

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

MEETING OF 25th JUNE 1979

QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

(65 TO 123)

QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED BY THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS AT THE HOUSE
OF ASSEMBLY MEETING TO BE HELD ON 25 6 79.

25 6 79

ORAL

No. 65 of 1979

The Hon M Xiberras

In view of long-standing Government assurances that the staff side was being fully consulted on the introduction of a computer, will Government confirm that there is disagreement and state what delays are attributable to this disagreement?

ANSWER

The Hon the Financial & Development Secretary

In answering this question, which I welcome, I am assuming that the Hon Member has in mind the two posts of Data Processor.

There has been delay - yes - some two months; but there has been no disagreement with the Staff Side.

The need for two duty posts to operate the key punch machines of the computer was established early in March this year in consultation with the Staff Inspector. The posts were graded as Data Processor ie, the same grade as the 7 posts in the existing accounting machine room. The holders of these 7 posts were then given an opportunity to try out the computer key boards and all 7 indicated that they would be interested in transferring.

Early in April consultations took place with the Staff Side on these transfers. At these consultations the Staff Side insisted that nothing should be done until they were in a position to confirm the grading of the posts of computer data processor in the United Kingdom.

Once this had been done, further consultations with the Staff Side took place on 23 May when the Staff Side indicated that before they would agree to the transfers they wanted more information about the continuation of the existing PBR scheme as it would affect the two Data Processors who would be transferred.

A meeting with the Staff Side to discuss this question was arranged for June 13th but had to be postponed until June 15th when it was again postponed. It was held last Friday (June 22nd) when final agreement was reached.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 65 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am glad that agreement has finally been reached. Would the Financial and Development Secretary inform the House

what delays have been attributable to non-agreement in the past bearing in mind that it is my information that for the whole of 1978 the Staff Side wanted to be given certain information about these posts and no meeting was held in the whole of 1978.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will answer the first part of that question only. The second part of that question I do not consider is appropriate. The delay, as I said, has resulted in a set-back to the planned programme of approximately two months and this has meant that the keying and verifying of approximately the 10,000 names and addresses which are required for computerising the billing system has fallen behind. However, it has not been all loss because the delay has been utilised by the Computer Manager to proceed with the actual programming of the billing procedure and he has been able to provide virtually full-time training for the Trainee Manager in programme writing to such an extent that it is now probably unnecessary for the Trainee Manager to attend any courses in the United Kingdom.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, bearing in mind a question I asked some very considerable time ago and one asked by my Honourable Friend Mr Restano, why is it that the Financial and Development Secretary considers inappropriate my question as to whether it is a fact or not that in the whole of 1978 no information was given to the staff side and that this must obviously have contributed to the delay.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I stand to be corrected but as far as I am aware my understanding is that the question of the computer staffing and Data Processing did not arise until early this year after the computer was installed.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary note and perhaps confirm that it was on the 19th of September 1977, that the whole business was first raised. That is my information. Would the Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that he has answered two questions in this House where he has assured Honourable Members there was consultation on this matter.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have said that there has been full consultations with the Staff Side.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Honourable Member give an answer to my question whether he will note that in the whole of 1978 no meeting was held in spite of the fact that it was on the 19th of

September 1977 that the matter was first broached with the Staff Side?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition appears to have much more information than I have and I am not in a position to confirm, deny or even note it.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am sorry about this, Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that the question of billing in various departments has been raised quite often in this House and the Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary has in fact said that there have been delays attributable to non-agreement in the past and I believe that he does owe the House rather more information than he has given it. Could I ask the Honourable Member, since he does know about the meetings of the 12th and 15th of June being postponed, as to why these two meetings were postponed? Was it at the request of the Staff Side or at the request of the Official Side?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I believe on this particular occasion it was at the request of the Official Side, that is my understanding.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Honourable Member not agree that on this matter which may have affected other departments of the government and in which the House has shown an expressed interest that the reasons for the delay should be ascertained as it may have repercussions and has had already repercussions in the budget which was presented to the House . . .

MR SPEAKER:

You are asking for the reasons for the delay.

HON M XIBERRAS:

What I am saying is, Mr Speaker, does he not agree that this information should be made available to the House since this was a matter for discussion as there was an influence on the budget which was discussed at the last meeting of the House.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, as usual we are opening a debate on the subject. I have answered the question and if there is another question . . .

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked whether you are prepared to give the reasons why the meetings of the 13th and 15th were postponed.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have no information to give the House.

HON M XIBERRAS:

My question, Mr Speaker, is would the Honourable Member make the information available to Members of the House if he is not prepared to answer that question now.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I don't think, Mr Speaker, that I am in a position to give that undertaking.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask who in Government is, in view of the fact that this is a matter which has concerned the House and which is absolutely relevant to my question.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer is implied. The Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary is saying perhaps he is the person to give the information but he is not in a position to give it now.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Nor, Mr Speaker, am I in a position to give it in the future.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask members of the Government whether they are prepared to give the public information about this matter at a future date?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

All I can say, Mr Speaker, is that I will do my best to make a note for my successor to give the House the information. I will not give it.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I fully appreciate the Honourable Member's reluctance to give this information but could I ask the Government, generally, since this is a very legitimate question and one which has a bearing on the billing and on the finances of various funds, whether they are prepared to make the information available for Honourable Members at a future date?

MR SPEAKER:

I think the Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary has said he is prepared to give the necessary information to his successor and it will be up to him to decide.

HON M XIBERRAS:

In view of the fact, Mr Speaker, that the Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary will regrettably not be here at a future meeting, could I ask the Chief Minister - I have asked the Government as a whole who I assume will be there - whether they are prepared to give this information.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The last assumption is perfectly correct. I am not prepared to give any undertaking on anything unless a question is put to me at the particular time.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I have not heard you ruling my question out of order. It is of course up to the Government to decide whether they should answer or not answer and is up to me of course to press for an answer. Mr Speaker, the reason why I ask the question is that there has been delays in billing attributable..

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, we know that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Well, would Honourable Members therefore....

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, if the Honourable Member will give way. Would the Honourable Member repeat that question. I didn't quite hear what he said.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, that there have been delays in billing attributable to the non-implementation of the introduction of the computer.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir. That is not true.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

No. 66 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON M XIBERRAS

Will Government confirm that there have been substantial and generalised increases in the general rates payable by businesses since April 1979; to what factors these increases are attributable and whether substantial price increases in commodities can be expected as a result?

Answer

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. There has not been a generalised increase of rates payable by businesses since April, 1979. The quinquennial review carried out last year however has resulted in an increase in the Net Annual Value and hence in the rates payable in 1979 by some businesses. A total of 962 business premises were affected out of a total of 1616.

The effect on prices of the increases in respect of these premises cannot of course be quantified. It is only reasonable to assume however that some part at least of the increases will be passed on to the consumer by way of higher retail prices. The extent to which this happens will, I would imagine, depend on the proportion of 'general rates' costs to total costs.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 66 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, since 962 have been affected out of 1616, would the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that this is at least fairly generalised and would he care to give an indication of price rises that might result bearing in mind price increases already being felt?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As to the first question, I am not going to have a debate as to what generalised means or not. If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to consider that a generalised increase, so be it. As regards the second part of the question, I have already said it is impossible to give any idea at all.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I know the Financial and Development Secretary does not like to enter into a definition but could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary if he could give us an indication in respect of these 962 places by how much rates have increased?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The net annual value of the 962 premises affected went up from a total - we are talking about net annual value - went up from

a total of £522,392 to £798,055, an increase of £275,663 giving a gross extra yield of £165,397 during the year in the general sanitary purposes rates.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I right in saying, Mr Speaker, that this is an increase of the order of 50% for 962 places?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, it is 52.77%.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

No. 67 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon Major R J Peliza

Since the minimum lending rate has arisen by 2% is the Government intending to raise the interest payable by the Post Office Savings Bank and would it not be fair and encouraging to investors for Government to link this interest to the minimum lending rate?

Answer

The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

The Government does not intend to raise the rate of interest payable on Savings Bank deposits; nor does it consider that the rate should be linked to any commercial minimum lending rate or to the Bank of England minimum lending rate.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 67 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is there any justifiable reason why the Financial and Development Secretary does not see why this should be done, either raised at the moment or linked with the minimum lending rate?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

There are two reasons, Mr Speaker. The first is of course that the minimum lending rate is a constantly fluctuating rate. It is held sometimes for a matter of days, it is held sometimes for a matter of months. To link the Post Office Savings Bank to the Bank rate is, I think, inconvenient and not in the best interests of the contributors. Moreover, it would cause enormous problems in calculating the interest payable on the deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank if, for example, a rate was increased and only held for 5 or 6 days, that is the first reason. The second reason is of course that the minimum lending rate does not itself affect Post Office Savings Bank rates in the United Kingdom or the commercial bank rate on savings accounts. It is basically a link for the inter-bank rate and the big term deposit rate.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

That, I assume, Mr Speaker, is Government policy?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

ORAL

No. 68 of 1979

The Hon Major R J Peliza

Will Government consider adjusting Income Tax Personal Allowances to bring them more in line with those announced in the last budget in the United Kingdom?

Answer

The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 68 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is there any particular reason for such a definite "No".

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the rates of personal allowance were adjusted in the Budget and the Government sees no reason why any further adjustments should be made.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The Financial and Development Secretary must obviously be aware that the differences now have increased considerably.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Of course, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Therefore parity is no longer parity in any sense of the word.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the Honourable and Gallant Major is anticipating, perhaps, the sort of answer that he is going to get to the question he has put down as No 70 and I would like to answer that supplementary question which he has just asked when I deal with Question No 70, if I may.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

ORAL

No. 69 of 1979

The Hon P J Isola

Has the tender for the erection of the FWD garage been awarded?

Answer

The Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

Yes, Sir. The tender was awarded to Messrs Peter Morello & Sons Ltd on 19th October 1978, the amount of the tender being £281,513.65.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 69 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, has work started on the project in the new site?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

My colleagues tell me yes, I was not aware that it had in fact started.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

The Hon Major R J Peliza

Does Government agree that in the following instances:

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------|---|---------------|
| (A) | Single | - | Income £3,000 |
| (B) | Husband | - | Income £4,000 |
| | Wife | - | Income £3,000 |
| | 2 Children | | |
| (C) | Husband | - | Income £4,500 |
| | Wife not working | - | |
| | 1 Child | | |

more Income Tax is paid in Gibraltar than in the United Kingdom and is Government prepared to take the necessary action to correct this situation?

AnswerThe Hon the Financial and Development Secretary

Mr Speaker, the answer to the first part of the question is yes. In the examples quoted by the Hon Questioner the income tax liability in Gibraltar is higher than in the United Kingdom.

The answer to the second part of the question is No: there is no situation to correct.

The Government does not accept and has never accepted parity with the United Kingdom in all respects in relation to general taxation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 70 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Financial and Development Secretary say by how much the differences are?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I would require notice of that question.

MR SPEAKER:

That is information which is easily available and you can get it yourself.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, it is obviously information that I can get myself but it is much more authoritative if it comes from the Government.

MR SPEAKER:

No. Question time is exclusively for the seeking of information which is not easily available.

HON M XIBERRAS:

We are seeking information, Mr Speaker, whether it is the policy of the Government to aim at equivalence of purchasing power on which this has a very great bearing or simply to pay parity even though this might not purchase as much in Gibraltar.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

The policy was spelt out in considerable detail in the budget when I introduced the Finance Bill. I would remind the House that the tax base in Gibraltar is totally different from the base in the United Kingdom. As I said when I introduced the Finance Bill, no less than 60% of all Gibraltar's PAYE tax payers have taxable income of £3,000 a year or less and only 8% have incomes of more than £5,000. Given those facts, it is quite impossible for Gibraltar to match the structure of personal allowances and other benefits that exists in the United Kingdom for the simple reason that the United Kingdom tax structure is totally different.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is the Government saying then that there is going to be a regressive situation in connection with parity and are there no other factors which the Financial and Development Secretary can recognise as having a bearing on the matter other than the tax base?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As far as income tax is concerned, the prime factor is the taxable base the composition of the taxpayers who are to bear the tax. The composition of their income group and their family composition.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, has the Honourable Member forgotten his talking about efficiency and the need to be cost conscious in Government?

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to debate that under any circumstances. Next question.

The Hon M Xiberras

Does Government consider that private sector tenants are adequately protected in law and when does Government intend to bring amending legislation to the Landlord and Tenants Ordinance?

AnswerThe Hon the Attorney-General

The Landlord and Tenants Ordinance is of course a measure that does confer protection on tenants. The Government from time to time reviews the Ordinance to see whether amendments are necessary. There are at present specific proposals under consideration by Government and when drafting is completed, these will be incorporated in an amending Bill.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 71 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am grateful for that reply but could I ask the Honourable the Attorney-General, who is relatively new to this House, whether he is aware that the Government committed itself to review the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance a very considerable time ago, I believe it was somewhere around June, 1977, and could he tell me in the light of this whether the amendments are likely to come to the House, let us say, when the House resumes?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I wonder whether the Honourable Member would be good enough to repeat the opening part of his question because I didn't quite hear it.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is he aware that the Government committed itself to a review of the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance some very considerable time ago? I believe it was the Honourable Mr Zammitt the Minister for Housing who made the statement and I believe it was in June, 1977. Would the Honourable Member, bearing this in mind, care to tell the House whether we are likely to see substantive amendments when the House resumes in October?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, a number of amendments have already been drafted and there are further amendments under consideration. I do not subscribe to the view that one should amend a major Ordinance piecemeal, I think it is far better to amend it comprehensively. The Government, as I said at the outset, keeps the Ordinance under review and I hope to be in a position to introduce an amending Bill as soon as possible.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am grateful for that answer, Mr Speaker. Will the Bill have protective provision for the tenants?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am unable to comment on the nature of the proposals in the Bill until such time as it is published.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Honourable Member and the Government, generally, not agree that when the House was considering substantial increases in rents in the private sector, it is more necessary to introduce into the House protective legislation for private sector tenants.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think, perhaps, that is more of a policy issue.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We have taken into account the points raised by Honourable Members opposite and other matters which they have not raised and which we have raised and the matter is in the hands of the Attorney-General for drafting a Bill for consideration as a matter of policy.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Since the Chief Minister is on his feet, could I ask the Chief Minister whether he envisages such amending legislation by the autumn?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can go no further than what the Attorney-General has said because actually at this time the matter is in his hands and once the Bill is drafted it doesn't take very long to consider it in Council of Ministers particularly as some of the amendments that the Honourable Attorney-General is considering are policy decisions already taken by Council of Ministers.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Will consultation with relevant interests on this amendment legislation be carried out?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have had the matter discussed with the Honourable Mr Isola at the time he raised a point and we discussed the matters that he had in mind and this Bill will be published in good time for Honourable Members to consider it. I am not prepared, let me make it clear, I am not prepared to have previous consultation of Bills with the Opposition unless they are of a very

generalised matter until they are published in draft form.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I wasn't talking about Opposition although, apparently, there has been consultation with one of its members. I am talking about interested associations in this matter.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We have not had any representations for many interested associations in the matter. The form of the legislation, as I envisaged, will be more protective of tenants than of landlords and it will be up to landlords when the draft is published to see whether they feel aggrieved by the proposed amendment.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon and Learned Member not consider it right if there are Property Owners' Associations, to consult them?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We are not aware of any such associations.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

No. 72 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government make a statement on the dispute involving the Radiologists at St Bernard's Hospital?

