



REPORT
of the Proceedings
of the
FIRST
House of Assembly
of
GIBRALTAR

First Session

Vol. 1 — No. 2

SECOND MEETING. THURSDAY, 25th SEPTEMBER, 1969.

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF
ASSEMBLY

THE SECOND MEETING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIRST
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY HELD IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY CHAM-
BER ON THURSDAY, THE 25th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1969, AT
6.00 P.M.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (In the Chair).
The Hon. W. Thomson, O.B.E., J.P.

GOVERNMENT:

The Hon. Major R. J. PELIZA, Chief Minister.
The Hon. M. XIBERRAS, Minister for Labour and Social Security.
The Hon. Major A. J. GACHE, Minister for Information, Port,
Trade and Industries.
The Hon. J. CARUANA, Minister for Medical and Health Services.
The Hon. W. M. ISOLA, Minister for Tourism and Municipal Ser-
vices.
The Hon. Miss C. ANES, Minister for Public Works and Housing.
The Hon. L. DEVINCENZI, Minister for Education and Recreation.
The Hon. C. B. O'BEIRNE, C.B.E., Q.C., Attorney-General.
The Hon. E. H. DAVIS, C.M.G., O.B.E., Financial and Development
Secretary.
The Hon. P. J. ISOLA, O.B.E.

OPPOSITION:

The Hon. Sir JOSHUA HASSAN, C.B.E., M.V.O., Q.C., J.P.,
Leader of the Opposition.
The Hon. A. W. SERFATY, O.B.E., J.P.
The Hon. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO, O.B.E.
The Hon. E. J. ALVAREZ, O.B.E., J.P.
The Hon. M. K. FEATHERSTONE.
The Hon. I. ABECASIS.
The Hon. Lt.-Col. J. L. HOARE.

In attendance:

J. T. SUMMERFIELD, Esq., Clerk to the House of Assembly.

Prayer:

The Speaker recited the prayer.

Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 28th August, 1969,
having been previously circulated, were taken as read and con-
firmed.

Documents laid:

The Chief Minister laid on the table the following docu-
ments:

- (1) The Prison (Amendment) Regulations, 1969.
- (2) The British Commonwealth and Foreign Parcel Post (Amendment (No. 2) Regulations, 1969.
- (3) The British Commonwealth and Foreign Post (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 1969.
- (4) The Museum (Entry and Fees) (Amendment) Rules, 1969.
- (5) The Traffic (Motor Vehicles) (Construction and Use) (Amendment) Regulations, 1969.

Ordered to lie.

The Attorney-General laid on the table the following document:

The Police (Amendment) Regulations, 1969.

Ordered to lie.

The Financial and Development Secretary laid on the table the following documents:

- (1) The Savings Bank (Amendment) Rules, 1969.
- (2) Supplementary Estimates Nos. 8 and 9 of 1969.

Ordered to lie.

Answers to Questions:

Oral

Question No. 1 of 1969.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Will the Minister say why under the defined domestic matters published in the Gazette of September 12th 1969 Food and Drugs and Animals and Birds have not been transferred to the Medical and Health Department?

Answer:

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

(HON. C. B. O'BEIRNE)

The power to specify defined domestic matters and to assign responsibility for Gibraltar Government business to Ministers is vested in the Governor under Sections 55(1) and 48(1), respectively, of the Constitution.

The object of the notice published in the Gazette on the 12th September, 1969, was to announce those matters which have been specified by the Governor as being defined domestic matters. The grouping of a number of matters in that notice under a particular heading does not imply that those matters have necessarily been assigned to one Minister or another.

In fact, the Minister for Medical and Health Services is responsible for matters arising out of the Food and Drugs legislation and for certain aspects of the Animals and Birds legislation.

Supplementary:

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

I hope next time the Government will be more accurate.

HON. SIR JOSHUA

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HON. SIR JOSHUA

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HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

But surely the question has not been answered in the sense that we want to know why the definition of the domestic matters, as appeared in the Gazette, does not tally with the responsibilities of members.

HON. ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

There are, Sir, one or two matters in this which have not been specifically allocated under section 48(1) of the Constitution. However, I can say that these matters which are very few in number are receiving immediate and serious consideration, and I hope that the allocation will be made shortly.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

I am very grateful. The Hon. Attorney-General will realise that it is of the utmost importance for the Opposition to know who is responsible for what, if anything.

Question No. 2 of 1969.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister say if the tender for the extension and conversion of K.G.V. Hospital into a psychiatric and gyriatric unit has been awarded?

Answer:

THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES:

(HON. J. CARUANA)

No, Sir.

Supplementary

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister say? "No" is a very concise answer and gives no information at all.

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, the tenders were only taken by one contractor in response to the notice published on the 3rd of August. The closing date for which was to have been the 10th of September. Circumstances made it necessary to call these documents in.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Is not the Minister aware that this tenderer, to which he is referring, was prepared to supply labour, etc., and under the particular circumstances in Gibraltar they should have jumped at this offer?

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, as Minister for Medical and Health Services I am not in a position to interfere with tenders. This belongs to the Tender Board. And the question of labour is not of my concern, although I have the utmost concern for the desirability of the conversion of K.G.V. Hospital into a psychiatric unit, and not a geriatries.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Is not the Minister aware that the mental patients are in very great need of a new hospital. That the new hospital on the K.G.V. Hospital was supposed to be constructed, or construction commenced, just when the Mackintosh wing was being finished? And although his concern is not about labour, is not his concern about mental patients and medical care generally?

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, the tender went out originally at a time when, in my opinion, if I may interfere a bit on the labour question, it was not very suitable to issue tenders out and therefore the response was such that financial arrangements have been upset. On the question of the welfare of the mental patients the delay will be minimal. In any case if the Hon. Member is referring to the winter period, the patients would have in any case been at St. Joseph's during the winter periods.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

What does the Minister mean when he says that the financial arrangements have been upset?

HON. J. CARUANA:

Financial considerations relating to the tender, Sir, which the questioner will appreciate I cannot disclose.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

No, but is it a question of tender, or is it a question of money, what is it? We want clarity.

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, if it is a question of money, I cannot divulge what it is; but it could be that the sum allotted originally does not coincide with the tender issued.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Is the Minister therefore saying that if the sum does not coincide with that sum which was originally budgeted about

Thursday, 25th

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eighteen months ago the mental patients will not be rehoused?

HON. J. CARUANA:

No, Sir, it does not mean that.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Then why the delay?

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, the delay in the first instance, the tender, which the old administration put out, did not include for the accommodation of labour or for the work to be completed by a given date. This will be included in the future tender.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

That was obvious.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

If there was in fact one tender, do I understand by that, that the tender was not competitive in the view of the Government; and does that not give rise to some suspicion about the circumstances of the tender?

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, the Hon. Member is probably right.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Is not the Hon. Member the last to talk about suspicion?

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

The point is a very important one, Sir, that I would like to clear on this question. Is it the fault of one tenderer that the others did not tender? Whether it is suspicious or not it is going to go out again. What is going to happen? When is the work going to start? This is what we want to know. We have not got any answer in respect of that.

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, I value the concern shown by the Hon. Members which I share whole-heartedly. We are pursuing the matter properly at this stage and the tender will go out as soon as it is practical. As to the question of whether the tender meets with the conditions, or the tenderers meet the conditions set out in the tender, this is a question which they should put to the proper authorities. And I suggest they do that — that is the Tender Board with which I do not for a moment attempt to interfere.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

The Hon. Member should know from now that this House has nothing to do with the Tender Board.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Sir, I do not know whether the Hon. Members opposite know there is a labour crisis; but will the Government ensure before putting out any tenders for public works, that having regard to the scarcity of labour, a proper list of priorities is worked out between the needs of the various social services, so that, for example, the building of the much needed primary schools in Lake Chad area is not delayed or prejudiced by the works suggested by the Hon. Questioner?

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, the Hon. and Learned Member is right. We are well aware that a list of priorities is very desirable.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

But have you got these priorities?

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Did the last Government leave a list of priorities for the Government to consider?

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

I want the answer to my question. Does the Hon. Member, or the Government, have a list of priorities?

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, the Hon. Member will find out in due course.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

When?

HON. J. CARUANA:

With due respect, Sir, I suggest to the Hon. Member he waits a little.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

I will wait what I want, not what you want.

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, we have waited for 25 years.

HON. A. P. MON

Will the Minister for Public Works, as Minister for Public Works, which the Government provided for p

HON. J. CARUANA

Sir, in my stands number 1. I am afraid, there are probably other things which I can assure the Hon. Member to get this under control in a matter of weeks, I

HON. E. J. ALV

Ruled out

HON. SIR JOSHUA

Mr. Speaker, it refers to a r

HON. MISS C. A

Sir, may I say that the North Pavilion is installed and that in the next few days the painting was not being done and the electric wash-hand basin and in some cases the accommodation at a charge of painting etc. will be

HON. I. ABECA

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No, Sir, why the police be altered, at

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Will the Hon. Minister say now whether in his priorities, as Minister for Medical Services, at what stage of the priorities which the Government has in mind will the new medical unit provided for psychiatric patients fit in?

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, in my list of priority the work on the psychiatric unit stands number one. The question of other priorities, I am afraid, there are Members in the Government who consider probably other things equally as strongly as I do mine. I can only assure the Hon. Member that I will fight with the utmost vigour to get this under way as soon as possible. It can only be a matter of weeks, I can assure the Hon. Member.

Question No. 3 of 1969.

HON. E. J. ALVAREZ:

Ruled out of order.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Mr. Speaker, the question does not refer to anything secret, it refers to a recommendation and that is all.

HON. MISS C. ANES:

Sir, may I answer the Hon. Member. The reconditioning of North Pavilion has been completed, the furniture is about to be installed and the first occupants should be moving in within the next few days. Although the structural condition of the building was not bad, extensive repairs were required to the plumbing and the electrical installation had to be entirely renewed; all wash-hand basins, toilets, showers, etc. also had to be replaced and in some cases additional ones installed. About 80 men can be accommodated. At this stage it is intended to admit workers at a charge of £2 per week. Total cost including furniture, bedding etc. will be in the region of £5,800.

Question No. 4 of 1969

Oral

HON. I. ABECASIS:

Is the policy of the Government no longer to alleviate the conditions of tenants living in houses which have been condemned as unfit for human habitation by a court?

Answer:

THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS AND HOUSING:

(HON. MISS C. ANES)

No, Sir. The Government has not yet seen any reason why the policy implemented by the previous Government should be altered, amended or changed in any way.

Supplementary:

HON. I. ABECASIS:

The policy of the previous Government was to accommodate people who were living under that condition. I would refer the Hon. Minister to the decanting action that took place at No. 41 Prince Edward's Road, known as Patio Recaño.

HON. MISS C. ANES:

Sir, the following properties were condemned by Court:

39/41 Prince Edward's Road, the property of Mr. Bassadone. All families except two were reaccommodated by the previous Government.

The following properties were condemned by Public Health only:

Multado's Estate, Prince Edward's Road. Eight families are still living there.

Property known as "Corredores" Prince Edward's Road. Eight families still living there.

