.

The paper also discusses the form of introduction of mother tongue-based bilingual program and key lessons learned from such programs.

Of course, successful implementation and management of these programs require involving all stakeholders' significant investment and selection of appropriate bilingual models. The paper argues that mother tongue-based schooling has positive implications for education in terms of increasing access and improving quality, especially in developing countries.

Therefore, the paper recommends gradual transitional and developmental maintenance models that maximize the development of learners' first language which can lead to improvement in second language learning. Mr Speaker, Sir, as I stated earlier, this Bill should have been well ventilated. There should have been discussions at the Bar of public opinion to highlight the merits of creole language as the stepping stone for equity for enhancement, for empowerment and for employability.

Mr Speaker, Sir, who is not for the enhancement of the population and it starts with the mother tongue which will ignite the cognitive process; subject of course, that there is proper psychomotor development. But, common things are common Mr Speaker, Sir whether we like it or not. I am not saying that silence is golden.

Inasmuch as we welcome and we welcome with an open heart our mother tongue which today, has become an examinable subject but we have to make sure that we are faithful in relation to what is spelt out and to be relevant to parity of esteem and level playing field but make no mistake! Tomorrow others will stake their claim but, the law is the law and we have

to be obedient to the law. At the same time, we have to convey strong signals that in our zeal to build a nation, we have to widen the circle of opportunities.

We welcome this Bill with a note of caution but, as I say, there was no need for duplication of resources. Let MES do what it knows, what it's good at doing and let MIE look at our level of preparedness in relation to skill and reskilling of teachers and preparation of curriculum.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said what needs to be said and I hope Government will err on the principles or on the side of caution. Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Koonjoo-Shah!

(6.10 p.m.)

The Minister of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (Mrs K. Koonjoo-Shah):

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Allow me to start by saying that this House is currently, as agreed by the person who spoke before me, debating a Bill which is extremely important to our entire nation, and of course, I will congratulate my colleague, hon. Vice Prime Minister, Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, for bringing this important amendment to the House.

Jumping straight into the crux of the matter, going by what hon. Dr. Boolell just stated before ending his intervention, the amendment Mr Speaker, Sir, is doing precisely that, we are widening the circle of the opportunity. We are, through this amendment, bringing the much beloved *Kreol Morisien* and putting up the structures adequate for them to be examined and having a body, the most appropriate body, to be awarding the certifications. Mr Speaker, Sir, late Nelson Mandela stated that –

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to the same person in his language, that goes to his heart.”

Unfortunately Mr Speaker, Sir, there are around 573 known extinct languages. These languages are no longer spoken nor studied.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill in itself is a robust safeguard to ensuring that our much loved *Kreol Morisien* does not experience such a fate because when we speak about the disappearance or the extinction of a language, we are also reckoning and we are also acknowledging that it

goes without saying that it's an entire encyclopaedia of cultural heritage that will be burned down if we ever let that happen to our mother tongue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to fully grasp the significance of the Bill being debated, we should try and go back to the 2020-2024 Governmental Program whereby this Government has pledged to value its population as its major asset through empowerment, improved social inclusion and equality of opportunity. The Government's agenda places a priority on eradication of absolute poverty and the minimum wage being one that has significantly been increased to that effect. However, Mr Speaker, Sir, our fight against poverty will only succeed through equal opportunities for our citizens in the education system and I'm sure the nation will entirely agree that education, Mr Speaker, Sir, remains unquestionably the most powerful tool in our war against poverty.

While I was going through the Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, what came to mind was the number of measures taken by this Government to promote our Mauritian language – our mother tongue, our very which is our very *Kreol Morisien*.

Mauritius has a diverse and a very intricate linguistic ecology and it's important that every Mauritian has a sound command of the *Kreol Morisien*. I wish to remind the hon. Mrs Arianne Navarre-Marie who, unfortunately, is no longer here. I would like to remind her that *Kreol Morisien pas dans un passé trop lointain*, used to be only a dialect and this Government, the Prime Minister in his vision, have started onto this historical journey and I find it sad that instead of commending and constructively contributing to this amendment, all that was put forth by that hon. Member was *cacophonie totale, pa satisfé, nanye pa bon* as usual. So it's a bit disheartening, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the population will recall that there has been the inclusion of *Sega Tipik*, *Geet Gawai*, and *Sega Tambour* of Rodrigues on the UNESCO World List of Intangible Heritage, the very UNESCO that hon. Boolell was citing earlier on. We have been included on the UNESCO World List of Intangible Heritage and I believe it is now high time for international acknowledgment of the diversity of cultures related to our Republic. We are headed in the right direction. We hope; I'm sure everybody hopes alongside me that very soon, the *Sega Tambour Chagos* as well will be included on the list with a view to conserving the Chagossian culture.

While this Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, is laying those cornerstones of own identity, we are fighting for our territory. It is unfortunate that some members, some people find this

amendment bill yet another opportunity to do politics, cheap politics *kot nanye mem pa bon*.
To fer osi to pa bon, to pa fer si pa bon.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, it's true that according to the World Development Indicators (WDI), Mauritius is among the nations with the highest literacy rates in Africa. The majority of those who begin primary school continue on to secondary school and a sizeable fraction also enrolls in higher education. Gender parity has been attained at the elementary and secondary levels while women are even more well-represented at the post-secondary levels, according – I'm not saying that just out of thin air – to the World Development Indicators (2020) Report and I know we have some members on the other side who are so fond of citing reports. So, please do take notes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, coming back to the Bill, the National Examinations Board will be responsible for the organisation and conduct of examinations in designating subjects at the secondary level.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, this model is well established and already in use in the United Kingdom. Exam boards have existed for as long as there have been qualifications offered by schools. Universities naturally formed the first exam boards because they had the requisite experience and expertise for awarding qualifications such as degrees.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in our case, the University of Mauritius will be awarding those certificates. We all know that the said university is the oldest and largest university in the country in terms of student enrolment and curriculum being offered. With more than fifty-five years of independence, we are now aptly able to benchmark with internationally recognised methods of teaching and assessment, and therefore, the University of Mauritius is indisputably the best institution to award the certificates in line with internationally accepted best practices.

Mr Speaker, Sir, *Kreol Morisien* is our oral heritage and is referred to as our mother tongue as well. Its promotion in the form of tales, songs, legends, and proverbs preserve our common cultural memory and our history. Across them, shared traditional knowledge, concepts, beliefs and values are passed down across generations thus bridging gaps in time and space. Our mother tongue, Mr Speaker, Sir, establishes a crucial component of our identities and maintains social continuity. It gives us a sense of our place and our roots in a world that is changing way too quickly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the range of Speaking Unions in Mauritius is revelation itself of the amazing diversity of our inhabitants. We have managed to focus on education and the preservation of traditional cultural heritage, particularly through the language skills. Mr Speaker, Sir, in Mauritius these very language skills are there to empower our younger minds to use the *Kreol Morisien* language in the right context, – and I think that, Mr Speaker, Sir, is of seminal importance when I say right context – within our very unique ethno-cultural society. Because in a way, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill will help towards exerting some kind of caution during the use or misuse at times of our adjectives, our sayings from this very colourful *Kreol Morisien*. For example, we will recall that one should use caution when utilising terms like ‘zako’ or ‘manz bondie, kaka diab’ – it has to be contextualised. So, hopefully, this will help in that direction. *(Interruptions) Bizin fer rapel!*

Mr Speaker, Sir, because of its diversity, Mauritius has very strong ties to the three major continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. One outstanding feature that puts Mauritius in a strong position to precisely serve as a true gateway to Africa for businesses is our ability to converse effectively in a variety of languages.

Mr Speaker, Sir, like I said earlier on, our Mauritian creole has evolved from being a mere unrecognised dialect, which remains only on what is spoken, it has evolved from that to a “language” – and here I am hoping, in fact, I am confident that Bhojpuri will follow suit in the foreseeable future.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, *Kreol Morisien* has evolved from this dialect to a language which in addition to being spoken is now also translated into writing in a very well-defined and structured way which can be assessed academically with the right accreditation from – and I repeat – an internationally recognised tertiary institution. *M. le président, nous avons maintenant une académie de la langue créole, nous avons notre propre orthographe, une grammaire propre à notre langue maternelle, les normes, et un dictionnaire de la langue maternelle de notre pays*, and I say this with a lot of pride.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the *Kreol Morisien* has come a long way since its emergence during the era of slavery and the stigmatisation that was associated with its use to today the acceptance of a harmonised form and its inclusion in elementary and secondary school curriculum. We do not, Mr Speaker, Sir, want to have any of our younger minds left behind, we want to empower all learners to fully take part in society. This is the philosophy of inclusiveness that has always guided this Government and our Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as parliamentarians, my colleagues will agree with me, that we are often questioned by the media or our fellow citizens as to when *Kreol Morisien* will be introduced in the National Assembly. We have to be very honest with ourselves here, Mr Speaker, Sir; this cannot and is not going to happen overnight. Actually, there was a PMQT to that effect from hon. Uteem in November 2021, whereby, and I quote, the Prime Minister answered –

“(...)we have covered a lot of ground, but there is still a long way to go. Works which have started need to be continued so as to ensure a successful introduction of *Kreol Morisien* into the National Assembly.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have quoted this just to portray that the Government and the Prime Minister mean business on this side of the House. Actions have always followed the talk unlike, and again I remember the Members on the other side who are kind of champions at futile talking, you know *koze, koz koze, aktielman pe re koz koze*. So, we do not just *koz koze*, we put our money where our mouth is, Mr Speaker, Sir.

To conclude, it is a known fact that when a language disappears, like I said earlier on, it takes an entire cultural and intellectual heritage down with it and is the disappearance of a unique *patrimoine*. We are doing everything not to have the *Kreol Morisien* suffer the same fate. Mr Speaker, Sir, the amendment to the Education Bill is not a mere one; it has not been plucked by the Vice-Prime Minister out of thin air. This Government, with the farsighted leadership of our hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, is guaranteeing our youngest citizens their right to education in their mother tongue.

We are aware that there are still some grounds to cover, some milestones to achieve, but this is another milestone nonetheless with a major bearing on nation building. We are setting the foundation stone of our rainbow nation, projecting onto the global map a beckon of inclusiveness, peace, harmony and unity. This is what this Government is devoting to.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill goes beyond just a language and the National Examinations Board and the certification; this Bill relates to the very organic construct of our Mauritian nation. It is a Bill that glues our social fabric with harmony and cohesion and it is a critical leap forward in consolidating us as *enn sel lepep, enn sel nasion*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, *viv nou Kreol Morisien ek viv la Repiblik de Moris!* I thank you all for your attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ramchurrun!

(6.25 p.m.)

Mr P. Ramchurrun (Third Member for Savanne & Black River): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to address this august Assembly on the Education (Amendment) Bill.

From the outset, let me congratulate the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for coming forward with this Bill. Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun has proven again that she is the right person at the right place to take this bold decision, and will be relentless in implementing the right policies to uphold our Mauritian education sector.

Personally, I very much welcome the setting up of the National Examinations Board (NEB) which will enable Mauritius to be once again a pioneer in the field of examinations management in Africa. Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, unlike some hon. Members from the Opposition, our side of the House is determined not to spread disinformation within the minds of our population. The hon. Minister of Education has been very clear to dissipate any doubts of overlapping with the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate. Due to the nature of our country's history, we have collaborated with Cambridge International for more than 100 years and this partnership has proven its worth throughout generations of students who are now successful professionals across all fields both locally and internationally and even in both sides of this august Assembly. However, given the only constant is change, we cannot be self-defeating by not enabling our educational system from having more flexibility in terms of examinations management and awarding of qualifications.

