HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MEETING OF 19th DECEMBER 1978

QUESTIONS

AND

(233 TO 299)

# HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY GIBRALTAR

# HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY - ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

A copy of the Answers to Questions asked at the Meeting of the House of Assembly held on the 19th December, 1978, is attached.

2. In case of any amendments Hon Members are kindly requested to hand them in not later than Thursday the 15th February, 1979.

26.1.79

CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

QUESTIONS ASKED BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS AT THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MEETING HELD ON 19.12.78.

# No. 233 of 1978

ORAL

# The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state what have been the receipts of revenue under income tax in the months of October and November this year and how these figures compare with the same months last year?

# Answer

# The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

Receipts of Revenue under Income Tax in the months of October and November this year were:

October - £713,371

November - 770,756

In 1977 the receipts were:

October - £373,319

November - 685,435

The 1978 figures are of course subject to verification and audit.

# No. 234 of 1978

# The Hon J Bossano

Can Government give the end of the month currency note circulation figures for the months of October and November?

# Answer

# The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

The circulation figure for those months was £5,711,410.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 234 OF 1978

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, in view of the interest of the Hon Member in extracting this information and others which I see in other questions, in view of the interest of the Hon Member on my left in extracting information of this kind - I refer to revenue under income tax, currency of circulation and so forth - would the Financial and Development Secretary consider producing this information on a regular basis to all Members without the need to put down a question?

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I should be delighted to do so if it will reduce the number of questions.

# No. 235 of 1978

# The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state what have been the receipts of revenue under indirect taxation in the months of October and November and how these figures compare with the same months last year?

# Answer

# The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

Yes, Sir, Receipts, that is cash collections and credits, in respect of Indirect Taxation (Head 2 of the Revenue Estimates) for the months in question were as follows:

October 1978 £344,497 1977 294,665 November 1978 447,557 1977 319,903

The 1978 figures are of course still subject to verification and audit.

# The Hon J Bossano

Is Government aware whether any Spanish bank or financial institution has attempted to set up a branch or subsidiary in Gibraltar to purchase an interest in any existing financial institution?

# Answer

The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

No, Sir.

Will Government state the amount of fees collected on "Duty Free" items sold to passengers at the Air Terminal from 1st April to the 30th November, 1978?

# Answer

# The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

The fees collected under section 31D of the Imports and Exports Ordinance from the sale of liquor and tobacco in the duty-free shop at the Air Terminal amounted to £23,284 at the end of the period 1st April to 30th November, 1978.

# No. 238 of 1978

# The Hon G T Restano

Will Government state when the computer ordered from TBM is expected to be operative in Gibraltar?

# Answer

# The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

The system 34 Computer arrived in Gibraltar last Sunday and an IBM engineer is expected shortly to carry out the necessary installation.

As soon as the computer manager arrives, probably about the middle of January, he will commence work on the wages and billing programmes. This phase is expected to last about 2-3 months and test running of the programmes should therefore be conducted in April/May.

The recruitment of a local understudy to the computer manager is already in hand. Other supporting staff will be recruited early in the new year.

If all goes strictly according to plan, it should therefore be possible for the computer to "go live" in July. This is the target date but it assumes of course that no snags will develop during the running-in period.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 238 OF 1978

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can Government now give a clearer estimate of what the overall saving will be per year?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No. Sir.

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HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Hon the Financial and Development Secretary state how the recruiting for the manager of the computer is being done?

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As far as the computer manager is concerned, the man who will start the programme off, the recruitment has been arranged under technical cooperation with the assistance of the Ministry of Overseas Development and the manufacturers of the computer, IBM.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is it intended to train a local manager?

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think I have said that.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

This is what I was trying to aim at, actually. How is this being done? I understand that one applicant who is in fact qualified in this respect, was told that his application was not acceptable. Can you say why? Is there any reason why applications should not be accepted?

#### MR SPEAKER:

No, I will not allow a specific supplementary on the application of one particular person.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Well, perhaps I can be given a general account of how they are going about this recruitment and why certain people who are qualified should have their application refused.

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, providing it is clearly understood that I am not answering the last part of that question at all, I will say this; the recruitment of the understudy has been conducted in accordance with the usual internal Government procedures, that is to say, the potential vacancy has been advertised within the service and applicants have been asked to submit their applications. These applications are in the process of being considered now.

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What I am getting at is, is there any reason why applications should be rejected? This is what I am trying to get at.

# HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have no knowledge of the details of the recruitment process other than the fact, as I said, that I am sure that recruitment is proceeding at the moment in accordance with the normal procedures.

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I will supply the details, Mr Speaker.

### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would like to come back to the saving that will be made with the computer. Does the Honourable Member really wish us to believe that he has no idea as to what saving is going to be made?

#### MR SPEAKER:

Answers must be accepted as they are given. He has already said that he cannot say what the saving will be.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the thing is that 12 months ago the Honourable Member did give a guesstimate. In a year there has been a complete change in overheads in Government and I would like to know what, approximately, would be the figure today.

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, if the Honourable Questioner would do me the courtesy of putting that down in the form of a question I should be delighted to provide an answer. That has nothing to do with the question that he has asked me.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, in view of the Honourable Member's interest in the reduction of staff he has evinced in various budget sessions of the House, does he not believe that expenditure of this kind ....

#### MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to go into the advisibility of spending money on the computer, that has been decided on.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member not agree, Mr Speaker, that now that he is in a position to say when the computer is to become operative or live as he has said, that he should be in a position to tell the House what savings should be effected.

#### MR SPEAKER:

Whether he should or shouldn't is one thing, but he has said that he is not in a position to say.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

I am asking, Mr Speaker, whether he does not believe that he should be in a position to do it.

### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, if I were asked I would provide the information. I have not been asked, I have been asked when the computer ordered is expected to be operative.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Honourable Financial and Development Secretary say what work will be done initially by the computer?

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I did say that, but I will repeat it. The two programmes, initially, will be for wages and the billing process.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

And does, in fact, the computer have the capacity to take on additional workers as it is brought into line. What I would like the Hon Member to say is, in fact, has the computer that we are bringing in the spare capacity to able to undertake much additional work?

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As far as I am aware from what I have been told by the experts, yes, it has, quite a considerable amount can be done on a computer, a lot more than what we are starting off with. But I think the Hon Member will agree that in all probability it is best to start off with two specific programmes and get those running before we embark on a widespread computerisation programme.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

May I ask the Financial and Development Secretary what consultations have taken place with the staff associations since the beginning of the initial consultations on the subject?

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am informed that the fullest consultations have been taking place with the staff associations and, indeed, the staff associations were consulted in relation to the grading of the understudy for the computer manager.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask whether in the course of these consultations the question of staffing has been discussed?

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have not been participating in these discussions with the associations so I cannot answer that positively. My understanding is that it has been but I would be subject to correction on that.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Honourable Member than explain to the House why he is unable to offer any information on the question of staffing and staff reductions?

#### MR SPEAKER:

That does not arise from this question. Next question.

# No. 239 of 1978

# The Hon G T Restano

Will Government state what revenue is derived from levying of duty on freight and postal charges for imported goods?

# Answer

# The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

No, Mr Speaker. No such data is collected.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 239 OF 1978

#### HON G T RESTANO:

I am surprised that the Hon Member has not said that the question doesn't arise. Mr Speaker, can the Government give a justification for levying duty on postal charges?

#### MR SPEAKER:

No, I will not allow that question, that was done when it was voted by the House when the Finance Bill was passed. That was the time to ask for the justification for the levying of such a tax or fee but not now.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Honourable Member say whether he has any interest in this matter and does he not consider it to be of interest to the trade, generally?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Are you suggesting that I have a personal interest?

HON M XIBERRAS:

Not for a moment, Mr Speaker.

### MR SPEAKER:

Could I have that question again, I am afraid I didn't catch

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

He asked whether I have an interest.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Yes, a professional interest. I am afraid the Hon Financial and Development Secretary is very ready to read wrong interpretations into questions. Could I ask the Honourable Member again whether in fact, professionally, as Financial and Development Secretary responsible for the finances of Gibraltar

along with the rest of the Government, will he say whether he has an interest in this matter which my Hon Friend has asked about, or not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I have none. Customs duty is levyed on the value of the goods as they are landed and that includes the freight and postal charges, handling and other incidentals which contribute to landed cost.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member do the public and the trade, in particular, the favour of inquiring into this matter which is obviously of interest of the trade?

MR SPEAKER:

What matter?

HON M XIBERRAS:

The matter which is the subject of the question.

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am afraid you have got to be more specific. The subject of the question is the revenue derived from levying of duty. Does the Hon Member wish to answer that question?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, what am I expected to inquire into?

MR SPEAKER:

That is what I am not clear on.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, my Honourable Friend has asked about the amounts derived from levying duty on freight and postal charges for imported goods. I am asking the Financial and Development Secretary whether he would do the House the favour and the public and the trade in particular, of inquiring into this matter to extract these figures.

MR SPEAKER:

In other words, what is the amount?

HON M XIBERRAS:

Yes. Mr Speaker, for the third time, yes.

MR SPEAKER:

I will not be talked to in that manner. If it is necessary

you will do it for the tenth time. Let us be clear about this one. I have to be specific as to what is being asked so that the Minister will know what he has to answer.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

I am sure, Mr Speaker, the Financial and Development Secretary will in fact ....

#### MR SPEAKER:

The Hon Financial and Development Secretary will answer the question when I allow him to answer the question and I will clear any matter in which I feel that clarification is needed and I will do it for as long as I have to.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, in pursuance of my duty as a Member of the Opposition, I shall ask the Financial and Development Secretary, within the rules of the House and your judgement, as many times and as many questions as I think it is fit to ask.

#### MR SPEAKER:

I am not suggesting that you are not entitled to do that and I will not be spoken back, with due respect to the Leader of the Opposition. I will not have sarcasm to the Chair and that is what I read in your statement and that is why I made the remark.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I think that the Financial and Development Secretary ....

#### MR SPEAKER:

I am now speaking to the Leader of the Opposition as to the way he has addressed the Chair and nothing to do with what the Financial and Development Secretary has to answer and that is the end of the matter. Would you please answer that question. Does the Hon Member wish to answer?

# HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I understand it, I am asked to provide the figures. I have already said in my answer that no such data is collected i.e., there are no such figures available to be provided.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

I have asked the Hon Financial and Development Secretary, Mr Speaker, whether he would do the House, the public and the trade the favour of inquiring into these figures so that they become available. That is the question I have asked.

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, what figures? I have said there are no figures.

# MR SPEAKER:

You have been asked by the Hon the Leader of the Opposition, would you take the necessary action to see whether you can institute a system whereby the data can be collected so that you can give the information.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I see no point in doing so.

Will Government state the inflation figure for Gibraltar for the first eleven months of 1978?

# Answer

# The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

The rate of inflation as measured by the General (All Items) Index of Retail Prices is computed on a quarterly basis (i.e. on the 1st of January, April, July and October each year) and it is therefore not possible to provide a figure for the first eleven months of 1978.

However, the increase in the Index for the first nine months of the year i.e. between the 1st January 1978 and the 1st October 1978 was 10.9%. The corresponding increase on a yearly basis i.e. between the 1st October 1977 and the 1st October 1978 was 13.5%.

The Food Group of the Index of Retail Prices is however computed monthly.

Food Index figures for the period in question are as follows:-

1st January 1978 / 1st November 1978 - 4.9%

1st January 1978 / 1st October 1978 - 4.6%

1st October 1977 / 1st October 1978 - 5.7%

I would like to point out to the Honourable Member that the Index is published and gazetted regularly.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 240 OF 1978

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could the Hon Financial and Development Secretary tell the House what the comparable figure is in the United Kingdom?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No. Sir.

# No. 241 of 1978

# The Hon G T Restano

Will Government explain the discrepancies that exist in the new tender procedures whereby in some cases:

- Only the successful tenderer's quotation is published. a.
- The successful tenderer's quotation is not published. b.
- All tenderers' quotations are published.
- None of the tenderers' quotations are published.
- The unsuccessful tenderers' are named. The unsuccessful tenderers' are not named.

# Answer

# The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

Sir, I am grateful to this question because it brings to my notice certain inconsistencies in the publication of tender awards. The publication of Tender Award Notices is the responsibility of the Head of the Department which initiated the tender. It is quite clear from the inconsistencies of which examples are given in this Question, that Heads of Department are not in every case complying strictly with the Regulation governing the content of Tender Award Notices.

My Office will issue an instruction to Heads of Department to comply, wherever it is practicable to do so, with the Regulation governing the publication of Tender Award Notices.

However, it is not practicable in every case to comply in all respects with the Regulation and the Regulation itself recognises this. Let me quote it:

- "26. The Head of Department shall cause to be published in the Gazette as soon as possible after the acceptance of a tender, a notice of such acceptance containing -
  - (i) a description of the works, service, article or property in respect of which the tender has been accepted; and
  - (ii) the name of the tenderer whose tender has been accepted and, where applicable, the amount of such tender; and
  - (iii) where applicable, the amounts of all other tenders received."

To illustrate the difficulty which arises in relation to the second requirement, consider running contracts; take for example that for the supply of provisions to Government Institutions. The names of the tenderers present no problem but the amount of the contract cannot for obvious reasons be given because the quantities to be supplied during the contract period are not known. And hence the value of the contract is also not known. Clearly a running contract presents the same difficulty in relation to publication of the amounts of unsuccessful tenders.

Also in the case of a running contract the cost of publication has to be considered. The cost of publishing every detail of the successful tender and of all the unsuccessful tender is clearly unacceptably high.

Nevertheless I fully accept that there is a need for greater uniformity in these difficult cases and I undertake to see what can be done.

Will Government explain why the telephones in certain areas of Gibraltar become non-functional immediately after rainfall?

# Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Municipal Services

The telephone cable distribution network in certain areas of Gibraltar consists of the old-type lead cable which are prone to breakdowns due to seepages of rainwater and in some cases damage by rodents.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 242 OF 1978

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker is it not about time that the old equipment was canged to newer and better equipment?

### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, most of these cables are over 15 years old and are therefore in need of replacement. Many sections have been replaced by polythene cable which is not prone to such breakdowns and the question of overall cable replacement is now being studied by the Department. The new petroleum jelly-filled polythene cable currently in use eliminates the problem of water seepage.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, then when can we expect that the new cables will be installed?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

There will be a gradual changing of the cables. At present, 60% of the cables are made of lead, 40% are made of polythene and petroleum jelly but unfortunately out of those 60% of lead cables 10% of lead cables are continuously breaking down and these are the ones we want to change as soon as possible.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask what the cost of replacing the 60% lead cables would be?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, this is an entirely different question and I would need due notice of it.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member say which areas, to his knowledge, are affected mostly?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Again, this is an entirely different question, Sir.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that when my Hon Friend asks why in certain areas of Gibraltar telephones become non-functional, it is licit to ask what areas the Hon Member has information about?

#### MR SPEAKER:

Perhaps the supplementary should be phrased in such a way as denoting the particular areas that you have in mind.

# HON M XIBERRAS:

I have asked the Hon Member to save time what areas are affected. The answer of the Hon Member has been, in fact, that the question does not arise.

#### MR SPEAKER:

No, he has not said anything of the sort, he has said he needs notice of the question.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Honourable Member answer the question then, Mr Speaker, does he have knowledge about what areas are, in fact, affected?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, I believe that the main areas which suffer faults are the Water Port and the North Front areas. These are mainly the old lead cables.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Honourable Member say if he now has a plan for the future so that the terrible situation that we are facing now is not faced again and therefore these replacements are taken as a programme as we go along with foreknowledge that this is going to happen.

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have already said before that the overall cable replacement is now being studied by the Department to eliminate these faults.

# No. 243 of 1978

# The Hon G T Restano

Can Government state why it is that it takes so long to repair telephone faults and also to install new lines?

#### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Municipal Services

There are three types of telephone faults:-

- (i) Exchange faults;
- (ii) Instrument faults;
  (iii) Cable faults.

Usually the first two faults are promptly diagnosed and repaired. In the case of Cable faults, these are more time-consuming to locate and repair since a considerable number of subscribers can be affected.

With regard to the second part of the question, a recent productivity agreement with the telephone installation section has increased the number of telephone connections considerably.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 243 OF 1978

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware that in some cases telephones have been out of order for well over four weeks and can be give an explanation as to how it is that these have not been repaired?

# HON DR R G VALARINO:

Repair is at hand. Unfortunately, some of these telephones are of the old type and need intensive repair to the cables themselves. They are mainly cable faults and we are doing everything in out power to repair these as soon as possible.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not agree that the subscribers are in fact paying to have their telephone and, in fact, that telephone through no fault of their own is not working and does the Minister not consider that a certain reduction in the fees chargeable to the subscribers should be made?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

This is an entirely separate question and nothing to do with the question in hand, and I am afraid that I will require notice of that question.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I cannot agree with that. This is a question of telephone faults taking a long time to repair and I think it is very relevant to that question that why should the subscribers pay the full amount chargeable. The Government it should pay to consider the non-payment of charges on telephones which have been out of order for some considerable time.

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a matter of policy and I need due notice of the question.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, since the efficiency of the telephone system is at stake as well as the inconvenience caused and the cost of maintenance, has the Department any plans for replacing these old telephones with ones which require less maintenance and have they got any plans for that?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I replied to this question in the previous answer to the Honourable Mr Restano. I said the new cables will require much less maintenance than the old lead cables.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I understood you said it was due to the telephones not the cables.

#### HON DR F G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it is obvious that the Hon Member does not reside in Gibraltar.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It has nothing to do with that. When I come to Gibraltar I find the telephones do not work, Mr Speaker, that is my great surprise, and I think the Minister should do something because the effect on visitors is very bad, I can tell him, because it reflects on the whole administration and perhaps the Minister should do something to avoid that as soon as possible.

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think you should apply to the Minister for Tourism for that.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I think it is, perhaps, "Panorama" who gives me the right to reside in Gibraltar, Mr Speaker, that independent newspaper, I don't think it is the Minister for Tourism who is responsible for that.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member confirm that my Hon Friend Mr Restano is correct in saying that some telephones have been out of order without being repaired for four weeks or is the period a longer period?