Peralta properties, Giro's Passage, two properties in all. Eight families still living there.

Rosia Steps. Three properties, also Peralta's. Four families still living there.

Marrache property in Cannon Lane. Tenants reaccommodated by the Government of the time. Now occupied by Moroccans although the property is still condemned by Public Health.

HON. I. ABECASIS:

Sir, would not the Hon. Minister for Housing agree that these people should be categorized under paragraph 2(j) of Government Notice No. 187 of the 25th August 1960?

HON. MISS C. ANES:

Sir, these people were the responsibility of the last Government. Nevertheless there are still many families living in sub-standard accommodation who by now, and over the years, have acquired sufficient pointage in the allocation scheme under the Housing Allocation Scheme to deserve reaccommodation on a priority basis; and any action taken to alleviate the circumstances of those living in condemned properties must, of necessity, be such as will not be detrimental to those on the priority list. The Government will therefore pursue the same policy adopted by the previous administration. Efforts will be made to include a percentage of this commitment in allocations as and when it is possible and practicable to do so. The unfortunate part of this state of affairs is not that tenants are condemned to premises and should be awaiting rehousing, but that they should

have to continue to be reaccommodated.

The unfavourable situation should be rectified to the state of affairs that those who are in compliance with the law in respect of private law should be allowed to do something to be allowed to live in a state of disrepair thereby aggravating the problem.

I have a number of cases where people claiming lack of funds will have to be evicted by the Government will acquire possession of the building) if litigation or, if they return the tenancy.

HON. SIR JOHN:

Sir, is it also acquired in the same way used for the purposes mentioned in paragraph 2(j) of Government Notice No. 187 of the 25th August 1960?

HON. MISS C. ANES:

Sir, I am

HON. A. W. S.

Have tenanted the first stage.

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No. Sir,

have to continue living in such circumstances until they can be reaccommodated.

The unfortunate part is that the properties which they occupy should have been allowed by the owners to deteriorate to the state that they have, and what is still more unfortunate, is that those in authority at the time failed to ensure complete compliance of any abatement notice issued, or orders made, in respect of properties concerned. It was in their power to have done something about it and they failed. Owners have been allowed to let good and adequate accommodation fall into such a state of disrepair as to be uninhabitable and worth nothing thereby aggravating an already very serious and almost insoluble problem.

I have already given some considerable thought to this aspect of the housing problem. I am of the opinion that in those cases where owners refused to carry out the necessary repairs claiming lack of funds and/or that the rents perceived are not worth the expenditure which they would have to incur, recourse will have to be had to a policy of compulsory purchase of properties by the Government. This will ensure that although Government will accept the commitment of housing such tenants as may be in possession, it will also acquire much needed land (for rebuilding) if the property is in such a state as to require demolition or, if it is possible, it can rehabilitate the property and return the tenants to their accommodation in due course.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Sir, is the Hon. Minister aware that the last Government also acquired in this way property that would have been otherwise used for other purposes; and had in fact made arrangements to buy the particular property that the Hon. Minister has mentioned "Los Corredores"?

HON. MISS C. ANES:

Sir, I am aware.

Question No. 5 of 1969.

Oral

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

Have tenders been invited for the work to be carried out for the first stage of the new Victoria Stadium?

Answer:

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND RECREATION:
(HON. L. DEVINCENZI)

No, Sir.

Supplementary:

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

Why not? Is not the Hon. Minister aware of the fact that plans were ready, and the money available, before the end of the life of the last Government? Why has he not taken steps already to get on with the job?

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Sir, I appreciate very much the concern of the Hon. Member as to why the tenders should not have been put forward. We are all aware, Sir, that the money is available and that the tenders have not gone out yet.

I was wondering whether the Hon. Member was asking why the tenders had not been given out yet, meaning since this Government took over or since the Opposition was in power.

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

My question is that as plans were ready and money was available, why have tenders not been invited?

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Well, Sir, we do not for the time being propose to invite tenders for the first stage.

I would like to emphasize that for the first stage, which involves only the resurfacing of the stadium, experience has shown, as in the case of K.G.V. Hospital that contractors are as yet unable to tender competitively.

However, I am happy to report that the Deputy Fortress Commander has been approached. Consultations have taken place, and are continuing with him, to see whether the Royal Engineers would be able to carry out the resurfacing of the Stadium as part of their programme of assistance to Gibraltar.

Some may wonder why the previous administration did not put tenders out while there was still a substantial labour force in Gibraltar.

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

It is all very well to say "some may wonder why the previous administration did not get on with the job", I think it was at the tail-end of the life of the last Government that the money was available and the plans and specification were ready.

But the present Government has been in power now for some time, and I would have thought (and I know what I am talking about because I am in the trade) that in the last month or two there was ample time to get on with the job. A thing I would like to know and I am not convinced with the answers.

HON. L. DEVINCE

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HON. CHIEF MINI

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HON. SIR JOSHUA

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HON. P. J. ISOLA:

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HON. L. DEVINCE:

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HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Sir, I am sorry if the Hon. Member is not convinced.

You will appreciate, Sir, that we do have priorities which have to be gone into, and this, I can assure you, Sir, the Stadium will in fact receive priority as far as new works are concerned. But you must agree, Sir, that if some arrangement can be come round to with the Royal Engineers, this would in fact leave us more workers to do other essential jobs and moneywise it would leave a lot of money to be used for other parts of the Stadium.

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

Not a bad idea.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Sir, would the Hon. Chief Minister give us an undertaking that he will, as soon as possible, give the House a list of priorities of work.

If each Minister says that he thinks that his project has got top priority, of course they have, this is what they are for. But the Government must have a list of priorities and this is the thing we would like to debate some time.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that a man with so much experience as Sir Joshua should try and put a question to me without giving notice.

But of course we shall give a list of priorities in due course when we sort out a number of things of which perhaps we shall hear later.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

It is because of my experience that I asked the question without notice.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Sir, the Minister in answer to the questioner referred to the first stage and said that the plans for the first stage only involved the resurfacing of the Stadium.

Could I ask the Minister: Are there plans at all? Or, are there any plans ready for the subsequent stages of the development? That is: the stand, the centre, etc. Are there any others prepared?

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

No, Sir. There never have been.

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

* On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Economic Development Committee has seen plans of the whole of the project of the new Victoria Stadium.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Perhaps. I mean I do not know whether you call a plan a picture of what it is going to look like. I think a plan involves rather more than that. But of course I am asking the Minister the question. I would like to know whether in fact there were, or there are, detailed plans for the second, third, fourth and whatever stages the Government think this has to be built; whether there are any at all, other than plans for the resurfacing of the Stadium?

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Sir, there are outline plans. But as far as I am aware there are no further plans except for the resurfacing, in detail, — costing, etc.

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

Is it not a fact, Mr. Speaker, that we could get on with the job on the first stage of the new Victoria Stadium without having detailed plans of the second and third stages? Is it not a fact, Mr. Minister?

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Sir, of course it is a fact. But I thought we were now thinking about the further stages. As regards the first stage I think an answer has been given already. I think it has been satisfactorily answered.

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

Thank you.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Sir, I want to assure the Minister that I was not seeking to criticize him at all in this. The reason why I was asking this question is that I did get the mistaken impression from the television interview with the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition on August 15th that all the plans for the Victoria Stadium were ready. Since this is not a fact, can I have an assurance from the Minister (I know he will do everything possible to get the resurfacing done) that the Government will treat the whole of the development of Victoria Stadium as a matter of top priority and will ensure that plans are ready so that when

the Government's fruition we've delayed by lack

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Sir, as far as I am aware, I understand that to be worked

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Thank you

HON. SIR JOSEPH:

Mr. Speaker, I am not at any stage in a position to be ready. All I can say is that at the beginning of the year I had done it. I

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

I will not be in Opposition on what he said.

HON. SIR JOSEPH:

I did not

HON. M. K. FLEMING:

Sir, if the Minister at least even got a prior members of the Opposition or which are

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr. Speaker, I answered the Leader of the Opposition to add.

HON. LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR:

In view of the conditions are due to the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition?

the Government's plans for the recruitment of labour bear fruition we will be able to get on with the job, and not be delayed by lack of detailed plans and drawings?

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Sir, as far as I am aware I can give an assurance in that respect. Also, I understand that detailed plans are already starting to be worked upon.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Thank you.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of clarification. I did not say at any stage in any television interview that all the plans were ready. All I said was that if the tenders go out shortly after the beginning of this Government, it should not be assumed that they had done it. That the work had been done for the first stage.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

I will not argue with the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition on clarification — but I am quite happy to show him what he said. I have got it all typed out in front of me.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

I did not bother to keep a record.

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, if the Hon. and Learned Back-bencher allows his Chief Minister at least to state what are top priorities. We have not even got a priority list from the Chief Minister. Surely the junior members of his Government are not the ones to state which, or which are not, top priorities.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I think I made myself quite clear when I answered the Leader of the Opposition before, and I have nothing to add.

Question No. 6 of 1969.

Oral

HON. LIEUT.-COL. J. L. HOARE:

In view of the fact that the Football and Hockey Competitions are due to commence about the first week in October, will the Honourable Minister give an indication as to the availability of the Victoria Stadium playing grounds for such competitions?

Answer:

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND RECREATION:
(HON. L. DEVINCENZI):

Until such time as work actually commences at the Victoria Stadium, the grounds will be available for football and hockey.

Supplementary:

HON. LIEUT-COL. J. L. HOARE:

I will press the point a bit further.

Mr. Speaker, people who are arranging these competitions cannot do so on a week-by-week basis. Competitions are on a league basis, which extend over a long period throughout the season. The season finishes in April and therefore it would help the various associations if we could be given a date, in time, of when we will no longer be able to use the ground so that we may if necessary, make other arrangements as is done on numerous other occasions, with the Services Departments, with whom the sporting associations in Gibraltar have very cordial and friendly relations.

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Sir, the Gibraltar Football Association have in fact been advised of the position and they seem to be quite happy. The Gibraltar Hockey Association, I believe, have also been informed by the Victoria Stadium Control Board about the position.

I realise the Hon. Member's concern about having ample time in which to make arrangements. As a hockey umpire and as a player, I am sure we are both very well aware of the situation. But again he will appreciate that whether this is gone into by the Royal Engineers or the tender goes out, the tenders are going to take about a month, work will have to be commenced and brought about. I am sure they could be given certainly at least a month, beforehand, when they will be able to terminate. And during that time I am sure that we can make suitable arrangements with the Services to accommodate them.

If I remember correctly, Sir, last year, as far as hockey is concerned, many of the matches were played either at the Naval Officers' Pavilion or at the Europa grounds.

HON. LIEUT-COL. J. L. HOARE:

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Minister for going into history. Since I was primarily responsible for the arrangements it is no news to me at all.

