HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

MEETING OF 25th March 1980

QUESTIONS

ANSWERS.

11 TO 120)

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government amend the Income Tax Ordinance so that wives in receipt of maintenance payments from their husbands for themselves and their children do not pay tax on those payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, the charging to tax of maintenance payments received by wives separated from their husbands was incorporated into the Ordinance in 1978 to correct an anomaly whereby alimony was chargeable to tax whereas maintenance payments were not.

Since both alimony and maintenance payments are allowable on the husband Government sees no reason why they should be exempt from tax in the hands of the person receiving them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 1 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, will the Government consider the obvious unfairness of a wife who is in a difficult enough situation being separated from her husband and having to provide for her children, receiving payments from the husband and then finding that those payments that she receives are not net? Would it not be fairer and more just that the position should be the same as when they were married, in other words, charge the tax on the husband and let the Courts take this into account when deciding what alimony or maintenance should be paid? Will the Government consider that situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government looked very carefully at this before the amendment was made. It is its view that the Court would take cognizance of the tax implications when a maintenance order is made.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact really that it is impossible to state on the part of the Court what exactly will be the tax payable and does not the Government consider that it is fairer that those problems should be on the lap of the husband rather than in the lap of a wife who usually as a result of the break up of her marriage is in a difficult enough situation in having to provide for the physical upbringing of the children of the marriage? Would Government give this another thought?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, my understanding is there is no reason why a Court in awarding the maintenance should not award a tax free amount which would then be agreed by the parties grossed up as to the actual amount that should be paid.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 2 OF 1980

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government make provision in the forthcoming budget so that persons in receipt of Elderly Persons Pensions receive them tax free?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

With your permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to answer this question and question No. 3 standing in the name of the Honourable Mr J Bossano, together.

Sir, in preparing for the budget the Government reviews all aspects of revenue raising measures. I take note of the Honourable Members' questions but I am sure they will understand that I cannot anticipate the budget. I would however point out that the question of Tax Free Pensions for elderly persons also raises important matters of principle which the Government are examining carefully.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 2 AND 3 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask the Government that when they consider the matter for the budget, will they take into account what the Chief Minister said on a teleivison programme known as 'Letterbox' prior to the elections, when a question was asked precisely in these terms, and he gave a knowing wink and nod that they would be dealing with it sympathetically?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, all aspects are taken into consideration. I would not wish to go further than that.

NO. 3 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government consider raising Personal Allowance under the Income Tax Ordinance in the forthcoming budget?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question No. 2 of 1980.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, will Government explain why it is that only persons with 20 years employment service are entitled to a tax free gratuity?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, tax free gratuities may be paid to any person whether in the public or private sector irrespective of length of service provided that the payment is made on retirement and is covered by the terms of an approved pension scheme.

The twenty year rule applies exclusively to employees of the Crown who terminate their employment other than by way of retirement. These gratuities are specifically exempt from tax because any service in excess of twenty years would not enhance the amount of the gratuity.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 4 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member say why it is that a person with less than 20 years employment with the Crown has a taxable gratuity?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, that is not necessarily the case. The questions that the tax authorities ask themselves in deciding whether or not a gratuity should be paid tax free is, has the person reached the end of his working life, in fact, is he retiring from work? If so, the gratuity is tax free. Secondly, is the gratuity linked to a pension? If so, it is tax free. So that a person with only 15 years service could retire and get a tax free pension. It depends upon the circumstances in every case.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Financial and Development Secretary not agree that some employees who do receive a tax free gratuity, in fact, get re-employed afterwards?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have no knowledge of such persons, it may be that they do, it may be that they don't, I don't know of any case of my own knowledge.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that in fact those persons who do pay tax from these gratuities are, compared with those who have them tax free, doubly penalised in that not only their gratuity is taxed but on top of that their salary for that year, their PAYE code, goes up because the gratuity is added as an annual increment for that particular year, so that on that particular year they pay far more tax on their salary because of the gratuity which is taxable.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Honourable Member explain why that is not so?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, the basic reason why tax is paid on gratuities is to get away from tax avoidance. It is possible, if gratuities were not taxed, for a person to receive a full salary over a period of 2 or 3 years, a large gratuity at the end of that period which, if all gratuities were tax free, would not be taxed and it is for this readon that to my knowledge most countries have a clause similar to that which we have in our Tax Ordinance. The question as to whether a person has to pay a higher rate of tax on his gratuity because it happens to be paid in the same year in which his service ends, is not necessarily unfair, it could be that the gratuity would be paid at a later date, as it were, after retirement.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 5 OF 1980

THE HON A J HAYNES

Does Government have any plans for improving facilities at the arrival hall at Waterport and is Government satisfied with the general conditions of the shed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is fully aware of conditions at the arrival hall at Waterport.

Funds are being made available for remedial works. The renovations will include works to the roof to prevent leaking.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 5 OF 1980

HON A J HAYNES:

Would other remedial works be considered other than to the roof?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I said that funds are being made available for remedial works. The inference is that other work, too, will be done.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, when will these remedial works be put into motion?

HON' FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As soon as the House has passed the next Estimates and funds are available, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, when the Hon Member said that Government is fully aware of the conditions, does that mean he is aware of the condition of the shed or the surrounding area and does he intend to improve facilities as well as carrying out remedial works?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, I am aware of the situation at the Waterport and the remedial measures being taken include not merely the work on the hall itself but also the arrangement for people entering Gibraltar.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Financial and Development Secretary deal as a matter of urgency, whatever else may be done, with the question of the toilets facilities in that area?

MR SPEAKER:

You will not answer that. We must be very careful about question time now. The Opposition are of course entitled to ask supplementaries but in the light of the number of questions we have had we will keep supplementaries to the particular matter affected by the question and this is outside that sphere. Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

In view of the fact that lotteries are only permitted in Gibraltar if sanctioned by the Government will Government take steps to prohibit the advertising of unauthorised foreign lotteries in local newspapers?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is an offence to print, publish or indeed to distribute any advertisement or any matter calculated to act as an inducement to participate in a lottery which has not been authorised under the provisions of the Gaming Ordinance.

Section 10(1)(c) of the Ordinance so stipulates. The advertising in local newspapers of unauthorised foreign lotteries is therefore in fact already prohibited.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 6 OF 1980

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, has any action been taken by Government as regards the advert appearing in the Chronicle on 15th March?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, yes, Sir. Immediately following the publication in the paper on the 15th March, a member of the Treasury pointed out to the newspaper concerned that the advertising of an unauthorised lottery constituted an offence. The newspaper confirmed that the advertisement was published in error and has given an assurance that similar advertisements will not be accepted in future. Arrangements have been made to bring the provisions of the Gaming Ordinance relating to foreign lotteries to the attention of all newspapers.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTAND

Will Government state the amounts outstanding in Electricity, Water and Telephone Bills per quarter broken down into 3 month periods up to and including September, 1979?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, the amounts outstanding in Electricity, Water and Telephone bills were as follows:-

Electricity

As	at	31st March 1979	£823,698.44
, tt ,,	11 -	30th June 1979	£766,346.62
u	v	30th September 1979	£754,284.02

Water

As	at	31st March 1979	£283,471.76
Ħ	11	30th June 1979	£323,341.19
ţţ	11	30th September 1979	£358,835.32

Telephone

As	at	31st	March 1979	£374,068.15
Ħ	it	30th	June 1979	£488,143.13
11	tt ·	30th	September 1979	£565,089.46

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 7 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, are there no amounts outstanding prior to the 31st March, 1979?

MR SPEAKER:

That is the amount outstanding up to the 31st March.

HON G T RESTANO:

I did ask in the question, Mr Speaker, broken down into 3 month periods. I would like to know what the amounts are outstanding, Mr Speaker, which have not been paid.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, at any moment of time amounts will be outstanding for bills. If I understand the Hon Member correctly, what in fact he is now asking is whether these amounts which in total were outstanding at the date that I have given, included amounts which have been outstanding for a period prior to that date. The answer is that those amounts do include certain sums which have been outstanding for some time.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could the Hon Member say more or less what amounts those are, approximately?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, no, I cannot and it would also be extremely expensive to go through each bill to find out what amounts were outstanding.

HON P J ISOLA:

This shows that there was something like £1½m outstanding on bills as at 30th September, 1979. I presume that figure does not include a large number of bills, because is it not a fact that when the Financial Secretary is talking about bills, I presume he is talking about bills actually issued as at that date, and is it not a fact that for many months before that date there have not been many bills issued in any of these 3 items, is that a fact or not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, to the best of my knowledge and the figures given to me, these amounts include the bills that were issued up to the period I have given, that is, 30th September would include bills issued for amounts up to that date.

HON P J ISOLA:

If the billing section was behind, as indeed it was by a number of months at that time of the year, the actual amount owing would in effect have been, would it not, considerably in excess of £ $1\frac{1}{2}$ m?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, it may have been but not necessarily because the figures could include the amounts and these figures are made up after the date. If the Hon Member had asked me on the 1st of October, 1979, the amounts outstanding as at the 30th September, it is true that these would not have included the amounts of bills not sent out for up to September but these figures are historic and therefore will have subsumed those amounts that were sent out for the period up to 30th September which issued after the 30th September.

NO. 8 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government state to what use, other than the processing of Electricity and Water Bills, will the computer be put?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, the initial task for the computer was the billing of Electricity and Water Services.

The aim is to issue all Municipal Bills ie Electricity, Water, Telephone and Rates in that order through the computer. Once this task is completed it is proposed to put on to the computer the wages of all industrial staff of the Government.

In the longer term it is intended to use the computer for the payment of monthly salaries, statistics, the control of stores and the production of income tax tables.

Subsequent targets will be selected after consultation with departments.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 8 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, are in fact all electricity and water bills now being processed by the computer?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, 60% of electricity and water consumers are on the computer, we hope that the remaining 40% will be on by July this year.

HON G T RESTANO:

And how long after that, Mr Speaker, will the wages and statistics and income tax be processed?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The next task, Mr Speaker, is telephone and rates and it will probably take about a year to get those on. The rest would be an ongoing programme, our programme is for three years.

NO. 9 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, would Government confirm that reminders are indeed being sent out on unpaid Electricity and Water Bills after three months and would Government not agree that except in certain areas of acute hardship three months is too long a period of time for credit to be given?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, I confirmed in answer to the Honourable Member's Question No 26/79 that reminders for payment of unpaid Electricity and Water Bills are sent out after 3 months. The Government is already considering measures to reduce the credit periods of 3 months.

NO. 10 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government consider inserting the date of reading in all Electricity and Water Bills?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, Electricity and Water Bills issued by the computer already incorporate the date of reading of the Bills. Monthly Bills not issued by the computer carry a stamp to denote the date of reading.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Is Government satisfied that the FCA formula represents a fair charge to the consumer having regard to the fact that the cost of light fuel oil represents the smaller percentage of energy generated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, sub-paragraph 5 of the first schedule to the Public Utility Undertakings Ordinance defines the average weighted cost of fuel and takes into account the fact that the majority of fuel used to generate electricity is of the less expensive thin fuel oil.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 11 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, may I ask, will the Government consider reverting to the old system of increasing electricity charges, doing away with the FCA formula altogether and putting up or putting down the price of electricity to the consumer once a year at budget time as is done with everything else?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, the provision of the FCA clause is incorporated into the majority of public undertakings in Western European countries, therefore, the Government is not disposed towards the feelings of the Hon Member opposite.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Is it a prerequisite of the awarding of aid from the ODA for constructional development that where possible, materials should be bought from sources in England and if so, will Government confirm that it keeps a very close watch to ensure that this requirement is observed with particular reference to specified items both in the original specification of any particular contract and in the contractor's offer at tendering time?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. ODA Development Aid is granted on condition that goods and services are procured from the United Kingdom save to the extent permitted by any general or specific waiver or as allowed by the ODA. The requirement is observed in respect of each and every project. Furthermore I am informed that this is one of the points which the Principal Auditor pays attention to when examining the United Kingdom Development Aid statements which are submitted annually.

2. The above rule does not apply to public works contracts over a specified monetary limit which in accordance with EEC Driectives give companies registered in EEC countries the right to tender.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 12 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

How does Government ensure that where items have been loosely specified within the specifications of the contract and not named as being of proprietary nature but rather a British Standards number quoted such specifications are indeed met particularly when items emanate from countries outside the United Kingdom?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is difficult to answer a question in such broad terms. What I would point out between building contracts generally the sand, cement, aggregate and timber have general waivers on the buy British.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 13 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government state the total amounts spent in development from the Improvement and Development Fund from 1st April 1979 to 29th February 1980 from (a) local funds (b) British Government Aid Funds?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the permission of the Hon Member I would like to deal with this question and the following question jointly.

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question No. 14 of 1980.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state how much has been actually spent on the Development Programme under the different Heads of Expenditure in the Improvement and Development Fund numbered 101 to 113 Head by Head between 1st April, 1979, and 29th February, 1980?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the Improvement and Development Fund recorded expenditure from 1st April, 1979, to 29th February, 1980, is:

	Head		£
101	Housing		1,163,423
102	Schools		429,284
103	Tourist Development		7,690
104	Miscellaneous Projects	•	715,688
105	General Services		190,734
106	Government Offices and	Buildings	247,907
107	Port Development		451,961
108	Marina Development		24,829
109	Public Lighting	,	4,077
110	Electricity Service	•	120,162
111	Potable Water Service		174,816
112.	Telephone Service		116,725
113	Police		NIL
			3,647,296

Of this amount £1,258,560 is from local funds and £2,388,736 from ODA Funds.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 13 AND 14 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask for those last two figures again?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The total expenditure to 29th February, 1980, is £3,647,296 and this is made up of local funds, £1,258,560; ODA funds £2,388,736.

HON P J ISOLA:

I don't suppose the Hon Financial and Development Secretary has handy the difference between the amount spent since 31st October 1979 and 29th February 1980 which was the last time I asked this question, the amount that has been spent since then, I don't know whether he has it handy?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the total expenditure to the 26th October 1979 was £1,667,531 so that we have spent slightly under £2m since that date.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is there any particular reason why quite a considerable amount more has been spent between October and February as opposed to 1st April to October?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Hon Member may recall that in answering Question No. 124 in October last year, I did mention that we had commitments of about £1.2m and the bills for those have now come in so that this is part of the reason why expenditure would appear to be heavier, because of the commitment factor. I have not been able to include in the figures from 1st April, 1979, to 29th February, 1980, the commitments which we have on projects because we have not received accounts from the Crown Agents.

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying, therefore, that from the Development Programme which commenced in 1978, if we take the £3m spent between 1978 and 1979 and the £3,600,000 referred now by the Financial and Development Secretary, am I right in saying, therefore, that of the total programme announced in 1978, April, amounting to £14m from United Kingdom funds and £8m from local funds making a total of £22m, in actual fact at the end of the second year of the 3-year programme we will have spent £6.6m, at least up to 29th February, 1980. Would that be factually correct?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are two points that I would like to make. First of all the £14m from ODA included £1m for technical cooperation which is not included in my figures because they are ODA figures and we don't have them. Secondly, whilst the Hon Member's arithmetic on actual expenditure is possibly correct, I haven't been able to check it, because it is not available, but it does not include commitments already entered into for work.

HON P J ISOLA:

I appreciate that, Mr Speaker, but can the Financial and Development Secretary assure the House that the amount estimated of roughly £22m up to 31st March, 1981, will be achieved bearing in mind that in a period of two years less than one third considerably less than one third, £6.6m has been spent, is there any hope of the Development Programme being substantially completed by 31st March, 1981?

MR SPEAKER:

I will allow a yes or no but no more. We are not going to debate the feasibility of spending this money within the period. This is question time.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I would merely like to say as I told the Hon Member in October that one cannot give any categorical assurances whatsoever on the Development Programme.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government consider the making of payments by way of compensation to those who have suffered quantifiable losses as a result of the present power cuts?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, no. Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 15 OF 1980

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, why not? Does Government not feel there is some element of responsibility which they should fulfil?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the legal position is governed by Section 11(a) of the Public Utility Undertakings Ordinance which reads as follows: "No action shall lie against the Government, or any servant or agent of the Government in respect of any injury, damage, loss or inconvenience forced by or arising directly or indirectly from any interruptions, defects, variations or discontinuance of the supply of electricity or from any breakdown of or accident to or defect in the Government's machinery or any other apparatus."

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, I am aware of this and that is why I am sure the Hon Member will agree that it needs Government's approbation for compensation to be made, and I ask for reasons for not giving compensation in this occasion when so many people have suffered quantifiable losses?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government has received no claims, the Government has received no enquiries.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would Government's attitude be different, Sir, if they were to receive enquiries and complaints?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I stated in answer to the Hon Member's original question, no, Sir.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

What proposals were put by Government to the Liquidators of Dayfenn Ltd with regard to the payment of compensation in lieu of the resale procedure for Engineer House and have these proposals been accepted?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the Liquidator appointed to deal with the affairs of L W Dayfenn (Gibraltar) Limited took over an enquiry which had been made in November 1977 to the Company's solicitors as to whether their clients would be prepared to surrender their residual interest in Engineer House in return for the payment of an appropriate sum as compensation and, if so, what amount the Company would be prepared to accept. An indication was also given of the conditions which would govern a resale of the property. Later, at the solicitor's request, an assessment of the value of the property was furnished by Government's valuer.

Following the appointment of a Liquidator sometime in October 1979, the engagement of a private qualified Valuer was agreed between the Official Receiver and the Liquidator in order to obtain from him a valuation of the site.

An estimate of value was submitted in January this year to the Liquidator by the local valuer engaged for this purpose. This was submitted to the Official Receiver and is now being considered by the Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 16 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister state exactly what this is?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think that I ought to state what the sum involved is as it could prejudice the outcome of the negotiations.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Bearing in mind that this has been going on for almost 10 years, could the Minister assure the House that some definite steps will be taken within the foreseeable future to ensure that that land is returned to Gibraltar?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think I can give that assurance, Mr Speaker.

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Does Government have any proposals for reprinting the Laws of Gibraltar so as to bring them up to date with the current legislation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Yes, Sir.

The need for a revision is accepted in principle. Council of Ministers in August 1978 approved a revision of the laws of Gibraltar in principle, subject to enquiries being made as to the availability of a person to undertake the work and as to the probable cost.

Because of other commitments, it has not yet been possible to make progress on this matter nor can I say when work will commence.

The revision of the laws will involve bringing in a suitable person, possibly on technical assistance, to be the revisor. The capital cost would probably have to be borne by the Government. I propose to put firm proposals to Government during this year with a view to being able to have the revision commenced in 1981.

