**Sir Edouard Lim Fat**

**Sir Edouard Lim Fat has left us on Tuesday last at the age of 94. This man has marked the History of Mauritius by charting its contours for development. The contribution of this Icon can best be appreciated by looking back at the economic and social conditions of our nation in the 70s.**

**The “overpopulated baracoon” as someone nastily called us, had miserably failed to arrest the population explosion and had reached the state of “the tragedy of the commons” in its agricultural expansion. To satisfy our craze for sugar mentality, the only vacant spots left to grow king sugar were the flower pots.**

**Enter Prof. Lim Fat with a new vision and a staunch belief in a diversification of our economy. It was an uphill fight as the luminaries of the ruling labour party opted for the expansion of agriculture where the job creation was highest per unit investment. Edouard Lim Fat found in SSR a good listener and finally a good supporter.**

**Helped by a few collaborators, he designed the EPZ and invested in Suzy toys, France Creations Ltee, Empereur Limitee, New Unawear Limited, Vogue Fashions Ltd and Broderie Industrielle Ltd. No further proof was needed to attract fellow investors. In a short five year period, the number of industries reached 85 which employed 17,000 workers and exported for Rs300m.**

**Today, the manufacturing industries account for a good share of our GDP and are destined to retain their preponderance for years to come. Fortunately, they are not mortal like their father is. For some time, Prof. Lim Fat had to reduce drastically his activities due to ailing health and was confined to his home.**

**On this fateful Tuesday was interrupted a life guided by an incurable optimism, a determination to succeed against all odds, and a belief that there are alternatives to beaten tracks that may produce miracles. Edouard Lim Fat’s life should be seen as a badge of honour by all those dedicated to the advancement of our country.**

**Who would have thought that this son of a boutiquier chinois would become a creator of the economic history of this island? To slightly misquote Camus, this is a man who has done both what he wanted and also what he could.**

**My sincere condolences to those in bereavement.**

**Dawood Auleear**

**4/3/2015**