Answer

The Hon The Attorney-General

I would draw the Honourable Member's attention to a Press Statement issued by Government on 20 March 1979 which set out Government's position on the Radiographers' dispute. The position has not changed and despite discussions and exchanges of correspondence, (which continue) with ACTSS, the dispute remains unresolved. The ACTSS has, however, indicated its willingness for a visit to take place by a consultant radiologist over a weekend and for the staff of the Radiography section of St Bernard's Hospital to cover the visit without payment for overtime or for any additional work. Government welcomes this initiative and has accepted the offer of the ACTSS in order to eliminate the backlog of serious cases requiring radiographical examination.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 72 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Attorney-General whether there has been any progress - I know there hasn't been any resolution of the matter - has there been any progress in this matter?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, a report has been addressed to the Industrial Relations Officer, by the Society of Radiographers containing certain proposals on the subject of the dispute and this is now receiving attention.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Government concerned, Mr Speaker, with the situation that has arisen? I don't think I heard the Honourable Member express concern on behalf of the Government.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think my concern was perhaps implicit in the reference I made that the Government welcomes this initiative. Of course any build-up by way of backlog in cases requiring radiography treatment is serious and therefore the Government does welcome the move by the Radiographers' Society to cooperate during this visit.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is the Attorney-General aware that it is a fact that the staff inspection team that came some very considerable time ago and who saw almost everybody at the hospital, did not in fact see the Senior Radiologist?

MR SPEAKER:

We must not go into the merits of the dispute.

HON M XIBERRAS:

No, Mr Speaker, I am just asking whether it is a fact, in view of the Attorney-General's statement, that a Consultant Radiologist is going to come and try to help?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of that. I would prefer not to become involved in the details of the matter under dispute.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could the Attorney-General or the Government, generally, say whether there has been a serious backlog of cases. He referred to this in his opening answer.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, there has been a backlog of cases. Cases are always potentially serious this is why the arrangement has been made for the Radiologist to come out and dispose of that backlog.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Serious in terms of numbers, a serious backlog, not in terms of the cases?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I must say in fairness to everybody concerned that any case which has been marked "urgent" or "emergency" has been done.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

No. 73 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

Will Government explain why it is necessary for repairs to Police cars to be put out to tender and not undertaken by PWD?

Answer

The Hon the Attorney-General

Minor repairs are dealt with in the Police Garage. Major repairs are however put out to tender. It is necessary that Police cars be maintained in efficient condition at all times and that they have priority in servicing. The purpose of going to tender is to obtain the specialised facilities and service available for this purpose.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 73 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Honourable Member saying that the Public Works Department garage doesn't give the priority or the necessary servicing that the police cars require?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am casting no reflection whatsoever on the Public Works Department. The fact is that there are different types of police vehicles - I could mention Ford and Volkswagen. There are certain specialised facilities, services and spare parts available with private organisations and it is an advantage to go to tender to obtain the benefit of those.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Surely, Mr Speaker, then you are going to the garage whose agents are obviously represented so why is it put to tender?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I believe, Mr Speaker, that it is appropriate to go to tender.

HON P J ISCLA:

Mr Speaker, I am not quite convinced because presumably the Public Works Department has the expertise and the technical people able to do it. If it is a question of spare parts presumably the Public Works Department if it is a Ford car would have to go to the Ford agents because I should imagine the agents of other cars don't have Ford spare parts, or go to England. Would it not in fact be more efficient for the Public Works Department to give the necessary priority and do the necessary repairs with liberty obviously to obtain spare parts from the Ford agents or direct from England? We do not see the problem.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the Public Works Department has a broad range of commitments. There are garages in town to whom the Police can go which specialise in the areas with which the Police are concerned and as I said at the outset, priority of servicing is an essential aspect of running police vehicles. I think it is on that basis particularly that they have gone out to tender.

HON G T RESTANO:

Was the tender in fact awarded to one garage or was it awarded to a number of garages?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I understand that last year in respect of the Ford Panda Cars, it went to the Ford Agents and in respect of the Volkswagen Ambulances it went to the Volkswagen Agents. So the answer is yes, it goes out to more than one tenderer.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

ORAL

No. 74 of 1979

The Hon G T Restano

When was the last time that all fire hoses were checked at Humphrey's Estate?

Answer

The Hon the Minister for Municipal Services

All fire fighting equipment at the Alameda Housing Estate was inspected during the first quarter of 1978. Inspections are carried out once in every calendar year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 74 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would invite the Honourable Member to go round to the Estate and verify for himself the fact that the hoses could not have possibly been properly checked in the first quarter of 1978 because as I am sure he will realise and I would ask him to confirm...

HON A J CANEPA:

What is the question? You are here to put questions.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. We will not speak across the floor of the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would he agree then that some of those hoses are completely desintergrating and that in some cases the nozzles are not even attached to the hoses and if a fire occurs there could be very serious consequences?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, as I said before all fire fighting equipment at the Alameda Housing Estate was inspected during the first quarter of 1978. I am repeating it for his information. Whether he likes to believe it or not is another matter. The inspections are carried out once in every calendar year. Some minor defects which did not render the equipment un-serviceable were found and this was reported to the Public Works Department who are responsible for the maintenance of the equipment. New reels have been ordered where those needed replacement and others have been repaired. Some repairs have been carried out to landing ~~bulbs~~ which were found to be faulty but there is still some work to be done in this respect.

VALVES

HON G T RESTANO:

Am I to understand then, Mr Speaker, that the hoses that apparently were not in good repair in the first quarter of 1978 have not been repaired because the Public Works Department have not carried out the repairs. Is that what the Minister is saying?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, as I have said before, the new reels have been ordered and repairs will start as soon as possible but the main thing is that there is no danger of any fire occurring at Alameda Housing Estate.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that in some of the fire hoses the nozzles are completely detached from the hoses themselves, that the hoses themselves are rotting and that if there was a fire there would be no hose to put out the fire with. Could I have an answer please, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have to rely on my Head of Department to give me the necessary details which I have produced here today.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I believe the inspection was carried out during the first quarter of 1978. I think that was what the Minister said. Could the Minister say when the hoses were ordered. I presume that it was as a result of that inspection that the hoses were ordered. Could he say when they were ordered?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I am afraid, Mr Speaker, I cannot answer that question and I do not have the necessary information.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will the Minister perhaps revise the whole question of when these things are inspected and perhaps carry out inspections once a quarter or once every six months or is he going to allow the situation to continue as it is and perhaps risk the lives of a lot of the tenants.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I will look into the whole question but I must repeat once again that there is no danger at all to the lives of the people living in the Alameda Housing Estate because the equipment is more than adequate.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would ask the Minister to go around personally because if he personally went round as I certainly did he could not possibly come up with that sort of information which is quite ludicrous because in fact the nozzles are not even attached to the hoses and the hoses are desintergrating. If there was a fire no water would be able to pass through the hoses. The information that the Honourable Minister is giving is certainly not accurate information. I would invite the Minister to make a tour of that Estate.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is there any procedure under which the Chief Fire Officer checks whether his recommendations for new equipment and new hoses are, in fact, carried out expeditiously by the Public Works Department because is it not a matter for really grave concern if it is not done?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I thank the Honourable Member. Yes, they are checked and if they are not serious they will be checked again when the next inspection is carried out which is due in a couple of weeks time.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the Honourable Member whether this would not be the subject of court proceedings if a private sector landlord was involved?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I think he should refer this question to the Attorney-General, not to me.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is not the Minister responsible for these things to the House? Is not fire prevention and fire precautions a matter in the schedule of the Minister and doesn't he know what his duties are yet? Mr Speaker, could the Minister say whether proper protection of Government buildings is a matter for his Department and for him or for the Public Works Department, in the last analysis?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, inspections are carried out by the City Fire Brigade. Any defects and anything of this nature are referred to the Public Works Department who carry out the necessary repairs.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, that is not quite my question. My question is, who is responsible for these matters? Is it the Fire Department?

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer is implicit. The Fire Brigade are responsible for inspection and for finding out what the position is and the Public Works Department is responsible for correcting whatever matters are brought to their notice.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am grateful to you but in the last resort if something should happen, as has happened in other estates, for instance, the Varyl Begg Estate and there was trouble with the hoses there and responsibility as between the Public Works Department and the Fire Brigade and there has been serious danger to life, who is responsible?

MR SPEAKER:

Without wishing to stick my neck out I would say it is shared responsibility, depending on what department has done what.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, but surely the Governor, in fact, gives the Honourable Member a schedule in which responsibilities are clearly outlined. Would the Honourable Member say whether fire prevention or fire precautions are ultimately his responsibility?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, we are talking about the Alameda Housing Estate. The Honourable Member is, as usual, talking about other matters. The responsibility of Government, I must remind him, is collective.

HON M XIBERRAS:

But is the Honourable Member telling the House that he is not concerned to read his schedule in order to find out whether the responsibility in this shared matter is his or the Honourable Mr Featherstone's, in the last resort? Is not the Honourable Member aware that what I am saying about Varyl Begg Estate is certainly relevant to this case?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I am fully responsible for the Fire Brigade.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Honourable Member then take up the suggestion made by my Honourable Friend Mr Restano and personally inspect the hoses in question which I know my honourable friend has, and if he is not satisfied and in view of his responsibilities, get the Public Works Department to do the work as I am sure the Public Health Department or his own Department would pursue the matter in the case of a private landlord.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the City Fire Brigade have assured me that the defects were of a minor nature, however, when the Fire Brigade inspects the equipment in a couple of weeks time I shall personally go and see that the equipment is in order.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask the Minister for Public Works whether he is satisfied that all recommendations to repair fire equipment at this Estate made by the Fire Brigade have been carried out by his Department since, apparently, it is his Department that is responsible?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, on a point of order, Honourable Members are not, I think, entitled to address questions to different Ministers arising out of a question put to a particular Minister.

MR SPEAKER:

It is supplementary. I think the Hon. Member is entitled to ask the question. Perhaps he can direct it generally.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am quite happy to direct it to the Government but in fact it was the Minister for Municipal Services himself who brought up the question of the responsibility of the Public Works Department. However, would the Government say whether it is satisfied that the Public Works Department is carrying out the recommendations of the Fire Brigade?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I am quite sure that my colleague, the Honourable Mr Featherstone, is as satisfied as I am that the Public Works Department is carrying out its duties in the normal manner.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So the Minister is satisfied that the other Minister is satisfied that.....

MR SPEAKER:

Order.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, it is a very important matter, it is a matter of life and death.

MR SPEAKER:

One has to accept the answers you get.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It is a matter of life and death. It is surprising that the Government which is spending so much money on the Fire Brigade should overlook a point like this which I think should be put right immediately.

MR SPEAKER:

What is the question you are asking?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The question is, Mr Speaker, can the Minister say in this House today when he can expect that the rotten hoses will be replaced by ones that are in working order. When does he expect this to happen?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

First of all, Mr Speaker, I dispute the fact that the hoses are rotten, as the Member has stated. I can assure the Opposition that I shall certainly go with the fire brigade personnal and inspect all the equipment at the Alameda Housing Estate within a couple of weeks. That is the best assurance I can give the House.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So the Minister believes that there will not be a fire within a couple of weeks. He can assure the House that there will not be a fire in that Estate for two weeks.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have said and I will say this for the last time, there is nothing in the equipment to render it unserviceable if there is a fire.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, has anything been done since the tabling of this question and today to change the hoses there?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Nothing has been done, Mr Speaker.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am sure the Minister is aware that he is responsible for the statements that he makes to this House.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

ORAL

No. 75 of 1979

The Hon G T Restano

Will the Minister for Municipal Services state when the new Telephone Directory is expected to be ready for general Circulation?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Municipal Services

The new Telephone Directory is expected to be ready for general circulation about the third week in July.

There is presently about eight weeks' delay in the supply of printing plates and paper to the printers. This has been due to problems over the actual shipment of the materials.

It has been noted that the printers have spared no effort in trying to get the shipment over in due time, but they have been faced with problems at source over which they have little control.

The proof reading of the Directory has now been completed by the Department's staff with the Printer.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 75 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I take it that the only reason for the delay is the non-arrival of goods from England, is that correct?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, that is correct. The goods were supposed to be coming on board the "City of Venice" which arrived on Friday, they are presently discharging and we shall await to see whether the materials are on board.

HON G T RESTANO:

If they are on board then the Minister can confirm that the directory will be out the ~~first~~ week in July?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

That is correct.

25 6 79

ORAL

No. 76 of 1979

The Hon G T Restano

Will the Minister for Municipal Services state how many of the 10% of the old telephone cables which are continually breaking down have been replaced during the past 3 months and how many are expected to be replaced before the advent of the rainy season?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Municipal Services

Two main cables, Main Cable 32 and 34 have now been replaced. These cables feed parts of the Waterport, and Moorish Castle areas and lower town areas respectively.

The Department is presently engaged in the replacement of another 3 cables, Main Cable 22 (Devil's Tower) Main Cable 24 (South Barracks) and Main Cable 28 (Marina Court area). It is expected that this will be completed by about September of this year. It is further hoped that the additional cable, Main Cable 25 (South Barracks) will be replaced by the end of the year, say around November/December.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 76 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the 10% which the Minister himself referred to during previous meetings, how many cables, in fact, are included in that 10%?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

All these cables Mr Speaker, form the 10%, the six cables which I have mentioned. Main cable 32, 34, main cable 22 which is in Devil's Tower Road, main cable 24, South Barracks, main cable 28, Marina Court area. These are the ones that will be ready by September. Main cable 25, another one in South Barracks, by the end of the year. Six main cables which are the 10% which are continuously breaking down.

HON G T RESTANO:

All 10% of the cables will be completed by September and one by December, is that it?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, two have been completed already, the other three by September and the last one will be completed by December.

