

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
MEETING OF 13 JANUARY 1976

QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

(1 TO 42)

Clerk to the House of Assembly
House of Assembly
Gibraltar

Question No 11

Second paragraph of answer, line 2, after the words "difficulties to" insert the word "be".

Question No 14

Answer to first supplementary Question : the last word of the penultimate line should be "as".

10 2 76

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'D. J. ...', written over a faint rectangular box.A small, stylized handwritten mark or signature in dark ink.

Financial & Development Secretary

QUESTIONS ASKED AT THE MEETING OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY HELD ON
13.1.76

ORAL

No.1 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state the amount of Income Tax Revenue that has been collected (a) from employees, (b) from companies and (c) from self-employed persons in respect of assessable income for each of the following years:

- (1) 1971/72
- (2) 1972/73
- (3) 1973/74
- (4) 1974/75

and the estimated figures for the year 1975/76?

Answer:

The Financial and Development Secretary

Sir, the question as phrased is not entirely clear because there is a difference in meaning between year of assessment and year of revenue. Assuming that the Hon Member means the amount of income tax revenue that has been collected in respect of assessable income the information is as follows:

For the year of assessment	1971/72	income tax revenue	£	834,040.68
" " " "	"	1972/73	"	£1,046,672.75
" " " "	"	1973/74	"	£1,120,401.00
" " " "	"	1974/75	"	£1,512,426.67

The breakdown requested for these years of assessment is not available as no separate analyses have been kept but I am pleased to say that figures are available of the estimated amounts to be collected for the year of assessment 1975/76. These are as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| (a) From employees | £1,750,000 |
| (b) From companies | £1,100,000 |
| (c) From self-employed persons | £ 150,000 |

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.1 OF 1976

MR SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member is going to get written copy of the reply.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Honourable Financial & Development Secretary aware that a breakdown giving the yield from employees and from companies and self employed as a group together has been given in the past in answer to this question?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Financial and Development Secretary not consider in view of the fact that this information has been provided for some of the years that it is possible to compute the figures which are being asked.

HON FINANACIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I will investigate.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Financial & Development Secretary, for the purpose of clarification, whether in fact the information given takes account of revenue that accrues in arrears, that is, if tax is collected due to a liability that arises in 1971/72 but is collected, say, in 1973/74, is that collection in arrears included in the figures given for the pertinent year?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

13.1.76

No.2 of 1976
The Hon J Bossano

ORAL

Can Government state when it intends to publish the results of the latest Employment Surveys conducted?

Answer:

The Financial and Development Secretary

Sir, the latest Employment Surveys that have been conducted relate to April 1975 and October 1975. The Report for the April 1975 survey will be presented to the House at the next meeting. The October 1975 Survey results are now being processed and the results will be published later on in the year.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 3 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Will Government confirm that there is delay as regards the payment of gratuities to the widows of public servants and will Government undertake to introduce any legislative changes that may be required to improve the situation?

Answer

The Attorney-General

It cannot be accepted that there is a delay by Government in the payment of gratuities in respect of officers who have died in service. The cheque for payment is without exception ready for payment within a week to ten days of death. The Pensions Ordinance, however, lays down that payment shall be made "to the legal personal representative" and until there has been a grant of probate or letters of administration have been taken out it is not known who this is. If payment were to be made to the widow and it should subsequently transpire she was not the legal personal representative then a further payment would have to be made. By reason of an amendment to the Administration of Estates Ordinance last year which did away with the requirement of providing sureties in applications for grant of probate and made the provision of sureties discretionary in the case of application for letters of administration the process of obtaining probate or letters of administration has been made easier and, it is hoped, less time consuming.

Supplementary to No. 3 of 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Is Government aware of the fact that this matter has been raised in the JIC by the Trade Union Side because of representations received from workers about the cost and delays involved in the procedures in Gibraltar?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I was not aware of that particular fact.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is Government aware that according to the views expressed by the employers in this forum the position in Gibraltar is one which is considerably more complex than what exists in UK because the law in UK has been amended to facilitate the payment of gratuities in circumstances where a public servant dies in office?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

I was not aware of that. The difficulty of course is that if there were to be specific provision that a gratuity should be paid to a widow then that would fetter the discretion of the public servant as to his testamentary disposition. He might not want to leave any money he left to his widow. I agree that in the normal circumstances he probably does. He might want to leave it to his children. And also the payment is for the benefit of the estate generally of the public servant and if there are any creditors and the payment of a gratuity goes to, say, a widow and not to them the creditors suffer.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Government prepared to consider amending the legislation if evidence is produced to show that in UK the position is much easier and that a change to follow UK practice in this matter would be in the interests of the employees involved?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Government will certainly consider any proposals which may be put forward but there is always this problem of fettering testamentary discretion. But it will consider certainly anything that is put forward.

The Hon J Bossano

Will Government give a breakdown of the total emoluments received by the Industrial Relations Officer taking into account the value of any subsidised accommodation and the grossed up value of any tax free gratuity?

Answer:

The Financial and Development Secretary

The emoluments of the post of the Industrial Relations Officer are at present paid by the British Government under Technical Assistance arrangements. They are therefore a matter entirely between the British Government and the officer concerned. The Gibraltar Government is involved, as is the arrangement in all such cases, only to the extent of providing accommodation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.4 OF 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Financial and Development Secretary may think this is a matter exclusively for the officer and Her Majesty's Government but obviously I differ from him in this respect and I should like to know from the Financial and Development Secretary whether it is intended at a future date to localise the post of the Industrial Relations Officer?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I am afraid I cannot answer that question. I have no such information at all. It is not available to me.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I accept that the Financial and Development Secretary is relatively new but will he make an effort, Mr Speaker, in future to get more information in order to be able to provide answers to supplementary questions?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, that was certainly not implicit in the question which was originally asked. I think, however, I would like to add something to what I have already said, with the permission of the Chair. And that is that the Government considers it highly undesirable, to put it at its mildest, and contrary to the public interest that the privilege which Members of this House enjoy should be used to enquire into the income and other personal earnings of an individual who is not a member of this House and whose emoluments are not dependent on the appropriation of public funds by this House.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government not consider that if the position of the Industrial Relations Officer is going to be occupied by a native, the natives of Gibraltar might be interested to know how much the expatriate is being paid?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't think those two matters are related at all. I would only say that I presume that the Hon Member is referring to Gibraltarians.

No. 5 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Is Government proposing to change the presentation of the municipal accounts in the next Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure taking into account the shortcomings of the present system?

Answer

The Financial and Development Secretary

No change in the presentation of the Municipal Accounts is envisaged for the coming Estimates. However, the question is loaded and until I have had the opportunity to examine the present system in depth I am not able to accept the Hon Member's opinion that there are shortcomings. If the Hon Member would care to communicate to me what in his view these shortcomings are I shall certainly consider them and it would assist me in examining the present system.

Supplementary to No. 5 of 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, has the Hon Financial & Development Secretary taken the trouble to refer to previous discussion of this matter in the House of Assembly to try and ascertain what the views of the Chief Minister and previous Financial and Development Secretaries were on this matter?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I have been informed that this matter has been raised on at least one occasion in the past or probably more I believe. But I must repeat that until I have been able to go in depth into the matter I cannot make any further comment.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Financial & Development Secretary aware that the Government accepted that the present system where the House does not know at the end of the year what the final outcome has been in respect of Municipal Accounts was a shortcoming and that an indication was given previously in the House that some attempt would be made to put this right? Is he aware of that?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I was not aware of that undertaking and I am afraid I cannot add anything to what I have already said.

The Hon J Bossano

Works Will Government state (a) what is the total gross cost of employing each U.K. Clerk of Works taking account the salary, tax free gratuity and provision of a house and (b) will Government also state why U.K. Clerks of Works are being recruited in preference to native ones and furthermore how the cost of employing a U.K. Clerk of Works compares with the cost of employing a native one?

Answer:

The Financial and Development Secretary

The average cost, per annum, of employing UK Clerks of Works is £8500, including salary, tax free gratuity, the provision of housing and furniture, appointment grant and passages. They are also eligible for educational allowances and passages in respect of any children.

2. It is not correct to state that UK Clerks of Works are being recruited in preference to Gibraltarians. The vacancies are required urgently in connection with the Development Programme and, when they were advertised locally, only one candidate applied and was found suitable for appointment. It was accordingly necessary, for the purposes of the Programme, to recruit others from outside Gibraltar.

3. The average cost of employing a Gibraltarian Clerk of Works is £1869 per annum (£2333 is on offer) plus the usual pension commitment.

4. The gratuity paid to the expatriate corresponds, though it is not, of course, as valuable, to the pension element of the locally recruited officer. Passages, housing and appointment grant are necessary incidentals. The true comparison is therefore between the two basic pays, a difference of £1917. Differences of this kind are not restricted to Clerks of Works but are to be found in all cases, including senior grades, where it is necessary to recruit experienced and qualified staff from abroad when such staff is not available locally.

5. This is the real crux of the matter - that where one is forced, by any circumstances, to recruit from outside Gibraltar, then the monetary reward must be sufficient to entice staff who will have to uproot themselves from their environment and incur additional expense on a short-term contract without security of employment. One is then obliged to pay not only the market rate in the place of origin but more in order that they may leave their place of origin and come to work some place else.

2.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.6 OF 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, Mr Speaker, it is I think obvious that the Hon Financial and Development Secretary is not aware - perhaps he can confirm this - that in the case of at least one of the Clerks of Works, the person in question was living in Gibraltar and working in the local construction industry and he uprooted himself from Gibraltar in order to go to UK and be uprooted from UK and paid £8,500 instead of £1,800. Is he aware of that?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would he not agree that it is an absurd situation where a person already in Gibraltar is provided with no incentive to apply for a job which he is competent to carry out but can obtain better pay by leaving Gibraltar and applying from UK?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a matter of opinion.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I was just going to say, Sir, that this is one man's view and not necessarily the view of anybody else.

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, Mr Speaker, does he think that this is something that we should encourage?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a matter of policy which I think if the Financial and Development Secretary wants to give an answer he can.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Hon Financial and Development Secretary think, for example, that it is desirable that at some time in the future we should have a native Financial and Development Secretary who should be recruited via UK?

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Financial and Development Secretary think that in the case of the Clerks of Works it is not ~~as in the case of the~~ Industrial Relations Officer a matter for the Officer and the UK Government and not a question for the House?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is a different matter on which he has no responsibility.

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, will the Financial and Development Secretary explain in what way the payment of the emoluments of the Clerks of Works differ in nature from the payment of the emoluments of other officers who are paid by UK such as the Industrial Relations Officer?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I really lost the thread of that question. Perhaps I might, with respect, ask the Hon Member to repeat it?

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, it is quite obvious that these two officers are paid by UK, but in the case of one the Financial and Development Secretary considers it wrong to divulge any information and in the case of the other one he considers it right to divulge information. I am seeking from him an explanation of what is different in the nature of the payment of these two officers that makes it correct for the House to have the information in the case of one and incorrect for the House to have information in the case of the other.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Hon Member is putting words into my mouth which never came out of it. The Industrial Relations Officer is working in Gibraltar under the terms of a Technical Assistance Agreement. Officers employed under that agreement are the direct responsibility of the UK so far as their pay, personal emoluments and other conditions of service are concerned. The Clerks of Works are working in Gibraltar not under any Technical Assistance Agreement, they are working for the Gibraltar Government, the Gibraltar Government is responsible initially for making available to them their emoluments of office but charges those emoluments of office to the projects on which they are engaged.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 7 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Will Government state whether the Report of Mr Morgan on the salaries of top Civil Servants has now been received and whether it will be made public as was the case with the Scamp Report?

Answer

The Financial and Development Secretary

The report has been received and will be made public.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 8 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state whether the sum expected to be collected under PAYE during 1975/76 has now been revised upwards from the quoted figure of £1,450,000 even without taking into account the effect of the current review of wages and salaries, and if so what the revised figure is?

Answer:

The Financial and Development Secretary

Sir, I have already given this answer in relation to a previous question.

The revised figures of income tax expected to be collected under PAYE during 1975/76, ignoring the effect of the current review of wages and salaries in the public sector, is £1,750,000

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.8 OF 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that this suggests that it would have been possible for the Government to do something to alleviate the burden of taxation in the current year without in fact going beyond the limits of what they originally expected to obtain in income tax?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I will not agree to that for the simple reason that this kind of information cannot be taken out of its context which is the context of total expenditure and it remains to be seen the extent to which the total expenditure for the year has exceeded the estimates and the extent to which it will be necessary to utilise the additional increment that we have from income tax to meet that additional expenditure.

No. 9 of 1976

The Hon P J Isola

Can Government give the latest available average per capita income figures for Gibraltar?

Answer

The Financial and Development Secretary

Yes, Sir. The latest available average per capita income figures are those for the years 1972/73 and 1973/74. For 1972/73 the revised estimated GNP per capita at factor cost was £717. For 1973/74 there was an increase; the GNP per capita figure being £864 at factor cost.