In the meantime, work in my own chambers is proceeding for the reprinting of those individual statutes that have been extensively amended. In 1978 5 such Ordinances were reprinted. At present proofs for the revision of 4 more Ordinances have been completed and they will be reprinted shortly. Pending the revision of the laws as a whole, this process will continue.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 17 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Is it not a fact that it is impossible to buy a set of the laws of Gibraltar, and isn't that rather an alarming situation?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, it came to my notice following an enquiry from a practitioner just this week that the laws of Gibraltar evidently are not readily obtainable. I agree that is an undesirable situation and it is one which we will pursue.

HON P J ISOLA:

Should not that give the question of having the laws revised a certain urgency because it would seem to me that if the revision is not going to be put in hand until 1981, it will be 1983 before anybody can buy a set of the laws of Gibraltar?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

All I can say, Mr Speaker, is that I accept completely in principle the need for a revision and obviously the availability of the statute law is a most important matter. I am reluctant to give a firm commitment to have a reprint done before then when I can't myself see the way clear to getting it done earlier.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Is Government responsible for the unsightly barrier obstructing the movement of pedestrians on the pavement along Main Street north of where Cannon Lane joins Main Street and for how long has this barrier been in this position?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, if the Honourable Member has no objection, I propose to answer this question with but after question number 19.

The barrier outside the premises at 197/201 Main Street was put there by the Government in September 1978 to protect passers-by from the danger caused by the state of the building.

The barrier now needs replacing and the Government has notified the owners that under section 43 of the Public Health Ordinance close boarded hoards or fences to the satisfaction of the Government should be put up to separate the building from the street and should be maintained in good condition until the Government otherwise requires.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 18 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is there any reason why the Government hasn't taken action in this respect before? I have brought it to the notice of this House before that that is a real eyesore to Gibraltar right in the middle of our town. Why hasn't the Government taken action before?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, this matter has to be looked at in the wider context of the building generally. Over the last year the Government has taken action. The Government's concern immediately has been to prevent danger to the public.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But doesn't the Hon the Attorney-General realise that that in itself is a danger in that pedestrians have to come down from the pavement at a point in Main Street which is really dangerous because of the narrowness of the street and the amount of traffic going round and the fact that it has taken over two years for the Government to do anything about it. Is there any particular reason why this is so?

HON ATTORNEY -GENERAL:

On the first part of the question, Mr Speaker, the obstruction in Main Street is not substantial and I don't accept that the danger caused by the barrier exceeds the danger caused by the building. Insofar as the second part of the question, I think my answer originally indicated that we are pursuing this matter.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I say that on this side of the House we accept that the barrier is less dangerous than the building but this doesn't really satisfy us at all. May I ask from the Attorney-General for an assurance that there will be no parking allowed next to the barrier and enforced because not only do pedestrians have to go off the pavement there but they also have to go round a car that may be parked there, so will the Attorney-General on the question of the barrier, give the House an assurance that the Police will be asked to make it safe for pedestrians?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, what I will do is to give an assurance that I will ask the Police to look at this desirability of controlling traffic in that area because of the barrier.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would it be possible to have another barrier making a sort of channel?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. We are not going into the possible solutions of the problem.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, are we going to allow that danger to continue there?

MR SPEAKER:

You have brought to the notice of the House the danger that exists but let us not go into the intricacies of the solution to the problem

HON P J ISOLA:

My Honourable Friend did ask for how long the barrier had been in that position, do we happen to have a date?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think I answered both to the last questions raised by the Opposition dealing first with the first question, I have already indicated that the Government is taking steps to require an alternative hoarding to be put up. In answer to the second question, I did say at the outset 'that this barrier was put up in September, 1978.

NO. 19 OF 1980

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, if I may have leave then to answer the second question first.

The Hon Member will recall that a nuisance order was made by the Supreme Court on 29 October last year. This required the owners within 60 days to repair the building in such a manner as to render any recurrence of the danger unlikely within 5 years. or alternatively to demolish the building.

The owners then took steps to demolish the property to the first floor level, thereby minimising the immediate danger to the public.

In February of this year, it was brought to the notice of my chambers that unauthorised building works were taking place on the premises. These were inspected and condemned as dangerous, and a stoppage order was served.

We are awaiting a report from the Chief Environmental Health Officer and the Surveyor and Planning Secretary. On receipt of this, it is intended to apply to the Supreme Court for further directions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 19 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Why is it now necessary to have a report from an Environmental Inspector? Surely the Government knew perfectly well in October, when this question was last raised, that the owners of the property had sixty days and the Hon and Learned the Attorney-General did give the House an assurance that appropriate action would be taken if the Court Order was not carried out by the landlord, so I would like to know why is there now a necessity to have a further report, surely Government knew before taking the matter to Court in the first place what was necessary to be done?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the further report is necessary to assess the implications of the further building that is taking place and before that building started we were not in a position to assess.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Attorney-General, is there not provision under the Public Health Ordinance for the Government to move in on a property which it considers to be in a dangerous state and so forth after giving the owner a reasonable time in which to put things right and I would suggest that $2\frac{1}{2}$ years is plenty of time and then charging the owner for the work done? Isn't there some sort of provision in the Public Health Ordinance for this?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, if I can answer the question, there are three aspects to the matter. One is, of course, that we can go to Court and get a Court Order, the second is that there is provision for the Government itself to take action in cases of urgency and the third aspect is that the Government can reclaim the costs reasonably incurred by it in taking action. This case has had all three elements in it throughout. We have always taken the line, I think, that the responsibility rests with the owner. It is his primary liability. Whereever matters have reached a stage where it has become really dangerous the Government has taken steps to ameliorate the danger. We went to the Supreme Court in October last year to get an Order, the terms of which required to render it safe for five years and we are now in the process of follow up action arising out of that Order. We have not lost sight of the question of expenses, we are in the process of itemising the expenses in a future date and we will be issuing a writ to recover this.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

In view of the statement that appeared in the press in early January to the effect that the Consultants of the Government to the Varyl Begg Project would be making proposals for the settlement of this long outstanding matter, can Government state whether:— (a) there has been any actual agreement reached as to liability between the Government, the Builders and the Consultants? (b) when work will actually begin at Varyl Begg Estate and is this dependent on whether there is agreement or not between the parties in dispute on the matter?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, I propose to answer the 2 questions raised within this question in reverse order if I may.

Government decided in principle in January of this year to proceed with the erection of pitched roofs at the Varyl Begg Estate. Since then the preparation of detailed plans and specifications and costing of this work has proceeded. It is anticipated that work will commence at the Estate on the roofs by June.

Agreement has not been reached yet between the parties as to liability. In deciding to proceed with the work on the roofs, the Government has reserved its legal rights. Discussions on the question of liability are likely to be held next month. It should be understood that there is other remedial work to be undertaken at the Estate. Action is also being taken to deal with such work. Discussions on liability will be directed towards a comprehensive resolution of the problem

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 20 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I right then, Sir, in saying that the Government is now doing what the Opposition asked the Government to do over two years ago and which the Government said it could not do, and that is to start doing the work and let the liability issue sort itself out later, is that not what the Hon and Learned Attorney-General has just answered?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, if I may reply to the question. The Government is now doing what it considers proper to be done at this stage.

HON P J ISOLA:

But may I ask the Attorney-General, does he not agree with me that what the Government is now doing is what the Opposition asked it to do well over two years go? Is that not a fact?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I do not agree with the Honourable Member that the idea had merit two years ago. The first thing to be ascertained was what was causing the leaks, and as I think I have said before it wasn't until May or June last year that we were in a position where we felt this had been adequately investigated.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, if it was discovered in May or June why wasn't work started then, or is time not a factor in the Government thinking except when there is an election about?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Time is a factor, we are working as quickly as we can.

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I right in thinking, Sir, that when the Government announced that work would begin in the Spring, that the work that they were referring to is the work that the Hon and Learned the Attorney-General now tells us will start in June, and is June Spring?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, it is the same work. There has been an element of slippage, I agree but it is the same work.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can Government state whether the pitched roofs will allow for laundry to be hung on top of them, are they flattened and will they also include a new floor?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Sir, I can only say that laundry could be put on the pitched roofs at the person's own risk.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, I take it then that the roofs will not be flat. My second question was concerned with the matter will a new floor be included under the pitched roof?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, it will be a roof over the existing roof, there won't be a new floor.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 21 OF 1980

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, in view of Government's statement made before and during the Election campaign that work on the roofs of Varyl Begg Estate would commence in the Spring of this year, can Government state in detail and specifically what is the work that will commence and who is to pay for the cost of this work?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the Consultants have designed a pitched roof to be constructed with universal steel beams, aluminium joists and aluminium sheeting.

It is proposed to undertake the conversion to pitched roofs block by block, starting first with the buildings most seriously affected.

The rest of the question has, I think, already been answered in relation to the previous question (20/80) by the Hon Leader of the Opposition.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 21 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, from what I understood from the previous question, the Government is going to leave till later to discuss the question of liability, can I ask the Government since it appears that the Government will be paying for this work initially, can I ask the Government what steps it is taking to bring this four year dispute to a conclusion? Is the Government proposing to issue legal proceedings, is the Government giving a time limit to the various parties involved before they do, is the Government going to seek arbitration? Does the Honourable and Learned Attorney-General not consider that it is time that the Government gave time limits and decided on what action it is going to take?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the position is that the Government is determined to proceed with the conversion to the pitched roofs. I have not said at this stage that the Government will pay for the cost of pitched roofs. The present position is that the Government intends before June to have further discussions with the other parties with a view to resolving the matter and that I should stress is a separate matter from its decision to proceed with the roofs but at this stage I cannot really comment further on what the position will be in those negotiations. I will, of course, still be here in May and June to answer further questions on this subject.

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, but is it not a fact, Sir, that discussions have been going on as to who is to pay for this for the last four years? Hasn't the Government now, even this Government, come to the conclusion that discussions are not likely to bring a solution and that because discussions are not likely to bring a solution the Government is being forced to do what it said it would not do and that is start work until the liability has been decided?

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, I understand that the order in which these houses or buildings will be repaired is in the order in which they are most seriously affected. Can the Government state which buildings are considered to be most seriously affected?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think I would require notice of that question to enable me to give you a considered answer. What I have said is a statement in principle that the Government would work starting with the most seriously affected building and working down.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Consultants that are designing these pitched roofs, are they the same Consultants that designed the original blocks?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the answer is yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Government confident that they are not going to make the same mistake as they made in their original design?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The Government is satisfied with the proposals.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I assume that if they are satisfied with the proposal and then the pitched roofs don't work, on this occasion the Government will bear the liability, will it?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, when I said the Government is satisfied with the proposals I mean this, that the Government was satisfied that the proposals seemed reasonable. We will of course hold the parties involved in the preparation of the roofs liable in the normal way but there is no reason at this stage to suppose that the roofs will not be effective.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Government on this occasion not repeat the mistake that they made on the last occasion of doing all the roofs before they decide to test whether the new roofs are more effective than the old ones, given that on the last occasion when it looked as if there was a defect in the first block, Mr Speaker, the Government did not agree that this was the case until the whole Estate was finished?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the considered view of the Government's technical advisers is that the pitched roofs will provide an adequate remedy. Perhaps I could say this without detracting from that, that if the work proceeds building by building it follows, of course, that the first building will be one on which they can see how progress is being made and will give an opportunity to consider the matter as it progresses in case minor matters need remedying.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I take it then, Mr Speaker, that there will be a period to see the effectiveness of the result on the first building before the second one is proceeded with or not?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, my comment was qualified by my opening remark, namely, that on the advice that the Government has available, we think that the roofs will be satisfactory.

HON J BOSSANO:

The advice that the Government has available, Mr Speaker, is independent advice to the advice of the Consultants, is that the case, and it concurs with the view of the Consultants, is that a fact?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

We have some advice from other Consultants, we have the opinions of our own Public Works technical men.

HON J BOSSANO:

And they agree, Mr Speaker, with the design produced by the Consultants, is that the case? They do not have any misgivings about any possible improvements that might be required which are not being introduced?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They raised some points and modifications were made.

HON G T RESTANO:

What is the estimated length of time for the completion of the whole project?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The estimated length of time for all blocks is approximately 18 months but that may be able to be brought forward if it were possible to proceed on more than one block at a time. The rate is one block per month assuming one crane in use, if two cranes could be made available then it may be possible to work at a rate of two blocks a month which will halve the time, but that is an estimate.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could the Hon and Learned Attorney-General say what the total cost estimated for these pitched roofs will be?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the plans and specifications for these roofs have been prepared and are in the process of being costed so I am not in a position to say yet.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 22 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state what the cost of putting temporary roofs on each block at Varyl Begg Estate came to?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Temporary roofs have not been put on each block at Varyl Begg Estate. If the Hon Leader of the Opposition is referring to the application of waterproofing material at Varyl Begg Estate carried out last November, then the answer is that the flat roofs of two blocks, Valiant House and Royal Sovereign House were treated with bitumen emulsion and a fibreglass membrane at a total cost of £6,851.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does Government propose to provide within the Medical Service for a separate budget to enable Matron to plan ahead the provision of secondment of staff to UK on refresher courses?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Sir, it is established departmental practice for financial provision to be made for staff to be seconded to the United Kingdom hospitals to undergo training courses.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 23 OF 1980

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government propose to create a budget which will enable the Matron to know the resources available and plan ahead the provision of additional refresher courses to those that have been standard practice in the past?

HON J. B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government at this present moment is in fact satisfied with the present procedure under which provision is made under Subhead 17 dealing with courses of training in the United Kingdom. The Government is satisfied with the present situation.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is Government increasing the complement of clerical staff at the hospital to enable necessary secretarial help to be available for the nursing office?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Recommendations on this matter, together with other questions connected with the Nursing profession, are currently under consideration.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 24 OF 1980

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say how much longer they are likely to be under consideration before he is likely to have come up with a policy decision on the matter?

HON J B PEREZ:

I think, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member well knows that this is a matter which is shortly to be discussed at a departmental meeting level. Following the meeting with the Staff Associations the Government will take a decision on the matter.

ORAL

NO. 25 OF 1980

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is secretarial assistance now being provided for the nursing school at St Bernard's Hospital?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Yes, Sir.

NO. 26 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

When does Government propose to provide for an additional Clerical Officer to cater with the high volume of work in the Health Centre Records Office?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Because of representations about the high volume of work at the Health Centre, the Clerical structure at the Records Office is currently under review.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 26 OF 1980

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, has the matter been under review for some time now, or is the review now starting?

HON J B PEREZ:

As far as I am aware the review is now starting.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, how, in fact, are the records kept at the Health Centre?

MR SPEAKER:

No. next question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can I put it this way. I would like to know are the records kept by patient or by

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are talking about staff not how the records are kept. We must not expand the scope of the question. Next question.

NO, 27 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state whether the nurses establishment is now at full-strength?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Yes Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 27 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

So there is no requirement for additional nurses, is that correct?

HON J B PEREZ:

The answer to the question is, yes, Sir, the establishment is now at full-strength.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has Government now examined the range of non-nursing duties being carried out by nurses of all grades?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

This question was fully discussed when the 1974 Nurses Agreement was under consideration and the results were incorporated in the Final Agreement. If the Hon Member has any additional information on the subject I would be grateful if he would bring this to my notice.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 28 OF 1980

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that in fact what the 1974 Agreement provides for is a range of nursing duties which are apart from those normally carried out by the grades concerned and that therefore nurses at a given grade get paid an allowance for undertaking duties of a higher grade and that the duties that I am talking about in my question refers to non-nursing duties?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I took the question to mean non-nursing duties in connection with extra duty allowance which is payable to some nurses who undertake work over and above what their United Kingdom counterparts do.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Member look into those duties which are not nursing duties as such and not in fact those duties which are of the higher order of nursing for which people are at present being compensated by an additional allowance?

HON J B PEREZ:

I will do so.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government takena decision with regard to the recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee that an Accounting Cadre in the civil service be formed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. The Public Accounts Committee's recommendation has been examined in depth by the Treasury and the Establishment Division. On balance it is considered that the setting up of an Accounting Cadre would be too inflexible an arrangement within so small a Public Service and that the same results might be achieved by less formal means which are being examined.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 29 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, what are these 'less formal means'?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The less formal means would be that one would have specialists in accounting working in departments who would be within the general cadre and who could expect promotion within the general clerical and executive cadre. The experience elsewhere with small services broken up into small cadres is that promotion prospects are restricted and this leads to great discontent in the service and clearly the Government has considered very carefully the recommendation by the Public Accounts Committee and is aiming at achieving the results desired by a slightly different and less formal means.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask whether this decision was taken after consultation with the Clerical Association?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, no decision has yet been taken. I have merely stated that the Government is considering setting up and clearly before any definitive decision is taken the Staff Associations will be consulted. I would add, Sir, that in our consultations we have, of course, taken the advice of the Principal Auditor.

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, I know it is difficult for the Establishment to accept change especially when change has been recommended by an outside body, but surely the Government must be aware on the effect that lack of accounting expertise is having generally on the efficiency of its administration and of its departments, and surely the Government is aware that the recommendation for the establishment of an Accounting Cadre was put forward in order to try and bring some efficiency into that part of Government administration and will Government not reject this outright unless it has some alternative that will improve the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, sir, this is not a question of the establishment rejecting advice from any quarter whether from inside or outside the service, but merely looking at the practicality of the situation. My personal experience with an Accounting Cadre in a service the size of that in Gibraltar is that after four years it proved totally unworkable and we had to revert to a general cadre with specialists in finance. Clearly, as I indicated in my answer, we have taken seriously the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee and what we are trying to achieve are the same results without a formalised Accounting Cadre.

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I right then in thinking that the Government proposes to try and have specialists in finance and accounting, make arrangements to have specialists not just in the Treasury but throughout the whole spectrum of Government departments?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

NO. 30 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

What steps will Government be taking to improve the role and functions of the Audit Section in the light of the representations it has received from GGCA and its specialist adviser Mr Jefferson?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, the functions of the Principal Auditor are prescribed by section 70 of the Constitution. Supplemental provisions are contained in other enactments, principally the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Act 1977.

The GGCA has indicated orally to Government that it intends to submit written representations on the staff structure of the Audit office. As yet they have not been received. The Government will consider them when they are submitted.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 30 OF 1980

HON J BOSSANO:

Did the Government, in fact, not receive representations during Mr Jefferson's visit to Gibraltar as to ways in which the carrying out of the function of the Audit section could be improved upon to bring it more into line with United Kingdom practice?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL: -

So far as he advised the GGCA I think yes, the scope of what he advised them on went perhaps rather wider than the staff structure as such but also the manner in which work may be undertaken. That, of course, must remain within the ultimate confines that the functions of the Audit office is laid down constitutionally. As I say, at this stage the fact that the representations are going to be made has been intimated orally and written representations are awaited.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Medical and Health Services say how many patients on average are making use of the Physiotherapy Department weekly as compared to the same time last year and how many qualified Physiotherapists are employed at the moment?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, it could be quite misleading to compare figures for a period of one week only or even longer periods. However, for the first two months of 1979-1980 the relative figures were 303 and 416 per week. Again these figures must be related to time taken in the treatment of individual patients as treatments can vary from 10 minutes to 45 minutes.