#### MR SPEAKER:

Will the Minister answer that question?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, there have been several cases which have taken longer to repair but as I have said before there are three main types of telephone faults: Exchange faults, Instrument faults and Cable faults. The first two are quite easy to repair but, unfortunately, Cable faults tend to take a little bit longer and this is the reason why some of the telephones have taken longer to be repaired. We are doing everything in our power to manage this as soon as we can and obviously we shall give every consideration in the future and we shall make sure that people will wait as little as possible to have their telephones repaired.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am very grateful for all those assurances but my question is: What is the estimate or what is the information the Department has on the duration of the periods for which telephones are not repaired, are out of order. Is it four weeks, four months, four years, what is the position?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid that some of these are extreme cases which may take up to six weeks but I am afraid that the particulars that the Hon Member is asking for I just do not have at hand. If the Hon Member gives me due notice I will produce the information.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, the question is: "Why does it take so long to repair telephone faults and also to install new lines?" Surely, the Hon Member would have expected some sort of information to be requested of him as to what is the period during which telephones are not repaired, what is the backlog, in other words.

# HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have answered that question. The one the Hon Member is asking now really touches on a completely different subject and I have told him that if he will give me due notice I shall produce the figures.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, it is not only that I take objection to information not being given in reply to my question but I take objection to the Government, generally, employing these tactics. Can I ask the Hon Member the question again as being relevant to the original question.

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, he can ask the question as many times as he wants but he will still get the same answer.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, bearing in mind that the Hon Member has given percentages of a number of lead cables and whatnot, does the Hon Member not consider it a reasonable question that we should ask what is the backlog in his Department of unrepaired faults.

#### MR SPEAKER:

The answer is, of course, that the Opposition is completely and utterly entitled to ask the question they are asking, the reasonableness of the question does not come into it because if it was wrong I would have intervened. It is a clear question that can be asked but whether the Minister has the information to answer the question is another matter.

# HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He hasn't got the information.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I wonder if the Minister, who does not seem to know very much about what is going on, can tell me when he thinks that the normality of the telephone system will be restored. When does he think that the day will come when one can ring and expect an answer from the right telephone? Has he got any idea as to when all this will be completed?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

If the Minister will be more specific. What does he mean by normality?

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I think the Minister will accept that things are not normal with the telephone now. When does he expect that the telephones will be working as they used to work before? Has he any idea?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, cables are always prone to faults because

of the type of material they are made of. We are changing the installation of these central cables and as soon as we can we shall give a more efficient service. I am afraid I have nothing else to answer to this question.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister realise that one time out of five times that you ring you get either the wrong number or you get a crossed wire or something is going wrong. Isn't he aware of this in spite of his living here in Gibraltar all the time?

#### MR SPEAKER:

The Minister said he was aware.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So when can we expect, Mr Speaker, that at least we only get one wrong number out of a hundred calls, by when?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, this is again something completely different to the original question and I have nothing else to say on the matter.

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am convinced, Mr Speaker, that the Minister doesn't know what is going on in his own Department.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can I revert to the installation of new lines. The Minister has said that now that a productivity agreement has been reached with the members of the Telephone Department staff, new lines will be installed much more quickly. Can he give us an indication of how long it will now take for new telephones to be installed?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes Sir. Since the introduction of the productivity scheme the number of connections has increased from 25 per month to the 139 during the month of November. On the assumption that this scheme successfully continues the waiting time for connection of telephones will be considerably reduced.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

I have asked, Mr Speaker, how long it will normally take for a new telephone to be installed. If somebody applies tomorrow how long will it take him to have a telephone installed?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Again, Mr Speaker, this is a theoretical question. We have got a certain number of telephones to install and in addition we are getting new telephone applications. At the moment we are installing something at the rate of 139 per month instead of the usual 25 and as soon as possible I am sure that the Department will deal with all outstanding applications. The list continues to increase and this is why it is difficult to estimate a given time.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Hon Member say what is the number of uninstalled lines?

### MR SPEAKER:

The Hon Member is asking about the backlog of uninstalled lines. In other words, how many applicants are waiting for telephones to be installed?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Since we started we had over 600. We have installed 150 odd, we have another 450 applications to install at the present moment.

#### MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

Will the Minister for Municipal Services state when Government intends to provide a limited number of STD lines?

# Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Municipal Services

Government intends to provide the I.S.D. facility to all subscribers. It will take three years to introduce I.S.D. in Gibraltar since the manufacturers need two years to engineer the project and the installation, and commissioning of the equipment will take over a year.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 244 OF 1978

#### MR SPEAKER:

May I ask a supplementary? What is I.S.D.?

### HON DR R G VALARINO:

International Subscriber Dialling, Sir. STD is Subscriber Trunk Dialling which is only used in the United Kingdom.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I did ask for STD lines rather than ISD because the Minister's predecessor I think over a year ago stated that Government was in the near future, in the very near future, considering providing a limited amount, and I think he quoted 200 to be precise, and now the Minister says it is going to take three years. Can this be considered to be in the very near future which was the assurance given by the Minister for Municipal Services over 12 months ago?

# HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, with regard to the first part of this question, the Subscriber Trunk Dialling which he asked about means automatic dialling within the United Kingdom which is obviously the wrong term to use in Gibraltar. The correct terminology is International Subscribing Dialling which is ISD. As regards the second part where the Hon Member refers to my predecessor, the Hon Major Dellipiani, since my predecessor's statement in October of 1977 the installation of the earth station by Cable and Wireless has made a difference to the matter and it is no longer practical to do things piecemeal.

Will the Minister for Municipal Services agree that in answer to question No. 173 of 1978 as to the fact that more room had been provided at the Telephone Exchange, he misled the House and that in fact no extra space had been provided?

#### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Municipal Services

In answer to question No. 173 of 1978, I did not mislead the House. I think there has been a misunderstanding of facts. By stating that more room had been provided for two extra operators, I inferred that the manual board at the telephone exchange, which consists of a five position switchboard was now fully manned. Prior to the employment of the two extra operators the manual board was manned by four operators instead of the maximum manning level of five. It is not now possible to employ additional operators unless the existing switchboard is extended.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 245 OF 1978

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the question that was asked at the last meeting, Question No. 173 was whether more room had been provided, more space, and the Minister said "Yes". To my understanding there has been no more room provided at that Exchange. Can the Minister confirm this, please?

### HON DR R G VALARINO:

I have already explained this in the answer, Sir, there had been a misunderstanding of facts.

# HON G T RESTANO:

A misunderstanding of facts, Mr Speaker? Was it that he did not understand the question that was put to him last time?

#### MR SPEAKER:

I am looking at the Hansard of Question No. 173. I think the Hon Questioner has got the Hansard in front of him. The Hon Dr Valarino said: "I am not questioning Hansard. One of the things was the question of providing more room. We found that the extra operators could deal adequately with the situation." I think that is the only time that the Hon Minister mentioned the question of room. I have gone through the Hansard because I think it is fair to say that perhaps I put words into the Minister's mouth. Reading further on you will see that I said: "The Hon Minister has now said that he has gone into the question of providing more room, that he has found more room and that he has employed two extra operators."

Then the Hon Mr Restano said: "He has provided more room, is that what he is saying?" The Hon Dr Valarino said "Yes." Perhaps the misunderstanding has arisen there but I thought that I would say this by way of explanation.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, hasn't the Minister said in the House even before that that it was impossible to provide a better service by providing more operators because he had no physical space in the building to do so. That is a fact, Mr Speaker.

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

What I meant was that there was no further room in the switchboard.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

On the same question, is the Minister satisfied that he has enough space for the five switchboard operators now? Are the premises, in fact, suitable?

#### DR R G VALARINO:

The premises for these five operators are at the moment suitable.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister now consider that every step has been taken to provide the best service in the interim period before the new equipment is received?

#### HON R G VALARINO:

I don't know what the Hon Member means by new equipment, I imagine he means ISD. This does not arise from the question but, certainly, if we are going to improve the switchboard this will need to be extended.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

The reason is, Mr Speaker, that I think that some people still have difficulty in obtaining the exchange, they find that they are waiting a long time beforethe exchange actually answers, and originally the Minister said that he would need this space to improve the period in between getting the ISD and the position at the moment. Will there be any improvement in obtaining replies from 00 or 95 or 93?

# HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, the decision by Government to allow Cable and Wireless to install a satelite earth station in Gibraltar has changed the situation. The earth station project will increase the number of circuits to the United Kingdom by

20 and, therefore, the switchboard will need to be extended and this is not possible at the existing manual board. Room has been found at the City Hall to accomedate the extension to the switchboard. This has only been possible as the Statistics Department at the City Hall has been moved to the Government Secretariat.

When will the new Telephone Directory be ready for distribution?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Municipal Services

It is expected that the new Telephone Directory will be ready for distribution by the end of June 1979. This date is, however, an approximate one since the closing date for the tender was only last Friday 15th December and the Tender Board has yet to consider whatever applications have been received.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 246 OF 1978

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

I thought, Mr Speaker, that a new Telephone Directory was supposed to come into circulation much earlier than that. I think we have had information of this nature in the House. Does the Minister know when it was supposed to come into circulation?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

There are several good reasons, Mr Speaker.

#### MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked whether therewas a date set for the rublication of the Directory and whether the date you have mentioned is the correct date or whether it has been postponed.

# HON DR R G VALARINO:

As far as I know the arrangement was to publish the Telephone Directory this coming summer.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could the Hon Member give an idea of how out of date the present Telephone Directory is? There is a list I know of about three or four pages of new numbers. Is the Hon Member in a position to tell us whether it is 400 or 500 numbers that are not correctly registered in the present Telephone Directory?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, there is the 3000's which was changed to new numbers which is about 600 and any new telephones which have been connected since then.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Minister ensure that the list of Service numbers, since the matter is going out to tender now, is extended in the new Telephone Directory to provide a better service to subscribers?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, we shall certainly look into the Hon Member's suggestion and we shall see what we can do about the matter.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister say why it will take seven months for the Directory to be published, why does it take so long? What is the reason for this?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, this really depends on the printers. The closing date for tenders was the 15th of December and the expected date for it to be ready is June. It is really up to the printers. I am afraid I have nothing else to add.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Minister satisfied that it should take as long as seven months to produce a simple Telephone Directory? Has he made any representations? After all, subscribers are paying increased telephone rates now and we are wondering about the service that they are getting, and this is part of the service. Is the Minister satisfied and has he made any representations to the printers that it should take seven months to produce a telephone Directory of the size that Gibraltar requires?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, it could well be that it may be ready before but the Tender Board has not met and we don't know as yet who the printers will be.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

But I am talking about the Minister who is responsible to the public for the service. Has the Minister made any representations in any quarter to make this telephone Directory available earlier than seven months?

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is more or less the average time that it takes for the new Telephone Directory to be prepared. I am happy to say that there has been a very good response from the general public and we intend to cooperate ....

#### MR SPEAKER:

Let us not alter the orbit of the matter. You are being asked whether you have made any representations to see whether the Directory can be produced earlier than in six months.

#### HON DR R G VALARINO:

This is a question which is difficult to answer as we still don't know who the printers are. Until the Tender Board decides and we know who the printers are there is no possible way that I can contact them to expedite the matter. The Hon Member should well know this after his long time in the House.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Very well, Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member, even before the tender is awarded, would he make it a condition that the Directory is produced in a shorter time?

#### MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

Will Government state when Castle House at Moorish Castle Estate was last painted and what is its policy regarding the painting of Government buildings?

#### Answer

#### The Hon the Minister for Public Works

Castle House at Moorish Castle Estate was last painted in 1962. Normally buildings are painted on a seven to nine year cycle but there are instances when the state of the external walls of a building permit deferment for a longer period. Inversely, there are also instances when a building has to be painted within a shorter period. The external painting of Castle House is in a reasonable condition and the indications are that it does not need immediate painting.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 247 OF 1978

HON G T RESTANO:

Did the Minister say that it was an eight year cycle?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

A seven to nine year cycle.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, even though the Minister says that Castle House is in a good condition, is it not wise to paint rather than leave it at virtually double the amount of years - since 1962 - we are in 1978. It means that the particular building has not been painted for sixteen years. Is it not wise to paint it before it begins to deteriorate?

#### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I understand, Sir, and masonry if it is not required, it is not unwise to leave it for a longer period than these seven to nine year cycle.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is Government in fact adhering to the seven to nine year period for the painting of buildings in general?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

By and large, Sir, yes, but at times, as I say, we have to do some on a shorter period and others take a longer period. It depends on the condition of the building when it comes up for actual painting.

Will Government state for how long scaffolding has been standing outside 197/201 Main Street?

# Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Public Works

The frontage of 197/199 Main Street was fenced off in July, 1976 and the frontage of 201 Main Street was fenced off in October, 1978.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 248 OF 1978

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, so Nos. 197 to 199 Main Street has been fenced off for nearly two and a half years. Is this not infringing on the public highway? Is any rent paid by the landlord for using up the highway?

#### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, Chapter 131, Volume 7, Section 39, Subsection 3, page 42 of the Public Health Ordinance states:

"If the Government are satisfied that any building or structure is in such a condition or is used to carry such loads as to be dangerous for the persons in the building or any adjoining building or on the premises on which the building or structure stands or any adjoining premises and that immediate action should be taken for the protection of those persons or any of them, the Government may shore up or fence the building or structure and may recover from the owner thereof the expenses of any action reasonably taken by them under this subsection."

After officers of the Public Health and Public Works Departments had carried out joint inspections of the building, it was agreed that there was a possibility of tiles or rendering falling off the west facade on to the footpath below with consequent danger to pedestrians and it was decided by the Chief Health Inspector that Section 39 of the Public Health Ordinance should be enforced. It is understood that a court case under Section 39 of the Public Health Ordinance in connection with this building is proceeding next month.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

On the same question, Mr Speaker; Is the Minister satisfied, or is the Chief Public Health Inspector satisfied, that there is no danger with the scaffolding being there to the public at large?

#### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is the intention of putting the scaffolding there so that if anything falls it will not fall on an area where the public passes.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

No, Mr Speaker, my question is, in fact, whether the scaffolding there, is a sufficient remedy, in the opinion of the Minister? Is the Minister satisfied or is the Chief Public Health Inspector satisfied that it provides adequate protection now?

#### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We understand that it does, Sir, that if anything should fall it would fall on the area of the scaffolding and not on where there are pedestrians passing.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I have confirmation that the Government is taking the landlord to Court next month, is that correct?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, the Public Health Department are taking the landlord to Court next month.

# The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government state what decision it has reached in respect of the Andrews, Kent and Stone Report on the Varyl Begg Estate problems?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Public Works

The Andrews, Kent and Stone Report raised a number of queries on the aspects of construction and of design and requested Government to obtain clarification from both the contractors and the consulting architects. On receipt of the Andrews, Kent and Stone Report letters were written to both parties by Public Works Department. The replies have been received and Government is presently studying their import together with Andrews, Kent and Stone who have subsequent to last House of Assembly meeting informed Government that the Consultants have been in contact with them. Andrews, Kent and Stone advise it would be sensible for them to prepare a more detailed response to both parties. Government has agreed that Andrews, Kent and Stone should prepare a more detailed reply and hence the question of issuing legal proceedings is in abeyance for the time being. In the meantime, of course, the Attorney-General is preparing for the eventuality.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 249 OF 1978

# HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, bearing in mind the very long time this Government has had this problem on its plate and has been unable to solve it, and bearing in mind what the Minister for Housing had to say at the last meeting of the House, that a decision would be taken very quickly on the Andrews, Stone and Kent Report, does the Hon Member really believe it is reasonable for this side to accept that action, real action, is being taken by the Government on this problem?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, am I to understand that that side of the House does not accept the further approaches by Messrs Andrews, Kent and Stone to the consultants and to the contractors as real action?

### MR SPEAKER:

Let us not have the position where the Government is asking questions to the Opposition because otherwise we will never finish. You can give whatever answer you feel is right, but let us not ask questions to the Opposition.

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I would say that the action of Messrs Andrews, Kent and Stone in preparing a more detailed response to both parties is a positive action. If the opposite side does not agree then that is their opinion.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Well, Mr Speaker, the Opposition is not in a position to agree or disagree. Could the Hon Member say what is the nature of the further clarification which is being sought?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I do not have all the details of this, Sir, but I know that Messrs Andrews, Kent and Stone have had discussions with the two parties involved and they are going into it in more detail in England and are preparing a report which will come to us in due course. I think that to take action precipitately before we have explored every possibility is not going to do us any good in the long run.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, but could the Hon Member answer my question and say what is the nature of the further clarification that has been sought? As I understood it, three alternatives were given by the Andrews, Kent and Stone Report. Is the nature of the clarification as to which of these three is to be implemented by the Government or has it to do with legal matters still on the dispute which has dragged on now for three years?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Still on the dispute. Sir.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

But, Mr Speaker, did not the Hon Member, or Hon Members opposite, give the House the impression that it was a question of selecting one of the three methods to correct the faults at Varyl Begg rather than go further into the possibility of taking legal action against the contractor or the consultants or both?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, if we do go to court and Messrs Andrews, Kent and Stone are going to be one of our chief expert witnesses, I think we would have put ourselves into a futile position if they were to say that they were carrying out further contacts and we had refused to allow them to do so and had rushed into court rather than let them finish their actual inquiries with the two parties concerned.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, may I repeat the question and put it in another way: Was not the Andrews, Kent and Stone Report to do with three possible methods of remedying the defects and was that not the brunt of the Report and was not Government at the time of the last meeting considering which of the three it should implement and nothing to do with further legal action or inquiries.

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The main body of the Report, Sir, was to say what was wrong with the roofs and there was at the ending three possibilities that were given that could be done as a remedy. Obviously, Sir, if we are to take the remedy of putting a pitched roof ....

### MR SPEAKER:

No, let us take it by stages. You are being asked that the question was which of the three remedies should be decided upon.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, was the report about the three remedies primarily because I asked for the report and I was denied the report at the last meeting of the House.

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, the main body of the Report is what was wrong with the building. Only at the end was it said that to remedy these defects, these are the possibilites.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, am I to take it then that the Government has once again reverted to the considerations involved in taking the parties to court and it has shelved for the time being implementation of one of the three remedial recommendations advocated by the Report?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, we have not shelved it, the whole question is who is going to pay for it and this is the reason that Messrs Andrews, Kent and Stone are at the moment contacting the two parties concerned, because if, for example, we decide to do a pitched roof we would like perhaps to know beforehand that the two parties concerned were willing to pay a share towards it.

# HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister a final question: Has, in fact, the Government now arrived at a decision

as to which of the three alternatives it would prefer? Can I ask the Government that in view of the great urgency which Hon Members opposite wanted to attach, or wanted to appear to attach, to this issue?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, we have not come to that full decision yet.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister state what he means by in due course? Is there a time limit set or is this going on for ever and ever?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We have impressed on Messrs Andrews, Kent and Stone that there is a strong sense of urgency to be used in this but, of course, they to some extent suffer the delays that perhaps the consulting architects may bring up because they will obviously consult with their lawyers in everything that they wish to do and the same with the contractors.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask whether Messrs Andrews, Kent and Stone will continue to receive a fee from Government for as long as the legal wrangle continues?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I shall imagine that as long as they are working for Government they will receive some fee. I do not think that there is any truth in the innuendo that they will drag their feet simply to get a greater fee.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member not agree that the matter has dragged on long enough and one can be rightly suspicious that the involvement of other parties in this will just contribute to increasing the bill?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think Messrs Andrews, Kent and Stone who had a most complicated task to do did it with quite a high speed of work.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

I disagree with the Minister, the matter has not been done, it is being done.

### MR SPEAKER:

# The Hon Major R J Peliza

Will Government confirm that the eighteen bedsitters at present being built in Prince Edward's Road are likely to be occupied by senior citizens in the main and will Government make provision for a lift to be installed in the building?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Public Works

Yes, Sir, the bedsitters will mainly be occupied by senior citizens. The building which is on 4 floors will not be provided with lifts.

### SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 250 OF 1978

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

. .

Shouldn't the Government give some consideration to that? Perhaps, later on it will be found that it is essential to have a lift there because of the age and condition of the people who occupy the bedsitters and it will be much more costly then to instal one.

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, owing to the restricted nature of the site it would be extremely difficult to make provision for a lift as well as being very expensive. However, in order to make it easier for the tenants to gain access to the upper floors, an access has been provided from the higher ground level at the rear of the building and by designing the staircase for the shallower rise.

### MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Was the installation of a lift ever considered?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, we did consider the installation of a lift but the site would be restricted and the number of bedsitters therefore would have been less and also the lift would have cost £30,000 to £40,000 more on top of the actual costings.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, does the Hon Member honestly ask us to believe that the installation of a lift would radically reduce the number of bedsitters? A small lift for the senior citizens who are going to occupy the bedsitters? I think that is a bit hard to swallow, Mr Speaker.

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It would probably take out three bedsitters or make them so small that there would hardly be room to swing a cat in.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Minister give the House an assurance that the expenditure of an additional £40,000 has not been a major consideration in this?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

£40,000 has been one of the considerations. Obviously, if there are going to be some 15 to 18 bedsitters and you are going to put up the cost of each one by £3,000 it is something to take into consideration.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Does the Minister not agree that a bedsitter now must cost in the region of £25,000?

### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

# No. 251 of 1978 The Hon P J Isola

Does the Government programme for resurfacing of roads include an early start for Library Street?

# The following written Answer was sent to the Hon P J Isola:

# The Hon the Minister for Public Works

Library Street is not included in the current or 1979 resurfacing programme. The upper part was surfaced in 1973 in conjunction with the alterations at Governors Parade/Holiday Inn and apart from isolated patches which are being repaired, this particular area is in good condition.

The lower section of Library Street was dug up last year to relay the sewers and until the new sewer trench has settled, it would be a waste of Public Funds to resurface this section of the road.

# The Hon Major R J Peliza

Will Government provide protection against wind and rain in the bus shelter situated in Winston Churchill Avenue?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Public Works

The three bus shelters in Winston Churchill Avenue are the property of a private company who provided the shelters in return for an advertising concession.

Two of the shelters are in perfect condition but the third shelter, outside Glasis Estate, has been vandalised and one end advertising panel is missing.

The concessionaires have been requested to replace the missing panel.

What is the current position with regard to deep-drilling for water?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Public Works

The pumping tests on the fresh water pool inside the rock has now been completed. The various parameters measured during the test are being taken to the UK for detailed analysis by the Scientists who supervised the test.

Apart from this, there is little change from the answer given in the last House of Assembly meeting to a similar question from the Hon J Bossano.

Will Government state whether the Working Party set up by the Public Works Department to consider the recommendations of HM Coroner's Jury to review safety procedures and working practices has concluded its deliberations?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Public Works

The Working Party concluded its deliberations on 15 November 1978 and its recommendations have been accepted.

A revised safety course organised by the City Fire Brigade and the PWD was held on 22/23 November 1978 and further courses will be held in 1979 and the revised safe working procedures are being implemented. Of course the success of these revised procedures will depend entirely on the men strictly adhering to them and not, as has happened in the past, falling into the error of over-confidence and failing to follow safe working practices.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 254 OF 1978

### HON G T RESTANO:

Does the Government possess the necessary safety equipment which is thought to be necessary?

#### HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We do, Sir, but we have also ordered new safety harnesses, new breathing sets, a resuscitator, a new trailer in the next financial year and improved type of protective clothing.

### MR SPEAKER:

# The Hon Major R J Peliza

What provisions does Government intend to make for pedestrian protection in Gardiner's Road?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Trade and Economic Development

Provision has been made for developers to construct a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft wide pavement on the east side of Gardiner's Road immediately adjoining their property and to the extent of their road frontages. The work will be put in hand when development in the area is completed. Part of this pavement has already been provided at the Northern end of Gardiner's Road.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 255 OF 1978

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister ensure that something is done so that it will not become spare parking places for cars as is happening in Engineer Lane?

HON A W SERFATY:

Yes, Sir, I will try.

MR SPEAKER:

# No. 256 of 1978

# The Hon P J Isola

Will Government state its policy towards the transhipment of liquid gas in the Bay?

# The following written Answer was sent to the Hon P J Isola:

# The Hon the Minister for Trade and Economic Development

The matter is at present under review. The Captain of the Port is currently in correspondence with the Dangerous Goods and Research Section of the Department of Trade in the United Kingdom who are carrying out discussions on the whole subject of ship to ship transfers.

- 2. The recommendations of the Captain of the Port are that we should not even allow the occasional transhipment due to the dangers involved. The matter is therefore at present being kept in abeyance.
- 3. As soon as the result of the discussions being held by the Department of Trade is known a firm decision will be taken.

# No. 257 of 1978

# The Hon P J Isola

Can Government confirm that part of the agreement reached with British Airways and Gibraltar Airways permitting increases in air fares was that the number of scheduled flights between Gibraltar and London would be maintained in 1979 at the same level as 1978?

# The following written Answer was sent to the Hon P J Isola:

# The Hon the Minister for Trade and Economic Development

Yes, Sir, I confirm that this is so. The agreement covers the period April 1978 to March 1979.

# No. 258 of 1978

# The Hon P J Isola

Can Government state the load factors on scheduled flights for the months of August, September, October and November 1978 and does Government agree that these justify improved frequencies in scheduled flights?

# The following written Answer was sent to the

# Hon P J Isola:

# The Hon the Minister for Trade and Economic Development

The load factors for the period in question are as follows:

	•	ARRIVALS		DEPARTURE
August		92.0%		95.2%
September		90.8%		100.0%
October		90.5%		99.6%
November		77.2%		85.1%

I agree that these figures justify improved frequencies in scheduled flights.

# The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state what further progress there has been on the question of the Caravan Parking Site fees?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services

Following representations made by some residents of the Caravan Park, and a meeting held with the Cheif Minister, a representative of the residents and myself, agreement was reached that the fees would be increased by 75% with effect from 1 October, 1978.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 259 OF 1978

HON J BOSSANO:

Has this been done, Mr Speaker, after full consultation with the people concerned?

HON I ABECASIS:

After consultation with their representative, a Mr Thorpe.

MR SPEAKER:

# The Hon Major R J Peliza

Will Government state whether special deliveries are being made for express letters?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services

Express letters are received in Gibraltar in the same bag as other ordinary mail but they are bundled together and so identified. These letters fall into two categories, i.e. those deliverable to PO Boxes and those deliverable to private or business addresses. When the express letter bundle is taken out of the bag, it is immediately broken and the items intended for delivery to PO Boxes are immediately placed therein. The recipient is normally advised, by telephone, that such item has been placed in his box. The items intended for private or business addresses are set aside from the rest of the mail that has been received for delivery by a postman/driver as soon as possible. In the ususal course of events, such letters leave the Post Office very shortly after being debagged. In the circumstances, it can be stated that special arrangements are in existance for handling and delivering express letters as expeditiously as possible. If, however, the question seeks to establish whether express letters are sent out and/or delivered by a special messenger or postman, detailed exclusively for the purpose, the answer is "No, Sir".

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 260 OF 1978

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister state in a more concise manner the time it usually takes? For instance, Mr Speaker, he used the words: "normally advised by telephone", I would have thought "always advised by telephone" would have been a better answer. Also what does he mean by "as soon as possible"? As soon as possible by this Government takes sometimes months, I just do not know what he means by "as soon as possible". Could he give us an idea of time from receipt of the letter to the actual delivery to the person to whom it is addressed?

### HON I ABECASIS:

Sir, I think I have given a very detailed explanation.

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

How long does the Minister reckon it takes for the mail to arrive, to be sorted out and received by the person to whom it is addressed?

### HON I ABECASIS:

Depending on the time of the arrival of the mail. If it arrives in the evening, it is sorted out later on in the evening and they are not ready for dispatch until the morning. Once the mail has been taken away from the bag it would take, perhaps, two or three hours, no more.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the plane usually arrive in the morning? Can he give us an idea at what time?

### MR SPEAKER:

Order. I have been telling you from the very beginning that we are not going to go into the question as to when the plane arrives.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

All I am trying to say, Mr Speaker, is that the Minister has referred to post arriving in the evening. Most of the post arrives in the afternoon at the latest ....

### MR SPEAKER:

Order. The Minister has said that express letters are dealt with in a particular way. He has qualified this by saying that if it arrives in the evening then it is not delivered until the following morning, that is all.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The information that I am seeking is what happens when the mail argives in the afternoon which is the normal practice.

### MR SPEAKER:

The Honourable Questioner, I am afraid, is being dilatory about it. The Minister has explained what happens when the mail arrives during the daytime and he has explained what happens when it arrives in the evening.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, all I want to know is how long does he reckon it takes from the letter arriving in the afternoon, say, at two o'clock, what time does he reckon it reaches the office of the person concerned. How long?

# HON I ABECASIS:

If it comes in the afternoon at two o'clock, the mail does not get into the Post Office until 3 or 3.30p.m. then

it is too late to deliver them. The Postmen leave the Post Office early in the morning. That letter is then delivered the following day.

### THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can arrangements be made so that express letters come in some other way or that the mail is speeded from the aircraft to the Post Office and things are sorted out so that at least it arrives on that day, otherwise express mail is the same as normal mail. It is no use spending all that money on it and I think the Government should tell people not to send express letters to Gibraltar. It is a waste of money.

### MR SPEAKER:

Let us not make statements at question time.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister make that public then? Don't send an express letter to Gibraltar because it is a waste of money.

### MR SPEAKER:

Will the Honourable Questioner say what is the question?

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The question, Mr Speaker, is quite clear as far as I can see and I find it difficult that you do not grasp it.

### MR SPEAKER:

If you find it difficult perhaps you are privileged to a greater extent than I am but you will ask the question in such a way that I understand it and the Government understands it.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, perhaps I can make it clearer. I'll try. Perhaps you will allow me to make a statement so that I can clarify what the question is. The mail at the moment, apparently, and this is from the statement which has just been made by the Minister, arrives in the afternoon, including express letters, and it is all delivered the following morning whether they are express letters or not, so, therefore, Mr Speaker, what I am asking is, isn't it reasonable to tell the public that it is a waste of money to send express letters to Gibraltar because they will not get here any quicker than any other ordinary letter.

### HON I ABECASIS:

Sir, if a letter is addressed to a P O Box it is placed

there immediately and normally the firm gets a telephone call from the Post Office. If it is addressed to a private address then it is delivered the following morning.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, perhaps, I could qualify that. If the express letter goes to a P O Box then it is alright, you can send it, but if it is going to an address it is better not to send it because that is a waste of money.

### HON I ABECASIS:

No, Sir, they are there and the boxes are in front of them and all they have to do is get the letter and put it in the box.

### MR SPEAKER:

The question is what benefit does an individual who has not got a P O Box get from an express letter?

### HON I ABECASIS:

The only benefit is that he gets a telephone call asking him to come and collect his letter.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It is all very funny for the Minister, Mr Speaker, but it is not funny for the people who are spending the money on this under false pretences and I would ask the Minister to find a way of speeding those express letters.

#### MR SPEAKER:

We are at question time. Please do not make a statement.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am asking the Minister, Mr Speaker, whether he can do something to speed up matters.

### MR SPEAKER:

Let us leave it at that.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I want to know whether he can do something about it.

### MR SPEAKER:

Order. Let him answer.

### HON I ABECASIS:

Sir, I have given instructions to take down statistics of the number of the letters involved to see whether in fact it warrants the appointment of a person to deal exclusively with express letters. If there are only a handful of them then I am afraid they will be delivered as usual. However, if the number of letters involved so warrant then we will look into the matter and employ a postman exclusively for that.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister then give an undertaking that if he finds that it is impossible to speed up the delivery of express letters he will make it public so that people do not spend money unnecessarily. Could he make this public?

### HON I ABECASIS:

It is up to the people to send it or not.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But the people do not know, Mr Speaker, unless they are told that there is going to be no quick delivery with express letters.

### HON I ABECASIS:

Surely, Sir, the Honourable and Gallant Questioner doesn't expect me to write to Hong Kong, Singapore, Caracas and other places.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

If I may say so, he should. I think it is only fair, Mr Speaker. Anyway, I certainly would have done it.

### MR SPEAKER:

Order. I am not going to allow a debate under the guise of the question on the advisability of using the service provided by the Post Office for express airmail letters.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the Minister whether, in fact, there is an obligation on the Post Office to honour the extra expenditure involved in express delivery?

### HON I ABECASIS:

All the Convention says is that it should be delivered as soon as possible and as soon as possible it is delivered. I have said, and I repeat, that if the numbers involved so warrant then we will look into the matter to appoint somebody exclusively for the express mail. If it is a handful of letters then I am afraid the answer is what I said earlier on.

# HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would it not be reasonable if the Minister should find that there is not a justifiable number of express letters arriving, wouldn't it be reasonable that people who do not have P O Boxes, that there should be an attempt to give them the same service as people with P O Boxes. For instance, if one should have let us say, 2,3 or 4 express letters arriving in a day, for addresses who do not have P O Boxes, wouldn't it be reasonable to try and give them a call, obviously, if they have telephone numbers and would the Minister at least consider that because he is under an obligation to deliver them as soon as possible.

### HON I ABECASIS:

If they are so identifiable, of course.

MR SPEAKER:

# No. 261 of 1978

# The Hon P J Isola

Does Government not consider that more windows in the Post Office should be manned so as to obviate the need for long queues of the public to form in order to get service?

# The following written Answer was sent to the Hon P J Isola:

# The Hon the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services

The Government is concerned at the manning position in the Main Counter of the Post Office and every effort, including the employment of additional staff from other sections, has been made to ensure the provision of an adequate and more rapid service, particularly to endeavour to cope with the unusually heavy demands experienced in the last 3 or 4 weeks. It has become evident, however, that such efforts have not been entirely successful. The matter, generally is now actively being looked into by the Administration.

Does Government agree that the general state of cleanliness at the Air Terminal leaves much to be desired?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services

The Air Terminal is cleaned daily, first thing in the morning, ready for the arrival and departure of scheduled flights. The recent increase in charter flights during the evenings and early morning has caused problems. It is for this reason that the Terminal is sometimes not as clean as we would like it to be. The matter is being looked into.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 262 OF 1978

### HON G T RESTANO:

What does the Minister intend to do about it other than just looking into it?

### HON I ABECASIS:

By looking into it we mean that the Establishment will investigate the matter. This is not a matter for me, the Establishment will look into the matter to see whether better arrangements can be agreed to with the people who are supposed to do the cleaning.

### HON G T RESTANO:

How long has this state of affairs been going on, Mr Speaker? For how long have we had all these charters?

### HON I ABECASIS:

Since the increase of charter flights, Sir.

### HON G T RESTANO:

Yes, but for how long, two months, three months?

### HON I ABECASIS:

About three months.

### MR SPEAKER:

## The Hon J Bossano

Is Government aware that pupils at the Boys Comprehensive School have had to take blankets to school apparently because of inadequate heating?

### Answer

### The Hon the Minister for Education

Mr Speaker, with your permission I propose to answer this Question and Question No. 264/78 together.

The day before the demonstration, the Headmaster of the school had reported to the Electricity Department that the heaters in the Common Room and in other sectors of the school, were not working. The Electricity Department acted on this verbal request and on the very same day of the demonstration, but unfortunately not before the news media got hold of the story, the heaters in the Common Room and in other sectors of the school were repaired. As to broken windows, the Hon Member should know that for some time now the Department has been trying to cope with this problem in Bayside Comprehensive School. The school is situated in an area highly susceptible to vandalism. The Department has tried all means of providing security for the school, short of erecting a protection barrier all round the school. Only recently a good number of ground floor windows which had been smashed and covered with boards, have had these boards replaced by Impatex glass, a very expensive supposedly unbreakable material. A good half dozen of them have since then been smashed. A newly-appointed handyman employed by the Department has been detailed to carry out minor repairs in northern sector schools and most of his time is taken up by general repairs to the Bayside Comprehensive School including the replacement of windows. Unfortunately no sooner do window panes go up than they are smashed again. There is a limit to the number of panes that we can put up but nevertheless the Department repeatedly tries to replace broken windows and louvres.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 263 AND 264 OF 1978

### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister said that the day before the protest the matter of the broken windows was reported to the Electricity Department. Surely, the heaters had been broken for a much longer period than just the day before?

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, the heaters were broken because the fuses had been removed probably by the children themselves.

### HON G T RESTANO:

How long before this protest?

