

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

MEETING OF 11 MARCH 1981

QUESTIONS
AND
ANSWERS

1 to 109

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, has Government now obtained particulars of United Kingdom bank charges and if so has it been able to compare those with local bank charges?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to question No 130 of 1980 from the Hon Mr Restano, I said that it was not considered appropriate for the Government to intervene in the level of charges raised by banks for their services. Having looked further into the matter my view is that it would be invidious to make comparisons in the House on the charges made by different banks in Gibraltar. Bank charges vary between local banks as they do between banks in the United Kingdom. I do not consider that it would be a practical proposition to suggest the pegging of local charges to those of any bank or group of banks in the United Kingdom or any other country. The community should rely on the banks' own sense of responsibility and on the forces of competition to ensure that charges are kept fair and reasonable.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 1 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in question No 130 of 1980 the question was whether bank standing orders which were charged for by banks in Gibraltar was an item which was not charged for by banks in the United Kingdom and the Hon Financial and Development Secretary did say at the time that he had not yet received the particulars of United Kingdom bank charges to be able to reply to that question. Is he now saying that the particulars have indeed been received, that comparisons have been made, but that he feels it unwise to air those comparisons in this House?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Hon Member then agree to discuss this matter with me outside this House?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I would be happy, Sir, to meet the Hon Member if he so wishes.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

11.3.81

NO. 2 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Financial and Development Secretary state what progress has been made during the last year to computerise all Municipal Bills?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, all electricity and water bills have been computerised except for bills for water supplied to shipping. These can be more conveniently dealt with under the previous system.

The programme for the Computerised Telephone Billing System is at present being written and the computer will be fed with the basic information shortly. It is hoped that it will be possible to run in parallel the manual and computer systems for the Telephone Accounts in the second Quarter 1981 and to rely on fully computerised telephone bills thereafter.

Work on the Rates System will start as soon as the Telephone Billing System is completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 2 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Has there been any slippage in the programme, Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, the programme was not done as quickly as the Government would have wished. The reasons are that the Computer Manager has had to train staff as well as to write programmes and with hindsight I think that we should have had an analyst programme writer as well as a Computer Manager, this would have speeded up the writing of our computer programme. At the moment for the telephone system we have, in fact, gone out to an expert locally who is writing the programme for us in order to speed up computerisation of the system.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that in March of last year the Government stated that the telephones would begin to be computerised in July of 1980?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have not got a record of the House of that time before me but if the Hon Member says that that was said I am sure it was said. What, in fact, did happen was that we did not begin to write the programme for telephones until the end of the last quarter of 1980.

HON G T RESTANO:

What staff is at present employed, Mr Speaker, in the computer department?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I would need notice of that question and I will let the Hon Member know in writing.

3 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government give a full explanation with regard to the £5,000 reallocation from sub-head 17 to sub-head 25 under Head 20, Warrant 20 of the Statement of Reallocation No 7 of 1980/81 of the Consolidated Fund?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. The sum of £5,000 was reallocated to sub-head 25 Ex-gratia Payments of Head 20, Public Works Annually Recurrent by Reallocation Warrant No 20 of 15th January, 1981, to make an ex-gratia payment in settlement of an action which had been issued against the Government in the Supreme Court of Gibraltar in respect of flooding at a garage on the night of 10 December, 1975. On the advice of the Attorney-General's Chambers the ex-gratia settlement of £5,000 was offered without admission of liability. The offer was accepted by the plaintiff who had originally claimed the sum of £9,494 plus costs.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 3 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, has there been a reduction of services from sub-head 17 - the up-keep of sewers and drains - because of this transfer of £5,000?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the total amount that is requested at estimate time for the sewers etc, obviously includes quite a number of various things such as materials etc, and these are liable to fluctuation, sometimes the quantity of materials taken is less than is required and this is what has happened this year.

HON W T SCOTT:

So there was, perhaps, an overestimate at budget time?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would comment that estimates are estimates, they cannot be correct to the exact percentage. I think, a fluctuation of 5% is quite reasonable.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 4 OF 1981

CRAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the Consolidated Fund Statement of Reallocation No 7 of 1980/81 Warrant No 19, Head 20, will Government give a detailed explanation of the £83,000 reallocated to Sick Leave for Workmen and further will Government explain why this amount has not been spent on the different sub-heads?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the sum of £83,000 has been reallocated to sub-head 7B, Sick Leave for Workmen of Head 20, Public Works Annually Recurrent to meet an estimated shortfall of this sub-head.

If the Schedule of Supplementary Estimates now before the House is approved, a total of £176,000 will be available in this sub-head,

Provision in Estimate	-	£70,000
Reallocation Warrant No 8	-	£ 9,500
Reallocation Warrant No 19	-	£83,000
Supplementary Schedule No 4	-	<u>£13,500</u>
		<u>£176,000</u>

Based on a labour force of 900 men and an average wage of £15 a day, provision is made for an average of 13 days sick leave per annum. It has been possible to reallocate funds from the other named sub-heads because these are expected to show savings; labour costs have been lower as a result of absences on sick leave.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 4 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Does the Government not agree that coming to the end of the financial year, the amount of £83,000 for Sick Leave constitutes a substantial element, was Government aware of this?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, provision is made for sick leave at the beginning of the financial year based on an estimate of previous absences on sick leave. One cannot control sick leave except by the entitlement of ten days uncertified sick leave per annum which employees are allowed after three years and the six calendar month sick leave on full pay in any period of four years which they are also entitled to under the Public Service Regulations. The Government has done its best to control the uncertified sick leave concession and 34 persons had this withdrawn during the leave year 1981. The Government is conscious of the need to control this but it is a very, very difficult area to control.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary, did I hear him correctly to say that as far as the estimates were concerned the provision for sick leave was estimated at an average of 13 days a year per person in the work force? Can the Financial and Development Secretary tell the House all these supplementaries and reallocations, what does that work out at in terms of an average of the year? Is it more than 13 days?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sorry if I have misled the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition. The figures of £176,000 which is the total which will be sought from the House with the Supplementary Schedule No 4 provides for 900 men at £15 a day with an average of 13 days sick leave.

NO. 5 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, in respect of the Improvement and Development Fund Statement No 4 of 1980/81 Reallocation, will Government make a Statement detailing the items under Head 101?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the reasons for the reallocations of funds within Head 101 Housing are given in Statement of Reallocation No 4 of 1980/81. I can however add the following information:-

- (a) £42,861 reallocated from Subhead 4 - Lime Kiln Steps GIB/46 (Phase B) to Subhead 15 - Lime Kiln Steps Phase 1A.

Additional funds were required for Phase 1A to demolish part of the buildings found to be structurally unsound.

- (b) £40,000 reallocated from Subhead 7 - 22 Road to the Lines to Subhead 10 - White Stores. This latter project when approved in August 1978 was estimated to cost £300,000. Although the final account has not yet been received, the latest information is that the total cost will be in excess of £357,000. The additional funds are required because of delays in obtaining building materials (facing bricks and roofing tiles), essential additional works and delay in handing over the site because of difficulties in reproviding stores on site.

- (c) £19,500 reallocated from Subhead 12 - Castle Ramp/Road to the Lines Phase I to Subhead 14 - Gas Works.

It has been decided to proceed with Phase III of the project. This phase entails (i) the completion of filling in of the gasometer tanks, (ii) formation of the access road, and (iii) regrading ground to profile for future housing development.

- (d) £5,200 reallocated from Subhead 19 (New) Waterworks - Flat to Subhead 18 - 52/58 Flat Bastion Road - Demolition.

Funds were required to meet the cost of boring trial holes on the site available for redevelopment following the demolition of 52/58 Flat Bastion Road.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 5 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I notice here that the sum of £59,500 from subheads 7 and 12 - Castle Ramp and Road to the Lines - is now no longer available to that project. Does that mean that there has been a delay in that modernisation programme?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the contractor on that project has not submitted the final account as was expected when supplementary funds were approved earlier in the year. This is, unfortunately, because of ill-health and it is not expected that the bills will be in before June of this year and for that reason it was possible to move funds from the subheads to where they were required rather than seeking supplementary provision.

HON W T SCOTT:

So at some future stage in the course of the House we will be looking for some supplementary estimates to put back into subheads 7 and 12?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, it will be a revote in the 1981/82 estimates.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am a little puzzled with the explanation with regard to Lime Kiln Steps because looking at Head 101 in the approved estimates, there was only provision as far as Phase B was concerned, as I see it here in Lime Kiln Steps, of a total of £5,000 for 1980/81. There was provision for Phase 1A of £80,000 and a balance to complete of £270,000 but as far as Phase B is concerned there seems to be no provision for balance to complete and only £5,000. I do not know whether it will come out later on but there does not seem to be anything in the approved estimates.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I take it that the Hon Member refers to the (a) £42,861 reallocation at Lime Kiln Steps. In my copy of the estimates Improvement and Development, Head 101, sub-head 4, Area Re-Development Schemes, Lime Kiln Steps GIB/46 Phase A, projected expenditure to 31.3.81 was £5,000. I think probably it would be easier if I either wrote to the Hon Member or spoke to him on how this additional amount is built up.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

11.3.81

NO. 6 OF 1981.

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, as it is now four months since Government has been considering introducing TV Licence Stamps, is the Minister now in a position to say whether the Government has taken a decision on the matter?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

Sir, the introduction of the TV Licence Stamp Scheme has been accepted in principle. The Government is now considering whether the Scheme should be limited to TV licence prepayments only or whether it should be extended to cover other licences and/or bills due to Government and, also, whether a General Savings plan linked to the Gibraltar Government Savings Bank, should be incorporated in the Scheme. Work on matters incidental to the introduction of the Scheme, such as the Stamps which are to be used and the format of the Cards on which the stamps are to be affixed, has progressed satisfactorily. The Hon Member can rest assured that a statement on the matter will be made as soon as I am in a position to do so.

11.3.81

NO. 7 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Mr Speaker, will Government state the present position regarding the report produced by Alexander Howden Brokers Limited on reinsurance and will Government summarize the various options to them under the report?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, the options open to the Government as set out in the Alexander Howden Report are a conventional policy, direct insurance with normal excess; direct insurance with self insured retention and the setting up of a captive insurance company which would be wholly owned by the Government. The Government considers the last of these options the most attractive but, after further consultation with the Crown Agents, it is seeking the views of an independent expert in the fields of risk analysis and captive insurance before taking a final decision.

11.3.81

NO. 8 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, does Government propose at the next Budget Session to amend the provision of the Income Tax Ordinance so as to lighten the heavy taxation burden on the average wage earner or salary earner in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, with your permission I propose to answer this question together with Question Nos 9 and 10.

11.3.81

NO. 9 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has Government now made a study in depth on the Income Tax Ordinance as promised in this House and if so will Government make a statement on its conclusions?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, with your permission I propose to answer this question together with No 10.

11.3.81

NO. 10 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government ensure that allowances under the Income Tax Ordinance are reviewed in the forthcoming budget by no less than the increase in the Index of Retail Prices?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, Members will recall my answer to Question No 224 of 1980, by the Hon A T Loddo, in November, 1980. At that time, I informed the House that an in-depth study into all aspects of income tax legislation was in hand. This study is now in the closing stages and, as stated in November, its findings will enable the Government to take decisions in connection with the 1981/82 budget. It is within this context, and that of the overall financial situation of the Government, that consideration will be given as to what extent, if any, relief to tax payers can be given under the provisions of the Income Tax Ordinance.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 8, 9 AND 10 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I thank the Financial and Development Secretary for that answer and I suppose from his answer that we must wait for the budget before we hear the conclusions of the study in depth. Is that the position?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary whether whatever the Government decides to do on this study in depth, whether the Government will make available to the House, whether the Government implements the study or not or the recommendation, whether the Government will make available to the House the conclusions of the study?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, without wishing to pre-empt what I will say in the budget speech I think that I would indicate in that what options the Government has examined and what conclusions it has reached.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that in fact failure to review the allowances in line with the Index of Retail Prices is effectively an increase in taxation because of the erosion of the purchasing power of money over the last twelve months?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I would agree, Mr Speaker, that what the Hon Member has just described would be that there would be an element of fiscal drag in the budget.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Financial and Development Secretary agree that the problem revealed in the question of my Hon Friend Mr Bossano would not be there if both he and the Government had agreed with the Opposition amendment at budget time of £100 additional increase in personal allowances which the Government and the Hon Mr Bossano felt unable to accept?

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member is allowed to ask me questions am I allowed to answer them?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. The Hon Financial and Development Secretary may wish to answer the Hon Mr Isola's question.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, if I understand what the Hon Member has asked correctly then my answer is I cannot agree with him.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition wishes to ask me.

MR SPEAKER:

He is not asking you, he is asking the Financial and Development Secretary.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Hon Member interested in knowing what the Financial Secretary thinks that I am doing in the House or what I think I am doing in the House?

MR SPEAKER:

The Hon Leader of the Opposition was asking a question from the Financial and Development Secretary. It so happens that you were in agreement with what the Financial and Development Secretary did at the time and therefore you were brought into it.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Hon Financial and Development Secretary then, Mr Speaker, whether he would agree that to have increased the allowances last year by £100 as proposed by the Leader of the Opposition on the wrong assumption that there was a greater surplus

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is completely hypothetical because it was not done.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr. Speaker, I don't think it is any more hypothetical than what the Leader of the Opposition wanted the Financial and Development Secretary to say.

MR SPEAKER:

On what the Leader of the Opposition was asking a decision was taken by this House, on what you are saying it was not.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Financial and Development Secretary agree that had the proposal put forward by the Opposition last year, which was unacceptable both to myself and to the Government, been accepted, it would have been totally irrelevant to the concept of indexation of tax allowances which is the subject of the question relating a review of the allowances to the Index of Retail Prices?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, yes, I think that had we agreed that additional £100 as proposed by the Opposition at the budget last year, the same questions would have arisen now.

11.3.81

NO. 11 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether War Pensions which are not taxable in UK are taxable in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, there are two types of war pensions in payment. These are: wound and disability pensions and war widows' pensions; both are exempt from tax in the UK. Only the wound and disability pension is exempt in Gibraltar under Section 7(1)(j) of the Ordinance.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 11 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Would, in fact, the Financial and Development Secretary then consider the possibility of extending the same provisions to the case of the pension that is not taxable in the United Kingdom in view of the fact that this must be something affecting a very small number of people and the loss of revenue would be quite small?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, this has already been done.

11.3.81

NO. 12 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the Tender Board is now working to the policy in the use of land for private development which was recently agreed in this House?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. The Treasury Tender Board is now guided by the terms of the motion recently carried in this House.

11.3.81

NO. 13 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether there are any delays in the granting of Development Aid and if so, what are the reasons?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir applications for Development Aid Licences are dealt with as expeditiously as possible. A number of applications do not include sufficient information on the proposed development and this must be provided before the application is processed and a decision taken.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 13 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Financial and Development Secretary agree, Mr Speaker, that in view of the importance of maintaining a flow of work for the construction industry in its present slack state, the requirement of the application of Development Aid should be made absolutely clear to those who apply so that in fact if that is the matter that is delaying the granting it should be avoided?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir. On the other hand the Government cannot proceed with an application if when it asks questions there is a refusal to answer them.

11.3.81

NO. 14 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, would Government not agree that the 'Duty Paid' sign displayed at the Departure Lounge at the Airport, far from being prominent, is in fact ridiculously small and will Government take immediate steps to ensure that an alternative more prominent placard is installed so that tourists are made well aware that the items for sale there are duty paid?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the sign has been replaced. I had in fact asked the Public Works Department to take the necessary action at the end of January.

NO. 15 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, is Government finally in a position to inform this House as to when physical work will commence on the erection of the new roofs at the Varyl Begg Estate?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, in view of questions 17 and 18 of 1981, I would with your leave propose to answer this question after question No 18. I think this would serve the best interests of clarity.

Preparatory work commenced on 6 November. That has been completed and aluminium and steel materials have been approved and ordered. Further work will be undertaken on site next month and the erection of the new roofs will commence in May.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 15 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Why has not this been a continuing process, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It has been a continuing process, the measurements have been taken, the steel materials have been ordered, they have to be fabricated etc and this is what is taking a little time.

HON W T SCOTT:

By continuing process I mean physically work on the site. I gather that although it started very well with quite a number of men there has been a withdrawal of labour.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Simply because the first work was the removal of the drying area walls. After that was done no further work could be done until the actual steel and aluminium turned up.

HON W T SCOTT:

So that is the extent of the problem at Varyl Begg, there is no other problem other than that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Not to my knowledge, no.

NO. 16 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Mr Speaker, will Government state the present position as regards reprinting the Laws of Gibraltar following Question 17 of 1980?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the Government has already accepted in principle the need for a revision. In March of last year I said that I intended to make firm proposals to Government during 1980 with a view to having a reprint commenced in 1981. Following a decision in Council of Ministers there will be some provision in next year's estimates to make a start on the revision.

In the meantime, 6 individual Ordinances were reprinted in 1980.

Last December I also wrote to all heads of Government departments asking them to let me have returns of those Ordinance that, by reason of heavy amendment and public demand, they would wish to see reprinted. These returns have been obtained and I am determining an order of priority for reprinting as many individual statutes as is feasible during this present year. I am in consultation with the Bar on the matter. So far we already have 4 of these Ordinances in the process of reprinting.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 16 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I understand from Question No 17 that a revision would be commenced in 1981 not in 1982.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think I said that following a decision which Council of Ministers took last year there is some provision in the next financial year, meaning 1981/82, to make a start on the revision.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can we have any idea when there will be a new bound volume of the Laws of Gibraltar?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am bound to say I think it will take some time. My experience of reprints is that they normally take three years so I think it is going to be some time.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there any provision for a different form of binding of these new Laws?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, perhaps if I can elaborate a little. Subject to the terms being settled, we do have in mind a Commissioner to undertake this work and no doubt he will have his own views on the format of the Laws. My own view as to how reprints should be presented is this, that I tend to favour bound in alphabetically ordered volumes with annual measures and reprints bound in each year thereafter. I think these are documents which are after all part of archives and I think it is important that they should be duly presented but that is my view at this stage and the Commissioner no doubt will have his own views and I will discuss it with him.

NO. 17 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether the agreement made between the parties involved in the Varyl Begg Estate dispute is being implemented in full and does Government envisage any slippage in the implementation of the agreement?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, with your leave, I should like to answer this question after No 18 which deals with the state of the agreement so I think that would serve to clarify the matter.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, there is no objection whatsoever but if this was going to be the case, why were not the questions put in the right order for answer? That is what I do not understand.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, from the practical angle when they come in they are classified more or less as they are likely to be answered but the full import of the questions is not appreciated at the time, otherwise I would not be intervening as I have done sometimes instead of doing it at the end. It is just that the whole spectrum of the thing is not appreciated initially. They are classified in order to go out to Heads of Departments and they are given a number and though they are classified more or less by subject matter an analysis is not then made as to how the thing will be answered.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, may I just clarify. I think it would be helpful if I were to deal first with the agreement itself and then with progress under the agreement.

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In the statement I made to the House on this subject on 4 November 1980, I said that the contractor would come on to site to commence preliminary work within two weeks of 27 October, 1980. I also said that the construction of the new pitched roofs would take approximately eighteen months to complete.

In the event the contractor came onto site on 6 November 1980 and undertook preparatory work. The contract for the construction of the new roofs stipulates that the completion date is to be 1 May 1982, which is less than eighteen months from the date on which I made my statement.

The Government does not envisage any slippage in this timetable.

NO. 18 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government confirm that the agreement made between the Government, the Consultants and the Contractors in respect of the Varyl Begg Estate has now been formally drawn up and signed by all the parties and will Government make a copy of this agreement available to the House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, the resolution of the Varyl Begg Housing Estate dispute involved settlements with the contractor and the consultant architects respectively.

In the case of the contractor, heads of agreement were concluded on 29 October, 1980. The terms were announced by me in the House on 4 November, 1980. They involved the settlement of the difference between the Government and the contractor over the existing roof and roof related defects, the reservation of the Government's position over other defects and the processing of those other defects by the contractor, and agreement on the terms of the new contract to be undertaken by remedying of roof related defects. By their nature, and as I indicated at the time, their incorporation in detail into formal documents and the completion of the financing arrangements required further time.

These matters have now been completed. A deed of settlement of the existing differences and the construction contract for the erection of new pitched roofs and related works were executed on 12 February, 1981.

In the case of the consultant architects, the heads of agreement were concluded on 28 October, 1980. These were of their nature more comprehensive than those with the building contractor could be.

Following the conclusion of the contract with the contractor, a formal deed of settlement and agreement for architectural services with the consultant architect has been prepared and is with the architect for completion.

As I said in the House on 17 December, 1980, these will be made available for perusal by any Hon Member of the Opposition who wishes to read them.

MR SPEAKER:

We might perhaps answer all the questions and then supplementaries can derive from there.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am quite happy to ask supplementaries as long as I am asking on this.

MR SPEAKER:

Precisely, but provided you realise that you will have no further right to ask supplementaries on this one when we answer the other questions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 18 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

I thank the Hon and Learned Attorney-General for that answer. Is it correct to say that the consultants have been dragging their feet rather more than the contractors because what possible reason could there be for the settlement agreement with the consultants not to have been signed today which is now over four months since the agreement was announced, is there some problem?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, there is no problem and I do not think it is really fair on the consultants to say that they are dragging their feet. The working out in detail of the construction contract was quite a major exercise and that took some time, final talks took place late January/early February and the way I have been proceeding is to get that completed and because the consultant has been helping us in negotiations with the contractor I have left concluding the formal terms of settlement with the consultant until we have settled matters with the contractor. I am satisfied that our heads of the agreement with the consultant are sufficiently clear for us to be covered in the meantime.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I take it then that the deed of settlement that has been sent to the consultants for signature does enshrine all the terms that have been agreed that there is no possibility of them disagreeing with the substance of the deed?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I really don't think there is any possibility of that at all.

NO. 19 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, will Government state what avenues are available to patients who require the service of the ENT consultant when he visits Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, all Medical Practitioners in Gibraltar are notified of the visits of the ENT consultant to enable them to refer cases to him. Government Medical Officers do this via our local ENT specialist, who decides which cases merit further referral; private practitioners do so direct.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 19 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister agree that some private patients go to see the consultant privately because they are not referred in the first place by the local ENT specialist?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, I do agree.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would he also agree that those patients are almost always treated and sometimes have operations performed by the ENT consultant?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would he then not agree that in some cases also where operations are required for, perhaps, personal reasons, patients would prefer to be referred to the ENT consultant and they are not referred to the ENT consultant?

HON J B PEREZ:

No. I think the Hon Member is missing one particular point. If a patient goes to the Health Centre Doctor and the Health Centre Doctor refers him to our own ENT specialist and in the case mentioned by the Hon Questioner the ENT specialist refuses to refer either because he feels that he is competent to deal with that particular case himself or he feels there is no reason to get a second opinion, the patient can then elect to go on a private basis provided he has a letter of referral from the Health Centre Doctor. It is a question of choice.

HON G T RESTANO:

It seems then, Mr Speaker, some of these patients who do go privately are eventually operated on by the ENT specialist. Would he not agree that in several cases

MR SPEAKER:

We must be careful. We are not questioning the judgement of professional people as to whether a patient should be referred. What you are saying is that the fact that they have ultimately been treated by the specialist means that the person who refused to refer him was wrong.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am wondering whether sufficient weight is given to the wishes of the patient to be referred to the consultant and if the Government would not agree that the fact that the operations are carried out by the consultant would warrant, perhaps, a certain amount of investigation by the Minister as to whether the procedure at the moment is being carried out correctly.