I am concerned primarily from the hockey side, since I am

the President, competitions, long the league either plan to three. Or, if it sequence and shorter duration be it two months whichever it is do some plan to make these

HON. M. XIBER

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Mr. Speaker Lathbury Barracks because the weather. What still, hockey st

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HON. M. XIBER

Sir, I would like to act as a member of the Opposition claim that I should

HON. P. J. ISOLA

Can I suggest that the hon. member should go into history about whether football could be played with the Gibraltar Football

the President, not just a player or an umpire, and I control the competitions. I therefore want to know the period of time. How long the league will have these grounds available so that we can either plan to have one round of games each or two rounds or three. Or, if it is for a short period we can change the normal sequence and have our cup Competitions first which are of much shorter duration. But we must have some indication of how long; be it two months, three months, six months or nine months, whichever it is, or even one month. With a date in time we can do some planning. Without it it is just not possible for anybody to make these competitions.

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, is the Minister for Education and Recreation aware that last year a number of hockey games were transferred to Lathbury Barracks and to N.O.P. Club precisely because of the indecision of the past Government?

HON. LIEUT.-COL. J. L. HOARE:

Mr. Speaker, this is not a fact. We played the games at Lathbury Barracks and the Naval hockey grounds merely because the Victoria Stadium was unfit because of the inclement weather. Whence all other sport in Gibraltar came to a standstill, hockey still carried on on these hard pitches.

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I asked the question of the Minister for Education, not of the Hon. Member.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

On a point of order, Sir. Perhaps I thought the Hon. Backbencher would have raised the point of order, to which he is so prone, that a Minister asking a question of another Minister, as far as I am concerned, is completely new.

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, I would not like to infringe upon the prerogative of the House and act in the same way as the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition acted and abuse of my lack of experience and claim that I should do things in this way.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Can I suggest to the Minister, Sir, that this sort of discussion about when they can play hockey and when they can play football could be more suitably dealt with in direct meetings with the Minister and the elected representatives of the Gibraltar Football Association and the Hockey Association rather

than the self-styled representative before the House asking questions. This, I would suggest to the Minister, I would ask the Minister: Is it not more desirable that if these Associations have problems they should consult direct with him?

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Yes, Sir. You are quite right, Sir. But I would like very briefly, if I may, to answer the Hon. Member on the point he has raised once again and which I think I had already answered satisfactorily, and that is, that we shall give you ample time in which to make the necessary allocations. It is impossible to do so now because, as I said before, consultations are taking place with the Deputy Fortress Commander, and as a result of that it is impossible at this stage to give any dates. But I can assure the Hon. Member that as soon as we are in a position to do so I shall, in the interest of all parties concerned, give ample time so that there will not be any inconvenience to hockey, cricket or anything else.

HON. LIEUT.-COL. J. L. HOARE:

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Minister for this, but I cannot accept the suggestion of the Hon. and Learned Back-bencher. It is a matter of opinion which way this is done best. And especially those of us who are intimately and directly concerned, and know about these things, are the people who should judge: not people who take no active part whatsoever in these items.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

I assure the Hon. and Gallant Member that my association with sport in Gibraltar during the last Government was extremely close and I do happen to know quite intimately the problems of the different sporting associations.

HON. I. ABECASIS:

Sir, if the question of sport is to be dealt with by correspondence between the association concerned and the Government why should we have a Minister for Sports then?

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order I think this is developing into a debate instead of questioning. As far as I know, according to the Rules, you ask a question — and the only thing you can put are questions but not make a statement.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

But we have a School Master instead of a Minister of Education during these proceedings.

HON. M. XIBERI

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MR. SPEAKER:

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HON. M. K. FEA

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HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, I think the point of order made by the Chief Minister is perfectly correct. I hope that questions, or that points, are made as questions in future, and not as speeches.

MR. SPEAKER:

Perhaps I can say a word now. I have allowed this question to be taken further than I intended to. We will therefore move to the next question.

Question No. 7 of 1969.

Oral

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

In view that a new school term has just commenced, are children to be taught exclusively the decimal currency system in arithmetic classes?

Answer:

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND RECREATION:
(HON. L. DEVINCENZI)

Instructions have been issued to schools to use decimal and metric units as far as possible, and no books or equipment of any other type are now being obtained. Teaching in non-decimal units is limited to the basic instruction which is still required until full decimalization is introduced.

Supplementary:

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, is the Hon. Minister aware that children are suffering confusion and parents are suffering from seeing such confusion in their children who are having to do exercises dealing with a coin which was known as a halfpenny and has now been demonetized?

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Sir, there seems to be so much suffering that I wonder if the Minister for Medical Services ought to come and join me in this.

Sir, we are aware that there have been a few complaints about this. This seems to be unavoidable. Under the circumstances, Sir, I would like to tell you that teachers who are forced by circumstances to use old text books have been recommended to make an intelligently selective approach in order that irrelevant work will be eliminated. The Department is looking into the text book situation in each individual school so that recommendations can be made to Government if it is necessary to take any specific action to overcome this problem.

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You will realise, Sir, that at the moment we do still use the normal pennies, etc., and if children go completely into the metric system now this will be very confusing to them as well — as if they go to the street to buy anything this will tend to be confusing. So the Headteachers are dealing with the matter as best they can with the help of the Department and, as far as I understand, the complaints have been very few and are being looked into.

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I am very grateful to hear all this, but is the Hon. Minister aware that in Britain, at least in primary education, it is hoped to go exclusively to the metric system from 1st January, and will we be following suit?

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Sir, I am very glad that the Hon. Member has brought this point out. It is quite possible, although I cannot confirm this, we are working in this direction at all speed, and it could be that by such date we could have some similar arrangement.

Question No. 8 of 1969.

Oral

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

What arrangements have Government made to print 50 New Pence bank-notes?

Answer:

THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

(HON. E. H. DAVIS)

None, Sir.

Supplementary:

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

Why not, Sir?

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, the present Government is endeavouring to honour decisions taken by the previous administration as far as possible.

The decision not to print the 50 New Pence note was taken in the life time of the previous administration.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

By whom?

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think, Sir, that I can say (I am not disclosing secret documents, I think. They may be confidential) by the Council of Ministers on the 3rd October, 1967, Sir, and the 30th April, 1968.

HON. SIR JOSHUA

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HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Was it then brought to the notice of those who decided that other territories outside the United Kingdom were going to print 50 Pence notes?

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition must recall that the Decimal Currency Board in the United Kingdom, which was a very high powered committee, made certain recommendations.

In the lifetime of the previous administration, Sir, a local Advisory Committee was formed which took account of all the information which was at the time available.

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HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

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Sir, that was in 1967. Would it not now be desirable to have a 50 New Pence note especially in view that not printing such would mean a loss in revenue to the Gibraltar Exchequer of between £6,000 and £7,000 annually?

Oral

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

o print 50

Sir, I must correct the Hon. Member in his figures. The loss to revenue would be £4,000 at the outside. But the Hon. Questioner should be aware that the circulation of Ten Shillings notes has been a dying circulation for many years. That people nowadays are carrying more and more pound notes rather than ten shillings. And if he cares to check on my figures he will probably find, he should find, that of the last series "C" currency notes issued (of which there are supposed to be some fifty-thousand in circulation) the redemption figure has been negligible. And that in the series "D" figure which was issued much later the redemption now is at the rate of ten per cent.

RY:

Now, I welcome anything any Honourable Member of this House will tell me, or advise me, to ensure that we get more money. I am sure that the Hon. Gentleman across the way knows that I am a money-grabber. But in this case I am afraid that I cannot agree that the notes on the one hand would outweigh the benefits on the other.

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HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I fail to see what the benefits are in not having 50 New Pence notes. I would suggest that there are benefits in having it. The Isle of Man has already produced one and it is gaining touristwise from such.

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uncil of Mini-
pril, 1968.

Is the Hon. Financial Secretary aware that in Britain they are already worried in Government circles about possible simple forging of a fifty penny coin which I presume will be used here to supplant our ten shillings note?

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

We will have, Sir, exactly the same coin as in the United Kingdom. In fact we already have 200,000 in Gibraltar at the moment. It would be rather a waste of money to have brought 200,000 coins to Gibraltar and then not to use them by having notes. If the Honourable Member is worried about the fact that we should have a note or a coin which would be of attraction to tourists, let me assure him that the matter has not escaped my attention in the same way as it did not with the crown pieces.

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR & SOCIAL SECURITY.

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Mr. Speaker: It is desirable that at this second meeting of the House of Assembly we should put the situation on the labour front into some perspective.

Fifteen weeks after the withdrawal of Spanish labour it is more apparent than ever that the main deficiency in Gibraltar's labour force is in the construction industry. Though it might have been thought at that time that other industries, both in the official and private sectors, would be vulnerable, the situation in these is becoming stabilised. In fact, the influx of alien labour which followed the withdrawal of the Spaniards and once again the response of our own people in taking up part-time employment, has allowed all industries to continue to function, although there are some deficiencies in particular sectors, especially in building. The increased influx of labour, however, has created new problems which it is the task of the new Government to attempt to solve. They are longer-term problems, and solutions must therefore be long-term. Much depends, however, on the resourcefulness and ingenuity with which our community confronts these problems. The choice between a forward-looking, smooth functioning society on the one hand, and on the other, a community lacking in guidance, is a matter which must concern every Gibraltarian. For its part, the Government will do everything possible to achieve the first, but it is up to the community as a whole to give us their support.

We have, of course, certain unfinished business to deal with. With regard to labour I would mention two items: First, recruitment from Morocco which had been decided upon during the term of office of the last Government; and second, matters relating to the accommodation of workers generally from overseas.

On the first, as the House is aware, the decision was not taken by the present Government but, as in other instances, it is our policy as far as possible to honour commitments entered into before our time. Mainly construction workers, for the official

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employers, have been recruited, and the administrative and medical requirements have been carried out promptly and efficiently thanks to the cooperation of all the departments concerned. Some more will be arriving shortly, and I must here express the Government's appreciation of the help which the Lands and Works Department has received from the Ministry of Public Buildings & Works in preparing the extra dormitory accommodation which it has been necessary to provide. I cannot also let this opportunity pass without mentioning the excellent work which has been, and continues to be done, — under great pressure most of the time — by the staff of my Department and in particular by the Section of the Department dealing with labour.

On the second and more general point of accommodation, there has been some anxiety as to when Government would be able to make provision for those U.K. workers who very gallantly came to Gibraltar, of their own initiative, to help us in our difficulties. We are very grateful for their help and have tried to reciprocate by providing as quickly as possible the best accommodation we can muster in the circumstances. It is hoped to make several buildings available for this end, and having visited one of them now completed, I am glad to say that I have been agreeably surprised by the results achieved, ahead of schedule, by a small group of tradesmen from Lands & Works Department in the short time available. I refer to North Pavilion which will house approximately 80 workers in comfortable rooms (4 to a room), some with a nice view of the straits, and in a pleasant area of town. Because running expenses are high and we want to improve the place as we go along by providing suitable furniture and fittings, the charges will be £2 per week per man but I am sure that those who are admitted will find North Pavilion to their taste and I trust that they will stay a long time amongst us.