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I don't know how long because normally, as happens in everybody's home, you don't use the heater until it is cold and then you find out whether it is broken. I have told the House, Mr Speaker, that we discovered that the heaters were not functioning when they wanted to use them which is normal, it happens in my home.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has the Minister thought of putting some protection wire?

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

We have put protection wires in certain areas but there is a limit on how much wire you are going to put otherwise it is going to look like a concentration camp.

### HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not the case that what the Honourable has called a demonstration was being talked about or organised, the need to take some means of protection against the cold had been talked about before it took place and is that what resulted in the faults being reported.

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am not aware of that.

### HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that it might be desirable to have some system of involving the students in being able to air their grievances so that there is no need for them to have to take blankets in order to draw attention to their plight.

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I agree it is a good idea. I will take it up with the Department.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, are the windows broken from the outside or from the inside?

# HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am never there when the windows are broken but usually they are broken from the outside. In fact, since I have prepared this question I have noticed that two extra window panes have been broken.

# HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I ask this because the Minister's reply in relation to the fuses appears to give the impression that it was vandalism in the school. I am therefore asking the Minister whether in fact it is the vandalism of the students themselves or is it of the people in the neighbourhood and if it is the latter, have the Police been informed and have they been able to do nothing about it?

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, if the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition had listened to my reply, I said: "the school is situated in an area highly susceptible to vandalism." I am not accusing the students, I am accusing the area.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask him the second part of my question again and that is, have the Police been informed and have they, so far, been able to come out with any culprits of window breakers?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Sir.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

The Police have not been informed. There is a Community Constable, I believe, in the area and I am surprised that the Police have not been informed if the Department has gone to considerable expense to try and keep those windows intact. Could the Honourable Member at least give an undertaking that the Police will be informed that there is a problem, it is costing the taxpayer a considerable amount of money, it is causing considerable discomfort to the students so will he not take some action?

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

If the Police are not informed I will instruct the Headmaster concerned to inform them. I do not know if they are informed or not. I cannot answer questions like that off the cuff.

### MR SPEAKER:

In view of the recent protest by boys attending the Comprehensive School as to the freezing conditions in the Common Room caused by broken down heaters and the state of disrepair of windows, will Government state whether anything has yet been done to remedy the situation?

# Answer

The Hon the Minister for Education

(Answered together with Question No. 263/78).

# The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government implement forthwith subsidised school transport for the children living at Varyl Begg Estate of the first and second year middle school age?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Education

Following representations made by the Parents Association, my Department is preparing a scheme to provide subsidied school transport for children living at Varyl Begg Estate of the first and second year middle school age. The Government will consider this scheme in the light of the existing bus service from other residential areas.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 265 OF 1978

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, when the Honourable Member refers to the Parents Association does he mean the general body or the Varyl Begg Tenants Association?

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The parents of the Varyl Begg Tenants Association because we are talking about the Varyl Begg School Service.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

If the Honourable Member will put up with me because there is also a Parents Association associated with schools in general as he should know. Could I ask the Honourable Member to answer the fifth part of my question, in other words, is the Government willing to do this forthwith, or is it going to wait for the next budget?

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The Government will consider the scheme in the light of the existing bus service from other residential areas. We are considering the scheme to see whether we can implement it this year or whether it will have to wait for April of next year.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Whilst agreeing with any suggestions the matter is complicated and has a number of connotations, would the Honourable Member not agree that these representations have been before him for some time now and will he not agree that the children in this area have a particularly good case?

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will not agree or commit myself to anything without further study by the Government. I have indicated verbally to the representatives of the Parents Association some time ago that the matter was under consideration, that the Government was sympathetic, that there was a whole area involved of transport and until the whole matter was looked into I could not take this as an isolated case.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Honourable Member endeavour to get the scheme established, let us say within a month, by the beginning or early in the new term?

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will endeavour to convince the Government to implement it as soon as possible.

### MR SPEAKER:

Will Government state why children in private schools are made to pay different charges for dental fillings and extractions than children attending Government schools?

### Answer

### The Hon the Minister for Education

Children in Government schools are not charged for dental treatment. Children in private schools are not covered by the Education Ordinance of 1974 Part X Health Section 55(1) and are treated as ordinary private patients. The question of different charges does not therefore arise. I would remind the Hon Member that this Ordinance was passed in the House of Assembly on the 29 March, 1974.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 266 OF 1978

### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Government consider enrolling or allowing dental treatment for these particular children to be provided free by the Government dentist?

### MR SPEAKER:

In other words, you are asking whether the Government will consider a change of legislation to include these children. This is the only way to do it.

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, not at this stage.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Member tell us, roughly, what number of children would be affected, because there aren't that many private schools in Gibraltar.

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, there is only, I think, the Loreto Convent which is outside the Government scheme other than nurseries and Kindergartens. Is it not a fact that this is the case? Is the Minister's refusal to do so a question of finance or is it a question of ideology?

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

It is a matter of principle and we would have to change the Ordinance, I have no figures and I will not commit myself to anything at this stage.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister say on what principle he is basing his refusal to allow other taxpayers in Gibraltar to get free dental treatment?

### MR SPEAKER:

The Minister has not said he refuses because it is a matter of principle, the Minister said that the changing of the Ordinance is a matter of principle which we will have to go into.

### HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, the principle that the Honourable Member agreed to on the 29th of March, 1974, when I wasn't a Member of the House.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But that doesn't matter, Mr Speaker. What I am saying is that this matter has come to light, perhaps it was overlooked then, it is, I think, a very reasonable question to put to the Minister. Could he give us an indication as to why he refuses? If it is a question of the Ordinance then the Ordinance can be amended.

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, we are not prepared to change the Ordinance ad hoc for this purpose. When the Ordinance requires amendment we will look at it.

### MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So in the meantime, Mr Speaker, if the Ordinance stays like this for another 10 years those taxpayers who are paying the same tax and in fact helping the Government by sending their children to private schools because they are helping, indirectly, running the cost of education in Gibraltar, they are also going to be deprived of free dental treatment. That is the position of the Chief Minister, that is what he is saying. Could he answer the question, Mr Speaker?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have said it quite clearly. When we have an amendment to the Education Ordinance we will look at it.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Notwithstanding the points I have raised for him to consider?

Has the Minister for Medical and Health Services done anything to try and reduce the waiting time of patients making use of the Health Centre?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Medical and Health Services

A number of meetings have been held with the doctors running the service at the Health Centre and since it was not possible to arrive at any comprehensive agreement, it was decided that an expert should be asked to come to Gibraltar to review the running of the Health Centre and advise on any changes that might be necessary. Application under technical co-operation to bring such a person has already been lodged with the Ministry of Overseas Development.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 267 OF 1978

HON G T RESTANO:

In fact it needs an expert to come to Gibraltar to tell us how to run the Health Centre, the Government cannot run it itself properly. Is that what the Minister is saying?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes. Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Will the Minister for Medical and Health Services state whether any resignations have been received from the Government Dental Service?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Medical and Health Services

Owing to the increased demand on the school dental service it was recently decided that the clinic should be placed on a full time basis. The part-time Dental Surgeon at present running the service was offered a full-time appointment which for personal reasons he has decided to decline. He has however agreed to continue to run the service until such time as we are able to find a replacement. Action has already been taken to do so.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 268 OF 1978

### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I know what action has been taken?

### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

We have got a recently qualified Gibraltarian and we want to persuade him to fulfil his contract and come back to Gibraltar. If that fails other action will have to be taken against this Gibraltarian and then the thing will be put out in the ususal manner and advertised here and then in Britain.

### HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister give an assurance that he will do his utmost to ensure that a repetition does not arise when Gibraltar was left without an Eye Specialist for so long?

### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Perhaps if the Honourable Members opposite had taken a different attitude they would not have been for a year without an Opthalmologist.

### MR SPEAKER:

Let us not go into the question of the Opthalmologist, that has nothing to do with the question. Next question.

Will Government consider waiving GPMS contributions where pensioners are concerned?

# Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Medical and Health Services

As explained at the last meeting of the House those pensioners receiving only Old Age Pension or its equivalent are exempted from paying contributions.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 269 OF 1978

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, am I right in saying that the Honourable Member is referring to those people who are insured but not to other senior citizens who are not insured?

### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I have just said it in my answer. Anybody receiving an Old Age Pension or its equivalent is exempted, at whatever age.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

So those people outside the scheme are required to pay, is that it?

### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

If their income ranges from £30 to £32 a week and they are not pensioners they are exempted.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

I see. The Honourable Member is saying that there is a means test for this.

# HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, if you want to call it that, but they have all got to fill up a form.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

My Honourable Friend was asking whether all old senior citizens could be exempted, not on a means test but exempted. In other words, that they should not pay.

### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I am not prepared, for example, to allow my colleague Mr Zammitt to go there with a pension and be exempted, I am not prepared to have my colleague the Financial and Development Secretary when he retires on, say, a £6,000 pension.

### MR SPEAKER:

The answer is no.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Honourable Member at least consider upping the income limit in this means test? I think he is talking about something in the region of £30 a week.

### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

There are discretionary powers in cases where, for example, they may have a child who is sick or an adult dependent receiving an elderly pension who is sick living with a couple getting £30 and in certain circumstances, of course, we up the limit but I would like to explain the position. If a labourer getting £45 married with a child, pays income tax, pays insurace, pays the Health Service and pays contributions, one has got to be very careful that someone is not too better off than another.

# HON M XIBERRAS:

Could the Honourable Member then put the limit at the same income as the labourer?

### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, it would be very unfair.

### MR SPEAKER:

# No. 270 of 1978

# The Hon G T Restano

Does Government not consider that it would be desirable to install a mortuary refrigeration unit at St. Bernard's Hospital?

# Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Medical and Health Services

No, Sir. When necessary the facilities at the Royal Naval Hospital are made available to us.

# No. 271 of 1978

# The Hon Major R J Peliza

Will Government consider resisting one of the two bus stops situated directly opposite each other in Line Wall Road near the Shell Service Station?

# Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

Government has received no complaint of the siting of these bus stops. The Transport Commission will be asked to look at this suggestion to see if there is some way of improving the present situation, if required.

# The Hon M Xiberras

Will the Minister for Housing now give a date for the allocation of vacant flats at Varyl Begg Estate?

# Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

It is expected that the allocation of Phase VI and Block 18 at Varyl Begg Estate will be possibly early next year.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 272 OF 1978

# HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am not talking, of course, of any of the flats affected by the Andrews, Stone and Kent Report. Is the Minister aware of this?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am sorry, would the Hon Member repeat the question?

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Minister confirm that he is talking about flats not affected by the Andrews, Stone and Kent Report?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir, I am referring to those affected by the Andrews, Stone and Kent Report. Phase VI and Block 18 are, in fact, the blocks where Andrews, Kent and Stone have dedicated most of their attention to.

# HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, when the Honourable the Minister for Public Works was answering a question he did not give the impression that he was as optimistic of remedial action being taken. Am I to take it, Mr Speaker, that the Minister is saying that in pursuance of the recommendations of Andrews, Stone and Kent it will be possible for him, early in the new year, to allocate Phase VI and Block 18 of the Varyl Begg Estate?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think I replied in similar terms at the last meeting of the House, Mr Speaker, that consequent on the Andrews, Kent and Stone Report Government had decided to make available for allocation the vacant flats of Phase VI and Block 18 with the exception of the top floor.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, what has made it possible for the Minister to give this statement now. The House will remember that he gave another date some time ago and he was unable to keep to it. What has made it possible?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, what has made it possible for us to allocate and get the Housing Advisory Committee to prepare and draw up lists has been in fact that there were a number of houses that required minor touching-up jobs which I think I also mentioned in the House at the last meeting and most of these now are ready.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

And the work, Mr Speaker, may I ask, has been carried out by Taylor Woodrow?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

Some of the work, Mr Speaker, has been carried out by Taylor Woodrow and some of the patching up jobs have been done by the Public Works Department.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could the Honourable Minister say why this work was not done before?

# HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it was not done before because we have also said here on umpteen occasions that we were waiting for an independent inquiry to know exactly our position of what we should do without detriment to the eventual outcome.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, so the Government has in fact taken a decision in order to allocate these flats by early next year, to put in the Public Works Department to carry out certain repairs and this will not prejudice its legal position?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, When I say repairs I would like to refer to them as patching-up i.e., touching-up of paint and the small items. The major items, of course, have to be done by Taylor Woodrow.

# HON M XIBERRAS:

Finally, Mr Speaker, or almost finally, what does the Minister understand by early in the year?

# The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government explain in broad outline, what individual and/or collective legal responsibilities Government tenants who decide to purchase their flats will be required to enter into, in accordance with the terms of the scheme recently circulated?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are a number of questions on the proposed Home Ownership Scheme which could be more conveniently answered together and I will, of course, be happy to reply to supplementaries to all of them. It would therefore help the House if I could have your leave to answer Question 276 first and then answer this question and Questions Nos. 274, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283 and 284 together.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I think perhaps we might say that it is unprecedented that so large a number of questions should be answered together and I think that because this is question time it might inhibit questions being asked on each of the various aspects of the problem. The Hon Mr Bossano is involved and also my Honourable and Gallant Friend Major Peliza is involved and I think it is going to be difficult.

# MR SPEAKER:

If the questions are going to be answered individually I will be very careful that the supplementaries are directed exclusively to the subject matter of the particular question that is being asked because otherwise we would be anticipating the other questions whereas if all the questions are taken together I would be happy to allow supplementaries to cover all the aspects of the matter asked under the various questions.

# HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, this is in fact the sort of situation which I hope we will arrive at that we would be completely free in asking and that the time allotted to all these questions will be a reasonable one in the circumstances, that being the case I have no objection.

## Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government sent some 2,500 questionnaires in relation to an exercise concerning the possible sale of post-war Government flats to sitting tenants. To date it has been impossible to analyse the replies and questions asked by those who have returned the questionnaire. Government, therefore, finds it impossible to answer with certainty some of the questions asked by the Hon Members relating to the many aspects of the proposed Scheme.

The intention of Government in sending the questionnaire was to test the "market" in compliance with our Electoral Manifesto of 1976. The reaction to the intended scheme will help Government to consider the finer details affecting the sale of flats.

I should make it clear that it is of course, not intended to penalise any tenant who would not be willing to purchase his or her flat as there would be no compulsion. The passing of ownership is one of the most difficult conditions on which no decision has yet been taken. Government fully understands the desire of purchasers to assign or leave their homes to their children whilst Government must ensure that the Home Ownership Scheme does not work to the detriment of persons in the waiting list or create speculation with Government flats.

The matter is a complex one and Government is looking at all these aspects and will examine queries from those who have responded to the questionnaire before coming to a decision on these matters.

# MR SPEAKER:

This is the complete answer to all the questions?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I hope so, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS 273, 274, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283 AND 284.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Hon Member confirm that the answer is that there isn't a house purchase scheme?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The house purchase scheme, Mr Speaker, as I explained, is that we are testing the market. We have put it out to find out what the reaction of the people is. If we find there is a response there will of course be a house purchase scheme. If there is no response there will not be a house purchase scheme.

## HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that he is putting tenants in an extremely difficult position to respond to something if even he himself doesn't know what they are supposed to be responding to. Doesn't he realise that there isn't a market for houses in vacuum? There may be a market for houses if the houses can be inherited which will disappear if the houses cannot be inherited. If he doesn't tell people whether they can be inherited or not he is not going to find what the market is, so how does he propose to deal with that problem?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the idea behind sending the questionnaire out and in answer to the Honourable and Gallant Major Peliza when he said that we had even quoted prices, was precisely to give people an indication of what their house was liable to cost. The finer details are subject to further consideration in discussion. That is why we offered them at this price and let us not tie ourselves in trying to turn a mountain into a molehill because what people were asked to do was to consider the possibility of buying their flat under this particular scheme and there are bound to come in, as we have had in the Housing Department, an enormous amount of questions which differ greatly from the questions we have catalogued in the questionnaire, which require special consideration. We also gave the figure because of the forthcoming rent increase which will not affect the payment of mortgage or whatever way they opt to pay in purchasing the house but it must be clearly understood that we only sent these questionnaires out to the 2,500 people to test and see if there was a desire in Gibraltar for people to purchase their own flats,

#### MR SPEAKER:

Mr Bossano, if you feel that some of your questions have not been answered perhaps, for the purpose of good order, you may wish to repeat the questions as supplementaries so that you get an answer to the particular question you are asking.

## HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, it would appear that the Minister cannot answer any question and yet he invited tenants in his questionnaire to ask him questions. He said in the questionnaire that they should approach the Housing Manager to receive an answer to any of the questions that they might want to raise. Notwithstanding the fact that a period of time has elapsed since then, the Government is saying now that they do not know the answer to any question. They haven't said whether there will be redundancies, they haven't said how the House

Warden structure is going to be affected, they have not said whether they propose to sell in 1979 at the same prices as mentioned in the scheme, they have not, in fact, told us what has been the response to the questionnaire because they still haven't analysed the answers and they cannot say at what price the houses at Rosia Dale are going to be included, if they are going to be included, so there has been no answer to any question. Is the Minister going to give specific answers to any of the points that I have asked or is it a fact that he cannot?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, in the questionnaire we obviously did not put down if there are going to be redundancies in the warden structure.

#### MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked whether you have got any specific answers to the questions asked in the House.

# HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Sir, I am assured that if the Home Ownership Scheme does get off the ground there will be no redunduncies and I can equally say I very much doubt that it would have any effect at all on the warden structure because the cleanliness of the Estate would still have to continue, Mr Speaker.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does Government expect the owners of the houses to do the maintenance through the Government?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

I don't expect so, Mr Speaker. When one is talking of a home ownership scheme probably the Honourable and Gallant Member is assuming that we are going to sell every single Government flat. There will also be a maintenance problem with Public Works Department whether we sell one block of Humphreys, five blocks of Humphreys or Varyl Begg for the matter. There will still be a number of houses that will not be sold.

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But, surely, the Government must have assumed that a reasonable number of people want to buy their flats and at least theoretically work on the assumption of, perhaps, 25% of the tenants or 10% of the tenants or 5%, but based on that I would have thought that the Minister would have been able to give us an answer on that particular question which, I think, is a very important one. All the consequences of the scheme, I would have thought, would have been studied and

analysed. I do not suppose the Minister intends to change the prices, does he, or are the prices firm now? Can he tell me what the position is with regard to prices? Are they subject to inflation if they are sold in 10 years' time or is there a fixed price now and people who have got an offer can now go firm on those prices. Can the Minister answer that?