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Mr Speaker, I am satisfied with the present arrangements that we have today in regard to visiting consultants because the procedures that must be followed is that no general patient is excluded because there is a private patient. Let us take, for example, the ENT consultant. He normally comes to Gibraltar on a five day visit. He must see all the general patients first before he can see the private patients and we know that is being done because we have a person there so I do not see any need to investigate the matter further because I have looked at this matter quite closely.

HON G T RESTANO:

I don't think the Minister has got the point, really. The point is that some of the private patients have to go privately because they are not referred to the consultant through the Health Scheme.

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Mr Speaker, if our local ENT specialist refuses to refer it may well be, I don't know, either because he feels he can deal with that case himself or there isn't anything wrong with the patient. If the patient doesn't accept our own local specialist's diagnosis then if he wishes to go privately he is free to do so.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, has a patient in the general Medical Service a right to insist on the visiting consultant seeing him rather without having to pay for the privilege?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, he is seen by our own local specialist. The visiting consultant only comes to Gibraltar as a back-up service to our own specialist and it is only in cases where our local specialist feels that he ought to get a second opinion or he cannot deal with that particular case either due to expertise or for whatever reason, that the visiting consultant sees a particular patient.

HON P J ISOLA:

But how far is the public allowed the privilege, which I would have thought is very common in medical practice, of a patient asking for a second opinion and not being dependent on the opinion of one doctor only? In other words, does not the Government consider it desirable, in the interests of medicine generally and on the right of people in the Health Service, that they should have some right to insist on a second opinion if they feel they are not very happy with what they have heard without having to pay for it?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, I don't agree, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

The Minister does not agree so therefore what the Minister is saying is that a patient in the Health Service has no right to ask for a second opinion even though the opinion is available from the visiting surgeon that comes to Gibraltar?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, the point I must make once again is that when a patient is referred

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to labour the point. I think you have given the answer, you do not agree that people should have a second opinion.

HON J B PEREZ:

People can have as many opinions as they like.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am not asking for many opinions, I am asking for a second opinion.

HON J B PEREZ:

I am satisfied, Mr Speaker, that the system is working well. We have one specialist, you cannot have two opinions from the same man.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, we are talking at cross purposes. What the Hon Leader of the Opposition is saying is that a patient will not be seen by the consultant unless he is referred to the consultant by the local practitioner and what the Leader of the Opposition is now asking is that when the local practitioner makes a decision not to refer, should the patient not have a second opinion.

HON J B PEREZ:

Let me put it another way, Mr Speaker. It is a rare occurrence when our own local specialist refuses to refer a particular patient to the visiting consultant when the patient insists in wanting a second diagnosis.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I question that and that is precisely why this question has been put in because people do and are going to see the consultant privately, paying for it, because the local practitioner will not refer them to the consultant.

HON J B PEREZ:

We are not talking about the local practitioner, we are talking about our own local specialist. If he has a particular case which he feels competent to deal with himself, there is no reason why that person should be paid out of tax payers money to get another opinion for something which is relatively simple for our own local specialist to deal with otherwise we might as well not have our own local specialist and have visiting consultants coming.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that the visiting consultant spends five days in Gibraltar and has plenty of time apparently to deal with all the private patients available, will the Minister consider giving directions within the Health Service that patients who would like a second opinion should as far as possible be given this facility which is normal all over the world.

HON J B PEREZ:

First of all, Mr Speaker, the Hon Leader of the Opposition has made a semi statement in the question where he says since the visiting consultant has plenty of time to deal with private patients. Let me tell the Hon Member that that, in fact, is not the case. In the last visit of the ENT specialist, the visiting consultant, he did not see any private patients because he did not have time. On normal occasions when visiting consultants come, they only dedicate about half a day to private patients if and only when they have seen all our general patients.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, just for information, could the Minister state in what way the visiting consultant is paid, for the amount of time spent in Gibraltar or on the number of persons that he sees?

HON J B PEREZ:

They are paid a lump sum irrespective of the time.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister, if that is the case, can he explain how by not allowing people to have a second opinion how that increases the cost in view of the fact that the consultant specialist whose visit to Gibraltar is paid for out of public funds still appears to have time to see private patients?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, it is not up to the Minister to allow patients to have second opinions, it is up to our own local specialist and I have already told the Hon Member that in most cases where the patient insists on a second opinion from the visiting consultant, invariably, and that is the experience that I had in the last year, invariably this is done.

HON G T RESTANO:

On a matter of clarification. The Minister has said that on the last two occasions, I think, at least certainly on the last occasion, no private patients were seen. This is a big departure from what has happened in the past where he has seen about 74 patients.

MR SPEAKER:

You are making statements.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it going to be the practice now that five days will be totally dedicated to national health patients?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, the procedure is that we have a certain number of patients that have to be seen that are referred to the visiting consultant by our own local consultant. We then get in touch with the visiting consultant and we tell him we have X number of patients. Then the visiting consultant comes to Gibraltar and if we have, let us say, 10 or 18 patients, he will say he will come for two or three days, to see our own patients not his private patients. If he comes for three days and he has seen our 18 patients and he has an afternoon left over there is no objection to the visiting consultant seeing any further patients.

MR SPEAKER:

That is the end of the matter. Next question.

11.3.81

NO. 20 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, would the Minister for Medical and Health Services inform the House what records are kept at St Bernard's Hospital for patients who are treated there privately?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no differentiation made between records kept at St Bernard's Hospital in respect of private or general patients.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 20 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I know I am not supposed to make a statement but I can assure the Minister that that is not the case because I went through this experience only two weeks ago where I was told that there were no records kept of my son because he was a private patient. Can the Minister explain this?

HON J B PEREZ:

I will undertake to investigate the matter fully for the Hon Member.

NO. 21 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, since in the near future senior members of the medical staff at St Bernard's Hospital are due to retire, would Government accordingly make this House aware of: a) how many senior doctors or consultants will retire and when b) what appointments it intends to make c) when such appointments will become effective d) how such appointments are to be made, and e) are any new administrative or operational posts to be created?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Two senior members of the Medical Staff are due to retire during the course of the year. The Medical Specialist will be retiring on the 30 September, 1981, the Consultant Anaesthetist will do so on the 1 November, 1981.

These vacancies were advertised both locally and in the United Kingdom in November, 1979, and attracted a good number of suitably qualified applicants.

Following the usual procedures and on the recommendations of the Public Service Commission replacements for these two posts have already been selected and will be taking up their appointments in due course.

It is not envisaged that any new administrative or operational post is to be created in the near future.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 21 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, are any other Senior members of the staff likely to retire within the next 24 months?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, I think the Director of Medical and Health Services will be retiring at the end of 1982, round about November, 1982.

HON G T RESTANO:

When that particular post of Director needs to be filled will any new administrative post or operational post then be made?

HON J B PEREZ:

This is a matter, Mr Speaker, which I am carefully looking into.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister, in view of the importance of the Medical Specialist to the Medical Service and, in fact, to the public of Gibraltar, can I ask him the years of experience that the doctor who is being appointed has as a Specialist or in general practice?

HON J B PEREZ:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member referring to the two replacements? I am afraid I haven't got that information with me.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Minister not agree that it is of vital importance to the general welfare of patients in Gibraltar that the persons appointed should be persons of maturity, experience and specialist skills?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, this is a matter really which I am sure there is no doubt in my own mind that the Public Service Commission looked into when they came to select the two replacements both for the Medical Specialist and the Anaesthetist.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Minister give this information to my Hon Friend as soon as he has it available because it is of very considerable interest to the Opposition, obviously?

HON G T RESTANO:

Since the Director of Medical Services fulfils a double function, one of Director and one as a surgeon, would the Minister say that the replacement of that post will be a similar one or whether it is thought correct that a man with the responsibilities of Director should also have a responsibility of carrying out operations?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I have already said that I am, in fact, very closely looking into this particular matter and I take the point made by the Hon Member.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Sir, how many patients, on a monthly basis, during the last six months have required the attention of the staff of the KGV Hospital broken down into a) inpatients b) outpatients c) private practice?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Sir, the following statistics shows the number of outpatients seen at the KGV Psychiatric Unit during the period in question:

SEPTEMBER	-	122
OCTOBER	-	120
NOVEMBER	-	104
DECEMBER	-	61
JANUARY	-	120
FEBRUARY	-	84
		<u>611</u>

As regards inpatients, on the 1st September 1980, there were 27 patients undergoing treatment in the Chronic Ward and 16 patients in the Acute Ward, a total of 43 patients. During the period 1st September 1980, and 28th February 1981, there have been 12 admissions, 10 discharges and one death in the Chronic Ward, leaving a total of 28 patients at 28 February 1981, and 57 admissions and 54 discharges in the Acute Ward, leaving a total of 19 patients on the 28 February 1981. The total number of inpatients in the Unit on that date was 45.

In reply to the Hon Members question on private practice I can say that there has been no private inpatient during the period in question. In fact, modern psychiatric thinking is such that the possible privileges that could accrue to a private patient, ie seclusion, could be in conflict with the treatment indicated and it is therefore actively discouraged. On the other hand the ordinary ward patient often requires a manner of treatment consonant with the privileges enjoyed by a private patient.

Private outpatient consultations are held both at the Unit and elsewhere and the number seen during the whole of the period in question amounted to 50.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government give its views on the advisability of employing a psychiatrist?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

The Government is satisfied that the present arrangements provide suitable cover in the field of psychiatry.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 23 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

On what basis is this view arrived at, Mr Speaker?

HON J B PEREZ:

On the basis of the present complement of staff that we have at KGV.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister agree that there is nobody with psychiatric qualifications at present employed by the Government?

HON J B PEREZ:

I do not agree, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

There is somebody with full qualifications, psychiatric qualifications, is that what the Minister is saying?

HON J B PEREZ:

What the Minister is saying is that the Government is satisfied that the present Superintendent of the KGV Psychiatric Unit is a man who has qualified by experience and not only is that view held by Government but the view is also held by the visiting consultant who has, in fact, attested to this in writing and steps are being taken to try and obtain consultant status for this particular person.

11.3.81

NO. 24 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government give its views on the advisability of employing a Clinical Psychologist?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Sir, I am grateful to the Hon Member for raising this question. I can confirm that the question of employing a Clinical Psychologist has already been considered by the Government. The conclusions reached, however, are that although it would be useful to have such a post, it is considered that the scope and workload at present would not be high enough to justify its creation, neither does the Government consider that any aspirant to the post would gain sufficient experience and job satisfaction with the number of cases that could arise here in Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 24 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Given the fact that in the previous question the Minister said that a consultant's appointment was being asked for for the specialist at the KGV Hospital, would he not agree that any such consultant would normally have a Clinical Psychologist working under him in a hospital of this nature?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, if we had employed a Clinical Psychologist which I have already said in a question we thought desirable, the estimated workload for that person has been estimated only one day a week and we therefore do not feel it necessary or advisable to recruit a Clinical Psychologist.

11.3.81

NO. 25 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Have doctors at the Health Centre now been provided with telephones in their private offices?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Yes, Sir.

11.3.81

NO. 26 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government state on how many occasions has the Community Paediatrician been consulted in relation to students in need of psychiatric treatment?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, since February, 1980, the Community Paediatrician has been consulted on six occasions in relation to students in need of psychiatric treatment. These cases were then referred to the Superintendent KGV Psychiatric Unit for treatment.

11.3.81

NO. 27 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state how many Stalls within the Public Market although tenanted are in fact not operational and can Government state for how long this has been the position in relation to each stall?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

There are five stalls within the Public Markets which are not being used for the sale of market produce although the rents in respect of same are fully paid up. The position concerning each stall is as follows:

Stall No 3: This general groceries stall was last used in February, 1980.

Stall No 5: Last used for the sale of meat etc in December, 1978, although the refrigerator is in use on a daily basis.

Stall No 8: This small meat stall has not been used for sale for the last eight years although as in the case of Stall No 5 the refrigerator is in use.

Stall No 13: This fruit and vegetable stall has not been used since November, 1980.

Stall No 18: This small stall was converted into a chacuterie store in 1975 and is still being so used.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 27 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister, did he say that that stall is still being used as a chacuterie store?

HON J B PEREZ:

Stall No 18 - this small stall was converted into a chacuterie store in 1975 and is still being so used.

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, does the Minister agree that stalls in the Public Market are there basically for people to sell their goods from as cheaply as possible to the public and that for this reason the rents in the Market are extremely low?

HON J B PEREZ:

Not only does the Minister himself agree but the Government itself is, in fact, not satisfied with the situation and we have already taken the opportunity to get the Attorney-General to draft certain amendments to the relevant Ordinance in order that this situation will not continue.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister then not agree that if persons apply for a stall to actually do business within the Public Market with the public, that in that sort of situation those applications should be treated favourably and people who are just paying their rent but not using the stall should be given notice to quit and are there any legal problems in the way?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, I have already said that I agree with that and that is precisely why the Attorney-General has already been requested to make certain amendments to the present Ordinance in order to put a stop to this situation and to look favourably at persons who actually wish to operate the stalls.

11.3.81

NO. 28 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state its position in relation to abatement notices served by the Government on persons who have created rubbish piles in Gibraltar but who are prevented from removing them due to the existence of an industrial dispute and does Government consider it fair in such circumstances to proceed against persons who are unable to abate a nuisance because of an industrial dispute?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Following the Gibraltar Licensed Victuallers Association's efforts to remove their own accumulations which, it is understood, met with some opposition from the Unions concerned, and in view of the fact that negotiations between the Government and the Transport and General Workers Union had already commenced, the Government postponed the service of any abatement notices in order not to upset the goodwill which brought the negotiations about. There are, therefore, no abatement notices pending and hence no proceedings are likely to follow.

As to whether such proceedings would have been fair in the circumstances the answer is 'yes' since the accumulations should not have been created by the persons concerned in the first place. It is understood that the Union objection lay in the employment of a third party to remove accumulations and not in individual traders taking their own business trade refuse down to the destructor. It would seem, therefore, that the individual traders themselves were not being prevented from removing their own trade refuse.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 28 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, I will not enter into argument on a hypothesis that was not incurred. I am right, therefore, in saying that although the Government considers it would have been fair to serve abatement notices and to prosecute in Court later on those who had left their rubbish out, they are not going to do it, is that the position?

HON J B PEREZ:

I have said that no abatement notices were in fact served so therefore there are no proceedings pending which is, in fact, what the question pre-supposed that abatement notices had been taken out which they have not.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am asking the question to the Minister because he himself volunteered the statement that it would have been fair for the Government to have proceeded and my question now is that even though the Government considers it fair to have prosecuted these people for leaving the rubbish out they are not going to do it, is that the position?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, what has happened in the past has already passed.

11.3.81

NO. 29 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government explain why it has been found necessary to re-allocate £38,500 for underestimating of installation costs and purchases of spares towards the (new) Hire of Generating Plant?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has found it necessary to re-allocate this amount of money to meet the cost of certain items which had not been foreseen in respect of the original estimate and others which were underestimated. These refer specifically to the question of insurance against all risks in the case of the former and higher costs of installation and civil works in the case of the latter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 29 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, how is it that this was underestimated? Surely, when Government purchased the skid-mounted generators they must have known what they required, what needed to be done, how is it that such a large amount was underestimated?

MR SPEAKER:

The reasons have been given.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could we have a breakdown of that figure, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, could the Hon Member say what he wants a breakdown of, of the underestimation or of the certain items which had not been foreseen?

HON G T RESTANO:

Of the whole £38,500, Mr Speaker.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the £38,500 forms part of a major sum. I can give him a breakdown of the total summary of what it has cost but not of the £38,500 specifically.

HON G T RESTANO:

Since the reallocation has been made, Mr Speaker, presumably it has been towards certain costs. Does the Minister not have a breakdown of those reallocations? Is he unable to say exactly what that reallocation comprises?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is certainly impossible to itemize this cost specifically. I am quite willing to give him the whole total of costs for his information.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would have thought that if £38,500 needed to be re-allocated it is that there has been certain underestimation under the different Heads.

MR SPEAKER:

You want the breakdown of the whole figure?

HON G T RESTANO:

Yes, the Minister said that he would be prepared to give them.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker. The overall cost:-

Local Costs

(A)	Wages up to 20.2.81		£11,491.84
	<u>Materials</u>		
	Unallocated Stores to Jan 1981	£2,723.33	
	Purchased locally	<u>6,417.77</u>	9,141.10
(B)	Woodlands - Hire of Generators (up to 31.3.81)		63,524.50
	" - Purchases (cable, lugs etc)		5,757.25
	" - Plant (Radiator Inhibitor)		488.71
	" - Insurance (full)		13,451.00
	" - Spares eg Filters, Injectors		3,477.76
	" - Misc Expenses		340.00
	" - Witnessed test by PCR		3,601.00
	Gib Underwater Contractors Ltd		3,307.00
	J H Ramagge		4,948.00
	Monteverde Transport		891.50
	Simons (Gib) Ltd - Contract Payment		12,933.00
	Whatlings (Overseas) Ltd (Louvre Screens)		1,800.00
	Expenses of Service Engineer		682.39
	Yorkshire Imperial Plastics (PWD Indent)		484.70
	Bank Charges		<u>197.59</u>

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, this sum of £38,500 which the Minister has mentioned, this is additional to the £27,000 that we are being asked to vote later on in these proceedings in respect of the hire of new generating plant; so the total is something like £65,000 being used for the hire of generating plant, an extra £65,000 as against the original estimate of £81,500, so the cost has gone up about 100%, is that the position on what the Government estimated?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, in answer to the first question, the amount sought in the supplementary estimates is for an entirely different reason.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister say whether he had any indication that there would have to be re-estimation of the amount to be charged at the time when we voted the original £80,000?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have said before that some items had not been foreseen in respect of the original estimate. I think this answers the Hon Mr Haynes' question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does he mean to say that he didn't have any idea at all that there would be extra amounts to be paid?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, some items were underestimated and some other items were more expensive than we originally had catered for and this accounts for the necessity to reallocate this sum of money towards the hire of new generating plant.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister not agree that we are now getting very much closer to the original purchase figure for the four generators after only two months of having the generators in Gibraltar?

MR SPEAKER:

I will allow a yes or a no and no more because we must not go into that detail.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

May I ask a question, please? Coming back to the original question by my Hon Colleague which is divided into two parts, the installation cost and the purchases of spares. Can I ask the Government to say whether the spares element of that cost is for the skid-mounted generators themselves or for the ancillary equipment to them?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, these are routine spares, in fact, they are running spares, they are filters, injectors, etc and they amount to £3,477.76. As far as I know they are for the generators and not for the ancillary equipment.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I would like to refer the Government to a statement that was made by them when they first announced the hiring of these generators and we on our side of the House were saying that Government should purchase the generators and not hire them. One of the reasons given at the time was that Government thought it more equitable to hire the generators because the cost of the spares would not come into it and I question now and I ask the Government if there has been a change?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Mr Speaker, there has not been a change.

MR SPEAKER:

You are not being questioned about whether the amount that you are being charged for the spares is equitable, you are being questioned as to whether Government is responsible for the spares or not on the hire agreement.

HON P J ISOLA:

The question is, Mr Speaker, is the Government liable to pay for any spare parts that may be required for the skid generators notwithstanding that they are on hire to the Government?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is not responsible for any major breakdowns in the generators and this is why we are fully insured but these are running spares that we need constantly like filters, injectors, etc.

MR SPEAKER:

For which Government is responsible?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

For which Government is entirely responsible.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the position then, Mr Speaker, under the agreement, that the Government pays a hire charge, pays for the insurance of anything that may go wrong in major breakdowns, pays for spares that may be required while the skid generators are here and pays for normal repairs of the skid generators, is that the position? That is certainly not the position that was revealed to this House when the announcement was made in favour of hiring as against purchasing because it seems to me that the Government has been hiring but is in the position of a purchaser.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I feel to a certain extent we are debating the point.

MR SPEAKER:

No, you are being asked a simple question.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Government is responsible for minor spares. Government is insured, it has got full insurance against anything going wrong with the temporary generating plant even as far as if the Opposition were to plant a bomb under it.

MR SPEAKER:

I would ask you to withdraw that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

It was merely a facetious comment. Any major breakdown will certainly be covered by the insurance and will certainly be the responsibility of Woodlands.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister saying in effect that the Government has had to pay £13,000 insurance so that if there is a major breakdown the insurance company pays and not Woodlands? Mr Speaker, is the position then that the Government is in the position of an owner although it is only a hirer? I think the House is entitled to clarification, this seems to be a major turnaround from the position that was announced in this House.

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked simply that if the hirers are responsible for major repairs why should Government be responsible for the insurance?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, we are responsible for full insurance because certainly things can go wrong with these generating sets which are unforeseen. As far as I know and as far as I am aware this covers the full insurance of the four sets from the United Kingdom to Gibraltar as well.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, may I ask the Minister, in view of the fact that this is a very important matter from the point of public funds, in view of the fact that there is an item in the Supplementary Appropriation Ordinance dealing with another £27,000 required for the skid generators, could we ask the Government Ministers and more especially the Financial and Development Secretary who after all is responsible to the House for the expenditure of public monies, could we ask him please to come fully documented so that they are able to answer questions on this all important matter?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 30 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government explain in view of the statements made by the Minister at the meeting of the House in December, 1980, how it is that whenever any minor fault occurs in Engine No 13 there are extensive power cuts in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

No statement made during Question 359 of 1980 by me to this House in December could have been taken to imply that power cuts were avoidable. In fact I stated that if in addition to No 13 Engine another engine or engines were to be out of service at the same time there could be a shortfall in the generating capacity.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 30 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I will quote from the Hansard where the Minister did say that: "a reduction of voltage which gives us extra power so should No 5 go out and should No 13 go out the others should be able to compensate for No 13". That is Question No 359 of 1980, page 4, so the question I think still arises and is still pertinent, Mr Speaker, could we have an answer?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is quite correct in quoting from Question No 359. He obviously forgets how Question No 359 goes on. I said that we would be able to compensate for No 13 but then the Hon Mr Peter Isola wanted me to provide definite details and I said: "The Hon Member is talking about No 13 but we would be able to cover No 13 but that does not mean to say that another engine could be out at the same time and this could mean a shortfall in the electricity produced and therefore I cannot give the Hon Member the guarantee that he is asking for".

MR SPEAKER:

What you are being asked is whether the recent power cuts have been as a result of not only No 13 but of other machinery breaking up at the same time.

HON G T RESTANO:

The question, Mr Speaker, is of course following the excuses that are given to the people of Gibraltar when there are power cuts and we are told that Engine No 13 had a minor breakdown. The question is, why does this occur? The question, Mr Speaker, is quite clear. How is it that whenever any minor fault occurs in Engine No 13 there are extensive power cuts in Gibraltar?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I shall then read the answer to the next question.

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked whether the power cuts that we have been experiencing recently has been attributable exclusively of No 13 Engine. That is what you are being asked.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, in the majority of cases the loss of an engine is normally not noticeable but since No 13 is the largest set the loss of it is felt to a higher degree. If any other engine or engines are out at the same time and the load is high and there is no help from the Dockyard as well, power cuts inevitably ensue, there is not much that we can do about this. As the Hon Member knows we expected No 11 to be recommissioned and it has not been recommissioned as expected and No 8 had a broken column

MR SPEAKER:

In other words what you are saying is that the power cuts are not attributable exclusively to minor repairs to No 13.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister point to a single occasion since he made his statement on December 17 to the House, of a single occasion when No 13 has been out of order and there have been no power cuts since that date? Has there been one single occasion that No 13 has stopped operating and there have been no power cuts since the 17 December, 1980?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, 14 of January - No 13 was out, our shortfall was 1.5, we had some capacity to spare there but unfortunately we had power cuts of very short duration.