25 6 79

ORAL

No. 77 of 1979

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government state when the decision was taken to authorise the builders to reduce the thickness of the outside external rendering of the Tower Blocks and was this done at the time on Ministerial authority?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Public Works

As the tenders for the construction of the Tower Blocks were higher than anticipated, Council of Ministers decided at the time that a reduction of £40,000 in overall costs should be achieved by pruning specifications and making deductions on prime costs. The then CLW was instructed by Government to go to UK in order to negotiate with the lowest tenderer with a view to obtaining reductions. A meeting took place in London on 11 January 1966 which was attended by the CLW as the representative of the Gibraltar Government, the Consultants, Messrs Sandford, Fawcett, Wilton and Bell and the contractors, Messrs Whatlings Ltd. Measures to curtail expenditure were discussed and it was agreed that various items should be reduced in scope and that the specifications of other items should be modified. Among the latter was item 139/3, external rendering. No Minister was involved in this particular decision.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 77 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister whether he is prepared to correct an erroneous impression he gave on television during a programme on the Tower Blocks that a decision had in fact been taken and the building of the Tower Blocks had been carried out in the time of the IWBP Government. He said that it was in 1969. Would the Honourable Member care, in view of his answer, to correct that publicly?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I don't think I said anything of the IWBP Government on the Tower Blocks at all.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Member saying that he did not say that this was done in 1969?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am afraid my memory fails me, perhaps the Honourable Member's memory is better.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Honourable Member to say what the date of the decision of Council of Ministers was?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It should be a little bit prior to the 11th January, 1966, I should imagine it would be late December 1965.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I to understand, Mr Speaker, that after the meeting in London at which no Minister was present, I gather, the matter was not put back to Council of Ministers?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As far as my records show, no, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Was the decision, Mr Speaker, taken on the advice of Government experts bearing in mind that it was from Council of Ministers that the original idea of reducing costs had emanated.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think I have already said that the Commissioner of Lands and Works represented the Gibraltar Government and he was a party to the decision.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is the Honourable Member saying that the sole representation on such an important matter as reducing the external rendering was left to the Commissioner of Lands and Works. Is that what he is saying?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, I am saying that it was left to the three entities concerned, the Gibraltar Government represented by the Commissioner of Lands and Works, the Consultants, Messrs Sandford, Fawcett, Wilton and Bell, and the Constructors, Messrs Whatlings Limited.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, then it is a fact that the decision was taken without any Minister having a hand in this?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have already said that, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member say what part of the savings of the £40,000 he mentioned earlier, could be attributed to the reduction of the rendering from $\frac{3}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ ", I think it was.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I cannot remember this off-hand, Sir, I know that there was a difference of from 24s.9d per square foot to 20 shillings per square foot but I am not sure how many square feet were involved and I am not sure of the amount that was actually involved.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, so obviously it was considerably less than £40,000?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I wouldn't like to accept the word "considerably", I am not sure of the figure at all. I am not sure whether that figure can even be drawn out from the information we still have.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not say that some research should go into this, I know that some research has been done already, in view of the fact that he has stated on television, and perhaps his memory is a bit better this time, that to put right the Tower Blocks would be over £1m, possibly £2m.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not saying that the whole of the fault of the penetration of water in the Tower Blocks is due to the rendering being less than what was originally intended, in fact, I think I have already stated in this House and elsewhere that some of the faults was due to cavities which occurred in the cement because there was not sufficient vibration at the time. I don't think it is reasonable to say that the trouble that we are experiencing at the moment is entirely due to the rendering being less than was originally intended.

~~XIBERRAS:~~
HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, this is in fact what he said on television, that it was the reduction of the rendering which had caused the precarious state of the Tower Blocks. Mr Speaker, perhaps he was thinking then that it was the IWPB Government that had carried the works. Could the Honourable Member state in the House by when a comprehensive analysis of what is wrong with the Tower Blocks could be made public?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think to some extent that is in anticipation of Question No. 78.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

No. 78 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

Will Government make a statement about the extent of repairs that are required to be carried out at the Tower Blocks?

The Hon the Minister for Public Works

Pending detailed investigation by a firm of Consultants, tenders have already been invited for the weather proofing and redecoration of the Tower Blocks, with a view to alleviating in the short term the problems of rain penetration. It is intended to appoint the firm of Andrew, Kent and Stone who are expected to arrive in Gibraltar on the 5 July 1979 to make recommendations on a permanent solution.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 78 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister say what are the short term repairs that will be completed this summer?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think if the Honourable Member, who I understand is very assiduous in reading tender notices, will remind himself what went in the tender, it is the painting with I believe a proprietary brand of mastic, the covering of the roof with asphalt and the general redecoration.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would refer the Minister to the actual tender which I have in front of me and it says nothing about proprietary brands, it says nothing about mastic in the tender. That is why I asked him what exactly are the short-term repairs that are to be carried out.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think when the person puts in the tender of what he is going to use, some proprietary brand will have to be stated in it, otherwise how are they going to make it waterproof?

HON G T RESTANO:

What sort of waterproofing is to be carried out?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think it would be rather invidious to give names. There are two or three proprietary brands of mastic that are on the market. I do not wish to plug one to the disadvantage of any other here in the House.

25 6 79

No. 79 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

Are all the lifts at the Tower Blocks now in full working order?

Answer

The Hon the Minister for Public Works

The evens-floor lift at Constitution House is under major overhaul; the rest are in full working order.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 79 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when will the work on the lift which is under major overhaul be completed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If all goes well, Sir, it takes about one month to do this work.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

No. 80 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

Will Government give the figures for water production from available sources for the months of February, March, April and May and state what stocks were held on the 31st May?

AnswerThe Hon the Minister for Public Works

Water production from available sources for the months of February, March, April and May was as follows:

SOURCES	February	March	April	May
	M ³	M ³	M ³	M ³
Rainfall	15,890	7,452	4,424	Nil
Wells	12,712	12,577	12,430	11,605
Dist (NF)	13,623	Nil	Nil	3,514
Dist (VTE)	4,264	18,031	10,374	16,460
Importation	7,410	14,820	17,290	14,820
TOTAL	53,899	52,880	44,518	46,399

STOCKS HELD AT 9.00 am ON 31ST MAY 1979 WAS 41371 M³ (9.10Mg)

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 80 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I take it that the non-production at the North Face distiller in March and April, was because of an overhaul?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, that is its annual overhaul.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister explain why the figure for May which would appear to be after the overhaul is so low, 3,514 M³?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because the overhaul takes about 10 weeks and it started in March, April and ran into May so that the small production was when it came back at the end of May.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

No. 81 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

Has the report on the detailed analysis of the results of tests for the deep drilling for water now been received by Government, and if so would Government make a statement on this matter?

Answer

The Hon the Minister for Public Works

The report on the detailed analysis of pumping tests carried out on a fresh water pool inside the Rock has been received. The results are not very encouraging and in fact state that, in view of the proven low yield at this pool, no further investigational works are recommended there. These tests, however, have enabled the location of the proposed drilling sites to be determined more precisely.

25 6 79

No. 82 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

Will Government state why it has now been found expedient to replace the bollards at Cornwall's Lane with a pavement so soon after the bollards were erected and will Government further state what has been the cost of a) erecting the bollards b) removing the bollards c) building the pavement?

Answer

The Hon the Minister for Public Works

The bollards were erected as a short term solution until labour and materials were available to construct a proper pavement.

2. This temporary solution was decided upon after complaints that an ambulance had been unable to gain access to Gavino's Court to convey a patient to hospital.

3. The steel tubing has been salvaged for re-use so that the actual cost of this temporary solution amounts to £130 ie

- a. the cost of erecting the bollards was approximately £100;
- b. taking down the bollards for re-use £30 approximately;
- c. the sum of £3,000 has been provided in this year's Estimates for the pavement and general embellishment of the area.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 82 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I take it that the £100 for the erecting of the bollards and the £30 for removal is mainly for the cost of the steel tubing and not, presumably, for the labour involved?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That includes the labour. The bollards were put up in less than two days.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

ANSWER

The outboard engines/comparable in horse power but they were of

a make that was completely unknown to the Public Works Department and my engineers preferred to err on the safe side and choose the type that they already had which had given proven service.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when the Minister says that the inflatable boats that were acceptable were of a heavier duty, how was the comparison made with the lowest tender? We are not talking about a great deal of money but the difference between one tender and the other is over 33% and I think today when money appears to be rather tight, it seems to me that more economy should be made and therefore I would ask the Minister since the lower tender apparently did not give specifications of the actual heavy duty of the boats how can he say that one was heavier duty than the other.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It was, they are heavier duty, firstly because the actual total weight of the boat is considerably higher, the thickness of the rubber is greater and since these boats have to stand up to a certain amount of buffeting, they were considered by the persons who made the recommendations that the heavier type was more preferable.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, if all those requirements were considered necessary by the Department, why is it that those particular requirements were not specified in the tender notice? The tender notice said nothing about the thickness of the rubber . . .

MR SPEAKER:

I do not think we can go into the administrative decision. The people who were dealing with the tenders decided, for the reasons stated, that one was more suitable than the other.

HON G T RESTANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if the reason given is that one is of a heavier duty type than another then if the tender notice that appeared in the Gazette did not give all those specifications that are required by the department surely it is unfair to say afterwards that tender (a) was not . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, the question you are asking is, would Government not consider that for the purposes of tenders, more details should be given?

HON G T RESTANO:

And that this one, in fact, was wrong, Mr Speaker.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The tender notice could have been more specific and I would probably then be answering questions why I had been so specific that it was slanted towards a certain manufacturer.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the Minister why they invited tenders for three boats and two engines, why was this?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because we have one boat that has no engine.

HON M XIBERRAS:

So in fact the Honourable Member was providing an engine for a boat which he already had. Was his department or the Tender Board in drawing up the notice pre-judging the issue in the same way? Was he, in fact, saying that he wanted an engine for an existing boat?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When we asked for outboard motors we looked at the types that were offered to us. There was one type that we already have a number of these outboards, we have more than one boat in service and we have spares for them. The other engine which was offered was of comparable horsepower but was of a make which was completely unknown to us and my engineers played on the safe side and took something that had proved itself, rather than take a chance of getting something else which was unknown and for which they had no spares and I think their judgement must be accepted.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, what we have now, and in fact I attended the meeting just by chance between the Minister and my Honourable Colleague Mr Restano, what we have in fact is an inclination on the part of the department to continue with the boats then in service but the putting up of a tender notice which unfortunately revealed another bid 33% less. Is this, in fact, an explanation of the matter?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, and I am not sure the bid was a total one or whether it was broken down into parts for the outboards in one amount and the boats in another.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I just want to make sure, Mr Speaker, that the inclusion of the third engine, the spare engine, was in fact to put on to an existing dinghy.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS:

And the make desired by the Department in the case of that particular engine was in fact the same as it had been using over the years?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I did not say the make of engine desired by the Department, I said that the Department having got the tenders in, found that one of the engines offered was similar to the ones they already had and because they already had that engine and it had proved itself and because they had spares for that engine and because they were not sure of the other type of engine, they preferred to play safe even at slightly higher expense and chose that engine.

HON G T RESTANO:

How many other boats and engines is the Minister talking about? How many more, apart from these, have the Department got?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think we have 6 or 7 boats altogether.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25.6.79

No. 84 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

Will Government state to what use the sand from the Upper Rock is being put, if any?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Public Works

None whatsoever. No sand has been extracted from the Upper Catchments to date.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 84 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Are there any problems envisaged with this sand?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir. The setting up of the arrangements for the extracting of sand from the Upper Rock are running a little behind and we hope to extract at the beginning of August when the sand will be sold for all building construction purposes.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Have any tests been carried out on the sand?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, many. It has been proved suitable for all construction purposes.

25.6.79

No. 85 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

In respect of the Varyl Begg project, will the Chief Minister give the date of the first intimation given to Government by either the Consultants or the Constructors or the Quantity Surveyors or the Government's own supervisors on the project, that major faults or defects were suspected in the project?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Public Works

The first three Blocks were handed to Government on the 4 October, 1974. Roof leaks were detected a few weeks later and the matter was immediately reported both verbally and in writing by Public Works Department to the consulting architects. The first recorded written representation from Public Works to Sir Hugh Wilson is dated the 24 January, 1975.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 85 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Can Government say whether there was any intimation from the builders?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not sure what the Hon Member means by intimation from the builders.

MR SPEAKER:

Of defects.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Would the Hon Member like to amplify the question?

HON M XIBERRAS:

I mean of defects as stated in the question.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir. The builders had not admitted liability.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Did the builders notify the Government that in their view there were or would be serious defects if building continued?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, some considerable time after the initial roof leaks had started Government was complaining to the builders and to the consultant architects that there was water penetration to a considerable extent. The builders at one time did make intimation that in their opinion there were certain design defects, which was causing this penetration.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am not referring to letters from Government to the builders but from the builders to Government.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The only letters which I can remember are where Government had complained to the builders about the defects in construction and the replies came that even if these defects were remedied the design was such that the fault would continue.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Thank you. Mr Speaker, would he give me a date for these letters?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I cannot remember offhand since this is rather alien to the initial question and I do not have it at my finger tips. It can be looked for.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I do not agree it is alien to the question. The question states: "Will the Chief Minister give the date of the first intimation given to Government by either the Consultants or the Constructors or the Quantity Surveyors or the Government's own supervisors on the project, that major faults or defects were suspected in the project?".

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, I have already answered that the first intimation was given by the Government through the Public Works Department some time prior to 24 January 1975. If later intimations came from other people I would have thought they were alien to this question.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, since there is a motion in my name at a later stage can I ask the Hon Member whether he can obtain the first intimation in respect of all the parties mentioned in the original question and would he make himself conversant with replies given to Question No. 79 of 1976.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

25.6.79

No. 86 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

When did Government first deny payments to either the Consultants or the Contractors associated with the Varyl Begg project?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Public Works

Payments to the Main Contractor were withheld on the 3rd August 1977. On the 26th October 1978 Government advised the consulting architects that a fee application which they had submitted on the 5th December 1977 would not be paid. The Consulting Architects were also informed that no further payments in respect of fees would be made until the situation at Varyl Begg was resolved to Government's satisfaction.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 86 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can Government say why it took some three years for defects to be discovered to stop payments to constructors and some four years to stop payments to consultants?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am afraid I do not have that information.

HON P J ISOLA:

Did the Minister not expect to be asked this question?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

This is something which the Legal Department handles for the Public Works Department.

HON P J ISOLA:

Did the Public Works Department seek advice on this?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir. We were in constant contact with the Legal Department.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Legal Department say why payments continued three years after the defects were discovered.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I cannot really answer that immediately but I will find out.

25.6.79

No. 87 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

What public funds have been spent to date in remedying the defects of the Varyl Begg project and will Government be claiming any of these monies from anybody?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Public Works

Government has not spent any monies to remedy roof defects at Varyl Begg. Investigations are still in progress to establish the causes that are giving rise to the penetration of rain into the blocks of flats. The second part of the question does not, therefore, arise.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 87 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister aware that his department has still not arrived at conclusions in relation to what has to be done at Varyl Begg?

MR SPEAKER:

I am afraid that that question is not a supplementary to this question. We must not anticipate the debate.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am frankly surprised. I seem to recall that in some debate in the past, Government was going to undertake remedial work. Has Government not undertaken any remedial work yet?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is the position, Sir. I do not think Government was going to undertake remedial work but expected the builders and contractors to do the remedial work.

HON P J ISOLA:

I thought I heard stated in this House that Government is not going to await the end of litigation but is going to step in and do the work itself and then claim from the contractors.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That was something that had been suggested but legal advice has been given to us not to do it ourselves.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, if that is the case, has the Minister considered for how many years we are going to be landed with no remedial work if there is no settlement?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We are anticipating the debate, Sir.

25.6.79

No. 88 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

Is Government now in a position to inform the House of what action it intends to take to make habitable the remaining flats at Varyl Begg and when is work to commence?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Public Works

The remaining flats at Varyl Begg will not be made habitable until such time as the question of responsibility for defects is resolved. A third statement from the independent firm of Andrews Kent and Stone was received early in June 1979. This statement, which is expected to be the final analysis of defects at Varyl Begg, is now being considered by Government and it is hoped that a solution to the whole problem of defects at Varyl Begg will now be possible in the light of the latest findings.

25.6.79

No. 89 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

Has a reply been received from the Department of Trade about the transshipment of liquid gas in the Bay?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Trade and Economic Development

Although several reminders have been sent, no decision has so far been received from the Department of Trade concerning the new regulations in respect of ship-to-ship transfer of liquefied cargoes. In reply to our latest enquiry the Captain of the Port has been informed that a letter on this subject may be expected soon although it is understood that no firm decision has yet been taken and discussions are continuing in London.