The setting up of the National Examinations Board (NEB) will undoubtedly be more cost-effective compared to our partnership with the CIE which has been on an increasing trend over the last few years. Our caring government has also never left any stones unturned to alleviate the burden of Cambridge examinations on our hardworking parents by expanding as has never been done before, the subsidies on exams fees, for example. However, the question we ask ourselves is whether it is a sustainable model and whether an alternative should not be considered. Hence, the setting up of the NEB will be a welcomed evolutionary step in our educational reforms journey, where we as a country, will be able to award secondary qualifications locally through our leading tertiary institution, that is, the University of Mauritius. Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Examinations Board (NEB) will also be a definite

edge for the UOM as it will launch the institution on another level playing field in the domain of qualifications awarding. In fact, the UOM has demonstrated very high standards with high quality professionals and it will now have the chance to further consolidate its internal frameworks and quality standards.

The NEB will also have a major opportunity to work with regional and international organisations to further the cause of examinations management. For instance, there is significant potential in the field of moving towards digital assessments through modernisation and digitalisation. It can also partner with other institutions to promote the best standards with respect to examinations data given the need to be as transparent and accountable as possible. For instance, it can partner with the OECD and the programme for international student assessment, which are currently developing assessments to be used across the world, for example, in collaborative problem solving and creative thinking.

Mr Speaker Sir, examinations offer a common idea of what students know and are capable of. They create a level playing field where everyone is evaluated independently on the same subject at the same time. Examinations and the preparation that precedes them are known to be motivating and promote learning. Examinations also give students a reliable, objective assessment of their learning and development, which can help them decide where to go on in the future. They are the most objective measurement and thus, coursework and non-exam assessments are only used in situations where it is impossible to test knowledge, abilities, and comprehension in a reliable way through an examination. It is thus crucial that credentials line up with our larger educational goal. Up to the age of 16, young people must have access to a comprehensive and balanced academic program. In order to familiarise students with the fundamental information they need to be informed citizens and to guarantee that as many children as possible may lay claim to a rich intellectual legacy, I think that students should be exposed to the best that has been thought and uttered. We have thus taken action to guarantee that students have the chance to pursue excellent vocational and technical education. All students, regardless of background, are equipped to achieve their goals with that comprehensive education.

Mr Speaker Sir, young people from all backgrounds, who are engaged and understand that the goal of their education is to realise their goals, will succeed with the right focus and dedication. But they require time to study the subjects they are interested in, whether academic or vocational. As we reach the second quarter of the 21st century and as young people deal with

all the issues of this complicated world, we need to start working on a system that works for them. We absolutely believe that this Bill will result in the upgrading and democratisation of our educational system and we are dedicated to continued and significant role of examinations.

Moreover, Mr Speaker Sir, the MSM has, whenever it is in power, spearheaded the need for our country's education policies to be a holistic one. This has allowed Mauritians to shine both locally and internationally as our local human resources have been widely recognised in many sectors and across the world.

Let me remind the House, that the education of our citizens is and will always remain a priority of this government and of the hon. Prime Minister. Mr Speaker, Sir, the words of late Sir Anerood Jugnauth from 1985 still resonate loudly after 38 years. I quote –

“Education as we see, it is not simply a question of passing on values and knowledge to the younger generations; it should aim at producing fully conscious citizens and future productive workers; it should aim at transforming attitudes among youths so as to pave the way for the development of our nation. We must therefore make serious efforts to make our education respond adequately to the future changes that are overtaking our society and adapt itself to change.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, the MSM has since 1983 been the driver of educational reforms to achieve excellence and accessibility of our education system for over 40 years. We are the first ones to acknowledge the need for change and improvements, but the MSM culture is not to dwell indefinitely on issues by depriving the population from the benefits of our policies. Mr Speaker Sir, unlike the Labour Party and the MMM, we do not thrive on the '*pa kapav*' or '*naryen pa bon*'; as mentioned by hon. Mrs Koonjoo-Shah earlier "*fer si pa bon, pa fer si pa bon*". I thank the hon. Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for her foresight and diligence in bringing forward this Bill and her unfettered efforts in pursuing the vision of the MSM, late SAJ and the hon. Prime Minister for our country's education.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, a quality education may transform lives and provide possibilities to more fulfilling work and lifelong study. It encourages healthy lifestyle choices and civic engagement. Good teaching motivates students, and it is essential that any assessment reform gives instructors their authority back so they can do what they were taught to do, which is to transmit a love of their subject to the next generation instead of teaching them for the test. Thousands of young people in our nation, including many from disadvantaged areas and homes,

will continue to be let down if we do not make this major change today, and our government will never let them down.

Hence, it is primordial that the setting up of the NEB is supported by both sides of the House to ensure that our future generations have a brighter educational future.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: MP Bodha!

(6.37 p.m.)

Mr N. Bodha (Second Member for Vacoas & Floréal): Merci, M. le président, de me donner la parole.

La vice-Première ministre et ministre de l'Éducation est venue avec un projet de loi extrêmement important. Je pense que c'est une nouvelle frontière pour tous les militants, pour tous ceux qui se sont battus pour la langue ou la culture créole depuis longtemps. Mais le projet de loi soulève aussi énormément de questions et je pense que ces questions ont déjà été soulevées par quelques membres de ce côté de la Chambre et je vais les souligner.

Ce qui est intéressant c'est que le *Kreol Morisien* est enseigné en créole. Au fait, c'est le seul sujet enseigné en créole. Quand nous regardons un peu le fait que l'éducation primaire est gratuite depuis 1957, l'éducation secondaire depuis 1976, c'est une date extrêmement importante aujourd'hui parce que nous sommes en train de voir l'examination possible de ceux qui ont 17 ans et qui veulent avoir un certificat, une notation en langue *Kreol* au niveau de la SC, ce qu'on appelle le *O-Level*.

En attendant, il y a beaucoup qui a été fait sur le plan de la langue et de la culture créole. Il y a la musique. Il y a les textes. Il y a la littérature abondante. Il y a les pièces de théâtre, par exemple, je parle de tout ce que Dev Virahsawmy a fait, '*Li*', '*Zozef ek so palto larkansiel*'. Il y a eu aussi des traductions de Shakespeare, par exemple, la traduction d'Othello.

Et de-là, aujourd'hui, des questions se posent. Au-delà de la SC, allons-nous passer à la HSC et allons-nous passer après à des diplômes sur le plan universitaire ? Il y a déjà des recherches qui ont été faites. Il y a des questions qui se posent. Quel sera le rôle de Cambridge demain en ce qui concerne la langue *Kreol*? Par exemple, en ce qui concerne les bourses pour les lauréats, est-ce que demain - la question a été soulevée - si un étudiant prend le *Kreol* comme sujet principal, comment est-ce-que cette notation va se faire ?

Deuxièmement, j'aurais aimé que Madame la ministre nous évoque aussi la question sur le *SC aggregate*. Par exemple, les élèves sont très contents de dire que : 'Moi, j'ai eu un *aggregate* de 10 ou j'ai eu un *aggregate* de 6.' Demain qu'est-ce que l'élève va dire ? 'Est-ce que j'ai eu un *aggregate* de 6 avec Cambridge ou 2 et 3 avec le *National School Certificate*, ici, qui est le *National School Certificate* en *Kreol Morisien* qui serait annoté par l'Université de Maurice ?' Donc, ce sont des questions extrêmement importantes et extrêmement sensibles.

Au fait, j'ai fait quelques recherches pour voir un peu où est-ce que le créole est enseigné et si le créole permet d'avoir un diplôme. En France, au fait, le créole est exclu du baccalauréat français jusqu'ici. Le créole est exclu du baccalauréat français sauf en Martinique où effectivement, il y a un lycée où le créole est enseigné en classe de seconde, c'est-à-dire, *SC* et en première, c'est-à-dire, *Lower VI*, et en terminale qui serait le *Upper VI*. Maintenant, ce qui est important, c'est fait uniquement par une dérogation. Et, ici aussi, nous sommes en train de poser la question sur la dérogation.

Alors la question a été posée : pourquoi pas Cambridge ? Madame la ministre nous a donné un certain nombre de raisons que Cambridge évoque en disant que, premièrement, il y a le problème de l'expertise ; le problème de corpus littéraire ; le développement du cursus. Il y a la question économique aussi, est-ce qu'il y a suffisamment d'élèves qui prendront part à un examen du *Kreol* au niveau de la *SC* ou au niveau de la *HSC* ? Alors, je pose la question à Madame la ministre : est-ce que si demain tous ceux qui prennent part aux examens de la *SC* et

HSC - cela fait quand même beaucoup, à peu près, peut-être 20,000-25,000 élèves - prenaient le *Kreol* en tant que sujet principal pour la *SC* ou sujet subsidiaire pour la *HSC* ou encore sujet au niveau de la *SC*, est-ce que Cambridge changerait d'attitude ? Parce que je pense que Cambridge a quand même énormément d'expertises et énormément de ressources pour pouvoir créer les moyens d'amener un examen dans un sujet. Alors, Madame la ministre a expliqué pourquoi on n'est pas avec Cambridge.

La deuxième question : si on n'est pas avec Cambridge, pourquoi ne pas le faire avec la *MES* ? La solution qu'elle propose, c'est la mise en place d'une nouvelle institution. Les gens se posent la question mais pourquoi la nouvelle institution ? Moi je crois que quand il s'agit d'examen, il est beaucoup question d'intégrité, pas seulement d'intégrité, mais aussi de niveau d'expertises, de niveau du sujet enseigné, le niveau de l'examen et pour beaucoup d'entre nous à Maurice et ailleurs, le Cambridge reste une référence de taille. Alors ma première

question est : est-ce que demain s'il y a plus d'enfants qui prennent le *Kreol* en *SC* et *HSC*, est-ce qu'on pourrait travailler éventuellement avec Cambridge ? La deuxième question c'est : est-ce qu'il faut vraiment mettre en place une nouvelle institution ? Et là, on a dit que le président de l'institution sera quelqu'un qui sera choisi par le Premier ministre. Ma question est : *do we have the right person in the right place, somebody who we can say that it is out of meritocracy, integrity and excellence that he has been chosen?*

Je prends une remarque qu'a été faite par le vice-chancelier de l'Université de Maurice, *which is going to be the awarding body*. Il dit –

« On n'est pas supposé donner des *awards* pour des examens au secondaire mais davantage pour le cycle tertiaire. C'est Cambridge qui s'occupe de ces épreuves. Il n'y avait pas cette compétence à Maurice. Même le MES ne peut pas. Comme Cambridge n'a pas l'expertise du KM, c'est pourquoi l'UOM vient aider. »

Moi, je crois qu'il faut peut-être mettre en place un système qui ferait que l'examen soit fait de telle sorte que le certificat ait toute la valeur, tout le 'carat' qu'on souhaiterait avoir. Parce que c'est vrai que nous sommes en train de franchir une étape extrêmement importante, c'est donné à la langue créole ses lettres de noblesse, les élèves vont l'étudier. Et plus tard si on passe au niveau de la *HSC*, les élèves vont étudier tous les textes en *Kreol*. Et il faut le dire que si on prend le texte de ces 50 dernières années, il y a beaucoup de choses qui sont d'une richesse extraordinaire que ce soit au niveau de la musique, au niveau de la culture ou au niveau de la littérature.

Alors, nous sommes en train aujourd'hui de passer à une étape extrêmement importante, et la question c'est la question d'examen. Alors comment faire pour que ces examens se fassent dans les meilleures conditions ? Ce sont des questions qui ont été posées par nos amis de ce côté de la Chambre. Comment faire pour que les examens se fassent dans les meilleures conditions ? Comment faire pour que le cursus soit établi dans les meilleures conditions ? Comment faire pour qu'il y ait tous les autres modalités ? On a parlé des *mock exams*, des *test papers*, *specimen test papers*. J'espère qu'on va mettre en place tout ce système pour que l'écolier se sente à l'aise et qu'il puisse vraiment *perform* comme on le dit dans les meilleures conditions, et d'autant plus qu'il s'agit d'une langue affective parce que le *Kreol* appartient à nous tous.

M. le président, j'ai regardé l'épreuve de *Kreol Morisien* de 2021-2022 pour le *National Certificate of Education* mais je dois dire que ce n'est pas facile. Je dois dire sincèrement que

ce n'est pas facile. Madame la ministre pourrait nous dire quel a été le taux de réussite au niveau de cet examen. Il semblerait qu'il y a eu quand même un taux intéressant. Je dois dire que ce n'est pas facile. Le Dr. Boolell a évoqué la question de la langue maternelle.