HON P J ISOLA:

But you had power cuts. Therefore, Mr Speaker, will the Minister not agree that his statement to the House on the 17 December was somewhat misleading in view of the fact that every time that Engine No 13 has even hiccuped we have had power cuts in Gibraltar, that is just factual.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I qualified my statement, in fact, I shall read my statement again: "The Hon Member is talking about No 13 but we would be able to cover No 13 but that does not mean to say that another engine could be out at the same time and this could mean a shortfall in the electricity produced and therefore I cannot give the Hon Member the guarantee that he is asking for". He is asking for the same guarantee this time as he was asking for last time. What I have said is that we would be able to cover No 13 as long as the other engines were available. No 11 did not come

back as expected, this deprived us of something like 2.2 and No 8 engine broke down a week before Christmas and this deprived us of another 1 megawatt. Therefore, unfortunately, we are not able to cover No 13 because of shortage of electricity due to other plant.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I was not asking the Minister for a guarantee today, I know that he is incapable of guaranteeing, the Government is not able to do so. We know that the Generating Station and the engines seem to be in absolute shambles but what I am asking the Minister is that in fact, for whatever reasons he may give, it has not been possible to cover for No 13 engine on one single occasion since he made the statement to the House in December in which he also mentioned the skid generators which have been in operation.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, we are now debating. Next question.

NO. 31 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government explain why Engine No 13 is subject to so many breakdowns and is this due to the fact that Engine No 13 has been overworked during the last twelve months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the majority of cases, loss of an engine is normally not noticeable but since No 13 is the largest set its temporary loss is felt to a higher degree. Following any major overhaul, snags of a minor nature are inevitably encountered and require rectification.

The operation of engines is maintained within limits so that the parameters specified by the manufacturers are not exceeded. No engine is run under overload conditions, quite the reverse, in fact, since load limits are set so that for instance exhaust valve temperatures are never higher than the manufacturers recommended valves. Hence No 13 engine, as indeed any other engine, has not been overworked during the last 12 months.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 31 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister say how many overhauls it has undergone in the last 12 months?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member should well know that No 13 had a major overhaul during the last 12 months and it is due for a major overhaul every two years.

HON G T RESTANO:

How long does this major overhaul take to complete?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, if I remember correctly the major overhaul takes approximately 12 to 13 weeks. I think this one took 12 weeks.

HON G T RESTANO:

I wonder why it is that immediately after a major overhaul of 12 to 13 weeks duration that engine No 13 should break down so frequently. What is the reason for that, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, there are two things I would like to say about this. First of all he said "immediately after the overhaul". This is not quite true, the overhaul was before Christmas and the problems we have had with No 13 have been after Christmas. I explained this in the first part of my answer. I said: "In the majority of cases, loss of an engine is normally not noticeable but since No 13 is the largest set its temporary loss is felt to a higher degree. Following any major overhaul, snags of a minor nature are inevitably encountered and require rectification".

HON G T RESTANO:

Does that mean that now those little faults that always appear after major overhauls have occurred that there will not be any more minor faults?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 32 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government explain why there has been inordinate delay in getting Engine No 11 in the Generating Station back into service?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Government cannot agree that there has been inordinate delay in rebuilding Engine No 11, although it is true that work is behind schedule. There are a number of reasons for this:-

- a. Bedding down the main and large end bearings is a laborious task requiring that the bearing metal be manually scraped so as to adjust the actual size to within very small tolerance limits. In this type of work accuracy is essential.
- b. The manufacturers normally insist that individual components be checked and adjusted to within specified limits. Again this requires that items such as cylinder liners be honed using special tools.
- c. Modifications have been made to improve the coupling between block and column and a certain amount of redowelling was also found necessary.
- d. To maintain the rest of the plant in service has required at times that both manpower and materials be redeployed as necessary.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 32 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Was all this new to the Minister in November when he stated that No 11 engine would be recommissioned by winter?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, certainly I think that we were somewhat optimistic about the date that we could get No 11 back. We have had two engineers from the manufacturers working on the engine almost continuously. Overall I feel that the manufacturers do not consider the time period unreasonable considering the amount of work done and, in fact, I must inform the House that even a new engine takes at least about six months to erect, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that the crankshaft arrived in July, 1980, and is it not so that if it did arrive in July, 1980, it is not just six months but it is now nine months?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the crankshaft was unfortunately delayed and work started in mid-August, 1980.

HON G T RESTANO:

But that is still 7 or 8 months.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

11.3.81

NO. 33 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government explain why there appeared to have been spillage of fuel from the skid-mounted generators which stained the wall at Smith Dorrien Promenade?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The stain on the wall at Smith Dorrien Promenade is not the result of fuel spillages but the result of an unfortunate and inadvertent error which resulted in a quantity of fuel overflowing whilst fuel supplies were being taken. Investigations are proceeding to determine the manner in which the stains are best removed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 33 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, how much fuel overflowed, has that been calculated?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I believe it was enough to stain the wall.

HON G T RESTANO:

For how long did that overflow continue?

MR SPEAKER:

It is not an overflow, it is spillage.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, with respect, he said that it was not a spillage it was an overflow. I want an answer. For how long was there an overflow?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

It was just a matter of minutes.

HON W T SCOTT:

Was the vehicle owned by Government or was it owned by a private company?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

My understanding is that it was owned by a private company.

HON W T SCOTT:

Will the cost of the removal of the stains therefore be up to the Government or the private company?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I can check on this and I will give the Hon Member the answer but as far as I know it will be borne by Government but I will check on it and I will give the Hon Member the correct answer.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government give this House the figures in units and value of electricity borrowed or lent between the Gibraltar Government and the Ministry of Defence during 1980 by quarter and the first two months of 1981 and will Government furthermore give details of cash transactions for this period which may already have been made or which are outstanding to date?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The Quarterly export figures from the two generating stations during 1980 were as follows:-

	<u>ISGS - KB</u>	<u>KB - ISGS</u>	<u>Balance to ISGS</u>
1st Quarter	748,800	258,900	489,900
2nd Quarter	253,000	98,600	154,400
3rd Quarter	632,300	83,800	548,500
4th Quarter	489,200	39,400	449,800

This yields a total in favour of ISGS of 1,642,000 units and represents about 3% of the total units generated by King's Bastion during this period. Only approximate figures for the first two months of 1981 can be given since accounts are rendered quarterly and these are:

102,200	12,200	90,000
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These figures can be taken to represent the total amount of energy transferred via the interconnector.

Under the Interconnector agreement units are charged at the weighted average price, which implies that quarterly charges are based on the average weighted price per unit for the preceding year with retrospective adjustment at the end of each year. This ensures that the amount paid is not more and not less than the amount received by the department from consumers.

Thus during the period in question £15,075 were paid in retrospect adjustment for the 900,000 units supplied during the financial year 1979/80, in addition the following payments

May 1980 : £23,340.00 for the 1st Quarter, 1980

November 1980 : £47,302.50 for the 2nd and 3rd Quarters, 1980

were made and a further £28,050 is due for the units supplied during the fourth quarter. All this totals £113,767.50.

NO. 35 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

In view of the fact that Government was able to ensure a continuous supply of electricity during the Christmas period, will Government explain why it has not been able to do so since then?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The loads experienced during Christmas as a result of the mild weather were lower than expected and substantially below the demands made on the system during the cold spell in November, 1980, and January of this year. Therefore the availability of plant in excess of requirements and assistance from HM Dockyard on a few occasions resulted in continuous supplies during the Christmas period, however, a major breakdown suffered by No 8 engine a week before the Christmas period, the delay in re-commissioning No 11 engine and minor faults in No 13 engine leading to outages of this engine of short duration have been the cause of the recent power cuts.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 35 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Has No 8 been recommissioned now?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Mr Speaker, No 8 has a broken column. We brought out a specialist in metallocking from the United Kingdom, he has looked into this and, regrettably, the engine cannot be metallocked and it is still at present out of commission.

HON G T RESTANO:

When is it expected that it will be back in commission?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it may not be economical to repair No 8 in the light of the proposed new power station about which I shall be making a statement later on in the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

Am I to understand then that this will be touched upon by the Minister in his statement because otherwise I have a few other questions to ask?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Mr Speaker, I said that it may not be economical to repair it considering the proposed statement which I shall be making later in the House about power development.

HON G T RESTANO:

When will that decision be taken, Mr Speaker? This is the first time that we have heard that one of the newer engines, it is the newest one in the old station, may be scrapped. When will a decision be taken whether to scrap it altogether?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the decision is under review as to what we are going to do about No 8 engine. This as as much as I can say at the moment to the Hon Member.

HON G T RESTANO:

I take it then that in the old station there are now three engines working, is that correct, Nos 4, 5 and 7?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, the Member is quite right, we have Nos 4, 5 and 7.

11.3.81

NO. 36 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that it is not possible to place international calls from the public telephone at the City Hall after 8 pm?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

No, Sir.

On 5 December, 1980, in pursuance of the answers I gave to Question No 149 in July, 1980, I wrote to the Hon Mr Restano and explained the position. I stated that two shifts are worked, from 8.00 am to 4.00 pm and from 2.00 pm to 10.00 pm. I went on to say that the City Hall is, however, closed at 9.00 pm whenever this is necessary in order to enable people already in the City Hall to effect their calls by 10.00 pm. I concluded by saying that the Government was starting to instal electronic type coinboxes from which international calls could be made. Two such coinboxes have been installed, on a trial basis, at Bayside Marina and Ocean Heights for clients. The trial has been successful and full use has been made of the coin boxes. Subject to planning permission it is now intended to instal another one at the Piazza, for public use. This service will continue to be developed. Emergency calls can be made from Waterport Police Station.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 36 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, in fact, if somebody between now and the time that the new public electronic box is available wants to make a telephone call and they call at the City Hall as the normal place, they are redirected as to where they have to go to make a call?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is quite right. They should be directed if it is an emergency call to the Waterport Police Station.

HON J BOSSANO:

Who decides if it is an emergency call, Mr Speaker? If somebody wants to make a telephone call, presumably, at that time of the night it must be something that they consider to be fairly important. They are sent from the City Hall to Waterport as the nearest telephone from which they can make the call. Why not the Central Police Station which is round the corner if it is considered necessary to do it from a Police Station?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Certainly, the Central Police Station would be nearer but unfortunately this was an arrangement we arrived at with the post at Waterport and we have carried this on. What we intend to do really is to instal more and more public boxes throughout Gibraltar so that eventually people can make use of this public facility and our eventual aim is really to do away with using the City Hall as a telephone station for many reasons, one of them being the safety of the building as there is a lot of expensive equipment there.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, isn't the Minister in fact recognising that the present arrangements are unsatisfactory and temporary and would he not agree that until what he proposes actually materialises we need to do something to provide a service on a temporary basis that is suitable for the needs of the people who haven't got a telephone in their own house?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I agree with the Hon Member. A lot of people have got telephones in their own houses and most of the people who use the City Hall are either visiting naval personnel or non-Gibraltarians wishing to call their families, these are the people who haven't got telephones in their homes. What I shall endeavour to do is to make sure that the City Hall is open for this type of people. The problem with the naval personnel as I said before is the fact that they do become drunk and from the safety angle this is very unwelcome and I shall endeavour that this public telephone kiosk at the Piazza shall be given as much priority as we can.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if we think of the main category of users being workers living on their own who are not allowed to have their families in Gibraltar, would he not agree that there is a need to give those people an opportunity to phone their families in cases of need? That is a clear case where people living on their own in Gibraltar may want to contact their family and they should have the means of doing so, would he not agree?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I agree that the Hon Mr Bossano is quite right. Unfortunately, these are the people who have the least number of telephones. Fortunately they are in a minority but I can assure the Hon Member that I shall endeavour to do my best to make sure that this minority is catered for in the way which I mentioned before.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is he saying that people are still going to be re-directed to Waterport or is he saying that he is going to look at the possibility of improving on that? What is going to happen between now and the time that the public booth is available, this is what I would like to know?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, first of all I shall look into the whole matter because the Hon Mr Bossano has brought it up. If I am unable to do anything about the City Hall then I shall make sure that people are redirected to Waterport and I shall make sure that a suitable notice is put outside the City Hall so that people can go to Waterport and this I can do. The other thing I can do is to make sure that as soon as we obtain planning permission the proposed telephone kiosk will be erected in the Piazza.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I suggest that the Police be asked to cooperate and that people be able to place calls from Waterport Station and Central Police Station?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

When the question of the security of the building was considered and the question of having service until midnight, in fact, the service is not until 8 pm the service is until 10 pm, the point is that they don't take any calls after 9 pm so that by closing time those that are pending have finished. At the time the matter was taken up with the then Commissioner of Police and they thought that the operational part of the Police Station would not be able to take it and that is why an arrangement was made that they would take reasonably essential calls from Waterport Police Station. They must take charge of the cash and the Police are reluctant to deal with too many calls except in circumstances that are fully justified.

11.3.81

NO. 37 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, in view of the fact that power cuts have occurred since December notwithstanding the installation of the skid generators and the assurances given by the Minister will the Chief Minister reconsider and recommend to the Governor a public commission of inquiry along the lines proposed in the motion of the Hon Gerald Restano in November 1980 in view of the great public concern at the obvious inability of the Government to ensure a continuous supply of power to the people of Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. The reasons I gave in November for the Government's decision to appoint a Committee of Inquiry into the Electricity Department, rather than a Commission of Inquiry, remain valid today.

The House will wish to know that, pending the appointment of a Chairman of the Committee, which is being pursued, the question of the appointment of other members as specialist advisers has been raised preliminarily with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and will be finalised when the Chairman has been appointed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 37 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, I don't want to flog a dead horse too much but will the Chief Minister not agree that the fact that the skid generators were mounted and we were told there would be no more power cuts if everything went normally, the fact that we were told that No 11 engine would be in commission by the middle of January and we are still waiting for it, the fact that we were told that faults on No 13 could be covered and it is shown that it has not been covered, does not the Chief Minister agree that the Opposition and, indeed, the people of Gibraltar, have a serious grievance on the question of power supply and that their grievances can only be vindicated by a proper Commission of Inquiry that is seen to be appointed with wide terms of reference and seen to be entirely independent?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Sir, the preliminary statement of the Questioner is one-sided and not accepted but I will not traverse the whole of it because we would be here all day and we have had that in previous questions so I dispute all the statements made in the preliminary remarks of the Question. I should remind Members that this was fully discussed in the motion in November last year and the motion passed in November was to the effect that the Committee of Inquiry into

the Electricity Department would be set up as soon as the inquiry into the Public Works Department had been completed. The Report of the Public Works Department Inquiry was submitted to the Government on 4 March and efforts to find a Chairman for the Electricity Department Inquiry were instituted in January of this year. Suggestions have been put to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office about the other members and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will be asked to go ahead as soon as the Chairman has been appointed and these suggestions can be cleared with him. It is not easy, Sir, to find a Chairman for this type of inquiry, it is necessary to find a person who is not publicly associated with any political party but who has knowledge of public affairs and Government Departments, who is of the right calibre and who has the necessary time. I think we may be getting nearer, we did get almost near to one but unfortunately it did not materialise and I will be having the appointment made as soon as possible. We do not think, for all the reasons that we have fully debated in the House, that it is in the best interest of Gibraltar to have the inquiry that was then proposed and was not passed but of the forward looking and of course in-depth inquiries into the whole situation which we hope we can do as soon as we have a Chairman.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, will the Chief Minister not agree that the facts or the history of events since the statement or since the motion in November, 1980, and since all the assurances that have been given in this House and the statements that have been made both publicly, as far as the Government is concerned and in this House, since that date, would he not agree that that would justify rather wider terms of reference for his Committee of Inquiry than the ones proposed at that time?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Sir, the question of the terms of inquiry will be looked into before the appointment of the Chairman and reviewed in the light of anything that has happened since then, otherwise the answer is no, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

How does Government arrive at maintenance allowances for sponsored patients and their relatives who have to stay in hired accommodation in the United Kingdom?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the maintenance allowance for sponsored patients and their escorting relatives who have to stay in hired accommodation in UK is assessed according to their income, subject to a maximum figure per week. Although capital assets are disregarded, any income derived from such assets is taken into account.

Since April, 1980, the maximum allowance has been £63 per week, and it was intended to increase this to £80.50 as from April, 1981. However, increases in the cost of board and lodging in UK were causing undue hardship in some cases, and this prompted Government to agree to this higher maximum being brought forward to the beginning of February, 1981.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 38 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister consider that £80.50 per week is a realistic figure for somebody who is staying in hired accommodation in, say, London?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, it is realistic based on the costs that we have now.

HON G T RESTANO:

How does the Minister consider that a person can live on £80.50 a week in hired accommodation and over and above that have to pay for his food and transport and so on?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The cost of public transport between the hotel and the hospital in the United Kingdom is paid by Government in most cases.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would not the Minister agree that £80.50 is not a realistic figure for somebody who is staying in London? I think most of us have been to London and I am not talking about five-star hotels, even small hotels, £80.50 for a week does not seem to be able to cover costs. Would the Minister reconsider the £80.50 and make proposals for increasing that figure?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

At this stage I am not making any proposals for increasing this figure. I am satisfied that in most cases it is adequate. If undue hardships is caused the Department of Labour and Social Security approaches private charities who do help out but I am satisfied that it is adequate.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am sorry to hear that, Mr Speaker. The other aspect I would like to go into on this one is that this, of course, is the maximum amount. Without obviously going into details of individuals, what would a person who has been assessed, shall we say, £25 per week; what sort of income would he require . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, the system is there and I do not think that is the sort of information that can be given in this House.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think he said, Mr Speaker, in his reply that there is a means test.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, it is quite elaborate, if the Hon Member is really interested he can come to my office some time and I will give him the details.

HON G T RESTANO:

Alright.

NO. 39 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, will the new Minister for Labour and Social Security make a statement to the House on his policy of the obvious inequality that exists as far as Income Tax is concerned between those persons in receipt of Elderly Persons Pensions and those persons that are in receipt of a Social Insurance Pension or a Retirement Pension - all State Pensions?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

I would remind the Hon Questioner that the Old Age Pension is a contributory pension, and the Transitional Retirement Pension is payable to a small and gradually decreasing number of persons who had a satisfactory employment record and who were in the social insurance scheme at its inception but who, because of their age, were unable to contribute enough to qualify for an Old Age Pension. The Elderly Persons Pension on the other hand, is entirely non-contributory and payable regardless of whether the claimant has been in employment or not.

The policy of the Government in this respect has been explained by my predecessor at great length in the House. I would also remind the Questioner of the reply given by the Hon the Financial and Development Secretary to Question No 2 of 1980.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 39 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not accept that the three pensions that have been put in this question are all State Pensions and does he not accept that the Social Insurance Pension and Retirement Pension are received tax free whilst the other State Pension, the Elderly Person Pension, which happens to be the smallest of the three, is fully taxable? Does he consider that to be equitable and are we to have the same unenlightened approach to the whole question of pensions from the Minister as from his predecessor?

MR SPEAKER:

Order, we are making statements. Let us start asking questions.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I have an answer?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, it appears that the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition has been such a long time away from Government that he doesn't know how Government works. It doesn't work on the whims of any particular Minister. What we are doing here is a consensus of Government as to how we should do it. I would indicate that in an answer to a previous question it was more or less intimated that the whole thing would be looked at globally in the context of the budget and taxation.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister then inform the House whether he is proposing any changes to Government, to his colleagues, more enlightened changes than we have had to date on this issue?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the position then that the Minister considers it fair that of the three State Pensions two should be received by the recipient tax free and the other one should have the full weight of the Income Tax legislation, does he consider that fair?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, it is not a question of whether I consider it fair or not. I have just said that I am not prepared to give my advice on this, I cannot take it out of context of the whole budget.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister telling the House that this matter is being reconsidered by the Government in connection with the budget? Can he give some ray of hope to those who suffer the inequity of the present system?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I would refer the Hon and Learned Member to Question No 2 of 1980.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 40 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, does the new Minister for Labour and Social Security propose to put right what his predecessor refused to do ie to put right the position of a number of elderly person who were never able to get into the Social Insurance Scheme for reasons entirely outside their control?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, I do not accept the inference, from the wording of the question, that there is necessarily anything to be put right.

Having said that, I should also point out that whatever this administration may or may not have done in this matter in the past, has been a decision of Government as a whole and not of my predecessor as Minister for Labour and Social Security or of any other individual Minister.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 40 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I don't think my question has really been answered.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, in my opinion it has been answered quite clearly.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer has been that he does not consider that there is anything wrong and therefore he has nothing to put right.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not agree that at the time of the introduction a number of elderly persons were able to buy their way into the scheme and benefit from it immediately and others were excluded for a question of weeks and never had the opportunity, does he consider that a fair and equitable manner of dealing with senior citizens?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, this question has been dealt with by my predecessor for such a long time, it has been a question of debate after debate, it is not a question of it being a whim of my predecessor it is a consensus of the Government that this is as far as we can go and we are not changing it and when the Hon Mr Scott comes into power I will press him to do it and let us see what he does to our Insurance Scheme.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, we are well aware of the question of consensus of the Government but doesn't the Minister consider it his duty as a Minister to initiate policy in his Department and what he is being asked is whether he is prepared to initiate policy to put right the position of a number, and now I think it must be a rapidly decreasing number of persons, who at one stage were not in a position of being Government servants and therefore could not be financed by the Government as those were and people who missed it by a few weeks?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer has been no.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am asking the Minister whether he as a Minister is prepared to initiate this.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I will not initiate anything where there is a consensus of the Government.

NO. 41 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, does Government consider that there is sufficient staff at the Family Care Unit to cater for the needs of the Community?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Government does not consider that the staff of the Family Care Unit of the Department of Labour and Social Security is sufficient to meet all its essential commitments towards the community, and it is for this reason that on the 26 February approval was given to recruit two Trainee Social Workers - one to replace the Welfare Assistant who has also only very recently resigned, the other one as an addition to the establishment.

Preliminary steps are now being taken to recruit suitable persons with a view to their going to UK for training in due course. The position should therefore show some slight improvement in the near future, albeit the full effect of this minimal increase in staff may not become apparent for some time, until both recruits have returned from training.

The position will be kept under constant review and if further strengthening of the staff is necessary this will be done.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 41 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Was this the result of the recommendations after the staff inspection?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister try and bring in temporary staff to do away with the overload in the Family Care Unit?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, we are talking here of professional people, we are not talking of temporary staff such as charwomen.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if you need expert staff you can hire them temporarily. Haven't we had doctors brought out on a temporary basis or on a consultancy basis?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister totally oblivious to the needs of the Family Care Unit as regards the number of outstanding housing problems?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I am completely aware of the situation and this is why we are doing something about it already.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the staffing problem has resulted in a large number of people who claim to have social problems and have accordingly gone to the Family Care Unit and they have not been attended and they cannot be attended.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

As I said, Sir, we have increased the staff and this should alleviate the position and I also said that we will keep this under constant review.

HON A J HAYNES:

But the Minister seems to be aware that his temporary measures will not in any way alleviate the present problem, it will not substantially affect the backlog of unreported social problems. What will he do to ensure that these social problems are immediately dealt with?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, it is up to me to judge when a situation requires immediate action and I will do it as soon as possible. I am not going to go into a debate right now on the aspects of my Welfare Section, I have said that we have taken some steps and it is going to be under constant review.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not consider that a person who claims to be suffering a social problem and wants to be classified as a social case, isn't that a matter of priority?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, there are so many priorities every day but we have to keep a constant review on the question of the number of welfare officers, there is also the problem of accommodation once we make the Welfare Unit bigger, of further finances, cost of training staff. It is no use employing people unless you can provide accommodation, you can provide the proper training, the proper supervision etc, etc. I have told the Hon and Learned Member that I will have it in constant review but I am not prepared at this stage to change anything that I have said.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is this a matter of priority for this Minister or not? Is the problem of a person who comes and says: "My life is in a desperate mess, my children are extremely sick, my marriage is on the rocks" is that a matter of priority for this Minister or not?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Of course it is and they are dealt with as expeditiously as they can be.