In answer to the second part there are two fully qualified Physiotherapists in the Department.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 31 OF 1980

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government intend taking on any extra Physiotherapists in view of the fact that more and more patients are making use of this department of the hospital?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government at this present moment of time is satisfied that the current work load is adequately catered for by the present two full-time Physiotherapists.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, yet with an increased workload of 25% there is a decrease in the staff of 33½%. Until some two months ago the staff and the Physiotherapy Department was 3 qualified Physiotherapists. Is the Government satisfied with this state of affairs?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the Hon Member is wrong in saying that there is one less Physiotherapist employed at the department. The position was that in 1979 we had in fact two parttimers and one full-time Physiotherapist and the position today in 1980 is that we have two full-time Physiotherapists, so therefore in 1979 there were two part-timers making one body and now we have two full-timers which is two bodies. I would repeat the answer to the first supplementary and that is that Government is satisifed with the present situation. However, I would say that should the workload increase we shall look into the matter further.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is the Government satisifed with the premises at present occupied by the Physiotherapy Department?

MR SPEAKER:

No, let us not expand on the question.

NO. 32 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, will Government state how many of the patients given appointments by the ear, nose and throat specialist during his last two visits to Gibraltar were private patients and how many of the operations performed were not under the Group Practice Medical Scheme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, official records are not kept of private patients seen by the visiting ENT Specialist but from incidental notes taken in the Department on his last visit he saw 38 private patients and operated on 5 of these.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 32 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister says that records are not kept. May I ask who, in fact, makes the appointments for the private patients for the Specialist?

HON J B PEREZ:

The appointments are made at the hospital.

HON G T RESTANO:

By hospital staff, presumably, Mr Speaker?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

How is it, Mr Speaker, that there aren't any records kept if members of the staff in Government employment are, in fact, making these appointments?

HON J B PEREZ:

Because, Mr Speaker, these are private patients which are seen by the ENT Specialist and Government feels that we would not be justified in keeping records of private patients nether would we be justified in disclosing information on private patients seen by the ENT Specialist.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is this the real reason, Mr Speaker, why the information is not made readily available because Government does not consider that it is justified in making this information public?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Sir. I did in my answer to the question of the Hon Member give figures.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, information has been given.

HON G T RESTANO:

Approximate figures.

MR SPEAKER:

To the extent that they are in a position to give the information, they have supplied it.

HON P J ISOLA:

In view of the fact that the visits of the ear, nose and throat Specialist are financed by the Government, isn't it extremely relevant to Government policy on this that the Government should know how many patients are seen by this gentleman during the short time he is in Gibraltar who are private patients and how many are Government patients for the purpose of deciding (a) whether they should continue bringing him out (b) in the question of salary and remuneration that they pay and a lot of other relevant factors? I would have thought, Mr Speaker, that it was extremely important that the Government should have records of that especially if appointments are made by their own staff.

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I did say we keep no official records. I also did say that Government does keep incidental notes on the matter so in answer to the Hon Member I did say 38 private patients and in fact 5 operations.

MR SPEAKER:

What you are being asked now is a simple question. Since as a matter of practice the appointments are made by Government officials in the department, do you feel that records should be kept of these?

HON J B PEREZ:

I have already said no, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would Government reconsider the position? Is this not rather alarming that a person who is brought to Gibraltar by the Government out of tax payers money and for whom private appointments are made at the hospital, that the Government has no official records of the work done by this gentleman or how the workload is split between private patients and Government patients, is this not a matter of concern to the Government?

HON J B PEREZ:

Sir, my answer to the first part of the question is once again no, Sir. May I, however, point out that general patients are not excluded from treatment in the interest of private patients. In fact, the procedure is that no private patient can be seen until all general patients are seen by the Specialist.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister who seems to have the information there, how many patients altogether are seen by the Specialist when he comes to Gibraltar and how long are his visits in Gibraltar?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already given figures for the private patients. During the Specialist's last visit to Gibraltar he saw 51 non-private patients and he carried out 15 operations.

HON G T RESTANO:

My question did say, Mr Speaker, during his last two visits. I have had the information for one visit, not the previous one.

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, that is why in the answer to the question I said that we do not keep official records and therefore I was not able to find the incidental notes with reference to the ENT Specialist's previous visit, the only information I can give to this House is relating to the last visit.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, this is rather important, is the Minister telling the House that his department doesn't know the number of private patients that were seen by the Government adviser on ear, nose and throat two visits ago, is this the position?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Good lord.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government now amend the appropriate legislation (Education Ordinance of 1974 Part X Health Section 55(1)) in order to allow children in private schools to have free dental service?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Education)

No Sir.

The House is owed an explanation.

When this matter was raised by the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza in December, 1978, I was advised, and so informed the House, that children in private schools are not covered by Section 55(1) of the Eudcation Ordinance which provides that the Director of Education may arrange, insofar as resources permit, for free dental and ophthalmic treatment to be made available to pupils in attendance at Government schools. This is correct. What was overlooked, and has now been brought to my notice, is that, under Section 35 of the Ordinance, authority can be given, by order, for the provisions of the Ordinance relating to medical inspection and treatment of pupils to apply, with such modification as may be prescribed by such order, to all independent schools as if they were Government schools.

It is not therefore necessary to amend the Ordinance in order to provide a free dental service to children in private schools and I apologise for inadvertently misleading the House on the last occasion this matter was raised.

Those Hon Members who followed our election campaign closely will recall that my Hon and Learned Friend the Chief Minister committed himself to looking into this matter. In fulfilling, as we invariably do, our election pledges, I can now inform the House that the necessary steps are being taken to make an order providing for a free dental service to all children in private schools.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 33 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I just ask why it is that now the order is going to be made and why was it not made when the original question was asked?

MR SPEAKER:

You have been told in the answer. They misread the Education Ordinance, they thought they needed special legislation, they now realise they can do it by regulation and this is what they are going to do.

HON G T RESTANO:

Yes, but way didn't they do it by regulation then, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Because they misread the Education Ordinance. They have apologised.

HON G T RESTANO:

But, Mr Speaker, at the time it was suggested to the Government to amend the legislation and they said that in principle they would not. Why then did they refuse to amend the legislation and now they are prepared to put in an order. It really makes no difference whether it is an order or an Ordinance.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It was in aiming to fulfil our pledge that we would give this necessary treatment that the whole matter was looked at afresh and the previous oversight of Section 35 in the Ordinance was discovered.

HON P J ISOLA:

What my Hon Friend is asking is not the question of legislation, what he is asking really is if this is thought to be a good thing why wasn't it put right in December, 1978, and not now just after an election? That is what I think he is asking.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because we have had second thoughts and we are improving on the past situation.

HON P J. ISOLA:

May I, Sir, congratulate the Government in fulfilling a promise given in "Face the Public" by the Hon the Chief Minister to one of the questioning members of the public and may I express the hope that the same commitment that he gave • • • •

MR SPEAKER:

Order, Mr Isola, we are making speeches. Next question.

NO. 34 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government be making provision for a separate identifiable budget for library books and other learning material for the nursing school in the financial year 1980/81?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is normal practice for the Principal Tutor to request the provision of books and other learning material for the Nurses Training School and his requirements have invariably been met in full. These bids are itemised departmentally within the relevant subhead of expenditure.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 340F 1980

HON J BOSSANO:

Does this mean, Mr Speaker, that the Government does not propose to provide for a separate identifiable budget?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 35 OF 1980

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government consider the possibility of modernising the Maternity Department at St Bernard's Hospital?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, this question is under consideration in connection with the 1981 Development Programme.

NO. 36 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government be making provision in the coming estimates of Expenditure for improvement in the amenities for nursing staff at the Health Centre?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, this matter was raised very recently by a representative of the Nurses Section of the T & G W U and is currently being considered. If it is agreed that certain improvements should be carried out every effort will be made to seek the necessary funds.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government now make available the 1976 Preece, Cardew and Rider Report on power requirements?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir.

The report contains advice and comment on the development of electric power and water supplies up to the year 2000. The information in the report affects Government policies on the priorities to be established in development programme as well as the Government's financial policies, including not only capital expenditure but forecasts of possible increases in the revenue to be obtained from the supply of electricity, and hence also Government budgetary policies. The report must therefore remain confidential to the Government as long as it considers this to be necessary.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 37 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, as the Hon the Chief Minister has mentioned the year 2000, will he take into consideration as to when to release this report the fact that there could be a change of Government before the year 2000 and that other people in the House elected by the people of Gibraltar are entitled to know what are the problems facing Gibraltar as regards power for the year and that it is wrong for the Government to keep this a closely guarded secret?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In the unlikely event of the Opposition being able in the year 2000 or before that to persuade the electorate that it is fit to take office, the report would still be relevant and they would have the opportunity of reading it then. The Government obtains advice on many matters from Consultants, its own officials and departments and other sources. Consideration of advice is an internal process and whilst the Government is answerable for its own actions and decisions, it is under no obligation to disclose the advice it has receive from any source, nor to say whether or not it has accepted or rejected any such advice. As I have already announced, I intend in due course to approach those on the Opposition bench on the question of a possible adoption of a Committee system. Clearly under such a system reports of this nature would be available to Members of the Opposition serving on a departmental Committee. Under the present system the Government must remain free to decide in each particular case whether or not it will disclose such matters to the Opposition.

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, is the Hon and Learned Chief Minister aware that in the course of debate on power development and indeed in answers to questions, Ministers on that side of the House constantly refer to the Preece, Cardew and Rider report and is he not aware that under Parliamentary practice in the United Kingdom it is not considered proper to refer to reports that have not been laid on the table and that it is impossible for the Opposition to take a constructive

MR SPEAKER:

Order. That is not correct. The parliamentary practice is that you must not quote from a report.

HON P J ISOLA:

I know the Hon the Chief Minister will rely on technicalities but does he consider it fair, Mr Speaker, to this House and to the people of Gibraltar that a report of such importance and which is constantly referred to by the Government in debate in this House, should not be made available to the Opposition so that they can take what I am sure the Government would like us to take, a constructive approach to power development to the year 2000?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We hope that Members of my Party will continue to be here by the year 2000 to continue giving the necessary advice.

HON P J ISOLA:

That looks a bit dodgy now, Mr Speaker, judging from the last election results.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, would Government consider revealing that part of the report which is already outdated, like earlier recommendations which are no longer effective?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, for the same reason and an additional one and that is that there have been further reports updating the matter and it would not be fair to look at one part of the report without looking at the others and the whole of them are still under consideration by Government.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Is Government aware of the frequent leakages occurring at the water tank situated on the south side of the Electricity Generating Station adjacent to the USOC Hockey Pitch?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, no water tank on the South Station leaks since these were internally coated with glass-fibre products a few years ago. It is likely that the Hon Member is referring to sea-water overflowing when one of the header tanks is being filled shortly after an engine has either started or stopped. This may occur for a few minutes until flow rates are stabilised.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 38 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

Is the Government aware that it does not occur for a few minutes. I have seen it myself at weekends at USOC Hockey pitch and it goes on for at least half an hour. I have seen this on a distinct number of occasions. It constitutes an eyesore.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, I would like to answer this question in various parts. First of all, the City Electrical Engineer and the Deputy City Electrical Engineer have inspected the area thoroughly and anyway this area is manned on a regular basis and no report of any leakage has been received from the men. Secondly, rain water can accumulate somewhere in the Bastion structure which drips through one of the weep-holes and this could be anywhere on the southern side of the Station. This may account for the water you have seen. Thirdly, the fact that we overfill the engines to some extent, this is in order to ensure that the engine does not run short of water.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, in view of the problems facing the public with the current power cuts, will Government assign an official to a particular telephone to whom the public may address themselves for their inquiries?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, normally a round-the-clock service to answer consumers' service calls and enquiries is already provided at the Generating Station. Additionally when power cuts are expected, in order to minimise inconvenience to the public, GBC radio and television are asked to co-operate by relaying information. To assign an official to a particular telephone would probably result in that line being continuously jammed by incoming calls.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 39 OF 1980

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, is the Minister not aware that the vast majority of the people of Gibraltar are unaware as to the exact time of the next power cut and as such they have difficulties with cooking and so forth? I ask therefore if the Minister would not be prepared to accept in principle any measure to facilitate the public at large in their inquiries as to the exact time of power cuts?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, we do that. In fact, as I have said in answer to the question, they can ring the Generating Station and we do contact GBC radio and television and ask them to co-operate by relaying information. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to estimate when it is necessary to shut down an engine immediately and this is probably what the Hon Member is referring to. If the Hon Member would care to read my lengthy statement to the House which I made at the last meeting of the last House of Assembly, he will realise that a comprehensive and full answer was given by me to this particular question.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, what is really being asked is that on occasions when there are power cuts there should be a telephone number which people can ring. May I tell the Minister that the number, which is 5957, in the Generating Station, during the recent power cuts one either got the engaged signal or when one actually rang and the telephone was ringing one did not get a reply and this was my experience and the experience of a lot of people and what the question is really asking, Mr Speaker, is that on such occasions somebody, possibly in the Secretariat, should be sitting there to answer the public's inquiries and not be running away from them.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer to that one has been that if such a service were to be given that the same thing would happen, that it would be engaged and that no service would be given. That is what has been said.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, may I say, and it is my own personal experience and people to whom I have talked, who rang this number and got the dialling tone, they got no reply. What the Opposition is suggesting is that in a time of power cuts we know how busy everybody in the Generating Station must be and what we say is that there should be a sort of command post in the Secretariat which gets the information from the Generating Station and gives it to the public who are entitled to know.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, if I may answer that question. The command post can never be in the Secretariat, the command post must be in the switch-board because they are the ones who know what is going on. This is why the number 5957 goes directly to the switchboard and they are able to answer. Unfortunately, a lot of people ring up and this particular number very often is engaged. Similarly, if we put a man there just to answer the phone exactly the same procedure would happen and the lines would continuously be jammed and the public would unfortunately not be kept informed. We do notify GBC radio and television as soon as possible.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government make a comprehensive statement on the state of the engines at the Generating Station and the full reasons for the extensive periods of power cuts that have been experienced throughout Gibraltar recently?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the reason for the power cuts have already been given wide publicity by the information media from the various Government communiques during the period in question.

At the time of preparation of this question, with the exception of two small engines in the South engine room, the remaining five sets were at present in service.

In the north station, at King's Bastion South engine No 9 is undergoing its regular major overhaul. There have been problems with the foundation of this engine as reported in previous meetings of the House. However, recently core samples have been extracted and these indicate that the concrete is very sound and there is no evidence of deep oil penetration. It is therefore considered that remedial works similar to those carried out recently on No 12 will be possible with the engine in situ. This work will follow on directly after the overhaul is completed.

Engines Nos 10 and 12 are in service and were recently inspected. These inspections established that the engines were in good working order. Engine No 12 will require to have the torsional damper wheel changed as part of normal maintenance at an appropriate moment.

There are no major problems envisaged with engine No 13. On the advice of the manufacturers all the big end bearings had to have their shells replaced following their introduction of a redesigned type.

As announced recently Engine No 11 sustained a failure of its crankshaft and the matter is being investigated with the manufacturers as to the best possible means of restoring this engine.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 40 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would still like to know the full reasons for the power cuts. Whether the Government had press releases or not, a release in the local press is, I think, neither here nor there, we certainly on the Opposition have never received any of those press releases, so I would like to have in this House an answer to that question.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, is is obvious to anyone that the problems with the power cuts arose as a result of maintenance of No 13 and No 9 engine combined with the breakdown of No 11 engine and, in fact, in the press release which was given out on the 12th March, 1980, regarding the situation at the Generating Station, this was amply covered as well as further press releases dealing with the problems at the Generating Station. Therefore, the fact that power cuts have occurred are really due to the fact that whilst two engines were being overhauled we had the unfortunate experience that No 11 engine developed a broken crankshaft.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, was it entirely and exclusively due to the breaking down of the engines that there were power cuts?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have already, I think, answered this question. It is not only No 11 engine, it is the fact that two engines were being overhauled at the same time.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister, is there any truth in the statement made by the Resident Officer of the Transport and General Workers' Union at the time in which he said that the engines had been overworked, had been overloaded, and that the real reason for power cuts was the lack of capacity at the Station. Is that all wrong, can the Minister tell us that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I believe that I have answered that question previously regarding the capacity of the engines at King's Bastion North. I did that at the last meeting of the House and I said that the capacity at King's Bastion North was adequate for the needs of Gibraltar.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member has not answered my question which is, is there any truth in the statement made by the Resident Officer of the Transport and General Workers' Union in relation to the reasons for the power cuts? Has the Government got a view on this?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer has been no, there is sufficient capacity. The reasons given are the breakdown of one engine whilst two were being overhauled.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister then saying that there isn't any truth in the statement made by the Resident Officer of the Transport and General Workers' Union?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member would care to read press releases, Mr Netto's contribution to this affair was denied publicly and the answer to that is no.

HON G T RESTANO:

What were the reasons for any industrial problems?

MR SPEAKER:

No, next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state, month by month, how much electricity has been either purchased or borrowed from the MOD from September, 1976, to February, 1980?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, yes and no. For reasons of administrative ease, the transfer of electric power between the Gibraltar Government and Ministry of Defence is reconciled on a quarterly basis, and I will give these instead of monthly figures. The position since the beginning of October 1976 has been as follows:-

QUARTER	UNITS IMPORTED BY GIB GOVT	UNITS EXPORTED BY GIB GOVT	BALANCE DU	RIN	IG QUART	TER	
4/76	223,171	199,345	23,826	in	favour	of MOD	
1/77	584,070	506,600	. 77,470	***	tt ·		
2/77	312,940	272,878	40,052	.	u	-	
3/77	46,958	14,994	31,964	•••	11	#215	
4/77	159,616	40 , 828	118,788		. 11		
1/78	244,871	47,078	197,793		te	encine	
2/78	187,805	560,245	372,440		ti	of Gib	Govt
3/78	1,677,374	110,987	1,566,387		\$t	of MOD	
4/78	377,022	97,055	79,967		11	***	
1/79	396,068	587,597	191,529	٠.	11	of Gib	Govt.
2/79	86,020	158,944	72,924	٠ 🕳	, tf		
3/79	568,715	322,957	245,758	ОСИ	tt	of MOD	
4/79	380 , 026	99 , 885	280,141	40.	11	ancië.	

