

GIBRALTAR

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

17 December 1981  
286 to 362

NO. 286 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government consider granting subsidies or extra tax relief in respect of privately installed solar heating or other such non fossil fuel consuming devices?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, any expenditure incurred by a commercial institution in installing this type of equipment would attract full tax relief under the existing provisions of the Income Tax Ordinance. A private individual who borrowed to purchase such equipment would be able to set off the interest charges against his taxable income.

If there were firm evidence that private dwellings were installing this equipment on a large scale the Government would be prepared to consider what additional relief might be given. Any such concession would have to be looked at in the light of the Government's financial position and the cost/benefit to the economy as a whole.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 286 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

An optimistic note, I think, Mr Speaker. Can the Hon Member explain more fully what kind of proposals Government would undertake if there were a stronger demand and will the Government also consider the age old adage of which came first, the chicken or the egg, if the Government offer an attractive subsidy or whatever that they might have a greater demand rather than wait until the demand before implementing the subsidy?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must disabuse the Hon Member immediately. There is no question of a subsidy, of the Government paying people to put these things in, any assistance would be in the form of tax relief.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, but will Government if they consider the matter is something which they should encourage, perhaps they should introduce the extra tax relief which is what I am asking for now, so as to encourage those who would like to instal solar heating to do so.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I feel that unless we have some indication of the number of houses in Gibraltar that would be able to use this it would be unfair on the generality of tax payers that a few people should get a tax relief for a facility that the generality of people cannot get and one has got to be very careful how we give away relief on taxation. If, however, it is clear that a large

number of these solar heaters, for example, could be installed which would have an impact on the amount of electricity we had to generate and we could look at the cost and the benefit carefully, then I think the Government would move but it would not be right to move until we had some indication of the size of the movement.

HON A J HAYNES:

How does Government propose to decide on whether it is going to be of general application or not?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order, next question.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, would the Government at least consider making goods of this nature, in fact, solar heating panels or whatever, not being subject to import duty?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government will consider that.

NO. 287 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, why is duty paid on goods introduced into Gibraltar on an approval basis through Mail Order Catalogues not refunded, when these same goods are returned within the prescribed time?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the Imports and Exports Ordinance does not provide for the importation of goods on approval. However, an importer may examine goods before tendering payment of duty and is at liberty to return such goods should he wish to do so. This is the only way to avoid payment of duty where the goods received are unacceptable.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 287 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would not the Hon Member agree that in the case of articles of clothing it would be very awkward to try them out at the Revenue Station before returning them?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, it depends on the article of clothing. I personally would not like to change my trousers in the hall but I would not mind changing my shirt. I think that the nub of this matter is that there is no provision in the Import and Export Ordinance for the repayment of duty once paid and this is deliberate because if you had a provision of such kind in Import and Export Ordinances there would be a tremendous amount of administrative work involved in repaying when people wanted to re-export goods that they did not like. What we can do is look rather more carefully at the arrangements at the Waterport where articles are received to see whether we can improve the facilities there.

NO. 288 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government consider allocating funds to provide further Building Society services to the community?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the Government's policy to create the right climate for home ownership by providing incentives to potential purchasers, for example, through taxation relief. Additionally, the Government is trying to help attract capital from abroad as such capital would, inter alia, increase the scope for mortgage facilities. However, if the Hon Member is asking whether the Government is prepared to allocate funds in the form of mortgages to prospective home buyers, the answer is no. Funds are just not available. Should the Hon Member care to suggest specific measures to improve building society facilities I would be happy to consider and comment on them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 288 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, offhand if they are not prepared to solve their own building society, if they were to inject funds into existing building societies or ones into which they could legally do so, then . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

What is the question?

HON A J HAYNES:

This is a suggestion he is asking for.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, on a point of clarification. The intention behind the last statement in the answer was that if the Hon Member would care to write or come and see me and to discuss this I would be happy but I do not think that they are suggestions which we could debate across the floor of the House at question time.

NO. 289 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, in view of the requirements in Standing Orders that Bills should be published at least seven days before the meeting of the House, will Government take steps to ensure that this practice is adhered to and in particular will Government ensure that the Bills are in fact circulated to Members with the Agenda for the meeting of the House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the majority of Bills are being printed and published in accordance with Standing Orders. Moreover, where leave is sought to suspend Standing Orders, there is nearly always a substantive reason for that course of action. In fact, of the twenty-three Bills introduced in 1980 and the twenty-seven Bills to be introduced this year, only three Bills do not fall within this category.

During the period, leave to suspend Standing Orders has been sought four times for the annual Appropriation and Finance Bills. By their nature, these Bills are not published in advance of introduction. Although the Development Aid Bill, 1981, was not strictly a budget measure, it was prepared at the same time as the Appropriation and Finance Bills and introduced on a suspension of Standing Orders at this year's budget meeting. It was not taken beyond its second reading at that meeting. No objection was taken in the House to this course. Standing Orders were also suspended in respect of the Landlord and Tenant (Temporary Requirements as to Notice) Bill, 1981, because it was not appropriate to disclose the proposal before publication. In the case of the Public Health (Amendment) (No 4) Bill, 1981, which dealt with a matter of urgency, it will be necessary to seek the suspension of Standing Orders. That Bill was however printed and distributed to Members as soon as was possible after Government decided to promote the measure.

As I have indicated, in three cases in the last two years, it has been necessary to seek the suspension of Standing Orders simply because of pressure of work. In one case, the Bill was read a first time only. The second Bill was not taken beyond second reading at the meeting in which it was introduced. The third case involved a Bill of a very minor nature. Mr Speaker, every effort is made to avoid this situation.

The Government will in future wherever possible, publish Bills so as to be available for distribution to Hon Members with the Agenda or ahead of the Agenda where possible.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 289 OF 1981

MR SPEAKER:

I would like to make a comment on this. I have felt slightly concerned because whilst it is accepted that Bills have been circulated with the Agenda, I think it has always been the practice to publish Bills long before the meeting to enable Members to have greater time to study the implications and thus be in a position to discuss the general principles and I think that is what my Learned Friend is referring to. Whilst I entirely agree with the Attorney-General that Bills have been published and circulated with the Agenda, I think we have kept to the minimum requirement.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, may I add a word of explanation. It was not until very recently, in fact, that I became aware that it had been the practice, certainly of my predecessor who was here for some years, to do this and I think the last sentence of my answer is intended to be an indication that in the future I will endeavour to follow this practice.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 290 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, will Government state what qualifications are required for the posts of Chief and Deputy Chief Fire Officer?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the Chief Fire Officer is required to hold the Diploma of the Institute of Fire Engineers and to have attended approved Command, Staff and Fire Prevention Courses in the United Kingdom.

The qualifications required for Deputy Chief Fire Officer depend on the grading of the post which is currently under review.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 290 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, what degree of Diploma is required for the Chief Fire Officer?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am sorry I cannot answer that. My information is that it is simply a Diploma of the Institute of Fire Engineers.

HON G T RESTANO:

There are three types of gradings and I wondered whether there was any one particular grading that was required.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I will undertake, if I may, to ascertain that and inform the Hon Member. I do not know the answer.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, may I have the leave of the House to provide some further information on Question 290 relating to the Chief Fire Officer?

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, most certainly.



HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I was not able at the time to answer the question put as to the different types of diploma. There are, in fact, three: a certificate which is not strictly a diploma, a graduate diploma which stresses the technical qualifications involved for a Chief Fire Officer and the membership diploma which stresses the managerial skills involved and either of the second or third is a qualification for the post.

HON G T RESTANO:

And as far as the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, which of these diplomas are required?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, at the moment the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer is under review and no prescribed qualifications have been settled.

HON G T RESTANO:

But would qualifications have been required up to now in the past? Is it the intention, Sir, if I can put it this way, either to downgrade the post or to upgrade the post?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I do not think I can comment on that at this stage, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

In other words, can I know what were the qualifications in the past?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

My information, Mr Speaker, is that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer was a designation, not a post as such, in the same way as the Deputy Commissioner of Police.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would not the Government agree that it is a post which carries quite a lot of responsibility particularly when the Deputy has to take over when the Chief Fire Officer is not here and that it would be preferable, in fact, it should be a requirement that he should have a certain diploma under the Institute of Fire Engineers?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I think while the matter is under review I cannot comment.

HON G T RESTANO:

Who is reviewing the matter, Mr Speaker?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It is with a public service inspector..

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Public Service Commission.

HON G T RESTANO:

The Public Service Commission? In what way, if I may ask and it may be a silly question, but in what way is the Public Service Commission qualified to look into the requirements of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It is being carried out in the same way as any other review of a post by Staff Inspectors.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, was there not a report once on the Fire Service, generally, and what the requirements were and was it not laid down there what sort of requirements were required for both posts?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I am not able to answer that. I do not know.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Hon Member find out and please let me know about this?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, of course.

NO. 291 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many prosecutions for offences concerning the depositing of litter have there been since the new legislation was brought in, in October, 1981?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, four litter prosecutions have been instituted since the passing of the Public Health (Amendment) (No 3) Ordinance, 1981. One person has been convicted and fined £25. The other three cases are pending. These prosecutions have in fact been brought under provisions of the Ordinance that were already in existence.

Two notices have been served under the new section 68B of the principal Ordinance.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 291 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, did I hear rightly, these four prosecutions have been under the previous law?

MR SPEAKER:

That is correct, yes.

HON A T LODDO:

Then, Mr Speaker, if I may recall, at the last meeting of the House I asked how many prosecutions on a similar question to this and the answer was that there had not been any because they had all been .....

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I understood this question to be how prosecutions have been brought since the new legislation came into force. Well, of course, since that has happened there have been four prosecutions. I think I did say at the last meeting of the House that the prosecutions which had not been proceeded with were prosecutions which came up a month ago. I do not think I said anything to the effect that there was an absolute bar on proceeding with prosecutions under the existing provisions of the Ordinance.

NO. 292 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government consider forming a small voluntary and independent committee to enquire into complaints directed against the Civil Service?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 292 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I think that was a bit blunt. In answer to Question 117 of 1981 which was a question asking: "Will Government undertake to start a complaints department at the Secretariat to deal with all and any complaints directed against the Civil Service?" Again I was told, Mr Speaker, that the answer was no, that there already was machinery and when this was investigated I was informed that the machinery was by way of "you could complain to the Governor". That is not really what I had in mind and this other option of going to the Head of Department was not what I had in mind. I understood then that the Government had not understood my question as to the motive and when I ask it again in a different form of asking a more specific request I would hope to receive more explanations to go along with it. Is it Government policy to protect the Civil Service from any form of complaint at all?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am happy to give the Government's reasoning at greater length. I am aware that at the last time this matter was raised, the Hon Member did refer to the possibility of a small advisory bureau and this question is obviously more specific. The Government feels that the existing machinery is adequate, that you can complain to the Head of Department, you can complain to the Establishment Officer, you can complain up the line in effect, and it feels that there is no real reason why any machinery other than that should be necessary because most people know perfectly well where to go and complain and I think most complaints are dealt with.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I also understood that the Government found themselves in the happy position and no one does complain.

MR SPEAKER:

We are debating, with due respect to the Hon and Learned Member. You must ask a question.

HON A J HAYNES:

There is a question coming at the end.

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect to you, the question should come at the beginning. Next question.

NO. 293 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government make a statement on the progress of the Government Committee on drugs?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I am most grateful to the Hon Member for giving me the opportunity to make a statement on the progress of the work of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, which I presume is the subject matter of the question.

As the Hon Member may be aware the Council was re-constituted very recently and I was appointed Chairman. The other members of the Council are:

The Commissioner of Police  
 The Collector of Revenue  
 The Principal Youth and Careers Officer  
 The Director of Medical and Health Services  
 Flight Lieutenant C Morgan RAF  
 Mr C Clinton BDS, and  
 Mr W Guillem MPS

The Council first met on the 25 September, 1981, and four further meetings have since been held.

At the moment the Council is engaged in examining certain recommendations made by a Working Party of the British Medical Association (Gibraltar Branch) on steps that in their view need to be taken to deal with drug abuse generally, including abuse of intoxicating liquors and other allied matters. The work of the Council is well advanced, meetings being held generally on a fortnightly basis, and a number of recommendations have already been submitted for consideration.

As the Hon Member will have noted the membership of the Council is intentionally a high-powered one, representative of all the agencies and professions which have an interest and can assist in this matter. I am very pleased with the progress being made and am very grateful to the members of the Council for making their very valuable time available to me so readily in dealing with this highly important matter for the welfare of our community.

I am very hopeful, and I am sure I have the support of my colleagues in this respect, that the recommendations which have been made and those which will be made in the future will be implemented and will go a long way to combatting the scourge of drug addiction which is such a great problem throughout the world today.

I would be less than responsible if I were not to take advantage of this opportunity of once again bringing to the attention of all persons in Gibraltar the grave dangers that drug addiction can present particularly to the youth of Gibraltar and would ask of those concerned with youth activities as well as parents and older members of our families to exercise great vigilance and pay great

attention to any possible signs there may be of this danger within their family circles. I ask Hon Members and the public in general, not to fall into the trap of complacency and think that this cannot happen here when dealing with the drug problem. I would urge that no effort be spared on our part to ensure that this evil influence does not spread in our community.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 293 OF 1981

MR SPEAKER:

Before you make any supplementaries may I comment on this particular reply. I am very specific and strict on the Members of the Opposition when they ask supplementaries and I must, I think, make a comment that an answer should not be taken as an excuse to make a statement. I am saying this because perhaps it has been done in ignorance but I feel that an answer should contain the reply to the information required and nothing else.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I should add that this is exactly what I wanted to hear, in fact.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, but I am concerned exclusively with procedure.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does the Minister feel there would have been any difference in adopting the Opposition's request for a Select Committee to investigate this?

HON J B PEREZ:

I think, Mr Speaker, that the position taken by the Government was, in fact, the correct one. I personally feel, in my own judgement, that a Select Committee on this would have been a waste of time.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Would Government consider administering with more flexibility the Imported Food Regulations, 1981, laid on the table at the last meeting of this House?

If I may, Mr Speaker, I think I would like to declare an interest. I have a small involvement in a Company which is involved in the importation of food although, of course, the question does certainly not arise out of that involvement and I am assured that the problems that face some of the importers which is the cause for this question, does not apply to that particular Company.

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, may I take this opportunity of apologising for the length of this answer.

I am not quite certain what is meant by 'more flexibility' and if the Hon Member would be more specific or point out any definite area to which he is referring, I would do my utmost to help him.

However, I must point out that the main objective of these Regulations is the protection of the community's health by ensuring that food imported into Gibraltar is fit; complies with local legislation and, in the case of meat and meat products, emanates from approved sources. I am sure the Hon Member will agree there can be no deviation in pursuing this objective.

Having said this, I must point out that since the passing of the Regulations, my Department has done its utmost to ensure that they are smoothly implemented and to help the trade adapt to the new requirements.

Specifically, the Department organised a meeting, which was very well supported by the Trade, to explain the Regulations prior to their implementation. Leaflets, detailing the main requirements of the Regulations, were also prepared by the Department and distributed to the Trade.

It was also agreed that the Department would allow the importation of all food which could be proved as having been ordered prior to the passing of the Regulations, irrespective of its complying or not, provided of course it was not considered harmful to health.

It was also decided that up to the end of the year and in order to give the Trade more time to adapt to the Regulations, there would be no strict enforcement of the documentation requirements for certain products, even though it was expected that the Trade would play its part and comply as best and as soon as possible.