HON A J HAYNES:

And is it also not a fact that the nature of these problems requires immediate attention?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

My Welfare Officers are very expert and they can judge which are the more immediate problems.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I think there is misinformation here. As I understand it it is first come first served, the report will not be accelerated in favour of any particular case.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is just referring to housing which is just one aspect of the many welfare problems that we have.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to solve the problem at question time.

HON A J HAYNES:

I would like some information as to the Minister's policy.

MR SPEAKER:

Not under the question as to whether the Family Care Unit is properly staffed.

NO. 42 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government state if the Gibraltar Official Employers Apprentices Board has met this year and if so what progress has been made with regard to the amended motion passed at the November 1980, meeting of this House dealing with Industrial Training?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the Gibraltar Official Employers Apprentice Board has met once so far this year - on 29 January - when a preliminary discussion took place on the amended motion passed by this House on 11 November 1980.

I would remind the House that this motion only dealt with school leavers who qualify for an apprenticeship with the Official Employers, but are not offered one only because of insufficient vacancies.

As came out in the course of the debate on the motion, the matter raises quite a number of difficulties and it seems unlikely that either the United Kingdom or Gibraltar Government employing departments will be able to be of much assistance, as the number of apprentices or trainees that they can take on is limited by financial considerations, by the fact that there must be sufficient suitable craftsmen available to undertake the training, and by the need to maintain a balanced workforce in keeping with their expected commitments.

The intention at present, therefore, is to offer one-year very basic training in the construction trades generally at the Construction Industry Training Centre provided that the youngster in question has not refused an offer of apprenticeship in a trade for which there may have been an unfilled vacancy, and on the understanding that there is no commitment to employ him in any capacity subsequently. The matter will have to be kept under review in the light of numbers affected and on the demands which they may make on the resources of the Training Centre at Landport.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 42 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

I am grateful, Mr Speaker, for that reply but will the present Minister for Labour assure this House that he will be continuing the policy of his predecessor by making the target which was mentioned on September, 1981, by adhering to it as a start of this scheme?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I will monitor this scheme personally to see how it works.

11.3.81

NO. 43 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, can Government give a breakdown of unemployment figures in the different categories as at 31st January, 1981?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

With your permission, Mr Speaker, I propose to answer this question together with Question No. 45.

11.3.81

NO. 44 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, can Government state what figures it has available, as at 31st January, 1981, for job vacancies?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the number of vacancies notified by employers, which remained unfilled on 31st January, 1981, was 16.

NO. 45 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government give the end of the month unemployment figures for the months of January and February giving a breakdown by sex, trade and nationality and the comparable figures for last year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The end-of-month figures of persons registered as unemployed in January and February of 1980 and 1981 are shown in the table which I am circulating and which also concerns Question No 43.

As will be seen, the tables are broken down as requested, and their preparation has been rather time-consuming. I would ask the Hon Mr Bossano and the Hon Mr Scott (and I am referring to his previous Question, No 43 of 1981) to get in touch with me at their convenience and let me know the sort of figures that they would like to receive on a monthly basis. I am sure this could be arranged without too much trouble, especially if they do not need the information broken down almost by individuals, as in the table which I am circulating on this occasion and which is time-consuming.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 43 AND 45 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

I am grateful for that reply particularly when it deals with monthly information being passed on to Members on this side of the House and in fact it would place us in a better position not to wait 2 or 3 months and get 2 or 3 months figures but if I might perhaps come back after we have had a few minutes to look at it, Mr Speaker, I would be grateful. The form was changed somewhat in the reply to previous questions on this subject that I have had, the format has changed considerably.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, am I right in assuming that the classification by trade is, in fact, taken to be the last employment in which the person unemployed was engaged?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

That is so.

HON J BOSSANO:

As regards, Mr Speaker, the non-EEC nationals, are people who are unemployed in any way limited to being offered employment in the category in which they were last or are they free to take up employment in any field?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

As far as I can gather the policy is for the category for which they were first employed especially if they were a tradesman is to find them work in their appropriate trade.

HON J BOSSANO:

I accept that it is preferable to find them work in their appropriate trade but are they in fact limited to the trade in which they were employed previously or they are free to take up other employment if it becomes available?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

They are limited, in fact, because you might have a labourer who has been unemployed a longer time and a tradesman coming along and because he has been a tradesman he is employed as a labourer before the labourer, in fact.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it limited to trade or is there a similar limitation by industry For example, if somebody is employed as a labourer, say, in the quota for the hotel trade, is he free to obtain employment as a labourer in the public sector or in another industry?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

A labourer is a labourer no matter in which industry he is.

11.3.81

NO. 46 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government give the number of work permits issued to new entrants in the months of January and February giving a breakdown by sex, trade and nationality and the comparable figures for last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, four employment permits in respect of new entrants to Gibraltar were given in January, 1981, and 6 in February, 1981. The corresponding figures for 1980 were 25 in January and 27 in February.

A breakdown of these figures is given in the table which I am circulating.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 46 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm that the policy is being maintained of not giving permits to new entrants for as long as there are suitably qualified unemployed people in the same categories?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

That is the policy of the Department and it is adhered to as much as possible.

11.3.81

NO. 47 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government make representations to the Moroccan Government to ensure that Moroccan subjects working in Gibraltar do not suffer long delays in Morocco waiting for a renewal of their passports?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the delay experienced by Moroccan subjects working in Gibraltar in having their passports renewed by the Moroccan Authorities was raised with a representative of the Moroccan Ministry of Labour last year.

It appeared that the length of the delay depended on such factors as the province in which a particular worker lived and the extent to which he had been able to obtain the required personal documentation beforehand (eg birth certificate etc). It was stated that workers living in the Tangier province were already issued with a temporary travel document for the period during which the new passport was being prepared and the possibility would be explored of extending this facility to workers from the other provinces.

The Government are not aware of any current cases of undue delay. If the Hon Questioner has any particular case in mind he should bring this to the attention of the Director of Labour and Social Security and the matter will be taken up again with the Moroccan Authorities.

11.3.81

NO. 48 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will Government make a statement regarding the position at present of the transfer of the Technical College?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, early in February Government made a statement concerning the present position with regard to the transfer of the Technical College. An indication was given at the time that Government had made firm proposals to MOD (Navy) for the transfer of the buildings (excluding the Medical/Dental Centre) and the land on which the buildings stand together with a proposal for meeting the running expenses of the new College of Further Education. These proposals have already been transmitted to the Ministry of Defence in London and a reply is still awaited.

NO. 49 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, can Government confirm that it has brought to the notice of the Ministry of Defence the contents of Question No 277 of 1980 with regard to Lower St Michael's Cave?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

Mr Speaker, yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 49 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, can the Minister give any more information on the subject or not?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, there appears to have been some misunderstanding as regards Question 277 of 1980 about which the Hon Member was asking as to the opening up of that particular part of the cave. We are not entirely sure if the Hon Member means Lower St Michael's Cave which comes under the MOD or if the Hon Member means new St Michael's Cave.

MR SPEAKER:

The question is directed to Lower St Michael's Cave.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, but I think the Hon Member may not mean that one, Mr Speaker, because Lower St Michael's Cave is not subject to vandalism because it is under the control of MOD and guided tours are taken down there by Official FHQ guides. The Hon Member may be referring to another Cave which is known as new St Michael's Cave which is part of St Michael's Cave, that is to say, our St Michael's Cave, where there seems to have been some vandalism and if that is the one he refers to I would really like to have more clarification on this.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I spoke to the Director of Tourism on the subject not so long ago and it concerns both Caves. I was not aware that New St Michael's Cave was termed as such I thought I had made myself clear, at least I thought I had, to continue using the name Lower St Michael's Cave but making sure the reference to the question was there. What information can the Minister give me on either of the Caves?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the information I can give is that about 5,000 people go down Lower St Michael's Cave every year on guided tours organised by FHQ, not by the Gibraltar Tourist Office, that is Lower St Michael's Cave as I know Lower St Michael's Cave. A letter was sent to FHQ on 23 January this year and the reply that came back was that in fact they were not very clear as to which one we meant. I am aware that the Hon Member did have a chat with the Director of Tourism on this but we still don't know because there is no vandalism caused at Lower St Michael's Cave but vandalism has taken place on what is known as New St Michael's Cave which is a portion of our St Michael's Cave which people can go down by means of a rope.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am referring to Lower St Michael's Cave and the allegations of vandalism are made from my own knowledge and in fact it is fair to say that there is hardly a stalactite or stalagmite of a small dimension at hand intact, they are nearly all broken, and on my own visits over the years I have noticed deterioration and when I talk of vandalism as I say I talk from my own knowledge and it includes some very large stalactites.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I take the point. In fact, the letter from FHQ does make reference to this and to avoid vandalism a certain amount of bits of stalagmites and stalactites were piled up at the entrance for the hunters to take away to try and avoid vandalism to the stalactites or stalagmites.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, there are other ways of preventing vandalism other than by giving them the broken pieces, surely?

MR. SPEAKER:

Your question was whether it had been brought to the notice of the Ministry of Defence and you are quite entitled to ask whether further assurances will be sought.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I take your point, Fortress Headquarters have been informed. As I understand it you were in some quandary as to which Cave I am referring to. I will make it clear that it is Lower St Michael's. I accept that New St Michael's is also in trouble but I would like reference to be made to both and could the Minister pursue the matter with FHQ?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I can assure the Hon Member and, indeed, the House, that people are allowed access to Lower St Michael's Cave by organised tours. There is an element of danger involved and it is only when escorted by FHQ qualified guides that a party of people are allowed to go down there but as far as I know no one is refused to go down there if they go as a conducted tour.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, it is not just FHQ guides who can take you, there are also Navy guides, RAF guides and Gibraltar Regiment guides, there are four types of guides. Could the Minister liaise further on the subject with Fortress Headquarters to find out if they have any better solution for protecting these Caves and will the Minister make a report at a later stage?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I can certainly go back to FHQ but according to our information there is no damage caused at Lower St Michael's Cave because as they are conducted tours obviously a guide is with people there whom certainly wouldn't allow the chipping off of stalactites or stalagmites.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister saying that there is no vandalism in Lower St Michael's Cave?

MR SPEAKER:

I am not going to allow that because we are not discussing whether there is or whether there is not, what we are discussing is whether the Minister brought to the attention of the Ministry of Defence the matters raised in the last question but we are not going to argue whether there is or there is not vandalism.

HON G T RESTANO:

The Minister has just said, Mr Speaker, that there is no vandalism because there are conducted tours.

MR SPEAKER:

That is the information he has been given.

HON G T RESTANO:

Question No 277 of 1980 was put precisely because the Hon Member on my right thought that there was vandalism and he wanted to prevent a heritage from being destroyed.

MR SPEAKER:

As a result of what the Hon Member has said here now the Minister has given an assurance that he will go back to the military authorities.

HON G T RESTANO:

I just wanted to confirm whether he has been saying that there has been no vandalism in Lower St Michael's Cave which I think I have just heard him say.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, yes, I am guiding myself by a letter sent to me by Lt-Col Campbell-Lammerton on behalf of the Brigadier who says: "All visits are supervised and so far the guides have not reported any vandalism. In addition to the guides Major Pass visits the Cave three times a month and he has found no evidence of any vandalism". I am afraid I have never been to Lower St Michael's Cave, Mr Speaker.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government give a breakdown of how the £150,000 in the Tourist Office Vote of the 1980/81 estimates, Head 24, sub-head 14, are being spent?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

Funds earmarked are as follows:

1. Main Consumer media, production support and sundry advertising	91,700
2. Coupon Response	3,000
3. Brochures, posters, leaflets, placements, cruises	32,000
4. Trade and sales promotions	12,400
5. PR visits (journalists) and expenses	3,200
6. Updating audio visuals	4,800
7. Agency fee	2,900
	<u>150,000</u>

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how much in cash the 5% commission to be paid to Bermans on the sales of souvenirs is estimated will amount to yearly and for how long will Government have to carry on paying this commission?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

Mr Speaker, it is not possible, at this stage, to estimate how much in cash terms will be paid in commission to Bermans Exhibitions Ltd on the sales of souvenirs connected with the Exhibitions as these are in the process of production.

This commission will be paid to Bermans Exhibitions Ltd for as long as the exhibition is in being.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 51 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I wonder if the Minister could explain what is meant by "for as long as the exhibition is in being".

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, so long as the figures are there. If the figures are removed or we decide not to have an exhibition then, of course, the commission would cease to go to Bermans on the sale of souvenirs.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister mean that he has given a sort of undertaking in perpetuity that we shall have to pay this 5% commission for as long as this exhibition is on?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

In perpetuity is a word I very much try to avoid using but as long as the exhibition is there, yes.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister feel that it is fair to tie up the hands of Government in this respect for so long when perhaps they would like to change the whole mode of doing business in this respect?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the question is that this was a venture that we didn't know how well we would do out of it. I think in a subsequent question the Hon Member may be quite impressed at what has occurred as a result of the Bermans exhibition. I think it is fair, quite honestly, that somebody who has invested money in the exhibition should have some return for their investment.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state how much Government will be paying Bermans for the maintenance of the exhibitions at St Michael's Cave, Upper Galleries and the Tower of Homage and how many persons will be travelling how many times a year at Government expense to carry out the maintenance?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

Sir, Bermans Exhibitions will provide, free of charge, the services of their staff (one person for models and one for costume supervision) for a once yearly visit to carry out inspection and adjustments where necessary.

The Government will pay their fares and expenses in Gibraltar, as well as any replacements of items damaged or stolen.

All the items in the exhibition are fully covered by insurance against such eventualities.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 52 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister not feel that in view that they are really making money in other respects on the exhibition, this maintenance should be carried out of their own expense entirely?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Is the Hon Member saying that now because I have informed him that we are doing well out of it, Mr Speaker? It was a completely new idea and one didn't know how well this would turn out to be and therefore when one draws up an agreement or contract they must be give and take on both sides if good faith is to be shown.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister feel there is a lot of give and very little take?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think the Hon Member will find that there is more take than we are giving, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 53 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

In view of the obvious need of good political public relations for Gibraltar in the United Kingdom will Government consider extending the activities of the Gibraltar Office in London in this direction?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. The Gibraltar Government Tourist Office in London was established to promote tourism in Gibraltar. This important job, I am glad to say, is doing well. It is not in my view necessary to add a political dimension to its functions. Any need for good political public relations in the United Kingdom is full covered, mainly by the Leader of the Opposition and myself, primarily through our close contacts with Foreign Office Ministers and officials and Members of Parliament, I consider that Gibraltar's political standing in Britain has never been higher than it is today. I believe also that there exists great goodwill towards Gibraltar in Parliament, in the Government and in the United Kingdom press and that this goodwill is reflected in the country at large.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 53 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Chief Minister think that there is no need for a constant effort in view of the present circumstances of Gibraltar to have somebody on the spot all the time to guide the press, something which we lack very considerably in the United Kingdom?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Giving that dimension to the Tourist Office would mean putting civil servants in charge of what is a highly political and delicate situation which would best be in the hands of people who are at the head of things in Gibraltar.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Surely, Mr Speaker, doesn't the Chief Minister believe that it is possible to find a man who is competent? Does the Chief Minister believe that we haven't got in our civil service a man who is competent enough to carry out those duties, of course, under the directions of the Government of Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I don't think the Hon Member is logical or in fact makes any sense in what he says because I didn't say that we couldn't find anybody. What I said was that it would necessarily be in the hands of civil servants and I made no aspersions but I have just made the contrast between that and the need for political approach. If the Hon Member is trying to look for a niche for himself in London I can tell him that whilst this Government is in office he will not find it.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I can look after myself without the Chief Minister having to give me a hand, I can assure him of that, but what I am trying to do, Mr Speaker, is look after Gibraltar which I, because I am there, can sense the need for this and what I am suggesting is that a good public relations man politically oriented is the person that we need. Does the Chief Minister believe that this is possible?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. We are making statements.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

All I am asking the Chief Minister, Mr Speaker, is whether he believes that it is possible to find a man who is well versed in public relations and can somehow project the image of Gibraltar in the United Kingdom, isn't that possible?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I didn't say one couldn't find one if you looked for one but we are not looking for one. I think that that is not the mission of the Tourist Office.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Perhaps, Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister doesn't want to do it or is not allowed to do it, I don't know.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have given that reply on my own and I don't need any directives. I don't know whether he receives any directives, I receive none.

NO. 54 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state what it is estimated will represent in money the commission due to be paid to Bermans in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year respectively after the £20,000 already paid to them have been recouped?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

Based on current numbers of visitors to the Exhibitions, it is estimated that the following sums will be payable to Bermans Exhibitions Ltd:

35%	of the additional charges for the first year	£14,880
30%	" " " " " " second year	£12,750
20%	" " " " " " third year	£ 8,500
15%	" " " " " " fourth year	£ 6,380

Then after that, Mr Speaker, we keep all the money.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 54 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

And the Minister is happy that the deal we have done in this respect is economical from the point of view of the Government?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I can assure the Hon Member that between now and the fifth year Government would have made £307,000.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the acting Minister for Tourism state what is the position with regard to the Tourist Advisory Board?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

I chaired a preliminary meeting on Friday 5 December, 1980, at the Tourist Office with the present members of the Gibraltar Travel Association. Representatives from the Gibraltar Trades Council and the Licensed Victuallers Association were also invited to attend. The draft terms of reference of the Board were tabled and those present were asked to consider them. Further meetings were held with representatives of the Gibraltar Travel Association and suggested amendments to the terms of reference are being considered.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 55 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister state when he expects the Advisory Board finally to be a working concern?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

As a working concern I would not dare say, Mr Speaker, I can say that good will has been shown on both sides to try and come to an agreement on the draft terms of reference and I hope that within the next 3 or 4 weeks we will be able to draw up the terms of reference.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am very pleased, Mr Speaker, to hear that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, what is the difference of opinion on the terms of reference? What are the areas?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The Tourist Board is, as far as we understand, an Advisory Board and the terms of reference which we submitted on being considered by the Association of members present they came back with terms of reference which were far beyond Government's possibilities of accepting, that is to say, they wanted to formulate policy and not only policy but expenditure and the control of staff and of course that cannot be because it is not a Board of management, it is purely an Advisory Board.

HON G T RESTANO:

How did the terms of reference differ, Mr Speaker, from the terms of reference of the original Travel Association?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

There is much more involvement, Mr Speaker. In the Travel Association there was very little that they had in the sense of recommending or making recommendations to the Minister. Under the new Committee one would expect to have consultations in anticipation to commitments.

HON G T RESTANO:

What, in fact, were the proposals which the Minister made, shall we say, on the expenditure side and what was the

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to go into that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, it seems to me, from the answer that the Minister has given, that there has been a divergence.

MR SPEAKER:

The question asked: "Can the acting Minister for Tourism state what is the position with regard to the Tourist Advisory Board". He has given the position and we are not going to discuss, under this question, the actual matters dealt with by the Committee.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would it not seem, Mr Speaker, that these areas, for example, expenditure, are the areas which are holding up full agreement between the two parties?

MR SPEAKER:

It might well be so.

HON G T RESTANO:

What I would like to know is what exactly those divergences are.

MR SPEAKER:

It is one thing to be told that there are divergences and the areas where there are divergences, it is another thing to ask the particular expenditure and the particular details of the divergence.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am not talking about actual expenditure, Mr Speaker, I am talking about the broad principles. The Minister said that one of the areas of disagreement was on expenditure, in broad terms, and I would ask him to expand on this.

MR SPEAKER:

And that is what I am not allowing.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would he not agree that we have a right to know on this side of the House?

MR SPEAKER:

You may have a right to know but you must ask the question in such a way that you are entitled to the information you seek. Under the guise of a supplementary under this question you cannot do it.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, is there any expenditure that the Minister would not give the Committee any power to control?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the Committee cannot have control of any amount of money, that is a matter for this House to control and the Council of Ministers but they can certainly be consulted and they can advise and recommend as to how they feel money ought to be spent or even what amount of money ought to be spent but the ultimate decision of the policy of Government falls upon Council of Ministers and this House.

HON G T RESTANO:

I take that point, Mr Speaker, and therefore I would have thought that the Advisory Board would have accepted that point of view. Have they not accepted that point of view?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I thought I had made that clear, Mr Speaker. The question is that their terms of reference were far too wide and our terms of reference were too narrow and it is within that middle balance that we are trying to find agreement, hopefully, within the next couple of weeks. I think that progress is being made and I hope it will not be too long before we are able to agree to the terms of reference.

NO. 56 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state judging by Hotel occupancy so far how the Tourist trade is doing this winter?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

The statistics available from Hotels for November and December, 1980, indicate a drop of 18% for November and 4% for December in all arrivals in hotels and 24% and 2% respectively in guest nights sold.

Visitor arrivals from all sources for November and December, 1980, were 14,305 compared to 16,711 for a similar period in 1979, a drop of 14%.

Generally our estimate is that winter will be down by about 30% on 1979.

These decreases are not peculiar to Gibraltar and so far as we know similar recession is being experienced in other resort destinations.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 56 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Since it appears that this was more or less foreseen, did the Government take any action to try and if possible stop the fall that we have experienced?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I don't think this Government can stop what has happened in the United Kingdom. The Hon Member is well aware of the recession in England. I can assure the Hon Member that I have found on this particular last trip that I went that there are a number of instances which one can attribute, one is late bookings.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to go into detail.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I can assure the Hon Member that we have taken a lot of steps, Mr Speaker, to try and contain the situation.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What steps were in fact taken? It does not matter who or what is responsible, it might be the weather, whatever it might be, what steps have been taken or were taken to try, if possible, to cushion the effect?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

We brought our advertising forward to September to try and hasten up particularly for this middle part of the winter. As the Hon Member knows I have personally attended two trade promotions to try and instil interest to Gibraltar and two days after I returned to Gibraltar the Tourist Office Manager went to South Wales and to Chester on a tourist promotion visit. We certainly have put a lot of beef into going around, visiting Travel Agents, and our Field Sales Officer is on the constant move all round England to try and promote Gibraltar.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, the question is what was done before this happened, not now, when we all know what has happened. I understand that the hoteliers and people concerned in the trade could see this coming and as far as I know they were warning the Government time and again. What actual steps were taken to try and improve the situation? Was more money spent on advertising? Was this House asked for supplementary funds for more advertising? Was anything done?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I can tell the Hon Member that in September last year I was in London and I was strongly advised that no matter what amount of advertising we put in the recession was such and the competition was such that, if anything, we would only be losing taxpayers money and the end product would not be to our benefit.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister is saying therefore that really it is because of the advice he got in London that he didn't do anything at all about it?

MR SPEAKER:

No, next question.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am asking.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, next question.

NO. 57 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state what is the forecast from the Tourist trade this coming summer based on the bookings received up to now?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

As compared to 1980 the forward bookings for next summer are on average down by 28%.

However, advance enquiries from the main Tour Operators in Gibraltar are higher than usual and are confident that the situation will improve later on and that summer 1981 will be better than summer 1980.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 57 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is this because he expects a change of Government in England, perhaps?

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask on this drop of 28%? Can the Minister attribute this drop of 28% which must obviously be worrying for the Minister to any given factors?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, a very simple one, Mr Speaker. Invariably, people have to deposit say £100 in the month of January to come out in the month of July and at the rate of interest today people are not paying the deposit and are becoming what is known in the trade as late bookings and one finds that people invest their money and the £300 or £400 which they have allocated to holidays is, of course, to their benefit. We are having much more response from people who make their minds up and book a week ahead and not six months ahead as was previously the case.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister consider that the very attractive rates given for tourists for holidays in America has a great bearing not only on tourists to Gibraltar but tourists to the rest of Europe? Would he agree that these attractive rates to America have a considerable bearing on the drop in bookings for Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I don't only say that it is the attractive rates offered by America or the Far or the Middle East, the strength of the pound is also an important factor.