Notre langue d'instruction reste l'anglais parce que nous apprenons tous les sujets en anglais. La question a été posée par beaucoup de pédagogues : est-ce qu'on ne devrait pas passer à la langue maternelle ? C'est-à-dire enseigner les premières années en créole, notamment comment savoir écrire, lire et compter ; les trois éléments de base.

Alors pour venir à la langue maternelle, je me pose la question : comment les examens seront faits ? En Guadeloupe, par exemple, il y a des examens à l'oral et puis il y a les examens en écrit et il y a aussi la possibilité qu'il ait un contrôle continu. Quand je pense à cette question de la langue maternelle, cela donnerait une situation extrêmement intéressante, par exemple, au lieu d'apprendre l'anglais en anglais, on apprend l'anglais à partir du créole, c'est-à-dire on a les phrases en anglais et on traduit en créole. À ce moment, on n'aura pas la traduction savoureuse qu'on a souvent – la traduction qui fait rire quand on traduit littéralement, mais on peut traduire le créole en anglais, c'est-à-dire dans le vrai anglais.

Alors, quand on voit, par exemple, au niveau de *Cambridge*, quand on étudie une langue, on a la version et le thème, c'est-à-dire si on étudie le français, à un moment donné, on a un texte en français qu'on nous demande de traduire en anglais, et puis il y a un texte en anglais qu'on nous demande de traduire en français. Toutes ces questions je les pose à Madame la ministre : comment ces examens seront faits pour que les élèves puissent comme, je l'ai dit, passer ses examens dans les meilleures conditions. Moi, je pense qu'il n'y avait pas lieu de créer une nouvelle institution. L'université de Maurice pourrait être bien sûre *the awarding body because you really need an awarding body*.

La meilleure solution aurait été qu'on puisse avoir un examen avec le concours de *Cambridge* parce qu'à ce moment, cela donnerait un saut international sans diminuer le carat de l'université de Maurice, et deuxièmement, pour ce que j'ai appelé *the aggregate result*, cela aurait été comptabilisé dans les résultats de la SC ou de la HSC, les résultats qu'on a de manière classique.

Je pense qu'il n'y a pas lieu de créer une institution nouvelle, on pourrait demander pour le moment à l'université de l'île Maurice d'être *the awarding body*, mais si demain il y a énormément - et c'est le cas, on voit cela en Martinique et en Guadeloupe – il y a de plus en plus d'étudiants qui prennent le créole même au niveau de la terminale et il y a des Brevets

Techniques Spécialisés (BTS) en créole ; le brevet est enseigné dans les DOM-TOM. Alors, moi, je crois que le créole pourrait devenir vraiment un ciment – le Dr. Boolell a parlé de la langue maternelle, mais le *medium* d’enseignement pour un meilleur apprentissage des autres langues, des mathématiques, des sciences et de tous.

Je crois que nous sommes en train de poser un jalon extrêmement important dans l’histoire de l’éducation aujourd’hui, c’est vrai. La question pour moi, c’est est-ce qu’on est en train de le faire dans les meilleures conditions parce que d’après des commentaires que j’ai vus, les spécialistes, des experts disent qu’il n’y a pas eu beaucoup de consultations, il n’y a pas eu beaucoup de dialogues, on n’a pas travaillé ensemble pendant longtemps. Je crois que le moment est venu pour qu’il y ait une vraie plate-forme, une vraie discussion pour que la langue créole puisse être enseigné, mais aussi puisse permettre à nos enfants d’accéder à de nouvelles connaissances, à la technologie nouvelle et de manière affective ; aimer la langue, sa littérature, sa musique, sa culture, mais en même temps l’avoir sur un diplôme qui aurait un carat international. J’ai terminé, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dhunoo!

(6.51 p.m.)

Mr S. Dhunoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. First of all, I would like to thank hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, G.C.S.K., the VicePrime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology for bringing this very important piece of legislation to the House and this amendment. When she was making her introduction about the Bill, she explained why and what was the importance of bringing this Bill to the House.

When we look at it in 1957, Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Bill was brought to the House, the Bill was to promote education and was presented by the Minister at that time, Mr Seeneevassen, and it was to promote in the colony and I quote from the Hansard –

“Colony and to consolidate and amend the law relating to education, to the supervision and control of schools that teaching therein and for the purpose connected therewith.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, *avec l’introduction de cet amendement, on va introduire le premier sujet, le Kreol Moricien. Le Dr. Boolell a parlé de notre langage maternel, l’honorable Bodha l’a dit, mais pour vous dire aussi que even UNESCO believes that every person has*

the right to learn in their own language and it is an important means to improve our learning, learning outcomes and our social emotional development.

However, as per the report that hon. Dr. Boolell was mentioning, he didn't say that "globally, 40% of the population does not have access to an education, a language they speak or understand. Cultural and linguistic diversity also play a key role in sustainable societies and help build peace, tolerance and respect for the difference." I am quoting from the report. I think that the amendment that you are bringing to this House is very important for the whole population.

My colleague hon. Ms Joanne Tour mentioned vastly on the importance of the *Kreol Morisien*, how we are being perceived and how this is going to change the learning between our students and our children for the future of tomorrow. I think this is also a very important piece of legislation where colleagues from the university, friends, my professor, Dr. Carpooran has been doing very well in designing the *Kreol Morisien* dictionary where we started in 2012 and to what we have built through the Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth and hon. Mrs DookunLuchoomun, how much we have advanced in trying to give the dignity to our *Kreol Morisien* language.

Today, we can say that we are going in the right direction. I think we should look at it as an option: doing *Kreol Morisien*, it could be like you are doing English, French, you are choosing an option like Arts. We should take it as a language that has its importance.

Hon. Bodha was mentioning his fear about this new establishment of the National Examination Board. He said that it should have gone through Cambridge. I think if Cambridge could have understood creole better than Mauritian, my question would have been, if they had, we would have gone through Cambridge.

Mais, M. le président, qui comprend le créole, notre langage maternel mieux que nous ? C'est pour cela que nous avons nos institutions ici ! Nous avons l'université de Maurice dont j'en suis fier d'être un des alumni de l'université de Maurice où j'étais formé. Et ce n'est pas que le créole mauricien que l'université de Maurice est en train de award des certificats.

J'ai aussi eu l'opportunité d'apprendre l'espagnol et l'allemand à l'université de Maurice à travers des lecteurs de l'université. Pour vous dire que nous avons de la compétence, l'honorable Bodha, nous avons de la compétence à l'université de Maurice. Il faut aussi donner le crédit qu'il faut à nos institutions parce que demain nous voulons que l'université de Maurice

soit parmi les 10 premiers dans le monde où les gens veulent venir étudier à l'île Maurice. Maurice, comme elle est située, est comme une plate-forme où on peut devenir un Educational Hub pour le continent africain et aussi de l'Asie.

C'est ce que nous voulons prouver ici, M. le président, parce qu'avec cet amendement qu'il y aura, nous aurons l'opportunité d'apporter le *Kreol Morisien* à un niveau internationale aussi. Si nous voyons les autres langages comme l'afrikaans et le swahili qui sont étudiés dans différents... Si on prend l'afrikaans, c'est environ 17,000 ; en Afrique du Sud et en Namibie, ils parlent l'afrikaans. On a environ 20 millions de personnes qui parlent ce langage qui est de l'époque coloniale quand les hollandais étaient en Afrique au Sud et au Namibie.

M. le président, nous commençons avec le *Kreol Morisien* mais dans la République, nous avons aussi le *Kreol Rodrige*. Peut-être qu'on ne le pense pas mais il y a des différences. Allez à Rodrigues, vous allez voir si vous parlez à nos collègues de Rodrigues, nos honorables membres qui sont là vont dire que ça c'est un commencement.

L'Université de Maurice aura le rôle important. Je voulais venir sur ces deux amendements du *Bill* à la Section 4, *New Section 5D inserted in principal Act*. Moi je pense qu'il est important que nous avons le *MIE*, la *MES*, tous ont leurs rôles spécifiques. Le Vicechancelier comme l'honorable Bodha a dit, mais oui, ils sont là pour le tertiaire et non pas pour le secondaire. On doit trouver la meilleure structure pour qu'on puisse aller dans la direction et avoir des *awarding bodies* comme le Cambridge. C'est là que le rôle de l'Université de Maurice rentre en jeu.

M. le président, nous voyons amplement que cet amendement va révolutionner le pays et ça va apporter - on va dire - un phénomène extraordinaire d'avoir la certification et demain on aura un sujet qu'on pourrait apprendre et avoir un certificat ou même un *credit* dans ce sujet-là.

M. le président, l'honorable Bodha a demandé aussi dans le *National Examinations Board* si c'est le ministre qui va nommer, le Premier ministre qui va choisir qui va être à la tête mais quand on avait introduit le *Bill* en 1957, c'était la première fois, M. le président, que *there was introduction of the Ministerial system. Let me quote from Hansard –*

“I should regard that the Director of Education and the Education ...”

It is quoted from Mr Seeneevassen when he introduced the Bill.

“... that the Director of Education and Education Authority for the Government school and all education authorities ought to be responsible to the Minister only”.

Ce n'est pas une nouvelle introduction que nous apportons, M le président. C'était déjà là et c'était à l'époque quand le premier *Ministerial Bill*, c'était ce *Bill*-là, coïncidence pour vous dire, mais on fait ce qu'il le faut pour aller dans la bonne direction et pour promouvoir notre langue maternelle, c'est très important.

M. le président, je suis sûr et certain qu'avec le Premier ministre et Madame DookunLuchoomun, avec l'équipe de l'Université de Maurice, la MIE et aussi le MES, nous allons produire... C'est mentionné, l'honorable Bodha, qu'il y aura des sous-comités qui vont être faits pour voir les papiers des examens. *We have to start somewhere* parce que pour l'instant M. le président, nous avons *a clean slate with regard to SC and people have been asking: I want to do Kreol Morisien as a language and when can I do it?*

If it will be a reality, it will be now. This Government under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, is bringing this Bill to the House. We are going to do it and we walk the talk like it has been mentioned by hon. Mrs Koonjoo-Shah.

M. le président, je vous dis, moi je suis pour le *Bill* et je souhaite bon courage à l'équipe parce que c'est un gros travail à faire. Il y a le côté technique aussi qu'on va voir. Je pense que nous avons tous les professionnels que nous avons à l'île Maurice qui peuvent contribuer dans l'aboutissement de ce projet de loi et de la concrétisation de nos examens au *School Certificate* et *Higher School Certificate*. C'est bon que nous avons la MIE, la MES et l'Université de Maurice parce que nous devons penser pour l'avenir et avoir des diplômes et aussi des *certificates*, pourquoi pas des degrés dans la langue *Kreol Morisien*. Ce sera une réalité ! Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Diolle !

7.03 p.m.

Mrs T. Diolle (Fourth Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): M. le président, le *Education (Amendment) Bill* introduit dans la Chambre par l'honorable Vice-premier ministre et ministre de l'Education, Madame Dookun-Luchoomun a une portée historique. Elle apporte dans un pays multilingue une reconnaissance tangible et réelle à une de nos langues ancestrales qui au fil du temps est devenue notre langue maternelle.

M. le président, permettez-moi de faire un bref historique de l'introduction de la langue créole dans notre système éducatif. Le *Kreol Morisien* a été souvent qualifié de langue inférieure par ses détracteurs jusqu'à son introduction dans les écoles primaires en 2012. Elle fait son entrée dans le *curriculum* de ces écoles primaires dans la catégorie qualifiée de langue ancestrale. Chacune de ces langues ancestrales est fortement marquée par sa dimension identitaire selon Eriksen et Stein, deux chercheurs qui ont beaucoup étudié le tissu social mauricien.