Finally, I think it only fair to thank the Trade for their co-operation in adapting to the requirements of the new Regulations, which I am glad to say are working most satisfactorily.



SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 294 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member asked for more specifications from me because he was not quite clear on the question. May I then specify and say exactly what is intended by the question? There are certain items imported in Gibraltar or which used to be imported in Gibraltar from countries like, for example, the United States and they have been imported into Gibraltar for many years. Under the new Regulations those United States companies which, clearly, they have Regulations there on food hygiene, those products will no longer be able to be imported under those Regulations and would the Minister therefore ensure that where products have been imported in the past for a long period of time and it has been provided that the hygiene Regulations have been applied and adhered to, that they are given flexibility of importation?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, within the context of the main objective which is in fact the health of the community in Gibraltar, I will do my utmost to help any particular trader who has problems. May I take the opportunity of informing the House that as yet there has only been one trader who has made representations and that is a matter which the Department is looking into but we must not lose track of our objective which is the health of the community.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that if the United Kingdom accepts the importer in question that is automatically accepted in Gibraltar and would the Government not consider that it would be equally appropriate to accept in the case, for example, of the United States Government, where we do know that the hygiene Regulations are as strict if not stricter than in the United Kingdom, would it not be worth considering applying it in the case of the United States?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, that is precisely the representation that I have received from one particular trader and I am having a meeting with him and the Government is considering how we can help.

NO. 295 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, is Government satisfied that there are sufficient available telephone lines to cater for:

1. the normal rate of applications
2. the hopeful increase in applications as a result of the next development programme
3. the further increase in demand following its projected development on the East side of the Rock?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Yes, Sir. The answer given to Question 251 of 1980 of 4.11.80 still applies.

There are over 1,000 spare lines available at present.

It is expected that these will be taken up by 1983, when, on the completion of the new extension, 2,000 more lines will become available.

Government is confident that it will be in a position to satisfy demand arising from the next development programme and any development on the East side of the Rock.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 295 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government have the forecast of the number of lines that they might require for the development on the East side of the Rock?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, no, Sir. Government has so far not had any detailed proposals at all on requirements on the East side of the Rock and in fact the scheme on the East side of the Rock, as I think the Hon Minister for Trade and Economic Development will expand on this further, is at the moment being studied and there are no definite proposals as yet.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, how can the Minister say that there are going to be sufficient lines when he does not know how many lines are going to be required?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it must be obvious to the Hon Member that with regard to the size of Gibraltar and the number of lines that we have available we shall be able to cater easily for the increased number of applications that will result if a development takes place on the East side of the Rock.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 296 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what reasons led it to decide to locate the most recent skid mounted generator in its present site and what other sites were considered?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, the length, weight and height impeded its entry into the town area, and by nature of its being a trailer mounted unit, it was more convenient to park it at a site which of necessity had to be near the power station.

An alternative and perhaps more convenient site might have been the USOC hockey pitch but access to this site was also a problem. An additional consideration was the loss of playing area which would have resulted.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 296 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, in November of last year, a year ago, when the original four skid-mounted generators were installed in their present location, the Minister was asked why they were not installed where this last one has been placed and he said that the installation was just not on. Can he tell us now, Mr Speaker, why it is that then it was not on and now it is on?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the answer is fairly simple. The four skid generators took far more available space at the USOC than the present trailer mounted generator which has really only involved the temporary loss of about twelve car parking spaces.

NO. 297 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether any of the proposals for minimising aural pollution as stated in answer to question 218 of 1981 will be adopted or applied to the King's Bastion Generating Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

No, Sir. It is not intended to introduce at King's Bastion any of the proposals stated in answer to the earlier question on the new Power Station, which was put by Mr Haynes, because such features are best incorporated within an overall design approach. Whilst this has been possible at the new Station, it would present serious difficulties in an existing installation, and in certain cases would be physically impossible.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 297 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I accept that, for instance, the engine foundations to be coupled from the main engine wall structure would not be feasible in the King's Bastion Generating Station but the other listed improvements, namely, composite fibreglass and plaster-boards sound insulating lining in the engine hall, can that not be introduced?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, not really. To be able to produce less aural pollution on the old Station, first of all we would have to change the building drastically.

MR SPEAKER:

But we are not going to go into detail, the answer is that it cannot be done. We are not going to debate the possibility of doing it or not.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am labouring under the difficulty that as I understand from the Minister's answer, the position is that these minimising aural pollution measures should be introduced when you build your power station and that in the case of King's Bastion we already have a power station. Obviously, the point of my question was how can we improve the position at King's Bastion and my question was asking whether any of these measures could be introduced.

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect to the questioner, we must ask questions which are short and to the point and seeking information. We must not debate at question time.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am not trying to debate.

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect, I will not have you answer back, that is my ruling. You can ask supplementaries to seek clarification and information but you must not make statements.

HON A J HAYNES:

For what reason cannot exhaust silencing be installed at King's Bastion?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Exhaust silencing, Sir, would mean further silencers in the air intake. This would only be a very small portion, a very small amount of the total requirements necessary to reduce aural pollution and if we did want to reduce aural pollution it would be an extremely costly exercise. Not only that, we have to remember that when the new plant is installed at No 5 jetty, the actual operating hours of engines in KB North station will be reduced substantially with a consequent reduction in the overall aural pollution and the engines in KB South will be done away with and also the four skid and the one trailer mounted generators.

HON A J HAYNES:

And in the interim nothing will happen I take it?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

How long is this going to last for? How long are we likely to have the four skid-mounted generators, one extra generator and a whole load of noisy engines at King's Bastion Generating Station

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, until the two new engines come on stream and this will be in May/June 1982.

NO. 298 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Does Government consider that, following the installation of the two 5 megawatt engines, there will be sufficient generating capacity to cope with requirements after completion of the land reclamation projects to the East of Gibraltar and would Government further state what extra generating capacity it expects will be required?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, at this very early stage it is not possible to say what extra generating capacity future installations on the land to be reclaimed to the East of Gibraltar will require for the simple reason that no detailed proposals have yet been received, to enable the possible loads to be estimated.

For this reason, it is impractical to expect Government to say whether or not the additional two 5 megawatt engines will be sufficient to cope. What can be said is that the new station, as now being built, can take an additional 7 megawatt engine, and, should the need arise, the extra capacity can be installed within a short time and certainly before any additional demand arises from developments at the East side of the Rock.

NO. 299 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the position as regards the proposed new Prison to be constructed on the East side of the Rock?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, a feasibility study for the construction of a new prison was completed earlier this year and the Government has accepted the report. The project, estimated to cost over £5m has been included in the aid submission being considered by the ODA. I think I would be dishonest if I did not add that I think that it would have a very low priority.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 299 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, does it have a low priority because of the large sum involved or for any other reason?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I cannot think of a better reason than £5m.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, how much money would Government be prepared to channel towards a new prison and at the same time give it priority?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I do not know, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there any point in Government trying to bring the price down of the new prison from £5m to £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Did Government give any consideration to the potential cost of a new prison before commissioning the report?



HON A J CANEPA:

Sir, when the team of consultants came here, I impressed upon them that if they came up with a very costly prison, even in a situation where we got substantial aid from the United Kingdom, it could well put it beyond the range of our possibilities but I am afraid that when you are dealing with professionals of that nature they always seem to go for the ideal.

HON A J HAYNES:

Did Government consider what kind of money they were prepared to channel into the new prison before commissioning the report?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, in a development aid programme of £40m, during the third year of that programme we would be prepared to put substantial funds into the construction of the prison if we got the £40m, then yes.

HON A J HAYNES:

If they do not get the £40m, what are they prepared to give to the prison?

HON A J CANEPA:

If we have got £40m, Mr Speaker, over the required period we would build the prison.

HON A J HAYNES:

What percentage of ODA will they expect will go towards the prison presuming they do not get the £40m?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, we have a development programme over a period of time of a certain capital sum partly to be financed by aid from the United Kingdom and partly to be financed by our own efforts. If the aid from the United Kingdom had come up to scratch and if the economic situation of Gibraltar enabled us to put as much into that development programme as what we thought we could last February, then arrangements would have been made to start the construction of the new prison in the third year of the programme, spreading the construction over a two-year period and we would have built it but I cannot tell what proportion one thing was of the United Kingdom aid, you look at the programme as a whole.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 300 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, is Government satisfied with the conditions prevailing at the prison and especially as regards remand prisoners?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the Government is not satisfied with the conditions at the prison. If the aid submission fails, consideration will be given to the implementation of alternative plans for rehabilitation of the existing facility. The regulations make no distinction between the standard of accommodation to be provided for convicted and remand prisoners.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 300 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Is Government aware that a remand prisoner, someone whose innocence, according to the law, is to be presumed until such time as proven otherwise, is entitled to a maximum of two hours liberty ie by liberty I mean outside your cell in twenty-four, and cannot they at least do something to improve the privileges for remand prisoners?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Sir, first of all, I should say that remand prisoners in the United Kingdom are kept in remand centres. I think it would be invidious in a situation where it is a small prison and everyone is together, to make privileges.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, we are talking about convicted criminals and people whose innocence is primary, it has got to be established that they are guilty, it is a different presumption, and they are being treated like convicted criminals and their liberty is severely handicapped by being in prison and furthermore the conditions whereby they have two hours outside their cell in twenty-four is extremely harsh.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us give an answer to that.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, may I just assist in this matter to some extent. I think the rules governing prisoners do make some distinction between remand prisoners and convicted prisoners.

HON A J HAYNES:

They are harsher for remand prisoners.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I do not think that is really correct, Mr Speaker. They make some distinction within the overall limitations of the facilities available at the prison, I think that is really the position.

HON A J HAYNES:

If I can help the Attorney-General, Sir, they are harder for remand prisoners. Convicted prisoners have more privileges since they are there for a long time, a remand prisoner, for instance, can opt for these . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to discuss the regulations.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that the Government realise what the position is as regards remand prisoners.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. Perhaps you should bring a motion about this, that is another matter, but not at question time.

HON A J HAYNES:

What are the alternative plans for rehabilitation that the Minister referred to in his answer as a proviso if and when the ODA is not granted?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Sir, I am not prepared to disclose them at this stage of the proceedings.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can he give us any idea what they entail?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I have said no, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 301 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, when did Government take delivery of the prison van at present under repair and what are the costs of the repairs?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the question is inconclusive as the Hon Member has not stated to which prison van he is referring. The prison has, in fact, two vans. The first was acquired in July 1977 and the second in September 1981. The first van has had to be put in for repairs on a number of occasions since 1977, the costs of these repairs amounting to approximately £300 during the past four years. No repairs have been made to the second van but some minor mechanical adjustments have been made by the dealers under the guarantee, at no public expense.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 301 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I did ask this question because it appears in the Statement of Re-allocations No 3 and in fact I am precluded, because it is a re-allocation, to ask the question at the time because it never appears but can I therefore ask the Government that if when I ask questions of this nature they tell me there are two vans, I can ask them also in the remarks column and the reasoning for the allocation, precisely to state which van it is or give some further details so that I won't have to ask this question?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

17.12.81

NO. 302 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government satisfied with the safety of the playground, formerly the tennis court, at St Mary's Middle School?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the Government is already aware of the need for greater safety in the playground at St Mary's Middle School and the renewal of the surrounding fence at the old tennis court has already been the subject of requisition to Public Works Department. This work will be carried out as soon as the PWD Blacksmith can be released from more urgent security work elsewhere. As the Hon Member will recall there are other playgrounds at Sacred Heart Terrace, and these are in use.

17.12.81

NO. 303 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, when will phase two of St Mary's Middle School begin?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, phase two of the building work required at Sacred Heart Terrace to bring into use the whole of the former Grammar School building has been included in the aid submission for the 1981/86 Development Programme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 303 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister, will this have precedence over the prison?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Certainly, Sir.

NO. 304 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will Government install safety bars in the windows of classrooms at St Mary's Middle School?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, this work is due to be carried out by the PWD Blacksmith at the same time as the renewal of the fence at the tennis courts.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 304 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would not the Government agree that where the lives of young children in school is concerned, this should take priority over any other work the Blacksmith might be doing at the moment?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Sir, Government is as concerned as the Opposition. All it requires at the moment is a bit more supervision and because of the inclement weather the windows will generally be closed. The urgent work being done by Government is on the question of security and I am not in a position to state publicly why we are doing this but if the Hon Member will meet me outside I will tell him exactly what is happening.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 305 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state their policy as regards the introduction of a comprehensive rehabilitation scheme and/or Attendance Centre for both juvenile and adult offenders?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, insofar as young persons between the ages of 12 and 21 are concerned, the reply which my predecessor gave to the Hon and Learned Mr Haynes's question No 94/80 of the 25 March, 1980, explained the existing provisions in the law which enables the Court to order attendance at an Attendance Centre in lieu of imposing a sentence of imprisonment, or for failure to comply with a probation order.

During the past year there have been seven cases in which the Courts have made an Attendance Centre order, and the present arrangements whereby the young offenders are required to attend under supervision at the Youth and Careers Office seem to have worked well.

The present question by the Hon Member opposite goes further than his previous ones on this subject, as he has also brought adult offenders into the picture. I am not aware that there is a need to consider introducing new measures for dealing with offenders.

In the absence of evidence to the effect that new measures are necessary, Government does not intend to pursue the matter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 305 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker; will the Government reconsider their policy on this if the ODA talks are not fruitful and as such no new prison is built?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, this has nothing to do with the ODA. I have just said that I am not aware that there is a need to introduce new measures.

HON A J HAYNES:

As I understand it, Mr Speaker, the new prison will, inter alia, provide you with some Attendance Centre or other type of thing, will it not?



HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Then I will ask the question which is, if the new prison is not to be built . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

That is hypothetical.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, but what will their policy be then?

MR SPEAKER:

When that happens then you are entitled to ask the question.

NO. 306 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, can Government state what figures it has available for job vacancies as at 30th November, 1981?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the number of vacancies notified to the Department of Labour and Social Security and which remained open at the end of November 1981 was 55, covering 36 different occupations.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 306 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Sir, can I ask the Government, if indeed they themselves have to arrive at these figures at the end of each month, to let me have them in the same manner that they do with the unemployment figures?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Member repeat that question please?

HON W T SCOTT:

In the same manner as the Members on this side of the House are circulated with the unemployment figures by the Department, could I ask the Minister if he will likewise do the same for job vacancies?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Certainly, Sir.

NO: 307 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government confirm that the Apprentice Courses in the Engineering and Construction Trades will commence in January, 1982?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the twenty-five engineering and construction apprentices commenced their training on 5 October, 1981.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 307 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Sir, I asked this question precisely because in a previous question at the last meeting of the House, Question No. 219, I went to great trouble to solicit this kind of information from the Minister and in fact I think on one occasion I asked him to give way so that I could illustrate to him the difference between the Apprentices Course and the Industrial Training Course. I make no apologies for having asked the question.

NO. 308 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government inform this House if and to what extent a further approach has been made to those young men who have passed the Engineering and Construction Entrance Examination but were not offered an Apprenticeship and will Government also inform this House if the Industrial Training Scheme will commence in January, 1982?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, on the 9 December, 1981, Government decided to proceed with the training scheme in question, and as the Hon Member is now aware, a notice was published in the press on 11 December offering training facilities at the Construction Industry Training Centre to youngsters who were successful in this year's apprentice entry examinations but to whom it was not possible to offer an apprenticeship because of the few vacancies.

Applications will be received until 31 December and arrangements are well in hand to start the training in January, 1982.