MR SPEAKER:

We are asking a question which is not relevant, that is a supposition but, anyway, if you can answer it concisely I will allow it but let us not discuss the whole matter now.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I think it is common knowledge, Sir, that the strength of the pound, as you know, has lowered the price of certain European countries by some 30%.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can I put it another way, Mr Speaker. Are not the air fares to America in comparison to the length of travel to Gibraltar considerably lower and does the Minister not consider that this is a very great contributory factor to the loss in trade?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I couldn't argue to the contrary. You have charter flights and Mr Laker can fly you to America for £70. The day we can find somebody who can operate a plane to Gibraltar for £50, well, God bless him.

HON G T RESTANO:

It is not a question of when we can find, has Government done anything to try to find somebody?

MR SPEAKER:

Order, next question. We are not going to discuss every single item under the guise of one particular question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state why no charges are made by the Post Office for carrying out services for other Government Departments?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, this service can best be described as an allied service not chargeable to departmental expenditure. This is a service rendered by one Government Department to another.

The Government system of accounts does not provide for precise costings and inter-departmental charges except for public utilities. Any move to cost all services provided by one department for another would lead to additional staff requirements and work and slow down the pace of Government business. There are no strong arguments in support of the suggestion that the Post Office rather than any other department should charge inter-departmentally for its services.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 58 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In terms of cash, can the Financial and Development Secretary give an indication what the costs involved are?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am sorry, Sir, I cannot because this would need a survey over a period of several months to see how much departmental mail went out through the Post Office. Of course, post going overseas is stamped, it is only that within Gibraltar which goes through free.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I was thinking of other things, Mr Speaker, such as perhaps the actual selling of Social Insurance Stamps at the Post Office.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government pays a social insurance contribution.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the Questioner is suggesting that the Post Office should charge to the public for the service rendered to the Labour and Social Insurance Department for the sale of stamps.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, perhaps I am a little confused but I seem to have got lost. The question relates to the Post Office carrying out a service for other departments and we seem to have switched foot slightly and moved over to services to the public and the point I would have thought is that this is a public service and so far as I know in no country when you buy a 2½p stamp do they charge you 3p, ½p being for the services of supplying, it all comes within the cost of the service.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, what I am saying is that certain services are rendered at the Post Office counter which are not directly concerned with the Post Office itself. For instance, let us suppose that it requires one extra clerk just to sell the social security stamps, doesn't the Financial and Development Secretary accept that that is a cost that is borne by the Post Office which is a service which is not directly concerned with the Post Office and that it is really a service which is being given to another department of Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I thank the Hon Member for the explanation, I am now with him. Yes, I agree that this is a cost which is for a service being provided for another department but the point is that inter-departmentally very often it is not worth charging because of the cost in accounting that would arise to assess these costs and I think that with the Post Office we are at that stage. The Treasury does from time to time look at services which are provided from one department to another. For example, recently we have been looking at printing and stationery where costs are met from the Secretariat vote for a certain department, as to whether we could charge or allocate these and we have decided that with the amount of work involved it is not worth it, the administrative cost is too high against the advantage which is, of course, that if you are using an allied service you are rather more profligate with that than you would be if you are being charged for it and it is a nice balance and we have got to keep an eye on it which we do.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state why the Post Office needs to rent or hire transport to carry out its services and how much this is costing?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

Sir, the need to rent transport owing to breakdowns in the Departmental Fleet, arose on the following occasions:-

June 1st - 6th, 1980

July 10th - 31st, 1980

August and September, 1980

December 26th, 1980 - January 9th, 1981

The total cost of hire amounted to £1,093.80.

In normal circumstances the need to hire transport should not arise again as the vehicles provided for in the Estimates 1980/81 were delivered on 20th January and 3rd February, 1981.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state why it has not purchased a small generator for use in the Post Office during power cuts?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

The purchase of a suitable generator for use in the Post Office during power cuts was considered. The project, which necessarily would have had to include certain works on the electrical installation, to enable the switch-over to take place, was not proceeded with in view of the improvement of the situation generally.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 60 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In view, Mr Speaker, of the last few power cuts that Gibraltar has experienced which I know about even if I am not in Gibraltar, would the Minister realise that this is almost becoming endemic and in order to provide a good service at the Post Office should they not do what business people are doing and have their own generator?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to hear the words "even if I am not in Gibraltar". Mr Speaker, it is a general policy matter, there are other services within Government which would equally require generators, collection of bills and what have you and therefore, Mr Speaker, we would be burdened with a tremendous cost if every Government Department was to be fitted out with a new wiring set-up and a generator to provide electricity and the power cuts are not so bad, I can assure the Hon Member.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, has the Government made a survey of the loss, generally, as a result of the Post Office being out of action during periods of power cuts however short they might be? I would have thought it was quite significant.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I can assure the Member it is not significant, there is no loss at all as far as I am concerned, Mr Speaker. The service has gone on, I agree, with some inconvenience but the Post Office has not had to close down as a result of the power cuts.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is it not a fact that things like registered letters have not been able to be dealt with during power cuts?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Not as far as I know, Mr Speaker. If they have not been registered at 10 am they have been registered at 11 am but they certainly have not been sent back and not registered. There may have been some inconvenience, I am not prepared to argue that point.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Perhaps the Minister could find out because notwithstanding I am away from Gibraltar I understand that that has been happening.

HON G T RESTANO:

My understanding definitely is that during power cuts people who have gone to the Post Office to register letters have been turned back. What I would like to ask the Minister is what his knowledge is of what services have been interrupted by the Post Office during power cuts?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, on a point of order, that is not the question that was originally asked for, it is a completely different thing.

MR SPEAKER:

It must in itself be inherent to the question the fact that the service is being affected due to the lack of light and that is why a generator is needed.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the question as I understood it from Mr Isola is, has Government had a survey of the loss and that is not the case. What I was saying is that there has been no loss. There may have been an inconvenience, that is what I was saying. The Hon Mr Restano has brought an entirely new concept into this argument.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am glad that the Hon Minister should say that I have brought in a new concept but perhaps he could answer my question.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am not aware that people have been sent away and that letters have not been registered, I am aware that somebody may have been told, "I am sorry, I can't see to it now, come back in half an hour or an hour's time when the power is restored".

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, that circumvents the point of that particular question which is, if somebody goes to register a letter and he is told to come back an hour later, an hour later may be too late to catch the plane that is leaving, say, on a Tuesday and it has to wait till Thursday and that does involve losses to people. I don't know whether the Minister will agree or not.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am sure the Hon and Learned Member opposite will have to agree with me that power cuts do not take place at half past 10 in that particular part of Gibraltar every single day.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I haven't had an answer to my question about the interruption of services to the general public.

MR SPEAKER:

You have had an answer. The Minister said that to his knowledge there has never been an occasion where a person has not been able to register a letter although there have been occasions when there has been delay.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think what he said was that to his knowledge somebody may have been told to come back in an hour's time and I think that is the whole purpose of this question about the Post Office purchasing a small generator because in the same way as traders along Main Street have had

MR SPEAKER:

But the answer has been that they are not prepared to purchase a generator whatever the inconvenience.

HON G T RESTANO:

But initially, Mr Speaker, if I may say so, the Minister said that there was no need for a generator there and I would like to suggest to the Government, I would like to ask the Government

MR SPEAKER:

Order. I am very aware of what the Minister said. The Minister has said that there is inconvenience at the Post Office the same as there is inconvenience in other departments, that it is an expensive thing to do because you have got to rewire the whole department and he sees no reason why the Post Office should be treated differently to any other department. That is the answer and we are not going to go round in circles.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask another question. How is it that the Government cannot invest in this sort of equipment when most of the shops down Main Street have had to do it and they have done it for the interest of tourists and clients generally? Why has the Post Office been the one exception along Main Street which has not invested, and I am told that it is not a very great investment, in this sort of equipment?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Because the Post Office happens to be the only building that Government, as far as I can recall, happens to own in Main Street.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is there not a tourist interest in giving people from Cruise Liners a service, they can't tell them to come back later.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, no more questions. Next question.

11.3.81

NO. 61 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, with reference to Question 394 of 1980 will Government state whether the abandoned flats now sealed at Casola Buildings were emptied of rubbish before being sealed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Yes, Sir.

When flats are vacated at 17/19 Rosia Steps (Casolas Building) or elsewhere any rubbish left behind by the outgoing tenant is removed as the flats are properly locked up and made secure.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 61 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Is that a factual answer or a policy answer? Does the Minister know that in fact the buildings were emptied or is he assuming that they were emptied?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, when I have a question from the Hon Members they are treated with the respect that I think they are entitled to have. The answer given to me, I don't go round houses checking, I can assure the Hon Member is a factual answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, referring to Question No 394, does that mean that the work to be effected at Casola Buildings has now been completed?

MR SPEAKER:

Under the guise of one particular question we are not going to discuss the whole question of Casola Buildings under any circumstances. You have asked a specific question and you have been given a specific answer.

11.3.81

NO. 62 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government reveal the latest waiting list figures for housing?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Sir, the figure now stands at approximately 1,750.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 62 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

So there appears to have been no change since November, is that correct, Mr Speaker?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, there has been a slight increase. There were 1,700, considering that we accommodated some 50 between November to date, we find ourselves another 50 up so there have been another 100 new applicants.

NO. 63 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, with reference to Question 272 of 1980 will Government publish a list of the first hundred applicants in the various units of housing as at March 5th, 1981?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, as I explained in answer to Question 272/80, waiting lists are not drawn up until and unless these are required for allocation purposes because pointages fluctuate from day to day and these lists might tend to give some people false expectations.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 63 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I was aware of Question 272, that is why I referred to it. I would nevertheless like to see a list of the first hundred applicants in the various units of housing at a particular date. I am not asking for the Minister to adopt what is after all a DPBG policy which is to have it published always but I was asking in full knowledge of his difficulty with reference to Question 272, for a list of the first hundred applicants. May I add, Mr Speaker, that Question 272 doesn't refer to expectations about to be dashed. It simply reads: "There are approximately 1700 applicants in the Waiting List. A card is kept for each applicant, which contains all the information related to his case, pointage and requirement. Waiting Lists are not kept for the simple reason that pointages fluctuate from day to day and could well tend to mislead people. Waiting lists would have to be drawn up almost daily in order to convey the exact position and correct information". Sir, I would like to know one specific instance of one day for my own purposes but I would nevertheless like a list for any given day.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Member said that this was a DPBG policy, he is wrong, it was an IWPB policy that goes back to 1972 and the three Housing Ministers who held office in the 2 years and 10 months none of them were able to come out with a list because it is impossible to do so and make that list public and I have tried on numerous occasions, Mr Speaker, to explain why it is impossible and it is so difficult because a person at the top of any requirement, a 3RKB or 4RKB could well find himself number 14 tomorrow. I see the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition nodding his head in agreement because I think he understands it. Well, if he understands it, Mr Speaker, he must realise that it is an absolute waste of time for my typist to be typing out 100 names of seven different categories of houses from bedsitters to 6RKB and by five o'clock that afternoon it is futile because the following morning when it is published Mr A is no longer at the top of the list, he is No 14, so it serves no purpose at all. I tried to explain that time and time again, Mr Speaker, but I am afraid it is water off a duck's back.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is no.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It can't be done, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

It can't be done or doesn't he want to do it?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to waste tax payers' money. It was worked out in answer to a question asked some two years ago before the Hon Member joined this House, that it would entail something like seven typists to carry out an exercise that would not mean anything to anybody.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, just a minute ago the Hon Member did suggest that the questions posed by us were treated with all due respect but this question is not being treated with due respect.

MR SPEAKER:

We are making statements.

HON A J HAYNES:

I would like the Minister to reconsider and to produce those lists.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Who to, Mr Speaker, may I know, please?

HON A J HAYNES:

To the general public or to me.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Must I repeat that it would mean nothing to the general public because the list that I draw up today, the 11th March, would mean nothing to Mr A on the 12th March. I think the Hon Member must accept that. Why should I put typists and my Department through the whole rigmarole of bringing out something which is absolutely futile.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is no so let us not waste time. You have been told that you are not going to get that list.

HON A J HAYNES:

I can accept the answer of a straight no but I cannot accept in silence the statement that goes with it. I just absolutely refuse to.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Minister on matters of expense? Would it be so expensive to produce a list of the first 100 applicants from the various housing units, say, on the 1st day of each month, as an exercise, so that perhaps the point that he makes of very sharp fluctuations would then appear, I presume? Would it not be a good idea to satisfy Members if that sort of exercise is done, perhaps then there would be more confidence in the way housing is allocated?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am somewhat alarmed because I think the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza when he was Chief Minister was very keen about the publication of this list. In fact, I remember Miss Conchita Anes making a particular issue of this at election time in the 1969 Elections but it is an absolute impossibility, it can't be done and if the Hon and Learned the present Leader of the Opposition doesn't know probably the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza might enlighten him on that side as to the impracticability of this particular scheme.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Member allow me to visit his Department and make my own list?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Most certainly not, Sir. I will certainly give him information of specific cases if he wants it but not to go round thumbing the files.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 64 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government undertake to house all those who are evicted by Government as "squatters" and who as a result of the Legal Proceedings for eviction become homeless?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

People who take the law into their own hands, squat and are eventually evicted by the Court, cannot expect to receive preferential treatment over other social cases who are lawfully and patiently waiting to be accommodated.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 64 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

The term 'homeless' seems to have eluded the Minister who so clearly defined it for me in answer to Question no 158, when he was asked: "Will you reveal the figures of homeless people in Gibraltar?" the Minister answered: "There are several social cases claiming homelessness which the Department or the Housing Scheme cannot accept as such, some of these being families that moved into a hotel with full advance knowledge that they had to vacate the accommodation by a given date. In other instances homelessness is by way of voluntary departure. Homeless cases as such are those who find themselves homeless by way of disaster or who are evicted by a Court Order for which they are not to blame". What I am asking the Minister, Sir, is to make provision for these people who are homeless under his definition which is where I am taking it from.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I didn't put the squatters there, they have opted to go there and broken the law. They cannot be termed as homeless because they have broken the law. The law is there and we cannot give them preferential treatment over other social cases that have not broken the law, under no circumstances.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am saying these people should not necessarily be allowed to stay where they remain but this comes back to the other question in which this subject was touched, Question No 369.

MR. SPEAKER:

We are quoting from Hansards and we are making statements at question time. I must repeat this is question time, it is exclusively for the purposes of seeking and extracting information and it must be concise and precise.

HON A J HAYNES:

I take your point, Sir. The only reason why I was seeking to elucidate the matter is because there seems to be a misinterpretation of the question and since we are dealing with a subject which has been the subject matter of previous questions, I would like to

MR SPEAKER:

That is the danger of allowing follow-up questions within the six months period and I am going to be more strict from now on if this is going to happen but, anyway, go ahead.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, it would appear therefore that Government are neither prepared to make a Family Social Care Unit report before undertaking legal proceedings or where the person has been evicted make a report then. Is Government totally inhuman as a landlord?

MR SPEAKER:

Order, that is not seeking information. I will not allow debate on questions. If you want to ask a question which is going to give you information you are free to do so.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, may I then repeat the question in the light of the points which I have made. Will Government undertake to have all those who are evicted as squatters who as a result become homeless, ie the true social cases?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Certainly not in preference to people who have not squatted.

NO. 65 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government reveal the number of housing units presently unoccupied whether as part of the modernisation scheme, or because they are unfit for human habitation, or because they have not yet been allocated?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, 261 units are unoccupied at present. This figure is made up as follows:

The Modernisation Programme		175
Unfit for occupation	14	
Scheduled for demolition	<u>24</u>	38
Awaiting rehabilitation -		
Government Quarters	14	
Varyl Begg Estate	27	
Others	<u>7</u>	<u>48</u>
		<u>261</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 65 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the 48 units awaiting allocation, how long have they been waiting allocation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Awaiting rehabilitation, I think I said, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does this include flats, did the Minister say, in Varyl Begg Estate, Laguna Estate, Glacis Estate?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That is right.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister indicate the sort of rehabilitation that is required for flats in Laguna, Glacis and Varyl Begg, as far as they are fairly recent Government developments?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

In the case of Varyl Begg, I think that the ones that we are talking about are the ones that we have not been able to put people in or in fact people have had to be moved from. The normal rehabilitation is mainly on electrics and what tenants sometimes alter that requires putting back into shape, i.e. louvred windows being taken away, holes knocked in walls for serving hatches and floor tiles, door knobs and one thing and the other, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO: /

Mr Speaker, with regard to the 38 which are apparently unfit for human habitation, could we have some sort of breakdowns of this 38? What sort of areas do they find themselves in?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I haven't got a detailed breakdown. The 38, as far as I understand, are places like Casolas Buildings where we have moved two or three people, 6, Lower Castle Road, which is falling down of its own accord. I think at Willis's Passage there was another one that required immediate attention. I can't recall any others off-hand, Mr Speaker.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Would Government take immediate steps to ensure that parking of cars in front of the Health Centre on Smith Dorrient Avenue adjacent to Casemates Hill is prevented as such parking constitutes a danger hazard to vehicles driving up Casemates Hill?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

It is not conceded that parking does take place regularly in a way which constitutes a danger hazard. Vehicles do sometimes park outside the Health Centre but away from the junction but often these belong to doctors who claim there is a need to do so for emergency purposes. Other vehicles are moved on by the police, who will continue to give the matter attention.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 66 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister does not agree that this constitutes a general hazard and I contend that it does. Would the Minister have the pavement enlarged, perhaps, or create other impediments to parking so that there is not just a yellow line where cars sometimes park on but create such a thing as an enlarged pavement to ensure that cars cannot park physically?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I don't know about an enlarged pavement but what I can say, Mr Speaker, is that in the past few months only three slight accidents have occurred in the vicinity and none of these has any relation to vehicles parked near the Health Centre. On the 4 March when Police specifically visited the scene due to matters raised in this question six vehicles were parked in Line Wall Road outside the Health Centre but away from the junction. Three of these vehicles were reported by the Police and the other three belonged to doctors.

HON G T RESTANO:

The Minister has said that doctors park there but because it happens to be a doctor, surely, it is just as likely to create a danger hazard for other vehicles, whether it is a doctor's vehicle or anybody else's vehicle, does the Minister not agree with this?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, of course I agree with that but I think that the Hon Member himself raised in the meeting of the 17 December the matter that he wanted Government to consider allowing doctors to park up in St Bernard's Hospital and also the staff and the nurses so I can't see the consistency that he wants us to overlook St Bernard's Hospital and yet no doctors are to be allowed to park outside the Health Service whilst in attendance.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, this of course is a completely different case. The parking spaces up at St Bernard's Hospital, to my knowledge, create absolutely no danger hazard to other vehicles.

MR SPEAKER:

We are now debating the question:

HON G T RESTANO:

He has brought it up, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

I think what you were asking in the previous question was that parking spaces should be given to doctors and nurses in the Hospital within the legal parking and not on the 'no parking' areas.

HON G T RESTANO:

Yes, absolutely. I think the Minister's comment is quite irrelevant to this. This is a danger hazard to other vehicles, what I was asking in December about St Bernard's Hospital created no danger hazard at all to any other vehicle. May I have an answer, Mr Speaker?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, yes, he may have an answer and that is contained in the first paragraph or sentence of my reply and that is that it is not conceded that parking does take place regularly in a way which constitutes a danger hazard.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does the Minister not agree that a vehicle driving up Casemates Hill, the driver has his view impaired if there are vehicles parked almost up to the corner between Casemates Hill and Smith Dorrien Avenue?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member goes there and has a look at it as I did he will find that whether the driver going up Casemates Hill opts to go left or right, exactly the same view is permitted on both sides whether there are cars parked to the right or not.

11.3.81

NO. 67 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has the Minister for Housing and Sport now obtained the costs to purchase electronic breath testing machines and if so would he inform the House what those costs are?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, the cost would be about £2,000 per machine in the United Kingdom. Two machines would be required if it were to be decided to introduce this type of test.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 67 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the Government considered whether to purchase those machines or not?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

We have not considered, Mr Speaker, it is not considered to be of need in Gibraltar.

HON G T RESTANO:

Did the Minister say he had not considered or that the Government had considered not to buy them?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The Government will not buy this, Mr Speaker, it is not considered that we require an uplifting of our present under the influence of drink or drugs laws.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister state how he arrived or how did Government arrive at that conclusion?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

We arrived, Mr Speaker, on the advice received from the Commissioner of Police and other authorities who have not shown a particular desire or interest in this new instrument in Gibraltar.

HON G T RESTANO:

Presumably the advice of the Stipendiary Magistrate has not been taken. He was the one who first, I think, brought to the notice of the general public the need of such equipment in order to enforce the law?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, yes, Sir, I remember the case vividly. The Commissioner of Police is not particularly interested or keen in this nor do we have evidence of its requirement in Gibraltar.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, Mr Speaker, the advice of the Commissioner of Police is therefore contrary to the sort of advice

MR SPEAKER:

No, it is contrary to the Stipendiary Magistrate's advice.

HON G T RESTANO:

The Minister said that it is contrary to have these machines according to the advice of the Commissioner of Police. What I am asking is, how does the Commissioner of Police arrive at his advice seeing that it is not the sort of advice that Police in the United Kingdom give?

MR SPEAKER:

I do not think it is fair to ask the Minister how the Commissioner of Police arrived at this advice. He must have considered the matter and given an overall answer but I don't think the Minister can answer for the Commissioner of Police.

HON G T RESTANO:

Surely, the Government must have considered the advice of the Commissioner of Police and presumably the Commissioner of Police must have given reasons for giving his advice.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. What the Minister has said is that on the advice of the Commissioner of Police who has considered the matter, it has been decided not to introduce them.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask what reasons have been given to back up the advice of the Commissioner so that the Government accepted this advice? What statements have been given, what reasons have been given by the Commissioner to back up this advice that we don't need this sort of equipment in Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the drink and drive problem in Gibraltar virtually doesn't exist. The number of people that are taken to Court under drink and drive are so few that it is not warranted to be of need.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 68 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state why they allow derelict trailers to be parked in public thoroughfares?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Sir, this problem continues to receive constant attention (as detailed in answer 376 of 1980).

During the month of February, 1981, over 60 offences connected with trailers were reported with a view to prosecution.

The difficulty with derelict trailers is that the police do not have the necessary equipment, but take every possible measure to persuade the owners to remove them. If owners do not co-operate they are reported.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 68 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister state if any more drastic action has been taken by the Police to ensure that in future the owners do act more promptly?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, as I said in the answer there have been over 60 offences connected with trailers just during the month of February, there certainly has been a purge on a clean-up of trailers. I can inform the Hon Member that a total of 41 trailers were found out of which 11 trailers are in an obviously derelict state and, of course, they will be disposed of either by throwing them over the cliff or in some other manner.

THE HON A T LODDO

Will the Minister confirm that in the 1980/81 Draft Estimates, provision has been made for wooden benches to be installed at the Victoria Stadium?

(The Hon A T Loddo in asking the question said "1981/82 Draft Estimates")

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, I think, with respect, the question has been wrongly read.

HON A T LODDO:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, it must be a typing error.

MR SPEAKER:

The question reads: "Will the Minister confirm that in the 1980/81 Estimates".

HON A T LODDO:

1980/81 has gone already.