Supplementary to No. 9 of 1976

HON M XIBERRAS:

Does the Hon Financial and Development Secretary have any idea offhand of the per capita income figures in the UK?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I don't have it with me.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary to what extent the apparent increase is a real one and to what extent it can be accounted for by inflation?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I am afraid I can't give the Hon Member that information but doubtless it could be ascertained and sent to him if he presses the point.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can he say, Mr Speaker, at which date in the relevant years the figures were calculated so that the information can be ascertained?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, except that these figures have been previously supplied and I am afraid I must admit I do not have the answer to the Hon Member's question.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 10 of 1976

The Hon P J Isola

Will Government give the final Revenue and Expenditure figures as at 31st March 1975?

Answer

The Financial and Development Secretary

The final figures for the financial year ended 31 March 1975 were:

Revenue £8,790,210

Expenditure £8,653,078

This shows a surplus of £137,132 as against an original estimated surplus of £392,010.

13.1.76

No.11 of 1976The Hon P J Isola

When does Government propose to resite the customs and police posts at Waterport and thus relieve the tenants of Varyl Begg Estate from the inconvenience caused to them from time to time as a result of the interruption of their journey from one part of Gibraltar to another at these particular posts?

Answer:The Financial and Development Secretary

Sir, Government proposes to resite the Waterport customs and police posts at the earliest opportunity. The original scheme was to provide segregation between the traffic flows of the port area and the Varyl Begg Estate by widening the present dual carriageway by using part of the paved area of the promenade and to erect a wall from the estate to the entrance to Waterport. A new police post would then have been erected opposite the existing one. On more detailed examination however, it was realised that this scheme would give rise to serious traffic problems. Moreover changing trends in cargo handling with the introduction of containerisation had to be borne in mind.

Arising from these difficulties a number of alternatives are under consideration but there are certain difficulties to overcome in the practical implementation of each.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.11 of 1976

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, whilst appreciating the difficulties involved, can some arrangement not come by insofar as Waterport Police post is concerned so that persons who are obviously living in the Varyl Begg Estate are not molested in the same way as any other Gibraltarian isn't from one part of the Rock to the other. Could some arrangement be made or some procedures be followed so that people just coming in to work for example in the morning from the Varyl Begg Estate aren't stopped and searched?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the Honourable Member that the Government is extremely sympathetic to this. It is something which I myself personally will be delighted to look into to see whether or not any procedure or other arrangement can in fact be made to permit the free flow of traffic and persons on foot into the Varyl Begg Estate without the necessity of passing through the normal customs checks. I can't however of course, as I am sure the Honourable Member will realise, give any assurance either that this is possible or indeed the nature of/ but I can certainly assure him that I will do the best I can. them

ORAL

13.1.76

No.12 of 1976

The Hon M Xiberras

What indications does Government have of wage settlements in the private sector pursuant on the publication of the Scamp Report?

Answer:

The Minister for Labour & Social Security

Virtually none, other than what is public knowledge from the information media. The Department of Labour and Social Security does not normally receive information of wage settlements in the private sector from the parties concerned. The only legal requirement in this respect is contained in the Regulation of Wages and Conditions of Employment Ordinance, whereby a registered joint industrial council is required to supply the Director of Labour and Social Security with an agreed true copy of all records of its proceedings. As there is no such registered joint industrial council in the private sector, the department must rely on the same sources of information as the general public, and would therefore welcome that parties to wage agreements should send in copies of such agreements, if only as a matter of courtesy, as has been done in some cases in the past.

The Consumer Protection Officer sometimes receives from employers information on wage settlements in support of claims for increases in price-controlled items.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.12 of 1976

HON M XIBERRAS:

Sir, since the Honourable Member must have a special interest, as Minister for Labour, of wage movements anywhere in Gibraltar, would the Honourable Member say that a majority of employees in the private sector have, in fact, received some pay increase after the interim award?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Sir, that is correct.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Honourable Member care to comment on the general level of the settlements?

MR SPEAKER:

No, it would not be pertinent to the question.

HON A J CANEPA:

I would say, Sir, that in the majority of cases

MR SPEAKER:

I would say that it is not pertinent to answer that question. The Minister has said that he has received no official information. He is not entitled to give information which he has gathered in the street.

HON M XIBERRAS:

As I understood it, Mr Speaker, I thought the Minister for Labour said that he had received no official information and he said that he had the same sources as any other member of the public. I have said that he must have a special interest as Minister for Labour and I am asking him on the basis of such information as he has what the general level of settlement has been?

MR SPEAKER:

You can ask him for his views. What the general level of settlements has been is what I am objecting to.

HON A J CANEPA:

My view, Mr Speaker, is that but for one case, namely, the agreement involving the wages of shop assistants, but for that case, I would say that the majority of other wage settlements have been within the ambit of what one would call the Scamp philosophy.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Well, Mr Speaker, could I then ask the Minister whether according to such information as he has, these wage settlements have been followed by any increase in prices?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I don't think that that will be seen until the index in respect of the 1st January is published. I think that is what may well show the extent to which these wage settlements have been followed by price increases. At the moment we don't have any statistical evidence.

HON M XIBERRAS:

One final question, Mr Speaker. Would the Honourable Member say that the imbalance created by relatively early settlements in the private sector as compared with non-settlement in the public sector has created any kind of serious imbalance?

HON A J CANEPA:

that they are
Yes, obviously, Mr Speaker, there have been one or two isolated pockets in the private sector where there have been rather lucrative settlements, but I would say ^{price} isolated pockets, ~~because~~ the interim settlements in the private sector tended to be consolidated into the basic wage and therefore the pattern was being set over a year ago. But in isolated pockets there has been some imbalance. I have already indicated one *instance*.

13.1.76

No.13 of 1976The Hon M Xiberras

Can Government make a statement as to the progress of the negotiations on the Scamp Report?

Answer:

The Financial and Development Secretary

Negotiations in JIC led to a comprehensive offer being tabled on November 3 which defines the Official Employers proposals for UK equivalent bands. This offer also includes provision for mark time wages for employees who would not benefit over and above consolidation of COLA and Interim Payments from the application of the recommended percentages in 1974 and 1975. With a view to reaching early agreement the Official Side have offered to settle on the basis of the offer and continue to discuss analogues making any changes which may be agreed retrospective in October 1974. Despite many reminders from the Official Side there was an eight weeks delay before the Trade Union Side returned last week and stated they wished to complete the discussion on analogues before commenting further on the offer made. The offer remains open for acceptance and the Official Side is prepared to continue meeting to discuss analogues if the Trade Union so wish. Progress has been made in the negotiations with Non Industrial grades both for UK Departments in GIBNIC and between Government and the individual Staff Associations in the case of the latter.

Offers have been made for the following grades:

Clerical
Secretarial
Technical
Nursing
Administrative
Revenue
Teaching
Police
Public Health
Medical Laboratory
Pharmacist
Radiography

There remains a number of points to discuss with some grades but I believe there is a prospect of reaching a settlement covering a sizeable number of employees in the fairly near future.

Government has made it clear to all Associations that as soon as agreement is reached back pay and the new rates will be paid as soon as ever possible.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.13 of 1976

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, could the Financial & Development Secretary please bear in mind and the Government try and do its utmost to expedite the settlement of this bearing in mind the very difficult effect that the delay is having, particularly on private firms of Gibraltar, who are forced to settle and have been forced to settle more or less on the lines of the Scamp Report without the possibility of recovering some of the money through the extra sales that one does expect when the rest of the employees of Gibraltar get the extra pay could he please bear in mind the necessity to expedite a settlement?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the Honourable Member that the Government is as anxious as the other side to settle. But I would ask the Honourable Member to bear in mind the complexity of introducing these structures in Gibraltar and the amount of detail requiring discussion with the various staff associations and so on and it is in such circumstances, in my own personal view, a question of making more haste at the expense of less speed in the end.

ORAL

13.1.76

No.14 of 1976

The Hon M Xiberras

Can Government give an indication of the loss of purchasing power to the community arising from the non settlement of the final stage of the wages and salaries review for industrial and non industrial employees of the official employers?

Answer:

The Financial & Development Secretary

I regret that I am not able to answer the question because it asks the Government to put a monetary value on a complex set of equations the variables of which are still the subject of negotiations. When a settlement of the Wages and Salaries Review has been reached it will be possible to assess, but then only broadly, the probable income effect that this will have on the purchasing power of the community as a whole.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.14 of 1976

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the difficulties of arriving at an accurate figure, but since the Financial & Development Secretary has already in fact answered this question in one of its aspects in answer to a supplementary by the Honourable Major Peliza, could I ask him to elaborate rather more on this. Could I ask him whether, say, to the nearest £300,000, whether he could indicate a figure which is not available in purchasing power for as long as there is no settlement?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I am afraid I must refuse to be pinned down to that extent by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I must stick to my original answer that it is not possible to put a monetary value on the additional purchasing power which the community will obtain following a final settlement in the future. The matter is in fact a hypothetical one and the question as framed.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I entirely appreciate the difficulty but would the Honourable Member not agree that substantial purchasing power is lost to the community for as long as there is no settlement?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I would prefer the word significant, Mr Speaker, Sir, to substantial.

HON M XIBERRAS:

But would it be significant to the extent of affecting his economic judgement for the coming year?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, that depends on how significant, significant is.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Sir, this is what we are trying to establish, how significant significant is. Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that an early settlement of the wage review would benefit the community greatly?

MR SPEAKER:

I think that was answered in the last question.

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Absolutely, Mr Speaker, and I must stress again that the Government is as anxious as anybody to achieve a final and, one hopes, lasting settlement.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Financial & Development Secretary agree that if the loss of purchasing power is a consequence of the review not having been yet agreed cannot be described as substantial, the cost which is another way of describing the same thing, is not substantial either?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Honourable Member's question leaves me a little speechless because I am afraid I just do not follow his line of thought and line of reasoning at all.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Financial & Development Secretary agree that the loss of purchasing power and the cost of the pay increases are the same figure, that we are talking about the same sum?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, since we are talking about an unknown figure I cannot possibly agree to that.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Financial & Development Secretary not agree, Mr Speaker, that the loss of purchasing power arises out of the fact that the increases in pay have not yet been agreed and would he also not say that once these increases are agreed the amount involved will be possible to catalogue on the one hand, from the consumers angle, as an increase in purchasing power and on the other hand, from the employers angle as the cost of the settlement? Would he not agree that whatever the sum may be, there are two ways of looking at that sum. One is from the angle of the consumers in the purchasing power of the community and from the angle of the employer as the cost of the settlement. Would he not agree that that is so?

MR SPEAKER:

We are going into economics on that one because he must then say whether the whole of the increase is going to be used on the purchasing of consumer goods or on something else. We are going into the hypothetical.

HON J BOSSANO:

No, Mr Speaker, if you will allow me. The purchasing power does not necessarily have to be the same thing as the amount of money that is spent. The purchasing power is conditioned by the income, so the income and the purchasing power

MR SPEAKER:

You have just qualified that by saying "does not necessarily mean".

HON J BOSSANO:

No, it would still be the purchasing power even if people didn't spend it. If they saved it it would still be their purchasing power because there would have the opportunity to spend it any time they wished.

MR SPEAKER:

I am only interested in finding out whether you are asking a hypothetical question and nothing else.

HON J BOSSANO:

No, Mr Speaker, what I am trying to establish is since the Financial & Development Secretary considers that the increase in purchasing power cannot be described as substantial, whether that means that he also considers that the cost of the settlement cannot be described as substantial either since they are the same thing.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us leave it at that now we know what you are asking. Would the Honourable Financial & Development Secretary answer that?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I beg your pardon, Mr Speaker, Could I ask the Honourable Member to repeat his question?

MR SPEAKER:

The questioner is asking whether the increase in purchasing power cannot be described as substantial whether that means that the cost of the settlement cannot be described as substantial either.

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I can only say, Sir, I presume so.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could the Financial Secretary say whether he has any notion of the cost to the Gibraltar Government and to the UK Departments of the offer that has already been tabled?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No Sir.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 15 of 1976

The Hon M Xiberras

How many Government Officers are currently receiving training in the United Kingdom under Government training schemes and are all available funds for this year being utilised?

Answer

The Attorney-General

Except for teacher training and scholarships, there is no block allocation of Gibraltar Government funds for training schemes. However, when the need arises the necessary provision is made and there are at present 8 Government Officers undergoing training in the UK financed from local funds.

There are also 11 other Government Officers undergoing training in the UK on funds provided by HMG in 1975/76 for training purposes under the Technical Assistance scheme, such funds being thereby fully committed.

If teacher training and scholarships are taken into account there is a total of 90 individuals being trained in the UK.