Whilst on the subject of accommodation, I would like to refer to the statement made following the talks with the Minister of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs, that good friend of Gibraltar, Lord Shepherd. One of the highlights of this statement was the agreement reached that consideration of the building of a workers' residence merited the highest priority and the undertaking to provide technical advice from Britain to help finalise the scheme quickly. We stressed to Lord Shepherd that promptness was essential and I am glad to inform the House that the Building Adviser to the Ministry of Overseas Development — which controls C.D. & W. funds is arriving in Gibraltar on the 29th September. His advice will obviously play an important part in the Ministry's decision. However, Government feels that every effort should be made to use industrialised building techniques for this project, not only because it is urgent to increase labour accommodation but also because this could be a pilot scheme from which we can judge how effective industrialised building would be in Gibraltar. If, with Ministry of Overseas Development help, the scheme is successful, our housing programme could be pushed forward much more quickly than at present, something which is very much in the interests of the community.

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The problems of industrialised building are not being underestimated but in view of the difficulties with which we are confronted not only on the Labour but the Housing front, the Government is determined to devote as much attention as is necessary to the matter with the double objective of increasing the rate of production and reducing the number of men required for the job. Here, too, Government is considering the introduction of innovations in the system of tendering in order to give due weight, in our present circumstances, to the time element in the contract and to the desirability of contractors employing small but highly skilled and organised gangs in their constructions. Gibraltar cannot afford unproductive labour, now less than ever, and the basic idea underlying all our thoughts of accommodation is that eventually, the type of labour which we will get will largely depend on the type of accommodation provided. By improving the quality and efficiency of our labour force, we can aim at reducing the numbers required as much as possible.

What is true of building is true of Gibraltar, as a whole. The Report of the Manpower Mission to Gibraltar, the Beeching Report, is an important document which must necessarily bring about a deep transformation of our society, if it can be successfully implemented. I add this warning because its recommendations will indeed be difficult to implement, calling as they do for changes in deep-rooted habits and methods. To raise our economy from the level of low wages and low productivity to a level of high productivity and high wages is not an easy task. But so that the ideal may be before all of us in a patent form, we are hoping, with the consent of Lord Beeching and Lord Delacourt Smith, to publish a condensed version of the Report. An announcement about this will be made shortly.

Social and economic changes require faith on the part of both employers and employees. The workers particularly must not feel that they are being taken for a ride. They must feel assured that increased production will be rewarded. As the Beeching Report implies, this calls for a wages policy and to this end yet another of those experts for whose help Gibraltar must be grateful, (in this case Mr. Arthur Marsh) has, at our suggestion, been asked by the Ministry of Overseas Development, and has accepted, to come here again with the following terms of reference:

- “(a) To review the situation in regard to wage and salary levels for industrial and non-industrial employees respectively in the light of the changes in circumstances since the submission of the 1967 Report;
 - (b) to examine the current situation in the light of the recommendations made in the Manpower Mission Report;
 - (c) to take into account the claims formally tabled in the Joint Industrial Council for;
 - (i) the introduction of a 40-hour week;
 - (ii) the payment of a 25% Productivity Bonus; and
 - (d) to report to the Governor.”
- Mr. Marsh, in 1967, did excellent work for Gibraltar and no one is better fitted to advise us. He is arriving *tonight* and it was

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possible so to inform the Joint Industrial Council this afternoon.

The promptness with which Government has taken this far-reaching decision, in fact, within days of assuming office, I offer as evidence that Government's insistence on increased productivity is not an attempt to exploit the worker. On the other hand, this community cannot afford to spend money to no avail. Increased wages and increased productivity must, in our present circumstances, go hand in hand.

Along with these arrangements for expert review of the wage structure, the Government has been considering the machinery to implement the Manpower Mission Report. The "Ad Hoc" Committee on Labour formed on the 9th June, 1969, just after the withdrawal took place, has performed a useful function, but for the longer term planning, a reconstituted Labour Planning Committee with Government, Official Employers, Private Employers and Trade Union representation is obviously a better instrument.

From the Labour Planning Committee matters will be sent to the Development & Planning Commission (under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister) as recommended by Sir Walter Courtts, which will in turn dove-tail and pronounce on economic policy generally. This should ensure that the needs and uses of labour receive adequate expression in the planning of our economic future.

If I may revert to the question of the building industry, a considerable amount of planning has already been done by expert advisers provided by the Ministry of Public Building and Works who are the major employers in this field in Gibraltar. Following visits by Mr Hislop immediately after the withdrawal of Spanish labour, 4 other gentlemen, the first of whom is already in Gibraltar, have been nominated to advise not only the Ministry here, but also the Gibraltar Government as to the best way of planning and coordinating. These advisers will also be available in the private sector and we must all be very grateful to the Ministry for their assistance.

Whilst on the subject of the private sector, of the building industry, it is perhaps not irrelevant that I should mention how unfortunate it is that our local building contractors, who have such an important part to play in the development of Gibraltar, do not seem to have given serious consideration to what they have so often been advised to do in the past, and that is merging into one unit which would enable them to deal much more expeditiously and economically with development works. I feel that the present circumstances offer an ideal opportunity for this to become a reality, for their own benefit and for that of Gibraltar as a whole.

Finally, there can be no doubt that Gibraltar is rich in sources of income but equally that Gibraltarians must work hard to exploit these. Nor would it do, at all, to call for increased productivity if that increase were not to be rewarded. Of that the Government is fully conscious. The benefits should and must be shared. Nor would it do to flood the labour market. In this respect we intend to enforce our administrative procedures

and if necessary alter others so that the fundamental purpose of the Government is not undermined in any way.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Sir, before the Minister starts on his second statement, may I say I am sure all Honourable Members of the House welcome his masterly exposition of the labour situation in Gibraltar, and of the measures that must be taken to remedy the situation. But, in doing so, can I ask the Minister for an assurance that Mr. Marsh, when he arrives, will be told in clear terms of the wages policy of this Government, as enunciated by the Chief Minister in the first meeting of this House? And can he give us some information as to when we can expect a further announcement of the composition of this important Planning Committee to which he has referred in his statement?

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, I might say it would be fair to answer any points which might make clearer anything I have said. On the other hand I would go as far as saying that the Beeching Report contains the policy on wages for the Government, and in following this policy, the Government will advise whomsoever it becomes necessary to advise. As to a date, I am not prepared to give that at this stage, Sir.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Mr. Speaker, because of the Standing Orders I did not want to raise any points on the statement. But since the stickler for Standing Orders has made a point I would like just to ask one point; the matter, of course, will be studied and if necessary we will have a debate. But may I . . .

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Mr. Speaker, is the Hon. Leader of the Opposition suggesting that it is out of order to ask a question on a statement?

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

I think that no debate can ensue.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

I was asking a question.

MR. SPEAKER:

You are quite right, no debate can ensue.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

That is right. And until the Speaker allows it, a point of clarification only, if I understand the Standing Orders.

So I wanted just want to raised as I think it i the terms of R cleared with J.L.C ion? Or are they

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

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HON. SIR JOSHUA

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HON. M. XIBERRAS:

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HON. A. P. MORRI

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So I wanted to avoid that, but since one has been raised I just want to raise a very small one. The matter will be considered as I think it is a very important statement. The question of the terms of Reference of Mr. Marsh, have they been fully cleared with J.I.C. and the Transport and General Workers Union? Or are they in draft form as yet?

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, they have in fact been cleared.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Very good.

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR & SOCIAL SECURITY.

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

One of the matters to which the present administration attaches great importance is an urgent revision of the rates of Public Assistance. To this, we are prepared to give high priority.

Since preparations for the 1970 Budget are well under way I have considered it proper to include proposals for a revision in my Departmental Estimates, so that they may be judged in relation to Government commitments as a whole.

Nevertheless, and in order to relieve existing cases of hardship, the Director of Labour and Social Security is being authorised to review the allowances payable to persons living with relatives in the same way as he now does in certain other cases, in order that where hardship is established and where the Department feels that the need exists, supplementation of the existing rates should be granted even now. It has also been decided that the allowance paid by Government to residents at the John Macintosh Homes and patients confined to hospital for a long period and who have no personal resources, should be increased forthwith from 7/6d. to 10/- a week.

I should also inform the House that because we dislike the term "Public Assistance" and because we feel that the community has a duty towards those persons who were unable, through no fault of their own, to contribute towards a statutory pension fund, we propose to alter the name of these social payments to what can be more properly termed as Supplementary Benefits. This will follow the pattern in Britain.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Sir, I was not dealing, as you will appreciate, with the Department of Labour and Social Security; but if I remember rightly instructions were given at the time to the Director of Labour and Social Security, that any applicants for Public Assistance living with their families should be given supplementation if there was hardship. I am not saying that you are in any way

misleading the House, I may perhaps be thinking on the wrong lines. But I think that decision was taken at the beginning of the year — in February or March of this year. I am not trying to say it has, but as far as my recollection goes I think it has.

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, whether this was the case or not the fact is that the Director has powers to supplement in many cases. Now, the essence of my statement is that he has been given a directive to be more liberal in the use of these allowances because cases of need do exist.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Are we to have a revision of Public Assistance benefits sometime in the future, may I ask?

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, I think also in the statement it is made clear that it is my view that such a revision should take place, and accordingly I have made provision in my departmental estimates.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR PORT, TRADE & INDUSTRIES

Mr. Speaker: the announcement which has just been made that Mr. Marsh is arriving in Gibraltar this evening to review the situation in regard to wages and salaries and to look into certain other matters, and the application to be made later in today's proceedings for supplementary financial provision to meet in part the effect of the merger of the Government and the City Council, could lead some people to think that they should increase prices and charges immediately against the possibility of an increase in costs. Any such action will be viewed by the Government with great concern and will not be tolerated. As a first step, an Order will be appearing in tomorrow's Gazette by which the Governor in Council will require that all goods exposed for sale, whether in shop windows, showcases or elsewhere, shall have their prices marked in such a way as to be clearly visible and legible to any member of the public looking at that window or showcase or standing at a reasonable distance away from where the goods are exposed. Any case of an increase in price which may come to notice will be investigated and if such increase should be found to be unjustified, then the Government will not hesitate to take such measures as may be necessary, with retrospective effect if need be, to deal with the situation. The Government, Sir, are determined to nip in the bud any attempt at increasing prices without justification and will, if necessary, extend the provisions of the Price Control Ordinance not only to commodities but also to services which at the

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ALLOWANCES

HON. FINANCIAL AN

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HON. SIR JOSHUA F

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moment are not price controlled. The last thing anyone in Gibraltar will want is a general scramble which could create a vicious circle.

ALLOWANCES TO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Motion re:

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I have the honour to move in terms of the motion standing in my name that, as moved at the meeting of the Legislative Council held on the 22nd May, 1969, allowances to Ministers and other Members of the House of Assembly shall be payable at the following rates:

Chief Minister:	£1,200
The Deputy Chief Minister (if circumstances require this appointment and if he is responsible for a Department):	800
The Speaker:	600
All Ministers:	700
The Leader of the Opposition (if circumstances require this appointment):	600
Other Members:	350

Sir, I commend the motion to the House.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Sir, having been the proposer of the Motion referred to by the Honourable Financial Secretary, I am glad to see that the recommendations which we made in May this year have been accepted by the present Government. I did say then that we had been under pressure that the allowances should be higher and we felt, having regard to all the circumstances, that so long as members of this House, whether Ministers or otherwise, were part-time it was not justified. I did say: "It will be up to other members outside if they want, and from here, to make any suggestion on the matter; but this has been the result of very serious consideration. The result of having accepted the recommendation to the Governor of the Committee and having made such slight amendments or slight alterations as were felt were the minimum required." I am very pleased to see that the Government has accepted those suggestions.