#### A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee which has produced this tentative plan to create a national discussion very much the same ....

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Which Committee?

#### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

The Committee which has been looking into this matter. First of all as regards going to Britain what we went to Britain originally for was to get the approval that we could embark on a House Ownership Scheme on houses for which aid had been given, and that was cleared. Having cleared that we started preparing a scheme with the Economic Adviser and the Statistics Department. The idea of sending out a circular was to get the ball rolling. It is a very complex and difficult matter, no more difficult than the education debate that has been going on in Britain for over a year. There are still a lot of questions and answers and a lot of questions coming in and that is why we provided an office in the Housing Department to deal with this matter. What we produced, and it says so in the beginning of the questionnaire, were samples of how much you could buy a house for and then it says how the price of houses would go up in relation to the increase in wages. All that is set out in the questionnaire that was sent to the tenants. I am answering all the questions, Sir, that have been lumped into one and then they can make all the supplementaries they like. Therefore, Sir, it is not true to give the impression that we have a firm scheme with all the problems sorted out and that we can give all the guarantees possible. One thing that escaped us, let us be honest about it, Sir, was the question of inheritance. It escaped us in an effort that people would not speculate with a house by passing it to someone who already has a house and he could occupy one house and sell the other one. All these things are coming up as a result of discussions.

### MR SPEAKER:

Is the Minister saying that the question of inheritance was not gone into and it is now being considered?

# - HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It was very much gone into but at the time we thought that people who have got a flat inherit the house instead of just getting the money and selling it back to the Government and at the same time keep a house which is suitable for him and sell your house to somebody else.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

So what is the position now? That is the question.

## HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

The position now is that if people respond and if there is a real desire to buy houses and if I were a Government tenant I would be standing on a queue with suggestions of how best to improve the scheme. All that we have done, Sir, is to try and provoke a discussion, to try and provoke a national debate, if you want to put it that way, on the House Ownership Scheme, and we have given guidelines which are subject to criticism, to change, etc. As regards redundancy I can assure the Honourable Member that whatever happens to the Housing Scheme there will be no redundancies and no one will be out of work within the Government because of the Housing Scheme in any shape or form.

## HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

With regard to the price of the houses. I take it that that is the firm offer now and that the prices will stand.

# HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I am very sorry that the Honourable Member is not in Gibraltar more often because if he had read the paper that was circulated it did say there that houses are tied up to increase in wages, for example, next year wages go up and the price that the owner will get if he wants to sell his house would be the equivalent of the percentage ....

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am talking of buying, not selling.

#### MR SPEAKER:

Order.

## HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

If the Scheme had got off the ground in 1978 then that would have been the sample figure round about which a

house could be sold. If it is going to be sold in 1979 then that house should go up by the amount the wages have gone up from 1978 to 1979, but it is my personal view, and I am talking as one interested in the Scheme, that since the Scheme has not been able to get off the ground in 1978, let me be honest about it, I doubt whether it will ever get off the ground because people in Gibraltar are not interested in buying their houses. That is a fact.

#### MR SPEAKER:

Order. The Minister must realise that we must not debate the matter. I see the difficulties he is labouring under but we must give specific answers and not explanations as to how the Scheme is going to be dealt with.

### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

The reply to the question is that it is my view that because the Scheme has not gone off the ground in 1978 the benefit of the sample price should still hold for 1979.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, if the Honourable Minister thought it important to seek advice from the United Kingdom on the question of how to queue up at the Medical Centre, doesn't he think that it is even more important to have sought advice on such a major exercise such as the Home Ownership Scheme?

#### MR SPEAKER:

Order. We are not going to debate the whole Scheme. We are going to get answers to questions. You can ask as many supplementaries you wish to elucidate information but let us not debate the House Ownership Scheme.

## HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What I am saying is this, Mr Speaker, I asked that particular question earlier to the other Minister who is obviously not responsible for the Scheme. I can see now that the Chairman of the Committee was really basically responsible for the Scheme.

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

I was also in that Committee, Mr Speaker.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Yes, but he was not the Chairman, Mr Speaker.

## MR SPEAKER:

Order. You asked the Honourable Minister for Medical and Health Services a question as to whether the prices quoted in the circular sent to people were static. You have been told that it will oscillate in accordance with the increase of wages. Let us have another question.

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

This is a very important Scheme, if it ever gets off the ground, the Minister doesn't think it will, but if it does, it is a very important scheme. Since it is the same Minister that thought it necessary to seek advice in the United Kingdom on how to run the Medical Centre ....

#### MR SPEAKER:

Order. I have said on several occasions that we must not debate the matter.

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

All I am saying is that given the immensity of the Scheme, wouldn't it have been reasonable to ask for advice before he went into this. Why didn't he do it before and now he is seeking advice?

# HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Sir, in the first place this is a matter which has been going on for two or three years and we have also got advice from the Housing Corporation Scheme which is run by the British Government and based on that principle and taking into account the level of salaries in Gibraltar, the necessity to encourage people to cwn flats and taking into account that there should be no speculation with the limited land that is available and the fact that the houses have been paid by the United Kingdom Government and still very highly subsidised, we prepared a scheme which took us quite a long time and we thought that unless we started the impetus and created the discussion we couldn't get anything off the ground if we had sent the scheme first to the United Kingdom and that is why we launched the Scheme and we hoped to get quite a number of replies in time so that when Mrs Novitt was in Gibraltar she could also look at the people's reaction. It is a question of getting it off the ground once and for all.

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, is it possible to get a sensible reply when there is no sensible question?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I agree.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am talking, Mr Speaker, about the questionnaire that they have sent out. That is what I am talking about and the Minister knows it. If you send a questionnaire where no definite offer is made, if a person doesn't know what is going to happen to the property after he buys it, if it is all very much in the air, as my honourable Firend has said, what is the use of sending a questionnaire. In fact, that questionnaire may be misleading. Does not the Minister think that in fact the answers he has got might be misleading and may even lead to his making a wrong decision.

## HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir, it was not misleading, in fact, it has proved its worth because we are discussing Home Ownership here in the House.

### MR SPEAKER:

Perhaps we should recess now until after lunch when we can continue with the question of the Home Ownership Scheme.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I do have nine questions on the subject and when we agreed for the thing to be dealt collect—ively what I expected the Minister to do was to make a statement which would individually cover the points raised in each of the questions which has not happened, there has been a broad statement. I would want to ask specific questions related to the questions I have put on the Order Paper.

## MR SPEAKER:

That is completely and utterly in order. That is what I am afraid is not happening. We should be asking supplementaries to elucidate the answers which, perhaps, have not been given.

# HON M XIBERRAS:

As the Honourable Mr Bossano has rightly said, if the Minister had attempted to answer the questions rather than say that he was not in a position to answer any of them, which is really the essence of his statement, then the matter would have proceded but I am sorry to say that other than getting from the Government an indication that the Scheme appears to be dead in their eyes we have not got much information out of our questions.

#### MR SPEAKER:

Perhaps the way to approach it would be that Members of the Opposition will ask specific supplementaries now to find out whether Government has got the answers.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

It will be duplication of work but we shall have to.

#### MR SPEAKER:

We will now recess until 3.15 this afternoon.

The House recessed at 1.00 p.m.

The House resumed at 3.25 p.m.

## MR SPEAKER:

I am sure there is no need to remind the House that we are dealing with the questions in connection with the Housing Purchase Scheme.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister two questions which arise out of comments made either by himself or by the Honourable Mr Montegriffo. Could either of the Honourable Members clarify why it is that in answer to a previous question it was elicited after several attempts on this side of the House, that there had been some consultation with Her Majesty's Government on the question of the scheme and yet the Honourable Mr Montegriffo in reply said that they had also sought the advice of the Housing Corporation and he also said, as Chairman of the Committee, that he had sought permission from Her Majesty's Government to see if they could sell houses which Her Majesty's Government had paid for.

# HON A P MONTAGRIFFO:

I think I was quite clear about it. I said that this has been going on for a long time, we had also studied the running of the Housing Corporation which is run by the British Government and as regards the question of asking permission we wanted to know whether it was possible to sell houses which had been given on an aid basis and the answer was, yes. In fact, they favour that and this is as far as I can go on this one. I also understand that when Mrs Hart was in Gibraltar the matter was also brought up mainly as to when we were going to get the scheme off the ground. The principle and guidelines of the scheme was all the time being prepared. It is very complex.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I right in saying, Mr Speaker, that Her Majesty's Government, in one guise or another, does have a direct or indirect interest in the scheme which is the subject matter of the questions before the House?

#### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Perhaps if we had not taken the initiative in trying to sell houses they might not have raised it. Perhaps if we had not taken the initiative or talked about selling houses for quite a long time now they might not even have bothered whether we sold or did not sell houses.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I would refer to my question directed to one of the questions here, the question of inheritance which obviously brings in the terms on which, and even the price I might suggest, at which houses might be sold. Was there in fact, on the question of possible alienation of Government property in which, apparently, Her Majesty's Government does have an interest having provided the money for its construction originally, has the advice or the views of Her Majesty's Government been sought on this?

#### MR SPEAKER:

I think the Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary did say that in answer to a particular question which was put by the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition, that Her Majesty's Government was consulted on the principle because they had contributed to the building of the houses. As far as he could say they had never been consulted as to the details of the scheme. I am wondering whether that is what you are directing your question to.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Not quite, Mr Speaker. I am trying to establish what relevance there is - I apologise for this but obviously there is a great interest on the part of the House from the number of questions that have been tabled - I am trying to establish to what extent alienation of Government property on specific terms of the Housing Scheme is possible given the direct or indirect interest of Her Majesty's Government. This is what I am trying to establish. That is the purpose of such questions as that on inheritance.

# HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

First of all I think I have said so before. If Her Majesty's Government had not been in favour of selling houses which had been paid for by them they would have

said so from the beginning and that would have been the end of that. But we were politically committed to the House Ownership Scheme and we could only sell houses and therefore before doing that even out of courtesy we would have been bound to ask them but we thought that it was the proper way to go about it and we were encouraged to do so. Of course, let me say that we were encouraged for other reasons perhaps which are not the political motives, the political motives of the Government is because we want to make people own their houses, basically. They saw that not only was this socially good but it was good also from the point of view of finance and maintenance.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, this is the whole rigmarole which I am trying to disentangle. It is, in fact, obvious, if I may preface my question with a sentence, it is, in fact, obvious that there is a United Kingdom Government interest in the alienation of property and in the terms on which property is alienated. Since Government tenants have in fact been offered what I assume to be Gibraltar Government property disposable by the Gibraltar Government, I would like to know whether that other party, Her Majesty's Government, has, in fact, put any conditions, offered any advice or offered any suggestions or commented on the rights and wrongs of the alienation of very substantial amounts of Government property to which they have contributed.

# HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No conditions have been placed by anybody. The whole thing was discussed by the Minister for Housing, the Economic Adviser, the Statistician, Treasury, Public Works and all those involved with housing and I had the misfortunate or fortune to be asked to Chair the Committee.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister - I suppose he will answer the question now - would the Minister, who if I may say so has given a somewhat distorted impression in his television interview about the right of alienation or inheritance, make clear to the House and to the public on what conditions a house may be alienated either by passing on to someone in the family or to any other party or by selling back to the Government, presumably.

# HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I don't know that I gave a distorted impression over the possible inheritance of houses in connection with the Home Ownership Scheme. I do not think I could have given a very distorted impression because

neither then or even today have we decided exactly finally what the inheritance system will be. There are many complications and it is probably one of the most problematic situations that Government will have to consider, the question of inheritance.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I to say, Mr Speaker, that the terms that went out to the tenants which would appear to me to be a pretty firm offer of Government commitment are not held to by the Government any more?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

Do I understand, Mr Speaker, that the Honourable Leader is asking if the price structure of the houses ....

#### MR SPEAKER:

No, the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition is interpreting whatever has been circulated by the Government to tenants to be a definite offer and he is asking you whether this offer still stands or is it subject to alteration.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, thank you for clarification on that. The questionnaire that we sent round was very brief. We know this, we were fully aware that the questions being asked were quite brief and that there would be a number of questions over and above what we were asking. cannot say it is definite because we cannot confirm that there will be a home ownership scheme until we know exactly how the people feel. Until we get the complete picture of knowing exactly how people would like it, then one can consider all these matters much better, may I say, than on the basis of the 8 or 10 questions we have had today on this particular issue. Then is when one can say whether the houses can be offered on these conditions, that you can leave it to your son or not leave it to your son or whatever but one cannot do that, Mr Speaker, until we have been able to analyse the requirements in response to the questionnaire. There are an enormous amount of questions and an enormous amount of suggestions in the answers to the questionnaires and until one gets that I am afraid that there is very little that one can say in answer to the remaining questions there is very little that I can add in reply until we know exactly what the response is and then and only then can we decide to have a home ownership scheme and we can then really draft something which is concrete and definite and then people can say whether they are interested or not interested. Until such time, with all respect, Mr Speaker, I think there is very little that I can add to satisfy Members opposite.

## HON J BOSSANO:

The whole problem arises from the situation created by the Government because it is putting the cart before the horse. Doesn't the Minister understand that they cannot come along and tell the House like he did at the last meeting, that he did not have to consult anybody here or allow any debate to take place because that was what was in the manifesto and it was going to be done, doesn't he agree, Mr Speaker, that he cannot turn round to us and say: "I do not know whether the Home Ownership Scheme is going to exist or not exist until people have said whether they want to buy or not to buy," and then say that if they say they do want to buy, the Scheme will be drafted and then if they do not like the Scheme then presumably the sale will not take place and the Scheme will collapse anyway. The position is, surely, Mr Speaker, that the Government has sent out a highly commercial leaflet full of the sort of commercials that one might expect from selling a brand of washing powder, and encouraging people to take up this opportunity of a lifetime and people don't know what it is they are taking on and we do not know and the Government does not know what they are taking on. Surely, the Government can now answer the questions that people need answered before they can make up their minds whether to answer yes or no.

#### MR SPEAKER:

Will you then ask the question you want answered.

# HON J BOSSANO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I would like to ask the Government whether they would not agree with me that the first thing they need to do is to put out how they think the Scheme will work and then they can have reactions to it.

## HON H J ZAMNITT:

Mr Speaker, the way that we think the Scheme should work is not the way that many other people may think the Scheme should work. We have sent this questionnaire out asking people whether they are interested in buying their house or flat and within that we have put such things as saying: "If you would like to buy, would you like to buy where you are living? If not, is it too big, too small, too high, too low, areawise one thing and the other." When replies come through we can then analyse. In fact, Mr Speaker, I forgot to ....

#### MR SPEAKER:

In other words, what you are trying to say is that until such time as you have received answers to the question-naire you cannot prepare the Scheme. Let us give answers to questions so that we do not debate the whole thing.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, all I can say is that I do not agree with the Honourable Member because until there is a market there is no demand.

## HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, doesn't the Honourable Member understand that the existence or non-existence of the market depends on the conditions he attaches to the Scheme. If the Government decides that the houses cannot be inherited there may not be a market. If the Government decides that the houses can be inherited there could be a market. So he is not going to find out whether there is a market or there isn't until he has made clear whether they are inheritable or non-inheritable. How can he expect to take a decision after the market has been established when one thing precedes the other?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

Of course, Mr Speaker, we are fully aware as I said earlier on that the question of inheritance plays a very important part in the whole scheme.

## HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Honourable Member whether in the event of somebody buying their own house they would be able to leave Gibraltar and keep the house empty?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

I very much doubt that, Mr Speaker. Again it is a question that would have to be considered but I as Housing Minister will not be very much in favour of having an empty house to the detriment of Gibraltar's housing stock.

# HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Honourable Member not agree that prospective buyers should be told that a condition must be that notwithstanding that they are the owner of the house they have to be in constant occupation of it. Would he not agree that that is something people should be told?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

As much as in occupation I very much doubt, Mr Speaker, but, again, that is one of the conditions that will have to be considered if and when the scheme is implemented.

### HON J BOSSANO:

With regard to the question of the House Warden structure where the Honourable Member, in fact, was not able to give us a categorical answer that it would not be affected, he said he thought it would not be affected if I recall rightly, Mr Speaker, in the original answer, could I ask him whether private tenants in a housing estate would have to make a contribution towards the cost of the House Warden structure equivalent to the contribution the Government makes on behalf of its tenants?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

I don't think, Sir. It is not the House Warden it is the warden structure, Mr Speaker, and that would have very little to do other than the cleaning up of the various estates. I don't think there would be any question of asking the tenants to contribute anything towards the warden structure.

## HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I don't think the Honourable Member has understood. If the owner occupiers, according to the information leaflet brought out by the Government, is going to be responsible for the cleaning of communal areas and there is a block in a housing estate which is owner occupied, would the owner occupiers be required to contribute towards the cost of the warden structure which will be looking after the whole estate or would they be able to set up their own little private enterprise system notwithstanding the fact that the warden structure is being maintained?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

The warden structure does not clean communal areas, Mr Speaker.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

Presumably that depends on the definition of communal areas. If the warden structure is responsible for cleaning the estate as a whole then if part of that estate is privately owned and part of the estate is publicly owned and there is not going to be any change in the warden structure as a result, I am asking the Government whether the cost of the estate that is relevant to the privately owned part of it is going to be charged to the private owner. That is what I am asking.

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, I don't think there would be any charge at all because by communal areas what we mean is such things as corridors and stairways and probably the patio but outside the actual block that would be the Warden's responsibility.

# HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I take it that looking at this from a housing finance point of view which I understand is one of the factors involved in the consideration of the scheme, in that case the situation would be that if a substantial proportion of public housing were sold the cost of the House Warden scheme would fall entirely on the Housing Account notwithstanding the fact that there was a service being provided by private owner occupiers. Is that the case?

### HON H J ZAMMITT:

The cleaning of the estate is a service of course to private or owner occupiers and I do not think quite honestly, Mr Speaker, that there is any way that Government could consider ....

# MR SPEAKER:

In other words the answer is that Government has not made up its mind on this particular issue. It is no use speculating if you have not got an answer. It is information that is being sought and if you have not got it you cannot give it.

## HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, am I right in saying that the answer is no, that there is not going to be a charge or is the answer that they do not know yet?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think we don't know yet is a better answer, Mr Speaker.