As at 31 December 1979 the balance stood at 2,072,809 KWH in favour of the MOD, this amounts to approximately 1.23% of the electricity generated at King's Bastion during the same period. Payment in cash has been effected for 1,900,000 KWH in accordance with a negotiated agreement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 41 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

What was the amount involved there, can the Minister say? What was the payment effected?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

In fact, we did vote it in the House, it was £62,240 and this was paid in three stages.

HON P J ISOLA:

That was the first time that the Gibraltar Government repaid the MOD for electricity in cash rather than in kind, is that so?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, that is so. We did pay the MOD in cash this time and not in kind.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does that not indicate that there is, in fact, a lack of generating capacity in the Generating Station and that there is some truth

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going back on a question which has been answered. I know you are going to ask whether there is some truth in what Mr Netto has said.

HON P J ISOLA:

Precisely, Mr Speaker. How can the Minister in these circumstances say, in answer to the previous question, that the statement of the Resident Officer of the Transport and General Workers' Union in this regard was wrong?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have already said that the statement of Mr Jose Netto was wrong. I would like to add that about three-quarter of the units due to the MOD date from the 3rd Quarters of 1978 when No 13 engine was out of commission for a major overhaul and replacement of all connecting rods and No 10 engine was out of commission whilst the foundation was being rebuilt.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

ORAL

NO. 42 OF 1980

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government make a comprehensive statement on the proposed purchase of a five megawatt generator?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, acting on the advice of our Consultants, the five megwatt generator which Government proposes to purchase will be installed as the first unit in the new power station at No 5 Jetty.

A unit of this size cannot and in any case should not be installed at King's Bastion and it is economically and environmentally logical that it should go on the new site.

Preece, Cardew and Rider in consultation with engine suppliers are satisfied that it is feasible to have such a set in operation by the winter of next year, as was stated in the Chief Minister's recent statement on the subject.

Three engineers from Preece, Cardew and Rider visited Gibraltar for several days a fortnight ago, when extensive discussions were held with officials of the Government.

Preece, Cardew and Rider have now been appointed as Consultants for the project and it is expected that tender documents can be prepared in time to meet the programme.

The CEE will be holding a further meeting with Preece, Cardew and Rider in London next week.

It will be clear to everyone that until designs are completed nothing more comprehensive can be said at this stage.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 42 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister explain the reason for a slippage of 6 months on the installation of a new generator as announced by the Chief Minister, not on February 28th in this House but on October 31st in this House? Can the Minister explain for the slippage of 6 months which his statement that it would be installed by the winter of 1981 implied?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Member has got his facts confused. There is no slippage and in answer to his question I have stated - he mentions winter 1981/82 - and I have said that Preece, Cardew and Rider in consultation with engine suppliers are satisfied that it is feasible to have such a set in operation by the winter of next year, this is 1981/82, as was stated in the Chief Minister's recent statement on the subject, therefore, there is no slippage at all.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister if he does not recall that the Hon and Learned Chief Minister said in this House, on the motion for the adjournment on October the 31st, 1979, that he had consulted with the departmental officers of the Engineer's department and that a 5-megwatt generator would be in operation within 18 months which brings us, Mr Speaker, to April of, 1981, and not the winter of, 1981, will the Minister agree that to be a fact? Perhaps I could refresh the memory of the Minister as to what he said in this House on December 5th, 1979.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I maintain that there is no slippage. Work has started and, in fact, there is a motion coming up on this particular subject work is progressing on the preparation of documents, site investigations, etc, and this engine will be in commission by the winter of 1981.

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked a simple question. Can you reconcile your statement now that it is going to be ready by the winter of 1981 with the statement made by the Chief Minister that it should be ready by April, 1981 it is as simple as that.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister answer that question before I remind him of what he said on December 5th, 1979, in this House, categorically?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I beg your pardon, Mr Speaker, could you repeat what you just said?

MR SPEAKER:

What you are being asked is that the Chief Minister made a statement in this House in October 1979 to the effect that this new generator would be installed by April, 1981. You are now saying it will not be operational until October 1981. Can you explain the difference in time?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, that is a difficult question to answer because different manufacturers have got different times of delivery. Some of them can quote delivery within 12 months, others can quote within 18 months and what we want to do, since we have decided and it is a matter of policy to start a new Generating Station, we have decided to go the whole hog and make sure we have enough power for Gibraltar for the future.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is a motion about the future and I will make a statement then. I am not prepared to get involved in question time.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I did ask for a comprehensive statement and I would have thought that in the comprehensive statement the House would have been told the reasons for the slippage from 18 months to 2 years of what the Chief Minister said in the House. I must ask the Minister for Municipal Services whether he still stands by what he said in this House on December 5th in answer to Question No 195 of 1979 in which he told the House that three manufacturing companies had been to Gibraltar already and we asked what time limits these companies had given and the Minister answered: "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." And when he was questioned further, Mr Speaker, and there is a lot I can remind him of, a lot of things he said there, but if I may go to my last supplementary which said: "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?" The Minister answered: "The Minister is not only confident, he gives the House every assurance that you will have one." Can I ask the Minister what sort of assurances is he now giving, are they the assurances of the Chief Minister who

MR SPEAKER:

Order, I will not have a question which is going to last seven minutes, that is making a statement.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask a simple question, is the Minister for Municipal Services confirming in his statement in this House the statement made by the Chief Minister on October 31st, 1979, or the statement made by the Chief Minister in this House on February 28th, 1980, which of the two statements is he confirming because there are six months difference between them?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, in the mounting, design and commissioning of an engine this is something which does always take time. Therefore, it is not as easy as just putting a car in No 5 jetty. This requires some thought, it requires a great deal of work. If the Hon Member cares to call it slippage for publicity purposes as he usually does the fact that he is not electioneering now probably tends to tone him down slightly but I have said that we are proceeding with a new Generating Station and this is what we aim to do, we shall have an engine by the winter of 1981/82, and this is exactly what I have said in the answer to the question. The fact that 18 months was said, 18 months can take anything up to settling down the engine but the commissioning of an engine could take some extra time.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question. We are going to debate this matter and I will allow no further questions.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I give notice that I am thoroughly dissatisfied with the answer and I shall raise this matter on the motion for the adjournment notwithstanding there is a substantive motion.

MR SPEAKER:

Most certainly.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state how many applicants are on the waiting list to have new telephones installed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, at the time the answer was prepared there were approximately 500 applicants on the waiting list.

I have checked today and the number of applicants is 490.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 43 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister state how long will it take, on average, for a subscriber to get a telephone installed?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, this really depends on the availability of cables because in some districts we have no cables and we have been unable to lay new telephones because of this particular fault. One of the areas in which this arises is mainly Catalan Bay where we have some applicants dating back as far as 1976. I am glad to say that the cable in Catalan Bay has been installed, the last section was laid only last week and subscribers are expected to be connected as soon as distribution cables are completed.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

How many subscribers will that involve?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

We have 21 subscribers in Catalan Bay.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So really when the Minister is talking about difficulty with cables it appears to me that there are only 20 affected in that respect or are there other areas which he could specify?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, this is one area which I mentioned as an example. There are obviously other areas which are similarly affected. We are also laying down some development cables, this is what we have done in Catalan Bay, and I am hopeful that during the coming summer months when the maintenance and repair of lines will go down because of the good weather, we shall be able to put in a higher number of telephones that we have been able to put in during the winter months where most of the men have been engaged in repairing existing lines.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister say that in fact the delay of all the 400 are due to the cables, if not, how many are due because there is not enough staff to connect them?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The fact is that we do have some shortage of staff. There are three parts in the Telephone Department which must go hand in hand. First of all is the replacement of cable programme that we have already started and this is progressing at a very, very satisfactory rate. In fact, we have cut down the number of cable faults by 85% in the last year. On the other hand there are telephone installations which we have to do and we have to repair telephones. The other problem which also gives us quite a lot of work is telephone transfers from people who move from one home to another home and this year we have done about 300...

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to review the whole of the work of the department. The question you have been asked is, how long does it take for a new telephone to be installed? It is as simple as that and we do not want to expand beyond the scope of the question.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, for a new telephone to be installed it certainly depends on the area. We give priority to certain cases, medical cases, business applications and certain Government organisations.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

How long are those 500 people who are still on the waiting list likely to wait, any idea at all?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, we hope to install between 320 to 350 telephones in the coming year.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NC. 44 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has the report of the British Post Office Consultants on the introduction of International Subscriber Dialling been received?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The report of the British Post Office Consultants has not yet been received. The report is expected at the end of March.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state how many of the telephone old type lead main cables remain, what areas they service and the estimated programme for their replacement?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

There are 30 lead type main cables still in service. These cables serve all over Gibraltar.

It is envisaged that another five lead cables will be replaced during the next financial year, serving mainly the upper and lower town areas.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 45 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, why only five main cables to be repaired in twelve months, cannot more be repaired?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, in answer to a previous question I said that this was a gradual replacement of telephone cables and I said that we would substitute about five cables a year, therefore, taking about 6 years in the complete replacement of the cable programme.

HON G T RESTANO:

That doesn't answer my question, Mr Speaker, my question is why cannot more be done in one year?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer given is that it is a gradual process and they have scheduled to change five cables a year. Next question.

NO. 46 OF 1980

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state how many public telephone boxes there are and how many of these are in working order?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

There are 21 Public Telephone Boxes in Gibraltar. Eight of these are in working order.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 46 OF 1980

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Government think we need 21 Public Telephone Boxes, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, no, I do not think we need 21 Public Telephone. Boxes in Gibraltar. Unfortunately these Public Telephone Boxes are extremely prone to vandalism and the policy of the department is to introduce the new electronic type of coin box which is suitable for international calls to be made via the operator and install them at suitable places where they can be looked after, places like the Health Centre, the Hospital, the Airport etc where they will be of great use. It is also thought that some of the Telephone Boxes could well be resited in places where they will not be prone to such vandalism and we hope that we can get the help of the Tenants' Associations as well in this regard.

HON J BOSSANO:

Do I take it, Mr Speaker, that the Government will be doing something shortly to put the ones that are not operational in working order or else do away with them because there seems to be no point in having unused and unusable ones?

NO. 47 OF 1980

THE HON A T LODDO

Has Government received any reply from Her Majesty's Government on the question of tuition fees to be paid by our students in the UK as from September, 1980?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Education)

No Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 47 OF 1980

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, what does the Minister propose to do about that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the matter was raised by the Chief Minister on February 20th. The matter was picked up by the Education Department from articles which appeared in the United Kingdom Press on 2nd November, 1979, following the publication of the Government's White Paper on Public Expenditure on 1st November, 1979. The financial implications as it would affect Gibraltar were then looked at by the Department of Education. A detailed memorandum was then sent to the Financial and Development Secretary on 18th December, 1979, and a paper for Council of Ministers on 16th January, 1980, and again on 6th February, 1980, when it was agreed that the Chief Minister should make representations to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This was done on 20th February, 1980, and as I have already stated no reply has yet been forthcoming.

NO. 48 OF 1980

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, has Government yet engaged a play-leader and if so when can he be expected to arrive and furthermore has the post of trainee play-leader been advertised?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Education)

Sir, Mr Colin James Hooker, formerly an Adventure Playground Leader with Crawley Borough Council at Furnace Green Adventure Playground has been engaged and is expected to arrive in Gibraltar on 25 April, 1980.

The post of Trainee Youth and Community Worker will be advertised shortly with a view to an appointment being made in early May. Part of his duties only will be associated with the Adventure Playground.

NO. 49 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, would Government be prepared to extend the use of the Government Nursery at Hargraves to all working mothers under the same conditions regardless of who their employers are?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Education)

Sir, the Government Nursery already accommodates children of working mothers irrespective of whom their employer may be. At the present time there are 34 children on roll at the Government Nursery of which 14 attend on a full-day basis, 12 for mornings only and 8 for afternoons only. The mothers of 20 of these children are employed by Gibraltar Government, 5 other mothers are employed by MOD and 9 are employed in the private sector.

NO. 50 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Why were perfectly sound reinforced quarter inch glass panes replaced by plywood boarding external doors and windows in Notre Dame School?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Education)

Only glass panes below approximately 4 ft above floor level have been replaced by plywood boarding at Notre Dame School. This has been done as a safety measure in a situation where small children could quite easily injure themselves if the glass panes were to be broken accidentally. The plywood boarding has yet to be painted and it is intended that this will be done as part of the painting programme during the coming summer.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 50 OF 1980

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, why were they put in in the first place and have been there for 6 years? Wasn't the danger there then?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It has become considered as a recognised possible point of danger to have any glass below 4 ft from the floor and progressively in all schools where there is such glass it will be replaced.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, why were the glass panes, once removed, left lying around on the ground for months until they had to be collected by the caretaker? Some of them were smashed.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not aware of that but I will look into it.

NO. 51 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Can Government say whether all school children who enjoy subsidised bus fares are allowed the same subsidy?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Education)

At the present time all children who are entitled to subsidised bus fares do not enjoy the same subsidy. It was decided last year that the existing transport arrangements be rationalised on the basis of a 50% subsidy to meet the requirements of all children from Varyl Begg who need to attend Bishop Fitzgerald Middle School during the first two years of the Middle School age range, all children from the North Gorge and sponsored children who attend St Christopher's School. In addition it was agreed that the 25% subsidy currently enjoyed by boys of secondary age living south of a line from the bottom of Witham's Road to the Casino should continue but be increased to 50% as soon as financial resources permit. In the case of Catalan Bay currently a bus is hired at the expense of Government for the 40 children or so who attend Middle and Secondary Schools in the town.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 51 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, is the position then that some children receive full subsidy and others only receive half, is that the position?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, some children receive 50%, some get 25% who are going to be increased to 50% as soon as possible, and Catalan Bay gets 100%.

HON P J ISOLA:

That is what I mean, Sir, the position will be that some school children will receive 50% and others will receive 100%. Why is that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The question of the Catalan Bay who get 100%, this is a historical situation, they have acquired rights and the intention will be some time in the future to phase it down to the 50% rate.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, how does one acquire such rights?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

This has been done to my knowledge for at least the last 20 years, since the William's Way Tunnel had to be used.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does that mean that in 20 years time the other school children will also enjoy a 100% subsidy?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

On condition that there is a landslide like the one near William's Way, it might be considered, yes.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when will the phasing down be done of the 100%?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

One would hope that this will be done slowly but possibly starting in the next financial year or so?

HON G T RESTANO:

In what manner will this be done?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The new people coming in will probably be only given the 50% subsidy until those who have the 100% have gone away with natural wastage having grown out of their school life.

NO. 52 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Why do student teachers, after qualifying, not get paid until they start work in the Autumn term?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Education)

In accordance with conditions of service applicable to teachers in the UK all newly trained teachers, where they are offered teaching appointments by local education authorities, are appointed with effect from the beginning of the academic year following the completion of their training courses. In keeping with UK practice it was agreed in 1978 that the same conditions of service should apply in Gibraltar. The incremental date for all newly appointed teachers is now 1 September.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 52 OF 1980

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but on the other hand teachers in the United Kingdom are not obliged to return to their birthplace or the authority which employed them for work whereas here they are, they cannot take employment elsewhere.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Is that a question, Sir, it seems to be a statement? If it is a question may I have it repeated then, please?

HON A T LODDO:

You have compared them with England, when in England they are not compelled to return to teach under the authority with which they are employed.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I don't follow the logic of the question.

MR SPEAKER:

The question that is being asked is that since in Gibraltar they are required to come back to work should this not be a reason why they should be paid as from the time that they qualify? This is the way I understand it.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the situation here is that we employ them from the beginning of the academic year which is the same system as in the United Kingdom. If we are going to have parity with the United Kingdom we must have parity all along the line.

HON P J ISOLA:

I would agree with the Hon Member if that is what he is saying but, surely, if we are to have parity with the United Kingdom and the same conditions of service there shouldn't be a condition imposed on a student who goes to England to train obliging him to come back to Gibraltar and work for that authority and nobody else, that doesn't exist in England so why has Government decided to follow the United Kingdom on that particular point of practice and not on all the others if we are to have similarity?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We follow as near as possible to the United Kingdom practice. Of course, a teacher in the United Kingdom probably costs the local authority £300 or £400 a year whereas here it costs nearly £2000 a year so you can't have absolute parity.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister consider it fair that a married man, for example, a married student who goes to England to train, comes the end of the summer term, comes back with his wife and child and his pay stops and he can't get another job because on the 1st Sepember he has to work for the Government as he is legally bound to. Shouldn't it be two-way, shouldn't the Government pay him right through from the date the man starts to go to learn his trade because of his commitment to the Government?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is very seldom to my knowledge, Sir, that we send married men to become teachers. If they get married while they are away they chould really face up to the responsibilities in going into the matrimonial state. There have been one or two exceptions where a married man has been granted some measure of allowance in the intervening two months.

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Education confirm whether University Graduates are denied financial backing for an extra year to enable them to obtain a professional qualification in teaching?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS (In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Education)

Sir, students who successfully complete an academic degree course under the Educational Awards Regulations are not automatically granted financial support to enable them to do a post-graduate teaching certificate. The decision as to whether financial support can be given in individual cases depends on a. the availability of financial resources; b. the academic attainment and confidential reports on the students concerned; c. the likelihood of a suitable teaching post being available in our schools on completion of a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education; and d. the extent to which our Teacher Training Scheme already provides for our teacher needs in schools. It should be stressed that the Teacher Training Scheme is specifically designed to recruit and provide local teachers for our schools although from time to time it is necessary to recruit some teachers through the scholarship scheme by providing financial resources for suitably qualified individuals to take the post-graduate teaching certificates.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 53 OF 1980

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but yet at this point of time in Gibraltar we have a number of expatriates working as teachers in Gibraltar. Surely, if we have the money to pay them, we have money to qualify our own people and have them back in Gibraltar teaching?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The situation is that in many instances people who go on the Scholarship Scheme choose to become graduates in certain disciplines which are not required in our teaching force and even if they were to stay and get their post graduate certificate they would not supplant one of these United Kingdom teachers who is teaching a completely different discipline.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say whether when school leavers are deciding between going on a University course or applying for a teacher training course, they are informed that they are at a disadvantage in terms of their prospects of employment as teachers if they choose the University course?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, I believe over recent years they have been told if they go on a Scholarship course their obtaining academic degrees does not automatically qualify them to go on a post graduate course since there may be no teaching vacancy available in the discipline they wish to follow.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it the case, for example, that there are people today finishing their degree courses who were told initially when they went on their degree courses that by choosing a degree course instead of choosing a teacher training course they were forfeiting their opportunity of becoming teachers, is that the case?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would not like to say that this was definitely done with those people who went three years ago, I believe it has been done at least in the last two years since we have been to some extent suffering almost from a surfeit of teachers especially in certain disciplines, for example, modern languages.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member agree that if people have chosen to go on a University course under the mistaken impression that their prospects of employment was just as high, that is a fact that should be taken into account at least for those who are finishing this year?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think it is not unfair that it should be taken into account and we will look into it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does Government then consider it a desirable aim of policy that graduates who have got a degree and who wish to go and obtain an Education Diploma in the subsequent year, that it is a desirable aim of policy that that should be encouraged, in the proper discipline?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

In the proper discipline, Sir, this is usually given, it is when it is a discipline which is already completely full and for which we have no further need that it is not granted because so to grant would almost imply that a job was going to be available for them at the end.