25.6.79

No. 90 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

Will the Minister for Economic Development state when the project to extend the Air Terminal is expected to commence?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Trade and Economic Development

It is intended to carry out the extension project in two phases. Firstly the arrival hall area will be extended. Tenders for this work and for the provision of baggage handling equipment will be invited with a closing date of around mid July.

The second phase will involve the extension of the departure hall and pre-immigration area and tenders will be invited for October with work to commence in November 1979.

25.6.79

No. 91 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government make a statement on the discontinuation of the Gibraltar - Madrid - Gibraltar flights and on the possibility of it's being resumed?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Trade and Economic Development

Mr Speaker, there is very little I can add to what I said in answer to Question No 27 of 26 February 1979. The discontinuation of the Madrid flights is not of our making. Alternate arrangements have been made by Gibraltar Airways for a direct connection through Tangier which is working satisfactorily.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 91 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, has the Chief Minister changed his mind about the description he applied to the discontinuation when he said that it was not the act of a friendly country?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I did not say that. I said that the unfriendly attitude was not to allow Gibraltar Airways to operate the service.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Unfriendly attitude?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am quoting from Hansard. My view is that it is an unfriendly attitude not to allow Gibraltar Airways to operate the service. I was not talking about the action of Gibraltar Airways in stopping the service.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I realise that, it was in fact the attitude of the Spanish authorities that the Hon Member was referring to. Does the Government consider this to be a problem for the airlines or is it a problem which involves governmental authorities?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Insofar as it is a question of the link between Gibraltar and Madrid by the local airlines concerned, it is a concern of the Government, not in connection with the service or the decision taken by British Airways to stop the service and we have taken every opportunity to bring this to the notice of those on whom the responsibility rests to see whether anything can be done on the matter.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am grateful for that reply. Could the Hon Member say whether the operators of the airline have given any indication that they might be in a position to resume the flights without detriment to their other obligations on the Gibraltar/London route?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The question does not identify the particular airline but, as I say, in respect of British Airways I think that their minds have been made up on economic grounds, so we are told. It is only in respect of the ancillary service that I think Government and the airline is interested in finding a solution.

HON M XIBERRAS:

In view of the phrase quoted by the Chief Minister from a previous meeting, have any representations been made in that particular quarter to try to bring about a more friendly attitude?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

My understanding is that every opportunity to bring this matter forward as one which is outstanding and unfriendly, will be made.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Chief Minister inform Hon Members of any progress that he or those responsible have been able to make?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I should be delighted.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the Government made formal representations to British Airways to renew the London/Madrid/Gibraltar flight?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I do not think so. Everything that could be done to stop them from discontinuing the service was done at the time with no luck.

HON G T RESTANO:

My understanding of it is that at the time when British Airways said they would discontinue the flight, it was thought that Gibair might take over the Madrid flight but since that has not happened, would Government make a formal application to British Airways to renew that flight since Gibair has not been able to take over on that route?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The stop was made on economic grounds regardless.

HON G T RESTANO:

I still ask the Government would they consider making formal representations?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We will only make recommendations when we think they will succeed.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Hon and Learned Member still willing to accept a situation which arises from what he has described as an unfriendly attitude, and will he not make the formal representations which my Hon Friend has asked him to make? Does he not consider that there is an obligation on the part of British Airways to do as much as possible to resume this service, I repeat, without detriment to other scheduled services?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot go on and on in this matter, one thing is the ceasing of the services and the other one I have been referring to is on the unfriendly attitude and the question of the possibility of Gibraltar Airways linking with Madrid. They are two completely different matters. On the first one the chances are limited but every opportunity will be taken to bring about the possibility of the restoration of the flights. On the second I have already answered.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, since the service before suggested changes were thought was London/Madrid/Gibraltar and the reverse, and since it is my clear understanding from those responsible that the ceasing of this service was undoubtedly connected with the takeover or possible takeover of certain responsibilities by the other airline, and since there was obvious consultation between the airlines, is there not a responsibility on the original operators of the original flights to provide a service since plans for substituting that service had fallen through?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have answered that question before, one thing has nothing to do with the other.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25.6.79

No. 92 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon Major R J Peliza

Is there any particular reason why Gibraltar Airways schedule flights from Gatwick Airport suffer a high incidence of delays to the great inconvenience of passengers?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Trade and Economic Development

Yes, Sir, there is a reason for the delays we are experiencing. They are due to the action being taken by French and Spanish Air Traffic Controllers. The high incidence of delays is affecting various destinations and not Gibraltar only.

The mid-afternoon Gibraltar Airways departure experiences longer delays because of the traffic build-up resulting from Air Traffic Controllers' action. British Airways early morning departures are least affected. Gibraltar Airways is ~~thinking in~~ terms of reverting to an early departure from London next season.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 92 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I would like to bring this to the notice of the Minister. If the plane left Gibraltar round about a quarter past eleven is the Minister aware that passengers would probably get to Victoria about 4-5 hours after that in the early morning, and is the Minister aware that there is no underground and it is very difficult to find a taxi and even to get a minicab. Does the Minister realise that under the circumstances tourists will find it very discouraging to go to Gatwick?

HON A W SERFATY:

I am aware of the various points raised by the Hon and Gallant Member and I entirely agree it is most unfortunate.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In view of that, Mr Speaker, is it possible to change the departure times before next season. Could that be done?

HON A W SERFATY:

Not as far as I am aware.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member give an assurance that to his knowledge the departure time is the only consideration in this matter?

HON A W SERFATY:

To my knowledge it is the later departure from London that is affected by the issue because of the build-up of traffic throughout this time with air traffic control.

25.6.79

No. 93 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon Major R J Peliza

Is it a fact that mail is unduly delayed at Gatwick Airport on weekends and if this is so will Government give an explanation why this is occurring?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services

No Sir. Mails have been received on every Saturday and Sunday since the transfer of the scheduled flights to Gatwick.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 93 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister aware that the delays are occurring at Gatwick Airport. Mail is not moved from Gatwick Airport until Monday morning. Is this not a matter for concern?

HON I ABECASIS:

Sir, I understood the question the other way round, coming from the United Kingdom to Gibraltar.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister aware that mail is delayed on the outward trip? That I know for a fact.

HON I ABECASIS:

If he does, I do not.

HON P J ISOLA:

As Minister you should be aware of that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I would have thought that the Director should be aware of this because it is Gibraltar mail we are concerned about.

HON I ABECASIS:

I have answered that I took it that he was referring to the mail from the United Kingdom to Gibraltar and not from Gibraltar to the United Kingdom.

HON P J ISOLA:

It is a matter for concern. I am sure that if the Minister

thought that mail from Gibraltar was being delayed he would undertake an immediate enquiry into this problem and inform the next meeting.

HON I ABECASIS:

Yes, of course, Sir.

25.6.79

No. 94 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

Can Government state how many schedule flights from London to Gibraltar since 1st April, 1979, have failed to bring mail and the reasons for this?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services

The scheduled flights from London on Wednesday, May 16th; Friday, May 25th; Tuesday, May 29th; Friday, June 1st and Wednesday, June 13th failed to bring mail. No notification was received from the British Post Office that mails were not being shipped on the first four occasions. The Gibraltar Post Office was however informed that there would not be shipment on the 13th and 14th June due to the fact that postal staff would be taking 24 hours industrial action from 1800 hrs on the Wednesday. Mail was, nevertheless, shipped and received on the Thursday.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 94 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister saying that no reasons were given on the first four occasions?

HON I ABECASIS:

No advance notice was given, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Was there any reason why it was not shipped.

HON I ABECASIS:

No, because the mail was received on the following day.

HON P J ISOLA:

I assume that the mail will eventually arrive but is Government not concerned that they do not bring mail when there are mail deliveries to the Airport, every day of the week.

HON I ABECASIS:

We assume there are deliveries every day. Delay would be from the Post Office, from the railway, or from the plane bringing the mail. It is very difficult to pinpoint from where the delay began.

HON P J ISOLA:

Whenever mail does not arrive will his department chase up the reasons for it? Are we not in danger that when at the other end people see a lack of concern whether mail comes or not, the service to Gibraltar may become more and more inefficient, whether from the Post Office or wherever, and is the Minister aware that no mail arrived this Saturday on the plane?

HON I ABECASIS:

Sir, there is concern in the Gibraltar Post Office to the extent that not only did we communicate with the authorities at the other end, but even the Director himself has gone to Britain to find out what the situation is. You must expect that there is still the teething troubles from the change-over from Heathrow to Gatwick. Recently there have been bombings in the sorting offices which could also delay the mail and there are a variety of reasons why this mail could be delayed. We keep a close watch and I will refer the matter back to the House of I feel it is necessary.

HON P J ISOLA:

I hope the Minister realises that it is important from this end if mail does not arrive, that at this end we do not assume it could be for this or that reason. It is important that the mail service should be accurate, speedy and efficient.

HON I ABECASIS:

Absolutely, Sir.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Did the Minister not accept that no mail arrived this Saturday?

HON I ABECASIS:

That was said by Mr Isola. I gave the details of the different dates as far as I know when they did not come, but not last Saturday.

Statement by Hon I Abecasis re Question No. 94 of 1979

Sir, as I undertook this morning, I have made inquiries and there was no mail received on Saturday last, but there was a parcel post the evening of the 23rd and on Sunday 24th, ie, yesterday. We received yesterday the Saturday and Sunday mail and we have made inquiries as to the reason why there was no mail on the Saturday and the matter is being investigated and the House will be informed accordingly at the first available opportunity.

No. 95 of 1979

The Hon M Xiberras

Can Government assure the House that the students of the Bayside Comprehensive School have reasonable access to and use of the Victoria Stadium?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Education

Bearing in mind the total use made by schools of the Victoria Stadium, the allocation of facilities and the programme of use prepared for the Bayside Comprehensive School is reasonable in that all boys have the opportunity to do physical education each week within the complex.

There are, however, minor difficulties being experienced by the school at the present time in relation to access to the site itself, the use of certain facilities within the complex and the extent to which an alternative programme of the use has to be prepared following disruption to the normal daily maintenance routine which occurred on the occasion of the industrial dispute on May Day. These minor difficulties are currently being examined in consultation with all concerned.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 95 of 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

I thank the Honourable Member for the answer. Could he say whether the difficulties particularly of access, have arisen of late or have they been there over a long period of time?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am not in a position to say when it arose. I am aware that it has to do with the nearest access to the school and now they have to use access which is further away from the school but before the Honourable Leader of the Opposition asked the question, the matter was being looked into.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Does the Honourable and Gallant Member mean that meetings had been held?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Meetings were being arranged, but due to the programme for the visit of HRH Princess Alexandra, where most of us were involved, we didn't have time to get down to it, but this is being done now.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could the Minister confirm that cancellations often affect the schoolboys, more often, in fact, than cancellations affect the adult use of the Stadium. Can he confirm this?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I cannot confirm it but I imagine it probably does happen because most of the maintenance is done during the daytime.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I notice, Mr Speaker, that the Minister responsible for Sport has shown some disagreement with that answer of the Honourable Member responsible for Education. My information certainly would accord with what I interpreted to be the information or the feelings of the Minister for Sport. Could he, in fact, check and let Honourable Members on this side know whether what I am stating is the case?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

You are stating that most of the cancellations affect children only and not the adults. I will check that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member also bear in mind whilst these discussions are going on, that a case was made for the Victoria Stadium in 1969 by the then Government in conjunction with the use of the schools, in other words, that the schools would profit from having the Victoria Stadium there, and will he not agree that therefore they have some moral claim to full use of those facilities.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will pass my comments to the appropriate committee.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask how often it is that boys in the Comprehensive School have to use Eastern Beach as a physical education facility rather than the Stadium because they cannot use the Stadium. I think one sees quite often boys from the Comprehensive School having to go to Eastern Beach because there are no other facilities for physical education classes.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I have more detailed information as to the use of the Boys Comprehensive. The indoor area is used on Monday afternoon, Tuesday afternoon and Thursday afternoon, Friday morning and Friday afternoon and on Saturday morning. The outside area is used on Tuesday in the afternoon and Wednesday in the afternoon.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, that is not a reply to my question. My question was how often do the boys have to make use of Eastern Beach because there are no other physical education facilities available.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I would require notice of that question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would have thought that that was a relevant supplementary to the original question.

HON A J CANEPA:

And how often they use the Boulevard.

HON G T RESTANO:

The Hon the Minister for Labour seems to want to answer everybody else's questions.

HON A J CANEPA:

Rubbish. Do you think we are walking encyclopaedias.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think it is the responsibility of the Minister for Education to answer the question if not now in due course.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We shall also try to get the time they go to the cinema and all that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the Minister for Education whether in the days that he has outlined when the students of the Comprehensive School are supposed to use the Stadium whether they are also allowed to use the showers of the Stadium?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

If they use the indoor sports facilities, yes, but not for the outdoor ones. They go back to school where there are showers.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the Honourable Member why?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Because there are showers in the school.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that it is difficult to understand why when they use the indoor facilities they are allowed to use the showers but when they use the outdoor facilities they are not allowed to use the showers.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Because for the outdoor activities the showers are located on the opposite side of the main building and it would require full time staff to look after the showers and cleaning if it is going to be used during the daytime.

HON M XIBERRAS:

It is because of the cleaning, I suppose.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Cleaning and supervision.

HON M XIBERRAS:

But supervision is done by the teachers, surely?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

It is because of the cleaning and general supervision. They have showers in the school.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Honourable Member aware that the showers at the school are very limited - I have used them - and that it would be good for the boys to be able to use the other showers when they are doing outdoor work there. Would the Honourable Member enquire of the Honourable Member sitting next to him, the Minister for Sport, whether this is a possibility?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I did indicateⁱⁿ my answer that there were certain facilities within the complex and that one of the matters that was being looked into was the question of the showers and other things; anything that has caused friction between the Stadium management and the Department of Education.

25 6 79

No. 96 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Does Government agree that it is invidious that some scholarship holders should be in receipt of lower maintenance grants than others and is Government prepared to remedy the situation?

Answer

The Hon the Minister for Education

As far as Gibraltar Government Scholarships are concerned the appropriate gross basic maintenance grant applicable to all scholarship holders is exactly the same. Under the Education Awards Regulations the grants are, however, reduced in respect of parental contributions and the net maintenance grants applicable will, therefore, vary from student to student.

Those students, on the other hand, who undertake an initial teacher training course or an in-service training course in UK are given different maintenance grants in accordance with the Technical Co-operation Scheme operated by the ODA and not by Gibraltar Government. There is no provision for parental contributions in this scheme and no expenditure is incurred on the part of Gibraltar Government as all teacher training/in-service education has been financed through technical assistance in recent years.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 96 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could the Minister say which is the higher of the two, the Gibraltar Government or the ODA?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, the ODA.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Can the Honourable Member say by how much?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

About £300 a year.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is there any way in which this position could be rationalised? I am sure the Minister will agree it is an invidious position. Is it a question of a decision on policy?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am not sure what the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is trying to get at. Does he want me to increase the grants by £300 or to reduce the technical aid by £300 over which I have no control.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I think that the answer should be obvious, to make them the same.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

To grant £300? I can tell you straight away that I am not prepared to do that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Minister not prepared to do it because it is impossible to have ODA funds changed in any way or is it because he is lacking money in his Department for this very necessary educational aid?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

What I am saying is that under the present budget I haven't got the money to do it.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Does the Minister consider the situation to be invidious then, and would he in the future be willing to have a levelling up?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am not willing to have it now or in the future.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could the Honourable Member say whether he has had representations about this from the people affected?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I have never had anybody on a government scholarship saying that they would like the same money being paid to them.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, the other thing is, is he satisfied that taking into account the parental contribution, the sums payable to the Gibraltar Government scholars are, in fact, what the Department feels it ought to be, in other words, that parents generally do make up the sum of money so that the students get the full allowance?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The total contribution by parents towards Gibraltar Scholarships come to around £35,000 a year.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is there any evidence that parents are hard pressed in meeting the required level of maintenance which the Department had envisaged beforehand?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I haven't had any complaints about this.

25 6 79

No. 97 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

Will Government make a statement as to why no repairs appear to have been carried out at Nos 197/201 Main Street since one of the owners was convicted over five months ago for failing to repair or demolish the premises?

Answer

The Hon the Attorney-General

The immediate responsibility for this matter lies with the owners but as I indicated in answer to the Hon Member's question in February the Government has kept the matter under continuing surveillance. It has since undertaken further work to minimise the danger, and as the owners have not themselves remedied the matter the Government is now in the process of taking legal action to compel them to do so and to recover from them the expenses that have been incurred from public funds to date.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 97 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask, first of all, whether there is still a distinction between Nos 197 and 199 and 201, Main Street? In other words are there two different problems involved? Is it that one property 197/199 belongs to one owner and No 201 to another and there are two different problems, or are both problems identical?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I understand the position to be that they are being dealt with as a single problem. It is the site on the corner at Cannon Lane and Main Street.

HON G T RESTANO:

That was not quite my question, Mr Speaker. I am asking whether they are being treated differently, if they belong to different owners.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer has been that it is being treated as one property and one problem.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, in December, 1978, there was a distinction made by the Government that 197 and 199 was one property and that 201 was another and in fact 197 to 199 had been fenced off at the time since July, 1976, and 201 which is the corner of Cannon

Lane, had fallen round about Christmas Eve. Therefore I would like to know whether there is any distinction at all or whether both have been taken together.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, perhaps I can clarify the matter and come back to the Honourable Member but as far as I am concerned, and my Chambers are taking action on it, there was a problem with the corner building and as far as we are concerned the owners have a duty to rectify that public danger.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the problem lies in both properties, apparently. In No. 201, Main Street, I think the ceiling collapsed round about December, 1978. I think, perhaps, one can identify Nos. 197/199 better by using the name of the shop that used to be there "Taj Mahal". That area has been fenced off for nearly three years. If we can take that particular property first and then perhaps go on to the other. That one, Nos. 197/199, which is the Taj Mahal shop, that has been fenced off for three years now next month. Can the Honourable and Learned the Attorney-General say for which building the landlord has been convicted and fined. Was it Nos. 197/199, is it No. 201, or is it the same landlord in both cases?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I regret I cannot answer that question at the moment but as far as I am concerned the problems are directly there upon the ground. I think it is clear that they apply to both buildings because I know that there are cracks in the wall on the North end of the Main Street and there are also problems going up Cannon Lane. But to answer the Honourable Member's specific question as to who was convicted in January of this year, I think you were referring to, I will have to check and come back.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would like to pursue this one a little bit further, if I may, Mr Speaker. Therefore we do not know whether it was the landlord of 197-199 or 201, Main Street, who was convicted - I can refer to the Honourable Member's reply on 2 February - he is saying now that he doesn't know which of the two landlords was convicted.

MR SPEAKER:

What is the question?

HON G T RESTANO:

I find it extraordinary, Mr Speaker, that the Honourable and Learned Attorney-General should not know which of the two landlords was taken to court.

MR SPEAKER:

He does not and it is as simple as that. He has said that he will find out.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, does anybody else in the Government know? Presumably, it was the Government who took the landlord to Court. Anyway, if the government doesn't know may I ask, Mr Speaker, since part of that property Nos. 197-199, has been fenced off for nearly three years, does the Government have any recourse to take over the property because after all it is obstructing the public highway in Main Street? Does the Government not have any powers to take over the property, if it needs to be repaired or demolished and the landlord

MR SPEAKER:

Order. Let us have a question. What are you seeking?

HON G T RESTANO:

I am asking that if the landlord having been taken to court is in no position or is not willing to repair or to demolish the property, does the Government have no authority to take over that property, demolish or repair and, possibly, put it up for sale?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the answer to that question is, yes, where an Order for repair and demolition has been made against the property owner, the Government may, if that Order is not complied with, repair or demolish and recover the cost of doing so. But the Government may also take other action to force the owner himself, who is the person after all who is primarily responsible for maintaining his property, to carry out his public obligations and that is what the Government proposes to do.

HON G T RESTANO:

I can accept that, Mr Speaker, as far as the premises at No. 201 Main Street, are concerned because, in fact, the premises at No. 201, Main Street, which is in corner with Cannon Lane, are the premises which had trouble at the end of last year, but the other property between Nos. 197-199, Main Street, has been fenced off for nearly three years. Why has the Government not taken action there?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I would like to make one other point clear. I am not able to answer precisely, and the only reason I don't is that I want to be quite sure that I am right, who is the owner against whom court action has been taken but as far as I am concerned there is a problem on the Cannon Lane/Main Street corner. It involves the properties that come around there and

the action I contemplate will be action in respect of every property which is a public danger. When I say all the properties, perhaps I should be more specific. All the properties which you have mentioned which constitute a public danger, they are the properties which I am contemplating taking action against, in fact, I am taking action.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I think this is a matter of public interest. Certain Hon Members opposite may not consider it to be such but I think it is. The landlord was apparently taken to Court by the Government in February, I think it was, and he was convicted and he was fined and for five months nothing seems to have happened. Presumably he was fined and perhaps the Honourable and Learned the Attorney-General can confirm whether he was ordered either to repair or demolish. This has not been done and I don't know in respect of which property of the two but in any case one of the properties has been in the same state and represents a danger to the general public.

MR SPEAKER:

We have had all that for the last quarter of an hour. What are you asking now?

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, what I am asking is, when will Government take any action in this case?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, it is not correct to say that Government has not taken action since the last question put by the Honourable Member. The Government has, in fact, as I said at the outset, taken some action to further minimise the danger. I also understand that the Public Works Department has done an assessment and the Government is now taking further action and I can say that that action has been initiated to ensure that the owner carries out his public obligations. As to why it hasn't happened before now, I am sorry I cannot comment.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask what action, in fact, has been initiated?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am taking proceedings against him to make sure that he carries out his obligations.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I then ask again, Mr Speaker, against which of the two landlords has action been taken?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Why has it taken so long to get to this stage?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, all I can say is that since the last time that this matter was raised in the House it has just taken some time, it is a serious matter, I am the first person to acknowledge that, but action has been taken.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Attorney-General kindly provide the reason why it has taken so long?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

In the past, you mean?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Yes.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I shall give him the information.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Honourable and Learned Member also be prepared to give me the information as to which of the two landlords has been taken to court, whether it is the same landlord or whether they are different landlords?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Certainly, Mr Speaker. May I add that I can give this assurance immediately, that action has been taken against whoever it needs to be taken against. As to who that is I will find out and I will convey it to him.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

Statement by Hon Attorney-General on Question No. 97 of
1979

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, by your leave, if I could refer back to Question No. 97. The Hon G T Restano asked me to clarify who owned what properties in the Main Street/Cannon Lane corner. If the Hon Member will envisage the corner and the square upon the corner it falls into two parts. Immediately on the corner itself is No. 201 which is owned by one man. Starting in Cannon Lane and going in an L are premises 197/199 Main Street and also 5 Cannon Lane. The legal title to those premises is held in the name of that same man plus another man who are Trustees for an Estate. The action which has been taken to date has been taken in respect of both properties.

If I could come to the second part of the information I would like to give the House. Sir, I think I did not do the Department of Health and in particular the Chief Public Health Inspector full justice before when I said that I did not know what action had been taken over the last three years. In fact, I should have said that he has, I consider, acted diligently in watching what has happened, identifying what has been wrong, taking out summonses and taking some enforcement measures as well as taking steps to ensure that immediate safety precautions are put into effect and the matter now rests with my Chambers and, as I said before, we are ourselves taking action.

25 6 79

No. 98 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

In view of the fact that in his report to the Gibraltar Society for Handicapped Children, Dr Hugh Jolly, the Physician I/C Dept of Paediatrics at the Charing Cross Hospital in London spoke of the need for a Paediatrician as a permanent member of the staff here, would the Minister for Medical and Health Services reconsider his decision not to employ a full time Paediatrician?

Answer

The Hon the Minister for Medical and Health Services

As the Hon Member rightly states, Professor Jolly was not an adviser to the Government of Gibraltar. We sought the advice of the King's College Paediatric Research Unit which, as stated in my last reply on this subject was that, at this stage, visits by paediatric consultants at regular intervals would suffice.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 98 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister say that he will not reconsider his decision?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

That is exactly what I am saying.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has therefore taken the decision to accept the report of one eminent paediatrician as opposed to the report or the opinion of another eminent paediatrician. They are both equally eminent and I think the Minister should give a reason why the Government has taken, or he has taken, the decision to accept the recommendation of one of them rather than the other one.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

In the first place, where there are too many eminences one is as good as the other. Which one do you chose? That is the first answer. The second one is that I am not seeking the advice of one paediatrician consultant as against the other, I am putting the weight of one paediatrician consultant against the whole weight of the Paediatric Research Unit of King's College, London.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would suggest to the Minister that he is putting

all the weight on Professor Stroud of King's College and ignoring the advice of Professor Jolly who is the paediatrician at Charing Cross Hospital in London. Is there any reason why the Government should follow the advice of one and not the other?

MR SPEAKER:

We must draw the line somewhere. The Government carry the responsibility of their decisions and they have said why they have taken that decision.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask why having in Gibraltar two different advisers, why the advice of one has been taken and not the other?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Because I consider that the people who have sought advice have given very good reasons that in the catchment area of the children of Gibraltar it would be futile to have a full time paediatrician doing practically nothing. You need 100,000 children to have one paediatrician.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Can I ask the Minister responsible whether these demarkations are, in fact, the ones that he applies normally in other areas of the hospital and medical services.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Can he repeat that question, please.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am asking the Minister whether these general definitions or general criteria to which he has referred, the 100,000 catchment area, are the ones that are applied in other areas of medicine in Gibraltar or is it not a fact that we have tended, in fact, to draw up our own criteria in these matters?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Oh, no, specially where visiting Consultants are involved and in specialisation we very much follow the basic lines of the UK.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, who is the visiting paediatrician?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

The King's College Paediatric Research Unit jointly with Guys Hospital, they provide all the paediatricians that are coming to Gibraltar and they have suggested that by sending paediatricians of this speciality and lecturing to doctors we can have an excellent service in Gibraltar. I think you will notice

that I have ended my reply by saying "...at this stage visits by paediatric consultants at regular intervals would suffice".

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when the Minister says that the catchment area for children is too small in Gibraltar, does he agree with his own report for 1977, at least the report of his department, that in fact the catchment area is one quarter of the whole of the total population of Gibraltar. According to the Report of his Department there are 7,384 children in Gibraltar, and this is one quarter of the population. Based on that would he still say that the catchment area for children and that therefore a paediatrician who is a specialist in children

MR SPEAKER:

I must warn Members that they are making statements and not asking questions.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I do not consider whether 10,000 or 6,000 is a good or a bad or a small or a large catchment area. This is the advice given by experts of great eminence, as eminent as Professor Jolly.

HON G T RESTANO:

That is not the point at all, Mr Speaker. On the one hand we have

MR SPEAKER:

Order. We must have questions and nothing else.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, basically, I am asking that there should be a full time paediatrician in Gibraltar and that is supported by the paediatrician in charge of Charing Cross Hospital in London.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. You have been given an answer. The answer is no and the reason is because they have received different advice.

HON G T RESTANO:

That is precisely why, Mr Speaker, I am asking the Minister to reconsider. There are two eminent opinions and I am asking the Minister to reconsider.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I cannot reconsider something which has been given to me and which I think is the right advice and in the interest of the people of Gibraltar. They say that a full time paediatrician in Gibraltar would go stale and out of touch.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I think my Honourable Friend has a very valid point. Is there any circumstance involving any particular consultant where the catchment area in Gibraltar is large enough to warrant a full time consultant?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Gynaecology is one area where perhaps you wouldn't have a full time Gynaecologist at all but we have one.

HON M XIBERRAS:

On what does the Honourable Member base, in fact, that there should be a full time Gynaecologist, is it on numbers?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. I cannot allow that question.

HON M XIBERRAS:

May I put it this way. The Government as we all know is there to govern and to provide a paediatrician or not to provide a paediatrician as it thinks fit but we would like in this House to have a reasoned exposition of the Government's policy and what we are asking is, in fact, what is the argument which the Minister has put his trust in. Is it simply a question of catchment area and if it is a question of catchment area . . .

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer has been given very clearly. They have sought advice and on the advice they have received they have come to a conclusion. Whether they are right or wrong is another matter. Next question.

25 6 79

No. 99 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

Has Government now been able to recruit a full time Dental Surgeon?

Answer

The Hon the Attorney-General

The post has been advertised. The response is under consideration and it is hoped to make an early appointment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 99 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when was it advertised?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, but I do not know when. The post was advertised both locally and abroad, there has been a response and that is under consideration.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Surely the Honourable and Learned Member or the Minister for Medical and Health Services can tell this House, arising from the original question, when the post was advertised.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I answered that I think, very clearly. I said that I cannot say when it was advertised.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask when it is expected that the decision to appoint or not appoint somebody will be reached?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, it is now a matter which is being considered by the Public Service Commission and I do not doubt that they will deal with it expeditiously and when they have made a decision it will be announced.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

No. 100 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

Will Government state what is the current position with regard to the possible future structural merger of St Bernards and the Naval Hospital?

Answer

The Hon the Minister for Medical and Health Services

Following discussion with Surgeon Vice Admiral Sir John Rawlins, Medical Director General, Royal Navy, during his recent visit to Gibraltar, and in the context of the statement I made in the House on 7 February 1978, for the present we are proceeding with what I then described as a "merger of minds" on a voluntary basis. A structural merger is therefore not foreseeable in the next few years.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 100 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

May I know, Mr Speaker, why that is?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I would refer the Honourable Member to the statement I made in the House on the 7th of February, 1978.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, that doesn't answer my question. What are the reasons why no structural merger can be made?

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer is implied. Read the statement and you will find it there. I do not know whether it is or not, I am not saying it is.

HON G T RESTANO:

In that statement the Minister said that there should be a form of human merger before a structural merger but why after a year and a half nearly, is there no progress in this matter?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I would refer the Honourable Member to the statement I made on the 7th of February 1978.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am saying, Mr Speaker, that the statement referred to a human merger and a human understanding, I think were the words

the Honourable Minister used, why is it that a year and a half later no progress has been made.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I would once again refer the Honourable Member to my statement. In the statement there is even a date.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can I therefore get confirmation that the Minister is unwilling to let this side of the House have the information that is required.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir, all the information I have, I have given to the House.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is the position then that there has been no progress since the Minister made the statement?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I refer the Honourable Member to the statement I made on the 7th February 1978.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

ORAL

No. 101 of 1979

The Hon G T Restano

When does the Minister for Medical and Health Services expect that the Lewis Stagnetto Ward will be used for the purpose for which it was built; namely, as a Geriatric Ward?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Medical and Health Services

It was intended that, of the first two wards which were closed owing to shortage of staff, the Stagnetto Ward should have been the first to be opened in late May or early June. However, owing to other circumstances, it was decided to open the Childrens Ward first.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 101 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, could we know what these other circumstances were?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, you are entitled to know and I will be quite honest about it. In the first place there was the annual desinfestation of the wards and we thought it would be better to use this particular ward for decanting and also because we still haven't got enough staff and the staff needed to open the Stagnetto Ward would be more than the staff we had available. Another reason why it could not have been opened is because the drug trolley which was bought especially for that particular ward was taken somewhere else because they were short and it is only now that I have been told that we need a trolley for food and a trolley for drugs and these have been ordered. We cannot open that ward unless we can obtain 14 more staff. We are doing our best.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, if 14 more staff are required before this ward can be put to the use that it should have been put to and in fact to the use that the Government and the Minister accepted from the Chamber of Commerce a certain amount of money for the geriatric beds which were to commemorate the late Lewis Stagnetto, how is it that the Government didn't make any plans beforehand? Is this the only ward that is affected by the lack of staff?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:.

The Honourable Member does not seem to have a very good memory. We had staff inspection last year and they recommended that before that ward could be opened we needed X number of staff more and we have been trying to recruit and we advertise every six or seven weeks, but we just cannot recruit the required number.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, this ward is for the elderly people and surely the Government should have known when the Chamber of Commerce asked the Minister what they would like because the Chamber of Commerce had a certain amount of money available, surely the Government should have been open in the same way as the Minister is being open at the moment. Surely he should have been open and said: "I would like geriatric beds but I cannot give you any guarantee as to when they will be used."

MR SPEAKER:

What are you asking?

HON G T RESTANO:

Is this the only ward which is affected by the lack of staff?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Unless we close one of the other wards and open the Stagnetto Ward and then you will be complaining as to when am I going to open the Victoria Ward or Napier Ward. It is just a question of manpower.

HON G T RESTANO:

My question, Mr Speaker, is whether this is the only ward that is affected?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

The only one at the moment.

HON G T RESTANO:

The only people who are affected are the elderly citizens. Is that correct?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

The only people who are affected are really the nursing staff who are coping with the geriatrics in the general wards.

HON G T RESTANO:

The patients, surely, are the ones who are being affected most?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, the nurses.

HON M XIBERRAS:

How long has this thing been going on for?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

If we take into account that when we decided to convert that into a geriatric ward we found that the partitions were made of cardboard and therefore, we had to re-wire, we had to instal different equipment, we had to do away with many of the partitions that were no good because it was meant for a different purpose, I am not suggesting they were not properly built, that took about a year and it has been going on now, I believe, for two and a half years.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could the Minister confirm that there was no agreement by the Government when it received this equipment from the donors to open up the ward at least as early as possible. Was there such agreement?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, but before staff inspection, both the Unions and management were prepared to open that ward with the staff we had.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Minister considering returning the money to its original donors because it cannot fulfil the purpose of the exercise?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I think the Chamber of Commerce are not as mean as all that.

MR SPEAKER.

Next question.

The Hon G T Restano

What is the latest position with regard to the streamlining of the system at the Health Centre?

AnswerThe Hon the Minister for Medical and Health Services

Following our request to the ODA last December for an experienced man to be sent to Gibraltar with the object of looking at problems of infrastructure at the Health Centre, we were informed last March that they had nobody readily available nor would they have anyone for many months to come. In the course of a telephone conversation with the relevant officer it was suggested that we should perhaps examine the matter again locally. I proceeded to prepare a paper containing suggestions for discussion with doctors of the GPMS last April but, because of the budget preparations and subsequent debate in the House, as well as leave problems in the Medical Department, it was not possible to initiate further discussions until recently and it is too early as yet to foresee the outcome.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 102 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Therefore, Mr Speaker, the great hopes that the Minister had of getting ODM help was not forthcoming, is that correct?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

In fairness to them, no, they said that they didn't have anybody in the foreseeable future and that it would take months before they could recruit one.

HON G T RESTANO:

In fact the answer ^{was} that the Government should set its own house in order.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

After prompting from me we agreed to have another local try.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would refer to question No. 267 which I raised last December when the Minister said that he was going to ask ODM for assistance in streamlining the Health Centre, and I asked him whether the Government was incapable of putting its own house in order and in fact his answer was yes, sir, that it was incapable and I am glad to see, Mr Speaker, that the ODM think the same way.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, did the Government have any offer from any local or locally recruited doctor to carry out certain changes which would have benefitted the Health Centre?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, Sir, except that that doctor formed part of the team of doctors who on a unanimous consensus put proposals to the Government that the Government could not accept and then five or six weeks before he was going to leave he put some of the proposals that I was proposing to them and they were rejecting and it came at a time when he was just leaving and conditional to his being appointed to a certain post which we were not prepared to do.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is the Honourable Member aware that on the 26th February, 1979, not six or seven weeks before the doctor left, he stated quite clearly what changes he would like to have seen and he made a request to be named adviser in general practice without any increase in his salary.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir, if you read the letter carefully you will see that he was asking

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going into details as to what someone was prepared to do.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, the reason why I ask is that Government, in fact, has somebody who has had previous experience of doing this elsewhere, available locally and should not the Minister in retrospect consider that he might have given this man an opportunity of carrying out these changes in view of the fact that ODA was not willing to come forward with expertise.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Sir, the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition has got the habit of making erroneous statements. This gentleman was leaving Gibraltar in May, not in June, and we offered him to stay after his resignation and also to remain till June if he wished but it is very odd that a man who together with the other doctors was making proposals which were contrary to what the Government was prepared to accept, should come five or six weeks before the date of termination of his appointment with proposals that he was not putting forward during the months of negotiations which were most frustrating and asking for a job which he stated in the letter that of course the money could

be saved by the savings that he could make in the Health Centre. That takes a lot of believing.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, do I take it now that the Minister is waiting for a reply from ODA before putting into effect the changes which might include extravagant prescribing and so forth?

MR SPEAKER:

What is the question?

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Minister going to wait until ODA replies?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Negotiations have been initiated and have been going on for quite a number of months.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Minister bear in mind his past failures in this direction, the loss of one doctor, and do something about getting some order into the Health Centre?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It is not true that I have lost a doctor and the Health Centre has been described by the Medical review of general practitioners as "a dream of a Medical Utopia come true". A system which they say is hardly found anywhere else in Europe.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not agree with the doctor involved that there is a need for more personal care or more personal attention of individual patients?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I agreed so much with ^{that} that I have been negotiating with them since July or August of last year and in the end it all amounts to pounds, shillings and pence.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would like to know whether the Minister is considering appointing a permanent doctor as an administrator at the Health Centre.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25 6 79

ORAL

No. 103 of 1979

The Hon G T Restano

Will Government state the length of time that a patient waited during the long weekend of 5/7th May between Hospital admission for a fractured hip and the operation, and will Government give the average time waited for in equivalent cases during any week-day over the last two years?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Medical and Health Services

The length of time the patient waited for a hip operation during the long weekend of 5/7th May 1979 was 90 hours. It is not fair to compare holiday periods with normal working days nor is it possible, without very exhaustive research, if at all, to say how long a hip patient waits before being operated upon during a normal working day. As a general rule, urgent surgical operations are carried out immediately. When holidays occur, non-urgent operations are carried out after the holiday. During normal working days, the period of waiting depends on many factors, ie whether the case is an emergency, the extent of the workload and whether the orthopaedic surgeon is operating on that particular day.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 103 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, am I to take it that somebody that has the misfortune to break a hip during a week day is rather more fortunate in having a quicker operation than somebody who has the misfortune of breaking a hip during a week-end?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It happens in every hospital. The other day there was another hip case whilst we were investigating this case and it took two days before they decided to operate on the lady. They thought it was better to wait two days as there was no particular hurry but I accept that if this lady had gone into hospital during a week day instead of 90 hours it might have taken 72.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I think the question is still unanswered. I have asked what is the average time waited for in equivalent cases during any weekday over the last two years. I don't think I have had a reply to that.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I cannot give an answer to that. It is impossible unless you

give me names of patients with hip fractures and then I can go to the files. In the operating list in the theatre we do not have the name of the patient. I have been trying to tell you the general picture that emerges of the daily running of the operating theatre. It takes one or two days for anybody brought in with a non-urgent operation and if it is on a Monday and it is a bone operation, the surgeon on duty will probably leave it for the orthopaedic surgeon to operate on the Wednesday.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, perhaps the Minister would like to say why it was that in fact this particular patient on this long weekend waited for more hours than is normally the case.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Because the surgeon on duty decided that it was in the interest of the patient who was an elderly person, to wait a little longer to settle down before undertaking any pinning or any operation required to be done.

HON G T RESTANO:

This is, I take it, unusual since the normal time waited is 72 hours and in this case it was 90 hours.

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am not going to allow questions as to whether the Doctor was right or wrong in delaying the operation.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask then, Mr Speaker, whether the doctor who took this decision was a doctor employed by the Government?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It was a doctor that the Government accepts as part of the statement I made on the 7th February, 1978.

HON G T RESTANO:

Was it a Naval Surgeon or was it a local doctor?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It was a Naval Doctor in accordance with the statement I made on the 7th February 1978.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

No. 104 of 1979

The Hon G T Restano

Can Government state how often during the past twelve months both Surgeons at St Bernard's Hospital have been away from Gibraltar at the same time and for what precise periods of time and who authorised such absences?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Medical and Health Services

I must state first of all that, following an agreement reached with the Royal Naval Hospital in February 1978, there is always a surgeon on duty at St Bernard's Hospital.

No records are kept of surgeons' absences from Gibraltar when they are off duty and it is therefore not possible to give a precise answer to the question. Each surgeon's leave entitlement is 6 weeks per annum; half this period is covered by the other surgeon at St Bernard's Hospital and the other half by the surgeon from the Royal Naval Hospital. Each of the two St Bernard's surgeons can therefore only be away, at the same time as their colleague is on leave, on three weekends each year, that is to say, a total of 6 occasions for both surgeons. In practice, it happens on about 3 or 4 occasions each year, and, of course, as I have said, it can only happen when the surgeon who is not on leave is off duty and the surgeon from the Royal Naval Hospital is providing coverage. I am informed whenever such an occasion arises.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my own and the Government's appreciation of the dedicated service rendered by the surgeons at all times as well as of the cooperation and helpfulness of the Royal Naval Hospital.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 104 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

We all share that, Mr Speaker, but may I ask who authorised the absence of both locally paid surgeons from Gibraltar at the same time?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

One was on leave and I presume it went to the Deputy Governor or the Establishment Officer or whoever it may be. I don't grant leave. When they are off duty they inform me.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I am sorry but I cannot just accept that presumption

on the part of the Hon Member. General Order Section 38 says quite specifically that no civil servant can be away from the Colony overnight without permission, so therefore, I would like to know who gave permission for both of them to be away at the same time.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

If you read the full paragraph I think that paragraph says that they must inform the head of their department, but it does not say who the head of department should in turn inform.

HON G T RESTANO:

So, therefore, who in fact gave the authority, Mr Speaker?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

As far as I am concerned I was informed and I make it a point always of telling all Consultants, that they should inform me when they are going away from Gibraltar for off-duty period because I am conscious that for leave periods it is a matter for the Establishment.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does not the Minister consider that in the case of general surgeons if one is away on annual leave the other one should at least over the weekend when the other one is away on leave, be on-call in Gibraltar and if not does he make himself responsible for the leave being authorised to the other surgeon?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I don't even make myself responsible for the death of Manolete. All I want to say is that we must thank the Naval Hospital for their assistance for the very simple reason that it would have been a real tragedy if we had carried on with having a doctor when the surgeon is on leave for six weekends off. I think this is good for the doctor and good for the patient.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am not talking about a doctor, Mr Speaker, being off on the weekend, I am saying away from Gibraltar. This happens six weeks in the year and during those six weeks I would have imagined that whilst the other doctor is away from Gibraltar there is a necessity to have a standby. Could I ask the Minister whether he will accept that geriatric surgery is not the normal practice of Naval surgeons?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Who do you think carry out hip operations in the Naval Hospital? The Naval Surgeons, of course.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister a question and that is, is it his view in view of what he has said up to now, that in the case of Head of Department the Head of Department need not ask, like other mortal civil servants, for permission to leave Gibraltar. Is that the view and if not whom should he ask?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I am not responsible for the implementation of any civil service or Colonial Regulations. I am not responsible for that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the Government again, Mr Speaker, who in fact authorises this or is there no purpose in that general order, or does it not apply to the Head of Department who happens to be a surgeon?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, so far as the establishment side is concerned of course all civil servants, including the Head of a department, must clear with establishment before they leave Gibraltar.

HON A J CANEPA:

More so in the case of Heads of Departments because arrangements have to be made for somebody to act as Head of Department.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the government make it a point of checking as to whether there was in fact permission sought on this occasion, bearing in mind that apparently the hospital is under some stress because of shortage of surgeons and this person happens to be a head of department and a practising surgeon. Would they make enquiries about this?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Unless there is any evidence that the normal rules were not complied with, there is nothing to enquire.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, could I then ask whether anybody in the government side knows whether in fact permission was sought or not and if no one knows would the Chief Minister not think it reasonable that an enquiry should be made about this. Could I have a reply to my question please?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I am not going to give any reply, I have taken note of the remark.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Well, Mr Speaker, it is a civil service matter and I can understand that the Chief Minister is not in a position even to make an enquiry but the government of Gibraltar should enquire into this.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25.6.79

No. 105 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Does Government have any intention of constructing or assisting in the construction of a public swimming pool?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

As a result of Question 211 of 1978, I have already stated in this House that this Government and myself in particular very much favour the construction of a public swimming pool but that there are priorities within Government and a swimming pool would therefore have to wait its turn. In so far as assisting in the construction of a swimming pool, Government has to consider the total cost involved and possible sites. It would not be possible to assist any project which would not meet the needs of the community as a whole.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 105 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Minister saying that he no longer is favourably disposed or even disposed to look at the proposals made by GASA in respect of limited facilities with some general use by the public of a smaller than olympic size swimming pool?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in their press release of the 21st May, 1979, GASA states that a six lane 25 metre pre-fabricated pool complete with a water purification and heating plant and guaranteed for 25 years, could be supplied by a reputable firm from the United Kingdom for less than £11,000. They do not however, give details of the cost of installation, site preparation, covering, provision of services and changing and shower facilities, etc, etc. Mr Speaker, I could for the information of the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition, say that looking at this particular proposal of GASA way back during the visit of Mrs Judith Hart, the total cost of this particular type of pool, but instead of 25 metres 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rd metres which would be more consistent with competitive swimming, the total cost of that, Sir, was in the region of £50,000 and not £11,000. This was put to my colleagues and, of course, even to ODA and it was considered, that a pre-fabricated pool with a guarantee of 25 years duration was not worth going into for that particular period.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is the position then that the Minister having set aside the possibility of a smaller swimming pool when Members on this side of the House were urging him to accept to help in this, having put before the people of Gibraltar the possibility of £1m on this big swimming pool now says that

nothing is possible in the foreseeable future as regards a swimming pool. Is that the position of the Minister, the Minister who had such an interest in swimming?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I have a great interest in swimming and I do not recall ever having said that we were going to have a swimming pool in Gibraltar.