### HON J BOSSANO:

Could the Honourable Member tell me what he does know and I might be able to restrict my questions to that area.

# HON H J ZAMMITT:

What I do know, Mr Speaker, and it has been said by myself and by the Minister for Medical and Health Services is, that there will be no redundancies in the Public Works.

#### MR SPEAKER:

Order. Shall we pass on to another question.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Does the same thing apply to repairs?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

We can stay here until doomsday but there is nothing more that one can say. One cannot say any more than what we have said. We just cannot give clear, categorical replies until if and when the scheme gets off the ground.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is not the Minister in grave danger of misleading the public of Gibraltar by putting out a scheme the important aspects of which he cannot explain even in this House? Does the Minister not consider it an important aspect of any offer with regard to the sale of Government housing that tenants should know to what extent they shall be responsible for their own repairs and to what extent the Government will be responsible for repairs?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

But, of course, Mr Speaker, what we did say in the circular we sent out was that houses before they were sold would be put into a reasonable state of repair. As I said before we can be here until doomsday but we cannot answer any question with clarity on responsibility of maintenance or on any other issue until we get replies that people are interested in purchasing. If they are interested in purchasing then we can get down to the finer details.

#### HON M KIBERRAS:

Isn't the Monourable Member in danger, Mr Speaker, of telling the House, in fact, that he is not defending the scheme any more, that he has simply put it out to tenants and he is awaiting tenants' reactions but he is not in a position even to explain to tenants what the scheme is. Could I ask the Minister another question to illustrate the point. How does the Government envisage that the responsibilities of those tenants who do purchase the houses are going to be held? Are they going to be held collectively or individually by the tenants in respect of repairs, for instance?

# HON H J ZAMMITT:

One would assume, Mr Speaker, that if there was a block of flats sold in its entirety to owner occupiers, that they would be able to form themselves into some sort of cooperative society and contribute a certain sum per week. I think it is common knowledge that there are some blocks of flats privately owned where tenants contribute £150 a year or £200 a year per tenant and then they have a private contractor to do their repairs.

### MR SPEAKER:

I think that the answer is that the matter is still under consideration and no decision has been taken. You are suggesting different alternatives which have not even been considered.

### HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, whilst I, for one, welcome this open Government approach, I think it exceeds in being too open. Surely the Government can have its own ideas at this stage which it is not rigid on and it is prepared to be flexible and change but what we would like to know is what the ideas are. Can the Honourable Member explain after the very clearcut commitment I got on no redundancies which I welcome, can he explain how he proposes to employ everybody in the Public Works if all the people who buy their houses are able to engage private contractors to do their repairs?

### MR SPEAKER:

Gentlement, it is obvious that we are not going to get any further on this question.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, we are dealing with a good number of questions.

## MR SPEAKER:

Certainly, if you ask a specific question.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask, in view of the statement of the Financial and Development Secretary earlier and in view of the conditions of the scheme, undetermined and vague as they are and subject to revision, change and so forth, could I ask the Government as a whole whether in drawing up the scheme such as it was envisaged they considered their responsibility to the public of Gibraltar, generally, with regard to prices.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, the prices were not just thrown out at random.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, how is it possible to arrive at these prices, fair as they may be? How was it possible if the Government was undecided at the time about the major conditions of the scheme, as we have ssen from the answers the Minister and the Chairman and so forth have given. Major conditions such as inheritance, how repairs are going to be effected, whether any property could be alienated, how the communal services are going carried out all these things.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, no, the question of repairs hasn't come up at all.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

The question of repairs, Mr Speaker, was the subject of one of my questions at least. I asked whether, in fact, it was envisaged that the repairs were going to be a collective responsibility or an individual responsibility and whether in fact, they were going to be undertaken by the Government or not by the Government.

# HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Nobody has said that the Government was going to be responsible for the repairs of the flats that were sold.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

But didn't the Chief Minister hear the questions that were put in respect of repairs, I think every other Member of the House must have heard them.

## HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not on repairs.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the Chief Minister what is his view as to how repairs are to be effected, whose responsibility they are to be, whether they are to be a collective responsibility or whether by analogy with the warden scheme, they are to be undertaken by the Government in respect of communal areas?

## HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think there can be no doubt about that as to the intention of those who have prepared the scheme and having regard to what has been said by various people, that the purchase of a flat or a house carries with it the responsibility for its repairs. The provision of the warden scheme has got an element of public utility in the sense of keeping the whole area clean the same as you have to keep Main Street clean. The Warden structure as I understand it, I don't know very much about it, is a completely different thing to the question of substantial repairs or repairs of the property. Anywhere where you buy yourself a flat you are responsible for the substantial repairs of the property and that was one of the items and in fact it was mentioned by the Financial and Development Secretary.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, the Honourable and Learned Member is aware that in certain communal properties, even today in Gibraltar, there are problems affecting repairs to the whole building over which there is dispute as to whether the obligations of the tenants are communal or individual. Could the Honourable Member answer the question as to whether it is envisaged or was envisaged that the obligations should be communal or individual, that is the subject matter of one of the questions.

# HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is individual except that people find it much more practical in every civilised block of flats one knows about, that they get together and do the work together and, indeed, the proposals say: "When a block of flats is sold to tenants an association will be formed by the purchasers which will be given the authority as well as the responsibility for the proper maintenance of the structure and the upkeep of communal areas. Apart from putting aside a monthly sum to meet the cost of maintenance, rates will of course carry on being paid."

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the Honourable Member then whether it is envisaged that in those blocks where the Government has not been able to sell all the flats, in those blocks Government would come in as a member of this association?

## HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, but on the other hand it is not intended that a block should be sold if there isn't a very substantial number of flats to be sold, that is to say, the Government will not go 50/50 with a block of flats because then the responsibility will fall on the Government. Unless a big majority of tenants in a particular block is in favour of purchase there won't be purchase.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Chief Minister whether he knows how many replies have, in fact, been received?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I do not know that.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

There has been no time to count the actual replies?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Oh, yes, Mr Speaker, to date we have received about 200 replies. They are trickling in, people are taking

their time, I can say that out of the 200 we have 150 replies from people interested in buying, with questions and with queries, we have 22 saying absolutely no and we have 64 who say yes but elsewhere.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Out of how many?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Out of 2,500 which we circulated.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Thank you.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is there any indication of any particular block where you might have 50% of the tenants going for it? Is there any indication from the replies received so far that there is any particular block of flats in which the scheme might have a chance of succeeding?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I would venture to say, Sir, that possibly Humphreys Estate stand the best chance.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In one particular block or is the idea of the Chief Minister ....

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The Chief Minister said as an example that if there was a 50/50 response in a particular block Government would not sell.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In other words, even if we didn't find that there was any particular block where there was approximately 50% the scheme would still go on in that particular block notwithstanding....

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If there is a majority of buyers it would be sold.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Unless there is a majority of buyers that particular block would not be sold. This is what I am trying to find out. From the replies that you have had are you suggesting now that there is a particular block in Humphreys in which this might succeed?

### HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, I am not saying that. I am sorry if I misunderstood the question. I thought that the Honourable Member was asking was there a particular estate where there was a larger demand and if that is the case then it is the other way around, I would say that Humphreys stands the best chance of being able to be sold in toto than possibly other estates.

## HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Notwithstanding that glimmer of hope there is at this moment no indication of any particular block of flats in which there are a reasonable number of people who might want to buy.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

We haven't really been able to look at that.

# HON M XIBERRAS:

In pursuance to Question 279, Mr Speaker, how does Government propose to deal with tenants who do not wish to purchase their flats from Government?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well, if there are a number who do not want to purchase they will have to remain as tenants of Government.

## HON M KIBERRAS:

What does the Government intend to do about their rent, for instance?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

On the question of rents, Mr Speaker, I think we all know what is going to happen. Rents will go up as and when needed.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, but would it not be a case that those remaining tenants would have to share the cost of certain services provided?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, surely the Honourable Leader of the Opposition can understand that one of the things we certainly do not want to do is to penalise anybody.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Can the Honourable Member give an indication as to what increases can be expected for those tenants who are not going to purchase their flats?

### MR SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member said that rents will not go up as a result of the scheme, they will go up in the normal course of events.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I have some doubts about this because the Financial and Development Secretary said that the scheme was envisaged to provide some relief to the Housing Fund and rents, of course, are an important element of the Housing Fund. That is why I want to seek an assurance from the Minister that he is not going to punish those tenants who do not purchase their flats.

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am a Housing Minister not a schoolmaster and I do not punish anybody.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Could he say that the rents would not be punitive in that sense?

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, on the question of maintenance which I think is one of the things that obviously the scheme might well relieve if that is the primary objective anyway, to reduce the cost of maintenance. According to the Honourable Minister for Medical and Health Services, Mr Montegriffo, the Chairman of the Committee, there will be absolutely no redundancy on the maintenance side and if that is so therefore how does the Government envisage ....

## HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I did not say that.

## MR SPEAKER:

Order. Please go on with your question.

## HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Yes, Sir. If there will be no redundancy it means that those people will carry on being employed there. If they continue being employed the cost of maintenance to the Government will be more or less the same as it is today. Where is the saving going to be coming from?

#### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

What I said was that there would be no redundancy within the Government service.

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think there is a misunderstanding on the part of the Questioner. The warden structure do not carry out major repairs.

## HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It is not on the warden structure alone, Mr Speaker, it is on the normal maintenance of the Government houses today. It does not consist only of the warden structure.

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Other repairs which are badly needed will be accelerated.

#### MR SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member has been given an answer by the Minister for Medical and Health Services. He said that there will be no redundancy within the Department.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

So at this year's level of expenditure we are still going to spend £600,000 on maintenance?

## HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

How is that going to be reduced?

# MR SPEAKER:

I must come to a conclusion that no further useful purpose will be served unless specific questions are asked for the purpose of seeking information. Please let us restrict our questions to that.

# HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Government going to be using the 1st of July 1978 as the base date on which to calculate any increase in the value of the houses?

# HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I think I mentioned before that if the scheme has not got off the ground in 1978, which we never had much hope that it would, the prices laid down for 1978 would hold good for 1979. But I would warn the House as I do not want any misunderstanding later on, that they are just guideline figures. I don't think it will change very much up or down but they are guideline figures, they are not exact figures.

# HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it correct to assume, for the sample selling prices, that in fact the selling prices have been based on the present rent per square footage?

# HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir, it was a combination of both things. It was a combination, first of all, being a new thing, to encourage people to buy houses, then taking into account the level of wages and the fact that people in Gibraltar devote even now before they become accustomed to a house ownership scheme, they devote a lot of their money to other things which in other countries are devoted for housing. Taking all into account as a package, the advice from the Statistics Department and the Economic Adviser was that this would be a fair price. It also took into account the repayment of mortgage.

## HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, it is not the fairness of the price that I am questioning what I am asking is what is the formula that has been used to arrive at a price for Jamaica House which, for example, is different from the price arrived at for Governor's Meadow House. What is the formula?

## HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It has followed in a way the Wyles Report on rents which classified the different residential areas and what they were worth. We followed that pattern.

## HON J BOSSANO:

To get back to my original supplementary, is it in fact true to say that the price is based on the area and the rent per square which are both mentioned in the leaflet that was produced?

## HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It is an important factor but the main factor was that people would be encouraged to buy their houses because we thought this was one way of solving the housing problem eventually.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, can I have the whole market price of the whole Government Estate?

#### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

That I am afraid I cannot answer.

## HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We have an idea that an empty Government flat in the market is worth a lot of money, but this is a home ownership scheme. Except for the appendix of the right of assignment and so on it is not a business concern, it would be an absolute loss. It is an encouragement for tenants to own their properties, it is not based on market prices.

### HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, in arriving at these prices am I right in thinking that in fact what the Honourable Member has said about the encouragement to buy is the factor that is related to a weekly mortgage payment that is not substantially above the rent. Is that where that comes in?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes.

## HON J BOSSANO:

Therefore working back on that, I imagine that a multiplier has been produced which can be applied to the base cost per square foct, is that the case?

# HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

In a way, yes, and then there was a reduction made in certain cases taking into account the residential area where the house is sited. But I think the Honourable Member is absolutely right, it is a question of encouraging people to buy houses at a low price rather than paying rent that eventually in 8 or 10 years will be much higher than they are now.

### HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask whether in June this year this had not been thought of since the Honourable Minister for Housing at the time in answer to a question said that there was no possibility of the house purchase scheme being based on current rents since these were far too low even at the rates that they are now.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, I think the Honourable Member is slightly confused. I may have said that prior to rents having gone up.

## HON J BOSSANO:

The question, Mr Speaker, in June, was whether the Government was taking into account the increase in rents due on the 1st of July in order to allow people the opportunity to buy their houses then and the Honourable Member answered that even after the increases rents were too low to justify the comparison between rents and the house purchase scheme. Is it then the case that this was thought of subsequent to that date?

### HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, I don't think it was thought of subsequent to that date because we have been meeting on this question certainly before June, 1978. It must have been drawn up much before that.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, there is a case certainly, about a month ago, in the United Kingdom on the alienation of flats by a local Authority in the London area and certain obligations were held to bind the Councillors who sold the flats. Does the Chairman of the Committee or any of the members or the Chief Minister, are they familiar with this particular case and are there any obligations as far as the public in Gibraltar who are the owners of the flats to be alienated. Do they happen to know about this particular case and do they recognise any obligation to the public as a whole as to the fair selling price of public property?

## HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Can I seek clarification. What is he saying, that we are selling it too low?

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Do you recognise any obligation. I don't think you are selling anything, quite frankly.

#### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I am not aware of the case, Mr Speaker.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Perhaps the Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary might consider looking into this particular case in the London area where certain obligations were said to be held by the local Authority.

## HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That must depend on the actual corporation law in the area and the conditions under which the housing scheme would be legislated upon here.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, on the question of the house prices, are the sample prices related to the whole of a block or would in fact the Government be thinking of taking into account the specific state of each flat?

### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir, the Government will take into account the area depending on the size of the house on any particular block. The Government will do all the repairs to a satisfactory level. They will all be handed over in a fit state and thereafter the owners will take over and do the repairs themselves.

## HON J BOSSANO:

So the repairs is not limited to the external repairs in a block, it is actually the repairs that the individual flats need to bring it up to a satisfactory standard.

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The blocks will be handed in a proper state of repair both inside and outside.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

The proper state of repairs means actually repairs to individual flats and not just external repairs?

## HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The basic repairs of the flats will be the responsibility of the Government before it is sold.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

I am talking about repairs and not decorations. For example, if there are two identical flats in a block and one has been waiting for the last 10 years to have its shutters repaired, will the Government actually repair the shutters before the flat is sold?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have already said so, yes.

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister say on what terms the flats are going to be sold? Is it a freehold, a lease?

#### MR SPEAKER:

That is information which you can get from the leaflet which has been circulated.

## HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am not so sure, Mr Speaker, given the fact that on present form the individual who buys it apparently is unable to assign the property to anybody else as I see it. What kind of ownership does he have, is it just a scheme to get the tenant to do the maintenance?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

That is nonsense.

# HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Well, I would like to know, Mr Speaker, what kind of a sale it is. Is it freehold, a lease, what are the conditions of sale? Can someone explain the position?

#### HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

If you read the leaflet you can see what it says. It is explained in the leaflet.

### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I have read the leaflet but the fact is that an individual cannot dispose of the property the way he wants.

## MR SPEAKER:

I am afraid we are going back again to square one. I will call the next question.

### HON J BOSSANO:

There are still some of the original questions pending.

## HON G T RESTANO:

The Chief Minister said that the Government would not be prepared to enter into a 50/50 agreement with all the tenants. What sort of ratio is he looking for? That is one part of the question, Mr Speaker. The second part of the question is, if in a block of flats, say, 60% of the tenants do not wish to buy their flats and 40% do and the Chief Minister has said that they would not enter into a 50/50 agreement, what happens then to those 40% who would be willing to buy their flats?

# HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The obvious thing is that he would not be able to buy and that is why there may be movement of people who want to go into a block that wants to buy, that is, if they want to. Nobody will be compelled and if there is not a majority of at least 70% or 75% of tenants in a block who desire to buy then it will not be sold because there will not be the essence of what is sought in the scheme and that is the interest to share with the greater number of your tenants the ownership of the block.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Can the Government give an assurance, Mr Speaker, that the conditions under which Government tenants hold their tenancy now will not be changed in any way in order to make them fit into the Government purchasing scheme? In other words, that those Government tenants can be sure that they can hold on to their house after exercising a free choice as to whether they buy or they do not buy. Can I get that assurance?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, of course, a definite assurance can be given in this matter and the Minister said that people who do not want to buy would not be penalised for it in any way.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

I thank the Honourable Member for that assurance.

# HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That assurance has been given before.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Yes. Mr Speaker, but the leaflet is not worth the paper it is written on, apparently.

# HON CHIEF MINISTER:

This is not from the leaflet, this was from the answer given by the Minister.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

The answer given by the Minister. Well, that also is subject to certain qualifications.

#### MR SPEAKER:

Order.

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I would ask the Honourable Member to withdraw that last remark.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

I said the answer given by the Minister was subject to certain qualifications and I am not going to withdraw that. Of course it has been qualified in the course of debate.

### MR SPEAKER:

What exactly did you say, that whatever a Minister has said in this House cannot be accepted?

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

I have said that the scheme as submitted to tenants is not worth the paper it is written on.

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, that is not what I am objecting to.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

The Chief Minister has inferred that I was referring to the Minister's answer. I am not referring to the Minister's answer, I am referring, and I maintain my position, on the scheme ....

## HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, no. May I, on a point of order. He made a reference to the fact that whatever was in the scheme was worth nothing and I said that what I had read from was not from the scheme but from the answer of the Minister and he said that that was equally worth nothing.

## HON M ZIBERRAS:

I did not say that, Mr Speaker.

#### MR SPEAKER:

I think he said that it was subject to certain qualifications.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

I said that the Minister's reply was subject to a good number of qualifications.

## MR SPEAKER:

You were not casting any aspersions on the Minister?

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Of course I was not, Mr Speaker. I am not going to be accused by the Chief Minister and asked to withdraw things I have not said.

## HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will accuse the Leader of the Opposition whenever I feel I ought to and I am not going to be frightened by his looks or by anything else.

## MR SPEAKER:

Order, order.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Government for an assurance that the repairs to flats owned by or at least held by Government tenants, such as they are, the obligations of the Government to repair and to carry out improvements is not going to change, in other words, that they are not going to be treated badly because they refuse to buy?

#### MR SPEAKER:

That assurance has been given already several times, as a matter of fact. Next question.

# The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government make a clear statement on the conditions governing "inheritance" of Government flats that might be purchased in accordance with proposals recently circulated to Government tenants?

# Answer

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

(Answered together with Question No. 273/78).

# The Hon M Xiberras

How many Government flats now being constructed at Rosia Dale are to be allocated on a pointage basis, and will Government say whether it intends to offer these flats for sale to tenants?

## Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

Rosia Dale Flats (not bedsitters) which are expected to be ready by June or July next year are intended, if the House Ownership Scheme is implemented, to be sold in connection with the said Scheme to tenants who will vacate Government owned accommodation which in turn will be used to meet the requirements of decanting in relation to the Modernisation Programme.

In all excluding bedsitters there are 30 flats in this Estate.

## SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 275 OF 1978

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

If I can follow the Minister's answer, Mr Speaker, am I to understand that the Rosia Dale flats are going to be given to people already holding Government accommodation and are not to be allocated to those who have the highest pointage? Is that what the Minister is saying?

## HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I said: "Rosia Dale flats (not bedsitters) which are expected to be ready by June or July next year are intended, if the House Ownership Scheme is implemented, to be sold in connection with the said scheme to tenants who will vacate Government owned accommodation which in turn will be used to meet the requirements of decanting in relation to the Modernisation Programme."

### HON M XIBERRAS:

I think I have got the position now clearly. In other words, people who at present have Government houses are going to be offered the right to buy a house at Rosia Dale and their houses are going to be disposed of on a pointage basis.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Sir, that is so. In fact, we had hoped that possibly the vacating of the present houses will be more than 30 flats at Rosia Dale.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Did the Minister say on modernisation or on a pointage basis?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

On modernisation, Mr Speaker.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

These are going to be allocated by the Committee, or not?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Modernisation is done by the Minister for Housing and the Committee is informed.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

Will the prices of the Rosia Dale flats be at the level of the other ones or at a level of the recent construction costs.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, again, one must say that we have not decided on the price structure of Rosia Dale. One can certainly say that they will not be in the Jamaica House price structure at all.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Is it going to be at market rates?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly not less than cost price.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am informed that the Housing Allocation Committee is prepared to sit on the 9th of January to draw up the list.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, it appears from the Minister's answer that it is the Housing Allocation Committee that is causing the delay so I would like to know, Mr Speaker; (a) when will the flats be ready for allocation in the building sense, in the structural sense, and (b) when does the Minister anticipate that they will actually be allocated?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the question of course can be boiled down to the following: It is not that the Housing Allocation Committee are holding back allocation, in fact, the possibility of the Housing Allocation Committee drawing up lists and still there may be some houses requiring ....

#### MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked two simple questions: (1) when will the flats be ready for occupation, and (2) when will they be allocated?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

What I am trying to explain, Sir, is that despite the Allocation Committee sitting down and despite the allocations being made, there is a possibility that the houses may not be able to be allocated immediately after because some of them may require more repairs than others.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

What I want to know, Mr Speaker, is when does the Minister anticipate they will be allocated? He said "early in the new year" and I would like to know what he means by that.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think that what we are trying to do is to offer comfort to those people who will know they have been allocated a house. As some repairs may be required to be carried out I am afraid I cannot tie myself to a particular date. Although all those who qualify will be allocated some people will have unfortunately, to wait a couple of weeks after some other allocations are made.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I can deduce from what the Minister has said that he anticipates that the houses will be actually allocated and, I suppose ready for occupation by the middle of February, let us say.

# HON H J ZAMMITT:

I would hope, Mr Speaker, and no doubt I will be reminded of this in the future, I would hope earlier than the middle of February.

# MR SPEAKER:

# The Hon Major R J Peliza

Has Government been tendered any advice by a United Kingdom Government entity in respect of their scheme to offer Government flats for purchase and if so what is the nature of this advice?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

Government was recently offered advice from UK in connection with the extended Home Ownership Scheme amongst other matters affecting Government housing by Professor Dela N vitt who recently visited Gibraltar for 10 days and whose report is being awaited.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 276 OF 1978

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Sir, so, in fact, we do not have the advice yet.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir, we are waiting for it.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will the Minister be able to make this available to me when this is received?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I would assume that after Council of Ministers have looked at it, it will be made available.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Rather than assuming can the Minister give an undertaking that he will make it available?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, I cannot give an undertaking, Mr Speaker, on something that hasn't happened. I would assume it is possible but I cannot commit myself in saying I will make it available or that Government will make it available.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister at least inform me when the report is received so that I can put my question again?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

I will certainly do that, Sir, because we are so short of questions always.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

How long after it is received will he let me know?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I will ring him up at Edgware or send him an express letter.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It will be received very promptly at the other end I can assure the Minister that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I did not catch the lady's name.

MR SPEAKER:

Professor Dela Nevitt.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the Minister whether to his knowledge the question of house ownership has figured in any of the economic talks that have taken place with Her Majesty's Government?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am not aware of that, Mr Speaker.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Perhaps some other Honourable Member could answer the question, whether the question of house ownership or home ownership has figured in any of the economic talks on the Housing Development Programme and so on and could I ask whether any advice has been received in this respect from Her Majesty's Government. Professor Nevitt is, in fact, advising on the implementation of it. I am asking about the desirability of it or, let us put it in a word which is somewhat fashionable, the initiative.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Professor Dela Nevitt, Mr Speaker, as I said in my answer, will be reporting not only on the Home Ownership Scheme but on other matters relating to Government Housing and other matters not related to Government housing.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

What I am asking of the Government is whether, in fact, as a result if the discussion of the Home Ownership Scheme in development talks there has been any indication on the part of Her Majesty's Government that this scheme is in their view desirable for Gibraltar - the Honourable Mr Montegriffo's answer is "Oh, yes" and the Honourable the Chief Minister has answered "No".

#### MR SPEAKER:

Order.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

I want to know whether Her Majesty's Government consider it is desirable and whether the terms of the Home Ownership Scheme has been suggested by Her Majesty's Government.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am aware, Sir, that Her Majesty's Government are keen in Gibraltarians possessing on being able to purchase their own homes. Of course, it is not that Her Majesty's Government has proposed this particular scheme which we have proposed. The scheme is left entirely to our discretion.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

Whilst accepting entirely that the scheme was left up to the discretion of Honourable Members opposite, is it a fact that Her Majesty's Government has been urging the Gibraltar Government to implement a scheme of some sort?

### HON H J ZAMMITT:

The answer is yes and no, Mr Speaker. Of course Her Majesty's Government would like us to sell our houses and hence we have decided or we hope to be able to implement a scheme that will give us as much fairness as possible in the purchase of houses. I must reiterate that we have not been coersed by the United Kingdom Government.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

I am not suggesting that. The word I used, Mr Speaker, was "urged" not "coerced". Could I ask the Honourable Member on what grounds Her Majesty's Government has urged or persuaded the Gibraltar Government to launch a scheme of this nature? On financial grounds involving maintenance, is it regard for the interest of the Government tenants? On what grounds has Her Majesty's Government urged or persuaded the Gibraltar Government to launch out on this scheme?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am now convinced that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition didn't read our election manifesto.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

I am not asking the Minister about the manifesto.

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, in our manifesto of 1976 one of the things that this Government put to the people of Gibraltar was the possibility of introducing a home ownership scheme so it therefore means that it was not the United Kingdom Government that urged us into providing Gibraltarians with the chance of owning their own homes but it was the other way about. We, as a Government and as a Party, put to the people of Gibraltar the possibility of being able to own their own house. There is no suggestion at all, Mr Speaker, that there is any request from the United Kingdom that we should do this. We started the initiative and we have had a working committee on this and of course it has been put to the United Kingdom as is evidenced by Professor Dela Nevitt's visit to Gibraltar to try and find what best system there is. As far as we are concerned, Mr Speaker, our intention is to provide Gibraltarians with the pride of owning of their house or flat.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

If I may say so, Mr Speaker, there is a particular point to this particular question.

# MR SPEAKER:

Which is the particular point?

### HON M XIBERRAS:

The particular point is not to hear what the Minister has to say about the election manifesto but what Her Majesty's Government has had to say to Mr Zammitt and other Ministers in the Government. My question was, on what grounds did Her Majesty's Government advocate with the Gibraltar Government the sale of Government flats?

#### MR SPEAKER:

Order. Have you got an answer to this?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I think one is accustomed in the House to have ....

#### MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked a simple question and I want a straight answer. Has Her Majesty's Government given you grounds to advocate the House Ownership Scheme? It is as simple as that.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the answer is, no.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I distinctly heard Members opposite say yes that there had been, it has been discussed and Her Majesty's Government was disposed well towards the scheme, in favour of the scheme. Could I ask the Honourable Member opposite on what grounds? In other words, what was the nature of the advice?

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the question of the Home Ownership Scheme came up in the course of the Development aid talks with the Right Honourable Mrs Judith Hart last April. It was the Gibraltar Government's initiative, it was all part and parcel of the Government's response to urging by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Overseas Development, not recently but over many years, to balance the Housing Account and the scheme was one in which the Government saw the prospects of generating funds on the one hand for further investment and for reducing the maintenance burden which is a tremendous burden on the Housing Fund.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

I am most grateful to the Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

May I ask one question on this?

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, certainly.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Why did Government put the cart before the horse? Why launch a scheme before asking for advice? If the advice is that the prices should be increased how will Government overcome the problem now and therefore could the Minister tell me why they have acted in this way and sought advice later. Can the Minister give an explanation for that?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I cannot give an explanation to that because they would add another three or four more questions to the list of questions I am supposed to answer in the next question.

#### HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, if the Minister is going to answer that question subsequently, fair enough, if not I am going to pursue it later.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, the House should be most grateful to the Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary. Could I ask, in fact, whether there has been consultation pursuant on the talks which took place with Mrs Hart, whether there has been consultations on the specific scheme as between Her Majesty's Government and our Government as to the specific nature of the scheme? For instance, the point that my Hon and Gallant Friend, Major Peliza, has mentioned of the price of flats?

#### HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, speaking for my own office, I can say that the details of the scheme, to the best of my knowledge, have not been conveyed to Her Majesty's Government. It is merely the scheme as a scheme without definition, without details, etc, that Her Majesty's Government are aware of. The details of the scheme, I imagine, must have emerged in the many discussions which Professor Nevitt had during her visit but, certainly, they have not through my office been conveyed to either the Ministry of Overseas Development or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask of one of the Honourable Members opposite whether in fact they recognise an interest, direct or indirect, of Her Majesty's Government, of the general conditions of the housing scheme especially as regards the prices of properties?

#### HON H J ZAMMITT:

No. Sir.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

He doesn't recognise an interest. Despite the fact that houses are being built out of grants by Her Majesty's Government the Honourable Member can say, if I understood him correctly, that there is no interest, direct or indirect, on the part of Her Majesty's Government. I did not hear the Honourable Member.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Will owner occupiers who purchase a flat from Government be able to pass on ownership to their children?

# Answer

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

(Answered together with Question No. 273/78).

How does Government propose to ensure that the maintenance and repairs is done to Government blocks of flats sold under the House Purchase Scheme?

## Answer

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

(Answered together with Question No. 273/78).

How does Government propose to deal with tenants who do not wish to purchase their flats from Government?

# Answer

Can Government undertake that there will be no redundancies in the Public Works Department as a result of the sale of Government flats?

# Answer

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

(Answered together with Question No. 273/78).

Will newly constructed flats at Rosia Dale be included in the House Purchase Scheme and if so at what price?

# Answer

Can Government state how the House Warden Structure will be affected by the House Purchase Scheme?

# Answer

Does Government propose to sell houses in 1979 at the prices indicated in the House Purchase Scheme?

# Answer

Can Government state what response there has been to the questionnaire on the proposed House Purchase Scheme?

# Answer

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

(Answered together with Question No. 273/78).

Can Government state what steps can be taken by persons below pensionable age to make up any short-fall in their contribution record so that they will eventually be entitled to a full pension?

## Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Labour and Social Security

If an insured person, for any valid reason, fails to pay social insurance contributions, these may be made good by him within the six months following the end of the year in which the gap in contributions has arisen. (This is referred to as the 'period of grace'). Other than this, past gaps in contributions cannot be made good.

Contributions which are compulsorily payable but were not paid at the due time are always recoverable in law, but may not count for benefit purposes if paid after the 'period of grace'.

When an insured person under pensionable age terminates his employment, or has exhausted his sickness or unemployment credits he may apply to become a voluntary contributor in order to maintain a satisfactory contribution record; but an application to pay as a voluntary contributor has to be made within a year of the date of the last contribution paid compulsorily.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 285 OF 1978

### HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Honourable Member not agree that it might be desirable to look into the possibility of giving people the opportunity to pay past gaps, perhaps not at the rates that were in operation then but at the rates that are current today in order to avoid having in the future a continuing problem with people who when they reach pensionable age are not entitled to a full pension?

### HON A J CANEPA:

This has been given a great deal of thought over a long period of time in the Department and the conclusion we have come to is that it would not be a good thing to do that and there are very many reasons why it would not be a good thing. People have been excluded from paying insurance in the past or have had gaps and continue to have gaps in their contribution record for a number of reasons. For instance, an individual may have a gap in

his contribution record because between a certain year and another year, let us say between 1960 and 1966, he was in employment earning over £500 and, therefore, he was not liable to pay insurance. Subsequently, in 1966, and in those days salaries did not go up at the rate that they have in the last two years, in fact in 1966 he may have become reemployed elsewhere at a salary or a wage below £500 and then started to pay insurance and he has a gap of the previous years which he cannot make good because at the time he was not liable to pay insurance or he may have a gap for a period of time when he wasn't even in Gibraltar. The difficulty is, as will become clear later on in these proceedings. that the Department does not have any record as to why people may have gaps in their contribution record. It could have been because they were self-employed, because they were earning over £500 and so on. We are not able to establish the reason why and we are not even able to establish whether they were actually in insurable employment at the time. It would be a case of having to go on the word of the individual. As I know, in a number of cases, he may not even have been working in Gibraltar, so how can you allow someone to make good a gap in his contribution record in such a case? We are dealing with a number of people where we cannot ascertain, in the majority of cases, the reasons for those gaps.

# HON J BOSSANO:

In fact, the case that would arise today would be that if somebody today was aware of the fact that his non-payment of contributions would result in a reduced pension some time in the future, that person could choose to become a voluntary contributor in all the circumstances that the Honourable Member has mentioned, is that not so?

# HON A J CANEPA:

If he becomes aware that he has a gap in his contribution record for a period of time when he was liable to pay and through no fault of his own contributions have not been paid in for him, put it that way, then he is not to blame and the matter can be put right because the Department would take steps. Let us assume that the employer was not insuring, the employer was not paying the contributions, then the individual is not to blame and steps can be taken by the Department to recover those contributions which would be credited to him. But if an individual says he is selfemployed now and he doesn't bother to pay and the Department takes certain steps but he still has gaps in his contribution record, those contributions are recoverable but they would not be credited to him. This applies in the case of a self-employed, in the case of someone who is employed, yes, they would be recovered, they would even be recovered after he reaches the age of 65 and they would have to be credited to him.

### HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am thinking basically, on this situation and this is what I would like the Honourable Member to give some consideration to and that is that given that we have today a situation where we are suffering from the anomalies in the past, would the Honourable Member not agree that it would be desirable to see if we can introduce something into the scheme that will ensure that we are not saddled for ever more with anomalies of people with different contribution records and different levels of pensions. Does he not agree that with the scheme as it stands today, for example, somebody who goes sick and exhausts his sick pay from his employer, then he will have a contribution gap.

#### HON A J CANEPA:

No, he can become a voluntary contributor.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

Yes, but he becomes a voluntary contributor but he is sick with no income which is not the best of times to become a voluntary contributor.

#### HON A J CANEPA:

I take the Honourable Member's point but they would be very limited cases. They would not be the ones that are giving us so much of a problem, they would be very few and far between. Other than that, as the scheme stands at present, except for the omissions of the past, let us say, we should not be faced in the future with a situation where we have people with gaps in their contribution records because there is no reason why they should have gaps provided they are in employment or they are self employed, no reason really why they should have contribution gaps except where, as the Honourable Member says, an individual could be five or six years so chronically ill that he is not able to take up employment and he has exhausted his credits. These are few and far between cases which, perhaps, we could look into.

#### MR SPEAKER:

Can Government state how many pensioners will be entitled to the full Social Insurance Pension in January 1979 and how many will be receiving a reduced pension?

## Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Labour and Social Security

In January 1979 there will be about 1390 Gibraltar Old Age Pensioners receiving the full pension and about 580 receiving a reduced pension.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 286 OF 1978

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say whether, in fact, these figures or proportions are changing in favour of more people receiving the full pension?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Sir.

# No. 287 of 1978

## The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state why the Landport Training Centre has been without a mason instructor for several months?

### Answer

# The Hon the Minister for Labour and Social Security

I think I should explain that in answering this question I am giving the facts of the situation as they affect my Department, but that I cannot go into matters which may be within the purview of the Public Service Commission.

Since July, 1977, when the Instructional Officer (Mason) resigned his appointment, the Department has been unable to find a suitably qualified replacement notwithstanding having repeatedly advertised the vacancy both within Government and outside.

In order to meet the problem in the short term, attempts have been made to engage on a temporary basis, an officer even if he does not hold all the required qualifications, but this has met with objections from the Unions.

The vacancy has once again been advertised both within Government and DOE, and applications are now before a Departmental Board set up under the Public Service Commission.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 287 OF 1978

#### HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not true that in fact the Department seconded somebody to carry out the duties on a temporary basis until a suitably qualified person could be found on a permanent basis?

## HON A J CANEPA:

Yes. Mr Speaker. this is the case.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Honourable Member say why that arrangement was not continued until the suitable person was found?

## HON A J CANEPA:

The arrangement, I think, was not continued because the individual concerned was only able to provide the practical side of the training and this was considered to be unsatisfactory.

### HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Honourable Member then saying that it would be more satisfactory not to provide anything at all?