Supplementary to No.15 of 1976

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, in one particular department the Public Works Department, and dealing broadly with the area covered by the question on Clerks of Works by the Hon Mr Bossano, would the Hon Member say how many people are being trained to fill in this position of Clerk of Works?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It is not an answer which I have available offhand but I will certainly obtain the information and supply it to the Hon Member opposite.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am grateful, Mr Speaker, I mentioned this, Mr Speaker, and is the Hon Member aware that it was only after the matter had been brought to the notice of the persons in charge that apparently two quite distinguished employees were sent away for further training in the PWD. I thought this was a complement to the question put forward by the Hon Mr Bossano earlier. Is the Hon Member aware whether the needs of the Public Works Department are in fact being met particularly in the direction of Clerks of Works?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I wasn't aware of the fact that two had been sent but as I have said when the need arises the necessary provision will be made and I think the Hon Member can be satisfied that if Government appreciates the need then funds will be provided for this purpose.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member not agree - still dealing with Clerks of Works - that there is an obvious need for training there since it has been necessary to bring from the UK in respect of a rather long drawn out operation in the Development Programme a good number of Clerks of Works at considerable costs?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It would certainly seem so.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member then canvas the idea amongst his colleagues that training should increase so that the need to import Clerks of Works - as an instance I give it - at quite high wages, would be obviated?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, this is certainly a matter which Government will take into very careful consideration.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I thank the Hon Member. Mr Speaker, dealing with other branches of the Government, is the Government generally satisfied that with its training programme it is meeting its commitments for a good well-trained civil service?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, Sir.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 16 of 1976

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government give an indication of recruitment trends in the civil service in the last three years?

Answer

The Attorney General

The question is so very wide that it is difficult, if not impossible, to give a precise answer. It can, however, be said that in general no special difficulties have been encountered in filling vacancies and on the whole recruitment has been satisfactory. There have been shortages of recruiting response from time to time over the past three years in various departments but there is no apparent reason for this. If the Honourable Member wishes more details then if he will pose specific questions I will do my best to see that the records are analysed and an answer provided.

Supplementary to No. 16 of 1976

HON M XIBERRAS:

I thank the Hon Member. Is the Government generally in any way concerned that there is an undue increase in the number of civil servants?

MR SPEAKER:

The original question asks will Government give an indication of recruitment trends in the civil service. What you are being asked is whether the trend is on the increase instead of the decrease,

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

If there is an increase Government is not increasing for the sake of increasing. A careful look is kept on the number of posts in the civil service and it is certainly not a matter over which Government is complacent. It is a matter which it always has and will keep under careful consideration.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am sure that that is the case but do I take it that there is concern or that there is no concern?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It is a little bit like saying: "have you stopped beating your wife?" I would prefer to say that Government is not concerned from the point of view that it does not consider there is an undue increase. But if there were to be an undue increase then of course it would be very considerably concerned and would take all steps to see that there was no increase above the necessary levels.

HON M XIBERRAS:

In respect of the Productivity & Training Unit is all rationalisation possible being done by this body whose reason for being, let us put it that way, was precisely to rationalise the work of the civil service? Is that proceeding apace?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, Sir.

ORAL

13.1.76

No.17 of 1976

The Hon W M Isola

Will Government state how many parking tickets have been issued since the system was introduced, for

- (a) obstruction
- (b) 'No Parking'?

Answer:

The Attorney-General

Between the 16 February 1974 and the 31 December 1975 3243 tickets were issued:

345 tickets were issued for causing unnecessary obstruction and 2898 for what may be widely termed 'parking offences'.

2443 fixed penalties were paid, 135 cases have been taken to court on non-payment of the fixed penalty (of which there have been 119 convictions and 16 cases dismissed), 183 cases are pending either payment or summons and 482 cases have not been proceeded with either by reason of a caution, or in some few cases having left Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.17 of 1976

HON W M ISOLA:

I am much obliged for that answer, Mr Speaker, but if I remember rightly when the parking tickets were introduced, did not the Honourable Attorney-General give the House an assurance that these tickets would be used primarily for obstruction rather than for parking offences? Because it appears to me that that is not the case as only 314 tickets have been issued for obstruction whilst 2400 odd for no parking. Were we not led to believe at the time that parking tickets would be used more for obstruction cases rather than for no parking offences and does the Government not agree that that has not happened?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am not aware of giving this particular assurance. I stand of course to be corrected if I did, but I think the Honourable Member will be aware that in very many cases which are strictly parking offences there is also a very great element of obstruction also. The obstruction cases to which I have referred are cases where there has been no additional parking element, but in the majority of parking cases there has been obstruction also.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, would not the Honourable Attorney-General agree that if more parking spaces were made available the volume of parking offences could be substantially or significantly - whichever of the two words he prefers to use - reduced if this were made available?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think that is highly likely.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

And could the Honourable Attorney-General say since this is highly likely what is the Government doing about it?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I don't think he is entitled to answer that one. I think there is a car parking question later on.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, since it is highly likely

MR SPEAKER:

What I am saying is that it is not the Attorney-General's responsibility to provide parking spaces.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I agree, Mr Speaker, he is not responsible but he is a member of the Government who is answering this question, and I think it is a very relevant supplementary to find out what is going to be done to lower the volume of crime. All I am trying to say is whether there is a policy at all to lower the volume of offences which he is responsible for prosecuting.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think I can fairly say that Government is always endeavouring to provide spaces for parking. I think as the Honourable and Gallant Member knows it is an exceptionally difficult problem in Gibraltar particularly in the areas where people wish to be, but it is a matter which is kept under consideration it is not just treated lightly. The problem of parking is accepted as a very difficult problem and Government does endeavour to do what it can to alleviate it other than by imposing sanctions.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 18 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Will Government confirm that in the provision of quarters to civil servants the same criteria are used in considering the allocation of a particular unit of accommodation regardless of the rank of the civil servant and that these criteria are the same as would be applied to an ordinary citizen under the Housing Allocation Scheme?

Answer

The Attorney-General

The answer to both parts of the question is 'No, Sir'. Government quarters which become available for allocation are graded as A1, A2 and B1. A1 and A2 quarters, which are for Heads of Departments and other senior grades, are allocated at the discretion of the Deputy Governor. B1 quarters are allocated on the advice of the Quarters Allocation Committee, on which there is a representative of the Staff Side, on the basis of a points system.

Supplementary to No. 18 of 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I don't think the Hon Member has quite understood the object of the question. What I would like to know is, quite apart from the procedure followed for allocating quarters, whether in fact the decision as regards the size of the unit reflects the needs of the family as it does under the Housing Allocation Scheme?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The answer to that is no.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Hon and Learned Attorney-General consider that there is anything peculiar about the needs of families where the breadwinner is a civil servant which requires that the provision of their accommodation should in any way be different from that of other citizens?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

In the case of officers on salary scales with a maximum in excess of £2,597, broadly speaking, A&P and above, seniority, length of service and family composition are among the factors taken into consideration in the allotment of these quarters. It must also be borne in mind that where an officer is recruited from abroad there is invariably a contractual obligation to provide suitable accommodation.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, what I am trying to establish is e.g. whether an officer is given, say, a two-bedroom house or a three-bedroom house or a four-bedroom house taking into account the needs of the family of the officer, or whether there is a different rule applied in the case of civil servants and if there is a different rule whether there are in fact different rules according to the grade of the civil servant.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I said size of family is certainly one of the factors taken into account in the allocation of quarters.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, what I would like to establish is in fact whether in considering whether a house should go to a particular officer or not there is the same concern not to produce under occupation as there is under the Housing Allocation scheme which would allow, Mr Speaker, e.g. a four-bedroom house, shall we say, to be given to a childless married couple. Would that be pertinent criteria operating in the allocation of quarters to civil servants, or not?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It would certainly be one of the factors taken into consideration.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, is there something in the rules that are used for allocating quarters which would prevent what could be considered as a serious anomaly in overcrowded Gibraltar?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Hon and Learned Attorney-General not agree that it would be a good thing if the same sort of concern not to provide excess accommodation were applied in the allocation of quarters as is applied in the allocation of houses under the Housing Allocation Scheme?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think it would always be a concern but as I say it is one of the factors taken into consideration. It cannot be the ultimate factor.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Financial & Development Secretary say whether in fact the size of the accommodation is also conditioned by the position of the civil servants in the public service?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Did you say Financial & Development Secretary?

HON J BOSSANO:

I beg your pardon, Mr Speaker, I meant the Hon Attorney-General, perhaps it was that I saw the Financial & Development Secretary coming into my line of vision and I got confused?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Line of vision or line of fire?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think it fair to say, and this is quite clear, that as far as Heads of Departments go they are allocated larger houses.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon Attorney-General give any explanation why a Head of a Department should be considered as having a need for greater accommodation than somebody who is lower down the hierarchy?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The houses are there, there are understandably a certain number of obligations imposed on Heads of Departments as far as entertainment not only in Gibraltar but of visiting officials and for that reason it is considered reasonable to give them such accommodation.

ORAL

13.1.76

No.19 of 1976

The Hon L Devincenzi

Has the Gibraltar United Football Club approached Government for assistance in finding suitable club premises and if so is Government in a position to assist them in this respect?

Answer:

The Minister for Sports and Housing

The Gibraltar United Football Club did apply to Government for club premises and in point of fact a large room at the rear of St Jago's was allocated to them last June for this purpose. Unfortunately the fire which occurred shortly after rendered this building unfit for occupation. I regret there are no other suitable premises at present which could be offered to the Club instead.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.19 of 1976

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Mr Speaker, will the Government agree that the Gibraltar United Football Club have been pressing Government for suitable accommodation in fact since my time, and my understanding is that although Government has persistently promised and kept on promising nothing ever happened. Will the Minister further say whether the premises allocated to the club was acceptable to them as being suitable.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, the Honourable Member opposite has very rightly said that they have been pressing Government for a very considerable time. In fact he himself said since he was in office. That is true and it is not only the Gibraltar United Football Club but, many other clubs that want adequate and suitable premises. However, Sir, I did manage to find them premises and may I say quite suitable and large premises. It was to their satisfaction but unfortunately the fire that took place there has rendered the club virtually useless. We certainly did do something about it, we certainly did find them club premises and the unfortunate circumstances have debarred them from enjoying what they could have enjoyed.

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Mr Speaker although I accept the Minister's statement my understanding was that in fact this club had refused the premises when it was offered and of course eventually they accepted but they did not consider it suitable. Nevertheless, coming down to more practical terms, can the Minister say what is being done? Is there any prospect of their being allocated premises in the near future, or is everything very much in the air?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I obviously wouldn't say that I've filed the thing and it is forgotten. I will do my utmost to try and find them accommodation but I think the Honourable Member himself very well knows that the resources of premises for clubs are not plentiful and therefore there is a great problem. I have tremendous sympathy may I say, Mr Speaker for Gibraltar United which is the oldest active football club we have in Gibraltar and through unfortunate circumstances they find themselves without a club but I cannot under any circumstances promise anything. I will certainly do my utmost to try and find them something.

HON L DEVINCENZI:

All I would say, Mr Speaker, is that because of what the Minister said himself about Gibraltar United being the oldest club etc, etc that he will really take it to heart and do something truly positive to help this club now.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, one supplementary. Has the club suggested any particular place to the Minister?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, they have not suggested anything since the fire occurred at St Jago's. Probably what the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is trying to extract is that prior to our offering St Jago's there was talk and a commitment may I say by Government then to have allocated them at Montagu Bastion where another club was situated, but then it was considered that it would be used as a youth complex, I have not, Sir, received any suggestion from Gibraltar United as far as I can recollect of them wanting any other place.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 20 of 1976

The Hon L Devincenzi

Can Government state on how many occasions in the last three months the Sports Centre has been available for use and on how many days it has actually been used?

Answer

The Minister for Sports and Housing

The Sports Centre has not been available for use in the last three months. However on 28th October, 31st October and 1st November, the Gibraltar Squash Rackets Club were allowed to try out the Squash Court during the visit of Tewkesbury Squash Team.

Supplementary to No. 20 of 1976

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Mr Speaker, wouldn't the Minister agree that this is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs and what is being done to remedy this position?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, as explained in the last meeting of the House the Sports Centre has not been opened for continuous use due to lack of staff and outstanding minor works. However, the four posts of attendant have now been circularised and it is hoped that these as well as the charwomen will be engaged in the very near future. Once this recruitment is effected, the staffing level at the stadium will be sufficient for The Sports Centre to be brought into constant use.

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Mr Speaker, one can't help feeling that notwithstanding the difficulties that the administration is encountering something must be done to get to grips with this problem once and for all. The situation is very bad and I would urge the Minister again to do something about it. Complaints are received left, right and centre and people just don't believe that this is the position even if it is true. It has taken far too long and there doesn't seem to be any indication as to when it will be corrected. There was a lot of talk about the Sports Centre and now it is there and we just don't have it.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I agree fully with the member opposite. It is certainly not for lack of enthusiasm on my side. The problems have been there. I would be the first person to have been delighted to have had the stadium in full operation but I can assure Members opposite that without fixing a specific date it will be in the very near future,

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say what is the present position as regards the opening of the Sports Centre?

MR SPEAKER:

The Hon Member wants to know when the Sports Centre will be operational.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

As I said the vacancies for the posts of Attendant have been circularised, I have been given to understand that it takes normally about two weeks between selection and the usual requirements. I am not able to give a definite date but I hope and I would assume that it would be about three weeks from now.

HON L DEVINCENZI:

And on the minor works as well?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The minor works are being attended to at the moment.

ORAL

13.1.76

No.21 of 1976

The Hon W M Isola

As a road safety measure will Government consider installing properly lighted Hore-Belisha beacons at the zebra crossings on the south side of Reforendum Gate and at the junction of Boyd Street?