NO. 54 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has Government now fully considered the memorandum submitted on April 19th, 1979, by the Tourist Transport Operators?

ANSWER

The Hon the Chief Minister

I have been informed that an appeal is to be lodged against the decision of the Transport Commission of 20 March and I do not therefore propose to say anything on this matter at this stage.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 54 OF 1980

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon and Learned the Chief Minister saying that he cannot say whether he has now considered the memorandum that he has had in his possession for 12 months because of an appeal that is being lodged? Surely, the fact that an appeal is being lodged on a particular decision of the Transport Commission cannot preclude the House being informed whether the memorandum has now been fully considered or is still being studied.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The whole question of the memorandum was linked up, by the time it reached the Government, with the pending appeal and therefore we decided not to proceed with it until the appeal was finished. Now that I have been informed officially by the operators that they are going to appeal, I haven't been told for that reason only, I have been told for other reasons by the operators, I do not think it will be in the public interest that I should say anything about a memorandum which has not yet been considered for the reasons I have mentioned.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Hon and Learned Chief Minister in fact referring to an appeal against the recent decision of the Transport Commission for two extra licences, or is he talking about something else?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is all linked up. The objectors to the application were the people who made the proposals to which the Hon Member refers and the consideration of that was linked with the application that was made whilst the matter was being considered and we felt that we should not consider it until the appeal had been disposed of. Had we not had official intimation that an appeal was going to be made, the answer that I had prepared for the Hon Member before yesterday afternoon was completely different to the one I am giving him now.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask the Government, since this memorandum has been submitted to the Government and we in the Opposition have obviously not received it, could the Chief Minister give us more or less an outline of what the memorandum, in fact, has to say?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, it was made public, I think, and if not I shall certainly make it available to Hon Members. I have no difficulty in making a copy available to the Hon Member.

HON G T RESTANO:

Not like the Preece, Cardew and Rider report?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, it is not as long as that.

NO. 55 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Can Government state why they find it necessary to make Irish Town and Parliament Lane no parking areas?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The parking of cars and lorries in Irish Town, Parliament Lane creates a hazard for pedestrians as well as difficulties for the loading and unloading of goods vehicles.

This problem was considered by the Transport Commission on 22 February 1975 and they recommended that:-

- a) Irish Town from its junction with Market Lane, Northwards should be declared a No Parking and No Waiting zone from 9 am to 7 pm (Monday Friday) and 9 am to 1 pm (Saturdays)
- b) Parking should be allowed on Sundays and Public Holidays
- c) Goods vehicles should be allowed to unload along the whole length of Irish Town, and
- d) Parliament Lane should be similarly decongested.

It was then the opinion of the Transport Commission that the then new area at Montagu Place should accommodate most of the cars hitherto parked in Irish Town and Parliament Lane during the decongestion hours proposed.

At the present time a completely new survey of all traffic parking and No Parking areas in the city is being made by the Police. Much of the city has already been surveyed and this particular area will come under review in due course.

NO. 56 OF 1980

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government take the necessary steps to ensure that the gates at the lower level of Green Lane, behind the Rock Hotel are kept permanently open?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The gates are the property of the Rock Hotel and define the boundary of their grounds. Consequently, the Government have no jurisdiction over these gates or that part of Green Lane which lies within the boundaries of the Rock Hotel.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 56 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

Does the Government not agree that this idea would be worth pursuing since this lane would be not only ideal for walks up the rock and so forth but far more important than that it would provide an extra outlet from the Upper rock and further decongest Willis's Road, Prince Edward's Road and so forth? Is there any reason why Government should not pursue this idea to take possession of that part of Green Lane which at the moment it does not own?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think the Hon Member has probably misunderstood the answer. That is private property, it forms part of the lease of the Rock Hotel. In fact, I can inform the Hon Member that Service vehicles are allowed access through Green Lane and so are some of the members of the Gibraltar Regiment who live up at Devil's Gap and I do know that residents who have an entry in Gardiner's Road from the rock side find great cooperation from the Rock Hotel who allow them access through their own private land.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is there any right of way along that stretch of road?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I wouldn't know, Sir, it is private property and I wouldn't know about any right of way. As it is private property, there would be no right of access at all if the Rock Hotel did not want to allow access.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider looking into the question of making the last owner of a vehicle responsible for its disposal?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The law on this matter is to be found in the Traffic (Removal of Vehicles) Regulations 1964 Chapter 154 which are fairly lengthy and somewhat complicated. However, Regulation 3(i) already places the responsibility for the removal of a vehicle when the vehicle has broken down on a road (ie a derelict) on the owner, driver or other person in control or in charge of any vehicle.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 57 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Why then do we see so many derelict cars lying about our streets and what is the reason for allowing that to happen?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I suppose the answer is that we live in an affluent society where we have too many cars in Gibraltar. I would like to inform the Hon Member that the answer to the next question will give more information on this matter.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I have a few more supplementaries which I would like to ask, Mr Speaker, but I am quite happy to ask them following the next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how many derelict cars are in our public thoroughfares and how many have been disposed of in the last week?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

A total of 30 derelicts are at present on our roads. 18 of these have been signed for disposal. The remainder are under investigation. The removal is not done on a weekly basis. The week before last 27 derelict vehicles were removed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 58 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister agree that there are a lot of cars lying about which apparently the Police or whoever is responsible for finding out whether they are due for removal or not, are finding difficulty? Would it be possible to make it part of the law that on the granting of a licence a kind of deposit were to be paid by the owner and that would ensure that our roads are not littered as they are with derelict cars which I think the authority responsible is finding impossible to clear?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I don't know, Mr Speaker, if we could incorporate in the law a deposit on somebody for the eventual funeral of his own vehicle because there are people who look after their cars and have a car 15 or 20 years but there are other people, needless to go into detail, that come to Gibraltar, are here for a very short period and use an old banger to get around Gibraltar and then they leave Gibraltar, sometimes even removing the number plates. I would, of course, like to inform the Hon Member, because he is not here all that often, that we do dispose of a tremendous number of derelict cars in Gibraltar, in fact, from 504 right down to this year, so far, 69, so normally, Sir, it is between 400 and 500 on average per annum that we dispose of which is pretty good going.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister agree that notwithstanding that there are a lot of cars still lying around which is, in fact, affecting the parking problem. If the Minister would like me to, I could point out to them quite a number that I have seen and I keep seeing whenever I come to Gibraltar. Surely, if there was a deposit the individual concerned just for the sake of getting his deposit back would see that his car was disposed of at the proper time.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I tend to agree with the Hon Member that some people leave their cars parked longer than one would like to see them parked but they may not necessarily be derelict. A derelict is a car which is absolutely abandoned. The fact that a car happens to be parked at a particular place with all the dust and dirt on, if it has a road licence there is very little the Police or anybody can do about it.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, how long has a car to be left abandoned before it is considered a derelict or is it something historical as well?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, I think we can be serious about the matter. Before a car is a derelict it must, of course, have been abandoned and then if the Hon Member reads the Gibraltar Gazette and the local papers he will find that the Police advertise that a particular car, giving all the details, is in such a place and if the registered owner doesn't see to it it would be disposed of and after a time period, I think it is 3 weeks, then the car can be removed.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

If the deposit is not something that the Minister is enamoured with couldn't he think of setting time limits as to the time a car can be left in one place and so ensure that if the car is not moved then it can be assumed that it is derelict?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, I disagree even more with that, Mr Speaker. I don't think that in Great Britain where the Hon Member lives and feels so strongly about, I don't think a deposit is asked in Great Britain for people to dispose of their cars.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I don't think Great Britain has got the problem that we have. I don't think you see derelict cars, they have such a thing as an MOT test.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I heard the Minister saying that the responsibility for the disposal of the car was on the owner, does the owner in fact bear the cost of the removal of the car when the Police removes it and disposes of it?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the answer is yes and no. The Police have the powers under rule 6(1) to charge the removal of a vehicle but it in-variably is not done, we consider the cleaning up exercise much more important than obtaining £2 revenue for the removal of a vehicle.

HCN G T RESTANO:

Does the Minister not consider that £2 is too low a sum for the cost of the removal?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Obviously, Sir, £2 today would be absolutely ridiculous to charge and no doubt this was in the Traffic Ordinance of 1957, and of course £2 at that time was a reasonable sum.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister consider revising that sum?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

There would be no point, Mr Speaker. If we are not implementing the £2 there is no point of revising it to £200 because probably we still wouldn't implement it, we would much rather dispose of the vehicles without having to search for somebody who has probably left for Northern Ireland.

HON G T RESTANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if the fine were large enough, surely, it would encourage people not to leave derelict cars on the road and the removal and the disposal of them would at least help the Government in recouping the money that it is losing in the disposal of those cars.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

We are not losing any money at all, Mr Speaker, we are just cleaning up.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, would the Government consider the creation of a car pound helpful in the matter or not?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well, Mr Speaker, of course, the Commissioner of Police has under these regulations the power to remove a car and impound it but we haven't got a pound for it.

HON A J HAYNES:

Wouldn't the creation of a car pound be considered useful?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well it would be much more expensive, I agree.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So the Government therefore have come to the conclusion there is nothing they can do as with many other things.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member thinks that disposing of 500 cars per annum isn't good enough then there is nothing I can say that wil' convince him.

NO. 59 OF 1980.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government consider making the two-way road into Varyl Begg Estate West, an exit only or entry only highway?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

A detailed survey has already been carried out by the Police who have recommended that the Western Road leading into the Estate should be entry only and that the Eastern Road should be exit only.

This would provide more parking spaces, decongest traffic and make it much safer for the 5,000 residents and in particular for the children at the school.

When minor details have finally been worked out this will be put into operation for a trial period and will be made permanent, if found satisfactory.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 59 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

When does Government propose taking these measures?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Very shortly, Mr Speaker.

HON W T SCOTT:

With no definite time period?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Very shortly, I would say within the next month or so.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Housing and Sport state how many seats on the main stand at the Victoria Stadium are usable, and whether it is Government's intention to replace the seats that have now been missing for many months?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, out of the total of 1472 seats provided for on the Grand Stand in 1975 only 569 seats are usable.

Government does not intend to reprovide similar seats, but will consider, in due course, the provision of other seating which will be less susceptible to vandalism.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 60 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Aren't there people employed in the Stadium to prevent vandalism?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

If we didn't have them, Mr Speaker, then we would be 1472 seats short.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, Mr Speaker, 900 short is certainly not an achievement to be proud of, is it?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It isn't, Mr Speaker, but I hope he does not blame the members of the Victoria Stadium. Perhaps the Hon the Leader of the Opposition might like to remind the people who jump over the seats despite the constant supervision of the supervisors and staff of the Stadium.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Haven't we got a rather large Police Force well paid and well trained who can stop this vandalism or are we going to give way all the time?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the Police Force have nothing to do in connection with control of the Victoria Stadium.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, next question.

No. 61 OF 1980

THE HON A J HAYNES

Does Government intend to levy fees on individual and/or Associations for the use of facilities at the Victoria Stadium and what are the fees envisaged and can Government explain the basis on which the fees have been assessed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Government intends to introduce a charge for the use of the playing facilities at the Victoria Stadium on a per court per hour basis on similar lines to some Sports Centres in UK. The fees have as yet not been finally agreed to but will in no circumstances be above those in UK.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 61 OF 1980

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, has the Hon the Minister for Housing and Sport consulted all the relevant sporting Associations as to the introduction of this scheme?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

This was done years ago, Mr Speaker.

HON W T SCOTT:

What reaction did the Minister get after consultation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

We were discussing at the time, Mr Speaker, the question of membership and there was not an adverse reaction.

NO. 62 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government consider the possibility of creating a Sports Council for Gibraltar the members of which will be selected by the various Sports Association and who themselves will decide how Government grants allocated to them are spent?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has for the past two years been considering the possible amalgamation of the Sports Advisory Committee and the Committee appointed to consider applications for financial assistance for Sporting Societies. This is with a view to creating a Sports Council for Gibraltar which will have responsibility for advising Government on sport and facilities also the allocation of grants. Members of the new Sports Council will be appointed by the Minister for Sport as is the case in the UK following consultations with the interested parties concerned.

The allocation of grants will be the responsibility of the Sports Council, but not the way in which such grants are spent by respective Associations.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government make a statement as to how housing is to be allocated in Gibraltar in the future irrespective of whether the housing concerned is pre-war or post-war housing?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government will in the near future be considering a paper containing suggestions submitted by the Housing Allocation Committee with respect to the Committee's terms of reference and the method to be adopted with regard to allocations of Government dwellings.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 63 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister whether a statement will be made on this before any more houses are allocated under the old system?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, we will still continue to use the present setup and if and when Council of Ministers considers the paper and it is agreed to then of course this system will change, otherwise we will continue to do what we are doing now.

HON P. J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Government whether they are dealing with this as an urgent matter in view of the great dissatisfaction certainly that we found during the election as to the method presently used for allocation of Government houses?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The allocation of Government houses, Mr Speaker, is conducted by the Housing Allocation Committee and there seems to be no difference to what has been going on for a number of years. I see no matter of urgency as such but, of course, we will try and hasten it as much as possible but it certainly is a matter of top priority.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I think I did hear the Minister say that the proposals were going to come from the Housing Allocation Committee, did I hear him correctly?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

They have come.

HON G T RESTANO:

How can that statement be reconciled with the statement of the Chief Minister at the Ceremonial Opening of the House where he said that the Minister would be coming up with proposals?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Of course, Mr Speaker, that is why I am Minister for Housing, they submit their suggestions to me and it is my duty to take it down to Council of Ministers for collective discussion with my colleagues.

HON G T RESTANO:

Therefore, Mr Speaker, can the Minister say whether the exact proposals of the Housing Allocation Committee have been transmitted to the Council of Ministers?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The exact proposals have been put on paper for the Council of Ministers to consider.

NO. 64 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government publish a list of all Government houses and flats which were the subject of transfers, temporary or transit homes, or allocation during the last two years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is regretted that there is not enough staff available to undertake this time-consuming operation when everyone in the Housing Department is fully occupied revising all housing applications prior to implementation of the revised Housing Allocation Scheme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 64 OF 1980

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, will they not consider giving a similar list but for a shorter period?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I don't think we can entertain anything which entails unnecessary work on an overtaxed Department.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would he consider the empty houses which are lying there for months on end not an important matter?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

There are no houses lying empty for many months, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Well, that doesn't seem to be the opinion of the general public, if I may say so.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Then the general public must be misinformed.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does not the Government consider the subject of allocations and transfers that have been approved and so forth a matter of considerable public interest to make some effort to publish some list to at least tone down or alleviate the great public concern there is on housing in Gibraltar? Can the Minister not make some effort so that people can see on what basis houses are being allocated or transfers approved and so forth?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I agree there is concern in Gibraltar about housing but it is the lack of housing not a question of providing a list.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, considering the paucity of houses, considering there was only Rosia Dale built in I don't know how many years I find it incredible to believe that there are that many houses for the staff to cater with. Sir, is it not a fact that so few houses have been allocated that in fact this could be done easily and without great effort?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, during the past two years there have been allocations at Varyl Begg, there have been allocations at Rosia Dale, there have been a great number of exchanges and transfers. It would be an exercise which would considerably tax the staff.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would the Minister consider a list of the straight allocations in the last two years?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, we have, as a Government, committed ourselves upon the termination of the allocation at Varyl Begg to publish lists of the allocations as such. That I commit myself to do on completion of the allocations of Varyl Begg Estate.

HON A J HAYNES:

I didn't understand that, could you repeat that?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That the Government has committed itself on the termination of V_{aryl} Begg allocations, to publish a list of people who have been allocated flats at V_{aryl} Begg, that will be done in due course.

HON A J HAYNES:

As regards Varyl Begg, therefore, there will be the kind of list I require?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government publish a list of all unoccupied available Government accommodation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, a list of unoccupied flats cannot be published as these are no longer available having been earmarked for allocation by the Housing Allocation Committee to those applicants whose applications' pointage value as at 31 December, 1979, qualified them for accommodation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 65 OF 1980

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, there is nothing available or unavailable?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

There is nothing available.

NO. 66 OF 1980

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Has Government cancelled any of its advertising in the United Kingdom and if so for what reasons?

ANSWER

THE HOW THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND POSTAL SERVICES

We have cancelled five advertisements scheduled to appear in the last week in March basically for two reasons. Firstly, the coupon response campaign which involved sending Gibraltar information and Tour Operators Brochures cost £2728 more than estimated, secondly we updated the promotional film during the course of the year.

NO. 67 OF 1980

THE HON A T LODDO

In view of the success of the Fun Day held last year, would Government consider reviving the Gibraltar Fair, if not as a Fair, perhaps as a Festival Week?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND POSTAL SERVICES

The Fun Day held last year was not organised by Government. No funds have been provided for a Fair or a Festival Week in the Estimates for 1980/81 but Government will help any organised festival as was done last year.

NC. 68 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider improving the amenities at the Air Terminal in time for the Tourist Season?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND POSTAL SERVICES

Yes, Sir. The Public Works Department has already commenced improvements at the Air Terminal.

NO. 69 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Has Government any plans for providing proper facilities for Tourists arriving on Cruise Liners at North Mole as must be available at other Ports in the world?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND POSTAL SERVICES

The Government has no immediate plans to provide facilities for cruise passengers at North Mole. However, the future development of tourism both internal and transitory and the required ancillary services are being reviewed in a Port Development Study which is being made in connection with the next Development Programme.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will Government consider the possibility of holding a stock of potable water for the exclusive use of shipping?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No, Sir. In operating our waterworks with the present levels of supply and production we need to retain as much flexibility as possible. It would be impractical to hold stocks of potable water exclusively to supply shipping. A contract has recently been entered into to increase importation of water, and when this is fully operational we do hope to be more able to meet demands made by shipping.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 70 OF 1980

· HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, is the Government aware that the stoppage of supply of water to shipping even for a period of a month or two months can have quite serious repercussions on the port of Gibraltar and therefore affect the revenues of the colony quite considerably and should not efforts be made to prevent these situations arising?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Every effort is made to supply at least some water to shipping who come in and ask for it. We cannot obviously always give as much as is required. We do appreciate the importance of shipping coming to Gibraltar and that is one of the reasons for this new contract for the importation.