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked whether you have discarded the idea of having a swimming pool.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir, we are not discarding any possibility of a swimming pool. As I said in my general reply it has to take its turn in Government priorities.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, will the swimming pool see the light of day at the same time as the Watch Committee in the Police?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

No. 106 of 1979The Hon G T Restano

Will Government consider amplifying and extending parking and other facilities at Eastern Beach?

ANSWERThe Hon the Attorney-General

A properly marked parking area has been provided on the old Slaughter House site next to the old stables. Only a part of this area was available for use last year.

A sign is very shortly to be erected at the site of the Old Refuse Destructor indicating that this is an official parking area and consequently the parking of trailers and lorries will be prohibited. Regulations are also shortly to be made extending the prohibition to containers which, not being on wheels, are at present not covered by the existing legislation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 106 of 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, therefore the area behind the present car park at the south end of Eastern Beach where there are oil drums, that is to be cleared?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

That area, as I understand it, Mr Speaker, is the old refuse destructor area which does, I believe, contain drums. When the legislation is implemented so that parking control can extend to things other than vehicles, then the containers will be cleared.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, what about the area south of the north face distiller which is quite a large site where containers are being parked at the moment? Will that be cleared too and will both those sites be cleared for the present summer season?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, may I ask the Honourable Member to clarify exactly where he means. There is the site on the corner which is the Old Slaughter house, there is a site going around further towards Catalan Bay on the seaward site near the old refuse destructor, I believe. Which is the site the Hon Member is referring to?

HON G T RESTANO:

I was referring to the site towards Catalan Bay on the other side of the North Face distiller where a lot of containers are being parked at the moment and which I feel are taking up place for possible parking spaces for bathers who are using Eastern Beach.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I have been in Gibraltar less time than my Hon Friend has, but I understand that that is in fact the old Refuse Destructor and as I have said, that is being cleared.

HON G T RESTANO:

The other site, Mr Speaker, for parking which I am concerned about is the site which is behind the Mediterranean Hotel which really I feel should be cleared up because it is so overgrown with weeds and old rubbish that a lot of parking area is being reduced. I wonder whether the Government will consider cleaning up that whole area to ensure that more cars could fit there.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am not sure whether that was a question or a statement. Could you clarify it?

HON G T RESTANO:

I am asking whether the Government would consider clearing up that area which I consider to be overgrown with weeds. The area I am referring to is adjacent to the Mediterranean Hotel and at the same time adjacent to one of the entrances to the North Front area. There is a car park west of Eastern Beach.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, that is not a car park, Sir, it is MOD land made available to the users of eastern beach during a particular month of the year at the car owner's risk.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could I ask why it is that it is completely fenced off? Is it not the responsibility of Government to have that area in a proper condition?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. We do not appear to be sure of the area we are talking about. Let us establish whether there is a government property which can be used for parking, then take it from there.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, if it has been given to the government for the

people of Eastern Beach is it not the responsibility of the Government?

THE HON H J ZAMMITT:

It has not been given, it has been made available for the benefit of Eastern Beach users during the summer months. The area as far as we know is clean. The weeds will not be there for very long once the cars go over them.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Government maximise the use of that particular area behind the Mediterranean Hotel? Will they weed the place or fix it so that they can get more cars in?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It is used to the maximum but we cannot mark out the surface at all.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the Attorney-General what legislation he was talking about?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the legislation I was referring to was the 1973 Order which regulates parking.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I right in saying that the police try to dissuade the people who are mostly occupying that site now, especially with containers, but that they were unable to do so because the legislation was not there?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the legislation at the moment does not apply to non-vehicles.

HON M XIBERRAS:

My question, Mr Speaker, is, did the police try non-legislative means, in other words, persuasion of the people who apparently have mostly stacked their containers there?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I do not know.

MR SPEAKER:

And it is not relevant to this question, in any event.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, may I point out the relevance and that is that this particular parking area is being occupied and the Government is unable to do anything at all about it. All I was asking was whether anything has been done by the Government and I gather now, and I am grateful to the Attorney-General for this, that persuasion was tried, failed and legislation is being considered.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, with respect, I did not say that, what I said was that legislation is being considered. I do not know whether the police have tried persuasion but I am sure that the Police would not exceed their powers.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask whether legislation is being considered as a result of this particular case?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I would like to answer that question because I take full responsibility for that part of it because I realised when we were reaching the summer season that those containers were a great nuisance. On the other hand, we do not see any reason why in the winter when there is no demand, they could not be parked there but it will not be by legislation to be brought to this House, it is done by regulations. It was decided by Council of Ministers at least three weeks ago that we should have legislation for this purpose.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, part of my original question has not been answered and that is "other facilities". I asked about parking and other facilities and we have only been talking about parking facilities. Does the Government consider that the changing rooms at Eastern Beach are adequate for the number of people who use Eastern Beach on weekends?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think I would require notice of that question because I have taken this to mean parking facilities generally.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think questions must be a little more precise. You cannot expect to find out every facility that can be given.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think that the basic facilities that users of Eastern Beach require are parking and changing and toilet facilities.

MR SPEAKER:

However reasonable the question is, the Government say that they need notice.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I then ask whether the Government will give thought to the changing room facilities and have an answer within the next few weeks?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If the Hon Member will draw attention of the Government to any particular service that is not being provided we will look at it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25.6.79

No. 107 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Is there already an allocation list for the new Government dwellings at Rosia Dale; will Government undertake not to allocate these dwellings until the House has had an opportunity to debate, in full knowledge of the facts, the principles on which the allocation is to be made? Has the Housing Allocation Committee been, or will it be consulted on this matter?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

In answer to a Question by the Honourable and Gallant Major Peliza (No 42/79) I stated that Government intends to offer Rosia Dale flats for sale to tenants who are able to give up vacant post-war accommodation.

The sale of these flats to tenants who have suitable pre-war accommodation or to tenants in private accommodation able to return to Government adequate housing which Landlords agree to make available for Government tenants is under consideration, as indeed are the conditions of sale etc.

If the intended sale should not materialise, and subject to any urgent unexpected requirement, the allocation would as usual be carried out by the Housing Allocation Committee.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 107 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, the Minister is now using the Housing Allocation Committee a bit more frequently and I am grateful for the undertaking he has given this House to this effect.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

If the Hon Member could mention when I have not used the Housing Allocation Committee for post-war housing, I will accept it.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I should know better than to say that the statement of the Minister constitutes an undertaking in the House. Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the fact that the Minister has said in the House that the Housing Allocation Committee will carry out the allocation. Did I understand him correctly that the whole method of allocation is under consideration?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Not the method of allocations, Mr Speaker.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Who would be eligible?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Government hopes to be able to sell the flats to those tenants who can return housing which Government can put to better use.

HON M XIBERRAS:

We have, Mr Speaker, an indication from the Minister as to how he proposes to do it. Am I right in saying from his answer that the matter of who should participate in this allocation is still under consideration by himself and his colleagues, this is what he has said, it is currently under consideration.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

What is currently under consideration is the sale of the flats to tenants who have suitable pre-war accommodation or to tenants in private accommodation able to return to Government adequate housing which landlords agree to make available for Government tenants.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Only a part of the scheme is under consideration. Would the Minister not agree that the House is still not in full knowledge of the facts of this allocation, though we see a welcome glimmer about the Housing Allocation Committee, and would he comply with my request to bring the matter to the House when his colleagues and himself have completed their consideration of it?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I sincerely hope that it happens long before we meet again in this House.

HON M XIBERRAS:

It need not come to this House, Mr Speaker, could he make it available to Hon Members on this side of the House, since we have expressed an interest in it?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I think that today they have started calling people in who could be interested in the Rosia Dale development. I am convinced that the Hon Leader of the Opposition will get the information if not through me, he will get it through other methods.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, this does not mean that I will read about it in the press?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Or some other people may tell him, Mr Speaker. He seems to have more information about housing than I have.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Do I take it then that the Minister cannot give me the information himself?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Of course I will.

No. 108 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government state how many (a) pre-war Government flats (b) post-war Government flats are at present vacant excluding those in the Varyl Begg Estate?

ANSWERThe Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

I would presume, Sir, that what the Hon Member is seeking is the number of flats which are vacant and under rehabilitation to be allocated when ready. If this is the case the answer to the question is:-

(a) four(4)

(b) eight (8)

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 108 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am talking about vacant flats, whether under rehabilitation or not.

MR SPEAKER:

You have been told there are four vacant pre-war Government flats.

HON M XIBERRAS:

The Minister said that he assumed that I was talking about those under rehabilitation. I am talking of those that are vacant for any reason.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

If that is the question the Hon Leader has asked then it is these four and these eight plus all those that have been decanted in connection with the Modernisation Programme.

HON M XIBERRAS:

The Minister says there are four and eight but could he give me an idea of what, in fact, is the total number for one reason or another in connection with the Modernisation Programme?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it would have to be a very rough idea and I do not want to be pinned down to this number. We have certainly decanted over 100 people in connection with the Modernisation Programme.

HON M XIBERRAS:

There is, as the House will recognise, a very wide discrepancy between one figure and the other. Could I ask the Minister whether it is not a fact that some of these flats have remained vacant for a very considerable period of time, let us call six to seven months a considerable period of time?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, in six to seven months there have been houses in connection with the Modernisation Programme that have been decanted. What I would like to say in case the Hon Leader of the Opposition has not realised it, is that these houses that have been decanted in connection with the Modernisation Programme have to be decanted with plenty of time in order to survey them properly.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that some houses are now in a fit state to be occupied, but yet they are lying vacant? Could the Minister give an indication of what proportion of that 100 he told me about these might form?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think the Hon the Leader of the Opposition has been led up the garden path on this one. I do not have any houses which can be used today, as far as I know, that can be occupied unless they are in connection with the Modernisation Programme.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could the Hon Member check because I could give him at least one address where the house has been vacant for well over seven months. Could the Hon Member, in view of the great shortage of houses that there is, please check and perhaps he could let Hon Members and the public know how many are in fact already fit to be allocated because I think he will find that there are more than what he suggests.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am caught, quite honestly, by surprise. I am not aware.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

25.6.79

No. 109 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government state how many families have been accommodated since February 1979 in Town Range Transit Centres and according to what criteria these dwellings have been allocated; and will Government publish the allocation list?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

Fourteen families have been accommodated at the Town Range Transit Centres. These were all social cases.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 109 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I assume it was the Minister who allocated these by ministerial allocation, on the recommendation of the Social Advisory Committee. In allocating these what criteria was used, was it a question of the time spent on the list as applicants, or was it a random choice, or was it a decision of the Minister at the particular time?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It was not a random pick and it was not my decision, it was on the advice of the Housing Advisory Committee, recommended by the Family Care Unit and, of course, the criteria used was the order of time they had been on our books.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Perhaps I could bring to the notice of the Minister people who have not been a very long time as socially categorised and have obtained accommodation there.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

In preference to anybody else, Sir?

HON M XIBERRAS:

In preference to others who had been recommended.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to substantiate that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I shall make the information available to him. Could I ask if any of these fourteen cases have not been socially categorised by the Committee?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir, all fourteen have been recommended by the Advisory Committee.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Government publish the Housing Allocation List?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Why not?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Because I do not think the Leader of the Opposition would like, if he was a social case, to have the information published that he was given a house at the Transit Centre because he could not get on with his mother, his father in-law, his sister or anybody else and I think people are entitled to privacy in this particular sphere.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could the Hon Member then publish the allocation list in other respects?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Sir, but that is another question.

25.6.79

No. 110 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

Will Government now make public the lists of allocations in respect of the last phase of Varyl Begg Estate to be allocated?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

After the percentages for the Medical Category List, flats for Government officers under the Quarters Agreement, Decanting of Transit Centres, and Decanting of Pensioners, had been deducted, the Housing Allocation Committee recommended, and Government accepted, the allocations in respect of the last phase of the Varyl Begg Estate as set out in the list I am circulating to Hon Members.

25.6.79

No. 111 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government make a statement on the decanting of tenants in preparation for the Lime Kiln Steps Development (Stage 2)?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

Arrangements for the decanting of tenants in preparation for the next stage of the Lime Kiln Steps Development have now been completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 111 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is there not one family who is outstanding?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, there is one family who were not in Gibraltar but to whom we have made an approach through a third party and they will be moving to another premises in the vicinity.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I think it is a Mr Bossano. There was one family, will the Minister confirm, which was outstanding when the question was put about a week ago. Is the Minister not aware of this?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, I am not aware of that one, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would he make an inquiry about this, Mr Speaker, because there is one remaining family according to my information.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Is the Hon Member referring to this particular decanting of phase 2, or the old phase 1 where we had a problem with a family of a name similar to the one he has mentioned, Sir?

HON M XIBERRAS:

I understood it was in connection with phase 2. I did not know that there was anybody outstanding from phase 1.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think the Leader of the Opposition is mistaken. There was a name similar to the one he mentioned but that was in relation to phase 1 and this person has been housed elsewhere.

25.6.79

No. 112 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

What shopping and transport facilities will be available to those families who are to be accommodated at the North Gorge Transit Centre? Will Government state for how long it is envisaged that these families will have to remain there "In Transit"?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

Families who are accommodated at the North Gorge Transit Centre will be expected to make their own transport and shopping arrangements, in the same way as all other families in Gibraltar do.

The length of stay will be determined by the pointage value of their housing applications when flats are available for allocation, unless they are housed there temporarily in connection with the Modernisation Programme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 112 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, am I right in saying that the Government has not looked at these matters, for instance, has it not looked at the question of school transport?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it depends entirely on the school children concerned because if they are of a particular age, I do not think St Joseph's School is all that far away. Shops at Naval Hospital Road are not very far away and as regards transport there are buses going up and down that particular road as there are to any other place in Gibraltar.

HON M XIBERRAS:

But my question was, has the Government considered these matters? It seems to me, am I right in saying, from the Minister's reply, that no consideration has been given to the question of school transport. It seems to me that it is quite a long way for people living at North Gorge.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I do not think it is right to say that we have not considered. The distance has been a consideration that we have taken into account in relation to North Gorge decanting centre. It has not yet been decided if we are going to have buses in that particular area or elsewhere.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Bearing in mind that that is mostly an area occupied by the military, is the Minister not somewhat concerned that these families should be somewhat isolated and should he not look very carefully into these matters? For instance, shopping facilities are quite a way away. Has the Minister looked into these matters?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it would be wrong for me to say that I have looked in detail into the question of the frequency of buses, there is a bus stop immediately outside North Gorge. It would not be right to say that we have looked into this in absolute detail.

25.6.79

No. 113 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government confirm that between 1973 and 1978 there have been 1654 new Housing applications and 358 withdrawals and do these figures reflect the nature of the Housing crisis in Government's view?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

Government can confirm that there have been 1654 new housing applications between 1973 and 1978. Withdrawals for the same period are 391.

