

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

MEETING OF 31ST OCTOBER 1979

QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

(124 TO 187)

31.10.79

No. 124 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government please inform the House of the sums spent to date by the Government in the Development Programme from 1 April, 1979, to date under Heads 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111 and 112 of the Improvement and Development Fund approved estimates, Head by Head?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Improvement and Development Fund expenditure and commitments (as at 26.10.79) during the current financial year are:-

IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FUND

Head	Actual expenditure to 26.10.79 £	Commitments to 26.10.79 £	Total actual expenditure and commitments to 26.10.79 £
101 Housing	695,060	6,000	701,060
102 Schools	218,466	312,000	530,466
103 Tourist Development	4,982	-	4,982
104 Miscellaneous Projects	323,555	290,000	613,555
105 General Services	113,693	76,000	189,693
106 Government Offices and Buildings	125,138	8,000	133,138
107 Port Development	21,138	379,000	400,138
108 Marina Development	15,795	-	15,795
109 Public Lighting	3,995	-	3,995
110 Electricity Service	57,368	14,000	71,368
111 Potable Water Service	56,285	15,000	71,285
112 Telephone Service	32,056	78,000	110,056
	1,667,531	1,178,000	2,845,531

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 124 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable the Financial and Development Secretary for this detailed explanation. Could he please explain, with regard to committed expenditure, is he saying that there is this amount still to be spent or is this amount already owed by the Government in respect of expenditure actually down on the ground?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, committed expenditure is monies which are required to meet outstanding fees or the cost of the purchase of plant and equipment which has been ordered and is expected shortly.

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying that a certain amount of the expenditure referred to as committed is really expenditure in respect of which Government partly has made orders and partly bills outstanding, would that be correct?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I now ask, Mr Speaker, would the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that in certain of the items of expenditure or Heads that he has spelt out for us, there is very considerable under expenditure and can he give the House any assurances that the expenditure target for 1979/80 will, in fact, be met by the end of the current financial year?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, when considering Development expenditure of this kind particularly on large projects, one gets a build-up throughout the year as equipment which is being ordered or the tenders which have been let come on stream and to the best of our ability, and I have consulted my colleagues concerned, we consider that we shall be able to spend the amount estimated in 1979/80 but one cannot give a categorical assurance. This relies to a great extent on equipment on order from outside Gibraltar and on the work that is being put out to tender and the output of contractors.

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, would, however, the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that these matters are matters that are taken into

consideration by the Government when preparing its estimates of expenditure and is it not rather sad that we should have the Government coming to this House in April, 1979, and telling us about the £7.7m they are going to spend on development and we find that at mid-term there is only spent of this amount something amounting to one-sixth of the amount estimated and would not that seem to indicate something seriously wrong with Government estimating?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, with respect, I feel unable to agree with the views expressed by the Hon and Learned Member. I think that every Government, when it is preparing estimates, must take a view on what expenditure will be and what the sum of expenditure will be on current performance, and one makes a judgement. You cannot, for example, ensure that steelwork which has been ordered from another country is going to be here on time, you make a judgement that they will be, they may be or they may not.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I cannot blame the Financial and Development Secretary for this, of course, but it is the history of this present Government ever since it came in in 1972 that in development it has failed in performance. Can I ask the Financial and Development Secretary how optimistic he can be, for example, in spending the £3m estimated for housing for the current year when at mid-term, at half year, the Government has only spent or committed itself to £701,000? Is the Financial and Development Secretary seriously expecting this House to believe that the Government will meet its target in housing of £3m by the end of the current financial year, and if he cannot give that assurance is this not a sad reflection on the ability of the Government to comply with its promises at the time of estimates?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the six weeks that I have been here I have been with my colleague, the Minister for Public Works, and we have been over all the development projects, we have looked at the housing projects very carefully, and to the best of our ability we consider that we are likely to spend the sums which have been estimated.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, we shall ask the question again, of course, in April, but may I ask, there are a number of items here on which I would just like to query, for example, and which are of concern both to the House, I am sure, and to the economy as a whole. In Port Development, Mr Speaker, I notice that only £21,138 has been spent at mid-term and there is a commitment of £379,000. Could I ask what that commitment is in

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respect of, is it fees or is it equipment that is coming, or what?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The £379,000 is in respect of (a) steel piling for the reclamation - £254,000; consultants fees - £50,000; the steelwork for a look-out tower - £75,000.

31.10.79

No. 125 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government undertake to amend the import and exports Ordinance so that references to Revenue Officers and Revenue Department should read Customs Officers and Customs Department respectively to bring the legislation into line with the current nomenclature?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. The matter is well in hand and it is hoped to bring an amending Bill to the House at the next sitting.

31.10.79

No. 126 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state whether reminders for payment on unpaid electricity bills are being sent and if so how long after the bills have been sent are reminders sent?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. Reminders for payment of unpaid electricity bills are sent after three months.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 126 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, could I ask in relation to that whether the sending of bills is now accelerated because the Government computer which has been here so long is now in full swing?

MR SPEAKER:

I will not allow the matter of the computer to be raised but I will allow the question as to whether the bills are being sent.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, the computer is at present carrying out a parallel run for the electricity billing and water billing of an estate. The idea of running out in parallel is to ensure that any snag that should arise, and these do tend to arise in any computer programme, will be ironed out. As soon as demand notes for the computer arrive, and I expect it in four weeks time, the computer will take over the billing of water and electricity for this first estate and then will progressively take over responsibility for all bills. It is hoped when it is running that a bill will issue within 48 hours of the meters having been read.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Financial and Development Secretary give us an idea when this great day will arrive?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I thought that it was intimated in my answer that when the demand notes arrive in about a months time.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Did I hear, Mr Speaker, correctly that the reminders are sent three months after the date of the original bill?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, that is what I said.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't that a very long time to send a reminder? Surely, isn't it a better idea to try and get people to settle the bills within a week or fortnight of receiving the bill and not waiting for three months? It is, I think, the procedure in most places. I think three months is a long time, Mr Speaker, does not the Financial Secretary think that it will probably be three months before they pay and they will then be six months in arrears?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, the Honourable Member is assuming that everyone waits for three months before paying their bills. This is not so, in fact, people do pay much more speedily than that. The point is that three months are given for the payment of the bills. After that if the bill is not paid a final notice is sent within two weeks.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does not the amount outstanding that we have seen in the estimates indicate that bills are not paid all that promptly as the Financial Secretary believes?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, bills are not paid promptly by certain sectors of the community, not by the generality of the community. I think that is my view.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Well, couldn't something be done for that section of the community that doesn't pay the bills? Since all the other sections do, couldn't we do something much more effective than send a reminder three months later?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, and in fact we do it. When a final notice is sent out two weeks after the reminder, the consumer is advised that unless the bill is paid within ten days of receipt of the final notice, the electricity will be cut off. This, generally, has a very salutary effect.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Financial Secretary happy that next time we come to the estimates we will see a much lower sum outstanding with the present system?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wouldn't like to give an answer to that question. I have no idea what the outstanding figure will be when next we present estimates to this House.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I hope, Mr Speaker, that the Financial Secretary will look back to the history of that account and perhaps he could take some action.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Honourable Member whether there is any distinction in the treatment of domestic consumers and commercial consumers in terms of their arrears?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, in deciding whether to cut off electricity, one needs to look at the full circumstances. For example, if the bill has not been paid by someone who is poor and it is a cold winter, clearly one would not cut off the electricity. Furthermore, one also must look to the interest of the economy, if the electricity is going to be cut off in a certain establishment, will this adversely affect the economy of Gibraltar, will it paint a bad picture of Gibraltar's provision for, say, tourists? In those circumstances we normally compound with the debtor that the bill will be paid over a period. Each case is looked at on its merits.

HON J BOSSANO:

Before the step is reached of having to consider cutting off, could the Honourable Member say whether in terms of reminding people that they owe money, there is any distinction drawn between the period allowed for what are after all profit making enterprises that may be running part of their business on interest free loans from the Government effectively, and domestic consumers who may be having financial difficulties because of personal circumstances?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, the rules for reminders, as far as I am aware, apply across the board.

31.10.79

No. 127 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government give figures for employed persons at the end of September broken down into the public and private sector and also by sex and nationality?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The Government is not able to give the employment figures requested in respect of September. I would like to point out to the House that employment surveys are conducted in April and October of each year. The data that is collected is processed manually and final results are normally produced four months after the start of the survey. Hence, the April 1979 employment survey results, for example, were finally tabulated in September, 1979.

The latest figure available showing a breakdown of employment by sex, sector and nationality therefore refer to the April 1979 Employment Survey Report which was tabled earlier in this meeting.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 127 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I don't think that the survey is broken down into the public and private sector.

HON A J CANEPA:

The survey gives information about various industries, if we know which are in the private sector and which are in the public sector, the necessary information can be compiled and I myself can make it available to the Honourable Member but, again, in respect of April, 1979, but not September, 1979.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Honourable Member say of the official sector total of April, 1979, 7196, can he break that figure down into the Government sector, DOE and MOD?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, I cannot do that, Mr Speaker. I can give him the information as regards the official employment, the totals, by sex and also for the private sector I can give him the totals and then divide it by sex, but I cannot give DOE, MOD and Gibraltar Government. I don't have that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could he give us that, Mr Speaker?

HON A J CANEPA:

First of all Gibraltarians. The official sector - males, 3,898 - females, 1,336 - total, 5,234. Private sector - males, 1,649 - females, 938 - total, 2,587. UK Nationals - official sector - males, 558 - females, 204 - total, 762. Private sector - males, 197 - females, 189 - total, 386. Moroccans - official sector - males, 1,059 - females, 33 - total, 1,092. Private sector - males, 1,096 - females, 10 - total, 1,106. Other nationalities - official sector - males, 76 - females, 32 - total, 108. Private sector - males, 265 - females, 53 - total, 318.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Minister, isn't it desirable that the Government should have comparative figures between the Ministry of Defence employment and the Gibraltar Government especially if there is a shift of employment between one sector and the other which has significant economic effects?

HON A J CANEPA:

But we do have them, those figures are obtainable, the only thing is if you ask me for information in respect of September, I cannot make that available. If you ask me to give you information in respect of April and October, according to the different employers, I can make that information available if I am given separate notice.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Government keep a careful note of the shift in employment, if any? Is there a significant shift from, for example, MOD employment into Gibraltar Government employment, because if there is that has quite big economic consequences to the Government.

HON A J CANEPA:

The Government does do that, and not only can that be done through the employment survey, but the Manpower Planning Committee meets every three months and there we are able to monitor the situation very carefully and invariably I myself as Chairman make it my business to find out from the MOD representatives what the situation is with their own figures and what the prospects are for the future. So we do monitor the situation because it is of great economic interest.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister tell the House whether in general terms there is a shift from Ministry of Defence employment, generally, into Gibraltar Government employment or is it vice versa?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think the situation is fairly static over a long period of time, you might get marginal shifts, for instance, it could be that about a couple of years ago as a result of the PSA cutting down seriously on their levels of overtime and the Gibraltar Government having a very high level of overtime there was a tendency to shift from one to the other, but the Gibraltar Government itself has taken steps to cut down on overtime and therefore over a period of time the situation levels out. Likewise, as regards the private sector and the public sector up to about a year ago I would say the private sector was very, very attractive because wages were far in advance of the public sector but then with the parity settlement, if anything, the tendency has been reversed and a number of people from the private sector would in the short term take up employment in the public sector but there have not been what I would call dramatic changes.

31.10.79

No. 128 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what is the current position with regard to Nos. 197/201 Main Street?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Yes, Sir. Legal proceedings were instituted in the Supreme Court in July to seek an order to compel the owners to repair or demolish the premises.

Following the issue of the proceedings, the owners took action to remedy the immediate causes of danger.

For the time being it is considered that the danger has been averted. The Government considered however that there may be a prospect of further danger at some future date as the building deteriorates. Consequently, the proceedings went to a hearing. Last Monday the Supreme Court made a nuisance order to the effect that the owners must within 60 days carry out repairs or demolitions so as to render the premises safe for the next 5 years.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 128 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon the Attorney-General say what action Government will take if within 60 days that action is not taken by the Landlords?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the Government would take the appropriate action to bring the matter before the court for the sanctions to be imposed. I think the Government would consider that position as it arises and would take the appropriate action.

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Government consider demolishing the premises themselves?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think I have said at a previous sitting of this House that it is the view of the Government that the primary responsibility lies with the owner. If the owner can do this we will make the owner do it rather than do it ourselves. The present position is that the owner is complying with the obligations on him to date and in the next sixty days he must take further action himself to make sure that this building is safe for five years.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But in the meantime, Mr Speaker, as this affects the public thoroughfare very badly, cannot the Government do something about that? What can they do to make it at least less of an eyesore that it is now?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the Government has taken what action is necessary and reasonable at this stage and I think the next thing is to await the sixty days period and leave it to the owner to take action to comply with the court order.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The Government has been saying this now for about, I would say, at least a year if not more. Cannot the Government do something more than just state here the Government view? I believe that the barrels that are there with the protective fence or whatever you call it, is the responsibility of the Government and not the Landlord. Cannot the Government do something about that?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, as far as I am concerned the Government is doing what is appropriate.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But does the Attorney-General believe that it is appropriate to see the state of those barrels and the bars lying all over the place?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am sorry, I didn't quite get the question.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, the state of the protective fence there is in an awful state and I believe that that is the responsibility of the Government. It has been like that easily for six months, I only come here now and again and I see it and apparently the Government doesn't see it, they are here all the time but they don't see it. Cannot the Government do anything about that since they are responsible for that?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to accept here and now that the Government is responsible but I will look into it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Are not the public being deprived of the right to pass to and fro on the pavements? Surely, that makes it the responsibility of the Public Works Department who are responsible for the public highway and I think everybody is concerned at the way this thing is dragging.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I can only say that I note the concern and I will look into the matter.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, the danger is that there could be an accident, people have to get off the pavement to go through. Cannot the Public Works Department do what is normally done, some kind of protective roof so that people can carry on walking along the pavement?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am not going to allow questions as to the remedial works to be carried out. Next question.

31.10.79

No. 129 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state if it is satisfied with the Secretariat security arrangements in view of recent events at the Secretariat and can Government give an explanation how it was that persons were able to enter the Secretariat and cause such damage without the alarm being raised?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I take the question to refer to the recent case of arson at the Government Secretariat. Following that incident, certain additional precautions have already been adopted but the Government does consider that it is also necessary to generally review security arrangements. It is in the process of doing so.

The police investigation is still continuing, and I cannot therefore at this stage give the explanation asked for in the second part of the question.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 129 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Can we then, Sir, look forward to a full statement some time in the future?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, Mr Speaker, certainly, at an appropriate time I will be happy to make a full statement on the matter.