As stated in the press notice, depending on the number of applications received, a selection may have to be made to reduce the number taken on to that for which the facilities at the Training Centre can cater.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 308 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, we are very glad to have heard that at least finally this scheme has got off the ground in practical terms although I have one remark to make and that is that it is rather funny that it was only two days after I posed the question that the public notice appeared.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I would like to reply to that, with your permission, of course. Mr Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Hon Member has never been in Government but he has two Members beside him who have and he must know that it takes some time before papers can go to Council of Ministers so if I had the scheme ready on the 9th December it means that it went to Council of Ministers well before that.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, what precisely will this course qualify people to do at the end of it?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I do not think that comes under this question. It does not follow from Mr Scott's question.

MR SPEAKER:

It certainly applies to the general matter dealt by the question but, of course, if you require notice you can give the information to the Member later.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Sir, I do not require notice. The intention is to encourage youngsters into trades which normally they would not have gone into and the idea is to give them a clear picture of what the construction trade means and at the end of the academic year if other employers come in with apprenticeships for these skills, that year will count towards their apprenticeship, so instead of doing four years they would only do three years.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, the only advantage is that they could shorten their apprenticeship by a year by virtue of the training they will receive but at the end of that year they would be like any other first year apprentice which effectively means that they would not be able to take on a job in any given trade.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, it is hoped that certainly the private construction industry will take a far greater interest in employing young apprentices and training them and making more use of our Construction Training Centre. I must state quite frankly that the Construction companies have found it always too easy to search in other markets and have never made any attempt to train youngsters.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is there anything, Mr Speaker, in the scheme that is likely to encourage construction companies to do anything different from what they have done in the past? Are they being penalised by a levy or rewarded by a subsidy if they take on apprentices?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think that a youngster who has received a years training in our Construction Training Centre would certainly stand a better chance of being employed in the construction business than somebody who has never been trained before.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, would Government consider ensuring a regular bus service from the town area to Mount Alvernia?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a matter for the Transport Commission, who consider that the area in question is adequately catered for by the present bus service.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 309 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Will Government make a recommendation to the Transport Commission along these lines?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The area in question is served by three different bus routes and there has been no demand from the inmates of Mount Alvernia, or from anybody attending Mount Alvernia, requiring a special bus service running up St Bernard's Road.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, that is not my understanding. Would the Hon Member not recognise that the friends of those who are staying in Mount Alvernia are naturally of an advanced age, some would like to visit and cannot because they do not have transport of their own and they would like to have transport to Mount Alvernia. It is a long way for them to go walking and it is also very steep so I think it would be in the interest of the people in Mount Alvernia, too, they would have more frequent visits. Would he consider making a suggestion to the Transport Commission?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, according to the Transport Commission they have had no demand at all from the inmates or visitors to Mount Alvernia. It is a difficult situation because even if we were to suggest to the Transport Commission that a bus service should go up St Bernard's Road, it is not the most ideal of places to have a turnabout place for public service vehicles to go up and turn around and come back again and although I agree it is steep but I think we are talking of something like 200 or 300 yards walk. If one takes the bus routes that stop at the bottom of Shorthorn Estate or outside the Loreto Convent it is merely a few steps to climb up and down. I am equally informed that elderly people who visit their friends frequently, that Mount Alvernia has on many occasions provided their own mini bus service to cater for that. As I say there is no demand, if there was a demand then the Government would consider it, Sir.

17.12.81

NO. 310 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many applicants have been housed during the last twelve months following recommendations from the Housing Advisory Committee on social grounds?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Sir, during the past twelve months twelve applicants have been accommodated as a result of recommendations made by the Housing Advisory Committee.

NO. 311 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, how many persons are to Government's knowledge, presently squatting in Government housing stock and how many persons to the knowledge of the Government are presently living in cars, in tents on the beach, in lean-to sheds or sub standard accommodation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Sir, there are at present thirteen families squatting in Government owned accommodation.

As far as the Housing Department is aware, there are two applicants who have alleged to be sleeping in cars and one reported case of a family living in a garage.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 311 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

What does Government propose to do about those squatting in Government housing stock?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, of the thirteen families squatting in Government owned accommodation, there are nine where an order of possession has been obtained for them by the Court. The Government tries to be as lenient as possible and particularly over the festive season we would certainly not like to implement their eviction but if the house that they occupy is required for accommodating some other person on the list or for modernisation, then I am afraid that person will have to find his own accommodation and come out.

HON A J HAYNES:

When the Minister says modernisation what does he mean, any time in the future in the modernisation project or now?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

In connection with the modernisation programme or rehabilitation programme which could be immediate.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does the Minister therefore say that in those cases where people have squatted in buildings which are not immediately required by Government, they will be allowed to stay there?



HON H J ZAMMITT:

They will not be allowed to stay, Mr Speaker, we would obtain a Court order for possession but we may not implement it as quickly as we would in other cases whereby we would require the house for immediate use.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister say exactly what the Government policy is because it seems now that today we have been given an indication that there is a change in this policy and that the idea is to have an eviction order?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

There is no change in Government policy, Sir.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is a matter of exercising discretion.

HON A J HAYNES:

It is a matter of exercising discretion but with what criteria?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Human criteria.

HON A J HAYNES:

The Government seems to lack a lot of that, I am afraid.

MR SPEAKER:

Order.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the Government going to act on these possession orders or not?

MR SPEAKER:

I think you have been given a straight answer to that one. Please sit down when I am speaking. You have been told specifically that if the land is needed immediately, the possession orders are executed. If not, they are lenient until such time as it becomes necessary for the person to be evicted.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am concerned with the answer given in respect of those who are presently squatting in accommodation which is not required immediately and for which Government have already obtained a possession order. What exactly is going to happen?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to go beyond what I have said for the simple reason that I am not prepared to encourage unfortunate people to squat in places that they may find themselves out in the street should Government decide to do so.

HON A J HAYNES:

But he is encouraging them.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is encouraging people to squat.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. We are now arguing and I will not allow that. Next question.

NO. 312 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government disclose the number of applicants who have been recommended for housing on social grounds by the Housing Advisory Committee in the last twelve months and will Government state how many applicants are still awaiting either for the Family Care Unit to make a report or for the Housing Advisory Committee to make a report?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Sir, in the past twelve months the Housing Advisory Committee has made pre-war recommendations in thirteen cases.

It is understood that the Family Care Unit have now investigated all cases awaiting an investigation report. However, there are fifty-nine cases which have been investigated, and for which the reports have not yet been received. There are a further seven cases for which a report has already been submitted by the Family Care Unit but have not yet been considered by the Housing Advisory Committee.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 312 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, we had in answer to Question 310 the answer that twelve of those recommended by the Advisory Committee were housed. Over that same period of time they made thirteen recommendations so only one has been left out. Can the Minister tell me how many applicants were actually heard, how many were rejected?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am sorry, I do not understand the question, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

We have heard that when the Housing Advisory Committee have made a recommendation, in this case they made thirteen, the Housing Allocation Committee have acted on nearly all of them ie, twelve out of the thirteen. I would like to know how many the Housing Advisory Committee rejected ie, thirteen out of how many?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid I do not know. I would require specific notice of how many they rejected. I have been asked to give how many there have been accommodated or recommended by the Housing Advisory Committee. I do not know, quite honestly, if any have been rejected. I do not think they have been rejected as such and if the Family Care Unit consider that a case is not a social problem then, of course, it does not get to the Advisory Committee.

HON A J HAYNES:

I know offhand of one which has gone straight there and has not been accepted by the Housing Advisory Committee. What I wish to know is the percentage of success for social cases?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am afraid I do not know, Sir, I require specific notice.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, how long does the Minister think that it will take for the fifty-nine reports which remain outstanding, how long will it take for those reports to be completed and the whole process of going through the Advisory Committee?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Again, Mr Speaker, I would not like to speculate on how long it will take for the outstanding cases on social grounds to be housed as opposed to recommended. What I can say is that within the next couple of weeks we hope to be able to allocate the Red Ensign Club in Engineer Lane which will accommodate seventeen families, social cases of course.

HON G T RESTANO:

That was not my question, Mr Speaker. The fifty-nine reports which remain outstanding, what I would like to know is not when they are going to be housed, I know the Minister probably cannot answer that question, but what he could answer perhaps is, how long the whole process will take for those fifty-nine to have their reports made out and submitted to the Advisory Committee?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, that depends again on two issues. It depends on the availability of staff within the Family Care Unit to keep up with the impetus of submitting reports to the Housing Advisory Committee and subsequently, of course, the Housing Advisory Committee being able to meet and consider the various applications. If the reports are through then one could say it could take a month or six weeks but I cannot go beyond that because there are occasions when the people in the Advisory Committee are unable to meet because of the exigencies of other duties.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many applicants in the waiting list have been housed during the last 12 months giving the numbers in respect of the various categories ie 4 rooms, kitchen/bathroom, 3 rooms, kitchen/bathroom, etc?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Sir, a total of 33 applicants in the Housing Waiting List have been housed during the last 12 months as follows:-

Bedsitter	-	16
2 RKB	-	2
3 RKB	-	6
4 RKB	-	7
5 RKB	-	1
6 RKB	-	1

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 313 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Is this the kind of average amount you get in a year or not?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It is slightly lower on average, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 314 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many persons have been rehoused as a result of the modernisation programme during the last 12 months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Sir, twenty-one families have been rehoused in connection with the modernisation programme during the last 12 months.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government disclose the number of applicants at present on the waiting list giving the number in respect of the various categories ie 4 rooms, 3 rooms?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

There are 1,816 applicants, at present, on the Housing waiting list as follows:-

Bedsitter	-	155
2 RKB	-	432
3 RKB	-	657
4 RKB	-	502
5 RKB	-	62
6 RKB	-	8

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 315 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Given the average of 33 per annum, it looks like it is going to be the year 2010 before these are accommodated.

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect, that is a supposition.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is that a fair assessment?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That is a most incorrect and unfair assessment, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, every time I ask how many people there are on the waiting list I am always given the same number.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member fails to understand, and there is no milder way I can put it, fails to understand the housing problem and therefore I am not prepared to talk to him on this issue any longer in the House, certainly, Mr Speaker. He fails to understand it and I am wasting my time and his.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Sir, will Government consider changing the method for carrying out tourist surveys by providing tourists generally with a questionnaire form to be filled anonymously and privately, in which the reasons for liking or disliking Gibraltar can be expressed and thus obtain less inhibited answers and more genuinely useful results?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government will consider any proposals for changes in the Tourist Survey which will improve coverage, methodology, response and final use of the results. It is however, likely that the change suggested by the Hon Member will reduce overall response to the survey and, in addition, will invariably increase the administrative burden and cost of the exercise. In practical terms, the Hon Member's suggestion could only realistically be applied to staying visitors in hotels. It would be a totally impracticable arrangement for other tourists, ie day excursionists from Morocco, cruise-ship excursionists and visitors staying with family and friends. I should point out that there are a range of questions in the tourist survey questionnaire, many of which can on present questionnaire design, only be correctly answered by interview. I must add that the questionnaires currently used do not ask or make reference to the name or address of the tourist being interviewed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 316 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But doesn't the Minister agree with me that a tourist who is in Gibraltar will try and be polite and always, if necessary, make an understatement about how he feels if the feelings are against his visit particularly if he is faced with a pretty Gibraltarian girl?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the questionnaire which I think the Hon and Gallant Member must have a copy of, has been slightly amended over the years. In fact, if I may give him credit, it was a questionnaire which the Hon Member himself gave publicity to way back in 1969 when he obtained consultants to look into the situation. We have found that people have no inhibitions at all, Mr Speaker, in answering the questions but if there is something that we feel would be of benefit we would certainly consider it.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister think it would be a good idea to put this other suggestion that I have made of asking the tourist why he likes it or why he dislikes it?



HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think the questionnaire does ask why he likes it or certainly why he has come to Gibraltar, Mr Speaker, and that is where we get our information that there may be repeat tourists. To ask a person point blank why you like it or why you do not like it maybe is to a degree inhibiting but the questionnaire has to be by way of interview otherwise if we gave these cards out to people who came on a cruise liner then, of course, we would have to tell them to go to the Post Office or Tourist Office or wherever, post it, send it on or collect it and therefore people would not do it. We carry out a survey of people throughout the month and we obtain our information. We are quite satisfied with it at present but if there is something that is felt that would be advantageous we certainly would not put blinkers on, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I hope he gives more attention to that because I think it is very important. On the second point that I made, doesn't the Minister think it is vital to know why they like it or why they didn't so that they can put that matter either right or reinforce where there is success?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 317 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government explain if when preparing the Gibraltar Tourist Office Brochure the hoteliers and other interested parties whose business premises appear in it are consulted?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 317 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't it a fact that it can be very prejudicial to the business concerned if the place or the way in which that premises is displayed in that leaflet can cause loss of trade to that particular hotelier and doesn't he think it is right and proper that if something is going to be printed such as the name of a particular firm in Gibraltar, that consultations should be carried out with them as to whether they agree or disagree since that can easily affect the business very considerably?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, the brochure happens to be a Gibraltar Tourist Office brochure which is paid for by the Gibraltar Tourist Office and I have, Mr Speaker, both the 1980/81 and the 1981/82 brochures. The only complaint we have had is from one particular hotel who is complaining of the photograph being a centimetre smaller of what it was last year. There is very little that we could do here because of space and of course this is done by experts who consider that the particular hotel in question had to suffer in size. Sometimes, Mr Speaker, and I do not want to start a storm in a teacup, sometimes of course it is the hotel's fault for not having up-to-date transparencies and when we ask them for it they cannot make it available and therefore we have to depend on our own public relations people to do it.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But isn't it a fact that this particular hotel is probably even considering claiming from the Government for loss of trade?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sorry?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is it true that this particular hotel is going to claim from the Government by having put that particular photograph, for what they consider to have been loss of trade?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I have not heard of that, Mr Speaker, but if it is so it is absolute rubbish, absolute nonsense that they should do that after we have been advertising their hotel. Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member would like I can tell him privately something else he might like to know.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't it possible, Mr Speaker, that by the way a particular photograph is displayed that instead of aiding that particular business it can do the very opposite and therefore all I am going to say is will the Minister . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No. Order.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker. Could I just add a final question?

MR SPEAKER:

No, you cannot because we are now going into matters of detail. Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if the difficulties preventing the formation of the Advisory Tourist Board have been totally overcome and if not what are the causes obstructing final agreement?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, the terms of reference of the Gibraltar Tourist Advisory Board have been agreed by all the constituent members except for the Gibraltar Trades Council whose views are awaited.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 318 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't there some disagreement on the question of representation on the part of the hoteliers who feel that they should have more representation in the Advisory Board?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That has been agreed to, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state on how many occasions and where has the Acting Minister for Tourism and Postal Services since so appointed, travelled abroad officially, and for what purpose, by whom accompanied, for how long and at what cost to the Government, on each trip?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, since my appointment as Acting Minister for Tourism and Postal Services, I have travelled abroad on official business on eight occasions, equally divided between the two Departments concerned.