Mr. Speaker put the question which was resolved in the affirmative.

Suspension of Standing Order

Motion re:

The Honourable Financial and Development Secretary moved the suspension of Standing Order No. 44(5) in relation to Supplementary Estimates No. 9 of 1969.

Mr. Speaker put the question which was resolved in the affirmative.

Supplementary Estimates Nos. 8 and 9 of 1969.

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I beg to move that this House resolves itself into Committee to consider the votes detailed in Supplementary Estimates Nos. 8 and 9 of 1969, item by item.

This was agreed to and the House resolved itself into Committee to consider Supplementary Estimates Nos. 8 and 9 of 1969 in detail.

House in Committee:

Head XIV Miscellaneous Services.
Item 37. Divorce Bill Expenses.

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, I should say that I vote in favour of this purely on the basis of the declared policy of this Government to honour, as far as possible, the commitments of the last.

Head XXV City Council Deficit.
Item 1. Deficit on 15th August, 1969.

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I must bring to the notice of the House the circumstances in which it has been necessary to make this supplementary provision for £123,000.

Late last year, the City Council asked the Government to make available the sum of £100,000 as a loan to enable them to repay an existing overdraft with Barclays Bank and provide them with the necessary liquid cash to meet day to day requirements. It was not, however, possible to meet this request without amending legislation, and in view of the impending merger the matter was allowed to rest.

The overdraft carried interest at 1½ above the Bank Rate and accordingly as soon as the Government assumed responsibility for the assets and liabilities of the Council on the 15th August, arrangements were made to redeem not only the overdraft with Barclays Bank but also a smaller one with the Crown Agents. It is in respect of these two amounts, £110,000 in the former and £13,000 in the latter that I now seek the covering authority of the House.

I should, however, warn the House that this will not be the only supplementary provision that will be required this year in respect of the City Council's liabilities. The City Treasurer and Accountant is in process of closing the Council's accounts as at the 15th August and until I have his report and balance sheet, I will not be able to give an exact amount of what is required. Similarly, the House will also have to vote supplementary provision to meet the Council's current expenditure until the end of 1969 and the extent of that commitment should be known by the next meeting. This latter figure, however, should be offset.

Thursday, 25th September

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Basing myself
at the 31st December
summarised as follows:

Overdrafts,
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HON. SIR JOSHUA F

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Thursday, 25th September, 1969.

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in part or in whole, by revenue accruing to the Council in accordance with their Estimates.

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Estimates

Basing myself, however on the Council's final accounts, as at the 31st December, 1968; the Council's liabilities then can be summarised as follows:

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Overdrafts, which were then	£103,580
Due to traders and depositors	134,199
Loan raised for capital works used for current services	129,925
A total of	<u>£367,704</u>

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As the House will see, the overdrafts increased between the 1st January and 15th August, 1969, and I am as yet unable to give exact figures for the other two items. Nevertheless, it seems that they may also have increased. In so far as the loans raised for capital works are concerned; the figure of £128,925 excludes £80,000 representing additional loans raised by the Council to finance capital works. This amount has not been utilised for current services but remains invested in Savings Bonds, which if realised today would bring about £67,000.

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But if the works for which the full amount was raised are to be completed, it will be necessary to find the necessary cash. This will give the House a rough idea of the commitments to be faced.

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Against these liabilities, and apart from a small sum in cash, the Council at the end of 1968 had accounts in the hands of collectors amounting to £248,000. This had risen at 15th August to £249,000. They also had a stock of materials and stores valued at £100,000 but this, because of the difference between the municipal and government systems of accounting, we do not regard as an asset but rather as expenditure incurred in advance of works for which they will be required. In any case a proportion may well have to be written off as obsolescent stock.

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The House will appreciate that it is of the utmost importance that the arrears of revenue due to the Council, nearly a quarter of a million pounds, should be translated into pounds, shillings and pence at the earliest possible opportunity. For this reason, I have already set in motion a concerted drive to effect collection, and I intend to recommend to the House that legislation should be introduced to impose a penal surcharge of 25% on accounts which are not paid within a given time after submission.

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I shall report again to the House as soon as I am in a position to do so.

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HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Sir, I think that the Financial Secretary's statement, whilst attempting to be fair, fails to give a complete picture of the situation, as he said, because the accounts have not been closed and because of the difference in the system of accounting. And

it may be very well to say that as far as the Government is concerned £90,000 worth of stock is nothing because it should be charged to works, but that is exactly Municipal accounting. You buy the stock and when you put it onto the work you charge for it.

Anyhow, this is incidental and I will welcome, for the general satisfaction of the people of Gibraltar, a full debate on the accounts when they are produced by the Treasurer because I think it is in the public interest to do so. Otherwise there can be a completely wrong perception of what has happened. But I would like to remind the Hon. Financial Secretary that in the normal way, the Council has for many years, as a matter of courtesy, apart from the fact that they had a representative of the Government as a Councillor, sent copies of the Reports on the Estimates by the Treasurer and Accountant to the Financial Secretary. And if the Financial Secretary will recall or look up he will find that in the Treasurer and Accountant's Report on the Estimates made in December 1967 for the year 1968, he drew the attention of the Council, and of course of the Financial Secretary as well, of the fact that we were running short of actual cash for the purpose and that an overdraft would probably be required.

A letter was sent in September 1968 raising this question of a loan of £100,000 to overcome the overdraft at the Bank which in normal circumstances of municipal accounting or normal trading business accounting, if you have the assets to account for them, it is working capital.

By February 1969 the Financial Secretary had stated that there would be need for legislation and he did not appear very keen on it. But, of course, looming over this was the impending merger and that is in my respectful submission why the matter was not brought to a head at that time — one way or the other. Because the Council had powers to raise loans in accordance with their statutes. And the Financial Secretary will also recall (incidentally that letter of September 1968 from the Council to the Administrative Secretary or the Permanent Secretary or the Financial Secretary probably was never answered) that in April 1969 another letter was sent from the Council to Government regarding loans required for capital works, which is how all capital works of the Council were financed — but again there was no reply — perhaps we were getting nearer.

I think that when the accounts are finally done and the explanation is given how the concept of how the accounting of the Council is done I think we shall get, and I am sure the Financial Secretary will agree with me, a clearer picture of the situation.

HON. J. CARUANA:

Sir, I welcome the Hon. and Learned Member's suggestion for a public debate for this purpose. However, although the Hon. Financial Secretary has not given the final picture of the City Council finances, I must deplore most emphatically the deplorable

state in which the that the present can never be he have to clear up. congratulate the end of the state steps to recover itself in the street

HON. SIR JOSHUA

Sir, regarding the Hon. Minister on his right who h

HON. W. M. ISOLA

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HON. A. P. MONTEG

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HON. W. M. ISOLA:

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HON. A. P. MONTEG

I remember on on the estimates.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Sir, I do not k in the last 20 years. for this merger abo then, we would not with the Hon. and Financial Secretary if he so wishes, tha ances of the City Co on this side of the finances, having had anxious to hear the after Municipal affa extremely anxious to cil, under the A.A.C years.

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state in which those finances appear to be at present. It seems that the present Government is assuming a liability for which it can never be held responsible, but which we most certainly have to clear up. I would like also to take this opportunity to congratulate the Hon. Financial Secretary for proposing at the end of the statement that he will be taking tough and positive steps to recover money due now to Government and which finds itself in the streets at this very moment.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Sir, regarding the deplorable state of the finances, of course, the Hon. Minister can converse in detail with his fellow Minister on his right who has been a Councillor throughout all this period.

HON. W. M. ISOLA:

Sir, I have been in the Council for twelve years. I also see that there are four members on the other side of which aggregately they have been there about 80 or 90 years.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

The finances of the Council, Sir, began to get into difficulty precisely in the last twelve years. There was a surplus before, Sir.

HON. W. M. ISOLA:

I am so happy today that I see some members of the previous City Council speaking whilst before, when they were City Councillors, I never heard them speak. I am so glad that they are now taking an interest in City Council affairs.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

I remember one Councillor who never looked at the reports on the estimates.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Sir, I do not know what City Councillors have been up to in the last 20 years. I have never been in this body. I was asking for this merger about 8 years ago. Perhaps, if we had got it then, we would not have to vote this money. But I must agree with the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition that the Financial Secretary has not really given a very full picture; and if he so wishes, that there should be a public debate on the finances of the City Council, as there are many of us here, I think, on this side of the House, who know very little of City Council finances, having had no experience, I am sure we will all be very anxious to hear the explanations of those who had been looking after Municipal affairs for the last 20 years and were always extremely anxious to point out to the public how the City Council, under the A.A.C.R. majority, had prospered during these years.

Perhaps we shall get a good explanation. I hope so. But the fact we are faced with today is: that as a result of a little notice published in the Gazette by the Governor, presumably after consultation with the Chief Minister, the Government in one stroke of the pen of the Governor took over all the assets and all the liabilities of the City Council. It is perhaps unfortunate that the notice was drafted in the way it was. I think it might have said: "The liabilities and the assets" rather than: "The assets and the liabilities", because now we are faced with voting initially the sum of £123,000 — and we are told this is not all.

It is a pity we are in this position because, as Hon. Members are aware, Gibraltar is now about to go through a difficult time, and the enlightened and forward policies which this Government obviously wants to put forward are going to be slightly hampered by having to pay out vast sums of money accumulated over the years by the City Council.

I do not think I am qualified, Mr. Speaker, to say very much on this. But I would like to ask the Financial Secretary if he can tell us a few things. A bit of information.

I would like to ask him, the City Council as he knows, from time to time sought loans from the public or anybody who wished to invest money in the City Council. I understand that one such loan is due to be paid on the 1st October, 1969. That is only 6 days ahead, can the Financial Secretary tell the House how much is the liability that has to be paid on that date, and is that money paid out of the £123,000 we are voting now? Or are we going to sell the Savings Bonds which are worth £60,000? I would also like to ask him: Are there any other loans outstanding by the City Council, their amounts, and when are these loans due? I would also like to ask him: What provision was made or has been made for the repayment of these loans? Is there a fund — a consolidated fund or a sinking fund — to pay them? Are payments being kept up to date into this fund so that on the due date the money can be paid?

If he could give us all these figures, I think Hon. Members, and especially those of us who have no experience of this curious system of accounting that calls an Electricity Undertaking an asset, when you cannot sell it — because if you do you have no electricity. Or calls the Telephone Exchange an asset, which you cannot sell to pay your debentures because otherwise we cannot use the telephone. I am ignorant, I accept that. I am ignorant of the way the City Council had handled this affair — I am absolutely ignorant. All I know is that the Government has to pay £123,000. And all I can say in reply to the smiles of the members opposite is: that in the Government anyway, over the last 5 years, we have a general revenue balance of £1,000,000. Or I should say, Sir, we had — it is fast disappearing with sums as large as these.