Des exemples de ces langues ancestrales sont le Hindi, l'Urdu, le Marathi, le Telegu, le Tamil, l'Arabe et le Mandarin. Elles sont enseignées à titre de promotion et de préservation des valeurs culturelles des groupes ethniques auxquels elles sont associées. Ces langues sont enseignées depuis la colonisation Britannique. Le *Kreol Morisien* fait son entrée au même titre que ces langues dans le cursus scolaire à la suite des efforts d'affirmation de l'identité créole qui a pris naissance à la suite des émeutes de 1999. Ces émeutes ont suscité l'émergence d'une affirmation identitaire de l'ethnie créole qui représente autour de 30% de la population selon le dernier recensement sur les ethnies qui date des années 80.

Le *National Economic and Social Council* fut créé à cette époque pour canaliser cette revendication forte de l'affirmation de l'identité créole qui émanait des rues et pour agir comme plateforme de stabilité sociale. Selon Dr. Harmon, chercheur qui a fait sa thèse de doctorant sur la langue *Kreol Morisien* de 2005 à 2010, il y a eu une convergence entre d'une part la revendication pour l'enseignement du *Kreol Morisien* sur une base purement pédagogique et de l'autre d'un mouvement identitaire qui faisait siennes la revendication de cette langue comme langue de sa reconstruction identitaire.

M. le président, je veux vous démontrer que le *Kreol Morisien* est une langue qui dépasse la fonction de promotion et de préservation des valeurs culturelles d'un seul groupe. M. le président, le *Kreol Morisien* a été adopté comme la langue maternelle d'une majorité de Mauriciens, c'est-à-dire, la langue parlée à la maison avec la famille, les amis, et entre collègues.

J'ai fait une demande à *Statistics Mauritius* afin qu'il partage les chiffres des recensements des 30 dernières années en vue de la préparation de ce discours. A noter que le recensement se fait chaque dix ans. Ce que nous pouvons observer c'est qu'en 2000, 70% de la population considérait le *Kreol Morisien* comme sa langue maternelle. En 2011, 86.5% de la population considère le *Kreol Morisien* comme sa langue maternelle.

En 2022, 78,9% considère toujours la langue Créole comme sa langue maternelle. Ces chiffres démontrent que les mauriciens ont adopté naturellement la langue créole mauricien comme langue maternelle.

Le *Kreol Morisien* est la langue parlée par toutes les ethniques et c'est *de facto*, la langue nationale. En ce qui concerne les salles de classe, le *Kreol Morisien* est souvent utilisé comme support afin de renforcer la compréhension des concepts par les enfants qui n'ont pas la facilité de parler et écrire couramment l'anglais ou le français.

Il faut noter que selon le dernier recensement, 0,5% de la population mauricienne considère l'anglais comme sa langue maternelle et 2,8% de la population mauricienne considère le français comme sa langue maternelle.

M. le président, quand nous abordons le sujet de la langue créole mauricien, nous parlons aussi de la démocratisation de l'accès à l'éducation et cela dépasse le débat identitaire sectaire. Nous parlons du mauricianism.

Le créole mauricien est la langue qui véhicule nos attitudes et notre compréhension de notre vie collective sociale et politique. La langue est un pilier de la construction d'un état fort et d'une population unie. Les chiffres de ce même recensement que j'ai cités plus haut, démontrent qu'une grande majorité de mauriciens sont des créolophones unilingues. Ce qui implique qu'ils parlent le créole uniquement. On peut donc imaginer que cette situation perdure dans les maisons et entre les parents et les enfants et de ce fait, il y a une grande majorité de nos enfants, de la République de Maurice, qui sont aussi des créolophones unilingues.

M. le président, j'affirme que la démocratisation de l'accès à l'éducation est passée par la langue créole au primaire. Je justifie cela par le fait que les pédagogues et l'UNESCO affirment que les premières années du primaire doivent se faire dans la langue maternelle de l'élève.

Une grande majorité de nos enfants sont des créolophones unilingues comme le démontre les chiffres des recensements de ces trois dernières décennies. Ce qui peut expliquer l'échec des enfants au cycle du primaire qui est entre 20 et 30% chaque année. Je m'explique. Ces enfants, en échec scolaire dès leur plus jeune âge, sont en majorité des créolophones unilingues qui n'ont pas la chance ou la même opportunité d'être exposés à l'anglais suffisamment pour pouvoir maîtriser l'anglais comme langue d'apprentissage. Ils ne peuvent pas soi capter les instructions des différentes matières qui sont enseignées en anglais ou s'ils

ont compris grâce au support de l'enseignement en créole mauricien, ils ne peuvent pas exprimer cette compréhension à l'écrit ou en situation d'examens.

Il est donc impératif que l'éducation nationale tienne compte de ce fait. Forte heureusement, notre Ministre de l'Education qui est elle-même une pédagogue d'expérience, est consciente que le créole mauricien dépasse le débat identitaire et introduit aujourd'hui dans cette Chambre, cet amendement au *Education Act* afin de mettre sur pied le *National Examinations Board*.

M. le président, je salue le travail accompli par l'honorable Madame DookunLuchoomun et ses officiers qui ont travaillé sur une formule plus qu'acceptable pour une langue qui voit sa reconnaissance dans le milieu scolaire qu'en 2012.

Un peu plus de 10 ans après son introduction dans le cursus scolaire, cette langue se verra compter dans le *School Certificate* du cycle secondaire et comptera aussi dans les cinq *credits* qui donneront l'accès à certains postes dans le milieu gouvernemental mais aussi, à la promotion de l'enfant aux classes supérieures.

Cela sera possible avec la mise sur pied du *National Examinations Board*. Ce projet de loi ouvre aussi la voie pour l'introduction d'autres matières qui ne sont pas encore dans la *Mainstream* mais qui peuvent permettre à des milliers d'enfants qui sont en *Extended Stream* par exemple, à progresser cognitivement afin de faire partie prenante de la société mauricienne et de son développement.

Le fameux BTS en créole, dont l'honorable Bodha nous a parlé sera possible grâce au *National Examinations Board* puisque cette institution a pour objectif de faire des recherches.

Ce projet de loi et la mise sur pied du *National Examinations Board* sont une lueur d'espoir pour les enfants créolophones unilingues de notre République qui ne peuvent pas s'adapter à l'anglais comme langue d'apprentissage. Ils auront dorénavant un *National Examinations Board* qui permettra des examens dans une autre langue que celle de l'anglais.

C'est pour cela que je félicite l'honorable Dookun-Luchoomun et le gouvernement pour l'introduction de cette loi.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Next orator would be MP Lobine.

7.12 p.m.

Mr K. Lobine (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that this Bill has been sufficiently canvassed by hon. Members from both sides of this House and I would not repeat what has been canvassed already but however, I would command the passion and the points raised by all Members who have intervened on this Bill with regard to the *regard* that we need to have on *le Kreol Morisien* and it goes beyond political boundaries and as a nation and as a patriot, I believe that this is a right step in the right direction to give to *le Kreol Morisien* its *lettre de noblesse* and rightly so, Mr Speaker, Sir, the philosophy and intention of this Bill in setting up a National Examinations Board for the organisation and conduct of examinations in designated subjects and in this particular case as per the schedule - *le Kreol Morisien* is a laudable initiative.

But! There is always a ‘but’ Mr Speaker, Sir. Hon. Boolell has raised several salient points; hon. Navarre-Marie has done so as well. I am still very doubtful whether it is the right way to proceed, that is, coming with an amendment of the Education Act instead of an amendment to the Mauritius Examination Syndicate Act 1984 because it would serve the same purpose.

The MES has, through time, got the experience, the infrastructure and the personnel to help in that junction. However, the law does not allow the MES to go the extra mile and through the amendment of what is being proposed, if same could have been proposed to the MES Act, it would have served the same purpose because if you look at Section (4) of the MES Act 1984, Mr

Speaker, Sir, it says as follows –

“Objects of the Syndicate shall be

–

(a) to organise and conduct such examinations as may be directed by the Minister;” and in the amendment being proposed, it is almost the same philosophy, the same intention, which is laudable, good intention and also it is the way forward because we know the problem that we get with Cambridge with regard to subject as *Kreol Morisien* and maybe in the near future, other subjects; technical matters that we might have it here itself but whether, it was not a better way to go ahead instead of amending the Education Act.

So, maybe the hon. Vice Prime Minister might enlighten us further on this matter and also with regard to the awarding body being the University of Mauritius, I strongly believe that this is a very good thing because this will give a sense of pride to get a certificate from an awarding body like the University of Mauritius for a subject that as many people before me have stated, needs to be given its *valeur*.

So, in that respect, Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that salient points raised by hon. Dr. Boolell, hon. Navarre-Marie and hon. Bodha should be looked into with regard to what will be the future of the *Kreol Morisien*. After going through this National Examinations Board, what is the next step; whether it will be counted with regard to be awarded a scholarship in Art Side at HSC level for example or whether, it will also be allowed to be taken to other Universities? We are in a global world now – whether this *Kreol Morisien* will go beyond our boundaries?

So, if we could get more information or if, in the near future, after the passing of this Bill, of course, if those information could be disseminated or if we could organise an *assise* with various stakeholders as to the future, as from now, the *creole mauricien* language is going beyond the boundaries of Mauritius because we can, for example, promote our language outside.

We can invite other cultures to speak, to learn *creole mauricien*, it could be a pillar of the economy to attract people to learn *creole mauricien*. If you go to Germany, there are experts in Indology, they are learning Sanskrit in Germany, which is becoming a very popular language over there. So, maybe in the weeks to come or in the months to come, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister could, with a team of experts, disseminate more with regard to what they intend to do with regard to *Kreol Morisien* going beyond this Examination Board.

So, I would end with a note of appreciation to all Members for their passion for our national language and I hope a better and a great future to our mother language, *creole mauricien*. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy!

7.18 p.m.

Mrs S. Luchmun Roy (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is with greatest humility that I lend my voice tonight in support of this amendment and I would express my appreciation towards the hon. Vice-Prime

Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun.

I would like to join my voice together with the hon. Member who spoke right before me, hon. Lobine, in appreciating the good job that has been done and the passion with which the debate started in this House.

I think, personally, that it is legitimate for us to have some concerns, to have some questions and some doubts as well. I am sure during the summing up of the debate the hon. Vice Prime Minister will definitely clear those doubts. But let's not jump the gun. I have been listening passionately to the speech of hon. Bodha, who unfortunately is not in the House, and he has referred to Cambridge University as *référence de taille*. He is the one who a few years back said that we need to have a 'paradigm shift.' I personally believe that this is a paradigm shift that is occurring tonight once we vote for this Bill.

He also mentioned Martinique and Guadeloupe, but let me remind this hon. Member that we are in Mauritius and we should be proud of who we are. We have our different cultures living together, talking different languages whether it is Creole, whether it is Bhojpuri, whether it is English or French. He also mentioned about creole being a medium of study, but let me remind him that we are already using creole as a support language to teach both in primary and secondary school as well.

I think, Mr Speaker, Sir, that it is befitting that this amendment and debate is taking place in this year where Mauritius is commemorating its 55th independence. This amendment paves the way towards setting an example and inspiring other nations, whether it is Martinique or Guadeloupe, which were previously under the British colonisation. Mauritius, after 55 years of independence, is positioning itself within the global debate. In 2010, I quote, UNESCO mentioned that –

“Africa is the only continent where the majority of children start schooling using a foreign language.”

This clearly stated the disadvantage of African students.

When we go on international forums, very often we get asked: what is your mother tongue? What is your national language? Very often, we say it is English and it sounds quite bizarre. Hon. Dhunoo mentioned in his speech, when you go to South Africa, when you ask

about them, they say it is Afrikaans. So, I think this is the right opportunity for us to pave the way for Mauritius to fit itself in the global village as we call it.

Since 1968, we broke the shackles from the monarchy. So, I think, it is important that the next time someone asks us: what is your national language; we can say with pride that it is creole. Our native language, which most Mauritians use, has found its way in the years 2010 and around 2015, the Mauritian creole found its place in Mauritian classrooms. I have been reading a lot about what has been said and hon. Mrs Tania Diolle mentioned about some figures as well. I would like here to quote a document submitted to the faculty of Department of Linguistic in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a degree in Bachelor of Arts for Yale University in April 2015 –

“Creole in Mauritian Schools: Mother Tongue Language Education and Public Opinion by Alisson Miller.”