Details of these visits are as follows:-

PERIOD	PURPOSE	BY WHOM ACCOMPANIED	COST £
21/25 Sept 80	Trade promotions in Portsmouth and Brighton	London Office Manager and Team	384.50
30 Sept/6 Oct 80	Attendance at British International Philatelic Exhibition 1980 in London	Director of Postal Services, EO, Philatelic Bureau and two other officers	245.00
12/22 Nov '80	Attendance at Essen International Philatelic Exhibition and to hold discussions with British Post Office	Director of Postal Services, Controller of Philately and one other officer	565.00
15/20 Feb 81	Trade promotions in Maidstone, Brentwood and Cambridge	London Office Manager and Team	389.50
22 Feb/1 Mar 81	Attendance at Stampex International Philatelic Exhibition in London and to hold discussions with National Girobank	Director of Postal Services, Accountant, EO, Philatelic Bureau and two other officers	289.00
12/18 May 81	Trade promotions in Sheffield, Hull and Leeds	London Office Manager and Team	267.75
19 May/3 Jun 81	Attendance at Vienna International Philatelic Exhibition	Controller of Philately and two other officers	1,045.00

PERIOD	PURPOSE	BY WHOM ACCOMPANIED	COST £
21/26 Sept 81	Trade promotions in Ipswich, Luton and Oxford	London Office Manager and Team	438.00
20/25 Oct 81	Area sales drive Guildford	London Office Manager and Team	370.05
16/26 Nov 81	Attendance at American Stamp Dealer's Association International Exhibition in New York and to hold discussions with the Govt's Philatelic Agents in America	Director of Postal Services, Controller of Philately and one other Officer	901.00

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 319 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister feel that this expense is justified and also does he think that it is important that the Minister should be there on these occasions?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Could the Hon Member say, do I consider it important in which particular department or to which particular visit?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In either department.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, let me commence by saying on the stamp situation, on the philatelic situation, yes, I think it is very important for a number of reasons. Although I cannot recall exactly what I have done on every single occasion, I can say that every time that I have attended a stamp exhibition prominence is given to Gibraltar because there may be five, six or seven or ten Ministers from various countries attending and therefore the Post Office, the administration as such is given priority within the whole exhibition. Secondly, it gives one a tremendous opportunity to be able to discuss and obtain what obviously we are after and that is the sale of stamps. If I can start from the tail end and work my way back, Mr Speaker. In the case of New York I think the House will be pleased to hear that I was able to secure Readers Digest, which has eleven million circulation in sixteen various languages, to publish for the first time ever and print our Christmas 1980 issue which I think will bring in tremendous results. While I was there I was able to persuade Readers Digest that they would take on our

Europe First Day Covers and when I was there I was able to sell 30,000 First Day Covers of the Royal Wedding to Readers Digest. That in itself was £30,000 but I do not think that one can look at it just purely from that sense, there is an awful amount of goodwill to be obtained in the particular sphere. Also, Mr Speaker, I think there have been questions in the House in the past as to the difference in commissions between our various agents. I can now report to the House that all our agents are now on 20%. We have reduced the two outstanding ones from 25% to 20%. Again the 5% although it may appear to be minute could well mean £20,000 or £30,000 dependent, of course, on our sales. That is something else which one can achieve whilst one is there. On Post Offices too, there have been discussions with Girobank, I suppose Members know that Gibraltar is now able to cash giro cheques which is a service we give not only to pensioners in the United Kingdom but tourists also are very pleased to be able to come to Gibraltar and obtain a service which they can get in the United Kingdom. Mr Speaker, one cannot evaluate in real terms what . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

We must not try and do so now.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It is a very wide question, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

You have been asked whether you can justify the visits and you have said yes. You can give some examples but you must not go into great detail.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, on tourism I think the Hon Member knows that when a Minister attends one gets television and radio coverage much more, with great respect, than if the Director or anybody else goes. In fact, I am encouraged by the Hon Member's question because reading through Hansard last year I see that he thinks we should go more often. I have tried to be as realistic as possible in this answer, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am glad to see, Mr Speaker, that he sees the importance of the Minister taking part.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if there have been serious delays in the air mail service from the United Kingdom causing disruption to trading concerns and if so can it give the reasons for these delays?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Delays in the receipt of airmail from the United Kingdom occurred during the period 24 November to 4 December, 1981. These delays did not at any time consist of more than four days. The reasons for these delays were that no mail was received on 24 November and on 27 November, 1981. This had a snowballing effect and created a backlog. The backlog had been cleared by 4 December, 1981, when the situation reverted to normal.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 320 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is it true, Mr Speaker, that the situation today is not all that good and even today they are experiencing long delays?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, there has been a further delay since the question was submitted for answer and that is because of the weather conditions prevailing in the United Kingdom. We have today, Mr Speaker, received all the mail bags consisting of sixty-two letter bags and thirty-six bags of parcel post which date back to the 10 December, so we are back to normal, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So the Minister is quite happy that except for something like the weather or some unexpected occurrence like the one he explained, we are likely to have regular mail again in Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, yes. We obviously do our utmost to try and ensure that there is a regular service of air mail in the aircraft but it depends entirely on the load factor of the plane. In the event, for example, of certain essential spare parts having to be brought out, mail could well be left back for the following day. We try, of course, to avoid this as much as possible but there are circumstances which we really have no control over.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 321 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government investigate the feasibility of converting all or part of the water catchment area on the East side for the dual purpose of harnessing solar energy and collecting rain water?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Mr Speaker, I should point out that the science of harnessing solar energy is still very much in its infancy and requires considerable developments before becoming viable on a large scale.

Also, the water catchment area faces East while the optimum direction for collection of solar energy is South.

The catchment area is subject to frequent rockfalls and landslides which would easily damage the delicate and expensive equipment involved.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 321 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Will Government investigate the feasibility?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, it all depends what you are trying to do. If you want to obtain electrical energy from the area, it costs at the moment something like £500 per square metre for the silicon cells, therefore, I think, the capital expense would be impossible. If you want to distil salt water into fresh water on the area you have got to put up a whole plastic frame system which again is very expensive and as I have said the fact that it does not face South does not help to a very great extent and if you get a rockfall even at the present day it can cost damage of £4,000 or £5,000, if you had a whole plastic system of distilling it would cost £50,000 or £60,000. I think the risks are too great to investigate really seriously.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 322 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, why has it been necessary to carry out further road works at British Lines, and at what cost?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, in order to utilise the land at British Lines Road recently released by MOD it has been necessary to carry out certain works. These include:-

- a. demolition of obsolete buildings;
- b. provision of toilet and services;
- c. levelling, kerbing and paving;
- d. laying of asphalt surfacing;
- e. container area.

In the event of the frontier opening, part of the released land will be used as a car holding area for traffic waiting to enter Spain, part as a coach parking area and part for container traffic.

The cost is approximately £80,000..

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 322 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I take it then that the works that were completed by the 1st June last year are still intact and this is sort of an additional thing?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, the works that were completed by June last year mainly applied to the Revenue Offices etc, it did not envisage the large car holding area which may be necessary, we really do not know until the frontier has opened, this could not be done last year as we had not had the land handed over by MOD.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government give the figures and costs for water production from available sources for the months of October and November, 1981, and state what the stocks were at 30 November, 1981, and will Government make a statement regarding the existing water situation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, figures for potable water production and cost for October and November, 1981, are as follows:-

	<u>October</u>		<u>November</u>	
	M <sup>3</sup>	(Mg)	M <sup>3</sup>	(Mg)
Rainfall	485	(0.12)	-	
Wells	7,439	(1.63)	8,980	(1.98)
North Front Distiller	16,216	(3.57)	9,347	(2.06)
VTE Distiller	17,077	(3.75)	8,509	(1.87)
Imported	25,739	(5.66)	17,377	(3.82)
Total	66,956	(14.73)	17,377	(3.82)

Costs are as answered in Question 176 of 1981.

Stocks on 11 December, 1981, were 25,000 M<sup>3</sup>, 5.5 Mg below the projected figure for this time of the year.

The lack of rainfall has meant a shortfall in production. Difficulties in importation have aggravated the situation.

The distillers have had to put back their maintenance periods to meet the shortfall in production.

The uncertain meteorological conditions do not allow us to predict whether we are to have average rainfall in the New Year.

In order to build up stocks to cover the period when the distillers go into maintenance, extra importation by tanker from the UK of 20,400 M<sup>3</sup>, 4.5 Mg is being arranged.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 323 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I notice that on both the distillers the production figure for November is substantially down, can we have some explanation?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes. The main reason, Sir, is that these two distillers have been working for a long time, they are getting near to their scheduled maintenance periods and therefore they are giving us more trouble and are breaking down more frequently than they would under normal circumstances.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, in the case of the VTE Distiller, for example, it is only the fifth month that it has had a continuous production since a break of four months from March to June of this year, whereas before last year that distiller worked for a continuous period of ten months.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, but these distillers are normally reasonably temperamental after a six month period and they should be stopped for a minor overhaul after some five or six months. This has got to the stage that the actual faults that are occurring are of minor consequence but unfortunately a small fault means shutting down for at least one day. The fault may be repaired in one hour but it takes sixteen hours before it comes back into production.

HON W T SCOTT:

What I am really leading to, Mr Speaker, is that if we had had even substantial rainfall as last year in October, November and December, it perhaps would not have made the significant difference in the total water production and water would still have had to be imported outside of the normal traditional way of importing it from Tangier.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, if we had had reasonable rainfall last year we would have had heavier stocks all the way through and therefore the distillers would have worked less and if we had had as we would have hoped, some 2 million gallons of rain in October and the same or even more in November then we would be in, I think, a much happier situation than we actually found ourselves in.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I am thankful to the Minister for that reply but, quite frankly, of the figures that I have seen here over the last two years, one thing seems to come out quite clearly and that is that there is a pressing need for another supply of water whether it is through another distiller or whatever. Is there a project in the next development programme for another distiller?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, there is and actually later on in the House I shall be asking for some money towards the provision of that new distiller.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, what is the average consumption of water on a daily basis in Gibraltar?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The daily average consumption, Sir, in summer is around 450,000 gallons. The consumption in winter is between 1,800 to 2,000 tons. If you multiply it by 220 you will get it in gallons but since we did make an appeal for people to go carefully with water, I am happy to say that the consumption has dropped to approximately between 1,600 and 1,700 tons per day, that is about 350,000 gallons.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 324 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government give the reasons why the tenants on the upper floors of Constitution House still do not have a continuous supply of brackish water?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the salt water distribution system serving the area which includes the Tower Blocks, both Constitution and Referendum House are affected, is unable, at peak hours, to meet the demand from that area. During periods of high demand the mains pressure cannot be sustained and as a result is insufficient to enable the water supply to reach the service tanks on the top of the Tower Blocks. The installation of booster pumps, already ordered, at the base of the Tower Blocks will enable the supply of water to be maintained during the periods of low mains pressure.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 324 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Sir, I think, if I remember correctly, this is not something new, in fact, it has been going on for quite a while and I remember distinctly, I think it was the Hon Minister for Public Works, in fact saying virtually exactly the same that he has said today quite a few months ago on the pumps. Can we have some further information as to why the pumps are not here and why they have not been connected and in operation?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir. The money for the pumps was asked for actually during the estimates last year, the money was approved and four booster pumps were ordered on the 12 May, 1981. Delivery is expected at the end of January, 1982. It will take approximately two to three weeks to instal them so I should hope by March next year the situation will be, for all intents and purposes, solved.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, does the Government not agree that it is perhaps a little bit unfair to ask the tenants of Constitution and Referendum House who having no brackish water on certain occasions, have to resort for toilet facilities to use fresh water thus increasing their water bills?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, I would agree with you there, Sir, it is a lamentable situation.

HON W T SCOTT:

What is the Government doing about this?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We are waiting for the pumps to arrive, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

Yes, but they have waited for so long and the tenants are having to pay more for their water than they normally would have done.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would it not be fair for those tenants who live on the top floor who are having to pay hefty water bills because the Government is not producing a service, should their water bills not be subsidised to a certain extent?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I think that in various areas of Gibraltar at certain times there is no salt water and one has to use potable water down the toilets. I think it would be an almost impossible task to find out how much water a person had used in flushing the toilet and I think the difficulties would be impossible. I do appreciate the difficulties these people are suffering under and as I have said by March next year they should be completely cured.

HON G T RESTANO:

How long, Mr Speaker, has this situation been going on for?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It has not been so bad until the last two years. Part of the difficulty has been that the Solway valves in the flushing units in the houses are giving trouble and are tending not to shut off properly and to leak salt water away all the time. This means that the tank has emptied quicker than it used to when the valves were new. When a valve becomes so bad that it is impossible to use at all, we replace it with the old fashioned type of flushing system rather than a Solway valve.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does that mean that these tenants, Mr Speaker, have been for two years having to use fresh water for those facilities?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir. This only happens at certain times during the day when there is peak demand on the whole of the salt water system. For example, during the night the tanks all fill up completely so I should say for the first five or six hours in daylight use there

is ample salt water. It can occur perhaps at two or three o'clock in the afternoon that the water does get a little short on certain days, not every day, only when there is a peak demand in the area.

HON G T RESTANO:

Presumably then also, Mr Speaker, during the evening and at night time.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, the peak demand falls off by about five o'clock and then the tanks fill themselves up again.

HON G T RESTANO:

But this situation has been occurring for the last two years at least.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Off and on.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not unfair that these tenants have for the last two years been having to pay more for their fresh water and would Government consider subsidising to a certain extent their water bills?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would not say it is unfair, Sir, on the other hand I would not say it is fully fair.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Government consider and look into it? He said he does not know whether it is unfair or whether it is fair.

MR SPEAKER:

He does not think it is unfair for tenants to use fresh water and he does not think it is fair for the Government to subsidise. Is that the answer?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government state what it considers to be the fresh and brackish water requirements for the development on the East side and how does it propose to effect this, should the project be realised?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, it is yet too early to visualise the kind of development that will be carried out on the East side of the Rock. However, based on an assumed population of 2,500/3,000, the estimated water requirements of the East side development are:-

Potable water	-	270 m <sup>3</sup> /day (0.06 Mg/day)
Salt water	-	540 m <sup>3</sup> /day (0.12 Mg/day)

Present potable and salt water distribution networks will not be able to cope with the added demands that the scheme would impose on them.

Existing pipe work conveying potable water from the waterworks to the development site would have to be renewed by the laying of larger mains.

A new salt water reservoir sited possibly on the East side would have to be built, plus mains to convey salt water to the reservoir and from the reservoir to the development.

The estimated extra potable water requirement means an increase of 14% of our total average daily demand. The present production available from existing sources cannot cope with this added demand, so extra means of production would have to be considered.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 325 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Would Government look for a source of some capital outlay for this extra source of production from the intending developer?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I cannot see that it is easy to expect the developer to buy a new distiller for his own demands. If, as we would hope over a period of time, the Water Account becomes a viable account then, of course, the capital outlay would be recouped in due time by the actual amounts of water supplied.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 326 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government explain why invoices to the Public Works Department from the Gibraltar Quarry Company totalling £32,970.35 remained outstanding on the 30th November, 1980, and what periods do these invoices cover?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the invoices covered the period from May, 1980, to November, 1980. A payment of £20,000 on account of the sum due was made on 30 September, 1981.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 326 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Why did it take, Mr Speaker, so very many months for this account to be paid?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think, basically, the invoices had not been put in as early as they might have been put in. Also there was a certain reluctance on the part of Government to pay to the Quarry Company this amount of money while they were still hoping to get active payment by the consultants.

HON W T SCOTT:

But, surely, isn't the situation, Mr Speaker, by having a look at one of the documents that was laid on the table, that the Quarry Company has paid a substantial amount of money through bank interest which could well have been substantially reduced had these invoices been paid when presented?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, Government is considering taking legal action against the consultants covering a number of different elements. One of them will be the actual cost of certain expenses that have been made and another one will be a consequential expense for interest which has been paid by the Quarry Company which would not have been paid had the consultants done their job properly.

