

H.A. No

# HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

MEETING OF 16 MARCH 1971

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(18 TO 21)

PERTINENT PAPERS

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SUBJECT

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Questions to be asked by the Honourable Members at the Meeting of the House of Assembly held on 16.3.71.

No.18 of 1971

Oral

The Hon. A. W. Serfaty

Sir, how many times has the Development and Planning Commission met to discuss Economic Development projects connected with the infrastructure of the Tourist Industry?

Answer

The Chief Minister

Since its appointment in April, 1970, the Development and Planning Commission has met on eight occasions and has considered 107 items, 25 of which were concerned with the infrastructure of tourism. Of these, 15 can be classified as economic development projects. These are:

- Development of Old Command Pay Office site for the erection of an hotel. Parcar Hotel.
- Cafeteria/Nightclub at Eastern Beach.
- Bayside Cinema.
- Development of Casemates - east side.
- Cafeteria/Discotheque at Victoria Stadium.
- Development Aid Licence to Mediterranean Hotel.
- Development Aid Programme which included aid to Tourism in the form of additional amenities to hotels.
- Chimney Corner Club.
- Proposed chalets at Catalan Bay.
- Catalan Bay: proposed boarding house.
- Giralda Gardens, proposed restaurant.
- Proposed nightclub at Chatham Counterguard.
- Extension to Lobster Pot, Catalan Bay.
- Amusement Hall and discotheque, Regal Cinema.

In addition we have dealt with the following matters related to tourism and the improvement of amenities:

- Development of Governor's Parade to improve parking and to embellish the Square.
- Reservation of sites for hotels at Napier Battery and Parsons Lodge Battery.
- Access to beach at Sandy Bay.
- Appearance of buildings, generally.
- Resiting of Refuse Incinerator from present site on main tourist route.
- Improvements to area opposite Cathedral of St. Mary the Crowned.
- Improvements to beaches and Waterport area.
- Proposed garden at rear of Artillery House.
- Caravan Sites.
- Clearing up of North Front and screening of sites fronting Devil's Tower Road.

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker, can the Chief Minister tell us when Napier Battery and Persons Lodge sites will be put out to tender?

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

I am afraid Sir, that I cannot give a date at this stage, Mr. Speaker.

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

These schemes were studied by the previous Government over 2 years ago, doesn't the Chief Minister consider that it is high time that these two sites were put up to tender for hotel development?

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

This is really a question dealing with hotels only, I will however try to explain to the Hon. Member that we have spent our time, I think to some extent successfully, in certainly getting one hotel going and possibly on the other one, we shall hear an announcement of its decision to start building soon. Once we have got these two off the ground, it will I think be time to start on the others.

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

Isn't this one hotel that the Chief Minister is referring to an old scheme, several years old. I see nothing new with regards to Hotel Development in the long list kindly read by the Chief Minister.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

I am very grateful to the Hon. Member to point out that this is a very old scheme and that luckily it is this Government which is getting it off the ground.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Will you answer the question why the Napier site is not being put out for tender now? After all, 19 months of this excellent era we are enjoying should be enough to know at least when it is going to be put out.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Well Mr. Speaker I think I said that I was not prepared to go into the details of this at the moment, but I think it is wise not to flood the market. At the moment it is important to get two hotels off the ground, we must not scare developers with undue competition.

HON. A. W. SERFATY:

Sir, can the Chief Minister give us an assurance that the Parkar Project will materialise?

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr. Speaker, I cannot give an assurance at this moment, but I think that things are looking well.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

On the question of flooding the market, surely this is well known to potential developers of the sites available and is he going to make it any

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easier to put them out for tender every so often, or is it not better to try and see whether in fact people are attracted to this. Or is it perhaps that they have no trust in the Government and therefore you are afraid of putting them out to tender.

HON. CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr. Speaker, that they have no trust in the Government, I think this is a very wild statement, perhaps they had no trust in the previous Government. This is why two hotels have taken so long to make up their minds to start building. Sir, on that issue, I think the Hon. and Learned Leader of the Opposition is very mistaken, I should say. As to the other one, I think that one has to be careful that we do get the right price for the land and the right developers, and this is the intention of this Government.

The Hon. I. Abecasis

Sir, will Government publish the Housing Priority List before the next allocation?

Answer:

The Minister for Housing and Public Works

Sir, this Government is committed to the publication of the Priority List showing the points of applicants and to this end the Government has initiated two important and necessary exercises:-

- (1) the revision of the Housing Allocation Scheme which, I am glad to say, is now completed and which only requires ratification by Council of Ministers and then, printing, and,
- (2) a general review and re-assessment of all applications taking into account certain new and vital recommendations as incorporated in the revised Scheme.

2. The House will appreciate that the Housing Allocation Committee and the Housing Section have been working during the last ten months towards these aims. It is important that the review be completed before publication. I am hopeful that this will be very soon now but certainly not before the next block allocation of 60 flats at Sandpits.

The Hon. Lt.Col. J.L. Hoare

In view of the temporary loss of parking space in Governor's Parade, what steps is Government taking to provide alternative parking space?

Answer

The Minister for Tourism and Municipal Services.

Mr. Speaker, the parking restrictions in Library Street have been relaxed, thus providing space for eight cars. It has unfortunately not been possible to find other alternatives in the vicinity.

The inconvenience caused to motorists is regretted but I am sure the House will agree that the major hotel development in Governor's Parade is in the long-term economic interests of Gibraltar and that its temporary disadvantages should be willingly accepted.