There is a chapter at page 10 where it mentions that –

“Mauritians use a variety of languages in their daily lives, including French, English, Kreol Morisien, and several other ancestral languages. Creole is the language spoken at home by 86.5% of Mauritians, while only 4.1% of Mauritians speak French at home and 0.5% speak English at home.”

In the same study, Allison Miller mentions about the solution: “creole Instruction as a Solution in Language Planning.” She mentions that –

“In the case of CPE failure, lack of English language proficiency and diminished comprehension of other subjects are to blame, both of which could be remedied through the use of creole as a language of instruction.”

So, I think we are all unanimously agreeing that using creole could be a medium to teach our students and to correct where we have been adopting, I say it, English as a medium to teach our children, but creole could be used to really redress the situation. The teaching of Kreol Morisien in our schools has been made possible through support of different people around Mauritius who have worked a lot. They have worked in elaborating the *orthographe*, the grammar and a dictionary as well and there are three documents to which we very often refer to in helping the Kreol Morisien to get into schools, that is, *l'Orthographe Kreol Morisien*, *Gramer Kreol Morisien*, *Diksioner Morisien*.

Since 2017, the teaching of the Mauritian Kreol has been presented as an optional subject across Grade 1 to 6 further to University of Mauritius also offers a degree programme covering Kreol studies.

In view of making the language being used for official purposes, it has to be spoken and written and also recorded, while respecting as mentioned like we do for other languages whether it is English or French, that is, respecting the *orthographe*, the grammar, the vocabulary in line when we publish or when we talk as well. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is imperative that at all levels, we adopt a standardised written system and acquire a proper communicative as well as a social linguistic cognitive competencies.

The teaching and learning process and training should be pursued and facilitated. Over time, people will definitely develop the mastery of the language. I was researching about – you know when we talk about language, we talk about creole, we talk about creating a new body for examination, I was definitely sure that the question of creole being brought to this House as a spoken language would be on the table. This has been raised by hon. Mrs Arianne NavarreMarie.

In his answer to the PQ, the hon. Prime Minister did mention that for us to be able to bring creole here into the Parliament, we need to have all the logistics ready. We as parliamentarians, we individuals sitting as hon. Members, we personally do not even master how to write proper creole, we do not even master how to talk proper creole. I am sure each and everyone has these grey envelopes where you have to check on the Hansard whether you spoken something right or wrong.

So, bringing Creole to the Parliament will definitely happen but it will happen after we have those qualified students going through the examinations, promoting the language, building up. So, I am sure that if it is not this generation then it is going to be the next generation that would be here talking Creole, write in proper Creole.

This is the Mauritius that we are walking towards, that is another milestone that we are working towards and the object of the Bill is clearly setting the changes that we want to bring through this amendment. Mr Speaker, Sir, the main object of the Bill is as mentioned... I am sure the hon. Member Arianne Navarre-Marie did not even read the Bill properly because it is very clear and it is simple English which is to the point; you do not even have to translate any word there, so, it is clear. The object states –

“(a) the setting up of a National Examinations Board for the organisation and conduct of examinations in designated subjects at secondary education level;”

That is, the role of the National Examinations Board would be to organise and conduct examinations.

“(b) the conferment, upon the University of Mauritius, of the power to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector, on the recommendation of the National Examinations Board.”

This debate, Mr Speaker, Sir, is significant because of the sheer breadth and depth of the amendments being brought to this House.

The Government’s direction as encapsulated by hon. Minister of Education continues in the same vein as to the vision of the Prime Minister, an education which is accessible to each and every one.

A significant part of the Bill has already been discussed and canvassed by Members of both sides. So, I shall dwell my intervention upon section 5D to the Education (Amendment) Bill, that is, the setting up of a National Examinations Board for the secondary education which has as functions again organising and conducting examinations in respect of subjects for the secondary education. In this situation, it is Creole language.

The NEB will have as task to develop rules and regulations for national examinations and assessments. I think it answers all the whys that were put forward by hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie. It will have the burden to develop assessment frameworks and assessment syllabuses in the subjects listed like *Kreol Morisien*. I want to lay emphasis on this part. It has the role; it has the duty, the burden to develop assessment frameworks and assessment syllabuses. That is, the Board will be constituted now and they will work together, they will try to find how to assess and how to really set the frameworks but hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie came forward asking why is it not done; why do we not have past papers? We are debating right now. We are asking them to vote for a Bill. So, I think we need to look forward and not look at the back. This is where I would humbly request her to read the Bill and then to understand the motive of this amendment being brought to the House.

The National Examinations Board will have the role to set and moderate examination papers in the specific language, here it is Creole. Section 5D 2(e) clearly mentions that the NEB will have to organise the marking and moderation of examination scripts as well. The Board

will have the responsibility to prepare exams reports on the candidates' level of performance in the subjects examined, conduct research on assessments for the secondary level. So, let me just take a step back to what is being done as this is one of the most important and significant steps in reforming the education sector as rightly mentioned by hon. Lobine. This amendment will help in engaging the population into an accessibility for education.

Furthermore, what is more important, that is, the Board; there is an examination, my colleague hon. Dhunoo mentioned it. We are Mauritians, we speak Creole, we are proud of our mother tongue, we are proud of our language. So, I think it is fair enough for us bring forward some professionals in this sector who understand Creole, who know how to write, the vocabulary, the *orthographe* to stand out and to be the one who will work for this institution and who will bring forward the change instead of going back again to Cambridge, because I mentioned it in my introduction, we are an independent island, we are celebrating 55 years of independence. So, I think it is the opportune time for Mauritius to stand out and to stand on its own for its language, for its people as well to help us forge for a nation which finds itself whether it is in education, employment, gender equality. This is what we are working towards with this Government.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will request Members on the Opposite side to focus on possibilities that these amendments are bringing forward and this is what we call a 'paradigm shift'. And again, I would reiterate what I started with like 55 years of independence, we cannot and we should no longer believe that we have the monopoly of ideas and politicise all the debates, that is, whatever we are bringing to this House should have a political agenda, should have a political colour. Instead I would appeal to Members on the other side – some Members not all of them – that this amendment is for the sake of our children, our nation and of course, I would appeal to their sense of patriotism so that we can vote this Bill unanimously and bring this for the future generations. I am done, Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your attention. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. François!

(7.33 p.m.)

Mr J. F. François (First Member for Rodrigues): Thank you. Mr Speaker, Sir, I will take a short call on the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2023) presented by the VicePrime Minister, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, Minister of Education and others.

Mr Speaker, Sir, whenever we are talking about education at secondary level, allow me to acknowledge and thank all our teachers and support staffs in our Republic who have been doing great jobs for us and our children over the many years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are debating the Education (Amendment) Bill with main object to amend the Education Act to provide for –

“(a) the setting up of a National Examinations Board for the organisation and conduct of examinations in designated subjects at secondary education level; and

(b) the conferment upon the University of Mauritius, of the power to award certificates in the secondary education sub-sector on the recommendations of the National Examinations Board.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the best educations in the world is the Finnish education system which provides equal opportunities for access to all and to raise the general level and quality of education for an individual education, personalised learning paths and an all-education focused on problem solving skills and life skills instead of mindless regurgitations of facts. The Finnish education system fascinates me. I think it should allow us here to think that there should be a greater choice and flexibility in our curriculum at secondary level where our Republic would surely have to move to a new examination assessment model in this new era of our education sector and the success of our nation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the proposed National Examinations Board will surely address issues of subjects that are mostly Mauritius-bound like *Kreol Morisien*, probably later on, Asian languages or Bhojpuri as mentioned by hon. Mrs Koonjoo-Shah and *Kreol Rodrige* amongst others. If at present, the only designated subject is *Kreol Morisien*, I find it absolutely imperative for Rodrigues to lay emphasis on the subject *Kreol Rodrige*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to base most of my short contribution on this Bill mainly with regard to the representation of Rodrigues in relation to one probable designated subject, the *Kreol Rodrige*. I hereby acknowledge the brilliant work of Professor Carpooran, Miss Yani Maury, a Rodriguan lecturer from the University of Mauritius and others, who cemented their testimony that *Kreol Rodrige* is different from that of *Kreol Morisien* despite the fact that we are talking of *kreol la repiblik* today. This is substantiated by the phonetic, lexicography and vocabulary of our *Kreol Rodrige* and its historical context from a sociolinguistic perspective

which I won't venture into now. We have got the responsibility to preserve and value this Rodriguan linguistic and cultural heritage, our mother tongue, *Kreol Rodrige*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the gist of my intervention today is about how Rodrigues will be represented and recognised through this Education (Amendment) Bill. It is a fact that there are so many questions and criticisms that are being flagged out by scholars, key stakeholders in the field of education, be it locally or at national level here, in the Press or on social media in relation to what they said, duplication or dichotomy of Mauritius Examinations Syndicate and National Examinations Board thereof.

The hon. Vice-Prime Minister enlightened the House earlier that Cambridge does not have the required expertise as well as literatures to sustain the examination process in that regard.

As raised from many quarters with regard to the designated subject *Kreol Morisien*, it is true that there are many shortcomings like syllabus requirements, as sufficiently canvassed by some orators. But I am glad to hear that the examination for *Kreol Morisien* will be considered at one and same sitting at the Cambridge School Certificate.

However, there are high expectations that throughout the functions of the Board, as per Clause 5D, sub-clause 2, as compared to the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, there will be a way to have a more holistic look at assessment, especially assessments that are exam-oriented. I do hope that the National Examinations Board will act in a systematic way through a broad cooperation with all stakeholders for an improved educational system in our Republic.

Mr Speaker, Sir, here, I seize this opportunity to thank, amongst others, the Central Government in particular, the hon. Minister of Education, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, to allow teaching of *Kreol Rodrige* in primary schools in Rodrigues since January 2020, from Grade 1 to Grade 4. This is anchoring our language and the Rodriguan Creole culture in our local school curriculum in Rodrigues and in our Rodriguan society overall. And I have to say that hon. Serge Clair, former Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues, was very adamant on the fact that our children in Rodrigues should be able to learn our own language, our mother tongue in our local schools.

We are thankful that the Central Government under the aegis of the hon. Prime Minister, Pravind Jugnauth, also responsible for Rodrigues, understood and accepted that same becomes a reality in Rodrigues. And here, Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to refer to Hansard. In PQ B/840,

on 08 November 2011, I put a question to the then hon. Minister of Education - I think it was hon. Dr. Bunwaree – asking him whether, in regard to the introduction of the *Kreol Morisien* in schools, in Rodrigues, (c) if Government will consider reviewing this decision, in view of the specificity and cultural differences in Rodrigues. Well, it can be referred to in the Hansard.

I hereby also put on record the valuable work carried out by the Creole Speaking Union and the *Akademi Kreol Rodrige*, a consultative and scientific institution created on 11 February 2019, formerly chaired by Miss Marie Florence François.

Furthermore, on 21 September 2019, the Scientific Council of the *Akademi Kreol Rodrige* presented a *regleman e konvansyon pou lekritir kreol Rodrige*. As rightly pointed out by hon. Mrs Luchmun Roy, we need to know how to write and talk proper creole. This document defines the specificity and authenticity of *Kreol Rodrige* within the Republic of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that suggestions from members of Rodrigues on the *Akademi Kreol Repiblik* was then decisive and they did make a lot of difference. My question now is – will the National Examinations Board consider the work done by Professor Arnaud Carpooran from University of Mauritius and the Rodriguan scholars to avoid any discrimination against potential secondary students in Rodrigues, be it at School Certificate or Higher School Certificate level?

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also value the great work of the former Regional Government under the leadership of the former Chief Commissioner, Serge Clair and Commissioner of Arts and Culture, Mrs Rose de Lima Edouard-Ravina for the revolutionary cultural project, a *diksioner kreol Rodrige* and the representation of Rodrigues on the *Akademi Kreol Repiblik Moris*.

As mentioned earlier, *Kreol Morisien*, as a designated subject is facing, I will say, a few challenges as reported and as canvassed in the House from various pressure groups. This is where I do hope that the functions of the Board, as specified in the new clause 5D of the Bill, will remedy same. I will not go into the details.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will propose that at the level of Grade 11, subjects like History and Agriculture be redesigned as per the Mauritian and the Rodriguan context, under the aegis of the National Examinations Board. Likewise, here, I plead more specifically that the subject ‘History of Rodrigues’ - I say it again, ‘History of Rodrigues’ and subjects like Fisheries and Blue Economy, Travel and Tourism, specifically for Rodrigues, find their way in the syllabus

at secondary level, which will also support our unique 'Rodriguanism model'. Yes, Fisheries or Blue Economy, Travel and Tourism, in line with our economic pillars for the future ecological and sustainable development of Rodrigues.

However, there is need to consolidate our Rodriguan literatures, be it with respect to our creole language, our identity and our culture as a legacy of our ancestors since slavery period. *Et ici, je voudrais citer encore une fois Mlle. Florence François qui disait, je cite –*

« Rodrig li nou fierte. Anou les lekritir kreol Rodrige rann nou ankor pli fier e al ankor pli lwin. »

I will also propose that through the National Examinations Board, other new subjects can be introduced, like Civic and Culture Education. Other specific technical and skill-based subjects and the corresponding syllabus and assessment can be mounted and designed accordingly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to conclude, this Education (Amendment) Bill should bring a new trust among all concerned stakeholders for a successful implementation of this milestone project in this new education era for our Republic, as is the case in Finland where one of the key factors for the success of its educational system is trust at all levels and the power of knowledge.

Mr Speaker, Sir, that would be my brief intervention on this Education (Amendment) Bill, which I welcome and I do congratulate the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Mrs DookunLuchoomun.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I suspend the Sitting for one hour.

At 7.46 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.12 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Please be seated! Should I call you honourable?

(09.12 p.m.)

Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand Baie & Poudre d'Or): It depends upon you. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: You did not stand up. Please, go ahead!

Dr. Gungapersad: To please you! Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Far from me is the idea of throwing the baby out with the bath water. Far from me! Here is a Bill which concerns our kids, here is a Bill which has to be voted, the sooner the better because the kids are awaiting

perhaps this National Examination Board in order to be in a position to pay for the SC examination. I understand that without this, they will not be able to proceed with the payment of their SC examination.

I believe we can agree to disagree, but we do not need to be disagreeable. We can agree to disagree. I want to contribute something to this Bill, but let me appreciate something said by hon. Ms Tour. She said something very interesting, amidst the toxicity of this debate, there are good things which have happened. Hon. Ms Tour said something nice and I would like to place it on record –

« *Nous ne sommes pas là pour écraser tous le bon travail qu'a fait les autres avant nous.* »

I think this is very interesting whatever hon. Ms Tour said in her intervention and she deserves to be commended for that.

Let me move to the Minister of Education also, she has shed some light and afterwards I will be asking a few questions, but I think I will align myself on whatever she said earlier as the mover of the Bill. She considered the National Examination Board (NEB) as one of the key fundamental aspects to offer diversity of subjects to our kids. Yes, it is high time we do that hon. Minister, and I agree with you. This is for the good of our kids.

NEB for the secondary subsector is indeed, as you said, a strategic move in the educational landscape. I agree with you and it should be like that for the general welfare of our kids. The National Examination Board is considered as a breakthrough in national education circles. This paves the way for other developments by making it possible to offer qualifications other than those offered by Cambridge assessments, international education called CAIE. It will help to *mauritianise* our assessment system. This initiative will also make it possible to offer students a wider range of subjects, especially since several questionnaires such as Asian languages are also corrected in Mauritius.

Allow me at the outset, as hon. Ms Tour said, to pay tribute to other people who have contributed at different juncture in the history of Mauritius to bring Kreol Morisien where it is today.

Allow me to pay tribute to all those men and women who have worked relentlessly and contributed enormously in the promotion of *Kreol Morisien*. When I talk of *Kreol Morisien*, we need to look at it from the larger prospective. I refer to all those artists, writers, poets,

linguists, researchers *et j'en passe*. I refer to those who have helped in the evolution of this beautiful language right from the times of slavery to present day.

Let us hope together that the National Examinations Board will give a much awaited boost to the *Kreol Morisien*. As I said, we can agree to disagree but we don't need to be disagreeable. Our contribution on this side of the House, is not to cast aversion on the Bill but like people who reflect, who think, we have some questions which we have been asking and my four honourable friends on this side of the House have brought forward a few questions and it is important as I said. It is not always nice to throw the baby along with the bath water. There may be something good we are saying for the welfare of our kids because we also, we care for those kids.

It was legitimate that my friends ask this question: why we needed a National Examinations Board when we have the MES? And the hon. Minister tried to explain because we didn't know it earlier. She explained and I hope in her summing up, perhaps, she will give further clarification. We also, we were worried how come we are going to take the SC examinations, for all the other subjects it would be Cambridge, whereas for one subject it would have been *Kreol Morisien* and I think the Minister tried to explain. Definitely, we may not agree in the way it is done but as I said there is urgency today. This Bill has to be voted so that the kids who are waiting to pay for the SC examinations can do so. And we have to do that, the sooner the better.

Now, when we read "designated subjects at secondary level", we have to bear in mind, secondary level stretches from Grade 7 to Grade 13, HSC, and already in between we have that NCE Examination and in NCE we have *Kreol Morisien*. Will this Board be henceforth responsible to conduct the exam? This is a question. It is good that our university, the University of Mauritius where I did not study like hon. Dhunoo but it is our university. We should be proud of our university. It has produced valiant men and women of this country who are at the head of different departments. But when we read that little word why a sub-sector being created perhaps if we had canvassed it earlier, we would have understood. I don't know for the other subjects which later perhaps the Minister will bring through a regulation, the technical stream. It is good and my good friend, the hon. Member from Rodrigues came with very pertinent suggestions about other subjects which could be included in a mauritianised way. It is interesting sometimes to listen to discordant narratives because we always live with takeaway

of perhaps, good practices. Perhaps, we grow better when sometimes there are clashes of ideas. Unfortunately, at the beginning, it started instead of clash of ideas, clash of persons.

In this August Assembly, we need to reflect what we are showing to the population outside because we are supposed to be, as you several times said, Mr Speaker, Sir, the “temple of democracy”, because we need - this is democracy - the freedom to say things as long as we respect the rules of the House. That is why some of my friends who spoke earlier on this side, asked this question: what is the expertise of the University of Mauritius in developing assessment frameworks, syllabuses for secondary sector? It is not that we are criticising the University of Mauritius. No, it is a legitimate question. I have been talking with lecturers of University of Mauritius. I am not going to mention names in order not to embarrass anyone.

When we are talking about parity of esteem, some of us, we did compete for laureateship, Mr Speaker, Sir. We did compete when we were students and it was a matter of pride to be a laureate or to be ranked after the laureate; to get a scholarship. I don't want the student who has *Kreol Morisien* in his certificate to be stigmatised. I don't want that because we love that language. We should empower that student and that is why we ask this question: what will happen after SC? It is a legitimate question. Will that student competing outside, for example, taking English Main, French Main and *Kreol Morisien* Main, will it be Main or will it be Subsidiary? A legitimate question; we are not undermining the University of Mauritius, we asking a question. Now, it could be marked in Mauritius; will the mark be conveyed to Cambridge because you know to be a laureate or to be ranked, a few marks that make the difference? We don't know what will happen. It is legitimate we ask these questions.

Now, there are other things. Whether it would be allowed at Principal level, whether it would have the literature component. When we talk of languages, be it Hindi, Urdu, English, French, all these languages we have a language component and we have a literature component and *Kreol Morisien* is very rich in terms of literature. Very rich! Perhaps, *ça va valoriser nos auteurs, nos poètes ainsi de suite*. This is what we are asking. We are not throwing the baby along the bath water. No! We are asking legitimate questions because this Bill which ultimately will become the National Examinations Board, is going to concern our kids in the years to come. Will adults who have already left school get this opportunity to take that subject? And I hope, yes they should. *On doit les donner cette possibilité-là s'ils ont les qualités, les aptitudes à le faire*. The exam paper - we want to know how the exam paper will be. Will it be the model

of English language -comprehension, essay writing, an oral component or will it be the French type where there is translation?

Hon. Members of the other side, we are asking legitimate and pedagogical questions. There is no controversy there and as I said this should be a non-controversial bill because it concerns our kids. We have made a lot of progress in this field of *Kreol Morisien* but if I say now, as at today at this time, we have an acute shortage of teachers for *Kreol Morisien*. Am I being wrong?

If I tell you as at today, the first batch of B.Ed and listen well! It is not *Kreol Morisien*; for B.Ed it is *Kreol Repiblik Morisien*. The first batch was supposed to complete by the end of 2023. They were supposed to complete this year. Do you know the reality? Do you know what has happened? Unfortunately all students who joined that course for B.Ed for *Kreol Repiblik Morisien*, they have left the course. *C'est à dire à la fin, là, pour décembre, on n'aura pas ces personnes avec B.Ed. Il faut chercher les raisons pourquoi* we have this situation. *Comment faire pour attirer d'avantage des gens pour qu'ils continuent avec leurs études dans ce domaine-là ?*

Next, we have been asking a few questions as to why Cambridge did not agree to allow Mauritians - without the creation of that National Examinations Board and the hon. Minister explained. She had meetings with them. Unfortunately, it did not work. Let us hope. We do not know in the future what may happen but at least, she said she tried.

Now, this is also true. I have been talking during the day, today, so that my information is not old-dated. Many teachers teaching *Kreol Morisien*, they are not aware that tonight we are discussing a Bill which concerns them. They are teachers.

Now, one important aspect, this may not be within the ambit of this Minister of Education because this is beyond. What implications for employment, Madam? Will the Public Service Commission and semi- governmental bodies have to review their recruitment criteria? Shouldn't schemes of service be revisited to include *Kreol Morisien*?

Mr Speaker, Sir, mention is made of designated subjects at secondary education level and at the end of Section (7) of the Bill, only one subject is mentioned, that is, *Kreol Morisien*. It would have been perhaps fairer since we are debating to have a few other subjects because I know in the pipeline we have the technical stream subjects which I think is a good idea. *C'est une bonne avancée dans le domaine éducatif. Pourquoi pas? Il faut donner la chance aux*

enfants, surtout ceux qui ont des problèmes avec un système hyper compétitif. Oui, il faut et ça va être une bonne avancée.

Next, this Education Act is being amended to set up these examination boards. As I said, it is good but we have to see positive things as well. For example, this NEB is perhaps the first step towards making Mauritius less dependent on foreign bodies for examinations in the secondary sector. If we have to improve it, we improve it as we walk the talk.

It goes a long way in recognizing local competencies. Yes! It goes a long way and we have a lot of competent people at the University of Mauritius, at MIE and elsewhere. Perhaps, University of Mauritius will get an opportunity to partner with Cambridge and other institutions.

Many subjects which are not examinable today or which are not examinable by CAIE, perhaps will be offered to Mauritian students. If this is the idea, why shouldn't we endorse it? Yes! We agree. But, as I said, unfortunately outside, many people are not aware about what the intention is. This is something good which could have been canvassed and doubts cleared so that we could have embraced it with open arms. As I said earlier, far from me, is the idea of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

When we refer to UNESCO; UNESCO said something very interesting. UNESCO promotes mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual approaches and education; an important factor for inclusion and quality in education. Research shows that this has a positive impact on learning and teaching outcomes.

I think I'm talking from memory. I think Catholic colleges did a good job; they used *Kreol Morisien* to teach the students having learning difficulties to master, to grasp certain complex ideas.