HON W T SCOTT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, but with respect, if the money which is outstanding to the Gibraltar Quarry Company by the Public Works Department had been paid, the consultants are not accountable for that element of interest, it is the PWD that is accountable for that and not the consultants.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I think it has been the feeling of this House that no more money should be poured into the Quarry Company at the moment until we have cleared the whole situation with the consultants who ultimately may be responsible for a considerable amount. If, of course, the House is willing to give me the odd £12,970.35 I shall be happy to accept it on behalf of the Quarry Company.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Minister is consciously twisting the words here. What is the intention of Government and when does it intend to pay the balance of not only the £12,970 outstanding but also any purchases that might have been made post to the 30th November, 1980?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There are two possibilities, Sir. Either I could come to the House for a very large supplementary to pay all these amounts and then if the Government and the Quarry Company reclaim the money from the consultants it will all square up, or there is the second alternative of trying to get the money from the consultants first and squaring up then. Speaking on behalf of the Quarry Company I would say that I would prefer the former course but I have understood that there is a Government reluctance and a reluctance I think on the part of the Opposition, to pour more money into the Quarry Company and that is the reason it has been left in abeyance until we can try and clear the matter with the consultants.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, one further thing. We are very glad in fact that finally the Minister has been able to speak on behalf of the Gibraltar Quarry Company. I think it is the first time ever he has been able to do this.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I do not accept that, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

But, Mr Speaker, surely, we are talking about not pouring money into the Quarry Company, what we are saying here, are we not, is paying them for goods produced, that is all.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, it is not exactly paying for goods produced, it is paying for work that they have done which has been considered necessary by the consultants to try and get the project working. Whether

Government should have footed that bill or whether the consultants should have footed the bill will obviously be one of the things in the Court action, if we have one.

HON W T SCOTT:

I am glad for the Hon Member but it does not appear in that way in the balance sheet.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The way the whole thing was arranged from the beginning is that the consultants said: "Do this amount of work", and a contractor who had been employed by the Government to do the work got on with the work and did it and submitted his bills. When the Quarry Company took over the consultants then shifted some of their instructions from the contractor to the Quarry Company and said: "You are not quite getting this right, do so and so". That, theoretically, was something that was being done on Government's behalf by the Quarry Company under the instructions of the consultant but whether the consultant was fully justified in saying that all these things should have been done since they did not produce a viable scheme in the first place, is the point at issue and may be the central theme in any possible Court case.

HON W T SCOTT:

May I ask just one last question, Mr Speaker, of a general nature. May I ask the Government for the latest news from the consultants in making this project viable?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, we have now asked ODA to provide us with an independent consultant to inform us whether the latest news as proposed by the original consultant is a viable scheme.

HON W T SCOTT:

So, in fact, the Government now do not feel as assured as they did in October of this year, at the last meeting of the House.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think I said at that time that we had had a proposition put to us by the consultants. We are now asking an independent consultant whether he considers that this is a viable scheme or not.

HON A T LOEDO:

Mr Speaker, who is paying for the independent consultant?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Hopefully, the ODA.

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, as the profit and loss account of this Company to the 30th November, 1980, showed a loss of £20,000 and as the net current liabilities at that date of the Company was £36,000 and as the Government has a guarantee of £40,000 to the bank, has it been necessary to increase that guarantee to the bank?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think so, yes, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister tell us to what amount?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

£60,000, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm whether one of the objects of the sand quarry was to cut a wedge at the top of the sand mound at the top of the Rock to ensure that falling rocks fall into a wedge and do not roll down the hill, is that a correct summary of one of the objectives?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That would have been one of the benefits of the quarry in operation, yes.

HON A J HAYNES:

Has any of that, in fact, happened?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, because the amount of sand produced from the top of the Rock is absolutely negligible.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, may I clarify a point on this matter. Obviously, the independent consultant's report is of some consequence and when that report is received it may have a bearing on the heads of damage which Government might be able to pursue by legal action.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that any litigation is bound to involve in lengthy periods of time and what is going to happen in between, is the Government going to go on increasing its overdraft or is it going to dispose of its interest in the Gibraltar Quarry Company and cut their losses?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, I think the Quarry Company at the moment is running without any increased expenses, it is running on a viable basis at the moment.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 327 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what is the extent of Government's involvement in the new litter bins being installed throughout Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the provision of advertising litter bins resulted from an offer made to the Government by a private firm.

The Government considered the offer attractive, as apart from being a source of revenue, the acquisition, fixing and maintenance was at no cost to Government.

After negotiations with the firm in question, an agreement was entered into for the provision of up to 300 litter bins for a period of five years commencing on the 1st October, 1981.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 327 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Does Government derive any financial benefit from the advertising on these litter bins?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would not say we derive anything from the cost of advertising, what we do derive is an amount of £5 per bin per annum for the first 150 bins and £2.50 per bin per annum for the next 150 bins and of course it also saves us having to provide litter bins ourselves.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is Government therefore consulted when the rates of advertising on these litter bins is offered to prospective clients?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

In other words, the client himself can mention whatever figure he thinks correct?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If people are willing to accept his figure I presume there is nothing that can be done about it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, who is responsible for emptying the bins, there are a lot of them very full?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The emptying is normally done by Government, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state which of the proposals and recommendations made in the Port Study Report have been accepted by Government and will Government make a statement as to their programme for implementation of these proposals?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, in reply to the first part of the question, I would refer the Hon Member to the detailed statement I made to the House in July outlining the Government's position regarding the recommendations of the report.

With regard to the second part of the question, insofar as major development projects are concerned, provision has been made in the 1981/86 Development Programme.

Apart from major development projects, the other matters recommended and phased within the ten years of the programme suggested by the Port Study Consultants which are receiving attention are:-

No 4 Jetty and Shed: This has been handed over to Government and is being used for the discharge of building materials in bulk, sand and gravel. The shed is being demolished.

Clean Up Operation: Working areas have been considerably improved and a large amount of dunnage, pallets and other materials has been removed from the Port area, by using the Port Department's pick-up van specially purchased for this purpose.

The Attorney-General is also looking into the necessary amendments to the Port Rules in order to give greater powers of enforcement to the Captain of the Port. This will make the clean up campaign more effective.

Staff: The appointment of a Dock Controller and two assistants is in hand. Their primary task will be that of coordinating all cargo operations and ensuring clear and safe working practices. Interviews for these posts have already been held and their appointment by the Public Service Commission is awaited shortly.

Yacht Reporting Centre: This was recommended for the latter part of the second year or later. Work has in fact commenced and a site office (Portakabin) has already been positioned on Waterport Wharf to the West of Shell's Bunkering Station. It is envisaged that this office will be operational early in the new year.

New Port Offices: Work is at present under way converting the old workers' hostel at the North Mole into the new Port Offices. The necessary works and refurbishing will be completed by June, 1982. This was actually programmed for the third year but Government has brought it forward.

Transit Shed: The refurbishing of the present Transit Shed was programmed for the fourth year, this, however, has already been tackled and is nearing completion, without any interference to cargo operations.

Unstuffing Shed No 2 Jetty: Detailed plans are now being drawn up for the unstuffing shed after consultation with the Port operators. A further meeting will be held once the plans are ready to ensure that all necessary facilities have been catered for, prior to construction.

Ice Box: As the Hon Member is aware, negotiations have been held to transfer the Ice Box to the old refuse destructor site. Although programmed for the fourth year, this is already reaching its final negotiating stage.

Sheppards Marina Extension: This was scheduled for the ninth or tenth year of the Programme. Government has, however, already approved limited reclamation in the Marina to improve the facilities. The first phase which provides for the reclamation of land for shore facilities, a slipway and an alongside berth, is already under way.

These, Mr Speaker, are the works at present being implemented in accordance with the recommendations of the Port Study Report although not necessarily as strictly programmed by the consultants.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 328 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, though, as the Hon Member has stated, a statement was made, there seems to have been one departure, the question of the use of the Ice Box and the Customs Shed. This we were told by the Financial Secretary was an idea. Has this now been incorporated as Government policy for the Port or is it still an idea?

HON A J CANEPA:

It is Government policy, yes.

HON A J HAYNES:

Has the feasibility of that idea been investigated?

HON A J CANEPA:

Not as yet, it is something that is at the policy stage and I think we will have to await developments in respect of the consultancies which are going to be put in hand in respect of supplementary economic activities. This is something which could form part of that.

HON A J HAYNES:

The other thing, Mr Speaker, what is the programme as regards the facilities for the North Mole and the Liners and so forth. As the Minister will remember, in Question 247 I asked and I was told in the answer eventually from the Financial and Development Secretary: "We will do it as soon as we get some money".

HON A J CANEPA:

I did not cover that part, Mr Speaker, precisely because I was aware of the fact that information had been given arising from Question 247. In fact, other matters that have already been approved but which are going to have to await development are the question of the provision of a modest passenger terminal, the question of converting the Ice Box into a transit shed, the provision of a security fence in the Port area and the reallocation of the transport companies facilities. These will have to await, as I said, developments.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister agree that these are in fact the most important aspects of the Port recommendations? I think they are. Is there a programme for these? Is there a set of priorities as to which will come first and as to which year they will be undertaken?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Mr Speaker, really the Government must now in connection with next year's budget, in connection with the new situation that we are faced with in the economy of Gibraltar, I think we have got to take a very close look at matters. It could well be that the Port Study in the wake of the Defence Review may be the subject of further assessment, or re-assessment I should say. I mentioned the question of major development projects, one project to which we are giving priority naturally will be the Viaduct bridge and the new causeway to the North of Viaduct bridge. I am sure that that would have immediate priority.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will that in fact enable the Government to do something at least for the Mons Calpe ferry?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, it is a limited matter. The causeway went hand in hand with reclamation of Waterport Basin. Until the situation is clearer with respect to development aid, I do not think that we can commit ourselves to reclaiming Waterport Basin but it is a logical next step. The causeway has got to be provided because the Viaduct bridge is in danger of collapse but that has got nothing to do at this stage with the Mons Calpe.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, one final question. I understand from the Minister's answer that there is some uncertainty for fairly understandable reasons as to the future but these I believe, Mr Speaker, would the Minister agree, do amount to some delay or potential delay in tackling the problems and fulfilling these recommendations and as such will the Minister consider introducing some interim measures for, say, the liners calling at North Mole, perhaps lavatories, a small cafe, something to beautify the spot and similarly will the Minister consider doing something to further remedy or improve the situation for the ferry passengers?

HON A J CANEPA:

I realise that the Hon Member has a particular interest in these two matters because he keeps on constantly bringing them up. My priorities are different, I will be absolutely frank with him. I do not consider these matters either to be directly my responsibility as Minister for the Port and that is why the Minister for Tourism earlier on answered the question on the Cruise Passenger Terminal and that is why the Financial and Development Secretary deals with the question of the arrival hall at Waterport, they are not my Ministerial responsibilities. I personally as Minister for the Port do not attach the same importance therefore. As Minister for Economic Development I am interested in other matters which I consider to be of greater urgency but really, as I say, we have to re-assess what is the situation that faces us in April or May, there might be further development talks in March, until that stage is reached the Government cannot do more than what it is doing and I think the Hon Member will see that we have tackled many matters that were in the Port Study Report. All the matters that should have been covered in the first year, I think, are pretty well covered or are in the process of being put in hand and we have gone well beyond. I think that that is an indication of the priority that we give to the whole Port Study and the urgency with which I am trying to tackle matters wherever possible but, really, I cannot commit myself beyond that, Mr Speaker, at this stage.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, by how many units does the Government expect its housing stock to increase as a result of the proposed East side development?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, it is impossible to say at this early stage how many housing units will be built on the area to be reclaimed. This information will only be available when proposals have been submitted. It cannot be expected, however, that Government's own housing stock will increase directly as a result of the scheme since this will be a private sector venture. There may well be, however, some gain to Government housing in the event of new houses being taken up by persons who now occupy Government-owned dwellings.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 329 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

I think, Mr Speaker, that we will come to blows with the Government on this one. The question, Mr Speaker, perhaps the Minister will agree, is aimed at a Government which has a definite policy and does the Minister . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

We are not debating, if you want to seek information you are free to do so.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does the Minister agree as to the advisability of having clearcut plans on the question of the East side development?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member had asked that question I would have answered it. I think there are a number of questions on the East side reclamation. As I answer them I think it will become clearer as to what it is that we are trying to do and what is the stage that we are at in respect of this project.

HON A J HAYNES:

What is the stage that you are at at this project?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think it will become clearer as other questions are asked but it does not arise on a question which is purely about the housing stock. If the Hon Member wants to deal with the wider implications of the East side development he can ask a question on that.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, following the statement of the 26th October, 1981, on the development of Government properties by the private sector, will Government now state whether any satisfactory proposals as referred to in paragraph 3 of the statement have been made and will Government explain the details of such proposals?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the scheme as outlined in my statement has not yet been advertised but a tender notice is about to be issued which will invite participation in the redevelopment or rehabilitation and modernisation of four pre-war properties for residential purposes. I can now, therefore, give the essence of Government's proposals in greater detail. Preference will be given to applications from persons who are eligible to apply for a house under the Government Housing Allocation Scheme, who wish to take up residence in these properties and who are prepared to solve their housing problem or improve their living conditions on a self-help basis without any assistance from public funds.

In return the successful tenderers would be granted leases of either 99 or 70 years depending on whether redevelopment or modernisation was carried out.

Participants in such a scheme would be required to form themselves into a housing association which would take on responsibility for looking after the common parts of the building on behalf of its members.

The four properties in question are:-

- 4 Lower Castle Road
- 6 Lower Castle Road
- 8/14 Devil's Gap Steps
- 8 Willis's Road

and now consist of a total of thirteen flats.

As I also said in October there will be a fifth property as well, namely, 46 City Mill Lane. The conditions of tender will be the same as for the other four properties except that Government will also consider proposals for redevelopment for residential or commercial or a combination of both purposes. Developers on this basis would be required to provide at their own expense a public pedestrian link between Cannon Lane and City Mill Lane.

Tenderers in the case of a personal occupation scheme will furthermore be given an opportunity to offer a lump sum premium or a rent with an option to commute thereafter the rent obligation within the period of 25 years in accordance with a given formula.

I may also add that when considering schemes of rehabilitation and modernisation Government will insist on a great deal more than just a cosmetic facelift. Standards of accommodation expected will be those normally used by Government in its modernisation programme and guidance will be available from Public Works Department if anyone wishes to consult them.

I would in fact commend tenderers to do so in their own interest having regard to the long period of the lease and to the need to avoid short-term expedients which will have serious financial repercussions in the longer term.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 330 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if there is a general interest in this project, will more houses be put on the market?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Sir, I can confirm that that is Government's intention.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is this therefore a new line in Government policy?

HON A J CANEPA:

This is breaking new ground engineered and initiated by the Minister for Economic Development.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, what new trading activities does Government expect will result from the East of Gibraltar Reclamation Project?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, it is too early to visualise what new trading activities will result from the development scheme in question apart from the initial construction stages.

A better appreciation of the trading potentials will, however, be possible once outline proposals have been submitted and analysed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 331 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, surely the Government must have some idea of what it would like to see in this new reclamation project. Surely, before asking for proposals they must have something in their minds as to what they would like to see there. Can the Minister not confirm this?

