

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

MEETING OF 5TH DECEMBER 1979

QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

(188 TO 236)

5.12.79

No. 188 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether it is the practice to ensure that all consumers have been issued with electricity and water bills for one month before those of the subsequent month begin to be issued?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes Sir. The sequence described by the Hon Member is the normal practice. However, we are now in a period of transition during which the billing process is being computerised and it is not always possible to adhere to such a sequence..

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 188 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would in fact the situation be or could the situation arise that one section of the community, for example, is getting the bills for one month while another section is still a couple of months behind, or is this not likely to happen?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the situation that the Honourable Member has described could occur. However, I have had discussions with the members of my staff to ensure that this will not occur when the computer comes on stream. The point is that with hand billing it takes a month or two months to get bills out. With the computer the bills can be got out within two days and we shall have to adjust our dispatch to ensure that they are not overtaken in the way the Honourable Member has described.

5.12.79

No. 189 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Are the Government their own insurers of Government Housing or are the same insured by insurance companies?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

On the advice of HMG conveyed by the then Colonial Office the Government has no insurance cover for any of its properties. It maintains its own insurance fund fed by annual contributions from the Consolidated Fund. The estimated value of the insurance fund is currently £400,000. As noted at (b) page 87 of the current Estimates the Government began a review of existing insurance arrangements earlier this year. Following consultation with the Crown Agents the Government is now in touch with them, regarding the possibility of taking out insurance cover against a major catastrophe.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 189 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Is a fire regarded as a major catastrophe?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, it depends upon the size of the fire. A fire that destroys a block of flats could fairly be described as a major catastrophe. One that destroyed only part of an office would not necessarily be so.

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying then that a fire such as occurred at the Government Secretariat would be covered by this insurance?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I also ask whether the decision to supply fire extinguishers to all Government tenants is related to the fact that the Government are their own insurers?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, this is an element in that if you have fire fighting equipment within a house or property of any kind in the United Kingdom, the premium is reduced because it is recognised that this equipment can cut down losses from fire.

5.12.79

No. 190 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Has Government advanced any monies to the Gibraltar Quarry Company Limited, other than funds emanating from ODA and if so, how much and on what terms?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir, the Government has not advanced any monies to the Gibraltar Quarry Company. Honourable Members will however recall that a sum of £1,000 was appropriated by this House in the course of the last budget session to take up the whole of the company's share capital. During the initial operating period of the company until it has itself had an opportunity to build up reserves and produce its first balance sheet, the Government has also provided the necessary guarantee to enable the company to obtain overdraft facilities for the purpose of meeting operation costs..

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 190 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I right, therefore, in saying that the position of this company is going to be exactly the same as that of GBC under which the Government bails it out if it is in trouble?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I don't think that this will be the exact position. The point is that once the company is able to produce its first balance sheet and present it to the bank, I think that there will be no need for the Government to stand behind it in guaranteeing its funds.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has the bank told the Government this, or is it the hope of the Government that the bank will advance to this company money without the need of a guarantee from the Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, it is expectation.

HON G T RESTANO:

For what amount is the guarantee that the Government has given?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, the overdraft limit is £40,000.



5.12.79

No. 191 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has the report now been received from the Staff Inspector in relation to the deck hands at the Port Department who have been on temporary employment for a considerable time and is it Government policy to accept all Staff Inspection Reports without reservation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Yes, the report was received on 7 November and is now under consideration.

2. As stated by the Hon Chief Minister during the second reading of the Supplementary Appropriation (1978/79) Bill on 26 June 1978, Government is committed to accept in full the findings arising out of the original staff inspections. There are certain clearly defined circumstances in which a report may be referred back.

3. Staff Inspection is a continuing process and, in the new procedure which has been established for future inspections, no provision is made for the automatic acceptance by the Government of the recommendation in staff inspection reports. The Government will therefore be free to implement reports or to implement parts and not others.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 191 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, has the report recommended that the deck hands on a temporary basis now be made permanent?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am sorry I am not in a position to answer that. I will look into the matter and supply the information.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is that because the Honourable Member does not wish to answer it or that he doesn't have the information available to him?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I don't have the information on that.

5.12.79

No. 192 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether it has now made a decision with regard to taking legal proceedings at the Varyl Begg Estate in view of the statement by the Attorney-General at the last meeting of the House that a decision could be expected in the next two weeks?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I did not in fact state at the last meeting of the House that a decision on legal proceedings could be expected in the next two weeks.

What I did say (inter alia) was that the Government has been advised on the question of liability, it had a view on the question of liability, it keeps in mind the question of legal proceedings, and that its objective is to procure the remedying of the defects and the sustaining of its legal rights.

I also said (and I think that this may be what the Honourable and Learned Member has in mind) that the point might arise very soon where the Government might have to proceed with legal proceedings.

Since the House last met, and in fact since before that occasion, we have been pursuing a line of action. At this stage we have not proceeded on legal proceedings, but that course is being kept under continuing consideration.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 192 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, it came to my notice since the last meeting that apparently in this contract there is provision for arbitration. Has the Government made a decision yet whether it will proceed by legal proceedings or by arbitration, at least could we have that answered?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, it is correct that under the terms of the contract there is a provision for arbitration and perhaps I can take this opportunity to clarify the meaning of the term legal proceedings. In the wider sense, of course, it would include arbitration and in my view arbitration is the proper initial step to take in proceedings. There is one other matter I would like to clarify, Sir. In the last meeting of the House I spoke about instituting legal proceedings. It is, in fact, the case that proposals for arbitration were made some considerable time ago but those proposals have not proceeded at this stage.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Honourable and Learned Attorney-General tell the House when something is going to be done about this? Do we have any idea?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am not ready yet to say proceedings are being proceeded with.

5.12.79

No. 193 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government state month by month on how many days in each month since September 1976 there have been power cuts up to and including November 30, 1979?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Yes. Power cuts have been required on the following days since September 1976.

November 1976	- 2 days
June 1977	- 1 day
July 1977	- 13 days
August 1977	- 7 days
October 1977	- 3 days
February 1978	- 2 days
April 1978	- 1 day
May 1978	- 1 day
July 1978	- 1 day
August 1978	- 2 days
September 1978	- 9 days
October 1978	- 3 days
January 1979	- 1 day
February 1979	- 1 day
September 1979	- 1 day
October 1979	- 8 days
November 1979	- 9 days

This amounts to a total of 65 days out of 1186, that is, just under 5.5% of the days involved. Of course, this does not mean that the town has been without supply for 5.5% of the time, nor does the answer make any differentiation between those days on which the restrictions have been rather light and those on which it has been necessary to share restrictions among several districts. I should clarify further that the above should not be interpreted as meaning that each district suffered interruptions on every one of the days mentioned above.

5.12.79

No. 194 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government make public the report of Messrs Preece, Cardew and Rider which was submitted in May 1976?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

No Sir. The matters dealt with in the Report are under continuing consideration and it would be premature to consider publication before firm decisions have been taken.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 194 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Government allow Members on this side of the House to have copies of the report?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, not for the time being.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government have something to hide? Have very sensible recommendations been made in that report which the Government has not taken up and are afraid that the people of Gibraltar should know?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Are there any military secrets attached to the report?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, for as long as the conduct of this House is based on the present system and the system of cooperation through Committee system is concerned, there are certain matters that must be the privilege of Government to decide when they are brought to the notice of the Opposition in the public interest but not in the interest of electioneering or of benefit for the purposes of the Opposition.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, since the report was received in May, 1976, and it is well over three years now, isn't that a long time for the Government to be giving consideration to this matter?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not with the calibre of the matter involved in the report.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Perhaps it is because of the incompetence of the Government.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, Mr Speaker, have any recommendations in that report not been followed by the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, the report covers provision for electricity till the year 2000 and it would be obvious to anybody, even a school child, that if that is the case there are many recommendations there which have not been implemented.