The other point I want to ask the Financial Secretary — I hope he has taken note of all this — there is a development going on just across the way: The Haven. How much is that costing and how is it being financed? Has a loan been taken? And the last question is: How much money did the Government raise

for the City Council. And again: Has the Government in re

In other words of the Treasurer's general position: Financial Secretary: Council owe on all things Bonds worth Have we got a fund? tary owes it to the to tell us a bit about

HON. FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

Sir, I am most am a walking Enc considerable notice of ned Leader of the full debate in the finances, I would I have taken very and I will be quit time. But I think, the House that the who has money in

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

But from where

HON. FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

The answer is is not there we will have to take measures or what still is, the rates and revenue commitments of the assurance I want

I could also stage. I could tell £1.6 million — not point clear — but payment of these shall be able, in answer he wants. ances, let me as plores, and I will built up, or having balance during the cial Secretary, the said, so rapidly.

for the City Council for which the Government is responsible? And again: Has the City Council been making payments to the Government in respect of this?

In other words, Sir, without going into the detailed accounts of the Treasurer of the City Council, and without going into the general position as to why they are in this position, can the Financial Secretary tell us, in cash, how much does the City Council owe on all these debentures, and is this amount of Savings Bonds worth £67,000 sufficient to meet all these liabilities? Have we got a fund or have we not? I think the Financial Secretary owes it to the House, before asking us to vote this money, to tell us a bit about this if he can. I thank you, Sir.

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I am most grateful to the Hon. Member who thinks I am a walking Encyclopaedia. Obviously I would require considerable notice of those questions, and since the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition has asked that there should be a full debate in the House on the question of the City Council finances, I would much rather reserve my position at this stage. I have taken very careful note of the Hon. Member's questions, and I will be quite willing to answer them all at the proper time. But I think, Sir, that in the public interest I must assure the House that there can be no question at all but that anybody who has money invested in the City Council will get it.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

But from whom, Mr. Speaker?

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The answer is, Sir, very shortly, that if this year the money is not there we will have to find it. But thereafter, Sir, we will have to take measures to ensure that the provisions of what was, or what still is, the City Council Ordinance, are met so that the rates and revenues of the Council march side by side with the commitments of the Council. At this stage, Sir, that is the one assurance I want to give the House.

I could also give the Hon. Member some figures at this stage. I could tell him, for example, that the commitment is £1.6 million — nearly £1.7 — in Debentures. I can make that point clear — but on the other hand I must also say that the payment of these Debentures is spread out until 1992. But I shall be able, in due course, to give the Hon. Member the full answer he wants. As to the running down of the revenue balances, let me assure the Hon. Member that no one deplores, and I underline the word deplores, that having built up, or having contributed to build up, that revenue balance during the four-and-a-half years that I have been Financial Secretary, that I should see it dwindling, as the Hon. Member said, so rapidly. There is one other question, Sir, that I can an-

swer off the cuff. The Hon. Member asked me about the building across the way. The building across the way was estimated to cost £140,000. As far as I know, something like £70,000 has been spent on it to this date. We still have to find £70,000 odd more. But I would not like, Sir, at this stage, to anticipate any further the full debate which has been promised to the House.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Sir, I would hate, having heard these figures, I would tremble, to ask the Financial Secretary how he proposes to find money for all these things, because I think that if he were to tell us the Government would probably be out of office the next day. But since the Financial Secretary has to sign the cheques on the 1st October, 1969, I am sure he must be in a position to tell me what are those cheques he has to sign for on that date. Perhaps he can tell us that.

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am afraid not Sir. Not at this stage. As I understand the position, it is of the order of £150,000, but I would not like to commit myself.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

But will the Hon. Financial Secretary, for the benefit of the Hon. Back-bencher, explain to him the fact that the borrowing powers of the Council are statutory, and that repayment is based on the revenue produced from the services rendered — such as the telephone — and that it is not a question of selling No. 6 engine or No. 5 engine, but the fact that if electricity is required and the rates are not enough you put up the rates in order that the money will be there to pay for the capital and the interest.

Will the Financial Secretary give a little idea so that people who are hearing this are not so confused and think that a million-and-a-half pounds has been taken to be spent just like that?

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, with the greatest respect to the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition, I thought that I had tried to make that point clear when I made reference to the period of time over which the loans have to be repaid. And I also made reference to the statutory provisions in the law.

With his eloquence the Hon. and Learned Leader has explained the position far more clearly than I can. But I can assure the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that I will spell it out in words of one syllable when next the subject is debated.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Sir, I must be very dense. But I would like to ask this question — perhaps to the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition, who is so quick on his feet to give explanations — I would

ask this question: of the Legislative and Learned Leader Gibraltar Post with Gibraltar Government him there three the Debenture how they going to get ask, I know there pay back through or I do not under Council has to paid had not removed Government, unce Leader — perhaps Secretary: how was an overdraft when they only had to be paid? And I to pay it on the money. That is on

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr. Speaker, with the items in laboured and the debate on this, with concerned with the made clear to the would suggest that a position to disclose on that, and that debate what we can here tonight. I think shall be able to assist future, it is a different bring the future at the moment I would the business in Council later on.

HON. M. K. FEATHER:

Sir, I very much and I would very much cussing. We are deficit of £123,000.

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, on a point the 15th August. With

HON. M. K. FEATHER:

These are the a deficit — it is an

ask this question: If the Government had held back the merger of the Legislative and City Councils, and we had left the Hon. and Learned Leader as Mayor, as had been requested by the Gibraltar Post which complained so bitterly about the way the Gibraltar Government had dealt with the matter, if we had left him there three months, how would the City Council have paid the Debenture holders on the 1st of October, 1969? How were they going to get the £150,000? That is the question I want to ask. I know there is an Ordinance. I know it is said you have to pay back through your services. I know all this. I understand it or I do not understand it. But I also know one thing: the City Council has to pay £150,000 on the 1st October 1969 and if we had not removed the Mayor, as it has been alleged against the Government, unceremoniously, how would the Hon. and Learned Leader — perhaps he would like to answer, also the Financial Secretary: how would they have paid this £150,000 when there was an overdraft at the Bank and we have to vote today £123,000 when they only have in cash £60,000? How was the money going to be paid? And I ask the Financial Secretary how is he going to pay it on the 1st October 1969? He has not asked us for the money. That is only, Sir, 6 days ahead.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think we are dealing now in Committee with the items in the Estimates. I think the point has been belaboured and the Leader of the Opposition wishes to have a debate on this, with which I concur because I too am very concerned with the position of finance in Gibraltar which must be made clear to the House, we hope, this evening. Therefore, I would suggest that the Financial Secretary, who is not now in a position to disclose the figures, should not be pressed any more on that, and that we should get on with the business and then debate what we can, in fact, on the facts and figures we have here tonight. I think this would lead to sensible debate and we shall be able to assess the situation as we see it today. As to the future, it is a different matter; and we shall have ample time to bring the future situation as to our finances to this House. At the moment I would suggest, Mr Speaker, that we carry on with the business in Committee and try and get on with the debate later on.

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I very much appreciate the words of the Chief Minister and I would very much like to get back to the point we are discussing. We are discussing the deficit on the 15th August, 1969 of £123,000.

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, on a point of order. We are not discussing a deficit on the 15th August. We are discussing an overdraft.

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

These are the words here, Sir, I wanted to clarify. It is not a deficit — it is an overdraft.

I think we have, as far as I know of accountancy, sufficient assets to cover that if everybody pays their bills to the City Council tomorrow. We would wipe out this £123,000 and with the other cash in hand we would have enough to meet the Hon. and Learned Back-bencher's £150,000 that he wants.

I think that it must be made very clear that perhaps the City Council has been over generous in not pressing hard enough for collection of accounts — but the whole situation is that they had ample assets to cover this £123,000 as stated by the Hon. Financial Secretary. There are £240,000 odd owing by the general public of Gibraltar. This includes, Sir, I am sure, myself, perhaps yourself and many other Members here. These are assets. I know the Hon. Back-bencher does not fully understand the word assets. He wants to write-off power stations, etc. But perhaps, if he takes a little trouble and enquires as to how Municipal accounting is done, he will find it is not an uncommon thing to have overdrafts in the bank. He will find that it is not uncommon in their accountancy to have many items put down as assets which under other systems of accounting might be completely written off. But there is no deficit whatsoever. And I think this wording here is extremely erroneous.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Sir, I would like to support what the Hon. Chief Minister has said about this and I would like to stress that I was the first one who said that I thought it was sufficiently important to have a debate, when we have the accounts, and the explanations of the Treasurer and so on. But just to give one slight example of the complications of this matter, Sir, even what my Honourable friend on my right just said, it is true that at this moment we are all saying the Council are owed a quarter of a million pounds. But this is true, that with the best system in the world at this moment you cannot collect every penny.

The point is that every time a demand note goes out, that money is owed to the Council. There may be people — and there are many — who do not pay their rates and other expenses up-to-date; there are many of them that do so in the course of business, before the end of the month. Every time the beginning of a quarter comes there is £100,000 out immediately. Within 24 hours the Council is owed that amount, and you cannot expect that amount to be paid straight back. So the point is that it is the process of business. And this is how the thing would have been solved. But I am very glad that we are all very anxious that when we have the full report we will have a full debate on the matter, because it is a matter of public importance and it is a matter of Gibraltar. We are all concerned with this.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition has misunderstood me. I want to have the debate today on the facts that we have now.

Thursday, 25th Se

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HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

I am sure the Financial Secretary will be the first one to say that it would be very unrealistic and unfair, without having the full account, to be able to debate this in any way that can be made sense to the public. I am sure the Financial Secretary will agree with that.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition, I must say that this is startling news for the people of Gibraltar. To hear that two hundred and twenty odd thousand pounds have not been collected. And that the debt is getting bigger and bigger. This is a very serious matter. As you know, I now must assume responsibility for the finances of Gibraltar—in a way overall responsibility—and it is my duty to call the attention of the people of Gibraltar, certainly of this House, to what may be a serious situation. I am not saying it is, but it could be. Any institution which borrows money and has no liquidity to pay for it, because it is not making provision for a sinking fund, I should say, is asking for trouble. It is all very well when you can knock at somebody else's door and out comes the money. But in this case the money is coming out of the same purse and it is our duty to see that it is regulated in a proper manner.

It is all very well to talk about municipal accounting, but I am sure it is not by any means proper, because it is called: "Municipal Accounting", to allow the debt to increase and increase. It is very obvious that this could have been obviated. And I am sure that the Financial Secretary already is seeing payments coming in.

The statement that he made very clearly that we intend to pass legislation and impose a penal surcharge of 25 per cent on those who refuse to pay will, I am sure, induce many people who I am sure have got the money to come forward and pay-up very quickly.