There has not been a review of applications since 1970 but it is the intention to carry out one later this year, and this could prune the waiting list somewhat.

Some of the applications are only for transfers/exchange and there is more than one application in some households, so it would not be true to say that as many flats are needed to solve the housing problem if housing problems are ever completely solved as there are applications on the Waiting List.

There are also cases of persons who are "overhoused" and it is Government's intention to make better use of the present housing stock by attempting to move these persons to smaller adequate accommodation.

That there is a housing shortage is only too apparent and Government, conscious of this fact, have committed themselves to building more flats in connection with the present Development Programme and will be looking for other areas to build more in the future.

But it is also important to renovate the existing stock, particularly the pre-war sector, and this is the reason why Government embarked on a Modernisation Programme, the benefits of which will begin to show in the not too distant future.

Government's policy is not only to provide flats but to provide adequate flats, with all modern basic conveniences.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 113 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is the Government not conscious that the situation has in fact deteriorated since 1972, that we are getting extra applications and we are getting fewer allocations, is this not a fact?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir. The Hon Leader of the Opposition is well aware of that. The fact that we have more applications is because there is an improved standard. We no longer have the situation where we have 5/6 people living in one room.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am asking about the Government's Abstract of Statistics figures, 1654. These figures do show a trend. Could the Minister tell us whether this trend is moving towards an improvement or to a further deterioration which has been experienced since 1972?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the 1654 new housing applications contained in the reply which I agree because of its length can become somewhat confusing, is not that we require 1654 new houses and I have said in as many words that these are applications not for a new house but merely for an exchange.

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked whether you feel that there is an improvement in the situation or a deterioration.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Certainly an improvement in the housing situation, it just requires a good reshuffle.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask whether the Minister draws that conclusion from the 358 withdrawals as compared to 1654? How can the Hon Member say that there has been an improvement in the housing situation if the pointage required for a house has risen astronomically?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am not saying that there has been an improvement in the housing situation, I am saying that we are heading for an improvement in the housing situation.

HON M XIBERRAS:

This is not what the Minister said, he said the housing situation was improving. How soon are we going to see that improvement reflected in real facts?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think we can begin to see an improvement when the Modernisation Programme begins to bear fruit.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to debate now whether there is or there is not an improvement. Next question.

25.6.79

No. 114 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

How many flats has Government allocated since October, 1978?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport

Allocations made since October 1978 to date number 178.
These can be broken up as follows:-

112 at Varyl Begg, 41 in respect of the Modernisation Programme, 25 Social Cases including 14 at Town Range Centre.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 114 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

How many of these have been done by the Housing Allocation Committee?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

All of them excepting the 25 social cases which have been dealt with by the Minister for Housing.

25.6.79

No. 115 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon Major R J Peliza

Will Government consider revising the old age pension to maintain at least the same relativity with those in the United Kingdom which have risen £3.80 to £23.30 for single person and £6.10 to £37.30 for a married couple?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Labour and Social Security

As the Hon Member is aware, it is a statutory requirement in Gibraltar since 1977 that the Government should review the level of old age pension yearly, so that the standard pension for a couple will be not less than 50% of average weekly earnings of a male industrial employee, as measured by the last available employment survey, and not less than 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % for a single person.

It is estimated that the average weekly earnings of a male industrial employee will have risen to about £70 per week by October 1979. Accordingly, Government has already approved proposals to increase old age pension from the present £30 pw to £35 for a couple, and from the present £19.50 pw to £22.80 for single person. I should remind the Hon Member that since this pension is not taxable in Gibraltar, whereas it is in the UK, the real value of the Gibraltar Pension will be higher than those mentioned in the question as applying in the UK.

I shall be introducing the necessary motion after the summer recess to give effect to those proposals, which will be implemented in January 1980.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 115 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I welcome the answer of the Hon Minister.

25.6.79

No. 116 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Is it intended to build flats for the use of the parents of Handicapped Children and if so, where are these flats to be located?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Labour and Social Security

There are no plans, at the moment, to build such flats as are mentioned in the question.

Government has, however, accepted the commitment to provide a residential home for Handicapped Persons as an aim of policy for implementation in the Development Programme of 1981/84. In this respect a feasibility study of a possible site is being carried out. In this connection the Society for Handicapped Children, with the help of Government and voluntary organisations, is carrying out some work to a cottage at Montagu Bastion with a view to implementing a pilot scheme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 116 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am grateful for the reply, Mr Speaker. Can the Hon Minister note that there is quite considerable disagreement among the parents of handicapped children themselves about the location of such a Home, whether it should be next to the school or separated from the school, and would the Minister consult the Society carefully about this?

HON A J CANEPA:

I can go further and say that both I myself and the Minister for Education, who is also involved in the matter, have already consulted the Society and that certainly no decision will be taken without their views having been fully considered.

25.6.79

No. 117 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government amend existing legislation so as to entitle Handicapped Children as such to benefits irrespective of the number of children in the family?

ANSWER

The Hon the Minister for Labour and Social Security

There is at present no legislation governing the payment of benefits to handicapped children.

Under the Income Tax Ordinance, the parents of handicapped persons are entitled to substantial tax relief, irrespective of the number of children in the family.

Under the non-statutory supplementary benefits scheme severely handicapped persons as such are already granted benefits irrespective of the number of children in the family and of means.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 117 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am talking about the old family allowances. We would like to see a reconsideration of the family allowance so that if there is a handicapped child in a family that family would get a benefit for that particular child irrespective of whether there are two or three children in the family, and if there is more than one child and one of them is handicapped then two children would receive family allowance.

HON A J CANEPA:

I understood the question fully. We are in fact doing this under the supplementary benefits scheme. Where there is only one child in the family and that child is handicapped we pay an addition under the supplementary scheme as if that child were receiving family allowance. Where there are more children in the family and one of these is handicapped the family are entitled to the £2 per week which is being paid at the moment. As a result of that, next week, from the beginning of July, those who are in receipt of supplementary benefits will be getting an additional £2 per week because family allowances are going up, and in advance of the review of supplementary benefits which we will implement next January.

HON M XIBERRAS:

It gives the child or family less rights. Would the Minister not agree that even if as of right and by legislation my proposal were to be adopted, the cost to Government would

still be very little if what the Minister states is to be applied. Would he not consider in fact that this would be a much more beneficial way of treating the handicapped child?

HON A J CANEPA:

I see the point that the Hon Member has in mind. The cost involved is very small because we are only dealing with very few people. However I think we have to be careful that we do not use a hammer to crack a nut. It is a matter of judgement whether the State, the Community, recognises by some other means the right that these persons undoubtedly have and this is being done at the moment, though not by legislation. One does not like to legislate just for the sake of legislating and this is what we are really talking about. There is a further point. Family allowances are closely linked with the fiscal system. Also, families with handicapped dependants are being treated well for they are receiving very considerable tax relief whereas that is not the case in respect of other children. I get the point, I sympathise with the issue, but it is unnecessary to have to legislate for the sake of legislating.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, may I say from the outset that we are most grateful for the stenographers but the proceedings of this morning when Hon Members spoke at the speed at which I am speaking now somewhat detracted from the dignity of Hon Members of the House and in my view the length to which it was carried this morning was rather a burden to the two individuals involved, an unfair burden. I am worried, Mr Speaker, because some members speak more slowly than others. However, I shall ask my question and that is does it matter whether it is made one way or another? The answer I would give is it matters very much and would the Hon Member not agree that legislation has been changed on many occasions for the handicapped child?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Mr Speaker, we have brought a great deal of legislation to the House on social matters but I think ultimately this is a matter for the Government to decide and it is a matter for me personally to take advice on and to make a judgement. Ultimately, I think it is precisely the handicapped that would stand to lose. The number of people who are deriving benefit is to my mind, given the flexibility of the scheme, greater than if you had provision made, rigorous provision as it would have to be under the Family Allowance Ordinance. This is a matter which has been under consideration for some years.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Minister in fact saying that if he gave the handicapped child as of right child benefit then his flexibility in the

application of supplementary benefits would be curtailed, because if he is I am sure that he is wrong.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am saying this because what is or is not a handicapped person would have to be very carefully defined. You may therefore be excluding people who qualify under the supplementary benefits scheme.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Minister not agree that doubtful cases could be dealt with by the Director of Labour and Social Security?

HON A J CANEPA:

You would then have a situation in which benefits would be made under the scheme and through legislation, which is undesirable administratively, and, moreover, the Director of Labour and Social Security would have to exercise discretionary powers under the legislation something which is usually invidious.

No. 118 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Can Government state by occupation whether parity with United Kingdom of wages and salaries are being paid in the private sector?

ANSWERThe Hon the Minister for Labour and Social Security

It is not possible to state by occupation whether parity with UK wages and salaries is being paid in the private sector.

Examination of the last available employment survey for October, 1978, indicates that, broadly speaking, wages and salaries in the private sector in Gibraltar are keeping pace with movements in the public sector.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 118 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is there any particular area where there is a noted shortfall in the wages received?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not saying that there is a shortfall. They are, broadly speaking, keeping pace with the public sector.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Does the Minister know of any particular area?

HON A J CANEPA:

No.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is it not a fact that in the employment survey there seems to be some substantial difference between the official sector and the private sector? Full-time male earnings in the official sector is £66.75 and in the private sector £59.41 with a difference of £7. As far as full-time women are concerned the difference is more acute, in the official sector £50.74 and in the private sector £37.79, which is a good £13 per week difference. Does he not agree that it must give grounds for concern?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Mr Speaker, if a clear distinction is drawn between earnings and basic wages and basic salaries the comparison between the level of earnings between the public sector and the private sector can be attributed to a number of factors. For instance, as far as women are concerned there are quite a number of women employed in the public sector as professional and these are very highly paid people. The fact is that there are no counterparts of these people in the private sector. There are much more highly paid professional people in the public sector as compared to the private sector.

25.6.79

No. 119 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government make a statement on the progress of the 1979 wages and salaries negotiations, on what procedure has been followed to date in this respect and on what procedure it intends to follow in the future?

ANSWER

The Hon the Chief Minister

A number of Unions have submitted claims in connection with the 1979 Pay Review. These have been under consideration and the Official Employers will be meeting these Unions later this week.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 119 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, what element of the present negotiations to be held after Government's belated acceptance of parity will be, as it were, automatic?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think that anything will be automatic but it will be quite clear that where there has been settlement in respect of a particular occupation which are cleared in the United Kingdom these would automatically be applied to Gibraltar. Insofar as analogues have been found they will be followed closely but they have to be looked at, they cannot be applied by a stroke of the pen.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I to understand that there will be automatic granting of the larger level of the increase of a particular class of people?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That, I think, is the result of parity.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, will there also be provision for the number of cases of particular individuals or groups of individuals who may have changed status during the year?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have no idea.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the latter consideration the one that might cause delay?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No claim has been put forward.

25.6.79

No. 120 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon P J Isola

Will Government make a statement on Gibraltar Regiment pay?

ANSWER

The Hon the Chief Minister

This is, of course, essentially a matter for the Ministry of Defence and I think it is wise, as in matters of pay in other areas, for this House to take the view that it should be dealt with under the usual procedures, while maintaining an interest in it, as we have always done.

I am informed that the process of evaluating the pay of the Gibraltar Regiment to link it to the British Army in the United Kingdom is still going on and I am assured that all relevant factors will be considered before any final decision is taken.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 120 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The last time I raised the question the Chief Minister seemed a little too optimistic as to the result. Has the Chief Minister got an indication of the way the review is likely to go?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The situation has improved insofar as the British Army is concerned and therefore it should have a corresponding improvement in the Gibraltar Regiment.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Improvement in the British Army yes, but hardly so far in the Gibraltar Regiment. When can we expect something to happen?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have said that the process of evaluating the pay of the Gibraltar Regiment to link it with the British Army is going on at this very moment and I am sure that every consideration is being given to the factors that are likely to benefit the Regiment in the evaluation.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, will the Chief Minister, knowing the interest that the House takes in these matters, endeavour to keep the money matter under review and keep the House informed of the proceedings of this case.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course.

25.6.79

No. 121 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon Major R J Peliza

Does Government have an indication as to the effect that the added spending on defence announced at the last budget in the United Kingdom is expected to have in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

The Hon the Chief Minister

I have made enquiries of the United Kingdom Government and will inform the Hon Members when I receive a reply.

25.6.79

No. 122 of 1979

ORAL

The Hon M Xiberras

Can Government inform the House of any progress as regards immigration and emigration procedures for Gibraltarians entering and leaving the United Kingdom?

ANSWER

The Hon the Chief Minister

I am pleased to be able to inform the House that I have received confirmation that Gibraltarians arriving in the United Kingdom may proceed to passport control channels marked "UK Nationals" or "EEC Nationals" or, where there is such a channel "Commonwealth Citizen". They should, however, be ready to follow the directions of the immigration authorities as to which of these channels they use, in the interest of processing arriving travellers as speedily as possible.

It is hoped to issue shortly a note drawing attention to these procedures with all new passports issued in Gibraltar. Copies of the note will also be available, as from a date to be announced, on application at the Passport Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 122 OF 1979

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is the Minister not aware that from different sources including from Mr Frank Judd, no longer Minister, we have been aware that we have the right to go through the EEC Channel and is he not aware himself that the difficulty ~~is~~ in getting the Immigration Officers in the United Kingdom to recognise this? Is he not aware that the European Movement produced a leaflet some time ago advising members of the public about this, about the choice of channels that they have and about the right to use the EEC Channel and ~~in what way is the situation different now?~~

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Because now you may proceed through the United Kingdom Channel.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I apologise to the Chief Minister. Mr Speaker, may I ask whether immigration personnel have been informed about this?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is because immigration have been informed and because procedures have been agreed that I have been able to make a statement.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I certainly want to welcome that and put it on record.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would it still be necessary for the Gibraltarians to fill in the cards?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I am afraid that will continue to be the case and it is done for statistical purposes and nothing else. It is purely for statistical purposes and has no relation to the right of entry which we have.

25.6.79

ORAL

No. 123 of 1979

The Hon G T Restano

Will the Chief Minister state when the earth station will become operational?

ANSWER

The Hon the Chief Minister

A number of circuits came into operation last week. The earth station should become fully operational by the middle of July.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 123 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask the Chief Minister whether now it will be possible for subscribers in the United Kingdom to dial directly the number in Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

With the new unit it will be possible for subscribers to dial direct without getting the announcement which they frequently got that the international lines were engaged.

HON G T RESTANO:

Will subscribers on the Continent and overseas now also be able to dial Gibraltar direct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot say whether with the present units now in operation steps have been taken to advise the telephone operators in the different countries in Europe that these are available. I should have thought that they should have known that before, but it is in the interest of Cable and Wireless, as it is in ours, that as many people as possible should get to know in Europe as elsewhere about the ability to phone direct.

HON G T RESTANO:

Will there be a code number for Gibraltar for subscribers all over Europe and even outside Europe, or different code numbers?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, there is a code number for Gibraltar and there is a code number for each country. The code number for Gibraltar is constant but the code number coming into the system is different in different countries.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does that mean that a subscriber in Germany will be able to use the same code number as the United Kingdom?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The area code varies from country to country, in London it will be 010.

HON G T RESTANO:

And will this also operate from outside Europe?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not want to get that far at this moment in time, but I am sure it is.