### HON A J CANEPA:

I think the Department was seriously hoping that consequent on the increases in salaries in the summer of 1978, the post would have been sufficiently attractive to attract applicants to take it up on a full-time basis.

#### HON J BOSSANO:

Is not the Honourable Member aware that the problem is not so much the difficulty of attracting applicants but the existence of the qualifications in Gibraltar that the Government is looking for which very few people have got.

#### HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, I know there are very few people that have them. As I said, Mr Speaker, the post has been recently advertised again. On the previous occasion, about three months ago, due to some unaccountable reason or other, the application of someone from DOE never reached the Secretariat and this has only come to our notice recently. There is an applicant from PSA but whether he is entirely suitable I do not know. I am told that there are good prospects that he may have the necessary qualifications but I agree that to teach City and Guilds is not that easy, a person has to be very well qualified. The Department at one stage was prepared to employ two persons so as to get one lecturer for the price of two. One would teach the theoretical side of it because he was a technician the other one would do the practical and we also ran into difficulties on this proposal with one of the professional Unions.

#### MR SPEAKER:

Can Government undertake not to raise house rents again in 1979?

## Answer

# The H n the Chief Minister

No, Sir. As the Hon Member will recall in my statement on the Appropriation Bill in respect of the 1978/79 Budget on 24th and 27th April, 1978, I stated inter alia that the settlement of the Pay Review would have its greatest impact on the subsidised consumer services for electricity, water, telephones and on the Housing Fund. I also stated that it would have been a simple operation to have passed on all the expenses at once and so have balanced the funded services. In the event, however, it was decided, in order to give time to the whole of our population to adjust itself, that the funded services should be made self sufficient not in one sweeping measure but in gradual though substantial stages depending on how the economy developed. As a result the charges for consumer services and the rents for Government flats were increased but not to the extent required to have balanced the funded services.

In the circumstances, therefore, the whole matter is dependent on a number of factors which will be discussed by the House at the time the proposals for the 1979/80 Budget are considered.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 288 OF 1978

### HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that the post war houses were increased by 100% and in fact the wages were not increased by 100%. How does the Honourable Member say that he didn't do it in one sweeping measure?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They were increased by 100% because the rents had not been increased since 1975 and the wages had been increased since 1975.

#### MR SPEAKER:

## The Hon M Xiberras

Is the Chief Minister aware of any American initiative in contacts with Spain over the Gibraltar situation, as reported by the Gibraltar Chronicle on 11th December, 1978, and is he aware of any proposals from that quarter?

### Answer

# The Hon the Chief Minister

No, Sir.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 289 OF 1978

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

In view of the reliability of some if not most of the reports of the Gibraltar Chronicle, would the Honourable Member make enquiries of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have made enquiries before I gave the answer.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

And I suppose that the answer is still, no, Sir?

## HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That was the answer.

### MR SPEAKER:

# The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government agree to discussing with the Opposition and GBC, limited broadcasting of the proceedings of the House of Assembly?

## Answer

# The Hon the Chief Minister

The House will recall that in reply to Question 204 and 270 of 1977, I stated, based on information received from GBC, that it would be desirable to defer consideration of the question of broadcasting live the meetings of the House of Assembly until GBC were in a better position to pursue the matter. The position has become more acute because of the work involved in producing colour TV from Wellington Front and the development of Mercury House as the permanent Headquarters of GBC who is currently operating two TV stations simultaneously (colour and black and white) in overcrowded, ill-adapted conditions which pose a considerable strain on staff resources.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 290 OF 1978

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I to take it that the Chief Minister is not opposed, in principle, to limited broadcasting of the proceedings of the House of Assembly and if he is not, will he not agree that meetings between Members of the House and GBC is the best forum in which to discuss this?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not at this stage. The question of the broadcasting of the proceedings of the House is a matter for the House as a whole and not for the Government alone. I am not against it but I certainly do not think that it would be fruitful or even fair on the overworked staff of GBC at this stage to have those discussions so long as they are concerned with the broadcasting in colour and black and white and the normal routine of radio and so on, in cramped spaces and now when the work starts at Mercury House with the transitional period of having the equipment taken over to Mercury House. I do not exclude the possibility at all except that I do not think it is fair to them at this stage.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Since the Chief Minister has already made some enquiries of GBC on this matter and since it takes rather a long time to get these changes actually carried out and since he is not, in principle, against the idea, would it not be a good thing to give GBC sufficient time to produce some sort of indication as to how this might be done in Mercury House once the problem of colour is over?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I can certainly put them on notice that as soon as they are relieved from their present overworking and difficult conditions we shall go to the charge on that.

MR SPEAKER:

## The Hon M Xiberras

In view of the undertaking given by the Chief Minister to the Varyl Begg Tenants Association to inquire into the circumstances of the recent fire at Carmania House, Varyl Begg Estate, will he now make a statement on the matter?

## Answer

# The Hon the Chief Minister

The facts of the incident, as already made known, were that the fire started inside a flat at Carmania House. The key to the fire extinguisher compartment could not however, operate the lock and the reinforced glass door of the compartment had to be broken to gain access to the extinguisher. This operation apparently took about ten minutes by which time the fire in the flat had spread.

An inspection of all the lockers storing the fire extinguishers has revealed that the keys did in fact fit the locks. The problem had arisen because the locks had been painted over and the keys could not be turned in the locks. New locks and keys have already been ordered and will be fitted as soon as they are available. All the new locks will be identical and as a further precaution a master key will be available from the Warden. It is also intended to make keys available to each of the Fire Brigade Appliances. Pending the arrival of the new locks all the cabinets have been opened to ensure that extinguishers are readily accessible.

## SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 291 OF 1978

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I think I heard the Chief Minister say that the locks had been painted over by the contractors. Did I hear that correctly?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the locks in the corridors had been painted red in order to call attention to the fact that the fire hydrant was there and too much paint had been put and the keys could not be fitted into the locks.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Was there not correspondence over a year before handover between the contractors and the Government on this question of the locks and the keys and so forth and fire precautions, generally?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not aware of this, Mr Speaker. I really would like to answer that question if I had the information. I will seek the information and give it to the Hon Member.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

I am grateful for that, Mr Speaker. If that is the case, as I think the Chief Minister will find, would he not agree that it is the responsibility of the people taking over, namely, the Government, that these fire appliances or whatever were in fact accepted?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is a hypothetical question. When I look at it I will give my judgment.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

In checking, as I am sure our Fire Brigade checks on these matters, was this not reported in time, the fact that the locks were useless to the point that the keys could not be introduced?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have no knowledge of this.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

In making enquiries on this matter as he promised the Varyl Begg Tenants Association he would do, will the Chief Minister not consider some consultation with the Fire Brigade as one of the important elements in giving them a fair answer.

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Oh, yes, there have been full consultations with the Fire Brigade.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

And have these consultations not revealed that periodical examination of the appliances have been carried out?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It has been revealed that they had not been regularly carried out.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, since this was a serious incident, would the Hon Member not agree that it would be advisable that reviews should be carried out of fire precautions? HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course, absolutely.

HON M XIBERRAS:

And has the Chief Minister instructed the Fire Brigade accordingly?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have not instructed them but I have seen that they have been given.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Pursuant on the fire?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, following on the inquiry.

MR SPEAKER:

## No. 292 of 1978

# The Hon M Xiberras

Is Government aware that Gibraltarians, defined as E.E.C. Nationals for the purpose, including members of this House, are newly experiencing unwarranted difficulties with immigration and emigration procedures at Heathrow Airport, in spite of repeated personal assurances given by Her Majesty's Ministers, and will Government raise the strongest objection with the Heathrow and Gatwick immigration authorities and with Her Majesty's Government?

# Answer

# The Hon the Chief Minister

The Government is not aware that any Gibraltarians are experiencing unwarranted difficulties with immigration and emigration procedures at Heathrow Airport recently. If the Hon Questioner were to cite specific and detailed cases where difficulties have been encountered I can assure him they will be taken up in the right quarter. In fact if persons experiencing difficulties in this connection were to obtain and supply us with the information requested in the leaflet issued some time ago by the local Branch of the European Movement, it would be most helpful.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 292 OF 1978

# HON M XIBERRAS:

I am very grateful for that, Mr Speaker, but I am sume the European Movement would not like to do the work of the Government all the time. Could I ask the Honourable Member how it is that he has not heard about this when Mr Frank Judd made statements about this matter and the matter was discussed as to ways of easing the immigration and emigration.

#### MR SPEAKER:

I think the Honourable Minister has said that he has not heard of any such incidents since the assurances were given.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Well, he can take the Honourable P J Isola as being part of the example, Mr Speaker. I can certainly supply him with other information. Would the Honourable Member, in view of this, press Her Majesty's Government further and ask them whether they can put Gibraltar as one of the territories entitled to go through the EEC channel, in other words, that there

should be some sort of a board or some sort of a label entitling or making it obvious that Gibraltarians are allowed through the EEC channel.

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that suggestion has more hope of being implemented than the previous one about making strong representations against the Immigration Officers and people about procedures of what has happened in the past because, as the Honourable Member knows, we were asked for particulars in order that they can pursue them because they have gotumpteen emigration officers and it is very difficult to say who has behaved and who hasn't behaved. That suggestion that the European channel should include Gibraltar seems to me to be a sensible one and I am prepared to pass it on.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Chief Minister note that representations to this effect were made already to Mr Judd by the European Movement and by the Opposition and, in fact, when Mr Toby Lewis came several years before and they were turned down then. Will the Honourable Member still undertake to try again?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If I had known that I would have said that the chances were very small of getting it done after all the efforts that the Honourable Member has mentioned but I will nevertheless do it because it is sensible.

#### MR SPEAKER:

# The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government report to the House on the representations made by elected members and representative bodies to H M Government on the proposals contained in H M Government's Green Paper on British Nationality?

## Answer

# The Hon the Chief Minister

The Memorandum containing representations made by elected members and representative bodies to H M Government on the proposals contained in H M Government's Green Paper on British Nationality was forwarded to His Excellency the Governor on 12 September, 1978 and has been transmitted by His Excellency to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 293 OF 1978

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

In other words, there was no progress from the last time the question was asked?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

· No progress.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

What does the Chief Minister intend to do about the situation considering that Dr Owen at one particular time was urging that representations should be made?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can tell the House that steps have been taken to expedite an answer.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

By this does the Chief Minister mean that he has written to the Governor or to the Secretary of State or to the Minister? What has he done?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have represented to the Governor, in dealing with this matter and in looking at the dates in which the despatch was sent, that it is reasonable to enquire when a reply may be expected.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Has any clarification been sought by Her Majesty's Government on any point in the representations?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No reaction whatsoever.

# No. 294 of 1978

# The Hon M Xiberras

Has Government been given an official report of the risks to the population of the recent fire on board the vessel "Hele" and will Government make a statement on the matter?

## Answer

# The Hon the Chief Minister

No, Sir. A Press Release issued by the Office of the Flag Officer Gibraltar on 1 December 1978 stated, inter alia, that a Board of Inquiry was being convened to establish the facts and circumstances of the fire. It is understood that the Board of Inquiry has not yet reported its findings. May I add to the prepared answer that I think the Inquiry was awaiting the result of the Coroner's inquest which I think has taken place or is about to take place.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 294 OF 1978

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Minister aware, even now, what the cargo of this vessel was?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, there were no explosives in the ship at the time of the fire.

## HON M XIBERRAS:

What was the cargo?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There were no explosives on the ship at the time of the fire. I don't know what the cargo was.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Not at the time of the fire, Mr Speaker, but was the ship on this voyage carrying any explosives?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not speaking for anybody but my understanding is that it had unloaded a number of pyrotechnics, I think, which are not particularly dangerous, in accordance to strict Admiralty instructions but by the time the fire started they had nothing explosive on board.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Chief Minister aware how the Inquiry is to be conducted? Will there be a transcript of the proceedings?

# HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is an Admiralty Board of Inquiry.

### HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the information be available to the Chief Minister and subsequently to other Members of the House?

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I don't know. I will ask for it to be available. I cannot say.

### MR SPEAKER:

# The Hon M Xiberras

Whilst recognising the requirements of security in H M Naval Base, will Government endeavour to find out the criteria on which restrictions are placed on certain Gibraltarians entering the base area and will Government satisfy itself that the manner of application of these restrictions is justifiable in Gibraltar circumstances?

## Answer

# The Hon the Chief Minister

Yes, Sir, I must however state that it may well emerge that any information which the Government is able to obtain on this subject cannot, in view of its nature, be disclosed to a third party.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 295 OF 1978

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Chief Minister aware, Mr Speaker, that certain Gibraltarians are prohibited from entering the Dockyard on the basis of certain convictions which have occurred and which have been paid for in full some period of time before and that these restrictions impose a very heavy financial burden on certain people, for instance, lorry drivers.

### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I am fully aware of that.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Chief Minister represent to the officials at Her Majesty's Naval Base that this in Gibraltar's circumstances should be a consideration provided there is no direct security risk.

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am prepared to pass on that information and I must also point out, too, that they have to act on standard instructions applying to Dockyard, generally, and that they find it difficult sometimes to overcome those general instructions for particular cases in Gibraltar.

#### HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, whilst respecting entirely that my original question said the requirements of security, will the

Chief Minister not agree that in the circumstances of Gibraltar it is difficult to accept a very long lasting prohibition to enter the Dockyard if one does not know the criteria on which certain persons are excluded, in other words, that if you don't know why a person is being excluded it is very difficult to say whether this is a fair thing or not a fair thing.

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Absolutely, and this is bound to happen in matters of security on many occasions and there is very little one can do except to put the full facts before those who have to take a decision. I don't hold out for security but I know the realities of it because I have had practical experience, professionally, on these matters and a no on security is a no.

MR SPEAKER:

# The Hon M Xiberras

Can Government confirm that the salary recommendations in respect of G.B.C. contained in the Massey Report have not been implemented on account of dilatoriness on the part of the Gibraltar Government in arriving at a decision about them?

# Answer

# The Hon the Chief Minister

There has been no dilatoriness on the part of the Government in considering the G.B.C. Staff Inspection report.

The Staff Inspection was carried out as a joint exercise by a B.B.C. Staff Inspector and a Government Staff Inspector. Although the B.B.C. Staff Inspector submitted a preliminary report in October 1978, the final joint report was not produced until 22 November 1978.

G.B.C. submitted an estimate of the additional funds required to implement the staff inspection findings on 9 December 1978 and this is now being examined.

# The Hon G T Restano

Will Government investigate the possibility of making use of the earth station to obtain television programmes direct from the United Kingdom?

### Answer

# The Hon the Chief Minister

No. Sir.

# SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 297 OF 1978

HON G T RESTANO:

May I know the reason why, Mr Speaker?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes. While no exact figures are available, the present day cost of the hire of the satellite circiut to enable TV signals to be repeated it in the region of £5,000 an hour. To this would have to be added payment of rights and royalties to the originating station, performers' rights, etc, cost of conveying signals from the originating station to the satellite station and cost of transmitting signals to the earth station. As stated in my reply to the supplementary to Question No 231 of 1978, the Government would rather wait until colour television is fully operational in its proper quarters and all the bills paid, before thinking of obtaining programmes via satellite of either Eurovision or from the United Kingdom.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, there is one aspect of this which I do not quite understand. The Chief Minister has mentioned originating costs or costs from the originating station. Does this mean that there would be high capital payments to be made to B.B.C. or I.T.V. for hiring their programmes through the earth station?

#### HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is right. First of all, there is the cost of the satellite connection at £5,000 an hour, and then you have to pay the rights and royalties to the originating station performers' rights the same as if you play a record in a public place or play music in a public place, you must play performers' rights and so on because the people are enjoying the result of the efforts of other people, then the cost of conveying the signal from the originating station to the

satellite, and the cost of transmitting the signal to the earth station. These are all additional to the £5,000 an hour and I think we ought to pay for our television first.

### HON P J ISOLA:

But the rights which are involved, would those rights not already be paid because we are importing films from B.B.C. and I.T.V? Surely, those performing rights are already paid on those.

## HON CHIEF MINISTER:

You pay for every performance, I know this from previous experience. GBC radio, for example, has to carry a record of all the records that are played, and sent to the Performing Rights Society at the end of a quarter or whatever it is and they are assessed for the amount of records that they have used during the period. With the canned material that we get on television you pay the right of performance by hiring the tape. But if you get a direct connection to the Palladium, for example, you would have to pay for that. For example, if you were to try and transmit a football match, the Football Association would demand the right to payment.

#### HON G T RESTANO:

I was thinking mainly, Mr Speaker, on current affairs programmes which are produced by the United Kingdom television. I think it would be of very good value in Gibraltar as part of the general education of people and I would have thought there would not have been such enormous fees on those particular types of programmes.

# HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, but that type of programme is of similar value if it is broadcast two or three days after with a tape and the price of that is considerably cheaper. We must realise that Gibraltar is making a very great effort in going colour, for obvious reasons. It is, I think, of great importance to Gibraltar that we should go colour and not lose our watching public. I think we should have first things first and if we can afford that later on, well, we will be much happier.

#### MR SPEAKER:

# The Hon G T Restano

Does the Chief Minister still expect that the conversion of the part of Mercury House to be used by G.B.C. will commence in January 1979, as stated by him in June this year?

# Answer

# The Hon the Chief Minister

Tenders for the conversion work have been invited. The closing date for tenders is the 15th January, 1979. Work will commence shortly after the selection of the tender by the Tender Board.

## The Hon G T Restano

Will the Chief Minister state whether it is still his Government's policy, as stated by him 2 years ago, that the appointment of Mayor of Gibraltar was to be for a one year period only and that the incumbent of this appointment would be renewed yearly? May I just make this clear, Mr Speaker, that when this question was submitted we had no knowledge that the Chief Minister would be moving a motion on the same subject.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

But the Leader of the Opposition knew.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I beg your pardon, Mr Speaker.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I informed him and he said: "We were putting a question on it."

HON M XIBERRAS:

I told him we had put a question down on it.

## Answer

### The Hon the Chief Minister

As the Hon Member will have observed, I have already given notice to raise a motion later on in the proceedings for the election of the Hon H J Zammitt as Mayor.

The Hon Friend on my left was so good a Mayor that he overstayed his time. I will have more to say about this when we come to the substantive motion.