NO. 71 OF 1980

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, would the Minister for Public Works state how much the conversion of Tank Ramp into a road has cost, and when is it proposed to allow its use as such?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, as part of the scheme for the rehabilitation of property at Tank Ramp and to allow access to the site ODM approved the sum of £40,000 for converting the old steps into a roadway. The work to date has been marginally within this figure.

Until the redevelopment is substantially complete and public utility services, water, electricity and telephone ducts are laid it is not practical to open the road to the public.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 71 OF 1980

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say how long this work has been going on?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

How long has it been going on or how long will it go on for?

HON A T LODDO:

That will come afterwards.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It has been going on since the Tank Ramp steps were made into a road. I cannot remember exactly but I should say it must be 15 to 18 months.

HON A T LODDO:

Has the Minister any idea how much long it is going to take?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, I should think somewhere around November, December this year.

NO. 72 OF 1980

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

What is the current position with regard to the Air Terminal. Extension Project?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, construction drawings will be completed within the next few weeks.

The production of Bills of Quantities has been programmed as soon as possible thereafter.

Quotations have already been sought for

- (a) the supply and erection of structural steelwork, roofing and cladding
- (b) supply and installation of baggage handling equipment.

Anticipated commencement of work on site 1st September 1980 and 12 month total contract period.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 72 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Wasn't work going to start on this extension in June of last year? I remember the Minister for Economic Development telling us that in one of the budget debates:

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, the initial scheme was going to but it had to be altered because it entailed the strengthening of the runway, it was going to be on the Eastern side of the actual present building and that would have entailed a very expensive strengthening of runway and now the alterations will be to the North side of the building.

ORAL

NO. 73 OF 1980

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state what its policy for the future is to modernisation of old houses and can they state how many houses will have been modernised between 1st April, 1979, and 31st March, 1980, and the extent of slippage, if any, on the programme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Government will continue with its policy for the Modernisation of old houses. In the light of recent experiences at Lime Kiln Steps and Tank Ramp, a revised method of approach has been devised as regard the pre-inspection and surveying of properties together with an improved system for inviting tenders.

It is proposed shortly to commence the Modernisation of 7 units at Castle Ramp, Road to the Lines with a further 28 before the end of this development programme, at the same location. Proposed plans are already at various stages of completion for an additional 140 units during the next development programme.

Between 1st April, 1979, and 31st March, 1980, 27 units have been completed. Since the idea of modernisation was put into practice, approval has been granted for 133 units, out of this, 113 will have been completed by the end of this month. Of the remaining 20, work is already in hand on 10 of them, and the remaining 10 are either awaiting preparation of tender documents or decanting.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 73 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Minister not agree that however much modernisation might be considered to be a good thing, the effect of modernisation on housing development in Gibraltar has been disastrous?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, I would not agree to that.

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, will the Minister not agree that a prime site such as Tank Ramp should have been knocked down and a block built there instead of the sort of single storey, whatever it is, modernisation that is going on there? Could not many more people have been accommodated in a block there, for example, than the few that will be accommodated as a result of modernisation?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

At much more expenses, I suppose, anything could be done.

HON P J ISOLA:

But will the Minister not agree that the Tank Ramp area which is just single storey ramshackle huts almost, should have been designated for redevelopment of modern housing?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think the Tank Ramp redevelopment, Sir, is modernising some houses and building some new houses. I do not agree that it was a prime site, it is a very difficult location, very difficult for the contractor who is working there.

HON P J ISOLA:

In view of the fact that the Government has built a road to make it easy, does not the Government consider that the building of a road to enable the modernisation to take place would have made much easier the construction of much needed new housing in Gibraltar?

MR SPEAKER:

You may answer if you wish but we are departing from the question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister explain the difference in costing between modernised flats and units as in Varyl Begg? The implications, Sir, as I understood it was that modernisation plans were less expensive than blocks. Can he therefore explain this with facts and figures, can he tell us how much it costs to modernise a house as opposed to a unit in a block?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Although I should ask for separate notice, Sir, modernisation is costing between £13,000 and £18,000 and new flats are costing about £40,000.

NO. 74 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, will Government agree that there should be no repetition in the future of new Housing Units being handed over without floor tiles unless tenants are compensated in lieu?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No, Sir.

In order to reduce building costs, various conditions were imposed by ODA one of them being that all floor tiling to dwellings should be omitted with the exception of bathrooms and kitchens. This condition was justified by the fact that ODA representatives in the course of their visit had observed that tenants of new flats were either:-

- a. removing PVC floor tiling and replacing with ceramic or other superior quality floor finishes (parquet);
- b. laying lino over new PVC tiles;
- c. laying carpet over new PVC tiles.

In view of the above it was considered that tenants would be provided with a level screeded floor and they should take it upon themselves to finish the floors to their own requirements.

An exception to the above condition was made by Government in the case of Bedsitters where the question of hardship was taken into account. All bedsitters are being tiled with PVC throughout.

To compensate the tenants in lieu, would be to defeat the object of the exercise.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 74 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister confirm that this in fact is a departure of Government policy over at least the last 30 years?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, it is a departure. Government is not forced to continue with the same conditions all the time, this was something that was suggested, almost imposed, by ODA and Government accepted it.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since the main reason for the flats being handed over without tiles seems to be that the tenants themselves have altered the tiles that had already been placed by the Government, would it not be a sensible suggestion to compensate the tenants to the extent of the cost of the tiles that would have been put there in the first place, helping them towards the cost of putting whatever flooring they wish?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It would be very difficult to work out compensation depending on the means of the tenant but to some extent the tenant is compensated in the rent that is charged which is probably a little lower without tiles than if it had tiles since the rent is based to some extent on the actual cost of construction.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say what sort of differential in the rent he is talking about?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think I need notice of that question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government report progress on the Housing Development at St Joseph's and the exact position in relation to the phase?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Mr Speaker, with your permission I propose to answer this question and No 76 together if the Hon Member approves.

Sir, acceptance of both tenders is open to the end of the month before which date they will be awarded

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 75 & NO. 76 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask, is the St Jago's area going to be put to any other use temporarily?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

You mean the St Jago's old school building? Yes, that is being used as a temporary hostel for labour.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is that going to be a temporary hostel for labour for a particular project?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, the Girls' Comprehensive School.

HON P J ISOLA:

But isn't this subject to redevelopment as well?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Not at the moment. The area that is going to be redeveloped is completely separate from the actual school area.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can Government assure the House that the use of the old St Jago's School, what is left of it, as temporary accommodation will not in any way slow up any other project in the Development Programme?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No. Sir. it will not slow it up.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 76 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state whether it has now accepted a tender for the Housing Development at St Jago's and when is work expected to commence on this Development?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Answered together with Question No. 75 of 1980.

NO. 77 OF 1980

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state why work has been stopped on the new road being constructed between Willis's Road and Tankerville?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, as I already stated earlier in reply to Question No 71 no further roadworks can be carried out until the public utility services have been laid. It would be unwise to lay the final surface before the water services, electricity and telephone ducts are in place. Furthermore whilst the redevelopment of Tank Ramp is progressing a considerable amount of construction traffic is moving on this road with possible damage to its wearing surface. The road will not be completed until the building works are finished and the already mentioned services are finalised.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, can Government explain why the toilets at Little Bay were not available to the public at all during the holiday weekend recently thus making it extremely inconvenient for the large number of people that went there?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, in anticipation of the bathing season the changing rooms at Little Bay are undergoing extensive repairs and could not be opened on the weekend of 8th to 10th March inclusive.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 78 OF 1980

HON A J HAYNES:

I take it, Sir, that they will be ready shortly?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They should be ready for the beginning of the bathing season.

HON A J HAYNES:

Which is?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

About the middle of May.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister what is the nature of the extensive repairs being done because I was there myself and I saw no visible sign of any repairs of any kind going on there?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I understand that the toilets had to be refurbished, new tiling, the whole place decorated throughout, that is the normal repairs that are done.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 79 OF 1980

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state the position with regard to its road resurfacing programme and inform the House of what roads have in fact been resurfaced between 1st April, 1979, and 29th February, 1980?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the asphalt plant at Catalan Bay was extensively damaged by a rock fall on 21 March 1979 and a number of spare parts had to be brought from the manufacturers.

Repairs were not completed until the end of May 1979 thus considerable slippage in the resurfacing programme occurred.

The main emphasis was on the construction of additional car parking areas at Moorish Castle Estate, Waterport, South Flat Bastion Road and Catalan Bay where considerable surfacing has been carried out.

Roads resurfaced during the current financial year are two sections of Line Wall Road and Scud Hill.

Resurfacing work has also been carried out in school playgrounds, speed ramps at Glacis, Laguna Estate and Viaduct Bridge.

A large number of service trenches have also been surfaced with asphalt.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 79 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister aware that one of the reasons why Gibraltar looks so dirty is perhaps because of the state of our roads and couldn't a bigger effort be made to do this resurfacing?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think one of the reasons that Gibraltar looks so dirty is that the general public throw litter all over the place.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't it a fact that it looks grubby when you are walking along the roads in Gibraltar, precisely because of the state of the roads themselves?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No. I don't necessarily agree with that, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

When does Government propose to commence cleaning the beaches as well as preparing other facilities for the Summer months?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The beaches are already being cleaned and the work of doingup the changing rooms on some of the beaches, as well as at Montagu, has also commenced.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 80 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will they be ready for the Easter Season?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We will do our best to have some of them available for Easter but of course this depends on the easterly wind as it brings up a lot of rubbish on to the beaches if we have a storm and then of course it makes it very difficult to get it clean in time. We will do our best if we have a fine Easter to have as many facilities available as possible.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I think the Minister referred to the actual changing rooms and so on and I can't see how that is affected. With regard to changing rooms and other conveniences as my Hon Friend pointed out before, wouldn't it be better if a start on the redecorating and cleaning up generally could be made earlier?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We could always take this into account in future years. I don't think this year it is specifically aimed at Easter, I think the aim is to have it ready for the beginning of the bathing season which is the 15th of May.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Couldn't we have the bathing season brought forward slightly. It would appear that people are already using the beaches and that it is one of the biggest attractions to tourists, couldn't the Minister reconsider that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We always try to help on a fine weekend in winter but you cannot guarantee the weather even at the 15th of May.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will Government make the effort to have at least toilet facilities available to the public at the beaches during Easter especially if the weather is fine so that people who go to the beaches in large numbers on holiday weekends at least have that facility even if they have to put up with dirty beaches and so forth?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, we will do our best.

HON A J HAYNES:

How does Government propose to clean the beaches?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, a man goes round with a little brush and a little stick and picks up all the little pieces.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, I ask this question because one often finds that the beaches are dirty even after they have been cleaned. What methods are used and are these methods effective?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The normal cleaning of the beaches is to remove as much debris that is lying around especially what has been brought in by the sea itself and to generally get the area looking neat and tidy. One of the things along Eastern Beach is that the wall is usually painted, I would not agree that after the beaches have been cleaned they still look dirty. I think beaches in Gibraltar tend to have a rather dirty looking atmosphere because if you inspect the sand carefully there are a lot of little black stones amongst the sand which gives it a rather dirty colour, it is not the silver sand of perhaps Benidorm etc, but I would not accept that the beaches are dirty.

HON A J HAYNES:

There are also cigarette ends in the sand.

MR SPEAKER: ..

Order, we are not going into the details of how to clean beaches. Next question.

NO. 81 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

When does Government propose to commence works at the north end of Camp Bay to make it safe for the public as well as clean?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

A very small area of the promenade at the extreme north end of Camp Bay has been fenced off from the public for several years due to the danger of rock falls in this area.

The face of the rock above this isolated area is badly cracked and it would be unwise to allow public access for safety reasons.

It would be extremely difficult and expensive to make this area 100% safe since there could be no guarantee that further rock-falls would not occur.

The area is kept as clean as practicable.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 81 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Wasn't work started last August on that north face?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

NO. 82 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Is Government satisfied that all specifications with particular regard to the supply of materials have been strictly adhered to by the Contractors in the Development Programme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, as far as Government is aware all specifications with particular regard to materials are being strictly adhered to by Contractors in the Development Programme Projects.

The PWD has a laboratory where certain materials are tested regularly and vigorously in order to ensure that they conform to specification. There has been two cases recently where Government has rejected basic building materials such as bricks and cement.

There is a standard clause built into the tender and contract documents which allows alternative materials (equal and approved) to be used in lieu of the specified product. When such cases arise the materials and specifications are examined by the professional staff before substitution is approved.

NO. 83 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state what is the estimated schedule for the completion of the new PWD Garage and the demolition of the existing one?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

It is anticipated, Sir, that the project should be substantially complete by June 1980 when the transfer from the existing Garage can commence.

The demolition of the existing Garage is planned for September 1980 as part of the Girls' Comprehensive School project.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 83 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The Government is absoltely sure now that there will be no change of venue?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

NO. 84 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state what is the current position with regard to the filling in between Nos. 2 and 3 Jetties?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the project has run approximately 30% of its contract period and it is estimated that it is 30% complete.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 84 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister give an indication of when it might be completed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Late December, 1980, Sir.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state for how long work has been going on in tiling the pavement at the North East end of Rosia Road, what is the square area completed so far and at what cost?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, I would refer the Hon Member to my reply to his question No 206 of 1979. Works had stopped at that time and it was stated that, if possible, further works would be carried out so that pedestrians could cross the read away from the bend in the road.

These additional works started on 18 February and finished on 14 March 1980 and a further 100 sq yds, 400 18" x 18" tiles were laid. The toal area of paving is therefore 175 sq yds. As stated in my earlier reply these works were charged to the General Road Maintenance Vote and an exact breakdown of cost is not possible but the cost of the latter work would be in the region of £1400.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 85 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't this the sort of kind of work that could be given out to piece work perhaps and reduce the cost?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the cost of laying 175 sq yds is approximately £2400 hence the cost per sq yd for labour and material is of the order of £14 per sq yd. Indications are that the current prices for this work if carried out by a private contractor would be of the order of £18 per sq yd. If this is done on piece work, Sir, I don't think there would be very much saving.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Hon Minister explain again the figures, how many tiles are laid per day?

MR SPEAKER:

I do not think Ministers are expected to have those details at hand.

HON A J HAYNES:

If he would give me the facts I would work it out.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I will send you a letter, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, I ask this because I feel that the number of tiles laid per day is remarkably few and considering the number of men working there it is preposterous that that should be the result.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think there is only one man working there.

HON A J HAYNES:

I have seen personally more than one man working there.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Take my word that I have seen more than one and two and even four.

NO. 86 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

In view of the process that the Tower Blocks will be submitted to in the final treatment what has been the cost of the temporary treatment of flint-coating that has been applied?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the cost of the weather proofing treatment and redecoration of the Tower Blocks will be £106,879.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 86 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

Is this work now complete?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Not quite, there is a fraction more to do.

HON W T SCOTT:

Can the Minister state what was the original cost at tendering time if the projected final cost is £106,879?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think that was the tender price, Sir.

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

When is the final treatment to the Tower Blocks to be applied and what is the likely cost of such treatment?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

It is not yet known when the eventual treatment will be carried out. The Building Research Establishment is assisting in this matter and recommendations as to suitable treatments are being awaited. Until more specific information is at hand it will not be possible to assess an order of cost.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 87 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

Does the Government have any idea when it will be in a position to examine the recommendations or when the recommendations will be submitted?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I understand there are three specialist firms in this. One of the firms is sending somebody out in the next two weeks to have a look at it and the other two firms will probably come within the next two months. After that we will assess the costings that they give us.

HON W T SCOTT:

Does Government have absolutely no idea at the moment what the final cost of the treatment would be?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have already said that, Sir.

NO. 88 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government consider declaring the roads at Varyl Begg Estate as public highway so as to be able to make those roads subject to the same laws as those affecting other roads in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir.

GRAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government ascertain and report what has been the total revenue from the sale of sand since the commissioning of the project on the East side and what have been the costs in wages/salaries etc since that date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Gibraltar Quarry Company Ltd operates as a private company and the data which has been requested is not available to Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 89 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, isn't that a rather strange position coming from the Chairman of the Company?

MR SPEAKER:

I think I have ruled on this one once before. The Minister is answerable for his Ministerial responsibilities and not as Chairman of any particular firm.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am questioning, Mr Speaker, the answer. The Minister was asked whether he would 'ascertain and report'. His answer has been that the information is not available to the Government and my supplementary is, how can that be if he is the Chairman of that Company?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer to that one must be, and I think I must rule on this one, that he is not entitled to part with information which he has exclusively as Chairman of the Company and not as part of his Ministerial responsibility.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister, is the position then that the Gibraltar Quarry Company is unwilling to give that information to the Government unlike, for example, the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation which is another independent body but always seems to be willing to give its information so that the Chief Minister can answer questions on its behalf in this House? Is the position that the Gibraltar Quarry Company refuses to give that information to the Government?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think, Sir, I have said that the attitude is that this should be treated as a nationalised company and that the accounts will be laid on the table every year as such. I believe the accounts for the first six months are at the moment in the course of preparation and it is quite possible that an exception can be made and the first six months accounts can be laid on the table for information of Members.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister if he does not consider the position of this so-called nationalised industry in Gibraltar to be rather different to the big nationalised industries in England where the Chairman, for example, is not a Minister in the Government? Is it such a difficult process for the Minister to ask the Gibraltar Quarry Company; "Can you please give us these figures, I have been asked about this in the House." Is it so difficult to do that and for the Quarry Company to cooperate?

MR SPEAKER:

Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition might wish to ask whether such information has been requested from the Company.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has the Minister, in fact, asked the Quarry Company to give this information so that he can reply to the question?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, it is a question of principle. If the Quarry Company operates as a private company it has the same rights as any other private company. I don't think the Government will be entitled to go to any private company in Gibraltar and say:
"Let us have your figures for the last six months or last year."
It is a question of principle, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister saying that this company which is chaired by himself, a Minister of the Government and the other directors are three Government employees, should be treated exactly the same as any other private company?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

'THE HON W T SCOTT

What further progress has been made on the Lime Kiln Steps Development particularly with Phase 2 of the project?

ANCWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the further progress made on the two phases is as follows:-

We call them Phase 1 and Phase 1A, Sir.

Phase 1

13 of the units are almost complete but the occupation of these dwellings is dependent upon the installation of the new sewer together with the replacement of water mains, electric and telephone mains and the formation of a new entrance to the site from Lopez Ramp. Due to the delays encountered by the Contractor in obtaining some materials and specialized plant it is unlikely that work on the new services and entrance will commence until mid-May 1980. Occupation of the new untis will therefore not be possible until mid-August 1980 at the earliest.