31.10.79

No. 130 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

In view of public disquiet can Government make a statement on the recent visit by UK Customs and Scotland Yard Officials?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

UK Customs and Scotland Yard officials recently visited Gibraltar in connection with criminal investigations that are being undertaken here. These investigations are continuing. I do not consider that this is an appropriate time to comment further. Once again, at an appropriate time, I will be prepared to make a statement on the matter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 130 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, I thank the Honourable and Learned the Attorney-General for that answer. Whilst, of course, one appreciates that these matters are all under investigation, I think the public would like some sort of assurance from the Hon the Attorney-General that in the use of their powers in relation to this investigation, the Honourable and Learned Gentleman will ensure that regard is had for rights of individuals and rights of property and so forth and that although nobody in Gibraltar can welcome the sort of investigation that is going in the sense that everybody would wish the thing to be finalised and so forth, I think we would like to have some sort of assurance that the Honourable and Learned the Attorney-General will ensure that the liberty of the individual, the rights of subjects, the rights of property, are preserved as much as possible and respected.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to comment further on this case but what I will say and I think it is perhaps unnecessary for me to say, is that I accept the responsibility for the proper conduct of criminal investigations and criminal prosecutions.

31.10.79

No. 131 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government confirm that the two extra boarding officers for the Port Department budgetted for in the last budget have still not been employed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

It is confirmed that the two extra boarding officers have not yet been employed. These two extra posts were recommended subsequent to the main Staff Inspection of the Port Department mainly although not exclusively for the new Yacht Marina which, at that time, was expected to become operational in April, 1979.

The Marina is not yet operational.

In the meantime the Establishment Division has had under consideration representations by the Staff Association concerned on matters arising out of the Inspection Report.

Some of the points raised have been referred back to the Staff Inspector. His report is awaited.

Although the Marina is not operational, there is still a need to fill the posts. This action will be implemented as soon as the process of staff inspection has been finally completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 131 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

How long is this likely to take, Mr Speaker?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I cannot say. All I can say is as quickly as possible. It is at a stage, I think, where it is nearing completion.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since it is thought that two extra Boarding Officers are required at the moment even without the Marina, would the Honourable Member not agree that it is putting intolerable stress on the six working already if they happen to do too much work which the Government considers should be done by an extra two?

2.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think the answer to that question is that the posts were originally contemplated mainly for the purposes of the Marina which is still not operational, so that aspect of the need for the posts has not yet arisen. It is true that there is other work, the Government desires to fill the posts as quickly as possible but I would not agree that there is an immediately pressing need.

31.10.79

No. 132 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Minister for Municipal Services explain why the faulty fire hoses at the Alameda Housing Estate have still not been replaced?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Due to the estimated high cost of replacing and repairing the faulty Hose Reels in the estate, plus the cost of their future maintenance, proposals are being considered by Government to substitute them by a type of extinguisher which will deal safely and effectively with all types of fires encountered in domestic property.

2. Replacement of the hoses would only provide a media (water) which is able to deal with fires involving carbonaceous materials. Electrical fires and kitchen fires involving oils and fats cannot be dealt with by using water.

3. The dry riser fire mains in the estate are now all fully operational.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 132 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister when he made his statement in the last meeting of the House, said that the repairs and replacements would be carried out as a matter of urgency, and they are still not there. Can he say what and when it is going to be done?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, we have looked into the matter now and we are having second thoughts about replacing the existing materials.

HON G T RESTANO:

When are the new extinguishers going to be installed?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, we have prepared a paper for the Council of Ministers which will be shortly dealing with it.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I don't think that is good enough, after all, this matter was raised in June, this is a matter which concerns people very closely, it could well be a danger, I

don't think it is efficient just to say that a paper has gone to the Council of Ministers. What I want to know is when are those hoses or whatever it is that is going to replace them going to be replaced?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, he hasn't heard my answer. I said the hoses because of the high cost

MR SPEAKER:

No, the Hon questioner has said the hoses or whatever is going to replace the hoses.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, as soon as the Government is able to do what is needed.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

As soon as when, Mr Speaker? Could the Minister say that again, I didn't hear?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

As soon as the Government takes a decision on this subject.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But wasn't the Minister going to take this as a matter of great urgency in June? Does that mean to say that four months are over and nothing has been done? How much longer does the Minister think that the Council of Ministers will take in arriving at a decision on an urgent matter such as this?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it is not that nothing has been done, it is that we have looked into this problem very, very closely and we have decided that the best method is not to replace the faulty hose reels but to go into a different sort of fire prevention which will be much more efficient and safer to the public.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I can see that but the point is that it has taken four months to get this far, how much longer will it take before we see the new equipment installed?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the recommendations and the investigations and the inquiry which I mentioned when I last stood up at the end of June has taken some time to evaluate.

3.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask why has it taken so long? Who has carried out these investigations?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Government cannot take a decision immediately. We are going into all the problems involved. It is easy to be on the opposite side of the fence and criticise.

31.10.79

No. 133 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state whether the main telephone cables that it was envisaged would be replaced by the end of September have in fact been replaced?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Main cables 32, 34, 22, 24 and 25 were replaced by the end of September. Main cable 28, feeding the Marina Court area was also replaced with the exception of a section of this cable which it is hoped will be replaced soon. All cables have been replaced with petroleum jelly filled cables.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 133 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask then since all the main repairs seem to have been done except for main cable 28, why is it that recently when we had a heavy downpour, there was again breakdowns in the telephone service?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the sections that were replaced, the six cables which I referred to, were 10% of the 60% of lead cables. It is the other 50% now of the other 90% of the 60% which are giving the trouble.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does Government propose to replace those as well?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

We have said so, Mr Speaker, before, that we intend a gradual replacement of all the old type of lead cables but this year we have replaced six.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, Mr Speaker, how long that is likely to take?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, by simple process of deduction which I am sure the Honourable Member will be able to do, the answer is about five years.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Couldn't the Government do something to speed this up? Are we going to be burdened with the terrible state of the telephones for five years? Could the Minister state, Mr Speaker, if they can do something to speed it up?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, there is nothing we can do to speed the process up. The process must take its time. There is no point employing more people now and have those people without any job in five years and then the Opposition will complain that we have spent money needlessly.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I should have known, Mr Speaker, there is nothing the Minister can do.

31.10.79

No. 134 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what is the present position with regard to installing international subscriber dialling in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

A budgetary quotation has already been received for ISD equipment using Cross-bar 5005 techniques.

A further quotation, using more modern equipment is awaited within the next couple of months.

It has been found necessary to obtain this second quotation due to the very rapid changes presently taking place in exchange system technology, with the switch-over to fully electronic and Stored Programme Control exchanges.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 134 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, did the Minister say that he had received a quotation and was expecting another one?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I said that a budgetary quotation had already been received of ISD equipment and that a further quotation using more modern equipment is awaited within the next couple of months.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is that quotation that the Minister is referring to the one that he has mentioned in this House before, is it the one of £100,000?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Mr Speaker, I wish we could instal ISD for £100,000.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can he give us an indication of what amounts he has received already in the quotation?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the quotation is in the region of about £1m, including the ISD equipment and a 3,000 extensions to the Cross-bar exchange.

HON G T RESTANO:

And how long is it likely to take to instal this equipment?

MR SPEAKER:

They have not had the second quotation.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister if the cost is going to be £1m, why it is in the estimates for 1979/80 the provision for International Subscriber Dialling and a 3,000 line extension to Cross-bar exchange was put down as £532,000? There is a big difference there, can he give me any explanation?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The explanation is simple. Technology is moving so quickly ahead that things are costing more and more each day and this is why we are trying to get another quotation using more modern equipment which we hope will help and ease the problem. We may even get ISD quicker than we hoped for.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the decision, Mr Speaker, consist in making up one's mind and purchasing and not waiting for delay? Isn't it a fact that already it is going to cost us another £500,000 more because of the dilly-dallying of the Government?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

A decision has to be taken and it is a very difficult decision considering the amount of money involved. We have engaged a British Post Office consultant and this consultation is awaited and he will report on how we should go about this.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister realise that this consultation has cost the Government £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m because if you estimated £500,000 and it is going to cost £1m now, it is £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m that the consultations have cost the Government. What is the Minister going to do about it? It is £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m of good Gibraltar money.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I think if the Honourable Member wishes to twist facts like that he should be elsewhere and not here.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister repeat that, I couldn't hear him?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I said if the Honourable Member wishes to twist facts like that he should be elsewhere and not here.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Anyone who knows arithmetic will see, Mr Speaker, that if it was going to cost £500,000 and now it is going to cost £1m, the delay has been an increase of £½m through the inefficiency of the Minister.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, what worries us on this side of the House is that as technology advances there is not a similar advance in Gibraltar and what worries us here is that Gibraltar must be one of the few places in the whole of Europe that doesn't have international subscriber dialling. Can the Minister tell the long-suffering public when they can expect to be able to have this convenience, not a luxury, this convenience which everybody in Europe already has. When can the public expect to have it, can he tell us, give us an estimate, a year, five years, two years, something that we can hold on to in hope.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, there were a lot of questions in that question of the Honourable Member.

MR SPEAKER:

Basically, you are being asked how soon or how long this is going to take.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

There are many complications about this. Recently the Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent visited Geneva and brought back very interesting information about this. As to ISD, the date by which I want ISD to start will be in the region of 1983.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is it 1983 if the equipment is ordered now?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I mentioned the British Post Office consultants and I mentioned that the new equipment may bring ISD quicker. I think the time, 1983, is a date when we ought to have it here but we may have it sooner than that depending on the equipment that we order.

31.10.79

No. 135 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government make a statement on the general condition of the engines at the Generating Station, give a detailed explanation for the power cuts that have been borne recently and furthermore state for how long the people of Gibraltar will have to endure further power cuts?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I would like to deal with Question 135 and 136 together and as you are aware, I gave notice on the 24 October 1979 that I would be making a statement on the Electricity Department and I shall be dealing with these questions in that statement.

MR SPEAKER:

If the Member asking the question agrees, we will defer these questions to the statement and I will not limit questions on the statement in clarification on matters dealing with these questions.

31.10.79

No. 136 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government give reasons for the apparent inactivity in building a second Generating Station?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, as I intimated in the previous question, I shall be dealing with this question in my statement.

31.10.79

No. 137 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state the present position with regard to the production of sand from the Upper Rock area?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The work on this project has suffered some delay and frustration partly arising from shipping and supply problems, as well as from the uniqueness of the project.

It is anticipated however that the various machines necessary for the extraction of the material will be operating next week.

Once a working area has been cleared there are no difficulties foreseen in discharging material to the road level.

Staff are now being recruited for the various functions and once in post will allow the sand to be stockpiled ready for sale. This project should be in operation within the next 2 to 3 weeks for sales and stockpiling.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 137 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, can the Minister say, he has talked of difficulties, can the Minister say whether these difficulties have anything to do or have resulted in the very substantial additional expenditure that we are going to vote in respect of the sand project? I notice we are going to be asked to vote £89,807 because it is stated that the amount has been underestimated. Will that affect prices, for example?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Very slightly, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

It will affect prices very slightly but can I ask whether this amount that is being voted has anything to do with the difficulties that the Minister has referred to?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

In the main, no, sir, certain items have become more expensive and have taken longer to do and therefore prices have been increased but in the main the extra money is not required for that purpose. At the time of the estimates I will explain why the extra money is mainly required.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister, Mr Speaker, at what price is it proposed to sell sand to the contractor?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not sure whether as Minister for Public Works I have the right to answer that question since it is a private company and it will be up to the company to decide that but I think the figure will be somewhere around £4.90 per ton.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I just ask the Minister, he tells us it is a private company, is the attitude of the Government to be, in relation to sand from that area, that the Minister although he is Chairman of the public company will not answer in this House.

MR SPEAKER:

Whether the Government answers a question or not is laid down by the rules of procedure. The rules of procedure say that a Minister will be responsible to answer questions on departmental Ministerial responsibilities. If the pricing of sand or anything to do with the sand does not come under his office as Minister but it comes under his office as Chairman of the limited company then he is not responsible to answer questions here.

HON P J ISOLA:

I appreciate that, Mr Speaker, but can the Minister tell me whether he has been made Chairman of this company as a result of his business qualifications or as a result of being Minister for Public Works, could I ask him that?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a question of which you should give notice.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am sure that is a fairly simple question he can answer. If he requires notice then we will ask a whole series of questions about the company but perhaps he could answer that now.

MR SPEAKER:

This is not a supplementary but the Minister is free to answer if he wishes.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think I would say, Sir, that this is a nationalised industry and would follow the same pattern as a nationalised industry

in Britain in which a report would be given once a year to the Government of how the industry is running and normally one doesn't expect Government interference and probing at every stage as to how the industry is running. I think there is some misapprehension on the part of certain Members of the House, and I would also say the press, who are asking questions which are, I would assume or I would consider to be private to the running of the company and should not be made public knowledge at every opportunity.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister state which of the nationalised countries in England has got a Minister as a Chairman?

MR SPEAKER:

That is not a relevant supplementary.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Minister, is it not a fact that this private company is in fact being subsidised entirely from public funds and does he not consider that he has a responsibility to this House in relation to the expenditure of those funds?

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect, insofar as the expenditure of any public funds is concerned the Ministers are answerable to this House. Insofar as the expenditure of money by the limited company is concerned the Minister is not answerable to the House in the first instance. I must point out this distinction.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask the Minister then if he has any information from the quarry company or whatever it is, this private company, any information as to why, for example, it is thought necessary to give this company a monopoly in sand? Is there any particular reason why the Government grants this company a monopoly in sand, in other words, stops the importation of sand by anybody else? If it is a private company and the Minister doesn't want to reply in this House about it because it is a private concern, could the Minister state why it is that Government finds it necessary to give this particular private company a monopoly in Gibraltar?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Firstly, Sir, it is for the public interest but it is not true that there is a monopoly. An import permit is required to bring sand and if somebody is able to bring sand at lower prices than the company can offer, I do not think this import permit will be refused.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is it therefore Government policy to allow private competition, free enterprise competition, with this Government controlled company?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have already said that if somebody can bring sand at a considerably lower price than the company can offer sand, this import permit will not be refused.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister say why does Government insist that it must be at a cheaper price, why cannot a company compete with whatever means at its disposal? If it is a higher price, Mr Speaker, then presumably the company would not sell it.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I should assume possibly that that would be also agreeable if they want to bring it at a higher price but they would have to also understand that they would have to work on a commercial basis and not as hitherto have a free area to dump sand on the North Mole, they would have to pay a proper price for that actual area and I think they would then become so prohibitive in price they would go out of business.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Honourable Member whether in fact there was this wonderful free competitive atmosphere previously in sand or whether there was a monopoly?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, there was very much a monopoly before.

31.10.79

No. 138 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government be proceeding with the plan to build a pedestrian bridge to join the Glacis and Laguna Estates?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

There are no plans at the present time to proceed with the construction of a pedestrian overbridge between Glacis and Laguna Estate. With the increasing use of large containers and oversize vehicles generally, there is a problem in providing sufficient clearance above the roadway.

Experimental modifications have been carried out to the pedestrian crossing in Winston Churchill Avenue in an attempt to improve safety by preventing overtaking and speeding on this section of road.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 138 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could the Honourable Member keep the situation under review in view of the concern felt by mothers of young children living in both estates because of the ever increasing traffic in that area?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, this is a question of priorities. I have no objection that this should be put to the next development programme but it would be a cost of very nearly £100,000 and one wonders whether it would take a high priority.

HON P J ISOLA:

Wasn't the bridge, in fact, provided for in previous development programmes?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When the original estate was designed, I believe there were plans for such an overbridge but the Honourable Member I am sure will be aware that there was some need to have a curtailment of the amount of money being spent on that estate and one of the things that went was the bridge.

31.10.79

No. 139 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what action has been taken to remedy the defects affecting the flats of tenants at Glacis Estate which were brought to the notice of the Director of Public Works in a letter dated 6th June, 1979?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the letter dated 6 June 1979 relates to representations made by the Glacis Tenants Association in respect of Tower Blocks flats which have a number of problems, mainly water penetration. I shall be answering a later question by confirming that the weatherproofing of the outside walls have already started. When this is completed those flats which need inside work will be attended to. As for the other complaints these are being dealt with under the normal maintenance requisition.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 139 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Honourable Member not think it is a good idea to keep the Tenants' Association informed on a fairly regular basis of the progress that is being made so that they know that the matters that have been brought to the attention of the Department have not, in fact, been forgotten?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, I quite agree and I believe we have a meeting with the Tenants' Association scheduled within the next fortnight.

31.10.79

No. 140 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government make a statement on the structural conditions of Jumper's Bastion Building with particular emphasis on the safety aspect of the same?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

For some time now the PWD has noticed certain defects at Jumper's Building and have carried out investigations. A Structural Engineer recently attached to the Department has begun a structural survey, and it is hoped that his report will be ready in the near future.

As the steel work in the concrete had to be exposed for inspection, and to ensure safety, the balconies and the stair landings have been shored up.

31.10.79

No. 141 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government received the report of the detailed investigation by the firm of Consultants on the weather proofing and redecoration of the Tower Blocks?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 141 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when is it expected that a report will be received?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, a member of the Building Research Establishment visited Gibraltar from the 17th to 19th October, 1979. He will be making his recommendations in due course. In the meantime work has commenced on weatherproofing and redecoration treatment.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is this on the roof, Mr Speaker, as well as the walls?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, he has looked at the roofs and the walls and the structure and everything concerning the Tower Blocks.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Minister aware, Mr Speaker, that after some of that work has been done the roofs of those blocks still leak?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not aware of that, Sir. I would like to have information provided to me if that is so and I would like the Honourable Member in providing such information to be sure it is the roofs that are leaking and not the upper levels of the vertical structure.

HON G T RESTANO:

I will certainly give him the information, Mr Speaker.

31.10.79

No. 142 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government give the figures and cost for water production from available sources for the months of June, July, August and September, and state what the stocks were on 30th September?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Figures for Water Production from available sources for the months of June, July, August and September are as follows:-

SOURCE	PRODUCTION M3 FOR JUNE	PRODUCTION M3 FOR JULY	PRODUCTION M3 FOR AUGUST	PRODUCTION M3 FOR SEPTEMBER
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Nil	1672
Wells	13109	10283	7760	8092
Importation	9880	9880	18137	16222
NF Distiller	8716	24415	22064	17131
VTE Distiller	15704	16870	21932	15403

Stocks at 9.00 am on 30 September 1979 stood at 44756 M3 (9.8 million gallons).

Total production costs are normally worked out over one financial year when capital charges and other overheads can be correctly apportioned and an accurate cost per M3 obtained.

At present the estimated operating costs for 1979/80 are as follows:-

Rainfall	£0.25/M3
Wells	£0.39/M3
Imporation	£1.80/M3
NF Distiller	£2.14/M3
VTE Distiller	£2.77/M3

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 142 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask on the production side, the North Face Distiller, why was production so low in June taking into account that it was even lower than the previous May and none at all in March and April?

2.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

In June the North Face Distiller had trouble with its turbine which meant it was out of action for approximately two weeks.

31.10.79

No. 143 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has Government now taken steps to introduce regular maintenance schedules for the lifts at the Tower Blocks in Glacis Estate?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Regular monthly maintenance on the four Tower Blocks lifts in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations has been carried out since the lifts were installed. During the last few months a certificate has been signed by the servicing fitter and his supervisor on completion of the maintenance work. In future a copy of the servicing maintenance certificate will be posted in the lift and a copy will be forwarded to the Tenants' Association.

Arrangements are being made for an independent inspection and certification by a firm of lift engineers. The inspection will be in accordance with the requirements of British Standard Specification 2655.

31.10.79

No. 144 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is Government now in a position to give a time scale for the repairs to the Varyl Begg Estate roofs?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The Gibraltar Government's views, following the third report from Andrews, Kent and Stone have been put to both the consultant architect and the contractors. Following from this the consultant architect is holding meetings with the contractors in London at this time precisely on this question.

A meeting between the Consultants, the Contractors and Government officers is expected to take place in Gibraltar as soon as the London discussions are completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 144 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Cannot the Government give any indication at all, which is really what the people want, as to whether they will still have to look forward to another winter or two more winters or three more winters. That is the sort of situation really that people want some reassurance of, the timescale still left.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, it was hoped this meeting in Gibraltar would have taken place about the middle of October but it should take place very shortly. I think definite propositions will be coming forward at that meeting as to how the roof situation should be solved. It will, of course, take a certain amount of time to do this so that I would not like to say that this winter some houses at least may still experience trouble.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister aware that this is a thoroughly unsatisfactory answer from the point of view from people who have been waiting for four years to have their roofs repaired, but we will deal with this in our own motion on the matter.

31.10.79

No. 145 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government explain why the supply of salt water is so frequently cut off at the Tower Blocks and other housing districts?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The Tower Blocks are fitted with overhead tanks which are fed directly from the mains.

There are times, when owing to demands from other areas, the pressure is not enough to allow the mains supply to reach these tanks. Normally the amount stored in the tanks can allow for this. However when leakages occur inside the Blocks, the tanks can become drained.

The tanks will only refill when the pressure again becomes sufficiently high (usually during the night). Thus there can be occasions when there is no supply available.

We hope to overcome the trouble by putting in booster pumps to feed the overhead tanks.

As regards other housing districts, the Hon Members will have to be more specific.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 145 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Tower Blocks had no supply of salt water for almost a week. Would the Minister say why that was?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not aware that the Tower Blocks were without salt water for a week. I will look into it but I do not think that that is an accurate statement.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister say why it happens at the South District, the Penny House district, which I experience every time I come to Gibraltar? Can the Minister explain that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There is some difficulty with the supply to the South Area, in fact, new pumps are being installed to improve it.

2.

HON G T RESTANO:

When are these booster pumps going to be installed at the Tower Blocks?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As soon as they arrive. They have been on order for about five months.

31.10.79

No. 146 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Do the refuse chutes at Alameda Estate continue to be out of use and will Government make arrangements to ensure that they are back in operation in the shortest possible time?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The Refuse Chutes at the Alameda Estate continue to be out of use but arrangements have been made to ensure that they are back in operation in a few weeks time.

31.10.79

No. 147 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

What arrangements has Government made with regard to the new Public Works garage at Varyl Begg Estate to ensure the least disturbance and danger to residents of the area and specially young children?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

I am not sure if the question refers to the construction phase or the permanent operation of the Garage. However, for the construction phase:-

I am not aware that there is any disturbance or danger to the residents of the Varyl Begg Estate.

The question of access of Contractor's vehicles to the site, which presented a degree of hazard, was resolved some time ago. To my knowledge there has been no change in the arrangements since or cause for further concern.

For the permanent operation:-

The access to the site will be from Waterport Road adjacent to the Shell Co Offices and no danger or disturbance is foreseen. The concern brought up regarding storage of fuel and possible hazards from foundry operation have been considered by the Chief Fire Officer and the Chief Public Health Inspector and they have allayed the fears raised, by confirming that the standards of construction and position meet all the statutory requirements.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 147 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Minister, will there be no access at all other than through Waterport Road to the garage?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, there will be no access at all.

31.10.79

No. 148 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government explain why there is so little progress with regard to the new Infant School at Varyl Begg Estate?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The programme which was scheduled to take 78 weeks is 10 weeks behind. Four weeks of this delay can be attributed to lorry drivers strike in UK in about January this year. This delayed delivery of bolts which were to be built into foundations, and drainage materials. A further six weeks delay was experienced during the summer due to the engineering strike in UK which delayed production of rubber seatings to concrete beams. In the end an alternative method had to be adopted.

The contractor has stated however that if there are no further delays the school should be ready for September 1981, as originally planned to fit in with the start of the 1981-82 school term.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 148 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

As the Honourable Member is aware in the case of schools it is very important that the date is met. Can the Minister give the House an assurance that this particular project will be carefully monitored so as to ensure that it is ready for the school year beginning September, 1981, because if it isn't would he not agree there would be great disruption?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, every project in the development programme is carefully monitored.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister saying this seriously?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, so much so that we have a meeting twice a month, one by the Chief Minister monitoring the whole of the development programme and one with my colleague Mr Serfaty at another time during the month, and we are monitoring it all the time, but I will see that this gets even more particular attention.

31.10.79

No. 149 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

What are Government plans for further housing development in Catalan Bay?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Government plans to redevelop the site at the northern end of Catalan Bay. Initially it is proposed to demolish the existing derelict buildings and then utilize the cleared site for the construction of additional units.

Demolition work is to start before the end of the year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 149 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

When does the Minister expect this particular development to be completed? I think he was very optimistic some time back that it was going to be done very quickly. It seems to be slowing down the same as all other projects of the Government.

HON A W SERFATY:

This is a scheme which was to be funded out of the £1m of ODA funds which had to be decided towards the end of this year but the availability of that money will depend on supplementaries on the cost of big schemes that like of the Comprehensive School. Towards the end of the year we will know what the lowest tender of the Comprehensive School will be, whether it is much higher than originally estimated, and it will depend on that whether the Catalan Bay scheme will or will not be included in the 1978/81 Development Programme.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In fact, the answer is that the Minister doesn't know whether there are going to be any houses built on the site of those derelict houses?

HON A W SERFATY:

What we do not know is when we shall be able to start development.

31.10.79

No. 150 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

What are Government's present plans for Engineer House and what is the current position?

HON A W SERFATY:

Sir, with your permission I proposed to answer Question Nos. 150 and 158 together.

MR SPEAKER:

I would like Mr Bossano's permission to do that.

HON J BOSSANO:

I have no objection.

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sir, this matter has been further delayed by the going into liquidation of Dayfenn Limited, the original purchasers of the site. The appointment of a liquidator was gazetted on 27 September 1979. The liquidator is taking the necessary steps to enable him to consider Government's earlier proposals with regard to the payment of compensation in lieu of the resale procedure stipulated in the 1967 Agreement.

If these negotiations are successful it is Government's intention to build a number of flats or maisonettes on the site which will include the requisite number of car spaces and, if possible, provide parking facilities for the general public as well.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 150 AND NO. 158 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister aware that as far back in 1972, during my administration, we were just on the verge of having re-possession of that site and it is seven years since then and nothing has happened and even at this stage we do not know when that land is going to be returned to Gibraltar. Can the Minister be more specific about it? Has he got an idea of what is going to happen and by when?

HON A W SERFATY:

I cannot add any more to what I have said, Mr Speaker. The Government has made an offer, it will be considered by the recently appointed liquidator, if the offer is accepted well and good, if it is not we have to stick to the 1967 Agreement and put the site out to tender.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But does the Minister realise that he is losing all credibility in that something similar to what he is saying today was said some time back on more than one occasion and he even produced more or less plans of what was going to happen there? Is the Minister absolutely satisfied with his own position with regard to this place?

HON A W SERFATY:

We cannot do anything more than wait and see what the reactions of the liquidator are.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But how can the Minister say that when at the time of my administration we were just on the verge of taking over that land?

HON A W SERFATY:

That I am not aware, that the previous administration was on the verge of getting this site. I am not aware of that, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I would advise the Minister to look into the records and he will find out.

HON A W SERFATY:

I am not supposed to look into the records of the previous administration.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Well, I think, Mr Speaker, he certainly can find out what the position was as regards that site.

HON G T RESTANO:

The Minister in his reply said that an offer had been made, may I know what offer has been made by the Government?

MR SPEAKER:

That has been ventilated in this House on many occasions. What the Minister has replied is that the offer which was made should supersede the provisions of the 1967 Agreement is now being considered by the liquidator who had just been appointed and until that gentleman decides whether to accept the offer or to go back to the 1967 Agreement, Government cannot move on the site.

HON G T RESTANO:

My question was, what was the offer?

MR SPEAKER:

But that I will not allow because as I say it has been ventilated before and it is not relevant to the question.

HON G T RESTANO:

I do not think I have ever heard of any offer that Government has made, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

It might have been before your time but, anyway, it is not a relevant supplementary, that is what I am saying.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the plans that the Government have for the place are going to be determined by the logic of the offer that has been made. If the Minister has made a new offer for the place which has not been made before

MR SPEAKER:

If you are asking whether the offer which the Minister is referring to is the one which has been disclosed to the House on previous occasions or is a new offer, that is a very valid question.

HON A W SERFATY:

I have no record of a sum of money having been mentioned in previous answers, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

What you are being asked now is whether the offer that you said that the liquidator is considering is the offer originally made by Government or is it a new one?

HON A W SERFATY:

It is the offer which has been made in the past year or so, not a new offer.

\ HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I assume that the offer is in fact to buy the site, a price for the site, and the Government thinks that an unchanged offer of a year ago is realistic and stands a chance of success, and there has been no adjustment for inflation for that year?

HON A W SERFATY:

I think the Government doesn't think that, the Government is waiting for the reactions of the liquidator for proper negotiations to proceed.

HON J BOSSANO:

So in fact the thing is that the offer has been sort of standing there all this time waiting for an answer?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

For seven years, this offer has been standing there waiting for an answer for seven years.

HON A W SERFATY:

Not for seven years, for the last year or so, I said.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But this has been going on since 1972, I am sure the Minister knows that. What has happened in the meantime? We got the feeling that everything was alright and that building was due to start any time. If that is not the case I must say the Minister misled the House.

HON A W SERFATY:

I would like the Honourable Member to say how I misled the House.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Well, in the sense that you even produced plans of what was going to happen in that site.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to debate, we are going to ask questions.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, on various occasions this matter has been raised in the House.

MR SPEAKER:

I accept all that. Which is the question that you are asking?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am asking, Mr Speaker, he says that we are waiting for an answer from the liquidator of the company concerned and apparently we have been waiting for an answer, since no offer

has apparently been made for seven years, or if not seven, five for sure, and I would like to know how could the Minister come to this House and say that everything was more or less about to be settled and building about to start

MR SPEAKER:

Order, you are making speeches. I want a precise question which is a supplementary and that is all you are entitled to.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, the question is, has the Government made an offer at any time? We got the impression that they have and that the situation is just about to be completed.

HON A W SERFATY:

I haven't got the date of when the offer was made, but I would like the House to bear in mind that the liquidator who is the man with whom we can negotiate, was appointed only one month ago.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What has been happening before that? Have there been no negotiations going on at all?

HON A W SERFATY:

The Surveyor and Planning Secretary, on behalf of the Government has made offers and has been negotiating with the legal adviser of the now defunct purchaser which offers were never accepted.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

For five years?

HON A W SERFATY:

I cannot say exactly for what period.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister say, is the position then that Government is powerless in this matter, that if the liquidator chooses not to answer or rejects the offer, Government is powerless and that building will stay like that for ever and ever, is that the position?

HON A W SERFATY:

No, Sir, because if no agreement is reached between the liquidator and the Government, the Government has powers to put the site out to tender under the 1967 Agreement.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is Government just waiting upon the liquidator?

MR SPEAKER:

Order, let us put the thing into perspective. What Government is saying is that whatever else has happened they have no power to do much about it, that the liquidator has recently been appointed and it is now that the company is in a position to take a decision which will enable Government then to take whatever action they consider necessary.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister, are the choices open to Government just these two, either they negotiate and come to an agreement acceptable to the liquidator, or they put the building out to tender?

HON A W SERFATY:

As far as I am aware these are the only two choices open to the Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister then, how long is the Government going to wait before taking one of those alternatives finally? Are we going to wait a year or what?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

May I intervene at this point. I have just had a word with the Attorney-General. I think it is a matter of great concern for everybody but there are very intricate legal problems which have been mentioned here. I think, having regard to the words I have had with the Attorney-General now arising out of this, I think we will hope to make some kind of a statement before the end of this sitting as to the legal situation.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

31.10.79

No. 151 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Now that the weekly air freight service has been withdrawn, to what use will Government put the air cargo shed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It is wrong to assume that the Air Cargo Shed will no longer be required for the purpose for which it was designed. There are, therefore, no plans for any alternative use for this building.

Attention is also drawn to the notice in Monday's newspaper where it was announced that a new air freight service was shortly to be introduced.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 151 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the question was put in before that.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Government start thinking about it because although a new air service is being introduced, clearly the reasons that prompted the withdrawal of the last one may well be in the minds of the new one shortly, so should not Government start thinking of what they will do?

HON A W SERFATY:

Of course the air cargo shed is not only used for the air freight, it is used for other things like newspapers and ordinary air freight. When the time comes we shall do some quick thinking.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

31.10.79

No. 152 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

What progress, if any, has been made with the project of filling-in between nos. 2 and 3 jetties?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

After a system of prequalifications, the selected tenderers were asked to submit a tender. These tenders were returned on 24 September, 1979. The Consulting Engineer for the project was asked to carry out the normal checks, and examine the proposals submitted and their recommendations have been passed to the Tender Board.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 152 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, who designed the project?

HON A W SERFATY:

Sir William Halcrow and Partners.

HON G T RESTANO:

Who appointed them, the Government or ODA?

HON A W SERFATY:

The Government with the full knowledge of the ODA.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when does the Honourable Member expect work to start because he did say some time back that he expected work to start last February?

HON A W SERFATY:

It depends on the decision of the Tender Board and it also depends on the fact that the lowest tender is higher than the estimated amount and this information we have passed on to ODA.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister explain why it has been passed on to ODA?

HON A W SERFATY:

Because it is a question of asking for more money than was envisaged in the Development Programme.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, must not the main consideration be to get on with spending the money that is being granted which is £1,283,500. Can the Minister say what is the order of the difference between the lowest tender and the amount provided in the estimates?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, perhaps I might answer that question. The amount is £350,000 of which this Government will provide from local funds 10% and the excess we hope to get from ODA. What has to happen is first of all we need to go to ODA to get their consent to raise the sum in the agreed project by £350,000. If, as one Honourable Member suggested, we went ahead without seeking their agreement, we would be at risk of having to meet the whole of this additional amount ourselves and obviously no one wishes that. Once we have the ODA's agreement to extend the sum for the project, the Tender Board will be able to make a pronouncement on the tender. It will then be for the Council of Ministers to agree for a supplementary provision for that extra £350,000 and for this House to vote the money.

HON P J ISOLA:

I thank the Financial and Development Secretary for this answer but hasn't the Government got to balance these considerations with the considerations that these are monies that are set apart for the 1978/81 Development Programme and that the Government could find itself in a position at the end of 1981 if it has seriously underspent on its Development Programme that it cannot get on with other Development, that new development aid will be geared to the existing and therefore should not the Government consider carefully the risk involved in that it might have to pay the £350,000 with the risk involved of not getting re-voted over £1,300,000 and is this not a major consideration?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the point that the Honourable and Learned Member makes is a good one. This is a matter for consideration by the Government. The Government has considered it and has decided to approach ODA for the additional funds.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could the Honourable Member explain what is the function of the Tender Board if in fact the situation that seems to have been created by his explanation is that the Tender Board has got to decide the tender and then the ODA has got to decide the money and presumably the ODA cannot decide on the money until the Tender Board has chosen which tender to accept and the Tender Board cannot decide which tender to accept until they know if the money is there?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a good question by the Honourable Member. In a case such as this we are driving what I think is called a troika, with three horses. First of all, the Tender Board cannot consider the tender until the ODA has approved the revised project amount. The Government for its part cannot put in a supplementary provision to this House for the additional funds until the Tender Board approves the tender and ODA have approved the additional amount for the scheme. What we have done is gone to ODA and said that this additional amount is required, given them the reasons and asked them to approve it on the understanding that the Tender Board would agree the tender. The Tender Board for its part have looked at the tender and agreed a tender subject to the approval of ODA approving the funds and this House approving supplementary estimates.

HON J BOSSANO:

Then the Tender Board has already chosen the successful tenderer?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No Sir, it cannot choose the successful tender until such time as funds are available.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if the lowest tender is £350,000 too high and the Tender Board does not necessarily choose the lowest tender, then if the Government goes now to ODA and persuades the ODA to raise a figure by £350,000 and the Tender Board then looks at all the tenders and decides that the one with £350,000 should not be the successful one, that the one that should be successful should be

MR SPEAKER:

I think that what the Honourable Minister has said is that the Tender Board has intimated what they would do in the circumstances.

HON J BOSSANO:

Which would be to choose the lowest one, so they have already picked the one.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Financial and Development Secretary whether, in fact, the Government has given proper consideration to the point that I have raised because is it not a fact that certainly on the figures that have been given to the House this morning by the Financial and Development Secretary, there will be considerable underspending of the global British Government aid to Gibraltar during the period of 1978/81 and in these circumstances would it not be a justifiable risk for the Government to agree the lowest tender which it feels is what has to be done so that we can get on with the project and avoid this serious underspending of British Government Development Funds there has been in the last six years.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. I want questions asked, not statements made.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, if I understand the question correctly, it was has the Government considered and having considered has it reached the right decision. I can only confirm, Sir, that the Government has considered it, it considered it last week and in my view, and that is the only view that I can give, it has made the right decision.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask when ODA's approval was first received?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sorry, I would need notice of that question. I assume that the question is, when was ODA approval first received for this actual project, for the amount as approved at the moment. Sir, I don't know the answer, I will write to the Honourable Member and send a copy to other Members.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask another question? Is Government aware of the risk they are running in not accepting the lowest tender at this stage reasonably soon, because is there not a risk that the lowest tenderer might withdraw his tender if there is substantial delay in an acceptance of the tender?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Financial and Development Secretary inform the House whether there is any hope now that the reclamation based on the consultants report and on the tenders received and so forth, that the reclamation of these two jetties will, in fact, be completed by April 1981?

HON A W SERFATY:

Virtually completed, if not completed. It is a job that should not take, so I have been told, more than about a year.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister say by whom he has been told, by the consultants or by men in the Department?

HON A W SERFATY:

By everybody dealing with this matter in the Public Works Department.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, if I may, the Honourable Member asked when the Port project was approved by ODA, it was approved in April, 1979.

31.10.79

No. 153 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Has Government any plans for the future user of the United Services Officers' Club now that the premises have ceased to be used as a club?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

No Sir. The Government has no reason for believing that the building will be declared surplus to defence requirements or that it will be transferred to the Gibraltar Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 153 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Couldn't the Government take an initiative in this instance since that place at one time, Mr Speaker, was a place where Services and civilians used to meet very successfully and bearing in mind the Sporting facilities adjacent to it, couldn't the Government take an initiative to see that the functions of the club could be revived perhaps with a little more emphasis on the civilian side and bring services and civilians together in that area. After all, I think the Services are more important to Gibraltar than the tourists, we do a lot for the tourists, couldn't we do that to bring the Services and civilians together?

HON A W SERFATY:

All I can tell you is that I brought this matter up to the Development Commission where we have Ministry of Defence representatives and the premises were still required for Defence purposes, that was the answer.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could not the matter be taken up at a higher level than the Planning Commission where perhaps the importance of what I am saying is more realised there than at the Planning Commission.

HON A W SERFATY:

The Honourable and Learned the Chief Minister has taken it up at a much higher level and that is the result.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Honourable Member then saying that the premises are going to cease to be used as a club and are

going to be used for some other important defence function?
What is the position?

HON A W SERFATY:

I don't think it has been decided whether it is going to be used as a club or not, but there were other purposes that were mentioned to me in the Development and Planning Commission such as a Medical Centre.

HON J BOSSANO:

The position would appear to be that if the premises are not used as a club then the Ministry of Defence is going to find some other use for them, but if they are used as a club then it stays as a club, well, does that not suggest to the Honourable Member that there isn't an important defence need for these premises?

HON A W SERFATY:

Whether it is used as a club or whether it is used as a sick bay is for the Ministry of Defence to decide.

HON J BOSSANO:

I accept that, Mr Speaker, but if in fact the club were to cease to exist, the Honourable Member says that the premises would not be available to the Government because it would be used for some other important defence purpose.

MR SPEAKER:

No, let us put matters into perspective. What the Minister has said is that the premises are Ministry of Defence land and they have not been released to the Government of Gibraltar and therefore they have no jurisdiction over that land.

HON J BOSSANO:

I accept that, Mr Speaker, but the reasons they have not been released or the reasons that they would not be released if there ceased to be a club there is that some other important defence use is intended. If that is the explanation the Honourable Member has been given and it appears that

MR SPEAKER:

Order. May we ask the Minister perhaps whether he has been given any explanations as to the use of the land.

HON A W SERFATY:

The explanation I was given as I said before, Mr Speaker, was that it might be used as a sick bay, that was the explanation I was given when I broached the subject.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, what I am trying to suggest is that the Government should take the initiative. If the Government hasn't got a will to take the initiative then we know it will fail.

MR SPEAKER:

What question are you asking?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The question, Mr Speaker, is of the two, what would the Minister prefer, that the premises should be a sick bay?

MR SPEAKER:

No, it is not up to the Minister to decide to what use the premises should be put.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I know, Mr Speaker, it is not up to him, but what would he support more than the other, because obviously the Planning Commission has

MR SPEAKER:

Order. May we have the question?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The question, Mr Speaker, is, of the two alternatives, which do they prefer, for the area to be used as a sick bay and therefore I believe decongest one of the schools?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I cannot allow that question. It is not for the Minister to decide whether the premises should be used for any given purpose. He has given an explanation and he has said that he has been told that the land is still required by the Ministry of Defence.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What I am asking is, of the two alternatives which does the Government prefer, would they see that as a sick bay or would they like it to continue as a club?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a matter of opinion and I cannot allow that supplementary.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What is the policy then, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Government has no policy as regards this land because it does not belong to them.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

There is a policy in Gibraltar, Mr Speaker, to take over land released by the Services.

MR SPEAKER:

You are perfectly entitled to ask Government whether they are satisfied that they have done everything possible to have this land returned to the Government of Gibraltar. You are completely free to ask that but let us not start to talk about policies in respect of land that does not belong to Government.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Released for the purposes that was suggested by me in this House, Mr Speaker. Are they satisfied?

HON A W SERFATY:

We are satisfied that we have broached the subject when the whole matter cropped up and we are satisfied that the site is not available, it is as simple as that.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state, as Chairman of the Development and Planning Commission, whether the Development and Planning Commission have any say in the user to which those premises are now put, if new?

HON A W SERFATY:

The legislation provides for the Development and Planning Commission to have a say on change of use. Normally, the Ministry of Defence, and they have done very well in the past, have come. Whether they have to or not, I don't think they are really forced to by the legislation, but they have come to the Development Commission for the opinion of the Commission. In every case they come.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Government give an assurance to this House that it will not permit as far as lies within its power in the Development and Planning Commission, a different user of those premises so as to deprive those civilians, a great number of whom had a right to use those premises for Sport and recreation?

HON A W SERFATY:

The Honourable and Learned the Leader of the Opposition can realise that the answer is that the Government will not commit itself to that.

HON P J ISOLA:

Why not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Surely, the statutory provisions and the provisions of planning must be looked at for what they are made. What you cannot use is one legislation for one purpose to enforce another purpose, that is obvious.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I have known many cases where there have been applications for change of user that have been turned down, it is normal, and I am asking the Government, is it Government policy to maintain existing sport and other facilities available to the civilian community of Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There have been no suggestions that the sports facilities are going to be withdrawn even at the worse, that has been reaffirmed many times. It is only the building that you are dealing with. It has been made public that whatever happens to the club the sports facilities will be available as hitherto.

HON P J ISOLA:

Let me put it this way, may I ask the Government to make strong representations to the Ministry of Defence that they have obligations to a great number of civilians who pay subscriptions as against Service people that they have obligations to those people who have over the years supported the club through their subscriptions and use of the facilities and that in those circumstances there is a need, as my Honourable and Gallant Friend has said, there is a need in the view of the Gibraltar Government to have a user of those

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premises that continues to bring about this joint user by civilians and services, and this is important in the process of bringing the civilians and military communities of Gibraltar together. Will Government at least assure us that they are fighting for that?

HON A W SERFATY:

We will bear that point in mind.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister giving an assurance or just bearing it in mind?

HON A W SERFATY:

You are having the assurance.

31.10.79

No. 154 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state when the Air Terminal extension project will really get under way?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Due to the very high costs of reprovisioning the apron to the East of the Air Terminal requested by the Ministry of Defence, a decision has been taken to carry out an extension to the North of the buildings instead of the East which is being costed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 154 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister do some quick thinking and tell me when he thinks the costing will be over, when he thinks the first brick will be laid?

HON A W SERFATY:

The costing will be over soon, in a matter of days, but the re-study of the extension to bringing the cost of the extension down to the available funds will take a little longer.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister whether the compilation of annual estimates is treated by the Government as a joke? Can the Minister state on what basis the Government provided that the project would cost £325,000 and that £209,000 would be spent in the year 1979/80? What was the basis for that when it appears that no agreement has been reached with the Ministry of Defence for anything at that date?

HON A W SERFATY:

On the basis that at the time that the estimates were prepared, we did not know and in fact had no reason to believe that the cost of strengthening the apron to the East because of the extension was as high as it eventually was estimated at and that made us change our minds and that is the reason for the slippage and the delay.

HON P J ISOLA:

But is it not lack of homework on the part of somebody in the Government Department? When you estimate, doesn't the

2.

Government have before it all the various factors involved,
and the apron as well?

HON A W SERFATY:

Not the apron, Mr Speaker.

31.10.79

No. 155 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state if it has made known any interest that it might have in taking over the large MOD site at the northern entrance to Main Street and if so to what use would this site be put should it be handed to the Gibraltar Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The future of the property referred to has been considered by the Development and Planning Commission in which the Ministry of Defence is represented. The Commission considers that this would be an ideal site for a multi storey car park combined with commercial development to reflect its strategic and valuable position in Main Street.

The Ministry of Defence is accordingly aware of the Commission's thinking and is participating fully in the exploratory investigations now being conducted into this possibility. It is understood that the MOD is prepared to relinquish this property if the seven quarters therein are reprovided elsewhere.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 155 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

How many quarters are involved, Mr Speaker?

HON A W SERFATY:

I have just said there are seven.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government not consider that to have a multi-storey car park right at the entrance of Main Street is rather an odd place and not particularly good for the general approach to Main Street?

HON A W SERFATY:

No, Sir, we do not, we consider it an ideal site for commercial development and a multi-storey car park.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Government state whether this is a viable proposition in view of the Government's policy on parking? Is it a viable proposition? Who is going to build it, the Government?

2.

HON A W SERFATY:

It is still premature to talk about these things but of course, it would be much more viable if the frontier were opened. It may become an urgent necessity then.

31.10.79

No. 156 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what are its immediate land requirements from MOD and what steps have been taken to take over such sites?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Gibraltar Government has given the Ministry of Defence an indication of its land requirements in the short and medium term. These include properties suitable for development both for public and touristic purposes. These include properties in Queensway, Main Street, Governor's Parade, Town Range and other parts of Gibraltar.

All these sites are, however, in actual use and occupation by the Ministry of Defence and, in the majority of cases, cannot be given up until or unless the accommodation built thereon is reprovided elsewhere.

The need for additional land was highlighted in the City Plan and the complex planning and financial considerations which Government's request entails is constantly exercising the mind of the Development and Planning Commission where the presence of representatives of the Services ensures the required degree of consultation and liaison with MOD.

31.10.79

No. 157 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government give every possible assistance in finding suitable premises for the Sea Scouts?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Yes. Government is, of course, interested in seeing that alternative premises are found for the Sea Scouts. Unfortunately Government is not in a position to be of assistance as it has no suitable building which could be considered for the purpose. The Government is using its best endeavours to help them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 157 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Have any suggestions of possible sites been made to the Government by the representatives of the Sea Scouts themselves or not?

HON A W SERFATY:

I know of one which has been seen by the Sea Scouts near the Camber but the Sea Scouts have turned it down, perhaps, rightly so because it is not really suitable.

31.10.79

No. 158 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state when it is proposed to develop the Engineer House site?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

(Answered together with Question No. 150/79).

31.10.79

No. 159 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

In view of the fact that a number of clubs and sporting associations have been rendered homeless as a result of the fire at Old Command Education Centre does Government contemplate allocating to these clubs and associations alternative accommodation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Although it is under no legal obligation to find alternative accommodation for the clubs and associations which were housed in the Old Command Education Building in Bell Lane, Government will try to reaccommodate those entities displaced by the fire as far as it is possible to do so with the limited resources available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 159 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, can Government state what steps it is taking in this direction?

HON A W SERFATY:

We are waiting for the termination of the work at Mercury House so that GBC can move to Mercury House from Wellington Front when Wellington Front will become available for this kind of allocation.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is it the intention of the Government then to offer the old GBC premises to these clubs and associations?

HON A W SERFATY:

Generally speaking, yes Sir.

31.10.79

No. 160 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is Government satisfied with the general state of cleanliness and tidiness at the Port?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In order to put the question into perspective it is first necessary to point out that during 1978, 50,283 tons of General Cargo and 40,210 tons of Building Materials were imported.

In the first nine months of this year 42,260 tons of General Cargo and 34,287 tons of Building Materials have been imported.

The throughput through our Port in 1978 therefore amounts to 90,493 tons and 76,547 tons during the first nine months of 1979.

This tonnage of cargo is worked in an area far smaller in aggregate than a football pitch and does not include the 2,100 containers and a few thousand beer kegs which are imported and then re-exported empty.

In the conditions the Port is working under, the Government is not only satisfied but appreciative of the co-operation of all the Port Workers in maintaining the present state of tidiness.

In so far as the cleanliness is concerned, Government employs 4 sweepers and apart from containers and palletised cargo stowed, the areas of the North Mole and Waterport are kept clean of actual litter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 160 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I wonder when was the last time that the Honourable Member went to visit the Port?

HON A W SERFATY:

I go there during the week when required and every Sunday morning on a personal trip.

HON G T RESTANO:

To say that the Port is tidy and clean is incredible. Mr Speaker, why should there be so many pallets thrown around the Port, can these not be collected and taken away or burnt

or something? Is it not possible for the Government to do something on those lines?

HON A W SERFATY:

They must be collected by the consignees.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can Government make plans to ensure that consignees do not leave them lying around?

HON A W SERFATY:

I know that the Port Department is very much on top, I know from my own personal experience when pallets are opened up in the Port because goods have to be taken out because they are too heavy, and the Port Department is very much on top for that pallet to be removed.

31.10.79

No. 161 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government ensure that the entrances to the harbour are not obstructed by fishing boats?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Under the Port rules, there is adequate power to ensure that the entrances to the harbour and fairways of the Port are kept clear of hindrances to navigation.

In practice, whenever it is noted that fishing boats are causing obstruction and shipping movements are to take place, the Police are notified who, by means of their Police launch, move away the offenders.

The above is common practice and no complaints have recently been received either from pilots or ships' masters.

31.10.79

No. 162 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state whether some of the deckhands at the Port Department have been on temporary employment, some for a considerable time, and will Government give an explanation for this state of affairs?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Yes. There are seven deckhands whose appointment to the Permanent and Pensionable Establishment has been awaiting the final implementation of the staff inspection on the Port Department.

Staff Inspection originally recommended that the complement of 22 deckhands should be reduced to 19 but, as a result of representations made by the staff association representing the grade it was agreed that the matter should be referred back to the Staff Inspector for further consideration.

A report is awaited from the Staff Inspector and a decision to appoint the deckhands on permanent and pensionable terms will be taken as soon as the exact number of posts to be incorporated in the Permanent and Pensionable Establishment is ascertained.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 162 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member confirm that some of these deckhands have been on temporary employment for five years?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I can confirm that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, does that mean that the pensions of these temporary employed persons are affected by their not having permanent employment?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the pensions legislation does enable temporary employment to be taken into account if it preceeds permanent employment.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since some of these deckhands, eight I believe, have been temporarily employed only, when can we expect that they will be given permanent employment?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the reason the matter has not been settled is that the Establishment is taking into account staff representations. As soon as that is done the matter will be resolved.

31.10.79

No. 163 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Chief Minister give a detailed account of the extent of repairs, maintenance, improvement and development which need to be carried out at Both Worlds and also the amount of financial assistance which has been asked for from ODA?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

As the application for financial assistance is still under discussion it would be premature for the Government to disclose detailed information passed to it in confidence by the owners of Both Worlds.

I can, however, say that the main purpose for which the loan has been sought is to finance essential waterproofing repairs, and that the assistance sought would cover only part of the work.

The Government has advised Both Worlds that it is not possible to give a loan on soft terms, but that subject to the approval of this House and on proof of need the Government would be prepared to make a loan of up to £200,000 at the same rate of interest which we receive on Gibraltar funds in the Joint Consolidated Fund of the Crown Agents. Both Worlds would also be required to provide adequate collateral for the loan.

It is possible for the Government to make this loan as it holds for general development purposes the balance of the United Kingdom/Gibraltar 1971 loan which is invested in the Joint Consolidated Fund.

31.10.79

No. 164 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Is Government aware that the Post Office counters continue to be undermanned and can the Minister report any progress on his assurance to the House to improve the position?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND POSTAL SERVICES

In reply to Question No. 25 of 1979, I stated, inter alia, that it had been established by the process of Staff Inspection that four positions dealing with postal matters and one dealing with Savings Bank transactions were sufficient to meet the requirements of the public at the Main Counter and this is what the department normally provides.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 164 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Do I understand the Minister to say that five counters are manned normally in the Post Office, and is that not evidently not the case?

HON I ABECASIS:

Normally it is, four for the normal mail, one for the Savings Bank.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister not aware that more often than not there are only two windows manned at the Post Office especially at the time when most people go which is to get the morning mail and to post letters in the morning to catch that day's flight? There are only two windows manned, is that not a fact?

HON I ABECASIS:

It is a fact at times. We have had recently some resignations and transfers within the Department which affects the positions in the main counter. The Hon Member opposite must realise that they are interchangeable and if the person dealing with the out-going parcel post is away ill, sick or otherwise, he must be substituted by one from the main counters. The same position applies if anybody in the South District or North District is away, one of the main counter staff has also got to go and replace him. We do our best to try, within our limited resources, to serve the public. I think there is a certain amount of obsession with this, people seem to be obsessed with the question and there are a lot of other places like the Bank, for example, where people have to wait.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister not agree that it is not obsession on the part of the public, it is annoyance by constantly having to stand in long queues at the Post Office with only two windows, and this is the experience of a great number of people. I know there can be people ill and people can be away or transferred but this cannot be a constant factor or else he should have his staff inspected medically. Can the Minister make some sort of survey and inform the House at some future date precisely what are the number of occasions on which four windows are in fact manned?

HON I ABECASIS:

The trouble is the rush hour, that from 11.00 am to 12.30 pm there are long queues, but if you go there in the afternoon . .

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked a simple question, will you please have a survey so that you can give the House information as to how many times the four windows are not open.

HON I ABECASIS:

Sir, at a time when Government is looking at the total expenditure of our budget, I don't think it is the right time to employ more people for the Post Office.

MR SPEAKER:

No, you are not being asked that. The questioner has asked a simple question. There are many occasions when only two windows are open when four should be open, and you are being asked if you can hold a survey so that at least you can give the House information as to when this happens.

HON I ABECASIS:

We will keep a record of the instances when there are only two windows open in addition to the Savings Bank.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the reason why I asked that question is because the Minister stated that normally the four windows are manned and the experience of many is that this is not the case so there must be some underlying reason. Does the Minister not know that in fact there are rush hour points? Well, will he ask the Postmaster to try and ensure that at least during the rush hour the four counters are manned so that he orders his affairs in the Post Office so that during those hours each day, say one or two hours each day, when it is the rush hour, he has the four windows manned and doesn't have them manned when there isn't a rush hour.

HON I ABECASIS:

That looks very simple but when you think that any clerk in the counter is responsible for seventeen types of denominations of stamps from half a penny to £5 and insurance stamps of ten different kinds, from 70p to £4.30 you will find out that it is not as simple as that to bring somebody down and have the stock taken before he can actually serve the public and then immediately after he finished have his stock taken again so that he can go back to his original office. It is not as simple as it looks.

HON P J ISOIA:

Mr Speaker, I appreciate that but shouldn't the primary consideration be the service of the public because this is a revenue producing Department and is there not a lot to be said for some inconvenience being suffered in the Post Office to try and give the four window service just two hours a day during the rush hour?

HON I ABECASIS:

We will see what the survey says.

31.10.79

No. 165 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P. J. ISOLA

Can Government state on how many days during the month of October up to the date of this question, mail has not arrived on scheduled flights and can Government give an explanation for the failure of mail to arrive on those dates?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND POSTAL SERVICES

Mail on four days during October up to the 30th October has not arrived on scheduled flights ie Wednesday 3rd, Thursday 4th, Sunday 21st and Sunday 28th. The flight which arrived on Sunday 7th brought parcel post only. The mail which closed in London on the 3rd was received in Gibraltar on Friday 5th. This mail had not been sent on the appropriate flight as the relevant waybills had not been received at Gatwick despatch on time. The mail which closed in London on the 4th arrived in Gibraltar on Saturday 6th. This mail had not been shipped before due to lack of space on the aircraft. The flight which arrived on Tuesday 9th brought 81 bags of both letter and parcel post - obviously clearing the backlog which had accumulated. The mail due on the 21st was received on Tuesday 23rd and that of the 28th was received on Tuesday 30th.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 165 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Government satisfied with the situation at Gatwick airport? Who is to blame for not supplying the waybills, is the Post Office or somebody else?

HON I ABECASIS:

We are not satisfied and we are doing our best, I think I reported the last time that the Director of Postal Services had gone to England to see whether it could be improved. You will hear, Sir, from my answer to the next question that an appropriate mail unit is being constructed at Gatwick airport so as to improve the moving about of mail.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister, I know I am anticipating slightly the next question, where is the mail kept when it is not actually shipped on the plane?

HON I ABECASIS:

In a shed at Gatwick airport.

2.

HON P J ISOLA;

In a shed under whose control and management?

HON I ABECASIS:

Under the Airport Authority, Sir.

31.10.79

No. 166 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Is Government fully satisfied that no mail for Gibraltar has been mis-directed or lost at Gatwick Airport and what security arrangement are there available at that Airport for Royal Mail having regard to the fact that there is no British Post Office at that Airport?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND POSTAL SERVICES

The Gibraltar Postal Authorities are not aware of any mail destined for Gibraltar having been either misdirected or lost at Gatwick Airport. Gatwick is an International Airport under the control and management of the Airports Authority and it is presumed that the security arrangements there are similar to those provided and obtaining in other Airports managed by that Authority.

2. The British Post Office whose responsibility it is, are quite satisfied that the facilities for the handling and safe-keeping of Royal Mail, by the Carriers, are in accordance with their requirements and up to their standards.

3. The Director of Postal Services has also been informed that in order to deal with the increasing mail traffic being handled through this airport, there are plans to build an appropriate mail unit which is to be manned by BPO personnel.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 166 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

I thank the Honourable Member for that answer. May I ask, reverting slightly to the previous question, the Minister did say that on one occasion the aircraft didn't bring the mail itself, it left it behind because it couldn't manage, is there not an obligation on the part of the scheduled airline to give priority to Royal Mail?