Answer:

The Minister for Sports and Housing

Police records for the past year show that there has been only one accident, and that not a serious one, at the zebra crossings in the area referred to. The crossings would therefore appear to give adequate protection and it is not considered that there is a need to instal beacons, particularly as there is excellent street lighting in the area.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.21 of 1976

HON W M ISOLA:

Is the Minister aware that at these Hore-Belisha beacons the pedestrians do not have the right of way and they may think that because these Hore-Belisha beacons are there that they have got a right of way. And is not the Minister aware that the last time that this was brought up the reasons given for not having properly lighted Hore-Belisha beacons was that it was too expensive to install? Is the Minister aware of that?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir, I am not aware of the expenditure involved when this was last brought up. What I would say is that in that particular area there is very adequate street lighting. Probably this would be a matter which could be given more serious consideration if we had more visitors to Gibraltar with cars but I think that locally we are all more than aware of the rights and privileges of who goes when and where and how. In that rather complex junction there has only been one accident and then not a serious one at all.

HON W M ISOLA:

I am not entirely satisfied with that answer, Mr Speaker, because in one particular case some motor cyclist was run over and immediately the Government brought in the question of helmets. But would not the Government bring this question up to the Transport Commission because to the ordinary person in the street a Hore-Belisha beacon means that they have the right of way when it is lit but if it is not lit they do not have the right of way. If the Government does not consider installing properly lighted Hore-Belishas would at least the Government put up some notice to the effect that they do not have the right of way there and thus prevent any further accidents because to my mind, Mr Speaker, that particular area is one of the most hazardous places in the whole of Gibraltar because traffic comes from all different directions. Will the Minister give this further consideration and bring it before the Transport Commission now that this has been brought up?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, on a point of clarification. The Honourable Member referred to an accident where a motor cyclist was run over. That was not the case, the motor cyclist himself fell off. Obviously one can look at these things and if it were considered by the Transport Commission to be a particular requirement in that area I am sure Government would be very sympathetic towards it.

HON W M ISOLA:

Well at least, Mr Speaker, if the Government does not consider it should have properly lighted Hore-Belisha beacons at least let them put up some notices, warning the pedestrians that they do not have the right of way because it is not a properly lighted Hore-Belisha.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, will the Honourable Minister, if he does consider the suggestion made by my Honourable Friend Mr Isola, also bear in mind that there is a new idea now whereby the zebra crossing itself is spotlighted and therefore any individual caught in that light is very prominent and I understand this is very effective. Could the Honourable Minister take that into account as well please?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Most certainly, Sir, I think we have tried to keep up with the Road Traffic Act of UK as far as possible of course and if it is a requirement in UK I am sure we will re-model our zebra crossings.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I wasn't saying it was a new requirement in UK. But obviously an individual using or attempting to use the zebra crossing is very quickly visible from all directions much more than if the zebra crossing itself is not spot lighted. I wasn't saying at all that this is required by law.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, one general point, will the Minister not agree it is a doubtful principle where one should rely on local knowledge rather than road signs to avert traffic hazards of the kind my Honourable Friend is referring to. I am rather concerned about this because we had one particular case where the man was not a local man, in fact, would the Minister perhaps rectify that statement or that impression?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am sorry, Sir, if I gave that impression. I wasn't saying that I didn't agree with road signs or traffic requirements. What I meant was that that particular very busy junction is a daily thing we go through but certainly, Sir, one is always flexible enough to consider improvements as always and if need be we will carry out improvements.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 22 of 1976

The Hon W M Isola

Can Government state whether:

- (a) Parking spaces will be available at Eastern Beach behind the Mediterranean Hotel this summer and,
- (b) whether it intends to use the site of the old refuse destructor as a temporary car park over the same period?

Answer

The Hon the Minister for Sports and Housing

It is unlikely that the area will be available for parking this year as the MOD propose to use it as a park for mobile homes. If, however, approval for this project is not given before the summer the matter will be reviewed.

The site of the old refuse destructor will be used as a temporary car park over the same period if it is not to be used for any other purpose in the meantime.

Supplementary to No. 22 of 1976

HON W M ISOLA:

When the Minister says that the old refuse destructor may be used as a temporary car park if it is not going to be used for some other matter, can the Minister say what he considers might be

MR SPEAKER:

No, you have asked whether the site can be used as a car park and the answer has been that if it is not being used for anything else and if it is still available it will be used. Let us not go into the use of the site under the guise of a parking question.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister whether he is not aware that in a rather lengthy debate on parking spaces the Hon Minister for Public Works stated that we had lost something like 50 parking spaces in his elaborate computation which Hon Members were at pains to follow. We had lost some 50 parking spaces behind the Mediterranean Hotel but that we had gained something like 70 as of right from the MOD. Now, is the Hon Member not aware of this statement being made and if he is aware how does he account:

- (a) for the statement of his colleague at that time, and
- (b) for the present position of the Government?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I cannot recall if my Hon and Gallant Colleague did mention that we had lost some places and gained some as of right. What I can inform the House is that the first wall that was erected in that particular car park lost 70 parking spaces and I am informed that the site of the old refuse destructor will accommodate something like 100 parking spaces if it is going to be used as a car park. But I am afraid I cannot recall, unless I were to look at hansard, the exact words used by my colleague.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I have been looking for the quotation, Mr Speaker and it was made at the budget session when we were talking about spaces and that is not available now. But would the Hon Member, still with reference to the parking spaces behind the Mediterranean Hotel which I now gather has been walled up, would he not agree that this causes quite serious inconvenience to people using that beach and that there is quite strong public feeling about this matter?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I am more than aware that the walling of the particular area has rendered a loss of over 100 parking spaces over the past two years on two summer seasons and I am very concerned and I give a lot of attention to that particular area ie, Eastern Beach Road, during the summer months. It is a matter I will certainly not drop. I will take it up very strongly.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, since the Minister is very concerned, and rightly so, about this particular matter, is he aware of what title the users of the beach there had to use that particular parking space?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, it was always MOD land and as we know parking there is entirely at your risk and it is a matter of a privilege and not a right.

HON M XIBERRAS:

And has there to his knowledge been no change in that position, because if I do find this quotation from the Minister for Public Works there was an implication there that there was a different title after the statement.

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

I think it was the additional car parking spaces that we had made available at the Old Slaughter House site which is in the same area.

HON M XIBERRAS:

If it is I apologise but I would like to check it with the hansom. Mr Speaker, perhaps I could enquire of the Minister now in respect of the other part of the question, does he not agree that this is a pretty vague reply? He says that it will be used for car parking if it is not going to be used for anything else. Is the Hon Member saying that there is some tentative purpose other than parking which the Government is considering?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I very much doubt personally that we will have anything there before the summer season. One can't very well say what one is going to build there or what one is not going to build there. It is purely a matter for the Development Programme, to make proper use of that piece of land. I am not prepared to say what Government intends doing other than a car park at the moment.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Did the Minister say he could not say or is he not prepared to say?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir, I said we don't really know what is going to happen on the site, quite honestly, at the moment.

MR SPEAKER:

In other words there is no commitment for the site. Next question.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 23 of 1976

The Hon J Pcasano

Can Government make a statement on the condition of recently constructed flats at Varyl Begg Estate which have been subjected to periodic flooding or are affected by immediate dampness?

Answer

The Minister for Public Works and Municipal Services

It is not possible to identify the flats the Hon Questioner has in mind from the description given. For example, it is not clear what period is covered by 'recently constructed'. As far as is known to me there has been no periodic flooding at regular or irregular intervals in any of the 427 flats taken over to date. The term 'apparently immediate dampness' is itself a contradiction.

However, in an effort to help the Hon Questioner, who I understand himself resides in one of the Varyl Begg Estate flats and therefore could perhaps be expected to be already aware of the position, it is a fact that bursts in rising mains have occurred in the above project as follows:-

12 February 1975	Salt Water	Aquitania House
3 June 1975	Fresh Water	Mauritania House
4 June 1975	Fresh Water	Aquitania House
6 June 1975	Salt Water	Royal Oak House
16 July 1975	Salt Water	Royal Oak House

In addition to the above, the recent torrential rains have caused a certain number of roof leaks with consequent dampness in ceilings and walls.

Despite the exodus of labour during these abnormally heavy rains, the Contractors remaining site staff have given all possible assistance to tenants.

It should nevertheless be appreciated that due to the very high relative humidity in Gibraltar especially at this time of the year, it takes time for any dampness to evaporate, which is required before the Contractor can prepare and redecorate any affected wall. Nevertheless this redecoration is already being done by the Contractor in a number of cases.

The various phases of the Varyl Begg project are contractually covered by a 12 months guarantee for poor workmanship and/or faulty materials.

Supplementary to No. 23 of 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say whether there are any flats in blocks which have already come outside the 12 months guarantee period that are still affected by dampness which hasn't been put right?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

That I wouldn't know, Mr Speaker, but if they have developed dampness after the 12 month period then it becomes a PWD responsibility to make ~~it~~ good and we will do these as soon as possible. If they were not subjected to any heavy rains from the time of construction there was no other way of finding out whether they were, in fact, waterproof.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware that some flats that were affected by rain last winter have had nothing done to them since last winter, that is the winter of 1974, and that of course they were affected again in winter 1975? Is he aware of that fact?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not and I shall be grateful if the Hon Questioner will give me a list of those and I will have them investigated straight away. It is not the policy of the PWD to leave this not seen to immediately. We are getting a great deal of help and co-operation from the contractors and the people working on the site.

type of work

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, perhaps I could clarify that I am not putting the blame on the PWD. It is the contractors' responsibility that I am referring to and what I am trying to establish, and this was the reason why I asked for a statement, was whether in fact the Government was aware of perhaps a certain amount of failure on the part of the contractor to fulfil adequately this 12 month guarantee period and since some of the flats in question are already outside the 12 months period, I was hoping that a statement would show that the Government has not accepted the flats and assumed the responsibility for something which to my mind would appear to be the responsibility of the contractor. Perhaps, the Minister can confirm whether anything of this nature has taken place between his Department and the contractor, or not?

investigated and confirmed

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

As I said before, Mr Speaker, if I were given a list of these alleged happenings, I will have them ~~reported and~~ I will certainly take them up because not only is there a contractual liability by the contractor during the 12 month period but of anything that is brought to his notice before the expiry of the 12 month period, even if he doesn't do it within the 12 month period. ~~and~~ If the contractor failed ~~and~~ that would be a surprise to me because, as I say, we keep a very close watch on the

contractor and he has not yet failed to meet his obligations on any one occasion so far as I am aware. I would be grateful if I were given a list and then I will investigate the matter personally and give the Hon Questioner a written reply.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I just clear something up. Is the Minister saying, in fact, that in the cases where the 12 month guarantee period has expired, the blocks in question have been accepted by his Department? Or has there been an extension of the guarantee period because the Government has refused to accept responsibility for floods due to dampness? I mean has one or the other occurred?

MR SPEAKER:

I am afraid we are talking at cross purposes. The Minister has said that he does not know of any case in which the contractor has been asked to do the work and he was refused. Is that correct?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

That is so. What I said, Mr Speaker, was that if the fault was reported before the expiration of the 12 month guarantee period and the contractor had not completed the work during that period, it still remains his responsibility.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, that is accepted.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if the Department, has, in fact, re-negotiated the guarantee period with the contractor the Minister would know about it, wouldn't he?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

There has been no such re-negotiations at all. The 12 month period exists in the contract and there is no question of re-negotiating or anything of the sort.

HON J BOSSANO:

So that in the cases, Mr Speaker, where the Government considers at the end of a 12-month period that the blocks in question are still not in the state of fitness that they would expect them to be, what is the position as regards the responsibility of the contractor?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

I have said, and I say so for the third time, Mr Speaker, if those defects had been notified to the contractor before the expiration of the 12 month period from the day it is taken over, then it remains the responsibility of the contractor to make them good to the satisfaction of the Department. That is not a re-negotiation of the contract.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask for further clarification in this respect? Is this applicable eg where it is the case of penetrating dampness and there is a subsequent occasion on which one gets penetrating dampness again? I mean the original dampness dries out and then on a subsequent winter the house becomes damp again. What is the situation, is that still the same defect that it was originally, or not?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

Mr Speaker, this is hypothesis. It could be from entirely different reasons and this is why I repeat that if the Hon Member will give me a list of those cases I will get them investigated personally and individually and I will let him have a reply on that basis. So far as I am aware the contractor meets his liabilities as and when they arrive. He has not shirked any of them.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I ask the Minister whether the leaking roofs in Canton House which are now outside the 12 months guarantee period, are these the responsibility of his Department or the responsibility of the contractor to put right?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

I really don't know, Mr Speaker, because this is the first time I have been told that the roofs of Canton House leak. I will make a specific enquiry about this.

HON M XIBERRAS:

If any fault is reported within the guarantee period will the contractor make it good even though the work is not completed within the period?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

Yes. I have already said this twice.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Has the Hon Member received any complaints from the tenants' association in one of his meetings with them?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

No, Sir, I haven't. Certainly not about that.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 24 of 1976

The Hon W M Isola

Will Government make a statement on the potable water situation?