Phase 1A

The Contract officially commenced on 1 February 1980 and the demolition works are well in hand. It has been necessary to redesign completely two of the five blocks, embodied under this Phase, as new buildings owing to their structural instability. This has delayed this project somewhat. Problems encountered in obtaining specialized plant/materials etc by the Contractor as mentioned before have also contributed to these delays and it is now anticipated that this Phase will not be completed until July 1982.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 90 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

Can the Minister state if there are any people still living in the areas of development in Lime Kiln Steps?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Not in the area that is being redeveloped, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister not agree that in the light of the difficulties being experienced it might be prudent at some stage to question the continued wisdom of pressing on with modernisation rather than with pulling down all buildings and replacing them with new construction?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The whole position, Sir, depends on once one gets the property free of tenants and one can start investigating, if the main structural walls are good then obviously modernisation is a good scheme, if the main sturctural walls are unstable then it is obviously better to knock the whole thing down and start again from scratch, but you cannot say before you actually investigate once the tenants are out and you can rip off floor boards etc, what is going to be the position.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister not agree, Mr Speaker, that in the light of the experience that has been had to date for the modernisation programme, it might be prudent to take a second look at it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We found with Phase 1, Sir, that the walls were in good condition and we have been able to do quite a good job there. It is Phase 1A which is a different area although in the same general area where we have found that the walls have been unstable.

NO. 91 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government state what progress has been made on the deep drilling for water?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, a total of eight boreholds (seven straight down and one at an incline) have now been drilled. Preparations are being made to drill two further inclined boreholes - which after test pumping should give the necessary parameters required to assess whether water of good quality can be economically abstracted. Work and expenditure are as programmed.

Results are still being assessed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 91 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

Has there been any particular success at Hay's Level?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The greatest success has been at the inclined hole at Orion where a total of 150 metres has been done and we were getting yield not of the best quality water but of water which possibly could be used for blending at a rate of about 30 gallons a minute.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, will Government give the figures and cost for water production from available sources for the months of October, 1979, to February, 1980, and state what the stocks were on the 29th February?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Figures of water production from available sources for months of October, 1979, to February, 1980, are as follows:-

MONTH	Rain- fall	Wells M ³	NF Distiller M ³	VTE Distiller M ³	Importa- tion	Total Produc- tion
Oct 1979	17433	11231	463	22252	15375	66754
Nov 1979	738	11624 .	17937	19021	11513	60833
Dec 1979	1848	12801 ·	14930	Nil	13539	43118
Jan 1980	10953	13693	11829	. Nil	9052	45527
Feb 1980	11278	14243	Nil	Nil	13454	38975

The stock on 29 2 80 stood at 39593 M³ (8.71 Million Gallons).

Total production costs are normally worked out over one financial year when capital charges and other overheads can be correctly apportioned and an accurate cost per M³ obtained. The estimated operational costs for 1979/80 were given in answer to question No 142 of 31 10 79.

At present the estimated operating costs for 1980/81 are as follows:-

Rainfall	£0.33
Wells	£0.45
Importation	£1.84
NF Distiller	£2.43
WTE Distiller	£2,20

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 92 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister say why the VTE Distiller produced no water for 3 months between December and February?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because it is on its annual overhaul which takes approximately 3 to 4 months. It should come back in April.

HON G T RESTANO:

Since it has produced nothing since December to February, that is 3 months, how is it that it will only be coming back into force in April?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

March is the fourth month.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I am glad to see that the cost of water of the Distiller has gone down by 57p. What is the cause for that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because the engineers concerned did a considerable amount of experimenting and managed to improve the yield from around 45% to 70%.

HON G T RESTANO:

I certainly congratulate him on that, Mr Speaker. Can the Minister say how the increases in the rainfall, wells and the NF Distiller, how they are computed, is this salaries?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is mainly as far as the rainfall, wells and importation, the increase in salaries, as far as the Distillers it is salaries and cost of fuel.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government say when the refurbishing of the public conveniences at Market Place will be finally completed, and how much will be the eventual cost as opposed to the estimated cost?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, work was scheduled for completion on 21 March 1980 and I believe it was done.

The estimated cost of providing two additional shower cubicles and internal redecoration was £2000.

Actual cost was £1995.

However additional work to that previously included in the estimate has been carried out. A third shower cubicle has been provided, the entire electrical installation has been renewed, the floor of the men's conveniences has been retiled, the Spanish tile roof has undergone extensive repairs. The cost of this additional work is in the order of £1300 and has been charged to Head 20 Item 16 (Toilet and Public baths). This additional work would have had to be done in any event.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 93 OF 1980

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, in fact, the works were only completed yesterday and the showers in those conveniences are not provided with curtains and when anybody showers the water gushes out under the door, is that what the Minister understands by completed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I will look into the question of curtains, I am very grateful for the three-day slippage that you inform me of.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I had been given to understand that this job was supposed to take six weeks and it was started in October.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have been given to understand that it was scheduled for completion on the 21st March, Sir.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government consider the creation of an attendance centre for juvenile offenders?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND . LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the Attendance Centre Rules made in 1961 under the Criminal Justice Administration Ordinance already provide for the establishment of an Attendance Centre. The Fire Station at Grand Parade is the appointed place for the reception of persons of not less than 12 years of age but under 21, and the Chief Fire Officer is the officer in charge of the Centre.

In 1975 the Criminal Justice Administration Ordinance, was amended to enable the officer in charge, in appropriate cases, to require the offender to carry out supervised activities at some place other than the Attendance Centre. In this connection the Youth and Career Service has in the past been designated for this purpose.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 94 OF 1980

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, would the Minister not consider the creation of the use of a building exclusively as an Attendance Centre as desirable?

HON A J CANEPA:

Not having regard to the incidence of orders, I might inform the Hon Member that no Attendance Centre orders have been made during the last two years.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, perhaps this is connected with the fact there is no recognised or established Attendance Centre.

HON A J CANEPA:

There is a recognised Centre as I have said, Mr Speaker, it is the Fire Station and that is the Centre designated by the Court.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, would the Minister not agree then that it is desirable to have a proper Attendance Centre, a building exclusively for the use as an Attendance Centre especially in the light of growing juvenile delinquency throughout the world?

HON A J CANEPA:

But fortunately, Mr Speaker, not in Gibraltar to the same extent as in the rest of the world.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would he consider it desirable, Sir?

HON A J CANEPA:

A lot of things are desirable, Mr Speaker, but they are not essential.

NO. 95 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government consider amending legislation to provide for higher benefits for persons in receipt of Disability Pensions which have not been increased for very many years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND

LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, I presume that the question refers to Disablement Pensions payable under the Employment Injuries Insurance Ordinance, and in that case, Sir, I should point out that the rates of benefits under this Ordinance are increased periodically, in the same way as Social Insurance benefits. However, the rate of disablement or industrial death pension applicable in any particular case is not increased after it has been awarded. At the time the award is made, if the degree of disablement is assessed at 35% or more, and it is considered by the Medical Board that it will last for not less than 7 years, the beneficiary may elect to receive a gratuity instead of a pension.

To increase the pension subsequently would bring the complication that it would be unfair on the person who had opted for the gratuity.

The matter raised by the Hon Questioner will be looked into. It could mean that the option to receive a gratuity would have to be abolished. I would invite the Hon Questioner to give further thought to the matter in the light of my reply and let me know what further views he may have.

NO. 96 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government provide for an increase in Family Allowance in July this year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

I think, Mr Speaker, that the Honourable Mr Bossano has been asking this question at least since 1973 at the pre-budget session and always getting the same answer.

This matter will be considered by Government in the context of its deliberations on whatever budget proposals it will be presenting to this House later in these proceedings.

I cannot therefore give a reply at this stage.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 96 OF 1980

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Government agree, however, that they should not be inhibited from increasing the Family Allowances in Gibraltar by the reactionary policies of the Conservative Government in the United Kingdom?

NO. 97 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

How often does the Manpower Planning Committee meet and what significant alterations has it made over the last three years in the proposed figures and more particularly what is the projected list of figures under the distinct trade classification for the next year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The Manpower Planning Committee established under the Control of Employment Ordinance meets at least quarterly, to examine and keep under review the employment situation in Gibraltar and to make recommendations as to the maximum number of permits which should be issued in respect of particular industries for the ensuing 3 months.

During the past 3 years the total permissible quota for employment permits, in respect of persons who are subject to the Ordinance, has been increased by 305, from 3385 to 3690. During this period the actual number of permits in issue has increased by 211. The most significant change has taken place in the building industry, where there has been an increase of about 210 employment permits and for which there is still provision in the quota for about a further 100.

The present approved quota for the period ending 30 April, 1980, is due to be reviewed again when the Manpower Planning Committee meets in 2 week's time.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government amend the appropriate legislation so that old age pensioners living on their own may have their Television Licences at reduced fees as well as their Telephone Rentals, Electricity and Water charges?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, in the first place, in order to answer this question, I would need to know what the Hon Questioner regards as an Old Age Pensioner. Is it any person over pensionable age or only a person receiving an Old Age Pension under the Social Insurance Ordinance? And whatever the answer to this may be, is it suggested that the reduced charges for television licences, telephones, electricity and water should apply irrespective of means?

In so far as needy elderly persons living on their own and receiving Supplementary Benefits are concerned, their rates of benefit include an element to cover electricity and water costs. In addition they receive a telephone allowance which is increased periodically to take account of increases in telephone rentals. At present the allowance is equivalent to half of the actual rental.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 98 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

Does not the Government think it a more equitable manner of subsidising them by having a reduced fee payable rather than to have them being subject to financial supplementary benefits?

HON A J CANEPA:

Subsiding who, Mr Speaker, the old age pensioners or the people on supplementary benefits?

HON W T SCOTT:

The people under the subject matter of the question.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the Minister has quite rightly stated that you must clarify who you mean. You are being asked to qualify and to explain what you mean by the term old age pensioner.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I was talking about old age pensioners generally. Any person who is in receipt of an old age pension.

MR SPEAKER:

Have you any answer to give?

HON A J CANEPA:

No; Mr Speaker, I stick to the answer I have given.

ORAL

'THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government make available the statistics it has in its possession with respect to pensioners in the distinct categories and also those persons of pensionable age who are either in receipt of a part pension or no pension at all and will Government also make available those figures which it has estimates as being an approximate number of elderly people not registered with it, that might be entitled to a pension should the Social Insurance Ordinance be such as to make the awarding of pensions (SIP) universal to Gibraltarians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the approximate numbers of persons receiving statutory pensions from the Department of Labour and Social Security are as follows:

Contributory Old Age Pension : 2,200

Non-Contributory Elderly Persons Pension: 930

Transitional Retirement Pension : 70

There are also about 200 persons of pensionable age receiving Supplementary Benefits, of whom a very small handful are entitled to one of the above pensions but at a rate less than their Supplementary Benefit entitlement.

Of the 2,200 in receipt of Old Age Pension about 600 are receiving reduced pensions at various rates, depending on the deficiency in their records of contributions. I am afraid that I cannot estimate with any degree of accuracy how many persons of pensionable age there may be without any pension of any kind, but their number is not likely to be significant.

I find the last part of the question impossible to answer because of the way it is put and I should point out that elderly persons are not required to register with the Department. For example - in the first place, the Hon Member mentions Gibraltarians only. There are many other persons in Gibraltar who are not Gibraltarians. Even if we consider Gibraltarians only, is it suggested that they should receive a full Old Age Pension irrespective of whether or not they have been residing and/or working in Gibraltar for all or part of their working lives?

I have said on many occasions - both in this House and outside - that this is an extremely complex matter which, apart from its financial aspects, goes to the very roots of any social insurance scheme.

NO. 100 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government give a breakdown of the unemployment figures in the different categories as at 29th February, 1980?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The figures at the end of February 1980 were as follows:-

•			SUB-TOTAL		L	TOTAL		
BRITISH							. •	
Adults	:	Males	56	•			٠.	
,		Females	36		92			
Juveniles	:	Males	5			•		
		Females	20		25		117	
ALIENS				87.				
Males	:		38	•			•	
Females	:		6		<u>.</u> 44		444 161 800000000000	

Eight girls and two boys school leavers included.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Is Government satisfied that the Construction Industry Training Centre is being fully utilised by both official employers and the private sector?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, Government is fully satisfied with the use which is being made of the Construction Industry Training Centre. The other Official Employer which makes use of the Centre is the Property Services Agency and which shares the Centre's running costs in proportion to the use made of it - which at present is about 30%. This lower proportion is due to the running down of the PSA's directly employed labour force, which has led to their sending fewer apprentices and trainees to the Centre.

The private sector of the Construction Industry, unfortunately, does not make much use of the training facilities at the Centre, in spite of an offer made a few years ago, and which is always open. No charge is made for the occasional apprentice or trainee which the private sector sends to the Centre, the cost of whose training is borne by the Government of Gibraltar.

In addition to training construction trade apprentices and labourers to craft standard for the PWD and PSA, the Centre's facilities are also used in other respects, such as for tradetesting craftsmen, arranging for group visits by school children to the working environment during their last two years at school, running short courses for supervisors and on specific subjects such as scaffolding, safety at work, etc.

NO. 102 OF 1980

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what are its lastest proposals for development at Catalan Bay?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, Government now proposes to erect 12 dwellings at Catalan Bay at the northern end of the Village. Work would start during the 1980/81 financial year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 102 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to hear that Government has decided to double the construction there in this Development Programme. May I ask why it is that the full amount of sixteen dwellings cannot be done during this year?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I don't think the Government has decided to double the number of flats, I think Mr Serfaty gave the figure of ten flats as the total required at Catalan Bay in December, 1979, and he said that the Government would endeavour to provide this. Thise was in answer to question No. 219.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, if the present Minister for Economic Development looks carefully at that reply of his predecessor he will see that what was said was: "These considerations have dictated the Government's proposals for the construction of six dwellings at Catalan Bay under the current Development Programme." I think I was quite correct in saying that I was glad that Government had doubled that. Why is it not possible to do the sixteen?

HON A J CANEPA:

Because the plans have been designed for twelve. You could build thirty, no doubt, if you were to build eight, nine or ten storeys, but this is a reasonable number of flats that can be provided on that site as cleared at the moment.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, how many floors will this development have?

HON A J CANEPA:

Four floors.

HON G T RESTANO:

.41

Would it not be possible, Mr Speaker, to have built a block high enough so that there would be an entrance from the top end of Sir Herbert Miles Road as well as from Catalan Bay Village?

HON A J CANEPA:

It may well be the case, Mr Speaker, it might be possible given the necessary labour, given the necessary funds, no doubt, but there are priorities and there are constraints.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would it not be desirable, Mr Speaker, in order to try and solve once and for all the whole rehousing problems in that area?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Sir, the housing problem at Catalan Bay cannot be solved at the expense of the rest of the community, it must keep reasonable pace with new housing in the rest of town.

HON G T RESTANO:

I agree with that, Mr Speaker, but on the other hand there is not a large amount of space available in Catalan Bay so once, I would have thought, space was available it should be used to its optimum use.

HON A J CANEPA:

I think that this is making reasonable use of the space available there as a first phase.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, would not the estimated cost of the Catalan Bay housing as set down in the approved estimates of 1979/80 of £120,000 indicate that the project was only for six houses originally as agreed and approved by Government?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't know, Mr Speaker, whether that was for the whole of the project or whether there was a balance to carry forward. If it was for the whole of the project that would indicate, I imagine, about 6 units.

NO. 103 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, does Government have any intentions to develop Jumper's Bastion or put it to salutory use?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, there are no plans at present for developing either North or South Jumpers. In the case of South Jumpers, the accommodation, which is below ground, is excessively damp and cannot be used because of its extremely dilapidated condition. The cost of rehabilitating these casemates would be high and uneconomic.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 103 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, Mr Speaker, what those costs would be?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not have the information, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

In that case, Mr Speaker, if he doesn't have the information how can he say the cost is too high?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is the technical advice which is given, Mr Speaker.

No. 104 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government give an assurance that land made available for development as garages for buses and lorries in the industrial area will not be used for any other purpose?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, I can confirm that as a matter of general principle Government gives the most careful scrutiny to any change-ofuse application. This applies a fortiori to applications affecting land allocated for specific purposes.

NO. 105 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will Government make an open area available for the parking of lorries and trailers and prohibit the indiscriminate parking of these as now occurs which contributes so much to the untidy appearance of Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The short answer to the first part of the question is that there is no longer any open area that could be considered for this purpose. Land has always been in short supply in Gibraltar and available resources have been absorbed by succeeding Development Programmes.

The "sixty foot strip" next to the Incinerator at Devil's Tower Road has been earmarked as a small lorry park.

Control of parking, of course, is a Police matter and the Police Force is empowered to take action in appropriate cases.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO GUESTION NO. 105 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, it appears that now lorries and trailers are parked indiscriminately along Winston Churchill Avenue between the pedestrian crossing and the Cross of Sacrifice and is that not a hazard for other traffic and for the people in the area?

HON A J CANEPA:

I would agree with the Hon Member that this is a hazard, Mr Speaker, I think it is a matter for the Police or perhaps my colleague the Minister with the responsibility for traffic could bring this to the attention of the Police.

NO. 106 OF 1980

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, is it still Government's intention to have a multistorey car park built at the married quarters site at Casemates if and when the property is taken over by the Gibraltar Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, there has been no change in Government's thinking on the future of the Casemates Married Quarters site. The intention is still to make the site available when it can be released for redevelopment as a multi-storey car park with an element of commercial and business usage to ensure that the project is economically viable.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 106 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister not agree that to have a multi-storey car park right at the beginning of Main Street would not be a very desirable thing?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think, Mr Speaker, that that is an ideal site, it is a site which is earmarked for that purpose in the city plan and no objections that I can recall were raised. I would imagine that having regard to the site in question it is ideal. You do want a car park of this nature, a multi-storey car park, I would say, on what I would call the periphery of the town centre.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I agree that the approximate area is an ideal place to have a multi-storey car park but multi-storey car parks are rather ugly buildings and I would have thought perhaps an area in, for example, opposite Ocean Heights which is as close to the centre as necessary and with easy access, would have been preferable rather than cluttering up the beginning of Main Street with an ugly building.

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't think, Mr Speaker, it need necessarily be ugly. I think the façade on the Main Street side would have shops and perhaps offices and entrance to the car park would be at Line Wall.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister have a look at the project?

HON A J CANEPA:

If, hopefully, the project does get off the ground I am sure that the Chief Planning Officer will advise the Development and Planning Commission very carefully in order to ensure that the building is as attractive as it can reasonably be made.

NO. 107 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Is the planned handover of the Dockyard and Technical College proceeding to the original schedule?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for Education)

Yes, Sir. The transfer of management is still scheduled to take place in September 1981 and discussions on this are continuing with the UK Government.

NO. 108 OF 1980

ORAT

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Does Government have any intention of taking over the land and buildings known as the Fleet Pavilion and if so to what use will it be put and will Government further state whether it has applied for the release of any other property or site adjacent or near to the Fleet Pavilion?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, Government has no contingency plans for taking over the Fleet Pavilion since no indication has ever been given that it would be released by the Ministry of Defence as surplus to requirement.