HON I ABECASIS:

Not to my knowledge, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

In view of the fact that the scheduled airlines are reducing the number of flights over the winter and no mail will therefore be coming to Gibraltar on Mondays and Thursdays, will the Minister make enquiries as to the possibility of mail being brought on the charter aircraft that come from Gatwick Airport on Mondays and Thursdays and possibly also newspapers and thus render, I think, a very necessary service to the people of Gibraltar?

HON I ABECASIS:

I am grateful for that but the Government anticipates all these questions and therefore we have already looked into the possibility of charter flights bringing over mail, we are satisfied that their licence allows them to bring Royal Mail and therefore the matter is being pursued. I am still nevertheless grateful for the question.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Minister to add to that the newspapers and if there is a need to change the licence will the Government support any application that requires that so we have newspapers every day and mail every day and then we will not be asking any more questions about Royal mail and things like that.

HON I ABECASIS:

The newspapers are included in the Royal mail.

31.10.79

No. 167 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state how it intends to spend the £4,500 donated by the Queen's Silver Jubilee Fund towards the adventure playground?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

The Government wishes to refer the Hon Member to Government Press Release No 96/79 issued on the 24 August last in which it stated clearly the purpose for which the £4,500 donated by The Queen's Silver Jubilee Trust had been approved and in particular reference is made to paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Press Release where it stated and I quote:-

"Earlier this year the Chief Minister wrote to the Director of the Trust applying for a grant for voluntary youth work connected with the Adventure Playground at Laguna. He explained that, as part of a community service project, youth clubs and youth organisations had undertaken, under the auspices of the Youth and Careers Office, to provide various amenities and amusements on the playground on a voluntary basis and that a grant from the Trust would help finance the cost of materials.

The Director of the Trust has now informed the Chief Minister that the Executive Committee are in no doubt that the proposal is a sound one and that they have agreed to make a grant of £4,500 which represents the return of the amount of £1,711 raised in Gibraltar topped up by a grant of £3,389 from their central funds."

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 167 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

The question asks how the Government intends to spend the £4,500. Could the Minister be a little more specific and say how that money is going to be spent, for what amenities, for what amusements?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I think my answer is quite clear. To provide amenities and amusements on the playground on a voluntary basis and this is for the materials bought.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has said for amenities and amusements but I think that amenities and amusements are wide terms, they could cover a host of different aspects, could the Minister say who is in charge of deciding what amenities and what amusements are going to be decided there, and in fact what amenities and what amusements are going to be placed there?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, the question of amenities and amusements will be decided with the people who have shown an interest in the adventure playground, that is, the Youth Services, the Youth Clubs, the charitable organisations like the Rotary Club, the Round Table, the Lions Club etc. They have all indicated different projects of the playground in which they are particularly interested and we shall channel those projects through the Youth and Careers Office.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Government is then, I take it, committed to consult all these bodies. Is a Committee going to be appointed to look into these things or is it going to be the Government itself which decides after advice from all these other bodies?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I have just said that it will be coordinated by the Youth and Careers Office.

HON G T RESTANO:

Up to now has Government in fact asked these Associations to give their ideas?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, we had a working meeting right at the beginning of the year with all the voluntary bodies including the Services, the Ministry of Defence, the Army, the Navy, etc.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has a single penny yet been spent, Mr Speaker?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

A lot of money has been spent already.

3.

HON G T RESTANO:

From these £4,500?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Not a penny from these £4,500.

31.10.79

No. 168 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Will Government explain why teachers, who have been sent to the United Kingdom for training and have qualified successfully, are not paid their salary throughout the summer as other teachers?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

In accordance with practice in the UK it was decided in July 1978 that newly-trained teachers should take up their first teaching appointments with effect from 1 September and not 1 July as in previous years. Throughout the period of their teacher training students are paid monthly maintenance allowance and not a salary and consequently, following the implementation of the new appointment date it was necessary to consider whether it was appropriate to continue to pay a maintenance allowance for the months of July and August previously covered by the payment of salary.

2. Bearing in mind all these considerations it was decided in July 1978 that payment of 50% of the approved maintenance grant, previously applicable during their teacher training courses, should be made to them from the date of termination of studies until 31 August on an ex gratia basis and not in consequence of any legal obligation. Married students were to receive the full maintenance grant during this two-month period. This provision was intended as a once-and-for-all exercise in 1978 only.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 168 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Is this fair, Mr Speaker? Is the Minister aware that student teachers were taken on into the Department as teachers? There are cases in 1979, that is why I have raised the question, they were employed as student teachers, they train, they had to sign a commitment to the Government not to work for anybody else but the Government, and they find in the case of two of them that I happen to know about, married people with children, find that they qualify, their grant stops and they cannot work for any other authority and have to work for the Government. Is it fair to put married teachers, for example, with family responsibility, in a position that they have no money during the summer vacation? How are they expected to pay for their family during that period when they are under a commitment continuous from the date of appointment and from the date of training, to serve the Government? Isn't that one-sided, if you don't pay them when they are under a commitment to serve the Government?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

What we are doing is following United Kingdom practice, which is the gold mine, the parity gold mine.

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, Mr Speaker, but I don't know, nor do I pretend to know the practice in the United Kingdom, I don't pretend to know it, but I am sure it cannot be as the Minister has described. Does the Minister consider it fair, and I would indicate to the Minister one very big difference between the United Kingdom practice and the Gibraltar practice to which he has not alluded and that is that in the Gibraltar practice there is a legal commitment of the teacher to work for the employer whereas in the United Kingdom there is no commitment on the part of the teacher once he is trained, so if we are going to follow United Kingdom practice the Government might perhaps consider being a little more slavish about the way it follows it. Does the Minister consider it fair that a married teacher who was employed by the Department as a student teacher, who was bound under his contract of employment to follow a training course and bound thereafter to serve the Government for three years, that that teacher when qualified, should not be paid for two months, does the Minister consider that fair?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, it is not a question of considering it fair or not, it is the question of what is the practice in the United Kingdom and what will be the practice in Gibraltar. During those two months, despite the fact that there are contracts where they can't work with somebody else, I can quote probably fifty teachers at this very moment who are working for somebody else after school hours. They could very well do so during these two months of holiday.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister think that a teacher just freshly qualified, in the summer vacation, when nobody works as far as Education is concerned, that is a fact, I don't know any teachers who work during the summer vacation or any pupil who works during the summer vacation or any pupil who requires teaching during the summer vacation - that is just a statement - but does the Minister really consider that the Government is being just and fair to people committed to themselves when it chooses not to pay them because the Government doesn't run a school during the summer vacation but yet pays every other teacher in the Establishment, isn't that being very much pennywise and pound foolish?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I don't know about other Departments but I am being pennywise and poundwise.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I tell the Minister that I am sure that any other enlightened Government which took office would not do that because that is really kicking a few who have no protection and depriving them of their livelihood. Is it not a fact that he cannot just go off and get employment outside Gibraltar, he either gets employment in Gibraltar or starves and doesn't provide for his family. Is that fair, is that just and will the Government do something to put that right before the next election?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, the next election will not influence me in my decision at all.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that if these particular teachers do leave Gibraltar then, if they have been on a grant or a scholarship to England, they are required to pay back that grant? If they find they have no work in Gibraltar and they go away is it not Government's prerogative to ask them to repay that grant?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, there is an obligation for all scholarships, whether they are teachers or others, except for the Gibraltar Scholarship, to come back to Gibraltar and take up work if there is work available. For those two months of the year there is not work available but there is work available as from the 1st September when the term commences so that obligation is quite clear. I take the point that the Honourable and Learned Leader of the Opposition has made and on the question of the married people we will consider them more sympathetically.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is there any other category of students in this situation or is it only teachers? Is anybody else who is sent on a Government grant told that work will be provided for him after an interval of two months since he has finished his studies, or is it normal practice that people get the job offered to them when they finish their studies?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No students of any kind are paid for the final months after they have completed their studies.

HON J BOSSANO:

But if anybody is studying, Mr Speaker, in any other field other than in teaching, for example, if someone is sent to study, let us say, public health or engineering, would the Government say to them; "We will ask you to fulfil your commitment to come back and work for us after you finish your studies but following an interval of two months when you will be doing nothing and not get paid."

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The occasion does not arise in any other case.

HON J BOSSANO:

Then there is in fact inferior treatment for those who choose to study teaching as opposed to any other profession?

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has said that in the future he will look at these married cases more sympathetically, does that mean that he will commit himself that married people in the future will not be subjected to the same treatment as they have been this summer?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am not committing myself, I said I will look at it sympathetically.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think we should have an explanation, Mr Speaker. What exactly does he mean?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

You are not going to get an explanation.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Minister just two points, one is that if he is going to look at the matter sympathetically which to my mind can only mean payment of money, he should make sure it takes effect during 1979 so that those who have lost this year are compensated and, secondly, could I ask the Minister to look at the apparent unfairness of a contract made between the Government and the teacher under which the teacher is obliged to work for the Government for three years but the Government is not obliged to employ him? There seems to be again a certain amount of unfairness in that sort of contract.

31.10.79

No. 169 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Minister for Education state why play leaders have still not been engaged to organise the adventure playground and will he further state who is responsible for the organisation at the moment?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

A request was made in July to the Overseas Development Administration for the appointment of a UK playleader. However, the National Playing Fields Association who were contacted by ODA were not able to locate any suitable applicants.

Recruiting is now in the hands of ODA and it seems likely that an appointment will be made in the near future.

Once this aspect has been cleared, the Government will then be in a position to appoint a local trainee Youth and Community Worker to work as an understudy to the UK adviser.

The Director of Education is responsible for the organisation through the Principal Youth and Careers Officer.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 169 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I take it then that the trainee local person will be employed as soon as somebody is engaged from the United Kingdom, is that correct?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Sir.

31.10.79

No. 170 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government confirm whether negotiations have taken place with Doctors at the Health Centre to introduce an appointments system and if so what has been the result of these negotiations? May I say, Mr Speaker, that of course the Government communique was issued after the question had been put in and possibly because the question was put in.

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, am I entitled to reply to the irrelevancy he has just stated which has nothing to do with the question?

MR SPEAKER:

You are entitled to answer the question as you see fit.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Sir, the scheme should have started on the 5th October but because some Doctors were for some reason on leave and study leave and because the Director of Medical and Health Services was not here it was not introduced at the time. The communique had been sent to the Secretariat and Secretariat usually takes one or two days before they issue a communique that comes from Departments. When I saw the question I had the courtesy of phoning him up and saying; "Look, a communique is coming out and I don't want you to think that I am jumping the gun ;" but if he feels that he has been the one who has obtained this, good for him, because if it doesn't work he will take the responsibility. Now I will answer the question, Sir. Yes, Sir, discussions with the Health Centre doctors and staff have been successfully concluded and a new approach which has been approved by the Board of Management will come into operation on November 5th 1979. The main features are the introduction of an appointment system and a choice of doctors in order to aim at a better patient/doctor relationship.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 170 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister doesn't seem to be particularly confident that the system will work from his remarks just now. However, I would like to ask how will the appointment system work?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

The appointments will be done exactly the same as they are being done at the specialist clinics in the hospital, block appointments, so that there will always be a flow of patients. For every quarter of an hour three or four patients will be given an appointment and of course they will have to wait half an hour instead of the one and half hours they are waiting now but it would be block appointments so that if one doesn't come or two miss the appointment at least there will be some patients to carry on the chain, so to speak.

HON G T RESTANO:

Will there be any difference, Mr Speaker, between appointments made in advance and urgent cases? Is there any provision made for urgent cases who have to go to the Health Centre to be catered for outside the appointment system?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Urgent cases very rarely arise in general practice and urgent cases go to hospital but if there were to be an urgent case as in fact there was yesterday or the day before yesterday, the patient is seen as soon as possible and there is no necessity to make any appointment. Advance appointments of course can be made for any day or days in advance.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I just say, Mr Speaker, that I am very pleased to see that this appointment system has been brought into practice. I think it is going to be very good for Gibraltar and it is a pity it did not come a long time ago.

31.10.79

No. 171 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether it proposes to supply beepers for theatre staff at St Bernard's Hospital?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

At the moment the senior member of the Theatre Nursing Staff is provided with a beeper and he in turn calls the rest of the staff whenever they are required.

A beeper is a desirable equipment but not absolutely essential. Government is very reluctant as a matter of policy, to come to the House for monies to pay for equipment that was not originally included in the Estimates unless such equipment were to be absolutely vital and essential but is prepared to consider the issuing of beepers to the two members of the Theatre Staff in connection with next year's estimates.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 171 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Honourable Member aware that in fact the staff have been providing beepers at their own expense because of the usefulness of having such a system for the good of the patients?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Far from me from trying to detract or to belittle the use of the beeper, it is one of the consumer society refinements, but if I may explain to the Honourable Member how they work. Now, if you forget the beeper, we pay an on-call allowance and a telephone to someone who is supposed to be at the other end of the phone which admittedly he may be at the other end of another phone but he leaves a number. Now with the beeper you have got to phone the out-patients Department, out-patients Department phone Cable and Wireless, Cable and Wireless beeps the particular person who because he has the beeper hasn't got to be at home behind the phone and could be perhaps in Sandy Bay or perhaps in Queensway and then they have to rush to another phone to ask the hospital what is going on. A beeper has got its advantages and perhaps its disadvantages. The only thing I can say is that once the rest of the staff have been issued with beepers, I am prepared to give them beepers at the beginning of the next financial year.

31.10.79

No. 172 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what further measures are planned to improve the parking facilities at Moorish Castle Estate?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Some twenty extra parking spaces have been provided during the current financial year within the Moorish Castle Estate. It is planned to revise the parking layout and mark out the parking bays together with the banning of goods vehicles from overnight parking within the Estate. This should facilitate parking.

With the future transfer of certain MOD Quarters it may be possible to provide extra parking space at the northern end of the Estate.

31.10.79

No. 173 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Is there any reason why the cost of the removal and disposal of derelict cars should not be paid for by the owners of the same and not fall on taxpayers?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Under the Traffic Removal of Vehicles Regulations Chapter 154, the Commissioner of Police may charge a removal fee of £2. This fee is invariably never charged as in many instances owners have left Gibraltar abandoning their vehicles. Moreover it has been considered a matter of public interest to clear up this unsightly nuisance.

Up to October 1979 nearly 300 derelict cars have been disposed of (over 150 during the past two months).