Answer

The Minister for Public Works and Municipal Services

The stock reported at 9 am on Thursday 8 January 1966 when this answer was prepared was 48,983 cubic metres (or tonnes) equivalent to 10,776,200 gallons which compares to 18,377 cubic metres (or tonnes) equivalent to 4,043,000 gallons on the same date last year.

Supplementary to No. 24 of 1976

HON W M ISOLA:

Is this the result, Mr Speaker, of the tanker which recently arrived with water?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

Obviously the water the tanker brought is included in the stock figures.

HON W M ISOLA:

Can the Government say what the cost was of bringing this water to Gibraltar?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

I haven't got the exact figures but quoting from memory, Mr Speaker, it was just over 4 million gallons and I think it was about £33,000.

HON P J ISOLA:

I want to ask the Minister whether the fact that there is a stock of 10 million gallons of water whether this will bring relief as far as the distillation plants are concerned and will essential maintenance etc, be carried out on them and how long is this stock likely to last as far as consumption in Gibraltar is concerned?

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

Mr Speaker, at the moment the North Face Distiller has already been undergoing an extensive maintenance for some eight weeks and it is estimated it will be another fortnight before it can be brought back into operation and when that one is in operation we anticipate closing the VTE down for a similar period so that we have got them both at peak capacity at the beginning of the summer. The North Face Distiller has taken 10 weeks to do because it was only given a minimum of maintenance last year because of the pressure of the demand. In fact we didn't stop it, it stopped itself.

to meet

HON P J ISOLA:

How many weeks supply does the present stock of water represent.

HON LT COL J L HOARE:

At the present rate of consumption and production, indefinitely.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 25 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Will Government consider amending the relevant law to give security of tenure to workers occupying accommodation registered under the Labour from Abroad (Accommodation) Ordinance?

Answer

The Minister for Labour and Social Security

It is not quite clear what the Hon Questioner has in mind when he mentions "security of tenure". Government does not intend to provide any more security of tenure to individuals beyond the present provisions whereby at least 3 months' notice must be given of the intention to cease to keep or manage premises registered under the Ordinance.

It is Government's contention that, primarily, it is the duty of employers to arrange for the accommodation of their own employees, and therefore, insofar as Government-owned hostels are concerned, preference is given first to employees of Government and the other Official Employers and then to those of private employers whom it may be in the public interest to help in making the accommodation available. So long as a workman comes within these criteria, is paying his charges regularly, and his behaviour does not impair the orderly running of the hostel, he can be assured security of tenure.

However, if he becomes unemployed, for whatever reason, or changes to employment which does not fall within the basic criteria, he is required to leave the hostel. This, however, is not done summarily, and the practice has always been to give him at least a week in which to find other accommodation. Only last month, I assured the District Officer of the Transport and General Workers Union that a number of aliens who were being made redundant at the Varyl Begg building project would be given a period of grace, of up to a month, to stay on at Casemates Hostel whilst they made alternative arrangements for accommodation if they found re-employment.

Supplementary to No. 25 of 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister of Labour, in respect of Government hostels which really wasn't the object of my question, ensure that this period of grace is maintained fairly regularly because there have in fact been incidents involving DOE workers where the workers were asked to quit their beds while an appeal against their dismissal was still going on and they were re-employed and found themselves back in the job and without a bed.

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Sir, I can give that undertaking. It has always been the practice in the Department to give at least a week ^{and} if it is not being done it is a matter which I regret and a matter which I shall take up. ^{That} ^{that} minimum period of notice I can guarantee can be given in all cases. Whether we can go beyond a week is another matter. As I say there are instances where we do and we shall certainly try and do our best to help the people concerned.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, on the question of private hostels where, in fact, workers do not lose their beds when they lose their jobs which is a different problem would the Minister not agree that there is a need to provide some sort of protection as regards notice to quit given to individual tenants in the hostel rather than the hostel closing down?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, I do see the problem. Where an individual tenant is given notice to quit by a landlord because for instance he may have made a complaint about the conditions in the hostel, it is of course desirable that the tenant should have some security. But the problem, Mr Speaker, which has been exercising not only the minds of officials in my Department but also in the Public Health Department, is the fact that it is foreseen that there would be great difficulty in the fair application to both the landlord and the residents of any legislation that aims at providing security in this respect. But I do appreciate the point that the Hon Questioner is making.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister not agree, Mr Speaker, that perhaps an improvement that might be considered could be to provide for appeals against notices to quit and for the notice to quit to be ineffective until after the hearing of the appeal, for example?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am prepared to look into that Mr Speaker, but as I say it does raise the question of fairer application of the law and it does raise the question of serious administrative involvement when there could be a spate of appeals. ~~and~~ I can foresee that happening in some instances knowing the situation in some private hostels. But I will certainly give the matter consideration.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But, Mr Speaker, if I understand rightly, the Minister is referring to Government hostels.

HON A J CANEPA:

No, we are now talking about privately owned hostels.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Coming then to the privately owned hostels, whilst obviously there is very little security of tenure, is the Government keeping an eye on the number of beds available. I happen to know only this morning of two cases whereby the tenants have been told that they have to leave their accommodation and they are finding great difficulty in find other accommodation. Is the Minister aware of this and what could be done to prevent this?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Sir, this is a problem which is constantly exercising the minds of Government. There is in fact a committee set up ^{by} under the previous administration under the chairmanship of the Deputy Governor, of which I am a member, which ^{meets} at frequent intervals ~~meets~~ to monitor the situation. I am fully conscious of the need to provide more accommodation and of a better quality.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is there anything in existence at the moment whilst the Government is considering a final and permanent solution?

HON A J CANEPA:

Sir, there is no slack in the accommodation available that can readily meet a problem that arises ~~such as~~ ^{where} where a hostel in the private sector closes down. ~~There is no accommodation immediately available to take up.~~

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But couldn't the Minister look into this matter with great urgency and find if something could be done as a contingency to meet this sort of situation? I don't suppose that there are all those people affected, but at least it could give some time to find accommodation a week or two weeks, some place where they can go into while they are ~~trying~~ trying to find other accommodation and perhaps also give time to the Government to see if they can do something to accommodate those people. I am referring of course to people who have permanent employment in Gibraltar not those who come to seek employment.

HON A J CANEPA:

Sir, with hundreds of people accommodated in the private sector in what cannot be termed entirely satisfactory conditions, it must be clear that there are no contingencies because if there was suitable accommodation it would be taken up immediately. The law would be applied as it ought to be rather more stringently, and a number of small hostels in the private sector would have been closed down as a result of providing other accommodation. In the long term, and I hope it won't be too long term, it depends on how long it takes to accommodate the present tenants of the transit centres, the ~~long term~~ objective is to convert Town Range Centre into a Hostel.

MR SPEAKER:

The Hon Questioner has been given an assurance by the Minister that he is looking into the matter.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, with all due respect, it is a bit more than that. I fully understand the question of suitable accommodation...

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, but we mustn't debate the situation. It may be important enough for a debate but not at question time.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I just ask the Hon Member to state whether he agrees that there are certain serious concomitants to the way the accommodation is being allocated at present which results, for example, in anomalous situations such as the case where an immigrant worker is entitled to reside in Gibraltar and register in his department as unemployed and draw unemployment benefit whilst at the same time his employer, say in the case of Government, in a Government Hostel deprives him of the accommodation which is the legal basis of his presence in Gibraltar.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, we are very careful whenever a person is drawing unemployment benefit which he is entitled to do for a period of 13 weeks, ~~we are very careful~~ to ensure that steps are not taken by the Department that will deprive him of what he is legally entitled to.

MR SPEAKER:

We must leave the matter now.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does he not agree that if a person is asked to leave the accommodation on becoming unemployed and if there is, as he has admitted, such a shortage of accommodation that it is almost impossible for that person to obtain alternative accommodation, that the person's right to register in Gibraltar as unemployed and to draw unemployment benefit to which he has contributed is being endangered by the fact that his presence in Gibraltar is illegal if he cannot find accommodation?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think that that happens in practice, Mr Speaker. I would be very reluctant to admit that the Department through taking such a step is effectively removing the right which the individual has to draw unemployment benefit for 13 weeks. I accept that it could happen if the step was actually taken of depriving him of his bed. Then the Immigration Department might put him out of Gibraltar. In practice I am not aware of such cases materialising because, as I say, there are very serious obligations which we have in respect of the payment of unemployment benefit.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, we must leave this question now.

HON J BOSSANO:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, but there is more information that I want.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, there is another question on labour from abroad.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I ask the Minister in respect of private accommodation whether he is aware that there are instances of individuals who have not lost their jobs but who cannot in fact renew their contract because they have been evicted from a private accommodation and the law says they must have an approved place to live under the Ordinance before their contract can be renewed and there are individuals in cases like this in danger of losing their jobs when they are perfectly satisfactory employees. Is he aware of that?

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, but what I would like to say is this. These are instances of what can happen accepting the legislation as it stands. We can go on ad nauseum in this vein. The Minister has given an assurance that he is going to go into the matter to try and put things right. If members feel there are more things to be said let us debate the matter by all means at the right time but you cannot at question time go beyond what we have done.

HON J BOSSANO:

What I am trying to establish, Mr Speaker, is whether in fact the Minister is aware that because there are a number of laws limiting the way in which immigrant labour can work and live in Gibraltar, the ramifications of one law impinges on the operation of the other?

HON A J CANEPA:

I accept that and I would say the underlying problem to it all, basically, is the shortage of accommodation.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

ORAL

13.1.76

No.26 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Will Government state how many premises have been licensed under the Labour from Abroad (Accommodation) Ordinance and what is the aggregate total of persons that may be accommodated in these premises?

Answer:

The Minister for Medical and Health Services

The number of premises licensed under the Labour from Abroad (Accommodation) Ordinance is 235 made up as follows:-

Privately-run accommodation	179
Accommodation provided by employers	52
Government-run hostels	4

and the total number of persons that may be accommodated in these premises is 4,344.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.26 of 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Minister say what is the level of occupancy?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Sir, this is what I have been trying to get and we find it very difficult in the department. I have been assured by the Senior Public Health Inspector that it would take some time to get the real occupancy and he may be able to do so before the end of the day. I can give the Honourable Member some indication of what is happening. It is odd, as it was odd to me when I got these statistics, that we should have 4,344 beds when we have been arguing that we haven't got enough beds. But the reason for that I am told is that as regards the accommodation provided by private employers they have more beds available than they are prepared to let other people. I know of a particular case where an employer has got three beds, he is paying for the beds but on the other hand they are not occupied. He has got those beds possibly in case he needs alien

workers to come over to work for him. As regards the privately run accommodation I am also told that there may be four beds in a flat but when there is a married couple - and I presume there must be an odd case because there aren't too many married couples in Gibraltar within the alien labour force - they occupy the whole flat and therefore although the number of beds look high all the beds are not available. However, the Public Health Department are doing their best to try and see whether they can relate the actual physical occupation of those beds and if the figures are not available by today I will certainly give it to the Honourable Member immediately they are available.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister not agree, perhaps the Minister of Labour, would he not agree that this information which has certainly surprised me as well might perhaps open up an avenue for greater Government control of the allocation of beds and perhaps produce a more stable situation in the relationship between availability of accommodation and the occupation of that accommodation since there appears to be a very substantial leeway there between the number of beds and the number of permits.

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Sir, I certainly would agree. I had no inkling that there were over 4,000 available beds in Gibraltar and perhaps the question is how ~~to~~ ~~we~~ make the best use of what is available. It does open up new avenues that are worth investigating.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could it not be a fact, Mr Speaker, that what the Minister's statistics are based on are the actual registration forms which are submitted by people when they pay their fee for registration of premises? In other words could it not be that they pay the fee they say: "Well, I have the right according to space and so forth regulations to have six beds," but they don't necessarily make use of the six beds. I also know of cases like that. And are not his statistics based on the number of beds that have been approved but not necessarily the number of beds that are actually there?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

That is precisely what I said before that though the number of spaces for the beds - I am talking now about the spaces of beds and not the occupancy of beds - we allow a certain number of beds but it may well

be that the persons who are running the hostel or subletting the accommodation are not using the space to put the number of beds that are allowed under the relevant ordinance. But I think we shall get all this when we get the figures that I've mentioned and in fact if I don't get everything I want I will press for more because even if it takes a little longer it is worth while doing an exercise in depth.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, has Government any control at all in stopping sudden reductions in the number of beds?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

We have no control. The only control we have is to make sure that they haven't got more beds than it is permitted under the law. That is why we should look at the whole spectrum of this particular problem when we get the figures.

HON M XIBERRAS:

In looking at the whole spectrum, Mr Speaker, would the Government not agree that one should develop the area of Government accommodation - we have brought this point a number of times to the notice of the Minister - would the Government not agree that it would be undesirable to embark on any scheme that reduces the Government commitment to the provision of beds in view of the overall situation?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Sir, the one place that we have got earmarked for the hostel at the moment is Town Range and of course the problem is the one of trying to accommodate the people there. But nevertheless, whatever I said before about looking at the whole spectrum, it will not in any case delay any possibility of building any hostel or providing any more Government hostels.

No.27 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Will Government state whether it is prepared to follow the good example of the DOE/PSA in creating new opportunities for young workers, both male and female by giving employment to six trainee gardeners and providing jointly with DOE the necessary training facilities?

Answer:

The Minister for Labour & Social Security

As far back as 1973, Government was already considering the training of local youngsters to attain the skills and knowledge required of a gardener. In fact, on the 27th June of that year, the Gibraltar Official Employers' Apprentices Board approved a paper tabled by the Productivity and Training Manager proposing the introduction of junior apprenticeship schemes, which included training in this discipline.

2. At the time, no suitably qualified person was available to Government to carry out the necessary training duties. It was therefore decided to send the Parks Supervisor, a Technical Grade Officer, to the United Kingdom to undergo specialist training, which included a period of attachment to the Parks Section of a Local Authority and Kew Gardens, together with an on-the-job instructors course, with a view to his undertaking instructing duties on his return. This officer was in the United Kingdom for 5 months returning to Gibraltar in October 1975.

3. A training programme for apprentice gardeners is now being prepared and it is envisaged that Government will be in a position to start a scheme involving three young persons, in the early part of this year.

4. When the scheme is approved by Government and the Board, PSA will be approached with a view to pooling resources in the proposed training scheme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.27 of 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware that the DOE has, in consultation with the TGWU, been able to move very fast on this? They are now in a position to start training within a matter of five weeks since recruiting the trainees. And will the Minister try to use his offices to accelerate the process in the Gibraltar Government so that there is no delay in the implementation of the DOE project in order to move into line with the Gibraltar Government?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't think that the project which the PSA are undertaking will be as far reaching as the Gibraltar Government one. I think ours is a rather more rigorous scheme, a better run scheme, along the lines of a junior apprentice scheme. I feel that I can confidently say that at the next meeting of the Official Employers Apprentices Board we should be in a position to table something quite definite. When I mention the early part of this year I have in mind the first quarter of 1976. We are in a position now to move quickly, ^{to} the delays in the past have been ~~because of~~ ^{due to} the fact that there was nobody available, ^{to provide the training} But we do have somebody available and I don't think, Mr Speaker, that the implementation of the training scheme will be inordinately delayed, either ours or the PSA one. But I think the Honourable Member will agree that it is desirable obviously to pool our resources.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister whether he can confirm that this opportunity will be equally open to both young boys and girls?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes.

ORAL

13.1.76

No.28 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Will Government explain the policies it has adopted in the application of the Scamp recommendations (a) to non-industrial workers and (b) to industrial workers; and will it further explain why in the case of the latter it has adopted a less favourable attitude?

Answer:

The Financial & Development Secretary

There is essentially no difference between the policies applied to industrial and non-industrial employees.

Firstly it has been necessary to determine the equivalent grade in the UK. In some cases the current structure in Gibraltar does not allow a grade for grade analogue and Official Employers have endeavoured to equate each Gibraltar grade to the UK grade which has comparable duties and responsibilities. This comparison has been carried out on a grade for grade basis and no attempt has been made to evaluate every single post. Therefore in the case of Government employment where previous gradings were based on local criteria, all Staff Associations have been made aware of Government's intention to carry out staff inspections based on UK criteria as a follow up to the Review. The outcome of such an inspection may well change both the number of posts within a grade and the schedule of duties of some individual posts.

Secondly for those grades who by the application of the percentages recommended by Scamp will not receive an increase over and above the increases as a result of the COLA and Interim Award already in payment, mark time arrangements have been proposed. These arrangements will ensure that all employees who are currently earning more than the recommended percentages will receive an increase of £26 p.a. over and above their present earnings.

Because of the magnitude of the exercise to discuss all the various industrial bands and in order to reach a settlement in reasonable time, the Official Employers have offered to make a settlement with the Transport & General Workers Union on the basis of the Official Employer's proposed UK bands and to apply any changes subsequently agreed retrospective to October 1974.

Thirdly, in order to place all grades on comparable conditions those Gibraltar grades for which the UK analogues contributes to a pension fund will be abated to the extent of the UK employees contribution.

It will be quite clear therefore from what I have said that the policy which is being applied to both Industrial and Non-Industrial grades has been a uniform one of seeking the appropriate UK analogues and the Government rejects absolutely the imputation carried by the question that the policy followed has been less favourable towards Industrial workers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.28 of 1976

MON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Financial & Development Secretary aware that in the case of non-industrials the Industrial Relations Officer made a statement to the effect that the grades involved were being equated with UK first and that a subsequent staff inspection team would result in the allocation of extra responsibilities if it were found that the posts in the grade did not in fact justify the analogues that had been chosen.

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As far as I am aware, Mr Speaker, that is what the Industrial Relations Officer did, in fact, say.

HON J BOSSANO:

And, Mr Speaker, would he not agree that this is dramatically different from the reactions of the official employers to a request at the opening of the negotiations in JIC for virtually this very approach in respect of industrial workers where the staff side suggested that the bandings should be equated with the bandings in UK as they stood and the inspection of the posts in particular bandings should be carried out subsequently in time for the October 1976 exercise.

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, one must remember of course that the Honourable Member speaks from a position of considerable advantage in matters in this respect. But as I understand it in the case of the industrials it is proposed that if on a comparison between the UK band today and the Gibraltar band it is subsequently agreed that that banding is too high, it is my understanding that it has already been stated in the negotiations that no further action would be taken. It would be accepted that in Gibraltar that trade would be higher. I

don't know whether this is really what the Honourable Member is driving at but perhaps if he can further explain if that does not satisfy him.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, what I am trying to establish is to what extent the Government is aware of the policy that is being enunciated in the negotiating bodies. I would like to know whether, in fact, the Financial & Development Secretary is aware that the delay in the conclusion of the pay review to which reference has already been made in previous questions stems initially from the failure of the official side to accept the proposal of the staff side that the negotiations for this year should be based on existing banding.

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am not going to allow that under this question. I think the original question is clear. You are asking for Government policy as to non-industrial workers and industrial workers. Let us not discuss the whole Scamp Report and how the negotiations are going on. One seems to forget that the object of questions is to seek information, and nothing else.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the information that I am seeking is the extent to which the Financial & Development Secretary and the Government is aware of what is going on. Because if they are not aware then perhaps they should take steps to become aware.

MR SPEAKER:

A supplementary must be directed to seek information relevant to the original question being asked, not to how the negotiations are getting on.

HON J BOSSANO:

No, not to how the negotiations are getting on. It is a question of the policy that has been adopted in respect of the application of the Scamp recommendations to industrial workers. Now, the policy that the Staff Side asked for as soon as the first meeting was held was that the bandings as they were in Gibraltar should be equated with the bandings in UK and a staff inspection carried out subsequently.

MR SPEAKER:

And you are asking now?

HON J BOSSANO:

Now that policy was unacceptable to the employers and it seems to me to be identical with the policy that is acceptable for non-industrials.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, the question is how can you reconcile one stand with the other.

HON J BOSSANO:

This is what I am trying to establish, Mr Speaker, because the Honourable Member has said that there is no difference between the two and to me there seems to be a clearcut difference.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, if there is a difference it stems from the fact that the

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am not going to allow discussion on the reasons for the difference. I am prepared to hear an answer which says that you accept the fact that there is a difference or you don't accept the fact that there is a difference. And if you accept that there is a difference then you are being asked why you are treating one in a different way to the other. But we mustn't go into the merits or the reasons.

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said just now one must bear in mind of course the somewhat unique position of the questioner but so far as the Government is concerned it is applying uniform policies to both industrials and non-industrials, as I said in my original answer.

MR SPEAKER:

Therefore the answer is that there is no difference.

HON J BOSSANO:

And therefore, Mr Speaker, I must ask the Honourable Member whether he is aware of certain facts which suggest that there is a difference because it may be that this is once again an instance of his ignorance of so many other things which has been displayed today. The fact that what the Minister has described as the policy that is acceptable in the case of non-industrials which he has admitted is so, is in fact what was considered unacceptable in the case of industrials? Is he aware of that or not?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I was not aware of it.

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, Mr Speaker, would he not consider then that in view of the fact that this has happened and that it is recorded and that it is possible for him to become aware of this, he should revise his ideas as to whether perhaps unwittingly the Government has in fact created a situation of more sympathetic treatment to one group as opposed to another group.

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I can't accept that.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I just ask whether the Government is considering a different percentage for any group of workers?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

You can certainly ask but you will not, I am afraid, get the answer.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is that, Mr Speaker, to be taken that the Government is not committed to the same percentage for everybody?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I am sure the Honourable Questioner knows, the Government is committed to the percentages laid down by Scamp.

HON J BOSSANO:

Therefore, Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Member now give me an answer to the question as to whether Government is considering a higher percentage for any group of workers?

HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The answer to that question is no, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

ORAL

13.1.76

No.29 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Will Government consider granting payment of family allowance in respect of the first child in the case of single parent families?

Answer:

The Minister for Labour & Social Security

Government does not feel that there is evidence of a need to pay family allowances in respect of the first child of all one-parent families. There is no gainsaying that anything done along these lines to help families is to be welcomed, but as I said in reply to question No.148 of 1974, on the same subject, Government's policy is to make the best use of whatever money is available for improvements to family allowances generally.

2. By and large, such one-parent families as there may be, and for whom the measure suggested in the question would be of significant assistance, would be expected to qualify for Supplementary Benefits. In that case the Supplementary Benefit Scheme already provides for payment of a sum (at present 90p) equivalent to the family allowance for the first child in addition to the normal increase for the child under the Scheme. In effect, therefore the purpose of the question is already being met in the really deserving cases, even if under a different guise.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.29 of 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister not agree that there are a number of instances where in a single parent family, the parent goes out to work and therefore is not in receipt of supplementary benefits and yet the needs of that family unit are obviously greater than the need of the other average family?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am aware of the fact, Mr Speaker, that in the UK this has been established beyond doubt after a great deal of fight and that a child's interim benefit is being introduced during the year April 1976 to April 1977, to meet that situation. But I am not sure and I have no evidence about the extent to which a similar provision is required in Gibraltar.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would he not agree that if in fact the extent of which such family units exist in Gibraltar is very limited it suggests that concentrating help in this area would be a very small burden on Government finances and that spreading that aid amongst all families would, in fact, reduce very little compensating benefits to all the families?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes Sir, it may well be that, financially, the burden is a very, very small one. But what is worrying me is that the proposal could introduce complications of an administrative nature when what we have been trying in the department has been to rationalise procedures in all directions. This is what we have been doing and I think we have been achieving that and I am very concerned about the introduction of very complex legislation along the lines of the UK which as I say is of an interim nature, raising all sorts of administrative complications. I am convinced, Mr Speaker, that if there is a handful of deserving cases who are not already on supplementary benefits, it should be possible to help in some other way if the need can be established. But I am reluctant to introduce complicated legislation for very few, deserving as it may be.

Will Government state how many apprentices were accepted by each of the three official employers in the last three years?

Answer:

The Minister for Labour and Social Security

The number of apprentices accepted by each of the Official Employers in the last three years is as follows:

1973	Government	19
	PSA/DOE	26
	MOD	18

1974	Government	16
	PSA/DOE	16
	MOD	26

1975	Government	22
	PSA/DOE	11
	MOD	33

May I say that what is very significant of course in these figures is the fact that the number of apprentices which the PSA/DOE have been accepting has shown a very significant downward trend in the last three years.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.30 OF 1976

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, does not the Minister agree that there is an increase in number of MOD figures? But would the Minister know why PSA, to begin with, are taking on fewer people?

HON A J CANEPA:

I understand, Mr Speaker, that it is their policy not to rely so much on direct labour but to put work out to local contractors.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, from the MOD side there is a welcome increase in the number of people being taken in. Could the Hon Member explain why this is, and what trades are the favoured ones?

HON A J CANEPA:

Sir, I have got a breakdown of these figures by trades, if that is what the Hon Member is after? The main.....

HON M XIBERRAS:

I asked which were the favoured ones?

HON A J CANEPA:

The favoured ones, Sir, from the breakdown are electrical fitter, mechanical fitter, shipwright, carpenter, and plumber. I would say, Sir, those are the favoured trades.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is there to the Minister's knowledge a shortage in any parituclar trade for which apprentices are not available or for which people would not go?

HON A J CANEPA:

Well, Sir, if I give the Hon Member the figures of the bids which the official employers put in in the last three years as against the number of apprentices that were actually recruited, that, I think will help to set the thing in its proper perspective. The figures for the bids made by the official employers were as follows:

1973	Government	22
	PSA/DOE	27
	MOD	23

1974	Government	25
	PSA/DOE	16
	MOD	27

1975	Government	29
	PSA/DOE	13
	MOD	37

That will give the Hon Member an idea, Mr Speaker, of the number of apprentices which the Official Employers were actually prepared to take on and the numbers that were actually recruited for a variety of reasons.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I thank the Minister for those very clear figures. Am I right therefore in saying that, broadly speaking, the needs of the official employers are met by this recruitment of apprentices.

HON A J CANEPA:

Broadly speaking, yes, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, one final question. In the Minister's experience, therefore, is it not true to say that the Dockyard, to give one example, is largely making up its labour force and it is not under-operating because of any shortage of recruitment?

HON A J CANEPA:

I would agree with that, Sir.

15.1.76

No.31 of 1976

ORAL

The Hon L Devincenzi

Will Government make a statement regarding the housing of Mr L Manetto, Government Teacher?

Answer:

The Minister for Education

I gave the Hon Member a comprehensive statement regarding the housing of Mr L Manetto at a meeting of this House on the 10 October 1974. Since that occasion, I understand that a Notice of Determination of Tenancy dated 30 May, 1975, was served on Mr Manetto and that his objection to this Notice was not in order because it was not in accordance with the relevant section of the Housing Ordinance. However, it is not likely that this matter will be pursued further in view of the short period to elapse before Mr Manetto's return in June or July of this year.

The Hon L Devincenzi

Can Government state whether there is any hold up in the building of the Girls Comprehensive School?

Answer:

The Minister for Education

There has been a delay in the planning of the Girls' Comprehensive School, occasioned by the need to consider in detail the total area required by the school in relation to that available at Montagu Basin and whether it would be feasible to re-site the Mediterranean Rowing Club on the same site. The Architects have now produced a plan of the school which incorporates the requirements of the brief prepared by the Department and shows that both school and Rowing Club could be constructed on the Montagu Basin site without restricting the area required by the school. Accordingly they have now been instructed to proceed with further drawings for the consideration of the Department.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.32 of 1976

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Mr Speaker, now that the architects have given the go-ahead, has the Department had any further consultations with other interested parties like the GTA or the Parents Association?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Several different parties have made representations to the Department, and also to my colleague the Minister for Development and we have listened to them. The present position is that the Architects have been told to go ahead with the planning of the school irrespective of what is the final siting of the Mediterranean Rowing Club.

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Can the Minister confirm that it will be irrespective of the re-siting of the Mediterranean Rowing Club.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the Minister has said that controversy over the siting of the Mediterranean Rowing Club will not delay the planning of the Girls' Comprehensive School.

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Thank you, Mr Speaker, but the question I asked as a supplementary which I don't think has been answered is whether there has been any consultation with these interested bodies after the go-ahead was given and not prior to that.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It was prior to the go-ahead having been given but having heard all the different representations made it was still felt that the go-ahead with the plans could carry on.

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Can the Minister say when work will begin?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When will they begin what?

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Work on the building. Any expected date?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, there is quite a lot of work to be done in the actual planning and getting it through the FCO Progress Committee but it should be possible to make a start on the actual building in late 1977.

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Did the Minister say FCO?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office because the funds are coming from the Overseas Development Programme and it goes through them and then through to the Overseas Department.

HON P J ISOLA:

Did the Minister say 1977? I understood that at the last meeting of the House when we were discussing the Development Programme, the date given by the Minister for Economic Development was October, 1976. Has there been a shift from this date, and are there any particular reasons for this shift?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The position is as it was put to us by the Architect; the amount of time that they required to get the drawings made out and the time to get it through the various committees in England. We are perhaps being optimistic if we say 1976 and they think a more reasonable date is 1977. We have told them the urgency of the matter; we have told them that they must cut all corners possible not losing anything in so doing, but they still feel that it will be around that date before we can get to actual starting work.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 33 of 1976

The Hon L Devincenzi

Will Government take steps and allocate funds for the promotion of the arts in Gibraltar in a co-ordinated and comprehensive fashion?

Answer

The Minister for Education

The Honourable Member will be aware that Government already allocates funds for the promotion of the arts in Gibraltar. If he feels that there is a need for increasing these funds or that they should be allocated in any better fashion, I shall be pleased to consider his ideas.

Supplementary to No. 33 of 1976

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not feel that in comparison to, say, sport, the overall provision for the development of the arts in Gibraltar is considerably less, that Government takes much less of a hand and that the planning of the overall artistic life of the community is much less than that of the sporting life and does he not feel himself that there should be some new emphasis in this.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I would not agree that there is such a dis-similarity. Perhaps the Honourable Member hasn't taken into account the amount of money which we spend in the Mackintosh Hall where there is a theatre where the arts are performed etc, where there are displays of painting exhibitions. All in all taking this and the money spent on cultural activities by my colleague on my right, I think that they do get a fair crack of the whip but we are quite happy to listen to any representations to further this if they should be forthcoming.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am glad to hear that, Mr Speaker. Something in the nature of some sort of Arts Council which we feel is needed here to co-ordinate activities of this kind because they are desultory in the main and they have been the prerogative of a particular class of people for quite a long time in Gibraltar. What we feel is that the Government should take a hand in co-ordinating and presenting a coherent programme of artistic expression.

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Mr Speaker, could the Minister instead of passing the buck, take the initiative in perhaps calling a meeting of those bodies which are interested in the arts, especially the more prominent bodies, in order to initiate discussions as to where help can be given and amounts requested for the Minister to consider at a later stage. Wouldn't he take some initiative instead of just saying "If you have any complaints come to me."

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Following what the Honourable Mr Xiberras has said and the suggestions that he has put forward I am quite happy to call such a meeting.

ORAL
13.1.76

No. 34 of 1976

The Hon L. Devincenzi

What plans does Government have to fill the headship of the Boys Comprehensive School once the Christian Brothers leave Gibraltar?

Answer

The Minister for Education

The post of Headmaster, Boys' Comprehensive School, has been advertised here, to serving qualified teachers with relevant experience in comprehensive schools, and also in the United Kingdom. Selection will be undertaken by the Public Service Commission in accordance with normal procedure and the intention is to appoint a Headmaster in May in order that there should be an adequate hand-over period before the existing Headmaster retires in July.

ORAL

13.1.76

No.35 of 1976

The Hon J Bossano

Will Government state whether it is prepared to expand the Nursery School facilities in order to encourage more married women to enter employment?

Answer:

The Minister for Education

Government expects to expand its nursery school facilities by 40 places when purpose-built accommodation on the Varyl Begg Estate is available for use. The completion of this accommodation is expected within the next few weeks but it has to be used by infant schoolchildren until the Varyl Begg First School is completed - possibly in late 1977/78. In the private sector, Government is considering the alteration of a shop area on the Glacis Estate for lease to persons wishing to run a private nursery school.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.35 of 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would Government consider expanding the existing facilities not just in terms of creating more places but also in terms of giving consideration to a more flexible time for making the facilities available in order to tie this in with normal working hours.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir. Part of the difficulty of course is staffing. A priority in teacher training has been given to the levels of formal schooling particularly the infant and middle schools, but one student teacher of the 14 recently appointed is going to the United Kingdom to be trained as a nursery teacher.

Can Government state when it obtained possession of "Engineer House and when it proposes to redevelop the site?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Possession of the site was formally taken by Government on 25 March 1974.

As I informed the House in January 1974 Government is bound under the agreement entered into with the original purchasers to invite fresh tenders for the redevelopment of the site as soon as practicable.

The Development & Planning Commission have considered on several occasions between April 1974 and August 1975 the manner in which this large site could best be developed in the best interests of Gibraltar as a whole having regard to the town planning, financial and legal factors at issue. The Commission have made certain recommendations concerning this property which are currently being considered by the Treasury in the light of the financial implications involved.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.36 of 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Minister not agree, Mr Speaker, that for the site to have been in Government's possession for getting on to two years now, shows inordinate delay in bringing this site to use.

HON A W SERFATY:

Sir, I am prepared to agree that it is taking time to reach agreement on this very important site but there are all kinds of complications including complications to begin with with town planning and density. The Commission is now very concerned that we should not encourage the building of a multi-storey building there which would further increase the density of what is already a very high density area. But of course this has implications because then the Government would have to take over the site and it has financial implications and that is why I have said that the matter is now in Treasury hands.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, with regard to financial implications, could the Hon Minister explain whether it means financial implications with regard to the previous tenant of the land or has it to do with the future development?

HON A W SERFATY:

There would naturally be financial implications on the development side if we were to decide to have car parks and recreational areas there but there are financial implications too to settle with the previous would-be developer who paid a large sum of money for the site.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The reason I have asked that question, Mr Speaker, is that I wasn't clear as to whether by the way he said it the Minister meant that there were going to be actual Government development and obviously I did not want to ask the question if that was the case. Since, obviously, I don't think he meant that I would like to ask the Minister now whether it is the intention of the Government to put that out to tender so that there is a private development or whether in view of the shortage of land it is now opportune to use that very useful site for Government development, for Government dwellings.

HON A W SERFATY:

At least part of the area as far as I can see will be developed by the Government. We may eventually decide to ^{put} another part of the site out to tender but it is quite obvious that it is in the best interests of Gibraltar for the Government to develop part of that area, if not the lot.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am very glad to hear that. Perhaps the Minister could give us just a little bit more information. What part of that area does he think would be used by the Government?

HON A W SERFATY:

The lower part adjoining Engineer Lane where we have a big parking problem and it would be a great pity to let that site go without using it for the solution of several of our problems, not only parking but also recreational.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What about housing? Doesn't the Minister think that is still very vital and very important?

HON A W SERFATY:

Of course I do but housing can be solved with the upper part of the area.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

MR Speaker, when he said the upper part of the area, is this housing going to be Government housing or private development? This is what I am trying to get at.

HON A W SERFATY:

I wouldn't like to commit the Government at this stage whether it will be private development or Government housing.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So am I right in assuming that when the Minister says there will be some Government development he means parking and other recreational amenities but not housing, at least not so far.

HON A W SERFATY:

What the Commission is very worried about is the density of building in that area. Honourable members will have I hope by the end of March an opportunity of seeing the densities of the different areas of Gibraltar. The Commission is worried about the proper use of that land and it may well have to be that the Government may have to lay its hands on that site. I think at this stage I would like to say that the Commission is worried about parking and recreational facilities for which undoubtedly in relation to the former, parking, the lower part of the area could come in very, very useful.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, obviously I think to carry on with this point would be to start a debate therefore, I would give warning that I may bring this matter up on the adjournment.

HON L DEVINCENZI:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister whether it is a fact that the only Government commitment to the previous would-be developer is to pay the price that he originally paid, or is there any other commitment.

HON A W SERFATY:

The commitment as far as I understand is that it must be put out to tender and the money that is received, less expenses, will go to the would-be developer.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would Government consider if that situation is produced introducing a tax in order to tax speculative gains of this type?

HON A W SERFATY:

Yes, we have ideas on the matter.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

The Hon P J Isola

Will Government make a statement on the proposed development at Rosia?

Answer:The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

The development at Rosia will be a phased programme which will start with the construction of 38 dwellings at Rosia Dale. A preliminary scheme has also been prepared for the development of the old Gasworks Site. The ultimate form of this part of the scheme will depend on the result of the site investigation now being carried out. It is envisaged that the area will be used mainly for public housing with some scope for those persons who wish to build their own dwellings.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.37 of 1976

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, did the Minister say mainly public housing?

HON A W SERFATY:

Yes, mainly.

HON M XIBERRAS:

By "mainly" what does he mean Sir?

HON A W SERFATY:

Mainly the bulk of the housing will be Government housing.

HON M XIBERRAS:

But I thought the Hon Mr Abecasis some time ago, or was it the Hon Colonel Hoare, said that only some 60 flats were to be built?

HON A W SERFATY:

38 at Rosia Dale and now we are talking about the Gas Works Site.

HON M XIBERRAS:

And that is going to be mainly for Government housing?

HON A W SERFATY:

Yes, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I ask the Minister in respect of the Rosia Dale site which I understand will be developed first. Isn't this figure of 38 somewhat a low density figure for public housing in Gibraltar?

HON A W SERFATY:

Well, if one wants high density one must go multi-storey and taking many factors into account I don't believe and I don't think the Commission believes, that multi-storey is the best answer to the problem of housing.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister think then that by building single-storey houses he can meet the needs of the many people who are on the housing list?

HON A W SERFATY:

Nobody has said, Mr Speaker, that we are building single-storey houses.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if it isn't multi-storey and if it isn't single-storey is he going to build underground ?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

No. 38 of 1976

ORAL

The Hon W M Isola

Will Government state how many cruise liners called at Gibraltar in 1975 as opposed to 1974 and will Government further state how many cruise liners are expected to call at Gibraltar in 1976?

Answer:The Minister for Tourism, Trade & Economic Development

72 cruise liners called at Gibraltar in 1975.

This compares with 92 for 1974. 58 cruise liner bookings have been made for 1976.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO. 38 OF 1976

HON W M ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, this brings us back to what I have said before that we are not promoting Gibraltar as a cruise port. Does the Minister not agree with me that the tax which he imposed on liners calling at Gibraltar has had some effect on liners calling at Gibraltar.

HON A W SERFATY:

I think I can definitely say no. No Sir, that has not had any effect. It is the high operating and fuel costs which has had an effect on cruising, generally, in the world.

HON W M ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, there is still from what I see a lot of newspapers advertising cruises and the vast majority of cruise liners which cross the straits of Gibraltar do not call at Gibraltar. Has the Government any plans or policies to encourage further cruise liners going by the straits of Gibraltar calling at Gibraltar? Does the Government not consider it essential for the trading community in Gibraltar that more cruise liners should be calling at Gibraltar? The fall is something like nearly 60% as opposed to 1974. It is disastrous.