I am glad to say that as a result, inter alia, of the opening of Gardiner's Road, the flow of traffic in this area is very smooth. The House will also be interested to learn that the plans for the future development of the area include a scheme for underground parking which, when fully carried out, should at least restore the number of parking places previously available.

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HON. LT. COL. HOARE:

Thank you for that reply, but is that an answer to my question of what steps the Government is taking to provide alternative parking space now, while the temporary loss is occurring?

HON. W. M. ISOLA:

Mr. Speaker, sir, without repeating myself, I have said that the parking restrictions in Library Street have been relaxed, providing space for 8 extra cars. I regret that there is no other alternative site available in that vicinity.

HON. LT. COL. HOARE:

May I ask the Hon. Minister to have a look at the West side of Main Street, from the Convent Bus stop to Inces Hall?

HON. W. M. ISOLA:

●Certainly, why not? (Laughter)

HON. LT. COL. HOARE:

And then decide whether this cannot be made temporary parking space?

HON. W. M. ISOLA:

Certainly, why not Mr. Speaker.

HON. LT. COL. HOARE:

Sir, so long as he will do something, I will accept his answer.

The Hon. I. Abecasis

Sir, what are the present requirements and arrangements to obtain a permit to hawk fresh fish?

Answer

The Minister for Medical and Health Services

Sir, on the 26th September, 1968, the City Council adopted a recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee I quote "That no more fish vendors' licences be issued and that vendors be informed that their licences will not be re-issued if they fail to renew them within a month."

The Public Health Department pursued these instructions until gradually by early June 1969, there were no fish vendors' licences in force.

Again on the 26th June, 1969, the City Council, upon refusing an application from a Gibraltarian to hawk fish, re-endorsed the decision of the 26th September 1968, I quote "That no further fish vendors' licences be issued."

This policy we still enforce today.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.21 OF 1971

HON. I. ABECASIS:

Doesn't the Minister consider that the time has come when this decision should be revised?

HON. MISS ANES:

Sir, through bitter experience, fish hawking has proved to be unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

- (a) slime or fish always smells, no matter how fresh;
- (b) gradual deterioration as hours go by especially in hot weather;
- (c) street hawking is incompatible with the trend to make our City clean and tidy; it is also a nuisance traffic-wise;
- (d) control of fitness for consumption of fish impossible.

There is an alternative method which would satisfy public generally, that is the opening of wet fish shops on similar lines to those of the United Kingdom in different parts of the town, to give facilities to those people who are unable to go down to the public fish market to obtain fresh fish.

Fish in the Public fish market is sold in the best of conditions. Proper stone slabs, ample water supplies, supervision, control of fitness for consumption, cleaners to keep the place clean and tidy.

HON. I. ABECASIS:

Didn't the Government receive an application from someone who was prepared to pay any fee and to abide by any condition that the Department of Hygiene and Health would impose?

HON. MISS ANES:

Sir, six applications have been refused. Three of them verbal applications and three written applications. The conditions were stated in the written replies and in verbal replies to the applicants, and I still insist that the policy adopted by the City Council on the 26th of September 1968 and then again on the 26th June 1969, which is in force today, it is the right one.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO. 21 OF 1971 (CONT'D.)

HON. I. ABECASIS:

Wouldn't the Minister be prepared to give it a trial? I mean, the persons who applied for a licence promised Government that they were providing a new van, a brand new van, and that they were quite prepared to allow the Health Inspector to supervise it if necessary. Would you give this a trial for at least 3 or 6 months to see whether he complies with all his promises?

HON. MISS ANES:

Well sir, considering that the applicant the Hon. Member is referring to, in his various letters, contradicted himself. For instance in one he said that he had already bought a van, then he said he was prepared to buy a van. In our first answer we quoted the decision taken by the City Council and I am sure that should the Government decide to consider the matter again thoroughly, then it will be done Sir. At the moment, I think that the decision by the City Council to adopt that measure, was taken in one of its rare lucid moments, and I think it was the right one. (Laughter)

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Is the Minister referring to lucid moment on her part or on the part of the City Council?

HON. MISS ANES:

I beg your pardon Sir? Could the Hon. Leader please repeat that?

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Oh, forget it! (Laughter)

HON. I. ABECASIS:

Do I take it that the Minister is not prepared to grant a permit for at least three or six months to this particular applicant?

HON. MISS ANES:

At this moment I cannot say that I will refuse or not. If Government considers that the applications are worth looking into and the decision taken by the City Council in 1968 should be looked into further, perhaps that may be the right time, but at this moment I still maintain that the decision taken by the City Council and the Public Health Department's in pursuance of the reports they submitted throughout the years, is the right one.

HON. I. ABECASIS:

Doesn't the Minister think it is in the interest of those people of Gibraltar who live in the remote areas, that they should have fresh fish, as opposed to frozen fish, taken to their places of residence?

HON. MISS ANES:

Fresh fish or frozen fish, this is a matter of taste. (Laughter) We have been eating frozen meat for a good number of years in Gibraltar, and I think none of us here remembers when we last ate fresh meat. Sir, there is already a wet fish shop in Laguna and it has proved very successful. I see no reason why there shouldn't be others in other areas.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

But will the Minister say whether he will consider giving facilities for such shops in the housing estates, at reasonable price, otherwise it will reflect in the price of the fish?

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HON. MISS ANES:

As I have already said sir, if Government decides that the time has come to look into the question of licences, we shall look into it, certainly. But it will be a matter of policy for this Government to decide whether we revoke the decision taken by the City Council in 1969 or not.

HON. I. ABECASIS:

Do I take it that this person has to apply once again? Do I take it that persons who are interested could apply once again?

HON. MISS ANES:

Well, they can always apply; there if of course, no reason why they should not.