HON A J CANEPA:

We have given those details, Mr Speaker, they have been provided as an Annexe to the application form that has been provided to applicants but I have said in the answer, I have made reference to outline proposals, we are not at the tender stage, we are only inviting outline proposals from applicants and then there will be a process of selective tendering. In other words, the procedure is going to be very much the same as that which has been followed in the case of the multi-storey car park where we invited proposals from potential developers and then from those applicants we selected and, in fact, the seven of them were invited then to tender formally. We are very much on the lookout to see what it is that people, having regard to the parameters which the Government is laying down, we want to give flexibility so that we do not stifle the development. The whole thing, of course, arose from a number of enquiries that the Government received from within and from outside Gibraltar and therefore because we were receiving enquiries in respect of a reclamation scheme in respect of the provision of yacht repair facilities on the East side of the Rock, the Government considered that it was therefore timely, if nothing else, to test the market in this respect.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, this is precisely what the question is leading to. The Minister has just said that one of the areas might be a yacht repair yard. That is the sort of general ideas which I would have thought the Government would have had already at this stage and in the comparison that has been made by the Minister with the multi-storey car park, does he not remember that when we first started talking



about the feasibility of a multi-storey car park, in fact, it was envisaged at the time that beneath the multi-storey car park there would be shopping arcades and so on and therefore what I would like to know is what the Government has in mind, of course, in broad parameters, but what sort of trading activities.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer has been that they have not got an idea as yet until such time as outline proposals have been submitted and analysed.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am sure, Mr Speaker, that no responsible Government, and perhaps the Minister will confirm that this is not so, I am sure that no responsible Government would go into a project without at least having some idea of what it wants to see there, particularly on such a large project for Gibraltar which covers 33 acres.

HON A J CANEPA:

But the information has been provided for potential developers, it is available. Of course the Government has ideas of the nature of development that it wants to see there. The Government, in inviting applications, have said that we want to see tourist orientated development, that we do not rule out commercial development, hotels, recreational amenities, yacht marinas and yacht repair facilities, that is the nature of the development that we would like to see. Having laid down the parameters, we are then inviting proposals in more detail to be submitted to the Government together with feasibility studies and so on. That information, in much more detail than what I have given, has been made available to potential developers. Anybody who makes enquiries, and many enquiries have been received particularly from outside Gibraltar, that information is sent to the potential developers.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I am grateful for that last reply, that is precisely why I asked the question. I do not think we have any potential developers on this side of the House and therefore we wanted to know precisely what we have been given now and that is what the question seeks in the first place.

HON A J CANEPA:

I did not take the question to be that, Mr Speaker. He referred to trading activities and if any Hon Member had asked for more details to be provided about the nature of the scheme, these would have been provided but the impression

that I got having regard to the nature of the question, was that the Hon Member had some idea of what the development project was about because this has been made public and it was picked up both by GBC and by local newspapers, it was given some publicity. I think, at the time, the Hon Member himself was away, I do not know whether he has managed to read up since he returned through all those newspapers whilst he was not here but, as I say, the information is available, the only thing is that we interpreted this particular question precisely as trade and not more in the nature of wider economic activities in the reclaimed area.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A T LODDO

In view of the extent of the proposed development of the East side, would Government expect the prospective developer to make provision for schooling facilities up to and including middle school level?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, Government does not expect provision to be made in the scheme for schooling facilities if the question refers to Government-financed schools but there would be nothing to stop a developer doing so if he so wished whether on a private or public basis. At this stage all that can be said is that the provision of schooling facilities is not a requirement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 332 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but would not the Government agree that in view of the size of the development, a 33-acre site, and in view of the fact that great emphasis is being laid on the commercial side, yacht berths, shops, restaurants, recreational activities, would not the Government consider insisting that part of the development should include a school for the area?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Sir. I do not think the burden can be put on a developer. If as a result of large scale development of the area concerned we get a population there which might be a sizeable population which has more of a resident character about it than that of a transient one, then schooling facilities might have to be provided for the children living in that area. I would consider that to be a Government responsibility, to provide such schooling facilities, I do not think that the burden need necessarily be put on the developer.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, do I take it then that in that case Government would build more schools in that area?

HON A J CANEPA:

In that case the Government would have to give serious consideration to the provision of schooling facilities in that area or in one close to that area.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 333 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, considering the magnitude of the proposed development of the East side of the Rock, would Government extend the time limit for submitting proposals?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the period of over four months allowed for the submission of proposals is considered reasonable given that such proposals will only be in outline form at this stage. The period can, however, be extended if it proves to be too short.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 333 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, do I take it then that even after the period for submitting proposals expires, anybody at a subsequent time wishing to tender would be allowed to do so?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, what I am saying is, Mr Speaker, if before the period expires and it expires on the 31st March, 1982, there are applicants who point out to the Government that they have in fact found the period of, it is 4½ months actually, Mr Speaker, because the date of publication was the 13th November, if they point out that they have found the period to be short, I think the Government would consider extending it after they have indicated that it is short but once the 31st March closes I do not think it would be fair to allow late applications.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, and would the Government in the case of there being only one interested party be prepared to hand over a multi-million pound project to that one party?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is a hypothetical question, Mr Speaker.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, does Government consider that enough information has been given in the Government's offer to prospective developers of the East Coast to enable developers who do not have an intimate knowledge of Gibraltar to put forward feasible proposals and does Government not agree that much more detailed information is necessary if prospective tenderers of standing are to be attracted?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, a scheme of the size and nature envisaged necessarily requires a thorough and expert study of all the factors involved. This must include investigations into hydraulics and geophysical conditions and take into account data on waves, tides and currents, sea bed conditions, soil and beach erosion and possible effects on the coastline and ecology of this part of the Rock. These investigations must be carried out by those persons interested in submitting proposals themselves since the results of their findings will determine the cost, extent and nature of the development and the assessment of the viability of the very substantial amounts that have to be invested in realising a project of this magnitude. This is normal procedure and the invitation to submit proposals is on the basis that Government will not supply any technical details other than the guidelines given in the brief available to potential developers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 334 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, does the Minister not agree that the 2½ pages of information that has been given out by the Department of the Surveyor and Planning Secretary together with part of a plan, really, of the area, does he consider that this sort of very, very sketchy information either about the area, about the Government thinking on it and what the Government would like to see there, is not likely to attract developers of international standing and is it reasonable to expect developers to go into the tremendous expense of having a feasibility study with such poor guidelines?

HON A J CANEPA:

It does, Mr Speaker, seem to be attracting certainly many enquiries from developers of international standing. I can assure the Hon Member that probably as a result of the half page insert in the Estate Gazette, up until yesterday's post, at a time when the mail is notoriously bad, we have received eight enquiries and some of those from people of very high repute. Whether the information will be enough, what we are providing, remains to be seen but the burden is on the potential developer. They do have to submit feasibility studies in the same way as a feasibility study has to be provided if a new hotel is to be built, say, at Parson's Lodge or at Engineer Battery, in the same way as a feasibility study has to be submitted for the multi-storey car park at Casemates.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister not agree that this is a much bigger thing than Parson's Lodge or anything else? We are talking about a big sizeable chunk of Gibraltar being leased out to a developer. We are talking of 40 acres or whatever it is. Does not the Minister agree that if we are going to invite or attract developers of international standing, that there should almost be a brochure prepared about Gibraltar, its people, the population, all these things?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, we have got such a brochure. We have a development brochure which is also being sent to all the enquiries. I do not know whether the Hon Member has seen it or not but the Government does have a development brochure which is kept up-to-date and this is also being sent to the potential developers.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is it being given to everybody who applies for the forms because I can assure the Minister that is not the case?

HON A J CANEPA:

Well, perhaps, in respect of enquiries from within Gibraltar it has not been made available but certainly in respect of enquiries from outside Gibraltar the development brochure has been sent. However, I will ensure that any enquiries that we have received from within Gibraltar also get the development brochure.

HON P J ISOLA:

In view of the fact that one advert in the Estate Gazette has brought on eight enquiries, does that not support the question of my Hon Friend on the right of the really short time that is being given? If Government want to end up with the right development, is it not in the interest of Government to advertise as widely as possible and to give plenty of time for people to make their own enquiries? For example, Mr Speaker, would the Minister not agree that in the brochure that is given out or the form that is given out, would he not agree that a statement merely saying that the project is subject to the Development Aid Ordinance would mean nothing to any developer without an intimate knowledge of Gibraltar?

HON A J CANEPA:

I have already given an undertaking, Mr Speaker, that there is no difficulty about extending the period in respect of those who communicate to us before the 31st March, no difficulty at all. What we are after is to ensure as far as possible that the scheme does get off the ground and if extending the period is the way that it can and should be done then, of course, we are perfectly happy to do so.

HON A J HAYNES:

Why the hurry, Mr Speaker, when up till now every time we have asked something about the East side they have said "Nothing doing"?

HON A J CANEPA:

I disagree with the Hon Member. I have been asked about the East side and now I am going to give him chapter and verse because he has given me the opportunity. On the 11th March the Hon Mr Bossano asked: "Can Government state whether it has received any proposals for a land reclamation project on the East side of the Rock?" and I said: "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". Again from the Hon Mr Bossano in July this year: "Can Government confirm that it has been told by MOD that William's Way Tunnel is required for defence purposes and cannot be used in connection with land reclamation on the East side of the Rock?" That led to a number of supplementaries including some from the Hon Mr Isola who asked: "Should a private firm apply to excavate from William's Way for reclamation on the East side, am I not right in thinking that any reclamation or any work on the Eastern side of the Rock would be subject, surely, to Government policy, tendering procedures and so forth? Am I right?" and I said, yes, he was. I said that I had a number of enquiries and I said: "I think that this is a matter that we want to pursue further, the whole question of economic development on the East side of the Rock and it will be tackled at my level rather than at an official level. I do not mind putting myself at the disposal of any people wishing to make an approach to me on the matter". This was in July. There had been previous questions so it has not come out of the blue, I should inform the Hon Mr Haynes, Mr Speaker, he can see that it has been very much in the pipeline and here it is.

HON A J HAYNES:

It has not come out of the blue, Mr Speaker, I mentioned it in my electoral broadcast. It has been a project which has been in the air since 1968 or 1969 so why, suddenly, the hurry for this deadline?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, the project came up in 1968 at the time that the border closed and that put an end to it. Naturally, interest has awakened because there are indications that the border may open and there have been indications since the signing of the Lisbon Agreement so, naturally, potential developers are now interested once again.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON W T SCOTT

In fact, Mr Speaker, this question has been partly answered already. Will Government inform this House as to the manner and extent in which the development on the East side has been advertised?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the invitation to submit proposals for development on the East coast has been advertised through the usual local news media and, in the United Kingdom, in the "Estates Gazette", which is one of the leading journals in the United Kingdom property world. The scheme was picked up by Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation and local newspapers and was given wide publicity. The local notice will be repeated at monthly intervals.

A press release giving details of the scheme was also issued on 2 December to 63 specialised newspapers in the United Kingdom by Eric Williams and Partners (Public Relations Consultants) Ltd on behalf of the Gibraltar Government Tourist Office. I can add, Mr Speaker, that I already have cuttings of it being given publicity in the Travel News of the 10 December and in the Travel Trade Gazette of the 11 December.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 335 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Minister not agree that because the project is of this size it would be worth, having regard to the result there has been from the Estates Gazette, it would be worth having paid adverts in a whole range of papers?

HON A J CANEPA:

I will consult with my official advisers, Mr Speaker, as to whether we should put advertisements in journals other than the Estates Gazette.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will Government give greater consideration to those employing or likely to employ the largest possible reclamation and if so, will they then make that clear in their advertising?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Mr Speaker, that will be a matter to be gone into when we consider the proposals which are received.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 336 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government make a statement on the 1978/81 Development Programme and outline the position with regard to the completion of this programme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, I would refer the Hon Member to the detailed statement which I made to the House on economic development during the course of this year's Budget session, where I gave a comprehensive account of progress on the 1978/81 Development Programme. In particular, Mr Speaker, the pages in question begins at the bottom of page 94 of the Hansard (Volume II) of the 11th March. I will, however, update the salient aspects. Total expenditure on the 1978/81 Programme will exceed £30m of which ODA grants will have accounted for £13m. The Gibraltar Government's contribution towards ODA funded projects has risen sharply from an estimated £0.9m to £4.6m. Financial slippage on ODA disbursements are estimated at £3.6m (mainly on one project - the Girls' Comprehensive School), the lowest ever percentage figure compared to previous programmes. In terms of physical progress, I would refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question 268 of 1981 at the last meeting, when I mentioned that completion of five remaining projects (ie St Jago's, St Joseph's, Flat Bastion and Lime Kiln 1A housing projects and the Girls' School) will be achieved by the summer of 1982.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 336 OF 1981

HON. P J ISOLA:

And these will be paid for in accordance with the Development Aid Programme of 1978/81?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 337 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Has Government any plans for further development to be put in motion now that this programme is nearing completion?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. The 1981/86 Development Programme. As I have informed the House repeatedly, this programme involved lengthy and detailed pre-planning of a series of projects related to infrastructural development, housing and other areas of social and economic need. I would add that the Government has already committed local funds for a number of planned projects, eg the Power Station (£7m), the telephone (IDD) system (£1m), the Catalan Bay housing project (£0.35m), and a series of port projects. I would also refer to the statement I made at the last meeting regarding private sector redevelopment of selective properties and the advertised notice inviting proposals for the East side reclamation.

NO. 338 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state whether their application for funds to the EEC for investment in a Hydroponic Farm Project for Gibraltar has been considered and will Government ensure that an area is earmarked for such a project?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the Gibraltar Government has not made an application to the EEC for investment in a Hydroponic Farm Project for Gibraltar. After many meetings and lengthy correspondence with the person interested in the proposed scheme, the Gibraltar Government agreed to make an approach in the form of an enquiry, enclosing details of the project, on behalf of the person concerned. A reply has only recently been received, from Brussels which states that, irrespective of Gibraltar's status regarding the Common Agricultural Policy, there is no legal basis for aid for the project. A copy of the reply has been sent to the person concerned.

A number of large areas in the Upper Rock have been proposed for the project. The Development and Planning Commission has not accepted that the areas in question can be earmarked for hydroponic cultivation. The Government is in no position to ensure that an area will be earmarked for a project which imposes large demands on land and which seeks financial assistance in the order of £7 million, particularly since future requirements on land generally have not yet been finally determined.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 338 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware that one of our MEP's, namely, Mr Alf Lomas, has taken an interest in the matter and this interest has been communicated to the other MEP's responsible for Gibraltar and that Mr Alf Lomas outlined a method whereby EEC funds could or may be made available for such a project?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am aware, Mr Speaker, that Mr Lomas and, indeed, Lord Bethell, I think, himself, has taken an interest in this project and one would be grateful for any concrete assistance that they might be able to give which might make the EEC more amenable to granting assistance to the Gibraltar Government in respect of this and many other projects in respect of which we have already approached the EEC for financial assistance and I would be grateful to know, myself, how Mr Alf Lomas proposes to pursue the matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister, to put himself out of this difficulty, write to Mr Alf Lomas and find out from Mr Alf Lomas himself and if so will the Minister then undertake to write on behalf of the Gibraltar Government to solicit the help of the MEP's for such a project?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, if I may answer this part of the question. We are fully aware of how we can pursue the funding by the EEC of projects in Gibraltar, it is known as the Ortoli facility. What we have been doing is delaying going forward on any such proposals until we knew the answer to this from HMG to the development aid application, because one thing that we would have to make clear was how much aid we are receiving from HMG when we went forward with an Ortoli proposal.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I never understood that the Government was proposing to finance this project itself. How can the ODA therefore have any bearing on the EEC funds?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am speaking about the way in which the EIB would fund any project in Gibraltar. It is most unlikely that it would go to a specific person and give them funds, any funding would be done through the Government.