HON A W SERFATY:

I wouldn't say it is essential but I would say it is very convenient to the trade of Gibraltar that cruise liners should call here. The fact that many cruise liners pass the straits of Gibraltar without calling here is a very old story, very old in the time of the Hon Member himself and mine previously and I am sure we have both done our best to convince companies to make more calls. But there are many commercial reasons which companies give such as the variety in the posts they have to offer and one thing and another that justifies this perhaps in their opinion. I don't hold a brief for them, but considering the world crisis in cruises, 58 is not too bad so far. There may be some more calling by the time this year is ended.

HON W M ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, when the Minister refers to 58 does he mean 58 different liners or liners which call again and again at Gibraltar.

HON A W SERFATY:

I am referring to 58 calls. I very much doubt whether there are as many as 58 cruise liners in the world today.

The Hon P J Isola

Can Government state whether the fence and wall now going up around the Europa Point Sports Ground has been approved by the Development and Planning Commission and has Government made any representations to the appropriate Ministry for making this area available to the general public at weekends at least?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

May I first of all explain that the MOD is not statutorily bound to seek approval from the Development and Planning Commission for any work which it intends to execute. As a matter of practice, however, the MOD voluntarily consults the Commission on all major projects which are not of a defence nature.

In regard to the fencing in of the Europa playing fields the Commission was informed in December 1970 of the Ministry's intention to carry out this work. This was stated to be necessary for preventing access to the grounds when they were unfit for play. Experience had shown that the surface was extensively damaged when the fields were played upon in a wet condition and that if they were allowed to be so misused everyong, both civilians and the Services, were prevented from playing on them. There was no intention to change the position. The fence would have the additional advantage of protecting persons on the adjoining roads from stray balls.

The Commission then accepted the position in the light of these assurances. The work which has been carried out to these grounds has been more extensive than envisaged at the time and because of the nature of the new surface of two of the fields it will be necessary in the interest of all who participate in these games, as explained by my colleague in July last year, to restrict their use to organised games on the same basis as before. I am, however, informed that the third pitch will be available to the general public during weekends as a general playing area.

The Ministry of Defence also intend to open up the area of Brewery Barracks to the public when this has been vacated by the constructors. This, together with the cliff side promenade, which will be restored and improved at the same time, will enhance the facilities available at Europa Point for picnicking etc.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.39

HON P J ISOLA:

of
 May I take up the last bit of the answer/the Minister and say that he is an absolute illusion if he believes that the facilities in the area will be enhanced as a result of what is going on there. May I ask the Minister if he has been to Europa Point and seen the great damage that has been done to the area, generally, as far as amenities to the general public is concerned? Does he not realise that what used to be an open ground enjoyed by many people of Gibraltar in weekends in this isolated city at the moment, has now been completely taken away? And does what he is telling us amount to this, that in fact the Government has made no representations at all to the Ministry of Defence at the obvious deprivation from the civilian population of Gibraltar of these important amenities at weekends?

HON A W SERFATY:

Mr Speaker, I never answer a question of this sort without paying a last minute visit to the site. Several days ago I went to the site to have a good look. I have also been a builder, so I am not surprised at the condition the site is in but I am confident that when the work is finished the site can be an asset to the people of Gibraltar and the Services, generally. I am convinced of that.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has the Minister been in that area before. All these works were commenced, before this wall was put up? On what does he base his premise that this will be an asset to the people of Gibraltar? In their deprivation of the use of the facilities they used to have there over the last 10 years? Where is the asset to the people of Gibraltar?

HON A W SERFATY:

The Hon Member doesn't give me much credit. Having been President of the Development Commission surely I make it part of my business to visit all Gibraltar because we are concerned with the planning of the whole of Gibraltar. But I am satisfied, let me say again, that when the work is finished and landscaped, it should be an advantage to the people. It is the work of man that sometimes makes the world look pretty beautiful.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister explain how the walls that are going up and the obnoxious fence that is going round the sport field how that is going to be landscaped? How is that going to look beautiful?

HON A W SERFATY:

I am referring to the site, of course, not to the fence itself. I have seen the wall and I have seen the penfold fencing. The penfold fencing is quite an acceptable fence. It has been accepted all over the world, if it has not been by the Hon Mr Peter Isola.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister consider that as a result of these magnificent works that are being carried out, the people who used to go to Europa Point and sit in their cars while their children played around or walk around the area, will now find great enjoyment looking into a wall and a fence.

MR SPEAKER:

Are we having an answer?

HON A W SERFATY:

I really don't get what Mr Isola is trying to ask.

HON P J ISOLA:

I will repeat it. Does the Minister think that the public who used to go to Europa Point and used to sit in their cars or walk around the area and see their children play and so forth will now be in the same position sitting in their cars facing blank ugly walls and a fence that is reminiscent of the fences that used to go around the Victoria Stadium, many, many years ago.

HON A W SERFATY:

The third pitch that I mentioned in my original answer will provide a very good playing ground I am convinced of that, let us not forget that for organised games the other two pitches will become available.

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, but is the Minister aware that there are very few organised games in Europa Football grounds in the winter months?

HON A W SERFATY:

I am informed that the Junior Boys' League are played during weekends in those pitches.

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, this may be so but is he aware of the actual use that is made over weekends, it may be 2 or 3 hours or 4 hours at the most and people go out to Europa Point very early in the afternoon or late in the evening, long after games have finished.

HON A W SERFATY:

Let us get down to brass tacks and let us see the facts of life. Nortex surfaces require some looking after. We have another pitch with a Nortex surface and we do not allow people to go with a bicycle and play around. It is organised games that we have allowed on that Nortex surface in the best interests of Gibraltar. So we must understand that the Services too have a right to protect their nortex surfaces. I don't hold a brief for the Ministry of Defence but as I said before that third pitch and the square that we are going to have outside the Old Brewsbury Barracks will also help a lot. Gibraltar is only 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ square miles in area.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I suppose that we must be content with translating the normal overcrowded playing conditions that exists in other areas in Gibraltar for the people of Gibraltar we must agree that this should also occur in Europa Point and I suppose we must be thankful for being left with a very small area of ground where a few people will be able to play knocking against each other all the time. But is the Minister aware that there are other ways of protecting nortex grounds or whatever it is over weekends by having proper supervision of the area. I would have thought that having regard to the number of people of Gibraltar who use that area it would not be difficult for the Commissioner of Police to have a policeman on duty there so as to prevent people on wet days playing on the pitch. Does the Minister consider that to stop people going anywhere you must build fences and walls around the place?

HON A W SERFATY:

Nortex, I am informed, must be watered daily and you cannot use - not that they are very much in fashion now- stiletto heels.

MR SPEAKER:

I am not going to allow Members under the guise of a question to give us the qualities either of nortex or the dangers of stiletto heels, otherwise we will be here all day.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware - he seems not to be - that in 1970 when the matter was brought up at the Commission for the first time, it was made clear

then that whilst it was obvious that some kind of protection would have to be given to the area because of the nature of the surface, there was no question of depriving the use except at times when due to the state of the ground this would be prejudicial to the surface. And that also notwithstanding all those provisos that we made very clear at the time, we left it open to reserve the right to take the matter up in Gibraltar Council, if in fact, the arrangements for the use of the grounds were not satisfactory. Is he aware of that?

HON A W SERFATY:

I am aware that the Hon Member was Chairman of the Development Commission then and he accepted the fact that there was going to be a fence round the field. Following the example of the Gibraltar Government at the Victoria Stadium, nortex surfacing has been adopted both in Queensway and in that pitch. The situation has not changed as regards the fencing which the Hon Member's Commission agreed in 1970, the situation has changed regarding the protection of the nortex surface.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

With all due respect I think the Minister should be aware that once in fact there was a fence already in that place. The idea was to ensure that access to the ground was not made on days on which the use of the field could be damaging to the surface. That was the whole point. There was no question of any walls then, and there was also always the reservation that if the arrangements were not satisfactory and would deprive the use of the area to the people of Gibraltar, the matter would be taken up in Gibraltar Council.

HON A W SERFATY:

Of course, the matter will be taken up if it is seen that the area allocated to the children of Gibraltar does not become available to the children or people. Of course it will then be taken up.

HON P J ISOLA:

But is the Minister aware Mr Speaker, that the area he himself has described which is going to be made available, is probably about 1/3rd of the area previously available? And is he aware that previous representations to Governors of Gibraltar on this matter has awakened a more enlightened and understanding response than we are getting from the Minister today? Can I ask the Minister whether any representations in respect of the Europa Point Football Grounds and its availability to the public have been made to the Governor of Gibraltar by the present Government?

HON A W SERFATY:

The information about the use of the third pitch has come from the Ministry of Defence of course.

HON P J ISOLA:

But can the Minister answer the question as to whether the Government has made any representations to the Governor of Gibraltar as Commander-in-Chief about the proposed reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ of the area at Europa Point to the public of Gibraltar, and is he aware that previous Governors have listened to such representations both with sympathy, understanding and what is more important positive help.

HON A W SERFATY:

The Hon Member with all due respect is misrepresenting himself because those two pitches will be used by the people of Gibraltar for organised games.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister aware that my question is being directed at the use of amenities by the public at weekends at Europa Point and it is precisely on that particular issue that representations have been made to previous Governments and previous Governors have responded sympathetically and positively on the matter. My question is, has the present Government made such representations to the Governor?

HON A W SERFATY:

Not as far as I am aware because there are no points for representations, Mr Speaker. The two pitches are going to be used by the people of Gibraltar for organised games. Perhaps more than before as my colleague for Sports says. And in addition there is going to be the other pitch. Why should we make representations?

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Hon Member aware that they are being used now for organised games? That the pitches are used now, and what concession is this?

HON A W SERFATY:

I haven't called it a concession. It is a continuation of what we have been doing.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Was not the Hon Member aware that this was an important matter, an important recreational matter, and has been since the closure of the frontier, for people to go out there generally outside organised games and to have an afternoon there on Europa Point or whatever it is called. In view of this why did the Minister or the Government not make representations to the appropriate quarters?

HON A W SERFATY:

I don't propose to make representations and I will not recommend my colleagues to do it for the free use of a nortex surface. I will not.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

13.1.76

NO.40 of 1976

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

Can Government make a statement on the increase of landing charges at Gibraltar Airport and can it state whether there were any prior consultations made in the increases and is Government making any representation in respect of the same?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

The increases on landing charges at Gibraltar Airport as from January 1st are 24% above previous levels on the Tridents, 14.7% on Vanguards and 25.7% on the Viscount. I was informed a few days ago that the landing charges would be increased and I am taking up the matter generally for the future.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.40 OF 1976

HON P J ISOLA:

Do I understand from the Minister that there have been no consultations with the Government on this matter?

HON A W SERFATY:

That is quite so.

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I correct in saying that it hasn't been brought up in Gibraltar Council either, is that the position?

HON A W SERFATY:

Gibraltar Council matters are confidential.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Have, to the Minister's knowledge, the users of the runway been consulted either?

HON A W SERFATY:

Not as far as I am aware.

HON P J ISOLA:

Are not matters that affect Gibraltar normally consulted upon between the Governor and his Ministers, and has this not occurred in this particular case?

HON A W SERFATY:

Well, this is a matter which has come only in the past few days. It may well come in the future.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker is the Minister saying that his first knowledge of an impending increase was when it was a fait accompli, when it had already happened.

HON A W SERFATY:

These things are normally a fait accompli. The answer to the question is, yes.

HON W M ISOLA:

Will the Minister briefly state what he means when he says he is going to take the matter up, and who he is going to take it up with, and when, and how?

HON A W SERFATY:

Of course the matter will have to be taken up in Gibraltar Council.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister suggesting that the matter has not been taken up before in Gibraltar Council?

HON A W SERFATY:

I have said so quite clearly, I think I have implied it, anyhow.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

13.1.76

No.41 of 1976

ORAL

The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state what has been the response of the British Government to the recent motion passed by this House condemning the use of "UK EYES ONLY" classification in U.K. Departments?

Answer:

The Chief Minister

The motion was passed at the meeting of the House held on the 25th November 1975 and I wrote to the Governor on this matter on the 11th December. The letter was not sent immediately as I considered it desirable to attach to it a copy of the full text of the speeches made in the debate.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.41 OF 1976

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Hon the Chief Minister be pressing the British Government for an early reply on this matter since there is obviously a great deal of interest and since until a decision is taken the discrimination continues in operation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have already made verbal representations about an early reply and I am given to understand that one will be forthcoming quite soon. Only yesterday I made a special request to find out the position was in order to keep the House informed.

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No.42 of 1976

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

What representations have been made to Government by the Pensioners' Association and will Government outline the points of disagreement between itself and the association?

Answer:

The Chief Minister

The Pensioners Association have requested that a proportion of pensions should be exempted from Income Tax . Government has informed the Association that their request cannot be approved. I discussed the Association's representations with members of the Committee on the 22nd December 1975 and the matter is under further consideration in the light of the discussion. This, of course, should not be taken as any form of commitment.