HON P J ISOLA:

The Minister, in his answer stated it would be premature. Can I ask the Minister in what way it would be premature to publish a report 3½ years old which has been considered by a Working Committee of the Government and by a joint Committee with the Ministry of Defence and on which the Minister made a statement at the last meeting of the House? In what way does he consider it premature to publish the report?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it is a huge report, it is still under consideration and it is not going to be published and that is the end of that. I have nothing further to say on this matter.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, may I thank the Minister for being slightly more frank in this reply than in the previous one. Is the position then of the Minister that he does not intend to publish this report at all, if that is so, very well, so be it, can I ask him that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have not said so, I have said that I will not publish this report to Members of the House for the time being.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can then the Minister tell us on what basis he says it would be premature? Is it because the Government has still not decided what to do about this report, is that the reason?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Mr Speaker, because there are many aspects of this report which we are looking at very seriously and we have not taken a final decision.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister, is it that the Government might be embarrassed by the publication of the report insofar as the Government has not taken measures recommended in that report and therefore can only blame itself for the present situation with regard to the power station?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the answer to that is, no.

5.12.79

No. 195 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government state what arrangements have been made since the announcement by the Chief Minister at the meeting of the House on 1 November 1979 for the installation of a new generator, and can Government state where the generator will be sited, whether the order for the same has been made and the cost thereof?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, with your permission, I will answer Question 195 and 197 together.

Discussions on the installation of the new generator have been held in Gibraltar with representatives of three of the major manufacturing firms. Representatives of another firm will be visiting Gibraltar shortly for similar discussions. Further advice from our Specialist Consultants, Messrs Preece, Cardew and Rider, will be required on this matter and on the long term problem as well. The selection of the site for the new generator will be made in the light of the information and advice obtained through these discussions and consultations. The Consultants have already been alerted to the situation and it is hoped that the formal terms of reference, which have been prepared and are under consideration, will be sent to them before the end of the year. The terms of reference will cover both the short and the long term problems which, obviously, are inter-related.

2. It is hoped that an order for the new generator will be placed within the next three months.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 195 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister state on what advice the Chief Minister at the eleventh hour at the last meeting decided that we would instal a generator within 18 months? On whose advice and why was this not stated in the Minister's statement and suddenly it came out on the adjournment?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, on the first part of the question this was arrived at due to advice from the department concerned. On the second part of the question I am afraid that the question itself does not arise out of this question.



HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Yes, it is, Mr Speaker, if I may say so. We are talking about the policy, short term and long term.

MR SPEAKER:

The supplementary is completely and utterly in order. Whether the Hon Member wishes to answer it or not is another matter.

HON P J ISOLA:

As the Minister has stated, three manufacturing companies have been to Gibraltar already. Can the Minister inform the House whether any of these companies have given an indication of how long it will take them to send a 5 megawatt generator to Gibraltar? Have any of them give us time factors?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, in fact, all of them have and the time concerned is all within the time mentioned by the Chief Minister in his statement to the House at the last meeting.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister intend to answer my question?

MR SPEAKER:

Does the Minister wish to answer?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has the Minister got no answer to my question? The Chief Minister drew it out of a hat at the last moment, just like that? When was the decision made, between the Minister making his statement and then later in the adjournment, was the decision made then?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

If the Minister had been in Gibraltar he would have heard my statement on television where I said that the matter was so important that it was left up to the Chief Minister to say and the matter had been on the cards for a very long time.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So, in fact, if I had not raised the matter at the adjournment the Chief Minister would have said nothing, is that correct? The Chief Minister would have said nothing at this meeting unless I had raised the matter at the adjournment?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I can answer for myself, I cannot answer for the Chief Minister.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Perhaps there is some difference between him and the Chief Minister. Is the policy of the Minister not really going hand-in-hand with that of the Chief Minister? Is that the situation of the Government today? Mr Speaker, I would like to know if there is any difference between . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Order. What would you like to know?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has said that he cannot answer for the Chief Minister, and here we obviously see a difference in policy. The statement said nothing about that new generator and suddenly the Chief Minister, on the adjournment, after really pressed by me, brought this out of a hat. I would like to know who advised him to do that in between the statement and his announcement. The Minister said that he cannot answer for the Chief Minister and I would like to know if there is, in fact, some difference in policy?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Sir, there is no difference in policy and this is all nonsense, absolute nonsense, like everything the Honourable and Gallant Member raises in this House after a trip from London. What has happened is that the Minister simply omitted to mention that fact, it was an important fact, and I gave the facts as it happened and that is the end. There is no difference and no amount of further questions will elicit any more information.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, wasn't that a real matter of substance that should certainly have gone into that statement, if that was the short term policy of the Government? Wouldn't the Minister agree that that is a matter of substance?

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister to be more specific on this question of the supply of the generator. Can he tell the House whether he got an estimate from any of the manufacturers as to the time it would take from the placing of an order for a new generator and its installation in Gibraltar by the company? Did anybody give a period of time for that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, and I have already answered this. The people we have consulted have said that they are able to put in a generator in the period stated by the Chief Minister in his statement at the House at the last meeting.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister be more specific? I am asking him did they give a time within which they would manufacture and deliver and instal from the time an order was placed, have they given a period of time, have they said 6 months, 12 months, 18 months from the date of order or 2 months? What period have they given?

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked a different question now. You gave an assurance that the generator could be installed within 18 months. What you are being asked now is whether the manufacturers have given you an estimate of time for delivery of the actual generator.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, there have been different time-tables with the different people concerned and the estimates vary, roughly, from 12 months to 18 months.

HON P J ISOLA:

So, therefore, Mr Speaker, am I right in saying that if an order is not made within a very short period of time, the generator will not be installed within a period of 18 months?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I would like to clarify my previous statement a little bit. Those 18 months include the 3 months in which we are going to place the order. The answer to the question of the Member opposite is that it is still within 12 to 18 months, depending on the manufacturer.

HON P J ISOLA:

So the Minister is confident that within 18 months we will have this 5 megawatt generator and he confirms and assures the House that we shall have it, is that the position?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The Minister is not only confident, he gives the House every assurance that you will have one.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, was the recommendation to instal a 5 megawatt generator one of the recommendations of Preece, Cardew and Rider report?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, as far as I remember from the actual report, I believe that the answer to that question is yes, that the 5 megawatt generator was the one I have stated, but I can check on these facts and answer to the Member opposite.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask why it has taken the Government then 3½ years to follow a recommendation which was made in May, 1976, and the failure of having adopted that recommendation has resulted in all the power cuts that we have been having? Will the Government reply to that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

In this report, Mr Speaker, there were many long and short term considerations which we have to consider seriously. We have been spending a lot of money, we do not gamble money away like the Members of the Opposition do and this is something that we will seriously consider, this is part of the report and all the report will be considered by Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister explain, Sir, why it was that the Government consultants, Preece, Cardew and Rider, took under a year to submit their recommendations about power development and the Government has taken 3½ years to implement a short term recommendation in that report. Can the Minister tell us that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, a short term recommendation has always been on the cards and in the last statement before the House I mentioned the Joint Consultative Council that merged with MOD and this is one of the short term measures which unfortunately MOD, for reasons which they have put forward, prefer to continue with its current and separate development programme, this is an unfortunate incident.

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, the Minister is not answering the question.

MR SPEAKER:

The Minister has answered the question, with due respect. The Minister has said that the installation of this generator has been decided upon as a result of the decision of the MOD not to cooperate with the local Government on the supply of electricity.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister say what that Joint Committee with the MOD has to do with the provision of a 5 megawatt generator because if I understood his statement properly in which he didn't mention the 5 megawatt, if I understood that one properly, the consultations with the MOD were in relation to the long term power development of Gibraltar of providing a desalination plant with a power station.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Mr Speaker, the consultations with the MOD involved both the short and the long term solutions.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state, Mr Speaker, the cost of the 5 megawatt generator in 1976, when the recommendation was made, and the cost today? How much is it costing the Gibraltar taxpayer to implement a recommendation that should have been implemented 3½ years ago now? Can the Minister tell us that and let the public then judge who is playing around with public funds.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, a facetious statement requires a facetious answer. He knows very well that it is impossible to state how much at short notice this generator is going to cost and, anyway, we have got a series of manufacturers that we are enquiring from and we don't know what price we are going to get from them. He knows this very well and this is just electioneering once again.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister agree, Mr Speaker, that definitely the price will have gone up very substantially between 1976 and 1979, taking into account the high degree of inflation?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the Honourable and Gallant Major Peliza will know that everything goes up including electric fires, cooking utensils which he knows very well and everything he sells.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. I will not have personal imputations in answers or questions, in any manner or form. We have got to keep the dignity of this House at a certain level. I have seen it happening twice today and I have not called the Minister's attention but I will, very seriously, next time it happens.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister answer the question, Mr Speaker? Is it not a fact that prices have gone up very substantially, regardless of what may have happened to other articles which we know are going up?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the normal trend of inflation makes every product go up and similarly the cost of a new generator and the cost of new generators will go up.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister agree that it must have gone up by 30% to 40% if not 50% in price?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. We are now getting away from the question. I think we have ventilated it sufficiently.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, has the Government not got the slightest idea of what a 5 megawatt generator is likely to cost today? Is the Minister telling us that the Government and its advisers have no idea what a new 5 megawatt generator costs and if that is the case can the Minister state on what basis they put £4m in the Improvement and Development Fund for Power Development? Was it just a figure that was thrown out as it came?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, we have an idea of how much the generator will cost but as we have said before there are several manufacturers, producing several types, we have not only to go into this, this is the short term process, we have to think of the long term process and as the short term process, is part of the long term process therefore we have to consider the whole matter as a global thing and therefore there is no point buying one generator from one firm. We are considering the possibility of a new Generating Station with new generators installed. Therefore the price structure may differ considerably from one generator to more than one generator.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is, in fact, the Minister saying that the present engines that we have, and is there any reason for wanting to change away from that particular manufacturer given that any new set it is obviously better to have of the existing make where the spares and so on could be used or part of one machine could be used for another?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Mr Bossano has asked a very good question. One of our major considerations is the fact that we have sets mainly of one type this is one of the considerations that Government will take into account.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has the Minister any idea of what that particular type of generator will cost?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, we would be prejudicing any other offers from any other manufacturer if we mentioned a figure in the House of Assembly.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister know anything about his Department?

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask where will that generator be installed?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have already answered that in my statement to the House.

MR SPEAKER:

It might help us if you repeat it again.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

"The selection of the site for the new generator will be made in the light of the information and advice obtained through these discussions and consultations." This refers to the specialist consultations of Messrs Preece, Cardew and Rider.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, if, as the Minister said earlier, Messrs Preece, Cardew and Rider originally in 1976 recommended the installation of a generator, did they not in their recommendations, say where it would be installed?

MR SPEAKER:

It seems they did not and we are now debating. We are now definitely going on to the next question.

5 12 79

No 196 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can the Government now give an assurance that there will be a continuous supply of electricity to consumers throughout the Christmas period?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

My statement of the 31st October 1979 informed the House that a definite possibility existed that restrictions might have to be imposed, as indeed happened on a number of occasions. A guarantee of no interruption in the supply of electricity is not usually given by any supply undertaking in the best of times and in the light of my earlier statement, firm guarantee of a continuous supply throughout the Christmas period cannot be given. However, efforts are being made to ensure that all plant is fully operational in anticipation of the Festivities.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 196 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In the circumstances would the Minister advise the housewives to do their Christmas cooking early, round about the beginning of December?

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I was not asking for guarantees, I was asking for an assurance, in other words, can the public of Gibraltar be reasonably assured that they will not be cut off on Christmas morning when the turkey is in the oven, in simple language, are we to be reasonably assured? I am not asking for signed guarantees and that no power station would ever do that, I am just asking, can the public of Gibraltar be reasonably assured by the Minister that they will be able to cook their Christmas turkey, for example?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the prospects are very good and the public of Gibraltar can be reasonably reassured that there will be no power cuts during the Festivities.



5 12 79

No 197 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR F J PELIZA

In view of the statement by the Minister for Municipal Services that the Gibraltar Government would now as a matter of first priority review the short and long term proposals for power development, can Government make a statement as to how far this consideration has gone?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Answered together with Question No 195/79.

5.12 79

No 198 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state, having regard to paragraph 16 of the statement made to the House by the Minister for Municipal Services at the meeting of the House of Assembly on 31 October 1979, whether the situation is no longer critical at the Power Station and whether normality has now returned?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Since my statement of the 31st October the situation at the Generating Station has improved considerably. Only two of the twelve engines are currently out of commission, one requiring work on alignment and regrouting and the other requiring normal but essential maintenance. Both sets are expected to be back in commission next week.

2. I would say that the situation at present cannot be described as critical and that normality has returned in the sense that no power cuts are envisaged at present. I must, of course, qualify this by saying that cuts could arise if unexpected failures of plant should occur.

3. I would add that certain members of the departmental work force have put in an immense number of hours in order to ensure that the work that has been required might be carried out as quickly as possible. I wish to place on record my appreciation of the special efforts made by those concerned.

4. Finally, I am glad to say that the Departmental Consultative Council is working well and this will assist towards the provision of a satisfactory service in the future.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 198 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am sure most members of the public will welcome the statement by the Minister that industrial relations appear to have returned to normal at the power station. Whether that has been due to the efforts of the Minister or the efforts of the Union involved, is a matter for speculation, of course.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Minister confirm that there was not a breakdown in industrial relations as such, in fact, during the previous situation and that, therefore, it is not a question that there has been a dispute which has been resolved, it is just that an

effort is being made by both sides to improve mutual understanding, isn't that the situation?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, the Hon Mr Bossano is quite right. There has never been a breakdown of relations except that now we have improved relations with the industrial staff.

HON P J ISOLA:

Did not the provision of a Joint Consultative Committee at the power station come about as a result of strained industrial relations, or else what was the need for it, can the Minister answer that question? I am asking the Minister if there were no strained industrial relations why was it necessary to put in a Joint Consultative Committee, or is Government keen on Committees everywhere?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the Departmental Consultative Council arose out of slightly different ideas of the working of the station by both industrials and the management. There was no industrial action.

HON P J ISOLA:

No one is suggesting there was, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

5 12 79

No 199 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government made an estimate of the cost to private landlords of providing fire extinguishers in each individual home in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The cost may vary depending on the make and size of the extinguisher selected by the landlord. Current prices are from £10 upwards.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 199 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say how many fire extinguishers are expected to be sold for....

MR SPEAKER:

Not under any circumstances. It is private landlords who are providing it. You have asked a question as to whether Government has made an estimate of the cost to private landlords. You have been given an answer which basically means that they have not. We must not go beyond the scope of the question.

HON G T RESTANO:

The only thing is, Mr Speaker, that I understood that legislation was to be passed to ensure that private landlords installed these fire extinguishers.

MR SPEAKER:

You are right in asking questions in so far as the provisions to be included in the legislation are concerned, but the question you are asking is the cost to private landlords.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would like to learn what number of fire extinguishers will be involved for private landlords?

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, to that extent you can ask.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I believe the question was, Mr Speaker, whether a survey had been done. A survey is being carried out at the moment but the Hon Member must remember that these are for private landlords and what we are providing at the moment is for Government-owned dwellings.

HON G T RESTANO:

The question was, since draft legislation is to be prepared...

MR SPEAKER:

The answer you have been given is that Government has made a survey in so far as the supply of fire extinguishers to Government buildings is concerned but they have not made a survey in so far as the supply of the fire extinguishers by private landlords. Is that correct?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

That is perfectly correct, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, since no survey has been made, can I ask the Government to make a survey?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We shall take the order now and carry it out immediately.

No 200 of 1979

5 12 79

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government state how often it will inspect fire extinguishers in Government houses and what will be the cost of such a service?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Inspections will be carried out annually. The inspections will be carried out by Fire Brigade personnel as part of their fire prevention duties and will be absorbed into the work routine, therefore there will be no additional cost.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 200 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister give us an assurance that there will be annual inspections because, if I remember correctly, when I asked a question about the fire hoses at the Alameda Housing Estate the Minister then said that there were annual inspection and in fact it was quite clear that there had been no inspection for many, many years. Can the Minister give us an assurance that there will be annual inspections from now on?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, we are now diverting to the fire hoses. If I remember rightly, I did say at a time that there were annual inspections and I think that there were annual inspections at the time, whatever the Member may wish to say, but I can give an assurance to the House that inspections will be carried out annually.

HON P J ISOLA:

How many visits will these involve? Will it not be well in the order of about 8,000? How many Government houses are there? Does the Minister know how many visits it will involve? I am surprised that it can be absorbed by the Fire Service.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If we had said it would cost more they would have said it was too expensive.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I cannot give the actual figures as I do not have them to hand. I can find out from the Chief Fire Officer and personally give the figures to the Hon Member but I am assured by the Chief Fire Officer that the Fire Brigade personnel can carry out these duties as part of their normal work routine.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will inspection be carried out just in Government houses or will it also apply to private houses?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

In the first place, Mr Speaker, we are providing this in Government houses. When the legislation is effective and passed then I am sure that the Fire Brigade will be able to absorb these further duties into part of their work routine. This will really mean the proper utilisation of the staff and, in fact, talking about the number of Government dwellings, we have 7,500 Government dwellings.

HON P J ISOLA:

I thank the Minister for telling us there are 7,500 Government dwellings. Is the Minister saying seriously to this House that the Fire Brigade, with its present staff, is going to be able to inspect something like thirty homes a day, is that what he is saying, without bringing the private housing in, with its present staff and its present responsibilities? I do not think anybody would believe that.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I think Honourable Members should at least give us credit occasionally for a little intelligence. All these matters have been thrashed out in Council of Ministers with the advice of the Chief Fire Officer who has given us the undertaking that the Minister is conveying to the House. The responsibility is the Minister's but since some of the questions are so childish I think I have to point out that Ministers' statements are made on the advice of Heads of Departments, particularly the technical departments.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

5 12 79

NO 201 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government state how many telephones are repaired daily in Gibraltar and how do these figures compare with numbers repaired three years ago?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The average number of telephones repaired daily in Gibraltar is 27. The number of telephones repaired in 1976 was 19. This represents an increase of 42%.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 201 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Government explain, if that is the case and if the answer is accurate, how it is that everybody complains now about the time it takes to repair their telephones and they did not complain three years ago?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, people have always complained when their telephone is out of action and is not repaired within a few days. However, the number of telephones in service in 1976 was 8,148. This compares with 9,000 in 1979 which is an increase, therefore, of 10.5%. There is one other aspect in that the industrial labour force at the external section which stood at 19 telecommunication mechanics in 1976, is at present at 18, therefore a decrease of one. We have a shortage of telecommunication mechanics at the present time.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it not in fact the case that a great deal of the delay in the faults is due to the fact that the repair work is not something that can be done to the household telephone as such which can be done in a fairly short space of time, but something wrong with the cables which require the use of a section of the telephone department which is even more short of staff than the Minister has suggested?



HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, telephone faults do not only cover repair of faults of the cable and the jointing work, it also involves cable faults and cable faults are by far the larger of the cause of faults and in fact a cable fault can put out 20, 30, 40 or 50 subscribers at a time, whereas a single telephone fault would just put out one or two in that particular section. The Honourable Member is right, we are short of staff as well in that particular section of the Department.

HON J BOSSANO:

In fact, particularly in that section, is it not the case?

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, we must be grateful to the Hon Mr Bossano for providing the answers to the Minister, but can I ask the Minister what he is doing to rectify that situation, or is that going to another firm of consultants?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the department is presently looking into new avenues of recruitment aimed at meeting the more complex equipment which is expected in the near future.

5 12 79

No 202 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government give reasons why it is that the Telephone Department does not seem able to cope with the demands made upon it by the subscribing public?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The demands made upon the Telephone Department by the subscribing public fall into three main areas:-

- a. installation of telephones and telephone systems;
- b. repair of faults;
- c. placing of international calls.

On a.: The installation of telephones has met with long delays due mainly to staff shortages and general lack of working cable pairs in both main and distribution cables.

On b.: Main cable faults have so far been less severe than the previous years. This has been due to an extent to the Replacement Programme, in which five Main Cables have now been replaced. There have been many line faults requiring the re-wiring or changing of complete drop-wire runs which has stretched the capacity of the external section and which is still causing serious concern. The reason for the delay in the repair of some lines suffering from this particular fault is the labour shortage presently being suffered.

On c.: The International Service is now functioning well and it is hoped that with the very recent employment of an additional five temporary trunk operators, the delays previously suffered on 00 and 95 will be alleviated to a large extent.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 202 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, what does Government intend to do to overcome the difficulties in a. and b.?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

On a., basically, as I explained in my previous answer, the real answer is to recruit more people and in fact I feel that the old avenue of recruitment of craftsmen from the

boy labourer grade is now inadequate and the department is hoping to attract some GCE'O' level entrants into its apprentice scheme. The successful outcome of this type of recruitment will enable the department to meet the future squarely. On the second one which we are talking about, cable faults, the obvious answer is the replacement of the old telephone cables by the new insulated type of cable which will continue for a number of years until all the old cables are gradually got rid of, we have the new insulated cables and much less faults.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister say if the International dialling in the exchange is now much alleviated, why it is that a subscriber who wants to call urgently knows he can have it provided he pays at double the rate? Is he aware of that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I think this is something that we put down in the regulations at the last Budget where we specified that for an urgent call a subscriber had to pay an extra amount to be able to get through straight away without any problem.

MR SPEAKER:

The principle is accepted. What you are being asked is why is it that by the mere payment of an extra charge you can get an immediate call?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Basically because if we take this urgent call, other calls have got to wait their turn.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, what I am asking the Minister is why if it is working properly, by which people would expect to get their call almost immediately, why if it is working properly it is necessary to charge people double if they want the call quickly?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I think the difference here is between the word "quickly" and "instantly". We are talking about an instant telephone call and this is what we are paying more for than the usual telephone call. We are requiring an instant telephone call and therefore other subscribers have to wait, the instant telephone call has got to be put through and the operator always does his best and they get it through within seconds and this is exactly what was provided for in the regulations.

5 12 79

NO 203 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

In view of the statement by the Minister at the last meeting of the House when speaking about International Subscriber Dialling equipment that costs were increasing daily, has Government now made a decision with regard to the ISD equipment to be used in Gibraltar and has an order been placed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

No decision can be taken with regard to the equipment to be used in Gibraltar for ISD until the British Post Office Consultants' Report is available. It is expected that the Consultant will arrive in Gibraltar in the next couple of weeks. He will be here for two months and the report will be produced as soon as possible thereafter.

5 12 79

NO 204 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state how long it is since the steel girders in some of the columns in the blocks in the Alameda Estate were exposed by the removal of the concrete covering?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

About two years ago, hair cracks were observed in the rendering on columns at Governor's Meadow House and Victoria House. Portions of non-structural concrete were removed. The surface of the columns at Victoria House, which were within the buildings, were re-rendered shortly afterwards.

Those at Governor's Meadow House, which are external and the work on which was therefore not urgent, will be dealt with in the near future.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 204 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Notwithstanding the fact that the work may not be urgent, does the Minister think it is reasonable to leave the steel girders exposed for two years?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I understand from my technical people that no harm is being done.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the fact that they look rustier after they are exposed than they did before happens to be a purely cosmetic thing, doesn't it, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

5 12 79

NO 205 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is Government aware that there is no external lighting between the two blocks at the North Gorge Hostel, nor is there any fencing or other protection for young children in the area?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

- A. Excluding the lights above the main entrance to the blocks, there is no other form of lighting between the blocks. We will be providing suitable lighting to the area in question in the near future.
- B. Chain link fencing is provided on the eastern side of Block 3 facing the gorge, and also on the southern end of Blocks 2 and 3 where, in addition to the chain link fencing, there is also a brick boundary wall. The contract provides for the erection of fencing on the north end of Block 1 and posts for this purpose have already been erected.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 205 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

First of all, on the lighting. When will the Government start installing the lights?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I should hope within the next two or three weeks, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not consider that the path which persons in the second block have to use to reach the ablutions at the back of that block is very dangerous, there is a steep incline and certainly without lighting and without fencing it could be a danger to limb? Would the Minister not make provision to have immediate lighting put up and fencing around that area?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I do not think there is very much danger that the fencing is not there, Sir, because one does not get as close to where the edge is. I would agree that the provision of lighting should be urgent and I will look into the matter.

5 12 79

NO 206 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state the cost so far of the paving works at the North end of Rosia Road and Alameda Estate and what is the area that has been actually paved?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

A token figure of £1,000 was provided in this year's Estimates to allow a start to be made on this section of unpaved footpath and it is proposed to complete the works in stages over the next 2/3 years. To date a sum of £995.27 has been spent and some 300 18" x 18" paving slabs have been laid.

It is considered from a safety standpoint that the works should proceed a little further southwards so that pedestrians may cross the road onto Rosia Promenade away from the bend in the road.