We must be ready to face holders of Debentures and to pay interest from our own funds. We cannot rely any more on an Institution which will pay on loan. Loans can go on for ever and accumulate and mount. You can easily balance this with statements of assets. Assets can be increased or decreased by valuation; but it does not mean that that value is real and increasing and that liquidity can be obtained there and then when the demand is made. To obtain that demand therefore you have got to ask for another loan. And you can go on increasing the loan until literally you become bankrupt.

Now, this situation, this Government is not going to allow, I assure you. And we must put our house in order very quickly. Therefore, I say, that we have sufficient information here

to discuss what at first sight appears to me a rather ominous situation, and I must make my position in this respect quite clear in debate tonight because I have now taken responsibility.

The Opposition is pressing very hard for priorities. They want to know what we are going to do next. But unless we are sure of our grounds financialwise it would be irresponsible for me and my Government to give any idea of priorities when we do not know whether we can pay for them or not.

Therefore, just as important as it is to hold a debate today, and to hold another debate in the near future, when we have more facts and figures, it is also very important that we reserve our position with regard to priorities until we know absolutely how we stand financially.

This, I assure you, from my point of view, is a very delicate situation. I will, of course, put people at ease, those who have lent money to the City Council, and say that this Government will honour it to the hilt.

Luckily we have sufficient in reserve — in liquidity — to pay and face any demands that may come forthwith. So there must be no panic. There will be no loss of money anywhere. The loser, of course, in the long run, are the Gibraltarians who will have to pay up this money.

Slowly but surely we have to recover all that money that has been on loan. This is like living on the 'never never'. We have got to put our house in order, particularly now with the bank rate increasing and increasing. I think it is not in the interest of the finances in Gibraltar to have to pay such high amount on interest. This is why the Financial Secretary very efficiently and very quickly suggested we should clear that overdraft.

The overdraft was done, and I should say we have spent already, say over £9,000 on that operation.

So you will realise, Mr Speaker, that this is a matter of great importance. It is no use saying that the City Council have, or had, powers to raise this loan. We all have statutory powers to do certain things. It is a matter of how you do it. This is where knowhow comes in. This is where experience pays — knowing how to use those statutory powers. You can abuse statutory powers. You can mismanage finance. We, at least, as far as I am concerned, will instruct the Financial Secretary to put this house in order as quickly as possible. And this must be established here tonight before we take any other decision in Government.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Sir, I think the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition is going to get up. I only want to ask him one question.

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HON. SIR JOSHUA I

Sir, I will, of first of all to say v Hon. Chief Ministe tion clear.

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Of course you fied that there is r has been going thr been particularly s that that was its o nomy. This is the this properly.

This loan which from the Council t loaned money and Undertaking — fo these assets. And a completely wron terpret matters.

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Will he answer, in the course of whatever he is going to say, will he tell the House how he proposed to pay £150,000 on the 1st October, 1969? Was it his intention to send the Debenture holders round to the City Council's debtors to collect the money from them? How was he going to pay? A simple question.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Sir, I will, of course, answer the question. But I am going first of all to say what I was going to say; and that is, that the Hon. Chief Minister has said that he wanted to make his position clear.

With the greatest respect, I know, and I have great respect for what he has said, and I can see his concern, but one thing he has shown is his complete and utter ignorance of Council accounting and the general way in which municipal accounting is done, and ours is done in the best traditions of British Municipal Accounting. This is as clear as day. And if he knew anything about it he would not have been talking about liquidity and sinking funds. Anybody would know that the local authority has not got a 'sinking fund' but provides every year a certain amount for capital and redemption of capital and interest.

The whole thing, in my view, is being put out of proportion. There is no need to panic or to say that there is no need to panic. Of course there is no need to panic. The assets are there.

If for example in the last 2 or 3 years there has not been enough income (the assets of the Council — the electricity for which the loans have been raised, the telephone and all the services), that is why we owe the money. These are the capital loans. These are the services from which you pay for your interest and capital. We are getting bogged into matters without proper information. I hope that the Financial Secretary will agree that the matter is too important to be dealt with without all the figures and all the material that one requires.

Of course you want an inquiry because you are quite satisfied that there is nothing wrong except the fact that Gibraltar has been going through a difficult time and the Council has not been particularly sanguine about certain matters well knowing that that was its own help towards the recuperation of the economy. This is the true fact of the case. But we have to go into this properly.

This loan which is now being cleared by this vote was asked from the Council to the Government as the Government had loaned money and passed on loans to us for the Electricity Undertaking — for the development. All that comes out of these assets. And until we get all these matters clear it gives a completely wrong conception, and people are apt to misinterpret matters.

With regard to the question, it is very difficult at any particular moment to say how you are going to pay. But, on the

other hand, it is also true that when you have to make big payments you tighten the screw. And what the Government is doing now, generally, the Council normally does in its own way up to a point. When a big payment comes then you tighten the screws and then you have your cash to pay for your payments.

That is what I imagine, and that is what I would have ordered, if it had been necessary. But there would have been no need for the Treasurer and Accountant to have done it to pay the debentures.....

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Sir, the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition has not answered by saying he would tighten the screw. Does he expect the Government to tighten the screw and get £150,000 from its creditors in five days to October the 1st? Or did he not tighten the screw in view of the proximity of the impending House of Assembly Elections? Or did he not tighten the screw because he knew that the Government had a general revenue balance of a million pounds and could well pay the £150,000?

But he has not told us yet how, if we had not abolished the City Council, or the Government or the Governor had not passed the Assets and Liabilities of the City Council on the day that they did, but had left it for a period of three months, I would like to know how the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition would have paid the £150,000 on October 1st?

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Sir, since a number of months the Council have been working on the basis that the Government were going to take it; and any request or any negotiation with regard to the finances of the Council were always left for the impending merger. This is the cause of all the trouble. There was a letter of September, 1968 which has not been answered. But I would like to ask specifically the Financial Secretary if he can honestly say that on the information that we have now we can really have a true clear debate on the situation of the finances of the Council?

HON. FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

Sir, I must confess that when I made what I thought was a brief statement I never expected to provoke this outburst. For one reason though, I am very glad. I have heard a lot of things said tonight. And I must say, with the greatest respect, that I do not agree with many of the things that have been said by the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition. The Hon. and Learned Leader has repeatedly referred to letters which have been unanswered.

I think that if the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition would refer to papers, he would see that the subject mat-

ter of those letters myself, the Finance the Town Clerk and his dual capacity. answered, is really p be put.

I have, Sir, en debate. I have tri Learned Leader. started speaking or to be fair and I an very fair. And fo should be adjourne August. But I wo and Learned Leade port on the Estimat with th greatest def Report for 1969.

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

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MR. SPEAKER:

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HON. LIEUT.-COL. J. J.

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HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, may I say ward very much to

ter of those letters was discussed time and time again between myself, the Finance Officer, the City Treasurer and Accountant, the Town Clerk and sometimes the Hon. and Learned Leader in his dual capacity. So that to say that letters have not been answered, is really putting onus on officialdom which should not be put.

I have, Sir, enough material here if I want to carry on this debate. I have tried to be exceedingly fair to the Hon. and Learned Leader. And the Hon. and Learned Leader when he started speaking on this subject, I think, said that I had tried to be fair and I am grateful for his words. But I want to be very fair. And for that reason, Sir, I ask that this debate should be adjourned until I have the final picture as at the 15th August. But I would like, Sir, just as a thought to the Hon. and Learned Leader — he referred me to the Treasurer's Report on the Estimates of the City Council for 1967. I would, Sir with the greatest deference, also refer him to the City Treasurer's Report for 1969.

HON. L. DEVINCENZI:

Sir, perhaps at this stage it is somewhat irrelevant, but you have been kind enough to ask me. All I was going to say, Sir, is that regardless of whether we have a debate now or not, I am sure that this side of the House is concerned with their initial commitment and I must say that the figure of £123,000 is a very significant figure.

MR. SPEAKER:

Does any other Honourable Member wish to ask any question?

HON. LIEUT.-COL. J. L. HOARE:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Hon. Financial and Development Secretary what value he is giving to the fixed assets which have been passed over? After all these did cost something to produce in the first place, and whether they are saleable or not they are assets.

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I thought, Sir, that before the short adjournment, that you were kind enough to give us, I had made abundantly clear that I did not want to pursue a debate at this stage. I must have the City Treasurer's final balance sheet before I commit myself to saying whether I agree with any valuation or not.

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, may I say that it is an interesting subject. I look forward very much to the debate. And I am sure that the Hon.

and Learned Leader of the Opposition in his very privileged position as Mayor and Chief Minister concurrently will have quite a lot to contribute to this debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Peliza do you go back on what you said a few minutes ago?

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

In that case we will go back to Head XXV City Council Deficit — Item 1 Deficit on 15th August, 1969.

Head XXV City Council Deficit.

Item 1 Deficit on 15th August, 1969, was agreed to.

Supplementary Estimates Nos. 8 and 9 of 1969 were agreed to.

Resumption

House resumed.

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I have the honour to report that Supplementary Estimates Nos. 8 and 9 of 1969 have been considered in Committee with considerable discussion and have been approved and I now move that they be passed.

MR. SPEAKER:

I now put the question which is that the votes detailed in Supplementary Estimates Nos. 8 and 9 of 1969 be approved.

Passed unanimously.

The Hon. the Chief Minister moved the suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 29 and 30 in relation to the Elections (Amendment) Bill.

Mr. Speaker put the question which was resolved in the affirmative.

The Elections (Amendment) Ordinance, 1969.

First Reading

The Hon. the Chief Minister moved that a Bill entitled "An Ordinance to amend the Elections Ordinance and certain subsidiary legislation made thereunder" be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker
the first affirmative

The Bill was

HON. MAJOR R. J.

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Mr. Speaker then put the question which was resolved in the first affirmative.

The Bill was read a first time.

Second Reading

HON. MAJOR R. J. PELIZA:

Sir, I have the honour to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

My Government is introducing this Bill because it has become very apparent in Gibraltar that the youth can contribute very considerably to good Government. And my Government is very determined to give them every opportunity to be able, from a young age, to take a responsible view of life in Gibraltar. We know by the young people who have constituted themselves into parties, that there is a great demand from that age structure to play an important role in the growth of the economy and of the betterment of the social services in Gibraltar. Indeed, I think they are as keen, if not keener, than we of the middle and older ages in improving the quality of life in Gibraltar. My Government would like to give them an opportunity, as soon as possible, to be able to do this. I think, as far as our party is concerned, that right from the beginning of the formation of the party we have been fostering and encouraging the young people to come forward. Indeed, new blood has come and I think we have felt it here in this House today. We want this to happen. The ventilation that is taking place is, I think a very good thing for Gibraltar. I wonder what would be the future of Gibraltar if stagnation had been allowed to carry on indefinitely. We are just trying to make sure that the same thing does not happen to us. We want to encourage the young people, by introducing the proper legislation, to come forward and participate in politics at an age when now, through maturity better education and, I think, on the whole their assimilation with the bigger political parties will enable them to participate, I hope, in the next election or general election that may take place. I recall that during my bye-election, that unfortunately because the supplements of the registration were not available, or because the way the law stood then, this was impossible and quite a number of young people who were entitled to vote did not have the right to use that privilege. We want to see that not only those get it now but even those of younger age who are proving themselves to be worthy of having the franchise. I, therefore, will introduce, as I go along an amendment to the Ordinance to enable us to ensure that the existing law will give us the opportunity to see that as soon as possible the younger people who we hope, if this Ordinance is passed, will be able to register without delay.