One thing that I think perhaps most teachers use is code switching and when we do code switching, we move from one language to another. We may code switch within a sentence or we may code switch within a paragraph. We have to see how, while doing one thing, we do not distort the other because learning a language is quite complex and we have to see how *Kreol Morisien* is going to help. It is good that at the University of Mauritius, we have a joint degree

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BA French and Creole and we should not forget Rodrigues – the specificity and how the kids in Rodrigues, when they take that paper, are in no way penalised because they have their accent

of talking, they have perhaps their way of writing. We need to harmonise that because they are the kids of the Republic and that is why I am more at ease with *Kreol Repiblik Morisien*. I am more at ease with that appellation. Perhaps, this is my way of looking at it. So, without being longer, I think this is a Bill which should have been non-controversial.

Unfortunately, some Members on the other side took a very toxic approach because we are talking about something for the welfare of our kids and *Kreol Morisien* is the mother tongue of many of us and I think it is opening the way for many other subjects, languages, areas so that our kids ultimately benefit from that.

So, to the hon. Minister, our queries are not negative criticisms. They are concerns and if they can be addressed, it would be for the welfare of our kids. I wish the National Examinations Board all the best.

Thank you everyone.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Toussaint!

(9.35 p.m.)

The Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation (Mr S. Toussaint): M. le président, dans quelques mois, 209 jeunes vont entrer dans l'histoire de notre jeune République en participant pour la première fois, au niveau *O'level – SC* comme on a l'habitude de dire, à l'examen du *Kreol Morisien* et ceci devient possible quand nous allons tous, dans quelques instants, je suis sûr tous, voter pour ce projet de loi et je sens dans les discours malgré les *queries*, les questions, qu'il y a consensus autour de ce projet de loi emmené à la Chambre ici par la Vice-première ministre, l'honorable Madame Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun que je félicite ainsi que tout son personnel et aussi toutes les personnes qui ont contribué à rendre ce projet possible.

Donc, le projet de loi vient créer le *National Examinations Board* qui aura, comme plusieurs membres l'on dit, la responsabilité de faire les examens du *Kreol Morisien* et ensuite de donner un certificat sous l'égide de l'université de Maurice.

Petit rappel pour l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad, il était important de voter cette loi, oui, pour que les examens puissent se faire, mais pas nécessairement pour que les jeunes puissent payer leurs frais d'examen. Il faut rappeler que les frais de la *SC* et de la *HSC* sont encourus par l'État, et que c'est notre gouvernement...

(Interruptions)

Non, je sens qu'il est passionné dans ce qu'il a dit ! Donc, il a peut-être zappé ce bout-là. *Non, non, pa lot la la ! C'est zappé ; la télécommande, la télé tout cela.*

Donc, c'est notre gouvernement qui a remis les subsides sur les frais d'examens de la SC et de la HSC ; des subsides que je dois rappeler qui ont été enlevés dans le passé par le Parti travailliste. *Like we used to say, we need to set the records right.*

Les questions sont légitimes et l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad a aussi dit qu'il fallait communiquer beaucoup plus et que les enseignants qui enseignent le *Kreol Morisien* ne sont pas au courant que nous allons débattre de ce projet de loi aujourd'hui. Je suis tombé sur un article – c'est un peu rare que je lis certains journaux – mais pour les besoins de mon discours, j'ai demandé à mon Attaché de presse de me trouver le maximum d'articles dessus. Je cite, M. le président, du Défi, Mardi 25 avril 2023 ; aujourd'hui, on est le 16, presque un mois déjà de cela – « L'Education (Amendement) Bill au Parlement. » Trois semaines de cela, je cite –

« Le Kreol Morisien première matière au *National Examinations Board*. »

Je conseillerais à tous les honorables membres et peut-être à certains enseignants qui, d'après l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad, ne sont pas au courant, d'aller retrouver une copie de cet article qui est très bien fait, c'est très scientifique. Ce n'est pas un article d'opinion, c'est très bien fait où tout est expliqué dedans. Le *Bill* est dedans, tout est expliqué ; il fallait juste le lire et cela aurait été très simple à comprendre. Je cite aussi un morceau de cet article –

« Le professeur Arnaud Carpooran, – qui jadis avait été mon professeur au collège de Saint Joseph et que je respecte énormément – douanier de la faculté des sciences sociales et humaines de l'université de Maurice, se réjouit de cette avancée majeure en particulier pour la langue maternelle. Selon lui, nul n'aurait pu imaginer à l'époque où le *Kreol Morisien* a été proposé comme matière, qu'il atteindrait un tel niveau aujourd'hui.»

Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, pour atteindre ce niveau, c'est grâce à nous, à tout le monde, parce que nous allons voter ce projet de loi. Donc, nous devons être fiers, et je le redis, tout le monde ; gouvernement comme l'opposition, nous devrions être fiers de ce que nous apportons dans notre pays aujourd'hui. Grâce à nous, nous allons rendre le rêve de 209 jeunes étudiants possible.

Les débats ont tourné autour du *National Examinations Board*, pourquoi se *board* ? Pourquoi pas le *MES* ? Pourquoi pas *Cambridge* ? L'honorable Bodha, malheureusement il a disparu, a parlé en long et en large de '*Cambridge, Cambridge, Cambridge, Cambridge.*' Probablement, il n'a pas compris ! Madame la vice-Première ministre a expliqué en long et en large les discussions que nous avons eues avec *Cambridge* et que pour différentes raisons, *Cambridge* ne peut pas faire ces examens. Parmi, je retiens une des raisons qui est la quantité de littérature disponible en créole mauricien.

L'honorable Bodha a parlé de notre cinquantaine d'années d'indépendance où il y a plusieurs textes en créole, etc., oui, certainement. Nous avons beaucoup de chansons, nous avons beaucoup de poésies, nous avons beaucoup de poètes, d'écrivains Mauriciens, de journalistes. Nous-même probablement quand on était à l'école parfois on a dû écrire des poèmes, des petits mots doux en créole, mais ce n'est certainement pas le créole mauricien comme cela doit être enseigné d'après les normes qui existent. C'est cela qui fait qu'il y a très peu de littérature en créole mauricien d'après les normes et c'est cela que *Cambridge* vient expliquer. Ceux qui sont dans le domaine, les littéraires qui sont dans ce domaine sont encouragés à s'aligner sur la bonne façon d'écrire le créole mauricien pour produire le plus d'œuvres littéraires possibles pour plus tard. Dans un deuxième temps, ces jeunes iront en *HSC* et après ils auront assez de matière.

L'honorable Navarre-Marie, malheureusement – je ne sais pas si c'est moi qui a mal compris – a parlé de *Cambridge* et pourquoi *Cambridge* offre le français. Si on parle que de la littérature en français et de la littérature francophone, et bien, il existe des milliers et des milliers d'auteurs en littérature française, littérature francophone, littérature africaine en français. Cela va, M. le président, de Molière à Racine, de Camus à Sartre, de nos compatriotes en Afrique. Il existe des tonnes et des tonnes de littérature en français. Donc, ce n'est pas comparable, je trouve.

M. le président, nous devrions aussi rester centrés sur nos 209 jeunes qui vont prendre cet examen. Il ne faut pas oublier que *the students must be at the centre of everything*. C'est pour ces jeunes que toute l'équipe de Madame la vice-Première ministre fait ce travail, et je dois dire à ces jeunes que nous sommes très fiers d'eux. Vous êtes audacieux ! Depuis que le sujet avait été introduit au primaire en 2012, *zonn manz ar li* ! Mine de rien, on s'est laissé un peu emporté dans tous les sens avec plusieurs questions légitimes, oui, mais il ne faut pas oublier qu'il y a quand même 209 jeunes qui ont tenu la route depuis 2012 !

Quand ils ont fait leur entrée au primaire, ils ont passé par tous les étapes qu'il fallait, le PSAC, leur entrée au collège, les examens de la NCE. Aujourd'hui, ces 209 jeunes audacieux, téméraires se sont dits : écoutez, nous, on aime notre langue *Kreol Morisien* et on va aller pour les examens dedans. Et je leur dis bravo ! Je dis à ces jeunes félicitations ! Et je félicite leurs parents aussi qui les ont probablement encouragés dans ce sens. Je dis à ces jeunes que vous êtes visionnaires parce que vous voyez loin dans ce qui va arriver probablement plus tard dans cette matière.

Il ne faut pas aussi oublier les enseignants qui font de leur mieux. Il fallait déjà changer la mentalité depuis 2012 et osez venir de l'avant pour dire aux personnes : 'Où travailles-tu ?' 'Moi, je suis enseignant.' 'Ah, de quel sujet ?' 'Le *Kreol Morisien*.' 'Huh ?'

Donc, bravo aux enseignants qui ont choisi et qui ont accepté de prendre cette aventure de devenir des enseignants du *Kreol Morisien*. Bravo ! Et on est fier de vous et vous faites un travail formidable.

M. le président, le *National Examinations Board*, d'autres avant moi en ont parlé, ouvre la voie à d'autres matières plus tard qui ne sont pas évidemment offertes par Cambridge. Nos amis de Rodrigues, le leader de l'OPR en a parlé et c'est excellent ce qu'il a proposé et je trouve qu'il y a *room* pour d'autres types de matières typiquement de la république de Maurice que Cambridge ou autre ne pourrait jamais comprendre.

Fait important, c'est que même si ces jeunes auront leur examen traditionnel de Cambridge Anglais, Français, Physique, bla-bla-bla, etc., ils auront aussi leur examen de *Kreol Morisien* par le *National Examinations Board*. *The results will be considered as one and same sitting*. Cela avait été expliqué dans l'introduction clairement par la Vice-première ministre et d'autres questions aussi posées par les membres de l'Opposition ont déjà été dites et je suis sûr qu'éventuellement dans son *summing-up*, madame la ministre va réexpliquer pour que tout soit clair.

M. le président, avec la possibilité de prendre comme examen le *Kreol Morisien* aujourd'hui à travers ce projet de loi, je dois aussi rendre hommage à un grand défenseur de la langue créole qui depuis plusieurs années a fait entrer le *Kreol Morisien* dans le salon des Mauriciens depuis les années 60 et 70. Ce n'était pas évident parce qu'à l'époque, c'était mal vu de parler le créole. Dans certaines institutions, on était forcé de s'exprimer dans d'autres langues et cette personne à travers ses œuvres artistiques, a fait entrer le créole dans beaucoup de salons et il a su briser les barrières qu'il y avait par rapport au *Kreol Morisien*. Je rends

hommage ce soir à feu Serge Lebrasse, M. le président. Et il avait si bien dit « *mo fier mo enn ti kreol* » dans une de ses chansons et de même pour moi.

M. le président, donc, je ne vais pas être plus long. Donc, tout a été dit, c'était un débat extraordinaire. Pour moi personnellement, c'est une grande fierté. J'aurais peut-être aimé être un enseignant en *Kreol Morisien* à ce moment-là. Et comme je dis, quand je pense qu'à une certaine époque de notre histoire, on nous empêchait de nous exprimer en notre langue maternelle, aujourd'hui je suis très fier et je frissonne à l'idée de voir que 209 de nos jeunes auront sur leur certificat écrit « *Kreol Morisien* ».

Vive nos jeunes ! Vive la république de Maurice ! Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister!

(9.50 p.m.)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me at the very outset to express my appreciation for the comments, views and arguments that have been expressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House.

We may not all be on the same wavelength, we may not all be reading from the same page but the fact remains that this is what debates are all about. It is quite legitimate for different views to be expressed. In fact, I welcome that because this gives me an opportunity to set the record straight and clarify some features and apprehensions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is unfortunate that hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie raised issues that I had already explained and canvassed during the Second Reading. She stated that there was a lot of confusion but sadly, the confusion seems to be more in her own mind.

An hon. Member: Yes!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Elementary courtesy, Mr Speaker, Sir, demands that once one has intervened, one is duty bound to stay back and listen to others but she instead made it a point to interrupt hon. Dr. Mrs Dorine Chukowry and compelled the Speaker to ask her to withdraw from the House. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very sad. On a day when history is being made and *Kreol Morisien* is being given its *lettre de noblesse*, she chose not to be party to it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, although the hon. Member is now out of the House, I will still clear her confusion and respond to some of the questions raised by her. She stated that there was a lot of confusion, that there is no programme of study and she was giving the impression that nothing is ready. Let me remind the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that *Kreol Morisien* is being taught in grade 10 as from June 2021 in our secondary schools. The MIE has since then developed the curriculum, the textbooks and everything has been done. She then complained about specimen papers not having been sent to schools and in the same breath, telling me it is only today. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me inform the House that the MES has an action plan and it was decided that it would be on 16 May that the specimen papers would be dispatched to schools and she was very much aware of it because she told me “only today”.

Now, we have a plan and what surprises me, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. lady is in fact an educator and being an educator, she should be aware that the teaching of a subject does not depend on specimen papers. It depends on the curriculum and the curriculum and the books are available and since long. Mr Speaker, Sir. *Je crois que c'est de la mauvaise foi.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, she then casted doubts on what was said in this House, stating that *les raisons avancées pour que Cambridge ne puisse faire les examens à un School Certificate level were obscures et suspectes. Mr Speaker, Sir, elle est allée trop loin en insinuant que les raisons que nous avançons sont obscures. Et je pense que je ne vais plus continuer à discuter et donner des clarifications à une personne qui sachant bel et bien que les papiers étaient entrés à l'école aujourd'hui a continué à faire de la démagogie sur un sujet aussi important que celui que nous discutons aujourd'hui dans cette Assemblée.*

I am not going to go on the several reasons canvassed by CAIE, Mr Speaker, Sir. As far back as in May 2021, I had made a statement in this House and I had mentioned the reasons why we had to come up with the National Examinations Board.

Mr Speaker, Sir, lots of people have been talking about - and I do understand that there are apprehensions, there are queries - who is setting up the paper, and how is it being done? Mr Speaker, Sir, if they had carefully listened to what I have said during the Second Reading, I had mentioned that the National Examinations Board was working in collaboration with the MES, the MIE and the University of Mauritius. The MIE being the institution developing the curriculum and responsible for the training of the teachers; the MES conducts exams; the National Examinations Board was working with the MES and the awarding body remains the University of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the curriculum was developed as far back as in October last. It was approved by the senate of the University of Mauritius in October last. I think we have to understand that when we come up with such programmes and such projects, we cannot rush. We have got to work systematically and we have to make sure that we do not go wrong. This is what we have been doing, Mr Speaker, Sir. Who prepares question papers? We all know that there are set experts for that.

Now, the hon. Dr. Gungapersad was talking about the specimen paper, what type of paper would it be?

The specimen assessment materials have already been circulated. The examination comprises three papers – a written paper, a reading comprehension and translation. They have been prepared by the MES and relevant follow-up activities like marking, grading of examination paper and the processing of results have been timelined.

Mr Speaker, Sir, talking about the registration of the students for the exam, we all know that right now, the MES is carrying out the registration of students for the Cambridge School Certificate. In fact, according to the timeline, by the end of May this year, all schools will have to send their list of candidates and the registration will start as from June this year. Everything has been planned, Mr Speaker, Sir. No confusion at all.

What is also important is that we work *étape par étape*. I have heard hon. Dr. Boolell stating: ‘what next?’ And it is true. We are all expecting that there will be an increase in number of students taking up KM at School Certificate level. We are going to work *étape par étape*. If you have noted, Mr Speaker, Sir, we had, as far back as in 2017, come up with the first PSAC Examination with *Kreol Morisien* offered then. Then, we came with the NCE where *Kreol Morisien* was offered. We have been working and we came up with this examination specifically because Cambridge stated that they were not in a position to offer the subject at the Cambridge School Certificate level. We had to come up with this Examination Board so as for us to offer the subject because we thought that it was a legitimate expectation for students having studied it.

We know that the MIE is already working on the curriculum. We know that the training of teachers is an ongoing process. I heard hon. Dr. Gungapersad stating that some students had left at the University of Mauritius, their course in Creole, French and Creole Studies but I wish to state that there are a large number of teachers who are in fact being trained and there are several courses being held at the MIE. From the information that I have gathered, we have 7

B. Ed Teachers who have passed out this year, 6 persons having done PGCE. By mid-2024, we will be having another 8 students passing out with their B. Ed from the MIE, and we know that there is an intake this year, of 11 teachers doing their PGCE in *Kreol Morisien*.

I also have here some information regarding teachers being trained. There are 184 trainees in the primary sector and we have a number of trainees for teachers being trained for the secondary level as well. So, obviously, we will have to keep on training teachers for that. This is important, but we also need to bear in mind that things happen step-by-step. We have come up now with this National School Certificate in *Kreol Morisien*. We will obviously come later on with *Kreol Morisien* being offered at subsidiary level through the National Examinations Board and step-by-step, we will proceed. The question which arose was –would it be possible for students to be offered a scholarship? Once we come to the bridge, we will cross it. We will need to negotiate with Cambridge, to see whether they can accommodate the marks that we will send to them by the time we offer the subject as an advanced level, a subject at principle level. All this will come in due time.

Right now, what we are saying is that if a student sits for the Cambridge School Certificate and wishes to take up *Kreol Morisien* at the National School Certificate level, he will get two certificates, definitely. But, we are going to consider it as having been taken at the same sitting so that, if ever the student gets a credit in *Kreol Morisien*, this will be reckoned with for the promotion to Grade 12. Furthermore, we have also started working with the authorities concerned to consider *Kreol Morisien* at the National School Certificate level and the other subjects at School Certificate level to be taken at one and same sitting. Therefore it will be considered as a fifth credit anyway. So, this is what we have already done.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a lot more to do. We are all aware and we all know that we need to go further. Now we have to give ourselves time. We have to build up our experience. We have to make sure that when we come up with a product, it is of a standard. We have all been talking about quality. We have all been talking about the standard that we want to achieve. So we need to work seriously and tread cautiously. There is no need to rush, Mr Speaker, Sir. We know what we are doing; we know where we are going.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I do understand that many people are asking why the NEB and not the MES. I have to make it very clear. The MES has got a mandate. The MES is running all the examinations and external examinations: the Cambridge examinations, the local examinations, professional examinations. It has its own mandate. We are all proud today to say that we have

a National Examinations Board affiliated with the University of Mauritius which is starting with KM but, we also know that this is just the first step.

Hon. Dr. Gungapersad queried as to whether anyone else apart from school students could take KM. Obviously, they will be able to sit for the National School Certificate in KM, just like any other private candidate can sit for any other examination at the level of the Cambridge School Certificate.

When we came up with the National Examinations Board and I have stated it in my intervention, KM is the first designated subject. I did not want to jump the gun. Hon. Dr. Boolell stated that we have already accepted, at the level of Government, to come up with a technology stream but we are not yet at it. We are working towards it. Once the documents are ready, I will come to Parliament and make a statement on that issue and that is simply why I did not mention it right now because it is not only the technological stream.

Our students take History of Mauritius at School Certificate level. It is a curriculum prepared by Cambridge. I think it is high time for us, here in Mauritius, to develop our own curriculum for History of Mauritius and the MIE is already working on that; we have a team working on that. So, obviously, there will be other subjects that will be offered by the National Examinations Board and there is a process, a movement and we have to make sure that we move slowly and steadily.

Cambridge has been a partner for a long time and we all understand that it is important to maintain it. We are not going to sever our links with Cambridge. We are working, we are evolving, we are developing our own examinations board but we never stated that we will exclude any other board. We believe in diversity; we believe in the offer of diversity. I have mentioned earlier that it is important for us to give a diversity of opportunities to our students to ensure that they develop the skills and the competencies that are required in this modern world and we are working towards it.

On ne fait pas beaucoup de *tamtam*, M. le président, mais nous faisons notre travail sérieusement. Et l'honorable Dr. Gungapersad l'a si bien dit, *this is not a partisan Bill. It is a Bill that should make us all very proud because as Mauritians, we are showing to the world that we can and that we will do it right and we will never go wrong.*

As it is, we have done a lot, Mr Speaker, Sir. Other Members in the House; hon. Ms Tour, hon. Dr. Mrs Chukowry, hon. Dr. Gungapersad, all the others, have all mentioned that we have made a lot of progress. There is still more to be done.

At the Ministry of Education, I must say we have got a team that is working very seriously. I must today thank all the educators, the teachers, who from the very first day, agreed to get themselves trained, to work and to ensure that *Kreol Morisien* could be taught in our schools. Today, I think, we need to thank them for that. *Sans eux, rien ne serait possible!* Everything that we have done, Mr Speaker, Sir, has been done with a team spirit. The MIE, the MES, the University of Mauritius and now the National Examination Board, the educators, *le corps des enseignants*, they have all worked towards making this dream of ours a reality.

M. le président, hon. François stated that there will be a possibility one day of having the National Examination Board offering Kreol Rodriguais Why not? But again, *c'est un cheminement. Il nous faut arriver là. On a commencé l'enseignement du Kreol Rodriguais à Rodrigues, mais ça viendra par étape. Il faut faire amont de patience. Nous l'avons fait avec Kreol Morisien, nous le feront avec le Kreol Rodriguais aussi. Ça viendra, mais il nous faut tous réaliser que ce que nous faisons aujourd'hui, c'est pour le pays, c'est pour les jeunes et c'est pour nous tous. Nous utilisons tous cette langue, c'est le créole mauricien, elle nous appartient à tous.*

M. le président, j'ai écouté tout à l'heure l'intervention de l'honorable Toussaint qui disait que nous avons vraiment de la littérature créole mauricien. Peut-être, c'est vrai, les écrits ne sont pas d'après le KM que nous enseignons aujourd'hui à l'école, mais je rappellerai aux membres de cet auguste Assemblée qu'à un moment donné, l'anglais n'était pas considéré comme étant une langue de statut. Les gens apprenaient le grec et le latin, et l'anglais de Chaucer n'est pas l'anglais de Shakespeare, et n'est pas l'anglais utilisé aujourd'hui. Pourtant, la langue anglaise est utilisée à travers le monde et peut-être est la langue la plus utilisée dans le monde.

Alors pour moi, *M. le président*, nous avons franchi une étape, une étape extrêmement importante, une étape qui premièrement nous permet de bouger à un autre niveau parce que nous avons notre propre Examination Board, mais en même temps, en parlant du Kreol Morisien, c'est une étape déterminante. Nous avons reconnu son importance. Aujourd'hui, nous reconnaissons qu'un certificat en KM est équivalent à un certificat dans n'importe quel autre sujet. Les deux certificats, le Cambridge School Certificate et le National School

Certificate in KM, to us is equivalent. We are making sure that the level of the papers, the standard of the paper is really high.

I wish to inform the House that the paper, the curriculum has passed through a process that is very stringent. *Le curriculum développé par la MIE, les papiers développés, élaborés par le MES ont tous été validés par l'université de Maurice, by its senate. Alors là, je dirais moi que nous avons fait ce que nous pensons être important, ce qu'il fallait être fait, et nous pensons que nous avons fait un grand pas en avant.*

M. le président, je suis heureuse de voir que there has been general consensus on this Bill and that in spite of the fact that there were certain divergent views, discorded voices, the main thing remains that all the Members of the House who intervened have expressed the view that it is important and that we are all very happy that the National Examination Board will be set up.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is one thing important that I would like to stress upon before I stop my intervention. We have in the Bill the possibility for the National Examination Board to link up with other foreign institutions and this will allow bench marking. As I have stated earlier, this will be an asset for us to ensure the quality of our product.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would now once again thank all Members of the House who have contributed to this Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. VI of 2023)

Clauses 1 to 3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4 (New section 5D inserted in principal Act)

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move for the following amendment in clause 4 -

“In clause 4, in the proposed new section 5D, in subsection (4), by deleting the words “subsection (3)(a) and (j)” and replacing them by the words “subsection (3)(j).””

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 5 to 7 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and the enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

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

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Education (Amendment) Bill (No. VI of 2023) was read a third time and passed.