HON A J HAYNES:

How would that be affected by the ODA?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Because, Mr Speaker, the EIB would want to know what our development plans were over a period, where the money was coming from, to that extent they would require to know what funds we were getting from HMG.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does the Government not agree it is a desirable objective to make Gibraltar self-sufficient in vegetables and fruit and can Government explain why Government cannot earmark an area on the Rock face up above about which there has been no development for any time, for any year, and areas especially that I would have thought do not give themselves easily to any other sort of development than some sort of hydroponic farm?

HON A J CANEPA:

I would say that to be self-sufficient, generally, is a good thing and to be self-sufficient in respect of food and vegetables may very well be a good thing. One has got to weigh up that objective, however, with the fact that it is £7m that we are talking about and note that we have only been able to get £4m from the United Kingdom on the question of development, that the project is not labour intensive, it would only employ twenty or thirty people. As regards the land on the Upper Rock, I think I should inform the Hon Member that the Upper Rock is in fact designated in the City Plan as a nature conservation area, it is a recreational conservation area. So under the present City Plan to earmark an area for development there would be contrary to the statutory policy in respect of town planning. These are the considerations which have until present guided the Development and Planning Commission in its deliberations.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I can understand the question of money, this is understandable but I cannot understand why the Development and Planning Commission would not agree as a very desirable objective, a hydroponic farm in Gibraltar, finance to be found from somewhere by somebody, and would not be prepared to recommend a change in the City Plan because is it not a fact that probably when the City Plan was drawn up there was probably no such project, hydroponic farms, I believe, are things that have come up in recent years?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, that is not quite so. We in fact had a feasibility study on hydroponics conducted here in Gibraltar in 1975 by an Arizona University team and it was not very conclusive.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, coming back to an earlier point. Did the Financial and Development Secretary mean that when the ODA monies have been cleared up he would then be applying for funds or not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

When we know the results of the application or submissions to HMG as to the 1981/86 development programme, we shall be in a position to go forward to the EIB on the Ortolí facility to see whether they will provide funds for any of the projects in the development plan.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister for Economic Development undertake to write to Mr Alf Lomas?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Mr Speaker, Mr Alf Lomas is one of the Members of the European Parliament who form the Gibraltar Group and it is not for me to write to Mr Lomas.

HON A J HAYNES:

Why does the Minister show an interest in Mr Lomas' possible suggestion, does he want someone else to write for him?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think Mr Lomas is aware of the fact that I have had correspondence and meetings with the person concerned because invariably they are copied to Mr Lomas. In fact, the latest letter which I have received from the person concerned dated yesterday has been copied to the Hon the Leader of the Opposition and to Mr Alf Lomas and if Mr Alf Lomas has greater interest in pursuing the project, I think he himself would get in touch with me.

HON P J ISOLA:

What would be the point of anybody pursuing the project if the Government is not prepared to earmark an area for a hydroponic farm?

HON A J CANEPA:

It is a chick and egg situation, Mr Speaker. We are reviewing the City Plan next year and perhaps the Development and Planning Commission might be prepared to reconsider its policy in that respect if it were to be convinced that the project is viable and is feasible, if it were convinced that the funds are available and that that is the best way of utilising such considerable funds. Then I think it would be the responsible thing to reconsider the whole thing either by moving the Scouts to Princess Caroline's or making Princess Caroline's Battery available. I myself do not favour that, I can tell the Hon Member, any development in Princess Caroline's Battery. I would like to see some areas of the Upper Rock available to the whole of the public and I do not think we have got to develop the whole of Gibraltar but perhaps the more conservationist line that I adopt is not shared by everybody.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I then ask, if the Development and Planning Commission will have a look at this again next year on all the conditions that the Minister has said, will the Minister agree that it is desirable not to do anything with any particular land that could be used for a hydroponic farm until final conclusions have been reached, otherwise there is no point in pursuing the idea?

HON A J CANEPA:

Nothing is going to be done at Princess Caroline's, that is certain. As far as the Scouts are concerned I am not so sure but what I do ask the Hon Members to understand is this, that the Economic Adviser and myself have been giving this matter a great deal of attention. The Chief Minister is also the subject of a lot of correspondence but on these matters usually the buck stops here. I do not know what it is that people in Gibraltar would like me to concentrate my energy on, whether it is the definite problems that we know are coming up, this could fit in, I am not saying that it cannot, but my time is limited, my energy is limited and this is a matter that I have been giving a great deal of time to perhaps at the expense of other matters and we now have a number of consultancies coming up on supplementary economic activity and we are all going to have to be working very, very hard over the next year. Unless the funds are available, quite honestly, I am loath to give more of my time to a project which might be abortive in any case. I must be frank and sincere so that Hon Members know exactly how I stand on that matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

Has there been a change in Government policy as regards the hydroponic farm because as I understand it, on the 2nd October, 1980, the Chief Minister undertook to write a letter stating that the Government of Gibraltar fully supported the hydroponic farm scheme and what they awaited was funds from the EEC?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, that is not correct, Mr Speaker. What was being sought was a declaration from the Gibraltar Government that it was prepared to earmark land for that purpose and the Government has never been prepared to earmark land for that purpose and I am telling you today, now, what the position is. That the Government was being pressed to do that, that is another matter.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 339 OF 1981

17.12.81

THE HON P J ISOLA

ORAL

Will Government make a statement on the Development Aid talks held in Gibraltar recently and have any assurances been given in relation to Development Aid in the foreseeable future?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I think, Mr Speaker, I dealt at length with this matter in the statement I made earlier today.



THE HON G T RESTANO

ORAL

Has Government issued an invitation to Mr Neil Marten, Minister for Overseas Development, to visit Gibraltar in connection with the next Development Plan?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The answer must be the same. I wanted to say a little more this morning but I was adhering to my statement and that is that as I had the opportunity of seeing Mr Marten as it was expected he would have been at the meeting with the Lord Privy Seal and the Minister for Defence, I would have referred had he been reluctant to accept the invitation, to the message I got from the Hon Member that he had said at the CPA Plenary Conference that he was willing to be invited and I would also have reminded him that at the previous CPA Conference he gave a similar reply to Mr Featherstone which was followed by an invitation which was later side tracked but in fact he was not able to be at this meeting because of the bad weather conditions in England that made it impossible for people to get to London. The message was conveyed at the meeting and also, on my behalf, to the Permanent Under Secretary by the Financial and Development Secretary when he visited him so the invitation is there and I shall now follow it by a formal letter inviting him to come.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 340 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

I am grateful for that reply, Mr Speaker. If I may just take up the Chief Minister on one point where he said that the previous year there had been a similar conversation with Mr Featherstone and that an invitation had been sent to Mr Marten, was this invitation not accepted?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it was linked up with something else, it was not accepted and we were side-tracked on that one, I do not say by Mr Marten himself but I think he was advised that it would not have been prudent for him to come at that time, that is my understanding of the situation.

HON G T RESTANO:

Was it followed up in any way?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, it was followed up but the answer was always the same and it came to a point when things were complicated and it was obvious that he had fore-knowledge of things to come and he was not prepared to come out.

THE HON J BOSSANO

ORAL

Is it Government's intention to continue to apply parity of wages and salaries and civil service conditions of employment irrespective of what happens to the Dockyard?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the application of the principle of parity of wages and salaries and conditions is subject to annual review by the Official Employers. In so far as the Gibraltar Government is concerned, the matter is looked at on the basis of the financial position and the overall state of the economy.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 341 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

So is the Chief Minister then saying, Mr Speaker, that the Government can give no commitment that it wishes to continue with parity of wages in the event of the composition of the public sector being reduced as a result of the Dockyard being run down?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not want to speculate, Mr Speaker, what the situation will be when the matter is considered in the normal way prior to the 1982 review.

HON J BOSSANO

Would the Chief Minister not agree that it is only correct that people who are outside the Dockyard should be made aware of whether their wages and salaries and their conditions of employment are likely to be put at risk or not by what happens to the Dockyard?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I would like to say that I hope it is possible to carry on with the wages policy. I do not know what the economic position will be, what the alternative would be and I think I have gone far enough to say that it would be our hope, not only in respect of the people that we employ but an indication of what remains of what may have gone away by the closure of the Dockyard if it is closed, that we will be able to maintain that.

HON J BOSSANO:

Have the UK Departments given any indication to the Gibraltar Government as to what their attitude would be in the event of the Dockyard not continuing in MOD hands?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

None whatever.

THE HON J BOSSANO

ORAL

Can Government state whether the motion passed in the July meeting of this House with reference to the Dockyard's future was brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Government and if so what their reaction to it was?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The text of the resolution passed on 14 July was formally transmitted to the Governor on 20 July. The matters dealt with in that resolution have been discussed in detail with British Government officials and with UK Ministers and I explained the present position on these matters in the statement I made earlier today.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 342 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Chief Minister agree that in fact the decision of the British Government on the announcement of closing the Dockyard in 1983 and, indeed, the way it was handled, runs contrary entirely to the feelings of this House as expressed in that motion and in the contributions made?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that is obvious, I do not have to agree with it, it is obvious and I have brought it to the notice of the Secretary of State not, if I may say so, directly resulting but it was very much in the papers that were before the officials here and that, I think, was reflected I hope clearly in my statement this morning.

HON J BOSSANO:

And the Chief Minister would also agree then that in fact the British Government decided to proceed with this in the full knowledge of the fact that it was contrary to the wishes of the House of Assembly because they were fully informed before they took the decision?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am sure that it must have been as much with the knowledge of the feelings of the House of Assembly as of the 7,000 workers of Chatham and those at Portsmouth when the decision was taken that it would affect them. Whether they had passed a resolution or not they would certainly have passed it before and in fact I think the hard answer to that is that the Government have taken very hard decisions well knowing that it was going to upset a lot of people and some of the people who have been upset and particularly affected are the people of Gibraltar and we are trying to do our best out of that situation.

When was the Gibraltar Government informed that Her Majesty's Government had taken the decision to close the Naval Dockyard in 1983?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I was informed, in the strictest confidence, on Friday 20 November that is, less than 48 hours before the Unions were informed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 343 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, did in fact the Chief Minister make any attempt in that 48 hours either to communicate with anybody else on the issue or to go back to the British Government and try and get the matter handled in a different way?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I could not communicate to anybody because it had been given to me in strict confidence but I made my feelings pretty well clear and I am sure that they were transmitted to London as is normally done when one takes matters up of this importance and this nature and, in fact, the reactions are in my experience always reported back.

Was the consultancy on a Commercial Dockyard suggested by the UK Government to the Gibraltar Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The ODA suggested a consultancy to study the effects of possible changes arising from the Defence Review, not for a commercial Dockyard as such.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO 344 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Was the possibility of a commercial Dockyard then entirely the idea of the consultants themselves and not part of their brief?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Their brief was a consultancy to assess the effects of the Defence Review which no doubt also indicated the closing of the Dockyard so it seems to me pretty obvious that they had to look at the whole picture. Certainly, nobody to my knowledge mentioned the question of the commercialisation, this must have been a natural result of the study of the proposed closing of the Naval Dockyard.

HON J BOSSANO:

And it was not suggested at an earlier stage either by the British Government to the Gibraltar Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, not at all.

Has the Gibraltar Government been consulted on the proposed closure of the Chart Depot?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Government has not been consulted on the question of the future of the Chart Depot.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.345 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Gibraltar Government aware that the Unions were informed in June of the proposed closure of the Chart Depot?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, we were not aware and we have had to make extensive enquiries in order to be able to provide the answer to the Hon Member of which he knew better before he asked than I do now.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, with all due respect to the Hon Member, I did not know he did not know given all this highly confidential consultations to which he is privy and I am not but would the Hon Member not agree that it seems very peculiar that the consultants who carry out a study of the commercialisation of the Dockyard should include the Chart Depot as part of the area that is not going to be closed down a couple of months after there has been an official decision to do away with it? Does he not agree it is very strange?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Very peculiar.

NO. 346 OF 1981

17.12.81

THE HON J BOSSANO

ORAL

Has the Gibraltar Government been told the total number of jobs that would be lost in the UK Departments if the Naval Dockyard were to close, including those, if any, in DOE/PSA?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker with your permission I propose to answer this Question together with No.347.

NO. 347 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

How many service and UK based civilian jobs would be lost in Gibraltar if the Naval Dockyard were to close?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

As the Hon Member knows, the only figures that the Gibraltar Government have are those contained in the Dockyard Study Report. These figures were disputed by the MOD(N) in London and discussions were subsequently held between the Dockyard Study consultants and the MOD(N) to resolve the differences. The latest assessment shows that the likely direct effect of Dockyard closure would be in the order of 1,300 employees. This figure includes UK-based civilians, the Refit Group and the PSA/DOE.

Figures should be treated as orders of magnitude and do not in any way refer to the precise impact.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 347 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not the case that the Refit Group, for example, is already in the process of being returned to UK, the individuals involved in the Refit Group that are Service people who are based in Gibraltar for the purpose of carrying out frigate refits?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

All that we know is that the Refit Group will go back when the refit that is at present going on with the frigate is completed.

HON J BOSSANO:

Which is in fact next month, is it not, Mr Speaker?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

So it is said to be, yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member not agree that in fact given, for example, that in the Dockyard Study the economic implications of the loss of UK-based jobs and service jobs are worked out as a result of the relationships established in the Input/Output Study, would he not agree that already in January we are going to start seeing the beginning of the policy of running down the Dockyard taking place and the economic effect even if this is not at first glance noticeable to everybody? Would he not agree in fact that we are not talking about a hypothetical situation in the future, we are talking about something that is already beginning to happen?



HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Will the Hon Member simplify the two questions?

HON J BOSSANO:

What I am saying is in fact, Mr Speaker, if within this number of 1,300 we have the Refit Group and UK-based civilians who are in Gibraltar because of the frigate refits and these people will be going back to UK in a month's time and that has an economic impact which is reflected in the Input/Output Study, would he not agree that in fact we are not talking about a hypothetical order of effect in the future but that the beginning of the run-down is starting in January and the effects of that run-down are starting in January?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, of course it has, it had when 224 Squadron was closed suddenly and we lost a considerable amount of money in defence spending, I entirely agree, of course. One person that goes away has an effect but let me say that according to the figures I have, in both areas of the numbers given as the grand total of direct effect and I have given the most favourable one, it excludes the Refit Group.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

17.12.81

NO. 348 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government give an undertaking that it will not seek to reduce its services or the number of employees in the event of a closure of the Dockyard?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I am sure the Hon Member must appreciate that it is too early for me to be able to answer this question with any degree of certainty. I very much hope that the need for either of the two measures referred to in the question will not arise.

17.12.81

NO. 349 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has the Gibraltar Government been given specific proposals by the British Government as to how the latter intends to offset the effects of the proposed Dockyard closure?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I would like to answer this question jointly with Question No. 352.

NO. 350 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that it was the intention of the British Government to close the Naval Dockyard in 1977 and that this was prevented because Government would not participate in the "Strasbourg Talks" unless the proposed Dockyard closure was not proceeded with?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. The sequence of events was as follows:

1. I was first informed of the proposed closure of the Dockyard, in strict confidence, on 8 July, 1977, by a Labour Government, by the way. It shows that it comes from all sides when the time comes, this was purely on an economy basis. I strongly resisted this in correspondence with the British Government through His Excellency the Governor.
2. At a meeting on 19 September, 1977, the Foreign Secretary informed me that he would do his best to persuade his colleagues and the Prime Minister to hold action on the Dockyard in abeyance while wider issues were being considered.
3. At a meeting with Dr Owen on 4 November, 1977, I myself suggested that talks might be held between the British Foreign Secretary and the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs with Gibraltarian leaders forming part of the British delegation.
4. By that time the British Government had already agreed to hold action on the Dockyard in abeyance.
5. The first talks, as people know, were held in Strasbourg on 24 November, 1977.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 350 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the matter of the Dockyard was not revived then by the British Government either during the course of the so-called Strasbourg process or once it met its timely death?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Never, the thing fell into oblivion.