Sir, I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr. Speaker then invited discussion on the general principles of the Bill.

HON. M. XIBERRAS:

Sir, I think I should say a word. I think I caught something about a teacher being on this side of the House some time ago. I think, although I am not a teacher any more I do have some knowledge of this particular age group.

To simply consult youth on decisions, to get their backing in one way or another and to offer them no power at the same time, is not a very good way of proceeding. Gibraltar must not be split into the old people and the young people. But there are very many decisions to be taken now which very particularly affect young people's future. Referring to a matter which came in for questioning: for instance referring to the Stadium, the schools and to a number of cases of which the members opposite are only too aware. I hope that if this Bill is carried that the youth will realise that the responsibility of the community is to the community as a whole. And I think that the worse thing that could happen in Gibraltar would be a horizontal division in which the youth tried to grab everything and the old people are left to be forgotten. I have no hesitation in supporting this Bill. I think it has come just at the right time. I hope it will be also the predecessor of other Bills which have to do with our democratic institutions. I refer to the conditions of eligibility to this House and to the question of the Declaration of Interests. I hope that from this Government the public generally will get a sense of a fair deal of fairness. And I hope that this measure, as I say, will just be the forerunner of other things to come in the same time.

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I am pleased with this Bill but it fills me with a conflict of emotions. The first is pleasure because this Bill, the principles of it, forms part of the electoral programme of this side of the House. And the rapidity with which the Government has put forward this Bill as part of their legislation is a clear vindication that our policy towards the future was both just and reasonable. I said rapidity, Sir, but I would almost say unholy rapidity. And this leads me to my second emotion, Sir, which is astonishment. I am astonished that the Government, as the first piece of legislation they should put forward should as an item purloined from the electoral manifesto of their political opponents. Of course, Sir, this borrowing from ones political opponents is nothing new. I believe in the 1860's to 1880's this was worked to a fine art by Disraeli and Gladstone. But I am not worried, Sir, that they should have borrowed from our political programme. Indeed, Sir, if for want of ideas of their own they must borrow from us I shall be happy to supply them with a complete copy of our manifesto.

I am glad to hear, Sir, that one of the Hon. Members has it.

Now, Sir, my third emotion is one of curiosity. In the United Kingdom the Labour Government considered lowering the

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voting age to 18 decided to moderate the age of government which democracy can put through which they know effect would be that not only the their opponents. Bill which is do ever come off? merely lip-service that is so, Sir, th and his party co the better.

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HON. SIR JOSHUA

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HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Mr. Speaker heard the Honour House of all his them. And espec emotions.

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voting age to 18. But after a certain amount of enquiry they decided to moderate, or at least change their ideas, and substituted the age of 20. I am curious therefore, Sir, how this Government which is pledged to integration with the United Kingdom can put through as their first piece of legislation a law which they know were their ideal of integration to come into effect would be doomed. Is this Government, Sir, so immature that not only they must borrow their first piece of legislation from their opponents, but they must ask their supporters to accept a Bill which is doomed to failure should their integration ideal ever come off? Or is it, Sir, that their pledge of integration is merely lip-service to a name which once had a certain charm? If that is so, Sir, then the sooner the Honourable the Chief Minister and his party colleagues change the name of their party then the better.

Now, Sir, this Bill seeks to give the right in franchise to our youngsters. They already had the right, Sir, in an emergency, and even not in an emergency, to serve their country. They would even have the right to die for it if necessary. They must of course have every right to play their full part in the community. They must have the right of enfranchisement.

Sir, this Bill has, as I have said, been presented with almost unholy rapidity, but the Bill must not suffer on account of its sponsors. It is a good Bill. I will support it, Sir.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Just one small point of clarification, Sir. I notice what the Honourable the Chief Minister said. First of all we had to suspend Standing Orders to deal with this Bill because it did not have time for publication. Then he said he would propose an amendment, I suppose later on in the Committee Stage. Then he also said that he hoped this would come into effect very quickly. And what I say is I hope the young people of Gibraltar exercise this right the soonest possible.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was not going to speak on this Bill till I heard the Honourable Mr. Featherstone filling himself in the House of all his emotions. I feel I must relieve him of some of them. And especially of a great number of inaccuracies in his emotions.

He has claimed that the Government has borrowed this Bill from the electoral programme of his party. Has talked of voting age of 20 in England — we have made one of 18; and he accuses the Government of borrowing this Bill from their manifesto. Perhaps Mr. Featherstone will be kind enough to tell me where this reduction of the voting age to 18 appears in the manifesto of his party.

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

On a point of order, Sir. The exact wording was: "Voting age. It will be our aim to lower the voting age for the next general elections." We might have been considering 16, Sir.

HON. P. J. ISOLA:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was about to read to the House what the manifesto said. And the Honourable Mr. Featherstone, a politician of much experience, and especially the one sitting on his left, made sure that in their manifesto they made it in such a way that they could claim any Bill that was passed for lowering the voting age as their own. They never said in their manifesto, Mr. Speaker, that they would reduce the voting age to 18. They said: "It is our aim to lower the voting age." If they had found that the public were not too much with them I suppose they could have lowered it to 20 years 6 months, and claim that they had fulfilled their promises. They could have lowered it to eleven and abolished the eleven plus at the same time. But that was not their manifesto. Nor was it, Sir, strangely enough, and that surprises me a lot, the policy of the young A.A.C.R.. I must refer there to Mr. Featherstone's newspaper, the Gibraltar Evening Post, which is now called by other names by certain sections of the community. In the Post of April, 25th 1969, we have the aims of the young A.A.C.R.. Nowhere in the aims tabulated as the objects of the party do we see the reduction of the voting age to any age at all. It appears the young A.A.C.R. were content to play second fiddle before the elections and after the elections, to their parent party. This explains, Mr. Speaker, the general average age of the Honourable Members of the Opposition, I am sure they will welcome this Bill because it will enable them at long last to produce Mr. Douglas Henrich at the next elections and others in the young A.A.C.R. I say this, Sir, because I think it is important, when looking at this measure, you do not take this measure as something coming out of the blue. This measure is part of the policy of the new administration to ask youth to take a greater part in the activities of society in Gibraltar, by giving them the right to vote. On that date they vest in youth a sense of responsibility to the future and to the community. That is the goodness in this Bill. I welcome what the Minister for Labour said about the Bill and of the necessity that old people and young people must not be split into groups. I only wish, Sir, that this party and the party opposite, took this to heart and did not have a young A.A.C.R., an old A.A.C.R., a young Integration with Britain Party, an old Integration with Britain Party, and that we had as a result, one Party speaking with one voice as a policy which they offer to the community as a whole. We do not get the position as reported in the Post for the young A.A.C.R. where we had Mr. Henrich saying that the young A.A.C.R. wanted as near independence as possible, and we have the Leader of the A.A.C.R. saying at the Constitutional Conference in 1968 that we want an unbreakable relationship with Britain.

How you can be something that to the leaders of public act of government merged in each one policy. And know that they are one party with one party with one that if nothing of common sense they are considered the community work together — the betterment of

HON. A. P. MONT

Mr. Speaker piece of legislation by the Hon. Member quoting from the

I find it very tactical manifesto in his political ring undivided which is support that in the two there is not a we say that they manifesto, we say so.

HON. J. CARUAN

Mr. Speaker from actions that I think that this valuable Bill to by the Honourable's Committee comments made we must make placing this in they must be they so wish.

How you can be independent and be unbreakably related is something that passes my imagination. I would commend to the leaders of both parties that I think they would do a great public act of good to the Community if these two parties were merged in each party and they spoke with one voice and with one policy. And the people when they go to an election will know that they are voting for one party and one policy and not one party with one policy that appeals to the aged and another party with one policy that appeals to the young. I hope that if nothing else this piece of legislation will bring a lot of common sense into politics, will make the youth feel that they are considered old enough to take a full share of life in the community and will make them realise that we must all work together — young and old — as one undivided whole for the betterment of Gibraltar. I thank you, Sir.

HON. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr. Speaker, I was not going to utter a word about this piece of legislation but I have been so thrilled by the quotations by the Hon. Back-bencher, the Learned Mr. Isola, about his quoting from the political manifesto, etc. that I am really astonished.

I find it very odd that he should be quoting from the political manifesto and what they say or did not say. I never read in his political manifesto that he would be supporting and giving undivided loyalty to the Chief Minister of a Government which is supporting integration. Secondly it is again very odd that in the two political manifestoes produced by the I.W.B.P. there is not a word about lowering the voting age. So, Sir, if we say that they have quoted or have copied from our electoral manifesto, we at least can produce ours to prove that we did say so.

HON. J. CARUANA:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think that life teaches us that one learns from actions rather than from words — especially printed ones. I think that this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is an extremely good and valuable Bill. I have read extensively the People's Bill referred to by the Honourable Mr. Featherstone — especially the Speaker's Committee set up for that purpose and especially all the comments made by Mr. England. I still think, therefore, that we must make it very clear to our young people that we are placing this important responsibility in their hands and that they must be ready and prepared to bear this responsibility if they so wish.

HON. MISS C. ANES:

Sir, it seems to me that if members of the Opposition are now so ready to claim this Bill as their own why then when they were in power did they not enforce it.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct one other inaccuracy made by the Honourable Mr. Featherstone. That is when he said that the age in England had been lowered to 20 when in fact it has been lowered to 18.

HON. M. K. FEATHERSTONE:

On a point of order, Sir. He did not say that. He said that it had been suggested that it should be 20 — that it should be, not that it had been.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Sir, I say that in England it has come down to 18 and that I do not know how this conflicts with our idea of Integration.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Sir, it has not come down to 18.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

It will start as from 1st January. Perhaps the Honourable Members would like to read the Hansard. But this, of course, is not the first time that we hear inaccuracies coming over. We have heard many statements today which have had to be corrected. We have just now, when he said that young people had the age lowered and immediately he claimed it was to 18. The other gentleman talks about it not being in the manifesto — in our manifesto. It is not in our manifesto. It is in the rules of our Party which go deeper than the manifesto. And again, I invite the Honourable member on the other side of the House to study our Constitution and he will find it there right from the birth of our Party which shows how deep our root goes in moving forward with the time in making sure that Gibraltar is not left behind in the backwaters of Europe. And here perhaps you will notice the very sentiment of the strength of our Party. This is why we have been able to grow from strength to strength so quickly. This is why in fact today, notwithstanding they have tried very hard to destroy our arguments and find chinks in our armour, I think that on the whole we have justified every situation we stood up to defend.

Mr. Speaker then put the question which was resolved in the affirmative.

The Bill was read a second time.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Sir, I beg to give notice that the Committee Stage and Third Reading of the Bill will be taken at the next meeting of the Assembly.

The House then adjourned sine die.

The adjournment was taken at 8.40 p.m.