MR SPEAKER:

That is the way it was asked.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, certainly as regards 1980/81, it was not included because we are talking in the past tense. We have made provision in this year's estimates to try and get Public Works to do it.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for that.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

11.3.81

NO. 70 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state the length of time it normally takes the PWD to repair Post Office vehicles?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the length of time normally taken by PWD to repair Post Office vehicles is no different from that taken to repair other Government Departments' vehicles and is totally dependent on two main factors:

- (a) the type of repair required, and
- (b) the availability of spare parts for the repair.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 70 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister on the whole satisfied with the length of time taken obviously not just with these vehicles but with vehicles, generally, as that will affect the cost of having to rent other vehicles?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

NO. 71 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government sponsor District Committees to embellish our Town which is giving a greater impression of decadence month by month?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Development and Planning Commission has recommended that urban design improvements to the Town should commence shortly. (In this connection the Director of Public Works and Chief Planning Officer travelled to the United Kingdom recently to discuss a pilot scheme with the Joint Centre for Urban Design at Oxford). The pilot scheme, which is seen as the first of a number of areas within the City Centre, will centre around Cornwall's Parade and its tributaries ie Bell Lane, City Mill Lane, Cornwall's Lane, Horse Barrack Lane and Castle Street.

The approach to this scheme, and all others to follow, will involve a public participation exercise with the landlords of the buildings in the area as well as the traders, in which economic, social and commercial factors will be considered at the same time as the improvement of the visual environment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 71 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am very pleased to hear that, Mr Speaker, and I hope it is a success but can the Minister give an indication of when it is likely to start?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I should hope within the next two or three months.

NO. 72 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

When does Government envisage the new Public Works Garage to be in full operation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the transfer of the Public Works Garage to the new garage/workshop complex was completed on 27 February, 1981. The majority of the plant and equipment is now functioning.

The garage/workshop complex should be fully operational by the end of this month.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 72 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, can Government confirm that at a very late stage within this so-called planned phasing from the old garage to the new garage, certain complications arose which were not spotted until quite recently with respect to the width of the two bays and will Government make a statement on it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, that is correct. The bays were found to be rather wider than is practical and it is already being arranged that they should be made narrower.

HON W T SCOTT:

And the Minister in saying that the new garage will be in operation by the end of this month has obviously taken regard to the narrowing of those bays?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

Not too narrow, I hope.

NO. 73 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, does Government not agree that there has been a reduction of Services under Head 20, subheads 1, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17 and 18, Warrant No 23 of the Statement of Reallocation No 7 of the 1980/81 of the Consolidated Fund and will Government give a detailed explanation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The Government does not agree that there has been a reduction of Services. However, on Treasury instructions, whenever Supplementary Funds are required every possible effort is made in the first instance to find possible savings within the particular Head of Expenditure.

The savings found in this case within Head 20 were as follows:-

<u>Item</u>	<u>Services</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Reasons</u>
1	Beaches	£ 3,000	During the course of the year, less materials and stores were required than allowed for in the estimates.
6	Rock Safety	£ 6,000	Less works required than originally anticipated.
10	Roads	£ 5,000	Savings due to labour from this Section having been engaged on I & DF projects, ie Roadworks, Car Parks etc
11	Garages/ Workshop	£12,000	More works were carried out for other Departments.
13	Cleaning of Highways	£ 4,000	Less maintenance required than originally anticipated.
14	Collection of Refuse	£ 5,000	Less maintenance and spares were required for the Refuse Collection Lorries than originally anticipated.
17	Sewers	£ 5,000	Four men originally provided for in the estimates for works on new estates were not engaged until December, 1980.
18	S W Distribu- tion	£ 5,000	Labour from this Section have also been engaged on I & D Projects.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 73 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Has there, in fact, under subhead 10 on the Maintenance Up-keep and Other Improvements to Roads, has this in fact included one in particular - Rosia Road, underneath Humphreys, is that contained within that subhead?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

What exactly do you mean by Rosia Road?

HON W T SCOTT:

The paving of the road.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, that is part of it.

HON W T SCOTT:

So that some money has been withdrawn and the project is nowhere near completion?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The project was not intended to be finished this year at all, it was only a small amount to be done each year. In fact, next year there will be a further amount in that project.

HON W T SCOTT:

Yes, but although therefore certain monies were allocated for that work, that work hasn't been done and it has been shifted on to another subhead. What I am suggesting, is that it is not a saving because the work has not been done.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, the money that was allocated for Rosia Road was spent on Rosia Road.

NO. 74 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government make a statement on the present situation with the disposal of refuse whilst the Destructor is under repair?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The present situation with the Disposal of Refuse is by dumping at Europa Point. This procedure dates back for many years and appears, unfortunately, to be the only practical alternative.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 74 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Does Government not agree that at least on the tourist side it represents a situation which is very damaging to Gibraltar?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have already said that it is an unfortunate situation but the only practical alternative. The main thing is that when we need, very rarely, to do a general overhaul for the refuse destructor it is done in the non-tourist months. If there is a small breakdown during the tourist season we do our best to contain it as far as possible by keeping the refuse at the destructor site for as long as possible.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is there no other area within Gibraltar that perhaps such rubbish as is combustible could be burnt?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think, Sir, there is no reasonable area where it could be burnt and I think it would be rather a fire hazard

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is there no possibility of cooperation with the Ministry of Defence who, I understand, dump their rubbish way out at sea?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think the majority of the Ministry of Defence rubbish is collected by us nowadays. What they do is that they dump some heavy rubbish out at sea. We have looked into the possibility of this but it is very expensive indeed.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, coming back to the answer that I got to looking for an area where controlled fire could take place periodically, the Minister in his reply said, "I think it would be a hazard". Can the Minister take steps either to confirm or deny his thoughts?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I will speak to the Chief of the Fire Brigade who I know is very much against open fires where a lot of combustible material can go up into the air and I will let the Hon Member know.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state for how long this dumping has been going on now in terms of time? As a matter of interest, has there been any similar period of time in the last 20 years when dumping at sea has carried on for such a long period?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I cannot say within the last 20 years how long this has been necessary. I can try and find out although I think records may not be too easy to find but dumping at sea has been a feature of the refuse situation, to my knowledge, for at least the last 25 years.

11.3.81

NO. 75 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government make a statement on the present position with respect to the Refuse Destructor?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The present position with respect to the Refuse Destructor is that the Plant is now working normally, the only items requiring completion due to the fire damage are the roof sheeting and side glass panels of the buildings which are expected to arrive shortly from UK.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 75 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Sir, is the Minister therefore now saying that the plant is working normally and that refuse is being burnt there? Is that what he means by working normally?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, burning started last Saturday.

11.3.81

NO. 76 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government explain why it has not repaired the ornamental cupola of the Market Place Clock which is at a rakish angle?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

A scheme was prepared last year for the renovation and painting of the whole clock tower and shelter but, owing to other pressing works, this has been left in abeyance. However, essential repairs to the concrete columns were carried out some months ago.

The structure encasing the actual clock is in fairly good condition and only the ornate ironwork above the clock is showing signs of corrosion which has caused a slight tilt at the very top of the building. It is hoped that this will be corrected in the near future. There is no danger to the public.

NO. 77 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, is it correct that a certain building contracting firm was forced to make workers redundant in respect of the development of the Girls' Comprehensive School because they were unable to pursue the construction of the Girls' Comprehensive School due to the delays in the moving of the PWD Garage and has this resulted in any risk of liability on the part of the Government under the building contract of the Girls' Comprehensive School?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Four Indian workers were made redundant on the 19th January. However, that same day, under pressure from the Union, the contractors' redundancy notice was suspended. After further discussion with the Trade Union the contractor withdrew the notice on the 30th January.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 77 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

With respect, it doesn't answer my question, Mr Speaker. Is it correct that a certain building contracting firm was forced to make workers redundant because they were unable to pursue the construction work?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would think, Sir, if they made them redundant and then took them back there wasn't all that need after all to make them redundant in the first place. I do not know, Sir, exactly why these workers were made redundant by the company concerned. There were claims that they would like the old Public Works Garage to be given to them as soon as possible and this was done as soon as we could manage to do so.

HON W T SCOTT:

Which was many months after the programme date of handing over the Public Works Department Garage.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If you are aware of the programme date then you are better informed than I am.

HON P J ISOLA:

Doesn't the Minister know?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We said we would do it as soon as it was practical.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I think the Minister has entirely failed to answer the question. What the questioner is saying is, is there any risk of liability on the part of the Government by reason of the fact that the building contracting firm couldn't carry on working on site because the Government had not moved the Public Works Garage out and that was the reason, apparently, why they made workers redundant, they did not need the workers because they could not get on with the work. The fact that they take the workers back does not mean that the claim will not arise against the Government for paying workers for doing nothing because they can't do it because the Government is still in the Public Works Garage. What we are asking is, is there any risk contractually, as a result of this incident to the Government under its contract? Are we going to have any claims later on?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As far as I know from my visits to that area, work continued on that site all the time and the four people who were made redundant I think just went back and worked at some other area on the site rather than actually knocking down the Public Works Department Garage which perhaps they had been scheduled to do in the first place. The Garage has now been handed over and as far as I understand no claims are coming forward.

HON P J ISOLA:

The claims need not necessarily come, Mr Speaker, now. We are asking the Government if they can assure us that there is no liability, no risk of liability on the part of the Government resulting from these particular incidents.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As I have said, Sir, as far as I know, no claim has come forward and therefore I cannot see that there is any risk of liability as such.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could not the claim come forward at the end of the building period or the contract period, Mr Speaker, if the building firm wanted extra time would the penalty clauses be prevented from coming into effect by reason of the fact that the Government was not able to give possession or whatever of the Garage, that is why the question is asked. Any risk of liability, not necessarily today, it could be in a year's time or in a year and a half's time.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They should give notice even now and I think furthermore if the four workers went back and were obviously employed somewhere else on the rest of the contract, they haven't really lost anything. As far as I know, Sir, the contractors for the building of the School were told they would get the Public Works Garage as soon as it was practical, they were given a date, they were requested to work their own schedules on the rest of their works to that date and that has been done. If there is any liability and some claim comes through at the end it will have to be looked at by Government but I would think that if they left it right to the end and did not tell us now it wouldn't have very much substantiation.

HON P J ISOLA:

This is probably a question which should have been answered by the Hon and Learned Attorney-General who obviously has not been consulted on the matter. What we are asking is, has this resulted in any risk of liability on the part of the Government under the building contract? We are asking a legal question, we are not asking for the Minister to tell us "I think and I know", we want an opinion on this. This is why we asked the question.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the question asked is very well put because how can one assess a risk? It is a matter for the consultant if and when the claim is made, surely, and then one must look at it.

MR SPEAKER:

The question which is being asked is in the knowledge of their contractual commitment with the contractor, do they feel that there is any liability?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has answered that several times by saying that there was no fixed date for the handing over except as soon as practical, and he has said that we haven't received any claim. We cannot say any more, we cannot look into a crystal ball to see what is going to happen in two years' time.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, we are very sorry the Government is unable to answer. We don't know, the Government has got the contract, we haven't seen them. Our question is very simple, does the Government consider that there is any risk of liability on the part of the Government arising out of this incident having regard to the terms of the building contract?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, surely the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition doesn't expect us to comment on a risk if the claim has not been made, that would be conceding something that it was not necessary to concede.

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I to understand from that, Mr Speaker, that there is a risk of contractual liability arising out of this incident? If not why cannot the Government say categorically: "In our view, in our opinion, there is no risk of anything going wrong as a result of this in view of the terms of the contract". That is all we are asking, Sir.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would like to assure the Hon Leader of the Opposition that work went on apace all the time, it was not a case of work coming to a standstill as they may seem to have assumed on that side.

HON W T SCOTT:

The Member opposite is under a very grave misapprehension, of course we never thought that the work stopped, of course not. It continued in other sections of the site presumably but on that section of the site which is also up for development they were unable to make a start on it.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As I said, in that other section they took back these four people and apparently found useful employment for them. I am sure the company did not let them just sit there doing nothing.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is it not a fact that because of that there was a strike because apparently the contractors wanted to make them redundant because there was no work?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question. We are not going to get any further on this one.

11.3.81

NO. 78 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government state whether long-term pumping tests have commenced in the deep drilling operation and will Government also state if the programme for catchment study and water seeping through the various tunnels has been finalised?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Long-term pumping test at the North Face Borehole site commenced in January, 1981, and is currently under way.

Fluctuations in the water level at the Orillon borehole have been recorded since January, 1981, and it is expected that test pumping at the borehole will commence in a week's time.

The catchment and related studies are still under way. The present drought has not provided the opportunity to collect meaningful data from these tests.

NO. 79 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government give the figures and costs for water production from available sources for the months of October, November and December, 1980, and January, 1981, and state what the stocks were at 31st January, 1981?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The figures for water production from available sources for the months of October, November and December, 1980, and January, 1981, are as follows:

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>OCTOBER</u>	<u>NOVEMBER</u>	<u>DECEMBER</u>	<u>JANUARY</u>
	M ³ (mg)	M ³ (mg)	M ³ (mg)	M ³ (mg)
Rainfall	2043 (0.45)	10482 (2.31)	273 (0.06)	-
Wells	10800 (2.38)	11067 (2.43)	12395 (2.73)	11474 (2.52)
NF Distiller	ANNUAL MAINT	ANNUAL MAINT	ANNUAL MAINT	3497 (0.77)
VTE Distiller	15499 (3.41)	16180 (3.56)	10446 (2.30)	5685 (1.25)
Importation	31136 (6.85)	20720 (4.56)	21571 (4.75)	28362 (6.24)
Stocks on 31st January, 1981, stood at 33,732M ³ (7.42) million gallons)				

The estimated costs of water production remain as those given in answer to Question No 298 of 1980 in 4.11.80. They may need to be modified and increased because of higher costs of fuel, power and chemicals.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 79 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Hon Minister, it seems to me rather unusual, there is a period which is in excess of seven months where the North Front Distiller has been out of action, from the end of May right up to some time during January of this year.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is correct, Sir. That was a very big annual overhaul that it was given last six to seven months. The whole plant is now some 10 to 13 years old and a big maintenance has not been done. It is hoped that this will give it a new lease of life for at least another 3 to 4 years.

HON W T SCOTT:

Surely it shouldn't have been termed annual maintenance because otherwise one would expect a seven months maintenance period every year. I also notice that on the VTE Distiller the figures have gone down substantially. Can we have an explanation of that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes. The VTE came back on stream about April or May after its maintenance, it worked very well through the whole of the period but near the end it started to get a number of troubles every two or three days due to its requiring maintenance and it has now been closed down for its annual maintenance.

HON W T SCOTT:

Presumably we will be looking to something like 3 or 4 months break within the VTE Distiller during which it will be receiving its annual maintenance.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, it is scheduled to come back about late May or early June.

HON W T SCOTT:

In fact, Mr Speaker, we are now running through a situation where we can expect perhaps very little or no rainfall at all between now and November and if we do not get any rain within the next couple of months we will not get any rain until November, we are coming to a situation where the North Front Distiller has received its seven months maintenance but its performance is still questionable, the VTE Distiller is under the maintenance at the moment, there is no rainfall, the wells have something like a static production and the only way we can improve it is through imported water and is Government obviously then looking for a substantial increase in the water imports?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, during the last 10 weeks we have been working reasonably satisfactorily with the total water produced and the total demand. It is hoped, of course, that there will be some rain before the end of April, it is quite possible that April can be quite a wet month, I promise a very rainy Easter for everybody. The two Distillers should be working through the summer months and with the measure of importation we are getting at the moment we should be able to cope satisfactorily.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there any other possible source of water available to us for Gibraltar?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There are many other possible sources but they are not all practical. You could bring water from the United Kingdom but the cost is very expensive.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would it be possible to expand the catchment area?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There has been a long polemic for many years on whether one should expand the catchment area or whether one should increase the storage. However, the expansion of the catchment area, especially in a year like this where there is very little rain and it is not going to do much good any way and the total amount of water obtained from rainfall on an average year is only 10% of our total needs, you would have to expand the catchment area to such a colossal amount to make any significant impact and it is just not practical.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, in the light of the bad rain year we have had has the Chief Minister taken any decision to provide more water for the Town or not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I believe in City Council days he used to hold a prayer meeting in the City Hall and the water used to come down very quickly, I think he is going to try and do the same thing again.

HON A J HAYNES:

Has the Chief Minister done anything to provide us with more water this year?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I cannot see that it is the Chief Minister's responsibility to provide water, I think that is the responsibility of the Minister for Public Works and as I said for the last 10 weeks we have been producing more than the actual demand and the situation at the moment does not warrant any undue alarm.

HON A J HAYNES:

Are you and the Chief Minister happy with the water situation?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I cannot speak for the Chief Minister, I would be much happier if we had a little more rain but at the moment I am not unhappy.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 80 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

In view of the fact that Government has spent about £350 in building two replica concrete seats at the small Piazza in Governor's Parade to appease some of the residents of the surrounding area, will Government consider building seats or providing benches in bus shelters?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

With one or two exceptions all the bus shelters are owned by a private company who have only provided seats at the major bus stops.

This is not part of the answer, Sir, but they are not replica concrete seats they are concrete seats.

11.3.81

NO. 81 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Does Government not agree that the faces of the Clock at Moorish Castle gives the impression of a derelict building and will Government state why it has not carried out the necessary work?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

A private contractor is responsible for winding and maintaining the clock. The Public Works Department provide the necessary assistance.

I am grateful to the Hon Questioner for bringing the condition of the clock face to my attention. I will look into its condition.

NO. 82 OF 1981.

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Can Government say how much of the £ $\frac{1}{4}$ million voted for by this House, Head 104, Sub-head 11 - Restoration of Communications with Spain, has in fact been spent to date?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Expenditure to date by PWD is £84,120. The Police has also spent £8,064 in Traffic signs.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 82 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Could the Minister say on what this money has been spent? I have not been able to notice any appreciable difference in the traffic chaos around the Fountain and the Laguna junction with Smith Dorrient Avenue.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the Customs and Immigration at Four Corners - £13,874 spent; the holding area of Four Corners - £12,915; the purchase of control booths - £15,656; the purchase of traffic barriers - £7,370; the purchase of crowd barriers - £2,628; the customs at Waterport - £4,514; improvement and cleaning at Landport area - £7,358; Alameda Car Park - £2,317; Security fence north of the runway - £11,262 and Key and Anchor Club - £6,236. The Police was extra, as I said, it was £8,064 on traffic lights.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, apart from that can the Minister say whether any money has been spent or whether the traffic lights which were promised for the fountain and the junction at Smith Dorrien Avenue and Glacis Road whether any money has been set aside for that and have these traffic lights been already ordered? Is there any progress in that direction because the main problem the traffic problem, doesn't seem to have been tackled at all in one year.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, we have got quotations but we have not yet ordered them nor spent any money on them yet.

HON P J ISOLA:

The Hon Member said that £7,000 odd had been spent on the Customs area at Waterport.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Waterport was £4,514.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister say how this has been spent because there is no noticeable difference around that area?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think it was money spent down at the wharf where people come ashore from the Mons Calpe.

HON P J ISOLA:

In view of the fact that there is still some one hundred and something pounds left of the amount voted will the Government use this money to improve the parking situation in Gibraltar or is it going to be just left over for next year?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think some of that money has been vired to another account, if my memory does not fail me, and of course it would come back as a revote should the need for the restoration of communications with Spain arise. I think it might be a little invidious to put it into other immediate heads, it should be left for what it is actually required.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister saying then that nothing will be done about these traffic lights until the frontier opens and if it doesn't open no traffic lights will be installed? Is that what the Minister is saying?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not saying that come what may, whether the frontier opens or not, there will be no traffic lights, this would be something that would have to be looked into and costed on its own account rather than on the account of traffic from Spain.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I seem to remember, and I am sure I will be corrected if I am wrong, that when this was first announced at a press conference or television interview by the Hon Minister, he did I think divide it into two parts, the total effect once the border opened and the desirability of improving the traffic flow within Gibraltar which would perhaps even enhance the traffic flow of the border once it was opened. I am sure he said that.

MR SPEAKER:

What are we asking?

HON W T SCOTT:

When he said at the time that prior to the border opening Gibraltar required traffic lights, one that was mentioned was Waterport, and that this would be effective, in fact, before the border opened to improve the existing traffic situation in Gibraltar in any case?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us find out. Does the Minister recall saying that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, I think I said that with the advent of traffic from Spain it would be almost essential to have traffic lights at the Glacis area and at Waterport and without the advent of traffic from Spain it would be quite a good idea to have at least one set of traffic lights at the Glacis area. However, when this had been costed it was decided at the time that we didn't have the funds in 1980/81, I am not saying they are not going to be put in 1981/82, but we could not use money from the Improvement (Restoration of Communications with Spain) to put into something which had nothing to do with that head whatsoever.

HON W T SCOTT:

But yet this has happened already in the £4,000 odd that has been spent round the Waterport area.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That was hoping that the ferries would be coming from Spain.

NO. 83 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Will Government confirm that the roadways within the Alameda Gardens are not open to privately-owned vehicles?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, only vehicles authorised by the Public Works Department are allowed to use the roadways within Alameda Gardens.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 83 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does that mean private vehicles authorised by the Public Works Department or does that refer exclusively to lorries and trucks from the Public Works Department?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Basically it means lorries and trucks belonging to the Public Works Department but permission is also given to the Park Supervisor and his family to use that road.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does the Park Supervisor and his family mean exclusively his immediate family because I can assure the Minister that I have seen on a great number of occasions more than three cars parked outside the residence of the Park Supervisor.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It should mean his immediate family and I will take steps to see that it does mean that.

NO. 84 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will the Minister inform this House when Tank Ramp is to be open to vehicular traffic?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, I would refer the Hon Member to my reply to Question 71/80 in which I stated that the roadworks would not be completed until the new underground services had been laid and building works finished.

To lay the final surface before the construction works are complete would be a waste of public funds as the surface would be liable to damage by constructional traffic. The laying of new services is almost complete and once the trench has been allowed to settle the final surface will be laid. This should coincide with the completion of the building works in June, 1981.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 84 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but if I may also refer to Question No 71, the Minister said that he thought that it would be somewhere around November/December of this year, meaning 1980, and we are now in March, 1981.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The whole thing is geared to the slippage on the actual construction works. There were one or two difficulties which had to be overcome and it has been pushed back to, as I say, about June.

HON A T LODDO:

When I said this year I was of course quoting from Hansard, meaning last year. Mr Speaker, we can take it that now the new date is June, 1981.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If there is no further slippage it will be June, 1981.

HON A T LODDO:

Considering the incline I am not surprised there is more slippage.

11.3.81

NO. 85 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Will Government give details of the extra remedial works required at Sacred Heart Terrace?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Mr Speaker, with your permission, I propose to answer this question together with Question No 86.

NO. 86 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Can Government say whether the refurbishing of Phasel of the Middle School at Sacred Heart Terrace is keeping up with the dateline for completion and will therefore be available for occupation after the Easter holidays?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The extra remedial works required at Sacred Heart Terrace are as follows:

- (a) The complete replacement of the timber suspended floor in the Lower Ground Floor. This was due to the discovery of dry rot on removal of some shelving at the request of the Director of Education.
- (b) This work has also resulted in the alteration of the 3 existing door openings to suit the new floor areas and demolition and construction of a new partition.
- (c) The repair and renewal, repainting of additional shutters and casements which were in a worse condition than originally envisaged.

In addition the Department of Education have requested the provision of notice boards and blackboards together with the removal of shelving etc not included in the original contract.

As a result of the above, the contractor has requested a four week extension of time to cover the replacement of the floor etc, it is anticipated that the contract will be completed and the building will be available for occupation at commencement of term after the Easter holidays.

This of course is dependent upon the prompt arrival of certain materials from the UK necessary to complete the works.

NO. 87 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state whether it is satisfied with the present condition of Jumper's Buildings and if not what measures are proposed for its improvement?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Temporary measures have been taken to make safe parts of the buildings which were thought to be in possible danger of structural failure. The buildings have been surveyed from a structural viewpoint and cores of the floor slabs have been taken for testing in the United Kingdom.

A report from a firm of consultants based on the results of the core tests and the structural survey, is expected during March. The report will make recommendations as to the manner in which the problems at Jumper's Buildings should be resolved.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 87 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I think there are other problems other than structural as regards, for instance, lighting. I don't suppose the Hon Member will need a report to decide on those matters. Will the Hon Member look into smaller or more trivial problems which seem to haunt that building?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I haven't been aware of anything to do with lighting as a problem but if it does exist I will look into it.

NO. 88 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

In view of the fact that the present development programme is due to end on March 31st, 1981, will Government state in detail what projects or parts of projects included in the 1978 to 1981 development programme will remain unfulfilled or incomplete and the value of such works?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

	Contract sum	Certified to date (Feb)	Value of work out- standing
St Joseph's 24 months contract May 80/May 82	£1,593,000	536,908	1,056,092
St Jago's 18 months contract June 80/Dec 81	£ 917,787	373,000	544,787
Naval Hospital Hill 18 months contract June 79/Dec 80	£ 433,000	291,530	141,470
Road to the Lines/Castle Ramp 21 months contract Feb 81/Nov 82	£ 520,000	19,000	501,000
Flat Bastion Road 18 months contract May 80/Nov 81	£ 430,000	155,000	275,000
Tank Ramp Development Phase 1 18 months contract Jan 79/ July 80	£ 374,758	302,720	72,038
Airport Terminal Extension 15 months contract project now out to tender			
Girls' Comprehensive School 24 months contract March 80/ March 82	£4,235,111	1,466,602	2,768,509
Lime Kiln Steps Phase 1A 24 months contract Feb 80/Feb 82	£ 547,000	326,477	220,523

That, of course, is to the end of February, we expect that there will be an expenditure in March of costs.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 88 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying that £5.58m appear to have been works not done and to that I suppose one must really add the value of the Air Terminal building which was projected for the 1978/81 programme. Has the Minister got any idea of the probable value of this development?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It will be between £ $\frac{1}{4}$ m and £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m.

NO. 89 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Does Government have any plan to move the Department of Education from its present position and when does Government intend to implement phase 3 of their programme in relation to the Courts?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Government intends to move the Department of Education to other premises, which in turn will provide the necessary accommodation to proceed with Phase 3 of improvements to the Supreme Court.

A Government Committee is looking specifically at the problems of the needs of the various Government Departments in relation to suitable accommodation that may become available in the future.

However, until such time as additional accommodation becomes available, no decision for the allocation of alternative premises to the Education Department can be taken.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 89 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I correct in thinking that the implementation of phase 3 in relation to the Courts must await the movement of the Department of Education out?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

As there appears to be no immediate plans to move the Department of Education we are not really talking even in the next development programme, is that right?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would not like to go as far as to say not the next development programme, we have three possibilities, St Jago's, St George's and Loreto. They should all become available, I would hope, on the finishing of the Girls' Comprehensive School somewhere round March, 1982, so there is a possibility that something might crop up around June, 1982, but I cannot promise any specific dates.

NO. 90 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Will Government consider not collecting any refuse of any kind on Sundays so as to ensure that the refuse collectors have at least one day of rest in every week?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Though on the face of it this would not appear to be undesirable, Government believes that both on Public Health grounds particularly in summer and because of the lack of suitable storage space in many of the buildings, collection of refuse on a daily basis leads to less practical problems.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 90 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, is that the real reason for the answer, may I ask, and if it is will the Government not agree that holding back refuse for one day is not a burden of any nature even in the hot days of summer compared to the obvious benefit of giving the refuse collectors a definite day when they don't have to work which seems to have started all the industrial action?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Despite this, Sir, the position is being kept under review but I would comment that Government introduced a scheme some years ago giving some of the refuse collectors a day off which they subsequently traded in for higher pay.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean that the working of 7 days a week is what the refuse collectors actually wanted or they have been given a benefit in return for their trading it in?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think they wanted it because of the emoluments it brought with it.

11.3.81

NO. 91 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Will Government make a statement on the situation with the refuse collectors and as to the steps that Government has taken to resolve this dispute?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

A claim was put by the Union on behalf of the refuse collectors for their conditioned hours to be based on a seven day week, for an improved productivity payment and for an improvement in their banding. Initially their position was that they would not negotiate on any other matter unless the seven day week was conceded. In order to press their claim they took action by refusing to collect trade refuse and thereby foregoing their productivity payment.

They have now withdrawn their claim to the seven day week and the action was expected to be lifted this morning and the backlog of rubbish cleared. Negotiations are in progress on the outstanding issues and a meeting on these was due to take place this morning and if I am asked a supplementary I shall be happy to answer it.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 91 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister able to explain why the dispute didn't end this morning?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, I think something else cropped up this morning and they had the meeting this afternoon. I understand that a settlement has been achieved, they will clear the rubbish that is laying around the streets by Friday and I am sure the trade will be pleased to hear that a new productivity agreement has been agreed with the men under which they will pick up eight boxes of cardboard refuse and five boxes of bottles every day.

HON P J ISOLA:

From each establishment?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

From each establishment.

HON P J ISOLA:

Are those the only terms of settlement or is the Minister able to make a statement on the terms of settlement?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, but obviously for this picking up of the trade refuse they will get an enhanced productivity payment.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is that all that is involved in the settlement?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, that is all.

HON P J ISOLA:

For how long has the rubbish been lying around in the streets?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think 5 or 6 weeks.

HON P J ISOLA:

And there has been no health hazard in that time?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There has not been a very great health hazard since most of the refuse was trade refuse which was basically cardboard and empty bottles although it was sprayed by the Public Health just in case.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if there are buildings in Old Naval Hospital Road which were given planning permission on condition that they provided a specified number of garage spaces and has this been complied with and are these spaces being put to their intended use?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Only two buildings have been erected by private developers in Naval Hospital Road in recent years. In neither case was planning permission given subject to a condition that garage spaces had to be provided. The schemes were approved on the basis of plans which included a certain amount of garaging but there does not exist in law any obligation upon a landowner to continue using land for the purpose for which planning permission has been granted. Since 1975, however, no material change of use can be made without the authority of the Development and Planning Commission.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 92 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

When the Minister refers to the new conditions would that apply to that particular building?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, it would not apply retrospectively.

NO. 93 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what is its present programme to develop Catalan Bay in order to provide more housing accommodation, how its programme differs now from previous Ministerial statements, when work will commence and how long it will take to complete?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

I would refer the Hon Questioner to the information given by the Minister for Public Works on the 17 December, 1980, in answer to Question No 402 of 1980.

All that I can add is that it is proposed to commence work at the end of September and completed within a construction period of 18 months.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 93 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, therefore the Minister will agree that there has been considerable changes from previous ministerial statements on the subject?

HON A J CANEPA:

The change, Mr Speaker, is due to this, that it has been intended to make a start on this project during the current financial year to carry it out with direct labour. Difficulties in recruiting the necessary supervisory staff coupled with the problems of the building industry have led Government to decide to put the project out to tender.

HON G T RESTANO:

I don't think that is entirely correct, Mr Speaker. Initially, and I quote from 1978 Hansard, the then Minister for Economic Development said that the work would commence some time after August, 1979. Also in his own statement made in November the Minister said that the work would commence in January, 1981. Here are two different statements and now we have a third one today. Will the Minister confirm that there has been serious changes from previous ministerial statements?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, arising from supplementaries to Question 402 of 1980, the Hon Mr Restano made clear that he was going to carry out some research on the matter. The Hon Mr Featherstone explained then that there had been changes in the plans to the extent that instead of proceeding with a Medview Terrace type of design, changes were made to the plans in order to provide 12 units in the first phase and he explained how delays occurred because of this in that there was a need for a new design for the production of new contract

drawings and documents with consequent delays in a starting date. In the intervening period between December and now, the Government has advertised both within Government and publicly in order to try and recruit an officer to supervise the direct labour force. We have found it impossible to recruit such a PTO II and in the light of that, in the light of the difficulties that in this intervening period became apparent in the building industry in that the industry required more work, the Government decided that this project should go out to contract. In doing so tender documents, working drawings and bills of quantity have to be provided and this entails a further delay of another few months.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, Mr Speaker, is it still the intention that 12 units should be built?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is correct, Sir, 12 units in Phase 1.

HON G T RESTANO:

The bills of quantity that the Minister says had to be done again, were these not originally prepared when it was thought that the work would be done by job price contract?

HON A J CANEPA:

The work was never going to be done by job price contract, it was going to be done by the Government's direct labour force.

HON G T RESTANO:

Were not bills of quantity prepared for those jobs?

HON A J CANEPA:

Not if the work was going to be done by the direct labour force.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Minister saying then that the job was envisaged to be done by the Public Works Department but no bills of quantity had been done and therefore the cost of the project was not known?

HON A J CANEPA:

It is not the same, Mr Speaker, as when work is put out to contract.

HON G T RESTANO:

My question was, did the Government not know when it envisaged the Public Works Department carrying out this work what the cost would be if no bills of quantity had been prepared?

HON A J CANEPA:

The position, Mr Speaker, I understand, is that you need much more specified bills of quantity if you are going to go out to contract. That is the information that I have. I am not a technical expert on the matter I am not even responsible for the Public Works Department, that is the information that I have and I must go on that information. The Hon Member may be right and I may be wrong but I must give the information that I have.

HON G T RESTANO:

I accept that that is the information that the Minister has. Without being a technical man myself either, it seems to me odd that when a job goes out to tender bills of quantity are prepared so that one knows exactly how much the project is going to cost but if it is going to be done by the Public Works Department this doesn't seem to be done. Is there any reason for this?

HON A J CANEPA:

I imagine, Mr Speaker, that the manner of control is different. If the Government's own direct labour force is going to carry out the work there is less danger for instance that there might be claims later on as there would be in the case of a private contractor and therefore I think you have to guard against those terms by having much more detailed specifications.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, how long will it take to complete, did I hear the Minister rightly when he said 18 months? Therefore if the work starts in September of this year by March, 1983, this job should be completed.

HON A J CANEPA:

I hope so but I don't think we are going to start before the end of September. I think it would not make a great deal of sense to start at the beginning or the middle of September, I think it should be the end of September. Since that is the kind of target date that we can reasonably aim at I think it should be the end of September or early October in order to try and minimise the extent of inconvenience this year to patrons of Catalan Bay beach.

NO. 94 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

What plans does Government have in relation to the PWD ex-joinery used as Stores in Library Street and further does Government not agree that this part of the Town area is not the ideal place to locate such Stores?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The use of the old Workshop in Library Street as a stores is a temporary measure pending the proposed acquisition of suitable premises, namely the PSA Depot at Ragged Staff, by the Government which will enable the Public Works Department to resolve its present storage problems. It is the intention, as soon as it is vacated by the Department, to invite tenders for the Library Street property for commercial and/or residential redevelopment. Government will of course ensure that the site is exploited to its optimum capacity.

NO. 95 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government inform this House if there has been any contract awarded to an investment company for the construction of the Woodford Cottage Development?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The answer is that no contract has been awarded to an investment company. It is still the intention to proceed with the development of the Woodford Cottage site as far as possible on the basis of a Housing Association Scheme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 95 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

I ask this question, Mr Speaker, because an article appeared in one of the local weeklies that in fact mentioned the name of an investment company and they said that this was the reply given to them by Government.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am afraid Government cannot take responsibility for all that is published in the press.

HON W T SCOTT:

But I didn't see Government in fact giving a refusal.

MR SPEAKER:

It is not for Government in this House of Assembly to deny any allegations which may appear in the press.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, Sir, perhaps I may help the Hon Member, he may be confused with the Buena Vista site.

HON W T SCOTT:

I am grateful to the Chief Minister but I am not.

HON P J ISOLA:

Following the answer that the Government propose to continue with this scheme, is it not a fact that only 7 applicants applied for housing in the Woodford Cottage scheme and if that is a fact how is it that the Government is going to proceed, is Government going to put the whole development to tender and then sell the houses? How can the Minister say the Government proposes to proceed with it if there are only 7 applicants?

MR SPEAKER:

As far as possible on the basis of the Housing Association Scheme, that was the answer.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister how can the Government envisage carrying on with the development if there are only 7 applicants? Does Government hope to attract more people into the scheme?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, the 7 applicants are going to be invited to form a Housing Association and set the ball rolling but at the same time Government is going to re-advertise in their advertisement making it clear that it is not an essential that one must be able to offer up some accommodation if one is accepted for this Housing Scheme and it is hoped that the other number of applicants will be forthcoming. On the situation that the total number of 14 houses were not taken up but some 10 or 11 were taken up, Government might consider building the other 3 themselves.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, am I then right in thinking that nothing will be done as far as any building on the site until the Government has re-advertised and assessed the result of that advertisement?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Government is not going to do any building, it is the Housing Association that would do it but they are going to be invited to get in touch with my department so that everything can go ahead as expeditiously as possible. I do not think it would be wise to restrict their ability to build as soon as possible since inflation is continuously increasing the price of building and if we made them wait for another 6 or 9 months they will have to pay an extra amount which would be unnecessary.

HON P J ISOLA:

The Minister has said that the Government intends to go ahead, who is going to provide the funds for the actual bricklaying to start off?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The Members of the Housing Association.

HON W T SCOTT:

Who presumably were 7 and Government now hopes there will be 14 but what if there are only 7 and therefore the financial commitment of each of the 7 will be increased.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The total area is divided up into 14 spaces. Seven of those spaces are required for the 7 people concerned and they are being invited to form a Housing Association and to get on with the job of filling up those 7 spaces. There will still be an empty space where another 7 houses can be built and once again a tender will go out asking people who are interested to apply and informing them on this instance that it is not a prerequisite that they are able to offer up some other housing to Government. On receipt of that reply, if there are a number of people interested then Government will proceed to allocate to those people, if there are 7 then they will get the 7, if there are 5 or 4 then those 4 will get an allocation and the odd 3 houses left will be built by Government themselves with the intention of making them into quarters. If there should be more than 7 then of course there would have to be some form of ascertaining which 7 should be given the opportunity. If nobody applies then Government would have to have a rethink what to do with that space of 7 houses.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the position then that the 7 who have applied will be expected to finance all the building, that they will get the land free from the Government? Is that the position?

MR SPEAKER:

It has been phased into two phases; the first phase will be that which will be completed by the applicants who have been successful so far and the second phase will be re-advertised. Is that correct?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, that is correct, Sir. I would mention that this Housing Association, once it gets itself formed, will then have to find the cost of the land which is a moderate cost and also the cost of the building itself.

HON P J ISOLA:

So what is happening is that the Government is in effect giving up land to be used for normal housing at no cost to the Government virtually or rather for a little financial return, to private building. Can the Government tell us something about the people who have applied, have they given in accommodation?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Could I comment, Sir, that I have another Question No 99 and that supplementary is actually covered in the answer to that question.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I thought I heard the Minister insinuate that after the first 7 had been built, let us assume there were no more applicants, it was restricted to the 7 that you have now, that perhaps Government would entertain the building of individual units one at a time.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, I never said that, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

I didn't say you said it, I said you had insinuated it.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I don't think I insinuated that.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, isn't this a fundamental change from the original policy of the Government which was that essentially by offering this site to people who were giving up accommodation, they themselves would be helping other people who are not in a position to buy their own houses and isn't this a complete departure from that policy?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think that again, Sir, is part of my answer to Question No 99.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the position then that Government is going to allow 7 people to go ahead building their 7 units whether anybody else comes forward or not in the foreseeable future and would that not create or possibly lead to the creation of a situation where there is going to be a piece of land around which there are no builders and no plans. Would it not be better to wait until the Government has a full picture of the development before allowing 7 people in into the development and leave the user of the rest of the land in limbo?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Government feels that the 7 people who have applied should get on as soon as possible to form their Housing Association and to get on with building. If the other area of land gets applications quickly they can go ahead very quickly after this, if there should be no application that will be an empty piece of land which can obviously be put out to private contract.

HON P J ISOLA:

If the test of granting an allocation is no longer going to be the handing in of accommodation and no longer going to be the housing priority list, would it not be in the public interest then for the Government to try and get as much money as they can for those 7 plots of land by putting them out to tender? Why give 7 plots of land to people on advantageous terms when by putting it out to tender the Government might receive much more money? What is the purpose of doing it if there are no longer any conditions attached?

MR SPEAKER:

What the Minister has not made clear, perhaps, is whether the first 7 applicants are still subject to the conditions which were advertised.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, again, if I might wait until the answer to Question No 99.

11.3.81

NO. 96 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Have tenders for the Air Terminal Extension been put out in January as indicated by the Minister in reply to Question No 401 of 1980?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Going out to tender on the Airport Terminal Extension was delayed due to the under-staffing of the typing section allocated to the Quantity Surveyors.

The typing is now completed and the tender documents were ready by Friday 6 March. The tender has now been advertised.

NO. 97 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Can Government say whether a time limit for the development of Parson's Lodge has been set and from what date is it operative?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

A time limit for the development of Parson's Lodge has not yet been fixed as the scheme is still at the Feasibility Study stage. A dead line was set for the submission of this study and this was met by the Company involved. Some additional information is expected shortly which will enable the Government to decide whether the project is acceptable and economically viable and should be proceeded with. Any formal agreement entered into subsequently would, in addition to standard safeguards, set time limits for the execution and completion of the work.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 97 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister make absolutely sure that we don't have a repetition of Engineer House?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not aware, Mr Speaker, of what Engineer House was all about. All that I know is that I undertook to expedite the purchase of it and that that has been done and therefore it will be included in the next Development Programme but I am not familiar with the history of EngineerHouse going back 20 years, I don't know what happened at the time but I can assure the Hon Member that having regard to the manner in which land is disposed of nowadays I very much doubt whether there would be a repetition of that.

11.3.81

NO. 98 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether it has received any proposals for a land reclamation project on the East side of the Rock?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No proposals have been received for such a project. Enquiries have, however, been received indicating interest in the 1968 reclamation proposals made then to the City Council which were related to the protection and development of the East Coast of Gibraltar for tourism. The scheme made imaginative and far reaching recommendations which raised major financial, infra-structural and engineering issues which have been up to the present beyond the financial resources of the Government to undertake and resolve. I may add that any submissions in this regard would be most seriously considered by the Government.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government reveal the numbers of housing units which will become available to them in accordance with the terms of application for the Woodford Cottage scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

I should like, for the record, to clarify the position with regard to the surrender by applicants of accommodation in connection with their participation in the Housing Association Scheme. The availability of such accommodation was not a precondition to taking part in the Scheme but would have been a preferential factor in the selection of applicants had the response exceeded the number of houses intended to be built.

Of the seven applications received two would involve the surrender of Government quarters and in the case of a third applicant, the acceptance by the landlord of tenants nominated by the Housing Department to two privately owned flats. There is also the probability of a flat at Alameda Estate reverting to Government for re-allocation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 99 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean that of the 7 only 4 units are likely to result to the Government and that the Government is therefore giving up a very valuable site in Gibraltar which could have been the subject of a more comprehensive building development for the sake of getting 4 flats and how can the Government say that this will alleviate the housing situation in Gibraltar?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The actual figure is 4 definitely, and possibly, a fifth.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In view of the shortage of land wouldn't it be reasonable for the Government either to have a scheme whereby they give up part of accommodation or at least undertake themselves to build houses which will be economical for people to buy particularly to people who perhaps later on might be able to give up accommodation and not give precious land to possible developers who are going to take advantage of the fact that they are not paying the premium for the land that they should.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They will still be paying some £8,000 for the land which is such a small sum and furthermore they are not developers it is for their own occupation. This was the whole idea of setting up a cooperative or a Housing Association and let people get on with the job for themselves and not be exposed to the vagaries and profits of a private developer.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister realise that perhaps this is the way we are going to finish up, by some developer, in fact, coming in?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I don't see how any of these 7 are going to be a developer.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not agree that the time of architects and Quantity Surveyors and others in his department could have been more usefully spent getting up-to-date or getting together the plans for the Development Programme about which he answered me earlier on in this session which have shown quite big slippages especially with the Airport Terminal that has only just gone out to tender, that was in the 1978/81 Programme, could have been more usefully spent in hurrying up the scheme and getting the Development Programme under way and the money spent than using them on what has been proved to be a worthless exercise, of very little value to the real housing problems of the Community?

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, in answer to the previous Question No 95, the Hon Minister said, amongst other things, that the Government would entertain building 2 or 3 quarters themselves. Doesn't this constitute a total departure from the development as originally proposed in this House by the Government one of the reasons of which was that it could not entertain the development because of the cost element?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Seven sites have been applied for. Government is going to put out further advertising to see if the other 7 are also taken up. On the condition that the 7 were not taken up Government would be willing to consider joining into the Scheme and building 2 or 3 flats which would become Government quarters. There is a very dire need for Government quarters, we are paying rents to private landlords for certain people who come from overseas who we need, these rents are very high indeed and it would be quite economical for the Government to build 2 or 3 quarters in such a development and would prove eventually to Government's advantage.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is this not a total departure from the original idea of having this kind of Scheme?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, the whole idea of the Scheme was to try and get 14 people to apply, if we only get 10 we are not going to throw the whole thing out of the window, we are going to say to those 10 "go ahead", there is still a little bit of space left, we are going to try and find a reasonable way of using that space, one way could be to put it out to a private contractor and another way is for Government to use it themselves and we think the second way is the better.

HON W T SCOTT:

Are we to look forward to a situation therefore, Mr Speaker, if the Government has no further applications for the balance of the 7, and there are another 3, so I understand, in addition to the first phase, there are 17 in total, that perhaps, if they do not receive any further applications Government will build quarters for ten?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, I have not said that at all. I am afraid the Hon Member does not listen or he does not interpret what I say properly. I said if we get another 3 or 4, leaving 3 blank spaces, we would be willing to take up the 3 to complete the whole development. I have said if we get no applications Government will think again and possibly put it out to private tender.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does Government consider that the building of Government quarters should take priority over the building of houses in the housing priority list?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think they should go hand in hand since both are needed for the well running of Gibraltar.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister say that this is going hand in hand when all of 3 are going to be taken up by Government quarters? Where is the hand in hand there of the building of £62,000 houses?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think if we are building and modernising some 200 houses, 3 in comparison to that is a fairly good hand in hand.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I ask the Government, Mr Speaker, what is the difference between allowing the other part of that land to be used for private development and what is happening now? Isn't what is happening now private development?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The Housing Association would give the houses to a number of people basically of Gibraltar which would be at a specific cost with no great profit margin incorporated. If they were to go to a private development I should imagine the private developer would be able to sell them to who he likes, possibly to people not of Gibraltar, people coming in from outside who could buy up the property and it would make no impact whatsoever on the Gibraltar housing situation.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it then the case, Mr Speaker, that there is a condition put that the houses cannot be re-sold to a non-Gibraltarian?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I wouldn't like to say a non-Gibraltarian because I think there are a number of worthy persons who are what I would consider a great help and need to Gibraltar and they are not Gibraltarians and they might be interested in such a scheme. They would only be available to people who could qualify normally for housing allocation in the normal course of events.

HON J BOSSANO:

But is it in fact a condition that only people who are qualified to apply for Government housing can apply and that the houses cannot be re-sold to anyone who doesn't qualify?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

On the question of the development of the other site would the Government not think that if the only benefit that they are gaining is the limitation of the houses to a restricted market that if they cannot obtain people interested in the rest of the site on a similar basis, would the Government not think that it is worth reconsidering the use of that site with a view to developing it for public housing rather than let a private developer take it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, I think that is quite reasonable.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, the Housing Association formed for the original section of the development, will they be responsible in any way for the other development?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 100 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government make a statement with regard to the tenders received for the multi-storey car park and can Government state whether any tender has been accepted and can Government state the earliest possible date for such a car park to be in operation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No statement can be made at this stage since the closing date for the submission of proposals for a multi-storey car park is 31st March, 1981. Considerable interest has been shown and 27 application forms have been taken to date.

Proposals received will be considered by the Development and Planning Commission who will select those schemes which are found acceptable on planning, architectural and economic terms. Those selected would then be invited to tender for the site on the usual competitive basis.

It is not possible at this stage to state the earliest possible date when such a car park will be in operation since one of the factors that will determine the commencement of the work will be the availability of alternative accommodation for the seven families who now occupy the Casemates Married Quarters before possession of the site can be given to the developer.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 100 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that not mean, having regard to the terms of the Government announcement on the matter, that the earliest possible date might well be some date about 6 years hence?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, I would not agree, Mr Speaker. I have told the Hon Mr Isola before publicly that he is very fond of doubling things when it suits him and halving them when it suits him as well. The position is that we cannot anticipate the construction of the required 7 quarters before the end of 3 years unless this period could be shortened by the developers undertaking the work themselves to specification and the MOD were agreeable to this course of action.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that not mean, Mr Speaker, that it seems it will take about 3 years before the present occupants are rehoused and have not the experts in the Ministry of Economic Development and Planning not pointed out to the Minister that physically pulling down or doing whatever to that building and building a multi-storey car park would take at least another 18 months?

HON A J CANEPA:

If that is the case, Mr Speaker, we are talking of $4\frac{1}{2}$ years and not 6.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am now very generous in my allowances for slippage where the Government planning is concerned.

HON A J CANEPA:

It is not Government, Mr Speaker, this would be done by private development. There is no slippage there.

HON P J ISOLA:

I don't know whether there is or there isn't.

HON A J CANEPA:

The private sector is much more efficient than Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask the Minister that we are really thinking in realistic and practical terms and perhaps he would give me an estimate in realistic and practical terms. We are not thinking of a multi-storey car park before $4\frac{1}{2}$, possibly, 5 years hence.

HON A J CANEPA:

It could be.

HON P J ISOLA:

If that is the case, Mr Speaker, where does the Minister for Economic Development and Planning propose to put all these cars that seem to be pouring out from the garages into Gibraltar? Has he no alternative plans?

HON A J CANEPA:

The alternative that I have is the site that Mr Isola knows all about and which he will not tell me about and this is a matter that we discussed at great length at the last meeting when questions were put precisely on that.

HON J BOSSANO:

If the Minister for Economic Development considers that the provision of this car park is an important element in the economic development to Gibraltar, does he not agree that the strongest representations must be made to the United Kingdom Government that such a development should not be held up because of seven service families?

HON A J CANEPA:

They would not be held up, Mr Speaker, if the developer undertook to reprovide these seven quarters but unless this is done the problem is that there can be no guarantee that Mrs Thatcher's Government will provide the pounds and pence which are required in the proposed bill of married quarters by the Ministry of Defence entailing, I think, some 70 quarters and the seven would be included in those 60 or 70 quarters so unless the money is forthcoming from the Ministry of Defence and they proceed and go ahead the only way to get around the problem, and this is a possibility I think that could shorten the time factor, would be by the developer on an agreed site, on a site made available by the MOD, if he were to build these seven quarters according to the specifications of the MOD and I would hope that MOD would be agreeable to that arrangement. That could bring the matter forward.

HON J BOSSANO:

Have in fact the MOD indicated their willingness to make a site available for these re-allocations?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't think that the MOD has indicated from Whitehall that that is the case but my understanding is that the MOD representatives that we deal with from their own point of view they do not see any objection to that and I would hope that they would therefore put it to Whitehall.

HON J BOSSANO:

If the MOD effectively did its own construction would the re-allocation cost still not have to be paid too?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, but there would be some account taken of the extent of betterment as between whatever quarters were built and the condition and value of those quarters at Casemates.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Government in a position to enter into a contractual relationship with a developer?

HON A J CANEPA:

Would he amplify on that?

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Government in a position today or in a month's time to enter into a formal contract with a developer, is it cleared that far with the MOD?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Mr Speaker, subject to the conditions which were laid down in great detail in the document that has been made available to applicants.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 101 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state the present position as regards the Port feasibility study?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The final report on the Port Feasibility Study was received on the 25th February, 1981. This is a comprehensive and detailed document, in two volumes, and Ministers and Officials concerned are at present engaged in an in-depth study of the report.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 101 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, if the report has cost £100,000 I am not surprised it should be in two volumes. I think we would expect nothing less, but will the Government make this available to the House?

HON A J CANEPA:

I regret, Mr Speaker, that I am not in a position to answer that question now.

NO. 102 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government give details of the proposed Development Programme prior to this year's budget debate?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Pending discussions with Her Majesty's Government, the Government is in no position to give details of the proposed Development Programme for 1981/86. A date for these discussions remains to be fixed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 102 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister agree that the nature of the proposed development programme has a great bearing on the budget and on the finances of Gibraltar for the forthcoming year?

HON A J CANEPA:

Indeed, Mr Speaker, I would very much agree but the extent to which the proposed programme can be carried out depends on the outcome of these talks with Her Majesty's Government and on the state of the Gibraltar Government's own finances as this will govern the amount of local contributions that can be made. There would therefore be little value in giving details at this stage.

HON J BOSSANO:

But presumably, Mr Speaker, in the draft estimates in the Budget, figures will be shown indicating what Government envisages its own contribution is going to be or would this not be the case?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Mr Speaker, it wouldn't be the case.

HON J BOSSANO:

So in fact we shall have no indication in looking at the Budget how this relates to what may subsequently be introduced as a result of the development programme in terms of Government's own expenditure?

HON A J CANEPA:

Not unless there were to be some indication by Her Majesty's Government of what it is prepared to commit itself to provide prior to the estimates being circulated to Hon Members opposite.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state whether the Government is in a position to hold discussions with the British Government on the development programme? Is Government's plan for the 1981/86 development programme sufficiently advanced to enable these discussions to be held in a meaningful manner?

HON A J CANEPA:

Very much so, Mr Speaker. The aid submission was in fact despatched to ODA on the 9th of February.

HON P J ISOLA:

In that case, Mr Speaker, ought not the Government to make strong representations to the British Government that these talks take place before the Budget session of this House otherwise the Government will have started off with a slippage on their development programme on the very first day?

HON A J CANEPA:

Why does the Hon Member assume that that has not been done, Mr Speaker?

HON P J ISOLA:

Because the Hon Member hasn't said it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 103 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government undertake to keep the Port free of oil and other debris?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The Government of course undertakes to do its best to keep the Port free of oil and other debris.

When the presence of oil in the harbour is reported to the Port Department, the City Fire Brigade and, when necessary, the Dockyard Fire Service, is immediately informed and the pollution is treated with dispersants. The Port Department has at its disposal an oil boom of approximately 400' in length. To acquire equipment to deal with any large scale pollution would be excessively costly. With regard to floating debris, the Port Department operates a small scavenger boat which under normal conditions can cope with pollution of this nature. However, because the refuse destructor has recently been undergoing maintenance, a substantial amount of rubbish has been finding its way into the harbour after having been dumped into the sea.

The Port Department has collected and disposed of certain amount of this rubbish, but does not have the facilities for tackling the problem fully.

The destructor came back into service on Saturday 7th March.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 103 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, as I understand it isn't part of the small oil pollution, I am not talking about a major disaster or a sunken ship, isn't part of the oil pollution in the harbour due to ships cleaning out their engine oil in the harbour?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't think so, Mr Speaker, it could be but I think there is legislation against that and steps I think can be taken to perhaps fine them if they do that, I think that that is an offence.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is Government satisfied with the present state of the harbour, apart from the floating debris, the oil?

HON A J CANEPA:

I have had no reports, Mr Speaker, about any serious accumulations of oil. I think the debris is what has been worrying us of late. I realise that there is oil from time to time but not in large quantities, thankfully. I think the Hon Member will recall that he put a question on this matter some time last year. At that time I think certain oil slicks had been identified but I do not think that that is the position now. I am not aware that the Port Department has received any complaints on the matter.

HON J BOSSANO:

I am intrigued by the Hon Member's answer that the debris which is refuse being brought into the harbour is then collected and disposed of. Is he saying that they then take it back, dump it again and wait for it to turn out in the harbour once more?

HON A J CANEPA:

That re-cycling has not, in fact, been carried out.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

11.3.81

NO. 104 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state whether the yachts presently in the Destroyer Pens will be allowed to remain at their present berths or whether Government will undertake to reberth them elsewhere?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The yachts presently berthed at the Destroyer Pens cannot be allowed to remain there as the berths are urgently required for commercial use. May I add that the whole purpose of acquiring No 4 Jetty would otherwise be clearly defeated.

These yachts were berthed there by the Admiralty and they are in Admiralty waters. The Gibraltar Government is under no obligation to reberth them elsewhere.

There are no facilities within the Commercial Harbour for affording safe berthing to these yachts. However, the Government in cooperation with the Admiralty is trying to help find temporary berths for those yachts which have nowhere else to go.

NO. 105 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government received any representation in relation to the Shops (Time of Closing and Opening) Order and does Government propose to review the legislation originally enacted for the protection of shop assistants but no longer serving such a purpose?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Government has not received any representations with regard to the Shops (Time of Closing and Sunday Opening) Order, 1976.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 105 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the Minister for Trade not received representations for amending this legislation?

HON A J CANEPA:

Sir, to the extent that the Minister for Trade is a member of the Government the answer is no.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Government consider looking into the advisability of amending such legislation?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

When I answered that the Government had received no representations I had already consulted my colleague, the Minister for Economic Development so I could answer safely 'no' knowing that it was a Government decision. As there have been no representations I see no need to change the Order.

HON G T RESTANO:

My understanding is that representations have been made from time to time but, anyway, again I would ask the Government whether they will look into the advisability of amending the legislation and if the Minister says that he has received no representations perhaps he can take this as being such.

HON A J CANEPA:

If the question is directed to me the answer is no.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Unless I receive representations I do not intend to make any alterations to the Order.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am asking now, Mr Speaker, that is the point, I am asking now whether Government will look into it.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, I will not look into it.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could he tell us on what he bases this answer?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

On the grounds that I have not received any representations from anyone concerned in the trade.

HON G T RESTANO:

As a result of the law as it stands today, presumably Government realises that there have been occasions in the recent past where trade has not been able to be carried out on a Sunday because of this law and would Government not consider that from time to time the legislation needs to be looked into especially when trade is perhaps going through a recession and all trade that can be picked up legally is good for Gibraltar as a whole?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I have already said no, Mr Speaker.

11.3.81

NO. 106 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Is Government now in a position to inform this House as to when it expects the Report from the Committee looking into the Public Works Department?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Report was received on 4th March. It is being studied and will be published in the near future.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 106 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

I am grateful to the Hon and Learned Chief Minister for that answer. At least we will see one report submitted to Government that will be published.

NO. 107 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Will Government consider implementing a Gibraltar Summer Time by advancing the clock by one hour during the Summer period?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, this matter was considered again by the Government in December last year. There has been no change in the circumstances which prevailed when I answered a similar question in March, 1980, and the Government has again concluded that the curtailment of the shopping time available to visitors from Tangier would entail economic disadvantages for Gibraltar and that a change would not therefore be justified. The matter can be reconsidered if and when direct communications with Spain are restored or when any other new circumstances arise which would make a change desirable.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 107 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, perhaps if the Chief Minister were to review the Time of Closing and Opening Order he might not find the problem so insuperable.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The position would still be the same because the time that people would be in Gibraltar is curtailed because of the change of time between Gibraltar and Tangier. Indeed, the trade is given freedom to open shops between 1 pm and 3 pm on days when there are cruises from Tangier.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does that mean then that if and when the frontier opens we no longer care about the sailings to and from Tangier?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We will continue to care but we also hope that they will be able to cater for larger numbers than those coming from Tangier as well.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, as I see it the answer to the question does involve not just the economic interests of Gibraltar but the social and recreational, the question of the cost of electricity, people having to spend more money on electricity, more fuel required, etc. Surely these schedules can be changed. How can the Chief Minister say that advancing the clock by one hour, that is, at worst one hour less in Gibraltar, can make this enormous economic interest. Has Government actually made a study of this or has Government taken it just from the people who operate the ferry? Has the Chamber of Commerce been consulted on this, could I ask?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Two hours in the summer and again I do not accept the original opening remarks of the Hon Member. He preceded the question by a statement which is not admitted. The matter was discussed with the Chamber of Commerce and with all other persons interested. The statement which he made which is not at all valid is that there would be a saving in fuel. The saving in fuel would be absolutely minimal, less than one per cent, because that was looked into generally, when we made the first study of the matter. The point is that Morocco does not normally change time in summer and if it does it is for a very short while, they do not change the schedule and if we advance one hour then it is 2 hours in advance of Morocco and therefore the time available with the schedule as they are and they are not our schedules, the main schedules are the ones on the Hydrofoil which affect a lot of the shoppers. They will not change the time and therefore the people have less time, in fact, it may not be worth their while coming at all because even now they have 3 and a half hours and it is known that it is not inexpensive to come from Tangier to shop in Gibraltar nor is the value of the pound helpful for that either.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I cannot understand this advancement of two hours. In effect, the Gibraltar time has not changed throughout the years so it is an advancement of an additional hour, not two hours. It may be two hours ahead of Moroccan time but the advancement is, in fact, one hour. Has the Chief Minister not considered the obvious benefit to Gibraltar of an extra hour of light and of sun for people in offices, people in shops, during the summer and has he had any consultation with the operators, with the representative bodies not just the Chamber of Commerce, has he had consultations with the Trade Unions, they have all agreed, have they? So everybody has agreed that we should not change the time, is that the position?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could the Chief Minister then please tell the House who has agreed and who has not agreed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

This is an annual exercise and we go through all the motions like last year and all the supplementaries are the same. The Trade Unions are in favour of a change but unlike what I was saying that because the Trade Unions want it we will say yes, then you would say that the Government does what the Trade Unions want, in this case the Trade Unions want it but the Government thinks that it is in the economic interest of Gibraltar not to have it and therefore we have decided not to change it this year. If there is a change in circumstances then we will do it but we did a very extensive exercise last year and the year before and we came to the conclusion, after receiving representations from the

trade, Trade Unions, Associations and everybody concerned, that it was in the better interest of Gibraltar not to put the hour forward. There are some people who think that there may be advantage in being able to listen to the two TV news at different times.

HON P J ISOLA:

The Chief Minister has been kind enough to tell me that the Trade Unions would like the extra hour and I am surprised the Government hasn't conformed but may I ask the Chief Minister whether the Chamber of Commerce has said they do not want it and the other bodies he has consulted?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the Chamber of Commerce certainly said it was in the interests of trade not to change it and the Tourist industry, too.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I would like the Chief Minister to clarify the position as regards a potential shopper who comes over on the Hydrofoil, he will be here for a limited period of time, that will always be 4 hours or 5 hours, how can it make a difference to him whether in fact he is here between 3 o'clock and 5 o'clock or 4 o'clock to 6 o'clock provided during those hours the shops are open?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Because the times of departure are the times of the place from which the boat departs and therefore they maintain the same hours and they have less time here, it is as simple as that.

HON A J HAYNES:

It cannot be.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The departure time of the Hydrofoil from Tangier is 10 o'clock or 11 or whatever it is, and they arrive here and the departure time is 4 o'clock, local time, and it continues to be 4 o'clock local time and if we advance an hour they will go at the old 3 o'clock so they have one hour less. It is as simple as that.

HON A T LODDO:

On a point of clarification. The way I see it and I would like the Chief Minister to correct me if I am wrong. At the moment we do not have summer time, if I may call it that, this one hour extra summer time, European time, whatever it is, we do not have it at the moment because the Moroccan Government will not change the time schedule.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, no, if the Hon Member will give way. I think he is completely mistaken. We now have European time all the year round and in Morocco they have one hour behind our time. If we advance one hour then we are two hours ahead of them, and as I have said the scheduled services will not be changed. The time that they decide to leave is local time and that will be the time that will regulate their departure and if they say 4 o'clock and we now say that 4 o'clock will be 3 o'clock then they will have one hour less and if they say that it is 2 o'clock you have two hours less.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, that is what I was trying to ask. The Moroccan Hydrofoil will not change their time, and that is why we do not have a Gibraltar summer time now but if the frontier opens then the Spanish bus service or what have you, then they will want to change to their summer time so we are at the moment deprived of this because of the Moroccans and in future we might be dictated to by the Spaniards.

MR SPEAKER:

What is your question?

HON A T LODDO:

My question is, is it a fact that we are now deprived of this summer time because of the Moroccans and then we will be dictated to have it by the Spaniards? Is this the case?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I don't know whether it is open to have evening classes at John Mackintosh Hall, some people could go there to take useful simple arithmetic courses. The criterion that the Government is using now is in the interest of trade at a time when there is, so it is said, a depression and the bulk of the trade in Main Street is now maintained by trippers from Morocco. If there is an open frontier situation the matter changes dramatically not only from the point of view of trade but from the point of view of land communications when it would be very unsettling to just change one hour by crossing a piece of land, if it ever comes to that, and in addition of course it is expected that if the frontier opens the number of tourists that will come from Spain will be such that the considerations that are now so important in respect of the trade from Morocco will take second place.

HON P J ISOLA:

Have the Hydrofoil operators been approached on this matter by the Government or the agents?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They have been approached locally, it was done by the department, it was done with the Chamber of Commerce and we found that they were not prepared to change the schedule and in fact we do this in December because if there is going to be a change it is advisable that the change should be advertised with as much time as possible in order not to confuse people.

MR SPEAKER:

That is the end of the matter. Next question.

NO. 108 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Chief Minister inform the House what measures he has taken since 1977 in connection with the imposition of a tax on Insurance Company premia as mentioned in his Budget speech of 1977?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I have never suggested either during the course of the 1977 budget debate or at any other time that the Government was considering imposing a tax on insurance premia.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 108 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I do not have the Hansard in front of me.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

For a change I do.

HON G T RESTANO:

I do not have the Hansard of his budget speech but I do have the Hansard of one of the questions which I put to him two years after the budget, perhaps, he has it there too, it is Question 63 of 1979 when we did ask about the control of insurance premia.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will tell you what I said in 1977 from the Hansard. For a change I am one up on the researcher of the House. In the general context, Mr Speaker, of my contribution to the budget debate, I said: "Far too much money goes out of Gibraltar, British gilt edged, UK national savings repatriation of profit. We are giving serious consideration to the introduction of Gibraltar's own national savings or development bonds married to the premium bond idea, as well as the possible imposition of some reasonable degree of control over the repatriation of bank profits and insurance premia. Many countries require insurance companies, for example, to retain for local investment some proportion of the premium income which they collect". That is what I said and that does not get anywhere near the imposition of a tax.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, since 1977, Mr Speaker, what has the Chief Minister done to implement these ideas that he put forward then?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will be very happy to tell the Hon Member. I have said in this House that the Government would consider the possible imposition to some degree control expatriation of the profits with banks and other financial institutions as well as of insurance premia. It is not proposed to pursue this. As far as the Government is aware since then and coming on to four years ago, things have changed and loan finance is available to Gibraltar for development and for other general purposes and it cannot be suggested that the pace of development is hampered by lack of such finance. Recent discussions with banks, both locally and in London, have revealed the willingness to lend money to Gibraltar for development. I am confident that the same facilities would be available to the private sector provided of course that any scheme for development is economically viable.

HON G T RESTANO:

I note that the Chief Minister said that he has had discussions with the banks. But what about the insurance companies?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The situation has dramatically changed as we all know and there is no dearth of money for development. We do not impose restrictions for the sake of them. It was at that time being considered as a possible measure but the circumstances have changed and it is not proposed to pursue that now.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since the Chief Minister made this statement which I suppose must have been a very serious statement since it came in his budget speech and that is supposed to be Government policy, why has he taken four years to inform this House that what he said then no longer applies today? Or is it a decision which has been taken in the very recent past?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In 1978 I said when I was asked whether I had now taken a decision because we know that the researcher follows them up regularly and I tell my colleagues not to give any date for anything if you do not want to have the Hon Mr Restano on your back for the rest of your life. Again there was a question from the Hon Mr Restano in 1978 and I said: "I am glad, however, to have the opportunity provided by this question to make a correction to my previous statement on the matter. Whereas I mentioned only the repatriation of bank profits and indeed these are not necessarily excluded, the Government has borne in mind and I should have made this clear, some requirement for local banks or any other authorities deposit taking institution to retain in Gibraltar a reasonable proportion of the amounts". That was in 1978 and there were all sorts of supplementaries and then I finished up by saying: "The statement made in last year's budget speech was a statement of intent in respect of a matter which on the advice then given and on the idea then discussed seemed to

be desirable and it still seems to be desirable to limit the amount or rather to ensure that sufficient flow of funds are in Gibraltar". So for as long as we are satisfied that there are sufficient funds in Gibraltar there is no need to do that. It was something that on the advice then given and on the circumstances then prevailing I stated that we would be looking into it. We looked into it well enough and the answer now is that we do not propose to proceed. It was not that it did not have Government support, it was a statement of an idea that was being pursued and which circumstances have now made it obvious that it is not necessary to pursue it.

HON G T RESTANO:

That was a very long answer, Mr Speaker, for which I am grateful, but of course it has nothing to do with the question that I asked and that was why it was that the Government having changed its intention, shall we say, in this matter, did not make a statement to this House previously as, in fact, promised in 1979 when he said after having asked him why we had to wait for two years, he said: "Well, surely, you can wait for another year". Why hasn't he made a statement since knowing that there was interest on this side of the House in this matter as a whole?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I don't know, it may well be that the statement had is salutary effect in the right quarters.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can I have an answer to my question as to why we haven't had a statement from the Chief Minister before?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Because the matter has been gradually improving to the extent that I am now quite satisfied that it is not necessary. Perhaps I could advance next year's question by saying that I will give the same answer as I have given today.

HON G T RESTANO:

I hope that in future when the Chief Minister makes Government policy statements at the budget one will not have to wait on this side for four years before he reneges on his statement.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will say whatever I think at the time that I think is proper and if I have to correct it I will make a correction and I am not going to have Mr Restano tell me what I have to say in budget speeches.

11.3.81

NO. 109 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that the holder of a British Passport issued in Gibraltar is not considered a UK national for community purposes if born in Spain?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The Declaration by Her Majesty's Government contained in the Final Act to the Treaty of Accession to the European Communities states that a person is a United Kingdom national for Community purposes if he is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies by birth or by registration or naturalisation in Gibraltar, or whose father was so born, registered or naturalised.

A British passport issued in Gibraltar will be endorsed accordingly if the person to whom it is issued comes within the definition I have referred to.

It follows that the fact that a person is born in Spain does not preclude the person being issued with a passport so endorsed, if the person comes within the definition in the Declaration.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 109 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Would in fact a person born in Spain with an original Spanish nationality and married to a Gibraltarian and acquiring a British passport as a result of marriage come within that definition?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the passport itself is not the determining factor, the starting point is, is the person a United Kingdom and Colonies citizen by virtue of birth, naturalisation or registration in Gibraltar? And if the person comes within that then he is entitled to be considered a Community national and to have his passport endorsed accordingly. If I understand correctly what the Hon Member said, if a person is born in Spain as a Spanish national therefore he seems to be an alien.

MR SPEAKER:

What he is asking is that if that person marries a Gibraltarian and is issued with a passport does he come within the legislation? The answer is that by marriage he is entitled to be registered.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, in that case the entitlement arises by virtue of the registration not because of the fact that a passport happens to have been issued.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is this registration an automatic thing, in fact, or do they have to apply?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

For a wife, yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could the Hon Member look into this matter then and make sure that people are advised accurately on the subject because apparently people have been refused the appropriate endorsement in their passport on the basis of their place of birth.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I will be happy to look into it.