NO. 351 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government make available to Members the plans that were prepared in 1976 to deal with a possible closure of the Dockyard?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. These plans are not available in Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 351 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, didn't the Hon Member say in a television interview that they were going to be brought out of their pigeon hole once the White Paper was announced, is it that he cannot find it in the pigeon hole?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I said that they should be brought out from the pigeon hole because we had been through this trauma before, that is what I said. I was shown the brief at the time in the strictest confidence, it is really not relevant today but as far as we are concerned we have to deal with the present day situation but the plans, I can assure Members and in fact I started to make enquiries after this in order to prepare myself for it when the first announcements were made not for this question but when the announcement was made and they were not in Gibraltar. In fact, to some extent I was originally told that because they were the plans of the previous Government they were not available to the present Government.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am talking about the plans the Gibraltar Government had then to deal with the situation not the plans the British Government had then to close the Dockyard.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We had no plans to deal with the situation, I am very sorry but it must be a misunderstanding.

HON J BOSSANO:

I think the Hon Member gave the impression in a television interview after the White Paper, perhaps he will go back and check, that in fact there were plans then which would not have to be looked at again if the possibility of the closure reared its ugly head again, I think were his words.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I was discussing this precisely with the then Minister on Tuesday night, Dame Judith Hart, because she was responsible for commissioning the plans and I was referring to those plans. I said there was the threatened Dockyard closure in 1977, I knew that on that occasion and I think I should stress this because it is important in relation to our participation in this, that those plans were being made entirely by the British Government in anticipation of the closure of the Dockyard, entirely by the British Government, and as I say, I was shown it in the strictest confidence later on and whilst the problem was on the mat but it did not ever reach a stage in which we had to make any contingency plan. Perhaps the Hon Member misunderstood me, perhaps I was not articulate enough but I could not refer to any other plans because no other plans could have been in my mind.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is Government aware what are the measures Her Majesty's Government proposes to carry out to maintain the economic and financial stability of Gibraltar in the event of:

- a) the opening of the frontier with Spain having an adverse effect on the economy
- b) a reduction in the level of MOD expenditure in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I have dealt with these matters, as far as I am able to at present, in the statement I made earlier today.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 349 AND 352 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am sure the Hon Member knows that I do not agree otherwise I would not have asked the questions. Will the Hon Member say whether, in fact, the British Government accepts even that it has an obligation to make specific proposals about off-setting the Dockyard closure?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I think that that is clear from the statement that I made this morning. If it is not clear it must be my fault but I thought everybody had understood that as being what all the fuss and all the talks and all the business and all the protests were about, about which I informed the House at large.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Chief Minister then saying that the position now is that the British Government accepts that it is their responsibility to suggest to the Gibraltar Government precise measures intended to maintain Gibraltar's economic equilibrium and that the process of consultation is that the Gibraltar Government will then tell the British Government whether such measures are acceptable to the Government of Gibraltar or considered sufficient or suitable?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I really do not know whether I remember all the little speech that my Hon Friend makes to put a question. I think, speaking generally, of course the British Government appreciates that the action that they have taken has an effect on Gibraltar, that they have a duty under the White Paper especially as stated in the White Paper and that they have the duty under the policy of support and sustain both of which have been reiterated. I think that it would not be

in keeping with the responsibility of the Government of Gibraltar if the Government of Gibraltar did not cooperate with the efforts that the British Government propose to make to try and see how that can be alleviated and in that respect, of course, the consultancies that are going to be done in addition to the already existing ones and the enquiries about the commercialisation of the Dockyard are spheres in which we must cooperate. We cannot really live in a cocoon and expect the British Government to do everything for us, we must make them responsible for the ultimate result but we must make it clear that we want to cooperate in saving our standards of living and in maintaining life in Gibraltar as we know it.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does that apply equally, Mr Speaker, to the subject matter of Question 352 which is different from 349 in that it is not limited to a closure of the Dockyard but is concerned with the level of expenditure in Gibraltar, that is, the level of MOD expenditure as it has been up to now?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am sorry, I cannot read anything more into this question than what I have read in it before and I have answered and that is that it is all part and parcel of the same problem and let me say that an adverse effect on the economy on the opening of the frontier has been emphasised in order to disillusion anybody who may think, and there are people who do think that the opening of the frontier is going to be the end of all our problems. In fact, I made the particular point to the Secretary of State that with an open frontier the closing of the Dockyard would have been equally disastrous in order to emphasise the point.

HON J BOSSANO:

May I ask the Chief Minister, has in fact the British Government given the Gibraltar Government an indication of the savings it is expecting or hoping to achieve in MOD expenditure in Gibraltar as the result of the review?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, not at all, that figure has not been given at all.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that that is a very relevant figure when we are talking about either maintaining the level of expenditure or substituting for it?



HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Perhaps I should preface this by saying that I am only answering the question to the extent that this is information to the House which I may have and which is not in the possession of Hon Members and if I have it I think it should be in the possession of every Member. I would like to stress once again that I am not answerable for the British Government in this House or anywhere else, I am only answerable for the people of Gibraltar but I appreciate that I am the political link or rather we all are but I have perhaps the highest responsibility, obviously, of the elected political link and therefore I must put whatever information I have at the disposal of Members in this respect. It has been emphasised to me that it is the change of Defence policy that has brought about this and not a question of Defence cuts. The Defence policy has affected Gibraltar considerably because there is very little money to go around for other things if you are going to spend the sort of money that is being spent to be a junior member of the nuclear club and therefore less money is available for more conventional methods of defence and, indeed, this is a matter which I discussed with Mr John Silkin, the Shadow Minister, because as I think I said before and if I did not I am sorry and I ought to say it now, that it is of course the view not only of Mr Silkin but of the Labour Party that the accent on defence is wrong and that it should go on the conventional side as the Americans are bringing out a lot of their warships which are in mothballs and that it is not the way for the British Government to reverse the procedure but there it is. This is the decision that was taken by the Defence Secretary which was sprung on everybody at the same time and what is likely to affect us seriously and we have to try and ameliorate that extent and certainly we must not be failing in our efforts so that nobody can ever point a finger at us that we did not save the situation by refusing to collaborate in an attempt to remedy whatever damage will be done.

HON J. BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if I can get back to the subject of the question that I was actually asking the Chief Minister. Would he not agree, if he has not been given the information as to the savings that the British Government hopes to achieve and since fundamentally it is a political decision related to economic factors of funding a nuclear programme out of a £20,000m budget, would he not agree that it is pertinent to ask the British Government just how much do they expect to save in Gibraltar towards their financing of nuclear weapons?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In that respect I think we have done a little homework and that is that without in any way attempting to question that, representations have been made regarding what it really means, what in that kind of budget that the Hon Member has mentioned Gibraltar really means, but at the time when as the Hon Member sitting next to the Questioner knows, things are running so very tight in the United Kingdom and local authorities are fighting over a post of caretaker and as to whether there will be a grant from the central Government and so on, these arguments looked at logically do not appear to carry much weight when every penny appears to be required to build up nuclear weapons.

NO. 353 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has Government been told by the British Government that the policy of "sustain and support" and Development Aid as such will not be continued once the Spanish restrictions against Gibraltar are removed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. We have made it very clear that, in our view, aid will be required for some time after the frontier opens, that is, irrespective of the Dockyard closure.

We shall be pressing this view when we come to discuss the aid submission

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 353 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

I accept, Mr Speaker, that that is the view of the Gibraltar Government but in fact has that view been accepted by the British Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It has not been denied when we have maintained it.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the British Government has neither confirmed nor denied whether it intends to terminate development aid and sustain and support with the frontier open?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There has been no specific qualification in discussing the sustain and support policy with regard to the opening of the frontier.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, Mr Speaker, I take it that I am right in thinking that Mr Fergusson in his visit to Gibraltar did not say to the Chief Minister that the aid programme was linked to the frontier restrictions and that although there would not be an automatic and immediate halt to it we could not expect it to continue, he did not say that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is true to say and I think we should not miss sight of the fact that the support and sustain policy arose out of the difficulties which started by the frontier restrictions and we have always held that until we have got back to normality after the opening of the frontier that the sustain and support policy should continue. I am grateful to the Hon Financial and Development Secretary who was present at the talks with me the other day, the tenor of the discussion did not indicate anything like any barrier being put on that, in fact, it was accepted implicitly because it is in the report and it was on that assumption that the opening of the frontier would bring strains and stresses more than benefits.

NO. 354 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has Government been told when the British Government expects the negotiations with Spain under the terms of the Lisbon Agreement to commence?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

It has always been the intention that the negotiations with Spain envisaged under the Lisbon Agreement should begin simultaneously with the removal of the restrictions. I have no information as to when this will take place.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 354 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Chief Minister think that he is likely to get prior information or does he think he is likely to be presented with it? Does he expect or has he got an understanding with the British Government that he will be told beforehand?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think I can say with some element of confidence though having regard to recent events I might get a knockout, that we are bound to know, at least I am bound to know with a little certainty. Let me also say that even logistically we would want to know because there are many administrative arrangements that have to be made and in any case it is also necessary because if in fact the negotiations are going to start at the same time, to get two Foreign Secretaries together plus, which is a more important thing, the Chief Minister of Gibraltar and the Leader of the Opposition, for the talks, will require a certain amount of previous arrangement.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is Government aware what facilities will be enjoyed by the Spanish Armed Forces in Gibraltar once Spain has joined NATO and the frontier restrictions are removed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 355 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, has in fact the Government of Gibraltar made any representations in this respect to the British Government as regards the facilities that the MOD may make available to Spain in the context of NATO?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Civil servants are very clever. The supplementary which has been prepared is very near to what the Hon Member had said and the answer is that the matter has been raised and I understand that it is one to be discussed once Spain is actually in NATO.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will, in fact, the British Government then be consulting the Government of Gibraltar on this issue?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have no doubt that the British Government through the Governor, who is also Commander-in-Chief, will consult. My experience of recent events regarding the Spanish situation is that I am much better informed on that than on Defence cuts.

NO. 356 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does the Gibraltar Government continue to have the absolute faith in the British Government the Chief Minister expressed publicly in June this year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The word I used was not absolute but near it. While recent events have upset me considerably, I was reassured, as I said in my statement earlier today, by the renewed expressions of support which I received from Lord Carrington on Monday.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 356 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon and Learned Member would allow me to correct him, the transcript of what he said in television does show that he said that he had absolute faith and that he had stuck out his neck and what I am asking him is whether in fact he still feels as confident now as he felt in the aftermath of the White Paper about the way he sticks out his neck in putting his faith in the British Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, to some extent I do because if you do not have faith, well, perhaps you cannot understand that, but if you have no faith in your own resolution then you are finished.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

17.12.81

NO. 357 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, has Government now considered the question of making public the report of the Committee of Inquiry into the disruption of normal teaching at Bayside Boys' Comprehensive?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir, copies of the report will be distributed to Members of the House and to interested parties. Arrangements are also in hand for a copy to be made available for public scrutiny at the John Mackintosh Hall.

17.12.81

NO. 358 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, is Government now in a position to make a comprehensive statement with regard to the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Public Works Department as stated in answer to Question No. 280 of 1981?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, a statement on this matter will be made at the next meeting of the House.



THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, is there any particular reason why the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation is not paying rent in respect of its occupancy of Mercury House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, it is confirmed that the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation will continue to pay a peppercorn rent for Mercury House as it did for its previous premises at Wellington Front. The reason for this is that the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation is not a commercial undertaking but a statutory body heavily dependent on public funds to meet both its current and capital commitments. Any other arrangement would only have added to the amount of Government subvention.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 359 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean, Sir, that the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation will not be granted a lease by the Government of their premises?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

A lease is being prepared at a peppercorn rent.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr. Speaker, is there any reason why the Broadcasting Corporation should be given that asset of a lease at a peppercorn rent?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Because it will be only for as long as it is used for the purpose for which it is meant. I have not seen a copy of the lease but I was going to say, I thought perhaps I might have got another kind of supplementary though I have no brief on it but I would have thought that if in fact the time came when the Corporation was in such good funds provided by their advertising that there was no need for subvention and that in fact they might show a profit, then it might be the time to consider whether they should not pay the rent for the premises.

HON P J ISOLA:

In that case doesn't the Chief Minister agree it would not be wise to give them a lease?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is why I said I have my own ideas about what the terms of the lease will be when the time comes.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 360 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has the Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation in fact signed the Balance Sheet as at 31st March, 1980?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. The Chairman, Mr J C Cortes, in fact, signed the copies of the Balance Sheet included in the three bound sets of the Financial Statements - 31 March, 1980 - and Auditor's Report of the Corporation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 360 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Chief Minister appreciate that that does not appear in the copies of the accounts that have been circulated to Members?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I appreciate that. One set is now filed in the Government Central Registry file on this matter, another set is held by the Principal Auditor and the third set was returned to the Corporation's Auditors, Messrs Clinton Chartered Accountants.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 361 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

In view of the need to ensure that the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation should not only be independent but be seen to be independent does Government not agree that both sides of the House should be consulted on appointments to the Board of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Government is satisfied that the present procedure for appointing members to the Board of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation is adequate.

The Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation acts in accordance with the Directions issued by His Excellency the Governor in Council which require the maintenance of strict political impartiality.

The Government does not agree that the independence of the Corporation would be further guaranteed by the other side of the House being involved in the procedure for the appointment of the members of the Board.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 361 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that it would be fairer because that would ensure that persons who either side of the House consider probably have a bias towards the other party would not be appointed to the Board and would not that be a good thing and in the public interest?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In cases of doubt I am quite prepared to have a word with the Leader of the Opposition but on the advice I have and on my own feeling on this it is a responsibility of the Government. To the extent that it is possible in a place of this size we do try to find people as independent as possible and certainly to exclude anybody who is well known to have any political bias one way or the other.

HON P J ISOLA:

But would the Chief Minister not agree that it is better that these matters should be ironed out before an appointment is made because once an appointment is made and then the appointment is called in question it results in embarrassment for all the parties, those objecting and those against whom objections have been made?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have no experience of any objections to anyone, indeed, quite a number of the members in the Board today were appointed originally by members of the then IWBP Government and those who have wished to do so have remained but as I indicated when I said that I would be prepared in doubtful cases to have a word with the Leader of the Opposition, I meant before appointment.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 362 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, how many vacancies are there on the Board of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation and when does Government expect to fill up the vacancies?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, as I stated on 26 October, there were two vacancies on the Board which have now been filled.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 362 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Have the names been published?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Hon Member will remember in a supplementary I said that people were being approached and that we did take a little time until the new Chairman was consulted on the matter and the appointments have only been made recently. The terms of office of the Board, with the exception of that of the new Chairman who was appointed on the 29th October, 1981, expires on the 31st December, 1981, and the opportunity of the need to appoint new members or re-appoint the current membership has been taken to fill the vacancies. I think I should say two of the vacancies have been filled by Mr J L Tavares, Manager of the Banque de L'Indochine and Major A L Casciaro (retd).