It is proposed to fund this small extension to this year's works from the General Road Maintenance Vote.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 206 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister aware that work seems to have started once and now is going again and is this go-stop-go business going to carry on?

MR SPEAKER:

This is inherent in the answer.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, what I am referring to is that you get the thing started and then everything is left there, then again it started, probably prompted by my question, I do not know, but now it is going ahead. Is the Minister intending at least to cover a particular stage and complete it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, this job has been classified as very low priority and labour is only used there when it is not required on other work.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister not realise that there are obstructions in that little bit now and again because of that and, in fact, it looks very messy.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

This area has not been dealt with for thirty years, I think we are now starting to get on with the job.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



5 12 79

NO 207 OF 1979

ORAL

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state for how long the repairs of paving at the North end of Rosia Road and Alameda Estate have been going on, why the work has stopped and when it is expected that the paving will be finished?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The works being carried out at Rosia Road are not repairs but a completely new pavement since this section of footpath was unpaved. The works are of low priority and labour is only employed there when available from other projects.

The works were stopped for some considerable time during the Feast of the Lamb.

As mentioned in my reply to Question 206 it is proposed to carry out the full paving works in stages over the next 2/3 years.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 207 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

There are places on that side of the pavement which are extremely narrow, is it necessary to take three years to do that?

MR SPEAKER:

I think the explanation has been given.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

On the question of does it take so long it is a question of are we going to put it in high enough priority to devote enough money to do the whole thing at once.

5 12 79

NO 208 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government take steps to remove building materials such as timber and sheet corrugated steel and cast iron pipes that have been left strewn in the Glacis Estate at ground floor level which constitutes a danger to young children as well as a nuisance?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

We can find no building materials at Glacis Estate other than those involved in current works.

If the Hon Member will inform me exactly where the materials he refers to in his question are located, I will immediately look into the matter of their removal.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 208 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I made it a point of going around yesterday and the material had been removed but it was there before, Mr Speaker, that is why he cannot find it. On that point, Mr Speaker, could the Minister look around that area and see if he could take away that slummish look it has at present perhaps by filling up the pot holes and things that are in the centre of the patios as well, I think, as a sort of square where water stagnates and I think that mosquitoes tend to breed.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, we are looking round the area and, in fact, we were actually washing down the area the other day and scrubbing it with detergent to make it look brighter.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Was that, perhaps, in preparation for my other visit?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, this was done following a meeting with the Glacis Tenants' Association with whom we cooperate very well.

5 12 79

NO 209 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Is Government aware that several doors to the refuse chutes at ground floor level in the Glacis Estate are missing and have not been re-fixed and does this not constitute health and danger hazards to persons and children in particular?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir, Government is aware that several ground floor timber doors to the refuse chutes in Glacis Estate are missing. These were found to be badly damaged and were removed. Some have already been replaced by steel doors, and further doors are scheduled to be manufactured at our workshops as soon as possible.

5 12 79

NO 210 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

What maintenance and cleaning does Government carry out in relation to the toilets at the Commercial Wharf and North Mole and is Government satisfied with their state?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

Three toilets are situated within the commercial port:-

One at the entrance to revenue enclosure next to the cubicles;

One at the elbow battery; and

One between Jetties Nos 1 and 2 and accessible from the main roadway.

The Port Department employs two Latrine Attendants, Monday to Friday during the hours of 8 to 5 and the latrines are kept clean. During the weekend one Latrine Attendant is on duty, on Saturdays from 8 to noon.

Maintenance is done, as and when required, by requisitions to Public Works Department. On inspection toilets have been found to be in a clean state.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 210 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister aware that if he were to go round the toilets and look.....

MR SPEAKER:

Order, I will not allow you to particularise. You have asked a general question and you have been given a general answer.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I think that the Minister has got a duty....

MR SPEAKER:

You might think what you like but I am calling you to order.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, could the Minister then see that the arrangement that he says exist are implemented more effectively because if we were to go round, Mr Speaker, he would see a lot of something I think which his Government is very much identified with.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. I will ask you to withdraw that.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I withdraw that.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

5 12 79

NO 211 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state the position with regard to the re-development at Casemates of the Government Hostel and what damage was done to the part reconstructed by recent heavy rains?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The progress to date on the rehabilitation of the Government Hostel at Casemates is as follows:-

The main roof has been stripped of existing asbestos sheets and defective timbers. Accumulated rubbish in the roof space has been removed. All the defective structural roof timbers have been replaced ready to receive the new asbestos cement sheets.

The Contractor stripped the roof in the belief that the new roof sheets would arrive in Gibraltar and be fixed before the winter rains. Due to delays in production at source, and shipping space, the sheets did not arrive as early as hoped. They were due to be dispatched from the UK on 2 December 1979.

The underground drainage system serving new kitchens, latrines, etc, at the rear of the main building has been completely renewed, with the exception of several small gully runs yet to be installed. Some redundant out-buildings have been demolished.

New potable and brackish water supply pipes have been installed to feed latrines, showers, new kitchens, etc.

Four first-floor dormitories are now complete each with their own kitchens, doors and windows replaced as necessary, vinyl sheet flooring laid and re-decorated throughout.

The four dormitories have all been electrically re-wired and work has commenced on the renewal of mains supply cables. Damage to finished work caused by the October heavy rainfall is as follows:-

DORMITORY 14 (occupied): Minor areas of flaking paint on walls and vaulted ceiling. These are isolated and do not appear to be causing the occupants any problems.

2.

DORMITORY 14 (not occupied): Since handover, paint has flaked in many areas. The Contractor has cleaned all these areas and recently no further flaking has occurred.

DORMITORIES 12 and 11 (handed over 30 Nov '79): These have a few minor isolated areas of flaking paint. The affected areas have been cleaned prior to handover.

It is almost certain that the flaking paint is attributed to the October heavy rainfall. There are signs of drips and penetration through the barrel vaults. This water will have carried with it soluble salts which are contained in the materials used to build the Casemates.

These salts have attacked the emulsion paint causing it to lose adhesion and this is deposited on floor, worktops, etc, as a fine white powder.

The ceilings and stonework were sealed before painting to bind the open texture of the surfaces. This was not a water repellent.

Unfortunately, the Contractor failed to take any precautions to prevent the ingress of water into the exposed roof slab and Government will, of course, if necessary, invoke the conditions of the contract, which includes a defects liability period of twelve months.

5 12 79

NO 212 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether sand is now being supplied in Gibraltar from domestic sources?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 212 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Can Government state since when it has been supplied from local sources?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

From the 9th of November, Sir.



5 12 79

NO 213 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether the refuse chutes at Alameda Estate are now back in operation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The refuse chutes at the Alameda Estate are being made operational, starting from Kingsway House and working up towards Governor's Meadow House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 213 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Are there any operational yet?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

None at the moment, Mr Speaker, in fact, work started a few days ago and it is Government's intention to condemn one of the two chutes in every block and we hope that within the next week one of the two chutes will become operational.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I thought the Hon Member at the last meeting of the House when he said that the refuse chutes would be operational shortly, I do not recall the Hon Member saying that they were going to condemn some of these chutes. What sort of effect is that going to have on refuse disposal in these blocks if you cut them by 50%?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the purpose of condemning one of the two chutes is to repair the condemned chute. In fact, we have to close one of them down at a time and allow one to be used whilst the other is under repair.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state how long this operation is likely to last, the full operation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Totally, Mr Speaker, doing all eight blocks at Alameda Estate, roughly, about one year.

5 12 79

NO 214 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Is Government aware of the large rubbish dump to the west of Moorish Castle Social Club at the entrance to the Moorish Castle Housing Estate, and why is not rubbish removed from this area?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Rubbish is removed from this area, as indeed from all other areas in Gibraltar, and there is certainly no accumulation of rubbish in the area he mentions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 214 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

I have seen it with my own eyes, Mr Speaker. Is it not a fact that this particular rubbish standing as it does as you go into the Moorish Castle Housing Estate on the right, is there not dispute as to whether that is taken away or not and meanwhile it accumulates? Can the Minister assure the House that there is no rubbish as you enter the Moorish Castle Housing Estate under the archway on the right?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I can assure the House that there is no rubbish at this particular stage. I am aware that when the Hon Member visited there and in consonance with his visit there was a lot of rubbish there. What happened there was that there was the arrival of certain Christmas goodies which required the unstuffing of certain cargo boxes which were placed there and removed by the actual shop owner himself.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Government aware that the rubbish that was there contrasted sharply with the words of wisdom that were spoken there at the time?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I assure the Hon Member that it was shop rubbish which was removed and although there are occasions when rubbish is accumulated there, the Warden Structure and the Public Works Department take particular care in alleviating the situation.

NO 215 OF 1979

5 12 79

THE HON P J ISOLA

ORAL

Can Government state the nature of the remedial works that are being carried out at Varyl Begg Estate and why it is that these works could not have been carried out three years ago?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The remedial works currently being carried out on the roof of two of the Varyl Begg blocks of flats are of a temporary nature.

These consist of the application of bitumen emulsion to the tiled flat roof areas and inner parapet walls as well as vertical faces of columns and duct walls rising above the flat roof area.

These temporary remedial works could not have been carried out three years ago, due to the fact that the nature of the defects was not known until June of this year. It was then that the third statement on the problems of the Varyl Begg roofs was received from the independent consultants, who are advising Government on the causes of the defects. This third statement, based on exploratory works carried out by the said independent consultants on the roof of Varyl Begg Estate, indicated what they have found to be the vulnerable areas.

The current works are in themselves exploratory and their effects can only be evaluated on the two blocks in question after the first heavy rains. Towards the end of August of this year proposals for a permanent solution were discussed in London and it was hoped that works leading to a permanent solution might have started before this winter. This is now seen as unlikely.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 215 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Government know the nature of the work that has to be carried out for a permanent solution?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As I have said before, Sir, we have been thinking towards the line of a pitched roof.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is the Government aware of what is required for a permanent solution and, if so, what is Government doing about it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have already said, Sir, that we are thinking that a permanent solution would best be obtained by the building of a pitched roof, I think the Hon Attorney-General has given the state of play in this question at the moment.

5 12 79

NO 216 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state what considerations, apart from a visit by a number of residents from the Varyl Begg Estate to the Chief Minister, finally decided the Government to take at long last remedial action at the Varyl Begg Estate?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

My answer to the last question explained the reason as to why it has not been possible over the last three years to attempt remedial works. A remedy cannot be applied if the causes are unknown.

I explained in my last answer that having identified the causes last June Government was working towards a permanent solution to the problem of the Varyl Begg Estate roofs in the hope that work on this might have commenced before the rainy season.

As this has not been possible, the Government is not taking other measures.

By using the evidence available to Government as from June of this year an attempt at a temporary solution is being put to the test. My Department cannot guarantee that this attempt is going to produce results.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 216 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Why has it taken, Mr Speaker, five months, since the cause was known?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because we had hoped that agreement was going to be forthcoming between the consultants and the contractors to start on a permanent solution some time before the rainy season had started and in the hope that that was going, no temporary solution was tried.

HON P J ISOLA:

What made the Government think that a dispute that has gone on for four years was so near to solution? What grounds did Government have to expect that the consultants and the contractors would come to an agreement on the matter?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As I said in a debate here some time ago following the intervention of Messrs Andrews, Kent and Stone as honest brokers, they were rather led to believe that the consultants and contractors were working towards a permanent solution on, perhaps, a more rapid procedure than has actually tended to be the case.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will the Government be paying for this or will the claim be put on to the contractors or consultants?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

At the moment Government is paying for it but it is being put in a suspense account and we hope we may be able to claim it back from the two protagonists concerned.

NO 217 OF 1979  
THE HON P J ISOLA

5 12 79

ORAL

What is the position with regard to the modernisation programme in relation to the Lime Kiln Steps with particular reference to phase 2 of the same?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

The second part of the current modernisation programme at Lime Kiln Steps and not phase 2 has been delayed by difficulties over the decanting of two tenants.

It is anticipated that these tenants will soon move out. The first part of the scheme is well advanced and will produce fifteen modernised flats. The second part will take about twenty months from commencement of work to complete and will result in another fifteen flats.

Phase 2 is not included in the 1978/81 Development Programme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 217 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it correct to say that if the Government had initially, when embarking on this development, decided to decant all the tenants affected by either phase, there would not be these serious problems of delay now?

HON A W SERFATY:

Most of the tenants were decanted and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition must remember the trouble that we have had with some of the tenants. There are still two tenants and we are hoping that within the next few days these tenants will move to decanting accommodation which has now been provided and which we hope they will accept within the next day or two.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member can make that answer, I suppose, that they will be shortly decanted because he will not be here presumably to answer any further questions on the matter.

MR SPEAKER:

We will have to wait and see. Next question.

5 12 79

No 218 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state whether the offer made to the liquidator of Dayfenn Ltd in regard to Engineer House has been accepted and if not what does Government propose to do about the position?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Government offer in regard to Engineer House is still being considered by the Liquidator. The second part of the question does not therefore arise at this stage.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 218 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Hasn't this been going on now, as we said I think in the last session, for years and years? Does the Minister foresee when this is likely to be concluded?

HON A W SERFATY:

We hope that the liquidator will soon make up his mind. He has now employed a local valuer so we are hoping there will be progress in the near future.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does he believe that this will happen before the general election?

MR SPEAKER:

That depends on when the general election is going to be held.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, a statement was made on this by the Hon and Learned Chief Minister and he undertook to let Members have copies of the statement, it might have helped if we had these before this meeting.



2.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I improvised a statement on information given and I was only given the copy of the Hansard recently. I have got it here and I will circulate it to Honourable Members.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

5 12 79

No 219 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government state why their plans for further housing development in Catalan Bay only comprise the construction of six units?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The number of dwellings that can be constructed at any given time depends on the funds then available and on the amount which can be allocated to any particular district in relation to the needs of the community as a whole. The availability of suitable sites is also an important factor. These considerations have dictated the Government's proposals for the construction of six dwellings at Catalan Bay under the current Development Programme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 219 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister not agree that the available space for development in Catalan Bay is extremely minimal and this area is perhaps the only one where real development can be made and would he not agree that by merely having six flats there, six units, he is not using the available space at an optimum value?

HON A. W SERFATY:

That is quite correct, as we are not using other available spaces in Gibraltar for housing, because funds are an important consideration.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I remember the Minister saying that he would be building sixteen flats in that area, why has he now come down to six?

HON A W SERFATY:

I cannot recall having committed the Government to building sixteen flats in Catalan Bay.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would refer the Minister to Question No 251 of 1977 where he said that there would be approximately sixteen.

MR SPEAKER:

Are you quoting from memory or are you quoting from Hansard?

HON G T RESTANO:

I am quoting, Mr Speaker, from Hansard. Approximately sixteen Medview type flats. Of course, he also said in answer to another question that the optimum capacity of the whole of the northern area would be fifteen units.

HON A W SERFATY:

Can you repeat that last sentence?

HON G T RESTANO:

"The optimum capacity of the whole of the northern area of the village now left for redevelopment is fifteen units." That was said in July 1978. Again, I would ask the Minister why if the optimum capacity is fifteen, he only proposes to build six?

HON A W SERFATY:

Yes, the optimum capacity can be fifteen or sixteen units but that does not mean that these fifteen units are going to be built in this or the next Development Programme.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would it not make sense to build the fifteen units rather than build six then perhaps build another nine in a year's time or three years' time?

HON A W SERFATY:

Maybe it would make sense to build more than six flats at this moment of time but it would have to be a political decision by the Government as to how many units we actually build at Catalan Bay in this Development Programme and this matter is being considered at the present moment of time.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask what numbers are there on the housing at Catalan Bay? How many people require flats there?

HON A W SERFATY:

The information that I have is that there are 30 people on the waiting list for housing out of a total of about 1,800. That is my present information.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Government be demolishing the building which has not yet been demolished, the one next to the two buildings which have been demolished?

HON A W SERFATY:

Not at the present moment of time. Eventually it will probably be demolished but not at the present moment of time. We have got about six tenants there and we really do not need this site at present for this Development Programme.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, has the Minister had meetings with the villagers?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not talk at cross purposes. The Minister has said that in the present Development Programme, in so far as the financial position is concerned, they can only build six flats and that they do not need to demolish this particular one for the building of those flats. We must not go beyond the scope of the question.

HON G T RESTANO:

The only thing was, Mr Speaker, and I refer to the Hansard of June 1978, the Minister said that he had had meetings with representatives of the villagers and he said that they were not unhappy at the proposed development of six. It has been made absolutely clear over the last few weeks that this is just not so.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to go now into the veracity of the statement made in 1978. That is another matter which you can bring up in another context.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister have meetings with the villagers to find out what their views are and not just his own, for the development of this site?

HON A W SERFATY:

I am having another meeting with representatives of Catalan Bay within the next few days.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister saying he is going to have another look with a view to revising the proposal upwards?

HON A W SERFATY:

No, Sir, what I have said is that I am meeting them at their request and I am always ready to meet people, why not?

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister, in view of the fact that this site, from what I hear from my Honourable Friend, is going to be cleared and is available and on this site you could build fifteen or sixteen units, why does the Government talk about financial constraints, as far as the Development Programme is concerned, in view of the fact that Government is not going to be able to spend the money that it has allocated in the current financial year for housing, the slippage there is enormous, why doesn't the Government get on and build in places where the site is ready for building and flats can be built?

HON A W SERFATY:

I, for one, am considering, I haven't taken this matter to Government yet, the possibility of not building just six flats, it is all a question of funds, of course, but building what Catalan Bay really requires at the present moment of time which is seven bedsitters, one four room, kitchen, bathroom flat, and two three room, kitchen, bathroom flat. This is what the technicians are now studying the possibility of building if we have the funds.

HON P J ISOLA:

That is what, additional?

HON A W SERFATY:

No, instead of the six flats. The present situation is that is what is needed is seven bedsitters, one four-roomed flat and two three-roomed flats, that is the present situation, and I will be delighted if Government were able to come to a decision of building these ten units.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, any increase in the amount is obviously a good thing and desirable. Why does the Minister talk of the question of money when the Government has provided £3m in 1979/80 for building of new housing and up to the half year they have only spent £700,000 so, therefore, why does not the Government build where it can, especially on sites that are available and not talk about financial constraints on a development programme which is grossly underspent.

HON A W SERFATY:

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition is talking of £3m. A lot of this housing is funded by the Ministry of Overseas Development, that is another aspect of the whole matter, and I can say that virtually the £13m which were.....

MR SPEAKER:

What you are being asked is a simple question. Since you have only spent £700,000 of the £3m. why don't you go on building where you can?

HON A W SERFATY:

The £3m. or whatever amount it is, Mr Speaker, has already been committed, it is already committed on other schemes.

HON P J ISOLA:

But which shall not come to fruition. Will Government, as a matter of urgency, substitute things that can be done quickly? The Minister himself is talking of substitution when he says "we are thinking in terms of substituting the six units by ten units". If there is flexibility why not go the whole hog, Mr Speaker, and thus ensure proper development in Catalan Bay?

HON A W SERFATY:

I consider the whole hog to be the provision of these ten units which are badly required.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

5 12 79

NO 220 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government state whether the Ministry of Overseas Development has now approved the additional expenditure involved in the projects of filling in between Nos 2 and 3 Jetties?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Yes, Sir. ODA approved a supplementary grant of £285,117, ie 90% of the amount required (£316,797) on 5 November 1979 to meet the additional estimated cost of the construction of a Container Berth between Nos 2 and 3 Jetties.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 220 of 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the tender now been accepted?

HON A W SERFATY:

Yes, Sir.

5 12 79

ORAL

NO 221 OF 1979

THE HON P J ISOLA

Have any applications yet been made for the carriage of mail and newspapers to Gibraltar on the days that scheduled aircraft do not operate?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services)

It is understood that the Civil Aviation Authority has been approached by one such operator who has been advised to make application. It is further understood that the application, if required, will be published and, if there is an objection, the matter will be decided at a public hearing.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 221 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Government support the application?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Fully.



5 12 79

No 222 of 1979

ORAL

HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether during the month of November the four positions dealing with postal matters and one dealing with Savings Bank transactions were fully manned throughout the month?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services)

The Savings Bank position was manned throughout the month. It was not possible to man all the other four positions throughout this time. The reason for this was that the officers in charge of the Sub-Post Offices were absent from duty throughout November, one on sick leave and the other on annual leave. This meant that staff from the Counter had to be deployed to cover these absences and this resulted in only three of the positions being manned.

5 12 79

No 223 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether there has been an improvement during the month of November in the carriage of mail to Gibraltar and whether non-delivery of mail has occurred on any day during the month of November?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services)

Mails on four days during November (the same as in October) has not arrived on scheduled flights, ie Wednesday 7th, Tuesday 13th, Friday 16th and Tuesday 27th November. The mail which was closed in London on the 7th was received on the 9th; that which was closed on the 13th was received on the 14th; that which was closed on the 16th was received on the 17th and that which was closed on the 27th was received on the 28th.

The Director of Postal Services telexed complaints to Overseas Postal Headquarters, London on the 8th November. This was followed by a letter in which the Headquarters were asked to ensure that all concerned in the despatch of mail for Gibraltar were made aware of the difficulties that were being experienced due to the non-arrival of mails on some days. The Headquarters replied that "instructions to forward Gibraltar mails by earlier trains to enable flight connections to be made had been overlooked on van schedules; that reminders had been issued and that inspection would be carried out." Apologies for failures were tendered.

5 12 79

NO 224 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

In view of the statement of the Minister at the last meeting of the House that an appointment would be made in the near future of a playleader to organise the adventure playground, can Government state whether such an appointment has yet been made?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

We have been informed by the Overseas Development Administration that interviews were to be held in London on Wednesday 28 November 1979.

2. An appointment should therefore be made shortly and it is expected that the Playleader will probably come to Gibraltar early in 1980.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 224 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Honourable Member give an assurance that the local trainee will be appointed immediately after the arrival of the Playleader?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the intention is that an appointment of the Playleader should be made and thereafter steps will be taken to appoint a trainee Playleader to understudy him during his time in Gibraltar.

5 12 79

NO 225 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what steps are being taken to remedy the loss and periodic shortages of linen at St Bernard's Hospital?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

The question is constantly under review and every effort is made to maintain inevitable losses at the lowest possible level. I am not aware that any patients have suffered through shortage of linen.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 225 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Minister aware that on a number of occasions the inconvenience caused by shortages of linen have been pointed out to the administration and that there seems to be some difficulty in finding a permanent solution to the problem?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, I am aware of that and I am told by the person dealing with this particular subject, that instead of having what they used to call a central linen stores they are now stocking up wards with five sheets per bed except in the case of KGV Hospital where they get a certain number of sheets for the number of beds they have got, I think it is two per bed, of course, and then they are issued with twenty per day. I accept that there are, not periodically, on certain occasions when late deliveries of linen or sheets that are ordered from the UK take longer than usual, there are certain inconveniences in that the stocking up of a particular ward goes down and they have got to rush to other wards to get some help.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Minister not aware that the difficulties with a constant supply of linen seems to have coincided with the transfer of the laundry to private industry from a Government operated operation?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I think I have been long enough in the Department, perhaps too long, to accept that in a big organisation like that, though I am not condoning it by any means, to lose about

2.

150 sheets a year or 200, the equivalent of about £500, is not considered to be something of a tragedy. The ideal thing would be to lose none at all and I accept that the losses might occur between the linen that is sent from hospitals to laundry and back as they are not counted because nurses refuse to count them and I feel that to employ a man costing £3,400 to save £500 is not worth the exercise.

5 12 79

NO 226 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the Children's Ward in St Bernard's Hospital is now fully operational and, if so, whether children are still being treated at the Royal Naval Hospital?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

The Children's Ward has been fully operational since mid June 1979 except that, as I have explained before in the House, tonsillectomies are carried out in the Naval Hospital. This gives us more elbow room for maximising facilities for other operations at St Bernard's and allow for more tonsillectomies to be carried out.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 226 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Minister is, in fact, saying that without the additional facilities in the Naval Hospital, they would be able to handle less volume of patients, is that the case?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

In a way, yes, for the simple reason that the theatre is used practically every day of the week and tonsillectomies is what is called a dirty operation and therefore if you do only tonsillectomies other patients will have to wait or else do an exercise to do only certain types of operations where you can fit in tonsillectomies, so by having tonsillectomies being done at the Naval Hospital two things happen. The first one is the one I have already stated, the maximising of facilities, the second, to keep the hospital working and I think it is very important for Gibraltar from the medical point of view and the political point of view that we should have a Naval Hospital presence in our city.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I just ask, perhaps, not a directly arising supplementary, but do we pay for the use of those facilities?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir, not at all.

5 12 79

NO 227 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Does Government not consider the provision of butane gas cylinders in the hospital kitchen under the Maternity Ward a safety hazard?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Sir, butane cylinders are stored in the hospital in accordance with the laid down UK code of practice and British Standards specifications following routine surveys carried out by the City Fire Brigade.

5 12 79

NO 228 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Has Government any plans to rehabilitate the mortuary at St Bernard's Hospital by providing more comfortable seating accommodation with heating and cooling systems so as to make the stay of relatives a little more comfortable?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Provision to rehabilitate the mortuary is included in the current year's Estimates.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 228 OF 1979

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister give an idea as to when we might see this happening?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I hope before the end of the financial year but I do not want to commit myself to any date because it is the responsibility of Public Works and the mortuary is a place which unfortunately is used very often and I am afraid that they have been on two or three occasions to start and they have not been able to because of the occupancy.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister realise that some of the residents might have died before the thing is completed?



5 12.79

NO 229 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is there any prospect that the Lewis Stagnetto Ward at the St Bernard's Hospital will be opened before the date of the next general election?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

As I do not know the date of the next General Election I am afraid that all I can say is that it will be opened when staff becomes available, as I have repeated on so many occasions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 229 OF 1979

HON G T RESTANO:

What staff is now required, Mr Speaker?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

At the last meeting of the Public Service Commission which was held about three weeks' ago, we were short of twenty and we were able to take twenty which will be coming on some time in December so provided we do not lose any nurses during that period it may be able to open it before Christmas, perhaps, but I do not commit myself to any date.

HON G T RESTANO:

Where are the geriatric patients at the moment being hospitalised, Mr Speaker?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I think I said that at the last meeting of the House the few geriatric patients that overflow from what used to be called Don Ward, and is now called Lady Begg Ward, are in Victoria Ward.

5 12 79

No 230 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what they propose to do to rectify the dangerous situation existing at the Glacis Estate as a result of installed traffic signs apparently being unenforceable?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The matter is with the Attorney-General's Chambers for the preparation of the necessary legislation.

5 12 79

NO 231 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government list the post-war flats standing empty as at 30 November and the length of time each flat has been unoccupied?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Post-War flats, with the exception of Varyl Begg Estate, standing empty at 30 November 1979 and the length of time each flat has been unoccupied are as follows:-

43 Tankerville House	-	26 June 1979 (now rehabilitated and on offer).
60 Kingsway House	-	8 August 1979
1 Inundation House	-	15 November 1979
81 Referendum House	-	15 November 1979
20 Coelho House	-	18 November 1979

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 231 OF 1979

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, will these houses being used as backup for the modernisation programme or will they be allocated through the Housing Allocation Committee?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, of the five houses I have mentioned the first one that I mentioned which I said had now been rehabilitated and on offer, is in connection with the decanting of Lime Kiln Steps which my colleague mentioned earlier on. The other four, I think, will be absorbed in connection with the modernisation programme of another area.

5 12 79

NO 232 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

What are the rents payable in respect of Rosia Dale accommodation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Rents for the accommodation at Rosia Dale are being worked out. They are expected to be in the region of £18 for a 3RKB, £23 for a 4RKB weekly. Bedsitters will be in the region of £10 weekly. All inclusive of rates.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 232 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister consider that these rents are well within the means of the average applicant on the housing list?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I cannot answer yes or no directly. I would say that Government has agreed that any person not being able to afford payment of these rents would not be prejudiced in as much as there are people who would opt to go to Rosia Dale and give up adequate post-war housing which would allow us to effect the necessary changes.

HON P J ISOLA:

In other words, housing will be allocated out of public funds, out of British Government assistance funds, only to those who are in the higher salary bracket, is that the position?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That is completely wrong, Mr Speaker. Persons on the waiting list, irrespective of their incomes, will be allocated Rosia Dale and upon them saying they are unable to afford it we will then find the necessary transfers to other people able to afford it, they will not be prejudiced at all.

HON P J ISOLA:

That is exactly what I am saying that, therefore, people who want new accommodation there will, in fact, be deprived of it, people who are entitled on pointage in the priority list, will not get a new house they will have to settle for a second hand house because the rents of Rosia Dale are well above the means of the average person on the housing list.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I would not agree, Sir, that they are above the average person on the housing list, Mr Speaker. Although Rosia Dale flats are, of course, much more expensive than the kind of rent that we have been accustomed to, let us not forget that there are people paying £14 or £15 in flats such as Humphreys and even more, so it is not completely true to say that they are above a person's possibilities of paying and what is more those rents will be frozen for three years so by that time they will not be very much ahead of other Estates.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does that mean that the rents of the other Estates could be raised?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well, I think it is possible, Mr Speaker.

5.12.79

No 233 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether the Rosia Dale flats have now been allocated and can Government state whether any applicants have had to decline the offer of accommodation due to lack of means and, if so, how many have been involved?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Offers to applicants who have qualified for the flats at Rosia Dale are in the process of being issued so there is no indication as yet of who will accept or decline.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 233 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I right in believing from that answer that all the flats have now been offered at Rosia Dale?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir, I have said that offers to applicants who have qualified for the flats at Rosia Dale are in the process of being issued. We have not, as yet, issued the offer to the successful applicants. It is only when the offer is made that the applicant has, of course, the option of accepting or refusing. We have not, as yet, offered any flats at Rosia Dale.

HON P J ISOLA:

What I am asking the Minister really is, are offers being issued now in respect of all the flats or are Government reserving flats?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, offers of all the flats at Rosia Dale will be made, I hope, shortly.

5 12 79

NO 234 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government state how many persons below and above retiring age are drawing supplementary benefits?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, in the first place I would like to make it clear that, for the purposes of this answer, Retirement Age is taken to be 65 for men and 60 for women.

Excluding dependants, the total number of persons in receipt of Supplementary Benefits is 407. Of these, 202 are above retirement age.

5 12 79

NO 235 of 1979

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government give figures for employed persons at the end of April 1979 broken down into Ministry of Defence, Department of the Environment and Gibraltar Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The number of persons employed in the Official Sector as at April 1979 was as follows:-

Ministry of Defence: 2,984

Department of the  
Environment: 819

Gibraltar Government: 3,393

7,196

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 235 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister state whether the Gibraltar Government proportion is now higher as at that date and at the same time the previous year, does the Minister know?

HON A J CANEPA:

This was a very specific question that the Honourable Mr Restano made arising from a question at the last meeting of the House and I have answered it specifically and I have not got any more supporting material other than the totals as between the private sector and the official sector but I am not able to relate it to the present situation.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister give that total as between the official and the private sector?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, I can give that. I mentioned at the end of the main answer that the total number of employees in the official sector was 7,196 and I can also add that in the private sector as at April 1979, there were 4,397 employed.



2.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It would not be possible to give a breakdown as to the number who might be employed with tourism in that field?

HON A J CANEPA:

I have got supporting information on nationalities. As regards industry I would refer the Honourable Member to the Employment Survey Report which I tabled at the end of October at that meeting, I think the information is there.

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NO 236 OF 1979

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

In view of the current uncertainty on the matter would the Chief Minister state whether he proposes that a general election will be held in Gibraltar in the early part of next year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

There is nothing I can say on the matter at this stage.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 236 OF 1979

HON P J ISOLA:

Does this mean that the Chief Minister is considering a general election in the early part of the year or that he has not yet been able to make up his mind, and what are the factors that inhibit him from making up his mind?

MR SPEAKER:

I am afraid that that question is completely and utterly out of order.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I would like to answer it, if I may.

MR SPEAKER:

You are free to do so if you wish.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am surprised that a former Member of the Integration with Britain Party would expect anybody, any Leader of any House, to give advance notice about the possibility of a general election. Coming from a former member of the IWBP it is more surprising.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It is not an idea, Mr Speaker, that we are asking for, it is, in fact, whether he is going to have a general election at all.

2.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is one due not later than the end of 1980.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is it correct to say that the Chief Minister would go for a dissolution of the House if he received adequate assurances from the Minister for Municipal Services about the power supply over the Christmas period?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will do everything possible to keep the speculation going.