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 173 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister aware that I was prompted to make this question because last time I was here there were about fifty derelict cars on the road? I wrote to the Commissioner of Police who in turn told me that the reason for the cars not being removed

MR SPEAKER:

No, you must ask questions.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Well, Mr Speaker, why then, if the system is good, as he says, why then round about August there were about fifty derelict cars on the road and I was told in writing by the Commissioner of Police that the reason for these cars not being removed was because the machinery available to do it was not available.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I think the Honourable Member is right for once, during his short stay in Gibraltar in August, it is absolutely true. The Police depend on a skip which is afforded to them by the PWD which during that particular month was out of action.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister explain why, is it short of cash? Why was it out of action? Couldn't we have ways of putting it right? Does it take so long for fifty cars to accumulate before the machinery was put right?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member without any doubt has lost contact with Gibraltar. We are disposing of 300 vehicles a year, which is virtually a vehicle a day, if he did see fifty vehicles it is roughly the period of one or two months. The skip is a particular lorry that is used for other things not only for picking up cars, but it was out of action for that particular month of August.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask is the removal fee of £2 related to cost and if not, why not?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, because legislation wasn't passed after parity. I think that legislation goes back to 1961, I think it was.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can we expect an amendment to the legislation and will the Minister give an assurance that the removal fee will be related to cost?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It could well be, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am asking for an assurance of that.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I can certainly give the House an assurance that this figure has been looked at by my colleague the Minister for Public Works in conjunction with the Police, but I don't really know if that would work.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has the Minister got an idea of the cost per car to public funds of the removal of a car, has he got any idea?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it depends entirely where the car is and the extent of the damage of the car, whether it can be towed away on its own wheels or has to be jacked up and hoisted up to a particular lorry. It would be difficult to give a figure, but I would assume that a figure of £10 would not be too high.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister tell us whether any effort is made to collect the present removal fee of £2?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I think I made it very clear in my answer by saying that invariably it is never collected.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is an attempt made to collect it, that is what I am asking.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

We have not, Mr Speaker, I don't think, ever charged £2 for moving any vehicles, we would much rather do it and get rid of it than charge the £2.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the Government can still get rid of it and charge afterwards, that is what I am asking, will the Government make an attempt to recover the cost of removing derelict cars?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, there are instances where many cars are left, as I said in answer to the general question, by people leaving Gibraltar and abandoning their vehicles, many of which are on MOD property and it would be difficult to collect.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, if they are on MOD property what is the point of disposing of them, either MOD should pay or it should be left on the MOD property. What is the point of disposing of a derelict vehicle on private property? Mr Speaker, are public funds being used to tidy up MOD property?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member may realise that MOD are in Gibraltar not Gibraltar within MOD. It is part of our duty as Government to keep Gibraltar tidy in its entirety and not excluding MOD property. They are also ratepayers.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, but MOD, I presume, don't run away so they can pay for the removal charge.

31.10.79

No. 174 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the flats placed on sale at Rosia Dale are intended for the average working man and if not for whom they are intended?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Government's intention was three-fold, (a) to kindle a desire for Home-Ownership which they feel is important for Gibraltar and attempt to sell the flats; (b) to recoup other flats left by those who purchased them for use for the continuing decanting process in accordance with the Modernisation Programme, and for applicants on the Waiting List and (c) to obtain funds to enable them to build more flats which would be allocated to applicants on the Waiting List.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 174 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Minister think that he has succeeded in kindling this desire to own flats by offering them at the payment of £300 a month?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the fact that the £300 a month has been mooted is only because that was the figure given by an enterprise, a financial enterprise, in what that kind of mortgage would cost, on 80% of the mortgage. It could be much less and it would depend entirely on the deposit each particular individual could of course put down as part of payment for the house, it would depend entirely on that.

HON J BOSSANO:

But when the Honourable Member went on television to inform the public of this new enterprise, what prospective market did he have in mind, Mr Speaker, who did he think his prospective purchasers were going to be, that is what I am trying to establish?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I know I am going to be dragged into an argument on this particular issue. I couldn't say it would be Mr Worker or Mr Capitalist on this issue but it is the figure that we were going on on the advice of the financial institution who offered that particular facility in loaning the money.

I am told of course that there are other facilities possibly less over a longer period. We were only at the particular time able to obtain information from one entity. I am sure the Honourable Member who is very well up on mathematics and on financial matters, is aware that there are building societies who can spread out for longer than fifteen years and of course this would diminish or cut down the monthly contribution.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am well aware of the reason why the Minister mentioned the figure, obviously that was the figure that was given to him by outside experts, but even with all my mathematical ability I am afraid I am baffled as to who he expected to be able to fork out the £300. When the Honourable Member knew that the sort of figure that people would have to pay to buy those houses was in the region of £300 a month and he decided that he would still go ahead, I am asking him, who did he expect to be the people who would take up his offer? Where did he expect them to come from? That is what I am asking, Mr Speaker. If it was the average working man that he expected to come rushing round his door with £300, fair enough, if it wasn't I want to know who he expected a response from?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, in a later question I think you will find a particular figure is asked for as to how many people have shown an interest in this and it may surprise the Honourable Member, but I would like to say the kind of person I expected to buy this kind of house was the kind of person who owns or pays two cars per month on the hire purchase system.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister, he has enunciated the three principles on which these flats were put for sale, can I ask the Minister how the Government justifies the use of money given by the Ministry of Overseas Development for housing in general to Gibraltar to meet the housing needs of Gibraltar in general, how the Government justifies allocation of these houses not on the basis of need, but on the basis of wealth, so that those who can afford will buy and those who cannot will have to content themselves with a house that is not new? Can the Government say how they justify that principle in this particular case of Rosia Dale?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I think it is more than justified in Government's attempt to try and be able to recoup suitable Government accommodation returned back to Government and let's be quite honest, we actually hoped that there were people who were able to return possibly even more than one house and provide

and return houses of lower rent which could suit people who couldn't afford the kind of rent that will be payable for Rosia Dale. In addition, Mr Speaker, the ODA were consulted in this and we were advised strongly by them to do it this way.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask the Honourable Member, judging from the answer he has given to my Honourable Friend it would appear that the number of people who can't afford these flats on a letting basis would be very small and, therefore, is it right to deprive somebody who can afford, for example, £40 a month or £50 a month for a new house but cannot afford £300 a month, is it fair to deprive that person who may be very high up in the housing list from obtaining a new house like so many of his fellow citizens have had over the last thirty years? In other words, is it fair to make the test means and not needs? Why has Government shifted fundamentally on this principle that has stood its ground in Gibraltar for thirty years?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it is, I think, quite the opposite view. Government has been trying to get people to buy Rosia Dale only if they can return adequate suitable accommodation which in turn we pass down to this poor Mr Man that the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition is talking about, who can afford £40 a month. That is what Government is trying to do, recouping and having a fairer share and putting housing stock to its maximum use and also have more funds available for further housing development. I don't think it is true to say that we would be helping the wealthy and ignoring the poor, quite the contrary, I think in recouping we would be helping the poor.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I think the Honourable Member misses the point which is that those who have been waiting on the housing list in bad accommodation for many years or overcrowded and have been waiting, those will be deprived of the opportunity of obtaining a new house because of means and will have to be satisfied with second-hand housing and that is the departure of the principle that has existed throughout the years.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I would like to ask the Government if this represents a fundamental change in basic policy towards saying that from now on new houses are going to be built for sale in order to recoup money to build more houses in which case, in fact, only the existing housing stock will be retained for renting, is that the policy?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, that is a more intelligent question, may I say. We have tried under the Home Ownership Scheme, not the Rosia Dale one, to try and sell flats and then we found . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not turn this into a debate. You are being asked a simple question, has Government changed its policy in order to build houses for sale instead of for allocation, it is as simple as that. The answer can be yes or no.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well, Mr Speaker, it is certainly no. This was an experimental case of an estate, to try and sell an estate.

31.10.79

No. 175 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Will Government state what it proposes to do about Rosia Dale Housing Development in view of the obvious injustice to persons on the waiting list following Government's decision to sell flats in this development at prices which only a comparatively small section of the community can afford?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The answer to the Hon Member's question is contained in my reply to Question No. 174.

Government does not accept the Questioner's view that it is an injustice to persons on the Waiting List. It is quite the opposite.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 175 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I don't want to labour the point too much, but can I remind the Minister that only this morning, in answer to a question put by me, the Hon the Financial and Development Secretary informed the House that for the period 1979/80, in housing, the Government had only spent £695,000 against an estimated £3m and does this not indicate that the housing priority list is likely to grow larger and larger and will he not agree that disposing of housing units actually available and ready for allocation in the manner that the Government proposes to do will do an injustice to those ordinary citizens of Gibraltar who would like, and I feel are entitled to have, a new house if they can pay the rent?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, absolutely no. The Honourable Member is insisting upon a new house. If he was aware of the housing situation in Gibraltar, I can assure the Hon Member that people want a house, not a new house.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister not agree that although there are, I haven't been in politics twenty years for nothing, that although there are a number of people who would settle for any sort of house, during the last twenty years the people on the housing priority list have wanted new houses and is it not a fact that people have stayed in the housing priority list longer than they need in order to get the right sort of new house?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, all I can say is that I can put it down to inexperience on the part of the Minister.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, what the Honourable Member may be referring to is that some people may want a house in a particular area of Gibraltar, but not a new house.

31.10.79

No. 176 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what is the estimated market value of the average flat at Rosia Dale and the price at which such a flat would be sold?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

It is difficult to give a figure for the market value of the flats at Rosia Dale but I would say that a fair estimate free from conditions is £33,000 for a 3RKB and £37,000 for a 4 RKB.

Government has offered to sell the flats at £22,922 for a 3 RKB and £26,461 for a 4 RKB which represents the actual cost of construction and £1,300 for the value of the land.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 176 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Government think then that the discount is a fair discount for the conditions that are being attached? Has that been worked out as a basis of the sort of value that people would be getting if they bought it weighing one thing against the other?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No Sir, this is just the actual cost of the building of the flats and the land factor incorporated and it was the lowest price that we could negotiate with ODA.

HON J BOSSANO:

In terms of resale of the flats, in fact, how would that work in respect of the Government buying any of those flats back? What would be the relationship between the price at which they would be sold and the price at which they would be bought back if the Government bought it back?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The same for the Government buying it back, Mr Speaker.

31.10.79

No. 177 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state how many applications have been received from existing Government tenants willing to give up their present accommodation for the purchase of flats at Rosia Dale, and also the total number of prospective buyers who have applied?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The answer to the first part of the question is two, who are willing to give up their present accommodation for the purchase of a flat at Rosia Dale and have signified that they have the resources to purchase. The total number of prospective buyers is 76.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 177 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

I must say I can't see how the Minister expected me to be surprised at two because then the Minister recognises that in my original question the prospective buyers that he expected have failed to materialise.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, the surprise I hoped to bring was that the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition couldn't believe that there were people in Gibraltar who were prepared to pay £300 a month for a mortgage, and in fact there seems to be 76 of those but they fail the conditions that Government has imposed of handing back suitable or adequate housing units.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could I therefore now in the light of that very clarifying answer which I think has thrown a lot of light into the argument, couldn't the Minister now accept and agree that the principle has shifted as far as the Government is concerned and instead of going to the people who need it, it is going to the people who can afford it?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, these are people who need the houses, very much so, but what they are returning is the 2-room and kitchen which is not considered by Government to be of a standard we can pass over in connection with our modernisation and decanting programme. They are people on the waiting list and people who very much want a house but cannot return adequate or suitable post-war housing which we continue to use.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So in fact what the Government is going to have is two classes of waiting list, one for the fellow with money who will get a good house and those who haven't got it will get a secondhand house, as my Honourable Friend quite rightly said.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, will Government state for how long Rosia Dale had been ready for allocation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It is not ready yet, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

In the view of that and in view of the response the Government has had, will Government now get on with the business of allocating the housing at Rosia Dale to people on the housing waiting list (a) to ensure that people are accommodated and (b) to ensure they get much needed revenue and not have pies in the sky about what they can get for their housing?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Government will sit down and consider whether we sell or not, I think I have my own views and Government has its own views, and then we will consider what reasonable rent will be demanded and when ready and handed over to the Public Works Department and then to Housing, we will decide if we allocate and when.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask the Minister to give the House an assurance (a) that the Government will now speedily decide its policy on Rosia Dale (b) will ensure that the housing is ready for allocation and (c) equally important to all the taxpayers in Gibraltar, that the Government starts getting revenue from that to meet its own deficit at the end of the year?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, you cannot get revenue by way of rent if the houses aren't ready for allocation. We can decide what we like and quickly but if the houses are not ready for allocation we cannot of course allocate and get revenue. We will, of course, decide in the very, very near future exactly what we will do with Rosia Dale.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask when the Government expects Rosia Dale to be ready for allocation and have the contract dates been met or have they not been met?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am led to believe, Mr Speaker, that Rosia Dale should be ready by the middle of next month.

HON P J ISOLA:

What is the contract date for completion?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I'm afraid I can't reply to that, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

Doesn't anybody know?

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister if in fact, given that only two people are in a position to give up the type of accommodation that the Government was hoping to recover, whether this is one of the crucial elements in this scheme, I mean, if this element is missing whether the Government will not take another very serious look at the whole thing?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Very much so, Mr Speaker, yes.

31.10.79

No. 178 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what proportion of a persons income Government considers should reasonably be spent on the purchase of a home for owner occupation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The Government has not decided as a matter of policy what proportion of a person's income should reasonably be spent on the purchase of a home for owner occupation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 178 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, wouldn't the Honourable Member agree with me that if the Government has got, as part of its manifesto, a commitment to foster owner occupation one of the first things it has to do is to establish the size of the market and in order to be able to establish the size of the market one of the things it has to do first of all is to decide as a matter of policy what it thinks people can afford to spend on buying their own houses otherwise it won't even know whether there is any prospect in Gibraltar of ever getting a scheme like this going. Wouldn't the Hon Member agree?

MR SPEAKER:

Your logic is completely and utterly right but it seems that they haven't, the answer has been no.

HON J BOSSANO:

Perhaps, if they failed, Mr Speaker, to exercise that logic, now with the benefit of hindsight the Honourable Member would give it some consideration, perhaps he can do that?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, there are two factors, one is that we are talking of the Home Ownership Scheme and not the Rosia Dale situation. We understand, Sir, that when seeking a mortgage from a bank, a monthly instalment for a loan will, as a general rule, not exceed 25% of the borrower's monthly income but I dare say that at the prices the Government mentioned in relation to the Home Ownership Scheme it can be easily deduced that over a period of fifteen years the sum of £4,000 or £5,000 would be very minimal on a monthly basis.

HON J BOSSANO:

The Honourable Member then is now saying that he has some idea, he is saying that in terms of the lending institutions the criteria of the lending institutions would be would 25%.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask the Minister why I wasn't told that the completion date for the Rosia Dale housing scheme was March, 1979, no one seemed to know? It does arise out of the question because Ministers have been saying in my previous supplementaries that it is not ready yet for allocation and so forth and I asked does anybody know what the completion date is and no one seemed to know and I find that in 1978 they told my Honourable Friend, Mr Bossano, in question no. 109 of 1978 that the completion date was March, 1979.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer to that is simple. They did not have the information in mind just now when the question was asked.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What is happening to the monitoring that the Chief Minister apparently said is going on?

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, this is a serious matter because we have been talking about loss of revenue to the Government, but may I ask, is there a penalty in the contract? Why hasn't it been completed in March, 1979, does the Minister know?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. The answer you were given to that question is a simple one, at the moment of asking they did not have the information at hand.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, may I respectfully suggest to the Ministers that if they are coming to the House to answer on Rosia Dale, especially four or five questions, I would expect them to know this sort of thing which is crucial to the answers they are giving.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, surely the Honourable Member has enough experience to know that because you raise a subject, unless it specifically relates to what you are going to ask you can't expect a

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Minister dealing with the allocation of housing to know what the question of penalties and the time of finishing is. He knows very well and he is playing to the little gallery that there is.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. This is the end of the matter. Next question.

31.10.79

No. 179 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether non-industrial Government employees are required to pay their rents as Government tenants by deduction from their salaries?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Yes Sir, they are.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 179 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Is this a condition of employment, Mr Speaker?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, under Financial Instruction, deduction of salaries, paragraph 70 (1) "In the absence of special circumstances, necessitating immediate payment, all amounts due from officers on account of contributions, advances, rent, etc, will be collected by means of deductions from salaries for which special columns are provided in the salary payment voucher. Industrials do have their rents deducted from salaries also if they so wish, they however, can opt out but they have to give four weeks notice to the Housing Department before doing so."

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the point that I am trying to elicit from the Government is in fact that this is a compulsory thing which the individual has got no right to opt out of, is that the case?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

In the case of non-industrials it is a condition of service, Sir, yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would this not in fact be in conflict with the Truck Ordinance that says that you cannot deduct money from people without their consent, Mr Speaker?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, that is not for me to know.

31.10.79

No. 180 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state for how long No. 14 Flat Bastion Road has been unoccupied and for what reason it has not yet been allocated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Property No. 14 Flat Bastion Road consists of 12 dwellings all of which are occupied and a wash-house which is being converted into a flat.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 180 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

For how long has that particular flat been unoccupied?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the completion of the conversion of the wash-house is being delayed on account of the fact that the roof of the structure above the wash-house which is being used as a fritters shop is faulty. I think it is just over two years that work has not been able to be done on this particular flat.

HON G T RESTANO:

Merely on account of the ceiling, Mr Speaker?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

There is some other little problem, Mr Speaker, which requires looking into but I understand that that matter is being looked at quickly.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does that constitute a major repair or not, Mr Speaker?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It does constitute a major repair, Mr Speaker, it is a conversion of a wash-house into a modernised flat and the roofs are leaking. It is a major job.

HON G T RESTANO:

Surely, the flat itself has already been converted and it is just the roof which, perhaps, needs repairs.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The problem really is, Mr Speaker, that the access to the roof of this particular dwelling requires entry through somebody's premises which is the matter of some controversy and until we get that straightened out I am afraid we cannot commence work.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does this mean, Mr Speaker, that there is water infiltrating from one dwelling into another dwelling?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It is the roof, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

The Minister first of all said they were unable to repair the roof because it meant going into somebody else's dwelling. Perhaps the Minister would like to expand on that, if it is just on ordinary roof of this particular flat which is wrong and it is in somebody else's dwelling, it is either in that other person's dwelling and there is a room on top or else there must be an open space in somebody else's dwelling, a garden or something, is that the case, Mr Speaker?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, it is that access to this particular wash-house can only be attained by going through a person's dwelling and that particular dwelling at the moment is under dispute and there are some problems.

HON G T RESTANO:

But, surely, Mr Speaker, to have a dwelling unoccupied for two years when work has already been done to modernise it seems to be ludicrous and I would ask the Minister to speed the process up immediately.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it has been unoccupied not for two years but I dare say fifty years, it has never been occupied, it is a wash-house which has been converted.

31.10.79

No. 181 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

In view of the obvious danger to young school children from the Boys' Comprehensive School inherent in taking the long route into Victoria Stadium, what prevents Government from giving access to school children to the Stadium by the entrance nearest to the Boys' Comprehensive School?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Government does not consider that crossing Bayside Road and walking on a pavement for a distance of some 100 yards presents a safety hazard to young school children from the Boys' Comprehensive School when they make use of the outdoor facilities at the Victoria Stadium only, ie football, athletics and hockey.

Entry to the indoor facilities is in fact allowed through a door opposite the school. Access to the outdoor facilities is not allowed through the 'side gate' opposite the school as this would mean that children would at all times have to cross the athletics track, surface drains and football pitches which would cause damage to the playing surfaces.

The danger of damage to the playing surface which are expensive to maintain, plus other difficulties such as control of access to the indoor facilities require that access to the outdoor pitches should continue to be from the Winston Churchill Avenue gate as has been the practice for the past eight years.

Government therefore considers that the present arrangement is both safe and necessary for the efficient running of the Victoria Stadium.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 181 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, what prevents school children who presumably are in charge of teachers, going in through the side gate and being directed to go round on the inside of the Stadium rather than subject them to obvious hazards. If you have a group of school children even going along the pavement next to a busy highway it is a hazard whether the Minister likes it or not which is unnecessary if there is a gate exactly opposite the school. Is there a certain amount of vested interest here that prevents this?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

To the last part of the question absolute rubbish, to the former I will answer. Mr Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member can go for himself and have a look at the Stadium. There is absolutely no room at all within the Stadium walls and the track, absolutely no room at all. The track today is but six inches away from the wall. There is absolutely no room at all for youngsters to walk in through that way without going on to the athletic track or the football pitches.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I won't refer to the Minister's answer in the same glowing terms as he refers to my question but can I ask the Minister, do they not walk across the athletic track at one point whichever way they go in?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Doesn't the athletic track go round the Stadium?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Sir, but there is a hockey pitch which doesn't go into it, sometimes they go to play hockey.

HON P J ISOLA:

What about when they play football?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

When they play football, Mr Speaker, they would go in but what the Hon Member must also realise is that the outdoor playing facilities are open for school use as from 9 o'clock in the morning. The indoor sports facilities open at 10 in the morning, I think we've all heard in the past about the time it takes to clean the indoor facilities. If access were allowed, and forgetting the damage that could be caused to the pitches, if you have the side gate open it would mean that access to the whole complex would be available and then we would have children running around in the complex and then we could have another little strike because our charwomen may not be very happy about seeing their work spoilt half an hour before they finish. I would also like to state, Mr Speaker, for the benefit of those who don't know, that the Victoria Stadium apart from its herring bone water collection is slightly sloped towards the west. It therefore means, Sir, that when it rains water is mainly concentrated particularly at the entrance. The ground may be fit, that is, the hockey pitch and the football pitch, but the athletic track where they would have to cross over, Sir, at that particular area of the side gate, would be in a very bad state and therefore ruin the ground.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, isn't this rather a case of obstinacy because can we not assume that teachers are endowed with a certain amount of common sense?

HON A J CANEPA:

Are they?

HON P J ISOLA:

If they were not, Mr Speaker, I would be rather worried about the school children. Is it not a fact that school children are, in fact, the best customers of the Stadium, they are the people who use those facilities most, and what good reasons can there be, Mr Speaker, for making everybody lose playing time, lose school time in going the other 100 yards if it is not necessary, is this not a case of real Stadium obstinacy?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, no, Sir. There is no more danger in crossing that particular road which has to be crossed whichever way you go in, than a school teacher taking 170 children, as has been the case, road racing, or taking the children as happens very frequently, to Landport basketball pitch, or Montagu Sea Bathing Pavilion.

31.10.79

No. 182 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

In view of the high overheads involved in bringing out teams from abroad to compete in Gibraltar, would Government not agree that its fee of 25% of the gross takings for the use of the Victoria Stadium is excessive and a deterrent to sporting associations from bringing out more sportsmen from abroad?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

No Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 182 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I thought that would be the sort of answer I would get. Can the Minister give me a reason for that answer, why does he not think it excessive, why does he not think it a deterrent?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I will give a reason. Government does not charge any fee for the use of any of the facilities at the Victoria Stadium. However, if any sporting association decides to charge an admission fee to obtain money to meet expenses in bringing out visiting teams or to raise revenue for themselves then, and only then, does Government expect to receive 25% of gross takings less approved deductible expenses, for example, the Police, turnstile attendants and refereeing fees, to partly offset administration costs and up-keep of the service it otherwise provides free of charge.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when one considers the indoor hall, when that is used and I would refer for example to the boxing matches that have been taking place over the last few months, has the Minister considered the expenses that these associations have to meet in bringing out these teams? Has he considered that they have to pay air fares? Has he considered at any time charging not 25% on the gross takings but looking into the net profit, if any, and then coming to an arrangement with the association and taking a cut out of that perhaps even 50% as the Honourable the Chief Minister has just said, it would be much fairer, I think, than 25% of the gross takings.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I don't agree at all. Boxing as the Honourable Member knows, attracts quite a large crowd and they do provide a figure of X towards Government on the basis of 25% and they are making 75%, and if they have to pay air fares for their fellow boxers coming out, I only hope that the other side when they invite Gibraltar will also pay our air fares because invariably I have found that we pay for teams coming in and also for our teams going out. Although I sympathise tremendously with sportsmen, I think that 25% of gross takings is not at all a bad deal. We have spent much, much more than that, Mr Speaker, in providing the facilities which includes, for instance, overtime.

HON G T RESTANO:

And the receptions.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I pay for those, Mr Speaker. The receptions at the Stadium are paid for by Horace Zammit and I have invited the Honourable Member so he has had a few whiskies on me.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, may I ask the Minister, we apologise for going into his little empire but we do feel, and may I ask him, is it Government policy to encourage visits by outside teams to Gibraltar, is it Government policy to encourage sport and in these circumstances is it not fair in view of the expenses that are inevitably involved in trying to persuade people to come to this tiny place, isolated as it is, in the Government taking a bigger cut in the net and not taking a cut in the gross which may leave the sport in a state of deficit on the particular event and therefore discourage them from bringing teams out? What is the Minister of Sport going to do, to keep his Victoria Stadium beautiful or to encourage sport and the practice of sport in Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, if the Honourable and Learned Leader of the Opposition can credit any Government providing more sporting activities over the past seven years than this Government and increasing sporting activities and promoting sporting activities than this Government has done then I would bow down. This Government has spared absolutely no measure at all to try and encourage and promote sport and I think it is possibly one of our greatest achievements.

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HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, may I confirm the assumption made by the Minister, no other Government in the last seven years has done more. There has been no other Government in the last seven years.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

31.10.79

No. 183 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider installation of traffic lights at key points during rush hours to relieve severe congestion?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The Police would be greatly relieved to have traffic lights installed at key points but in local circumstances it is considered greater congestion would be caused.

Police physically control the following junctions at rush periods:-

Cathedral Square
Main Street/Library Street
Secretary's Lane
Ragged Staff/Rosia Road junction
Waterport junction when school-children crossing

A Policeman is capable of judging the traffic flow from one street as compared with another, whereas traffic lights may hold up a long line of traffic on one street when the other connecting street or streets might have little or no traffic.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 183 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I think that is debatable, Mr Speaker, but there is at least one point where I have never seen a policeman in the days that I am here, and that is the one coming down towards Acmoda, the corner there, which in fact is a very dangerous one, that is, Europa Road coming down where the Queen's Cinema is. That to me, is a very dangerous place and I think traffic lights there would operate very well during rush hours. At other times of course you can have a winker and therefore there is not need for the lights to operate. I don't agree with the Minister's previous statement. My experience is that when there is a policeman regulating traffic it takes longer because people more or less judge the intervals but that is for the opinion of the Government. Could the Minister consider that particular point where I think in fact that if we don't do it fairly quickly there might be a serious accident.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I take the point, I don't think traffic lights would be the ideal but possibly the Commissioner of Police may be able to offer a proper controller at this particular area.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Of course, the other fact that perhaps the Minister should take into account is that the police are quite an expensive item of our estimates and the more we need for traffic, of course, the less there are available for other more important things.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I assume they would only be used for rush hours, Mr Speaker, not on a permanent point.

THE HON G T RESTANO

ORAL

Will Government give unemployment figures for the end of September broken down into sex and nationality and will Government further state how many young people who left school this summer are still without employment?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The figures at the end of September 1979 were as follows:-

			Sub-total	Total
BRITISH				
Adults	: Males	54		
	: Females	<u>26</u>	80	
Juveniles	: Males	20		
	Females	<u>24</u>	44	124
ALIENS				
Males		32		
Females		<u>3</u>	35	<u>35</u>
				<u>159</u>

Seven boys and twelve girls who left school this summer are still unemployed. These nineteen form part of the forty-four juveniles shown above.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 184 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is this figure not considerably higher than the normal unemployment figure of 124 British juveniles?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Mr Speaker, on the contrary, in fact, the total at this time last year was 168. The position is described to me by the Principal Youth and Careers Officer as very healthy at the moment.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, what is the comparison with the aliens at this time last year?

HON A J CANEPA:

At this time last year there were fewer aliens unemployed, 20.

31.10.79

No. 185 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Is Government aware that there is a real need in Gibraltar for club premises for pensioners and will Government provide appropriate premises centrally situated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

This matter, amongst others, was raised with me by the Gibraltar Youth Association, and the Juventud Socialista de Gibraltar when I met them at about this time last year following a petition which had been handed to me on the subject of pensioners and senior citizens generally.

Conscious of the need to provide club premises for pensioners, provision has been made in the past at new housing estates such as Moorish Castle, Glacis and Varyl Begg, where pensioners can meet and relax whilst at the same time not be entirely separated from the rest of the community.

Club facilities at Montagu Bastion were offered by the Gibraltar Youth Association for the use of pensioners, but I am given to understand that the offer was not taken up.

Recently also, the Catholic Community Centre has been making available premises where pensioners, who have formed themselves into an organisation may meet regularly and I understand the Rotary Club is studying a Community Service project on the subject.

Whilst agreeing, therefore, that it would be desirable to have premises centrally situated which could be used exclusively as a club for pensioners, I would not go as far as to say that this constitutes a real need. However, should suitable premises become available at any time, consideration would be given to using them for this purpose provided that there is no more pressing need for the premises.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 185 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister explain why he thinks there is not a real need?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think, Mr Speaker, that all the factors that I have outlined in my answer go through the extent to which we are catering throughout Gibraltar at the estates and by voluntary organisations for pensioners and because of what is being done I do not think that what the Honourable Member is after constitutes a real need. It is something which is desirable which we shall keep in mind and try to do but I don't think it is a real need.

31.10.79

No. 186 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

What is the current position with regard to the conversion of Mercury House and when is it envisaged that GBC will be able to become functional from there?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Work has been proceeding on the conversion of part of Mercury House since May last and it is hoped that GBC will be able to start operating from there in July 1980 as anticipated when the contract was awarded.

31.10.79

No. 187 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Has Government received an invitation to participate in the Madrid seminar currently under discussion and does Government intend to participate in the same either directly or indirectly?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No Sir.