The possibility of converting No 2 Naval Ground into a car park has been raised with MOD's representatives in the Development and Planning Commission. The impression gathered is that there would be no MOD objection to such a proposal if the playing facilities available at this ground, or indeed at both playing fields, were reprovided. This could be done by suitable reclamation or by providing a playing deck above the car park. Either solution would be bound to involve substantial expenditure.

NO. 109 OF 1980

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state what is the current position with regard to the future of USOC?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, it is understood that the Ministry of Defence is still considering the use to which the former USOC Club House will be put. May I add that the sporting facilities continue to be available.

ORAL

NO. 110 OF 1980

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government consider utilising the area known as the "Jungle" to create more parking spaces thereby alleviating the parking problem in general for the residents of Moorish Castle and also clear part of the area and make it usable for children as a playground?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, some 20 extra parking spaces have been provided at Moorish Castle during the current financial year and the marking of parking bays has been effected. This has greatly improved the situation.

Approaches are currently being made to MOD for the release of further land in that area for use as car parks and plans are ready to effect this work if the land is released.

Access to the "Jungle" area is through Castle Communication, which is extremely narrow. In order to allow traffic to use this access freely a considerable amount of rock blasting to widen the road would be necessary. Any car parking scheme at this site would therefore be very expensive, and is considered impractical.

Government has considered the possibility of converting the area for leisure purposes and a playground could be included, but costs so to do are very high and the scheme has been allotted a low priority.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 110 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

With reference to that part of the question dealing with the children's playground, has Government solicited the help or the advice of certain Youth Clubs in Gibraltar?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Not at this stage, Sir, we would do if we actually intended to go ahead to build a playground up that area.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, with reference to the part of the question about alleviating the parking problem, is Government satisfied that all the garages allocated in the Estate are, in fact, being used as garages and not for some other purpose?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

From my rather scanty local knowledge of the area, I think there is at least one garage which is not being used as a garage, I believe it is used as a shop and I think they have a trade licence to do so but I am not very acquainted with that situation at all.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister look into this and, perhaps, let me know? Does he think it desirable that garages should be used for any purpose other than a garage?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am willing to look into it, Sir, but I believe that there is some demand for the need which this shop serves which is fruit and vegetables in that area.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Has Government ascertained what were the causes of the oilinfiltration in the Harbour recently, what measures it took to disperse this oil and what further measures it envisages taking to obviate similar conditions arising again?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to reply to questions No 111 and No 112 together.

The causes of the oil pollution are unknown; no oil slicks were reported entering the Harbour and no pollution of Port waters exists, other than in the vicinity of the Camber and the Calpe Rowing Club.

The Camber is only slightly polluted whereas the sea at the Calpe Rowing Club has a thick film of oil, specially in the slipway area. When this was notified to the Port Department, the City Fire Brigade were immediately informed and both areas were treated with dispersants. Since the first report, the situation has not worsened.

There has been no spillage in the Harbour and it is presumed that the oil has infiltrated during a westerly blow.

Other than spraying the area with dispersant, there is virtually nothing else that can be done. During daylight hours, visual watch for oil slicks is maintained from the Port Department Lookout situated at Western Arm.

When oil slicks are sighted their location is communicated to the Dockyard Fire Brigade, who deal with them prior to their entering Harbour. During the hours of darkness it is impossible to maintain a watch.

It was at one stage suggested that oil in the vicinity of the Gibraltar Yacht Club was possibly caused by a leakage in the oil supply line from Coaling Island to King's Bastion. The roadway was dug but no trace of oil or leakage was found.

As regards taking any further measures, it must be stressed that we can only rely on visual sightings and treatment being given immediately. In this context £3000 is provided for dispersants in the Estimates of the City Fire Brigade. The Dockyard Fire Brigade also keep stocks of dispersants.

Apart from the presence of oil in the waters in the areas stated and the reported soiling of Pleasure Boats, no other damage is known to have been caused.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS 111 AND 112 OF 1980

HON W T SCOTT:

Has Government received any claims by the boat owners and if so what is the extent?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, if I may, perhaps, answer that question. There is one claim which was made some time ago on behalf of the Yacht Club. Whether or not this relates to oil which appeared in January of this year, whether or not that is the same oil is a matter which is undetermined but there has been one claim made by the Yacht Club in respect of oil which was in the waters around the Yacht Club as far back, indeed, as July of last year and that is a claim which is being dealt with by my Chambers and Government. I should, perhaps, add that liability is not accepted in respect of that claim.

NO. 112 OF 1980

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government state the extent of the damage caused by the recent oil spilling in the Harbour?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Answered together with Question No. 111 of 1980.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government take steps to ensure that the number of berthing facilities for small yachts and pleasure craft are not reduced even temporarily by developments in the Port area?

ANSWER.

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, yachts berthing within the Commercial Port of Gibraltar do so only when berths are available and always on two hours notice, as the primary responsibility of the Port Authorities lies with commercial ships.

At present yachts are berthed at Sheppard's Yacht Marina and in the Destroyer Pens, the former being a private Marina, and the latter within Admiralty waters.

A second Marina will be operational shortly, which will be capable of berthing approximately 180 yachts. It will be equipped with all the ancillary facilities required by yachtsmen.

The Destroyer Pens are at present catering for 31 yachts, which could easily be absorbed by the two Marinas.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 113 OF 1980

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, I take it that the answer is no, then?

HON A J CANEPA:

You are perfectly correct.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member aware that the Camber could be developed to take far many more yachts?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am aware, Mr Speaker, of the fact that additional pontoons and other moorings have been provided within the Camber recently.

HON A J HAYNES:

Have they been completed recently?

HON A J CANEPA:

This has been a subject which has been under consideration in the Development and Planning Commission over the last two years or so and in fact the chains were made available by the Ministry of Defence to lay them at the bottom of the sea in order to provide the necessary moorings.

HON A J HAYNES:

Yes, but have they been laid?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not sure what the state of play of that is, Mr Speaker, I would require separate notice of that question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, does the Minister consider it desirable for yachts coming in as they do now from the Atlantic after the March equinox to find that there is no reduction in berthing facilities? Does he consider it desirable to have these yachts and if so will the Minister take steps to make sure that they will be berthed?

HON A J CANEPA:

I consider it desirable that the number of berths should not be reduced but I consider it absolutely essential that the necessary development that is required at the Port for the economic benefit of Gibraltar is not impeded by a few yachts which could otherwise be berthed at the new Marina which, as I say, will open shortly and I mean shortly within the next few months.

HON A J HAYNES:

Months is the period we are talking about, Sir. The point is that would it not have been desirable to have the Camber development completed before the Destroyer Pens were evacuated or emptied?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Destroyer Pens are going to be required by the Government before the year is out and therefore it may become necessary for those yachts to be moved elsewhere. It becomes an absolutely essential matter that the Government should have No 4 jetty available for commercial use in the Port.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, without going into the benefits to Gibraltar of the Port Development as opposed to the possible benefits from yachts, I ask the Minister that he will ensure that the Camber and every other facility will be made available to yachts so that there is no decrease in the number of berthing facilities available.

HON A J CANEPA:

I cannot give such assurances, Mr Speaker. I think the development which is necessary in the commercial port cannot be held up by the requirements of a few yachts.

HON J BOSSANO: .

Could I ask the Minister how the development of the expansion of Sheppard's Marina will affect the use of that area at present by small fishing boats owned by local residents? This is the area next to Sheppard's Marina, not the new Marina, the existing Marina which I understand is due to be developed next to the Gifmac Ice Factory around that area at Waterport.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am trying to cast my memory back to matters that have come to the Development and Planning Commission with which I have not dealt directly but as far as I can recall I remember there was a request by the operators of Sheppard's Marina for a certain area which they required in order to carry out further expansion and my understanding, again quoting from memory, was that that request was refused. I don't think that the Government was in a position to make that available as there was a continuing use for it.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister agree that if the situation arose as a result of that request for the need to evacuate that area of all the small craft presently using it that he should consult with representatives of the people involved?

HON A J CANEPA:

I know that there is constant consultation with Small Boat Owners Association, the Government consulted them, in fact, only a week or ten days ago. Last Tuesday there was a meeting with the Small Boat Owners Association so they are kept fully consulted.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, would Government consider implementing a Gibraltar Summer time by advancing the clock by one hour during the Summer period?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, this matter was considered in depth last year after consultation with interested parties, including Government Departments, the Chamber of Commerce, the Hotels Association, the Gibraltar Taxi Association and the Trade Unions. The Government appreciated that an additional hour of daylight on summer evenings would be generally welcome from the point of view of leisure activities. The Government also recognised, however, that there would be certain disadvantages in making the change, particularly in relation to the time available for shopping by day-trippers to Gibraltar. While it was not possible to quantify the economic disadvantages which would ensue from a change, it was considered that, in the present economic situation, it would be preferable to take no action which might prejudice an important source of revenue.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 114 OF 1980

HON P J ISOLA:

Does this mean that because of day-trippers the community will not have an extra hour of daylight?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is much wider than that, with great respect. First cf all, I would like to say that we are always prepared to look at this if new arguments are produced and, in fact, we had the advice of all the people and it took quite an exercise to come to this decision. In the first place, sailings of ferry with Morocco cannot be changed, one hour shopping time would be lost, 25,000 day excursionists visited Gibraltar in 1978 and spent £650,000, so that is a factor which we have taken into account. The Chamber of Commerce is against the change on these grounds as well as the Hotel Association and the Association for Travel Agents unless the Mons Calpe traffic is not affected. The Gibraltar Taxi Association are against it if it is going to reduce the number of tourists and, naturally, the Trade Unions are generally in favour, I have a completely open mind, we did a big exercise, it is too late now to do it this year but we would have to review the matter if additional evidence is produced next year.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, this is exactly the same that was said last year. The Government answered last year that they would consider introducing it as an experiment this year. This question is being asked in March, is it not amazing that because the boats can't change their time or the aeroplane can't change their times, and I would have thought this was a simple matter, that people who work in offices late and who could have this extra hour and enable them to go to the beach and enjoy the pleasures of summer will be deprived of it, and I would have thought that shop hours could be altered too to suit the new hours. It is no use the Chief Minister saying that they will consider it again next year, that is what was said last year. Why doesn't the Government have a go at trying something new?

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, on the question of those day-trippers, these day-trippers are not affected.

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to debate the matter. We are going to ask questions.

HON A T LODDO:

The day-trippers cannot be affected because in any case the Chamber of Commerce always applies for permission for shops to remain open.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If the Hon Member would give way before he proceeds, I will explain that I think he is on the wrong tack. It is not that it will be impossible because the shops are not opened, it is because if they keep to their time-tables, the visitors would be here in Gibraltar one hour less.

MR SPEAKER:

It is the difference in time between Morocco and Gibraltar.

HON A T LODDO:

That time-table can be changed.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They will not change it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, may I suggest to the Chief Minister that he considers licensing of transportation between Gibraltar and Tangier in that case because in the same way as a scheduled airline change their time-table at whim to suit their convenience it is time that the convenience of the people of Gibraltar was taken into account.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is the economic interest of the people of Gibraltar that we are taking into account which leads to the convenience of the people of Gibraltar.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that the Chief Minister stated publicly in the pre-election programme "Face the public" that his Government had been in consultation and correspondence with the presently engaged Paediatrician for 18 months would he not agree that he misled the House in opposing and defeating an Opposition motion in the last House of Assembly asking for the appointment of a Paediatrician?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Government's attitude in this matter has been consistent throughout. Before the question of engaging a full-time paediatrician was first raised by the Hon Member in February, 1979, the Minister for Medical and Health Services had arranged, as announced in a Press Release in August, 1978, to have the question of paediatric needs studied by the King's College Research Unit. The advice given at that stage was that a team of paediatric consultants should visit Gibraltar four times a year and that, after a year's trial, a further assessment should be made.

The report on this assessment, received on 2 November, 1979, recommended that a Community Paediatrician should be recruited to carry out specific functions, in accordance with the particular requirements of the situation in Gibraltar, which were set out in detail.

By adopting this course of action, rather than being rushed into a snap decision to engage a full-time paediatrician, the Government obtained two significant advantages. In the first place, the special needs of the situation in Gibraltar, as assessed over a period of a year by a team of no less than four consultants, were built into the functions of the post. Secondly, as a result of their close interest and connection with Gibraltar over that period of a year, the King's College Research Unit subsequently placed all their paediatric facilities at Gibraltar's disposal and are willing to arrange further visits by their paediatric specialists as and when these are requested by our own Consultant Paediatrician.

When the Government opposed and defeated in this House, on 1 November, 1979, the Opposition motion that immediate steps should be taken to implement a full-time paediatric service in Gibraltar, it did so because, as it had already made perfectly clear, it was awaiting advice from the Research Unit, advice which, as it happened, arrived on the following day and was immediately acted upon.

Sir, it has seemed to me necessary to explain, yet again, the Government's consistent policy on this issue and the reasons why we opposed the motion - all of which are set out in the Hansard. Insofar as my statement in the pre-election programme was concerned, I said nothing new. I said in the debate on the motion in November last year that people had shown an interest in the possible job of paediatrician and that this was a matter for the Public Service Commission. When the Research Unit's advice was received, the post was advertised and a selection was made.

Sir, for almost a year, the Hon Member failed to shake the Government off the course which it had set itself - on a matter taken up on the Minister's initiative and not that of the Hon Member. He failed furthermore to make political capital out of his campaign on this subject. Now that the matter has been resolved by the Government, in a manner which is to the best advantage of the Paediatric Service and which would not otherwise have been possible, the Hon Member raises it yet again. In doing so he suggests that I have deliberately misled the House. This is a most serious allegation which is completely unjustified and which I repudiate. It is also my view, Sir, that to flog a dead horse is an abuse of the procedures of this House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 115 OF 1980

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister says that the Minister for Medical and Health Services first started his investigation of the matter in August 1978, yet the Minister during the debate which he has mentioned said that he had only gone into this after Professor Jolly had come to Gibraltar and Professor Jolly came to Gibraltar at the end of September of 1978, so which of the two statements do I accept?

MR SPEAKER:

I gave a lot of thought as to whether I should allow this question. I allowed it so that you could be given an explanation. You have been given an answer and I will not allow debate as to what was said and what was done. You are free to seek information but we have got to be careful not to fall into the temptation of debating the subject.

HON-G T RESTANO:

I just wanted to clarify that point, that the previous Minister for Medical and Health Services seemed to mention a different date to the one mentioned by the Chief Minister and I wondered which of the two statements was the one I could keep.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to answer any supplementaries on my statement.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the statement that the Chief Minister had been in consultation and correspondence with the presently engaged paediatrician for 18 months, does that explain why it was that the paediatrician's family came to Gibraltar, settled down and his children went to school long before the Government made the policy decision

MR SPEAKER:

No, I will not allow that question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In any case, there is one thing wrong. The Hon Leader of the Opposition has attributed to me having said something about him which I didn't say.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am sorry I thought he had said it. That remark was not made by the Chief Minister then?

MR SPEAKER:

It has been clearly stated by the Chief Minister in his statement that it was only after the report was accepted that the matter was referred to the Public Service Commission and the post advertised.

HON P J ISOLA:

I do not think he has denied that he said in the programme that he had been in consultation and correspondence.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not I, the Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

That is not denied?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That there had been contact with an applicant, yes, of course.

HON P J ISOLA:

What I am asking is does that explain why it was that the applicant and his family came to Gibraltar long before the Government made a decision to employ a paediatrician?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 116 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government support the idea of having a Gibraltar Centre in the United Kingdom and if so in what way do they envisage they could help in making this project materialize?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Government has noted with interest the reports on the Press Conference held by Mr Albert Poggio on behalf of the Association of Gibraltarians in the United Kingdom - the Gibraltar Group. I personally welcome this move to reactivate the Association and hope that their efforts will command general support from Gibraltarians both here and abroad. It has been stated that the Gibraltar Government will be approached for assistance but no such approach has yet been made. Only when the Government is asked for specific ways in which it might be able to help will it be possible to consider what might be While I think that the Gibraltar Group in the United Kingdom is a very desirable manifestation of our identity as a people, even among those who are not living in Gibraltar - or perhaps particularly among those who are not living in Gibraltar I believe that this kind of movement, if it is to succeed, must do so substantially on the voluntary efforts of thoseinterested and concerned. The Government is certainly sympathetic to these efforts but it would be wrong to make promises of assistance before a specific request is received and can be considered. Even then, such a request will have to be weighed very carefully other pressing demands on the public purse. The Governagainst ment will, of course, have to be satisfied, bearing in mind in particular that, as stated by one of the Trustees, the Group has been inactive for two years, that the project will be viable, lasting and well administered.

As I have said, this kind of movement depends essentially on the support of a large number of people and I would like to take this opportunity to urge all Gibraltarians, here and abroad, to show their support by contributing to the Group's financial target.

NO. 117 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider publishing a pamphlet on Gibraltar similar to that produced by the Gibraltar Branch of the European Movement for distribution in influential circles in Britain and other countries of the European Economic Communities and Commonwealth?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, a written statement of the views of the people of Gibraltar is in preparation for use by the delegation from Gibraltar to the European Parliament which, as announced last week, will be taking place in April. The Government will consider publishing this statement for general distribution.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 117 OF 1980

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will it be published in the form similar to the leaflet where there are some pictures and illustrations, in order to make the person looking at it interested in the subject?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We shall try to do that.

NO. 118 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

When is it expected that GBC will be fully operational from Mercury House?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Work on the conversion of part of Mercury House is proceeding according to schedule and, as envisaged, GBC/TV will be able to start operating from there in July this year.

The transfer of GBC Radio will then follow and I am informed that GBC should be fully operational from Mercury House by the end of this year.

No. 119 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government consider re-opening talks with the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation for the purpose of permitting the proceedings of the House to be broadcast?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, in reply to Question 290/78 in the last House I stated, after consultation with GBC, that it would be desirable to defer consideration of the question of broadcasting the meetings of the House until GBC, who had other pressing commitments, were in a better position to pursue the matter.

I am now pleased to inform the House that, as the move to Mercury House is progressing satisfactorily, GBC have agreed that it will be possible to continue discussion of this matter in the very near future.

MR SPEAKER:

May 1 perhaps add to that answer that I have received a letter from GBC about two days ago saying that they are now in a position to consider broadcasting and asking for suggestions and that it is my intention to write to both the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition suggesting that a sub-committee be appointed to study the matter.

NO. 120 OF 1980

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Will Government give consideration to amending the appropriate legislation so that persons who at Election time are away from Gibraltar such as students and holiday-makers will be able to vote by post?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir.