

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

MEETING OF 7 JULY 1981

QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

110 to 208

NO. 110 OF 1981THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government give the same protection to the printing industry as that enjoyed by other industrial sectors by including this industry in the schedule under the Trade Licensing Ordinance?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, I must remind the House that the Government was prepared to include printing in the Second Schedule to the Trade Licensing Ordinance when a Bill for an Ordinance to amend the Trade Licensing Ordinance was taken through all stages at a meeting of this House held in March 1980. The Bill provided for the inclusion of printing in the Second Schedule but was amended at the committee stage on the grounds that it could be thought that to include printing in the Trade Licensing Ordinance might have interfered with the freedom of expression. That argument was put forward by the Hon Major Peliza and I believe I am right in saying that at the time it had the support of the House.

As I said during the second reading of the Bill I have referred to, the proposal to include printing in the Trade Licensing Ordinance stemmed from representations made by the printing trade at the time. The Gibraltar Master Printers Association have once again raised the question of protection under the Trade Licensing Ordinance. These representations were received on the 29 June and are being considered. Clearly the views expressed by the House in March 1980 regarding freedom of expression in relation to the inclusion of printing in the Trade Licensing Ordinance must be taken into account. The Government would not wish to proceed on this matter unless it felt that members of the Opposition would support the inclusion of printing in the second schedule to the Trade Licensing Ordinance.

NO. 111 OF 1981

THE HON G T RESTANO

Would Government make a comprehensive statement with regard to the importation and operation of gaming machines in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. The importation of gaming machines is not controlled. That is to say machines are imported under Open General Licence but are subject to the payment of import duty at the rate of 12%.

The operation of gaming machines is governed by the provisions of sections 3 to 5 of the Gaming Ordinance. Briefly section 3 prohibits the keeping of a gaming house; section 3A makes it an offence to keep a gaming machine on premises for the purpose of gaming; section 4 makes playing in a common gaming house an offence; section 4A, recently introduced, regulates the use of gaming machines paying out lottery tickets only. Section 5 enables the Governor to exempt any person from the provisions of sections 3, 3A and 4. The policy of the Government is not to allow the proliferation of gaming machines in Gibraltar. By gaming machines I refer to machines commonly known as "one armed bandits". As regards machines which only pay out lottery tickets the Government has adopted a more liberal approach as they contribute towards the sale of the Government lottery.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 111 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I welcome the statement that it is not the intention to proliferate the situation of these machines but would the Government agree for the public at any rate it is more a practice to have machines which pay out cash prizes than those that pay out lottery prizes.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Government then say whether a monopoly has been given to one company in Gibraltar to operate machines giving out cash prizes.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir. The International Sporting Club in 1958 tendered for and were awarded a contract to build a Casino. There was an agreement signed in 1961 which outlined the terms by which the parties agreed to be bound and, when the Casino was completed in 1964 a lease of 99 years was issued and the necessary exemption under section 5 of the Gaming Ordinance was granted from 15th November 1964, valid for 21 years. The exemption authorised the keeping of a gaming house including gaming machines and under present arrangements the Government receives 10% of the gross takings. The instruments upon which the rights and operations of the Casino depend do not grant it the sole franchise to run a Casino in Gibraltar and the Government is advised

that they do not have an exclusive right. In spite of this it was never the Government's intention to allow another Casino to be built.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, but my question was is there a monopolistic situation in Gibraltar with regard to gaming machines giving cash prizes. And I think the answer is yes. Would the Honourable Member confirm whether in fact in practice the answer is "yes, Sir"?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

In practice yes Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not rather unfair on the other operators who have to give lottery tickets as prizes and is this not perhaps rather unfair on the public themselves who perhaps prefer to have cash prizes rather than lottery tickets. Would the Government consider reviewing the situation with a view to allowing other machines which are already installed in certain areas in town, to give cash prizes?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is there any reason for this Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Because the Government does not wish, Mr Speaker, to proliferate the use of gaming machines in Gibraltar.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am not asking for any proliferation, on the contrary, Mr Speaker, I am saying for those that are already installed.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, these are not the same machines the machines that are installed are not paying out cash prizes, if we did permit them to give cash prizes, there would be a proliferation.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I am sorry, they are already. It is a special alteration to the machines which has made them not give cash prizes normally those machines would have given cash prizes. So there is no proliferation of machines.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think perhaps the Honourable Member and myself are at cross purposes. I accept that there would be no proliferation of machines what I am saying is there would be a proliferation of gaming machines paying out cash prizes and the Government does not consider this to be desirable.

HON G T RESTANO:

I regret that Mr Speaker, but there is one final question. Has there been or does the Government have any idea whether there is likely to be any application to operate gambling machines at what used to be the Continental Hotel?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would need notice of that question.

HON G T RESTANO:

I give notice now, Mr Speaker, perhaps the Honourable Member could look into it and give me an answer.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, you will have to put another question.

MR SPEAKER:

When the Honourable Member said that he needs notice he means that this is a matter for which he needs notice and therefore it is another question. And basically I tend to agree that I have allowed supplementaries but that is something which has arisen from the original question but which I think requires a new question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state the present position as regards the option to be taken in connection with the Alexander Howden Brokers Limited report and will Government state whether they have any additional information to the answer given to Question No 7 of 1981?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, a desk-type report on the Alexander Howden proposals was received from the risk analysts Ernest A Notcutt (Overseas) Ltd in early May. Alexander Howden were invited to comment on this report and their reply, dated 25th June, was received last week. Both the Notcutt report and Alexander Howden's extensive comments are being considered. These require careful study before any further progress can be made in this matter.

NO. 113 OF 1981

THE HON A T LODDO

Can Government say why people who have completed income tax returns have been given a "B" code and at the same time been invited to call at the Income Tax Office to discuss any grievance in this respect?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is extremely unlikely that any individual who submitted his income tax return and claim for allowance on the form sent to him on the 1st of July 1980 would have been given a "B" code for 1981-82.

A "B" code, issued to single persons who are not eligible for any other allowances, has this year been given to all individuals who have failed to submit a return of income and claim for allowances to the Income Tax Department.

Notices of coding are issued through the employers who are informed that any employees who consider they have not been given the correct allowances should call at the Income Tax Office to regularise their position.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 113 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I accept that it might be unlikely but I can assure the Honourable Member that I have two instances which I have taken up personally and if I have taken up two I am sure there must be more. Would the Member look into it?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will accept that it is possible that some errors have cracked the system. What I would point out to the Honourable Member, Sir, is that 40% approximately of taxpayers in Gibraltar failed to complete their tax returns in 1980 and the only way in which the Department can get these tax returns is by imposing the discipline of issuing a "B" notice. This is not an unusual arrangement in any country where people fail to make a return of their incomes but I will look into the point for the Honourable Member.

MR SPEAKER:

Next Question.

NO. 114 OF 1981

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, Sir, can Government say whether any time limit was set for the development of the site formerly occupied by the Shell petrol station at the junction of Corral Road and Landport?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, the Government and the occupier of this site are in dispute and legal proceedings are being initiated. The time limit for development may be in issue in such proceedings. I should be grateful if the Honourable Member would agree not to pursue the question until such time as the proceedings have been determined.



NO. 115 OF 1981

THE HON G T RESTANO

Who is authorised to place trunk calls payable to Government Departments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, there is no central control over the use of the trunk call services. Heads of Departments are committed to exercising adequate controls in order to operate within their budget allocation for public utility services.

The general practice is that only senior officers who have been authorised to do so by their Head of Department use the service.

NO. 116 OF 1981

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government confirm whether it has any intention to localise the post of Principal Auditor once the present incumbent retires?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

It is Government's intention to advertise in Gibraltar for a permanent appointment to this office when the present incumbent retires.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 116 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the advertising be only in Gibraltar or will it also be carried out in the United Kingdom?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The advertisement may be placed first in Gibraltar and in the United Kingdom but I reiterate that the intention is to make a permanent appointment.

NO. 117 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government undertake to set up a complaints department at the Secretariat to deal with all and any complaints directed against the Civil Service?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

No, Sir. There is already machinery to deal with such complaints.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 117 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

What is that machinery?

HON ATTORNEY- GENERAL:

Sir, any person who is aggrieved by the conduct or the behaviour of a member of the public service is free, and always has been free, to complain to a number of people including the Head of Department, the Establishment Officer, the Administrative Secretary, the Deputy Governor and if necessary the Governor.

HON A J HAYNES:

I was thinking of something less formal by way of machinery. A sort of small advisory bureau as much as a complaints department just to ensure that, however large the civil service gets, small problems to the public are dealt with quickly.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am not quite sure whether that is a question or a statement, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked whether you feel it would be better that such a body should be set up to consider complaints.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The Government does consider at the moment that there is adequate machinery and that there is no reason why a complaint, cannot be made to the right quarter or why the public should not know how to make a complaint. After all if somebody is not happy about something it is the common thing to go to the Head of Department. The Government is broadly happy with the present arrangements. The possibility of an Advisory Committee is possibly a matter that can be looked into, though I wouldn't give any comment as to whether there is any merit in it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 118 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Will Government take steps to apply the same principles of censorship to Spanish speaking films as it does to English speaking films?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, Sir, the position concerning this matter was outlined in some detail by the Hon Minister for Economic Development and also by myself in answer to Question No. 336 of 1980.

The legal position is that Spanish films may be exhibited if they have a Spanish certificate that is equivalent to a British Board of Film Censors certificate; although in the case of Spanish films there is no standing legal requirement that persons under the age specified in a certificate may not be admitted to a cinema showing the film. Such a requirement could be imposed by way of a condition attached to an exhibitor's licence and in any case all films are of course subject to the general powers of censorship under section 5 of the Entertainments Ordinance.

In practice, exhibitors are voluntarily displaying the classifications in advertising and are voluntarily enforcing age limits.

So far as British films are concerned, it is the practice to require a review wherever there is doubt as to the suitability of the film. As previously mentioned, there are some practical difficulties in adopting this procedure for Spanish films because of the short time during which such films are available in Gibraltar but those responsible monitor their nature from time to time by attending the initial public screenings.

Government is satisfied that these arrangements are for the time being adequate to ensure a reasonable standard of acceptability but is keeping the position under review.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government reached any conclusions concerning the replacement of the Director of Medical and Health Services on his retirement and if not what options are being considered?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, the question of the replacement of the Director of Medical and Health Services, who is due to retire in May 1982, is a subject which has been exercising our minds for some time now.

I have already held consultations with the present Director and other interested parties as to the terms in which the circular advertising the vacancy should be drafted and I am currently considering the advice which has been rendered to me in this connection. Further consultations will be necessary and I am not therefore in a position at present to state the options.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 119 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has just said that he has had consultations with the Director and other interested parties. Would he like to explain what he means by interested parties?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I have been in contact with the British Medical Association. I have also been in contact with the General Nursing Council. I have also been in contact with the Department of Health in the United Kingdom. I took the opportunity of the Delegation of the CPA. There were two Chairmen for Health; one for Jersey and one for Guernsey, and I have had a discussion with them and, before the Honourable Member brings it to my notice, I did also say that I was prepared to discuss the matter with him as well. I am nearly ready to be able to tell him what the options are but before we obviously do that I am prepared to discuss it with him, if that is what he is asking.

HON G T RESTANO:

No, that is not really what I am asking although that of course has been asked in the past. What I am asking is what options are being considered; what advice has been obtained from this long list of organisations which the Minister has been consulting and the Director too for that matter.

HON J B PEREZ:

I have already informed the House that I have not yet finished with the number of people that I intend to consult on this matter because it is a very important matter for Gibraltar because in fact the Director of Medical and Health Services, should we decide to retain a

Director of Medical and Health Services, has a very important function to play for the whole of the community and this is why I say I have consulted various people. I have given him the list of the people I have already consulted, there are probably others but I am not yet ready to give the Honourable Member the options.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the Minister any idea when will he be in a position to give those options?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes Mr Speaker, at least before the next meeting of this House which will be in October.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

What progress, if any, has been made to the improvement of the filing system at St Bernard's Hospital?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

The question of the filing system has been under consideration by my department and has been discussed by the Board of Management. A number of suggestions for improvement have been put forward and these have been referred to the Establishment Officer with the request that the advice of the Management Services Unit should be obtained. It is hoped that their report will be available shortly.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 120 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Amongst those recommendations, Mr Speaker, is there any recommendation to change the site of the office where the filing system is kept today,

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, that is one of the recommendations. As I have explained in a previous answer to a question, said that the main problem as I saw it with the filing system was space and one of those recommendations in fact to move the records office elsewhere but we are also looking into the question of computerisation of records. This is why the Establishment Officer has been given the options, he will look at it and then prepare a report.

HON G T RESTANO:

Where will the records office be kept now?

HON J B PEREZ:

This is a matter which is being looked at.

HON G T RESTANO:

It is a recommendation which has been made by the Department. I would like to know where it is intended to have the records office.

MR SPEAKER:

No. The Minister has said the recommendations have been that they should be moved not where it is going to be moved to.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well I am asking has there been a specific recommendation and if so to where is that office to be moved?

HON J B PEREZ:

There has not been a specific recommendation to move a place from A to B. There has been a recommendation that we ought to move it elsewhere.

HON G T RESTANO:

So in that case who has to decide where the new site will be?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member missed the point that I made. It may well be that we will not have to move to a larger space if we computerise the records but this is something that the Establishment Officer will be looking at and prepare a detailed report so that I can consider what is the best alternative available to us.



NO. 121 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Minister for Medical and Health Services state whether he has made any progress to recruit a seventh doctor for the Health Centre?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, after consultation with the Health Centre doctors and following a detailed report prepared by my department, Council of Ministers have recently agreed to the enlargement of the complement of doctors at the Health Centre by one.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 121 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

I am pleased to hear that statement at last, Mr Speaker. When will the advertising be made for this post?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker let me say that before I left for the United Kingdom with the six man delegation of the House, we gave instructions to the Establishment to advertise the post, unfortunately this morning I have yet not been able to check whether it has been advertised whilst I have been away, if not, it should be advertised in the very near future.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Are problems still being encountered at St Bernard's Hospital on account of unauthorised persons making use of the car park earmarked for doctors and staff?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I am very grateful to the Hon Member for giving me the opportunity to make a statement on the situation prevailing at the hospital garage earmarked for the use of doctors and other authorised staff at St Bernard's Hospital.

As the Hon Member knows from publicity in the local press in the recent past, a great deal of difficulty has been experienced in maintaining this car park free from intruders in the past. Matters improved as a result of that publicity but I regret to say that the improvement was shortlived. In the more recent past difficulties have again been experienced with unauthorised people trespassing in this area and a great deal of abuse has been showered upon members of the hospital staff when attempts have been made to advise trespassers about the intended use of the car park. A number of devices used to prevent unauthorised persons from making use of the car park have been vandalised.

It does not appear that the persons concerned appreciate the fact that it is absolutely essential that this car park should be readily available to doctors and nursing staff to be able to park their vehicles in response to emergency calls and very often a lot of valuable time is wasted in convincing these persons to remove their cars when these doctors and nursing staff respond to emergency situations and find that they have nowhere in which to park their vehicles with the consequent risk to life involved. Other means of being able to achieve this objective are currently under consideration but I trust that in the meantime through the medium of the publicity that this reply to the Honourable Member's question will receive those persons who insist on abusing the use of this car park will appreciate that whatever restrictions are placed in the use of the car park are solely and entirely with a view to serving the public including the relatives of these persons when in need of urgent medical attention.

I once again appeal to the public spiritedness of those persons visiting the hospital and others not to block this car park with their vehicles since it could well be that at any given time the emergency that the doctors and the nursing staff are responding to could well affect their own relatives, and it would then be useless to blame the medical services for the consequence of their own irresponsible actions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 122 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker I am very grateful for that reply and I too hope that the persons who use the car park who are not authorised to do so can be convinced, but I doubt it very much. Has the Government considered at any time placing a porter at the entrance of that garage to prevent anybody who is not supposed to park there from doing so?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, there are two particular points which the Government is considering. One is the question of porters and the second is that we have asked for different quotations for an electronic device or something which cannot be broken by the said people concerned. We have, as far as I can recall, in the last four months replaced a possible number of about five different padlocks but these keep on being broken by the people. But, yes, this is one of the things that we are looking at. Either that or the electronic barrier but it must be one which cannot be vandalised otherwise we are wasting our money.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since it is quite an important matter because patients could be affected, would the Government treat this with urgency and if it is considered that the porter should be placed there which I think probably is the only machinery which cannot be vandalised, they should implement that policy quickly.

HON J B PEREZ:

We are in fact dealing with the matter as a matter of urgency.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what agreement has been reached with tobacco importers with regard to advertising generally and health warnings?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Speaker, the agreement between Government and the Tobacco Importers, which is still in the process of being finalised, is a purely voluntary one and is intended to provide for health warnings to appear on all cigarette packets sold in Gibraltar and on cigarette advertisements.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 123 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker will there be any voluntary agreement to cut advertising on the news media?

HON J B PEREZ:

Not at this stage, Mr Speaker, I must point out to the House that the whole basis of this particular voluntary agreement was in fact that we had to comply with EEC directives which in fact require what I have already outlined to the House. But the question of cutting down on advertising on cigarettes is not in fact part of Government's policy at this precise moment of time. We believe that we ought to do one thing at a time. In other words one has to learn to walk before one runs.

HON G T RESTANO:

So therefore if it is to comply with EEC directives, surely it is not a voluntary agreement it is a statutory one if we are to keep to EEC directives, is that correct?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Mr Speaker, because the EEC directives say that a particular Government has to do all it can within its power to promote or to endeavour. The EEC is not a mandatory one which requires legislation. But let me add that in fact, as far as I am concerned as Minister for Health I prefer to have an agreement on a voluntary basis rather than legislation because one gets much better cooperation and let me add now and say in this House that the cooperation from the importers of tobacco in Gibraltar has been fantastic. We have had various meetings and every has run, and in fact is running, very smoothly. I think this is working because it is being done on a voluntary basis. No legislation will be required unless of course importers come back and say that they prefer the legislation. Then of course we will look into it.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister not agree that it might be preferable that the money which is being used for advertising on the news media, which

is not of course good for young people and so on, be used for further sponsoring of, say, sporting associations.

HON J B PEREZ:

Of course I would agree.

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is irrelevant. It is not for the Minister to decide how the importers use their advertising money.

HON G T RESTANO

I only asked, Mr Speaker, in so far as that is what happened in the United Kingdom, where there was voluntary agreement between the government and the manufacturers of cigarettes and tobacco and advertising on the media there was cut down. The money that was to have been used for that was in fact used to sponsor other associations. I am asking whether it might not be preferable to carry out that here too.

HON J B PEREZ:

I said yes the only thing is that one must start somewhere and the way I started it was at least to get a voluntary agreement on the question of the health warning. That is step number one but I agree with the Honourable Member it is preferable if instead of the tobacco importers spending an amount of money in promoting and advertising the question of cigarettes that they should give it to sport. Of course I agree but one has to do one thing at a time.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I take it then, Mr Speaker, that the Minister will be taking it up with the tobacco importers once he has finalised the health warning.

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes.

THE HON G T RESTANO

What are Government's charges in respect of trunk calls when the number being called is connected to an answering machine?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

A trunk call which is answered by a device in the subscriber's absence is charged in the normal manner.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 124 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that from here we have to use the trunk operators because the new international dialling system is not in operation yet and it is the normal practice for operators before connecting the person making the trunk call of ensuring whether the number is the correct number and would it not be preferable for the person making the trunk call to have the option whether to accept that call or not?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am afraid not. These are the CIDT regulations covering international traffic and paragraph 85 says that in the manual or semi automatic service the chargeable duration is determined as follows:

"Station calls: The chargeable duration shall begin as soon as the call is taken up between the callee and the call number and somebody has answered the ring at both stations whoever answers the call." Then paragraph 87 article 87 says "When a subscriber line is connected to the absent subscriber service or to a device which answers the telephone in the subscriber's absence and may possibly record a message or a exchange data in the absent subscribers service or the device is assumed to be equivalent to a person answering for a subscriber at the latter's express wish. The call shall therefore be set up and charged in the normal manner." Now in the normal manner in Gibraltar if you ring UK it means you are charged for a minimum of three minutes.

Now if somebody knows that an answering machine is going to answer in the UK this can be got around by the fact that you can put a personal call in which the operator then has to get the person involved and then if there is an answering machine the operator will tell the caller what has happened and it is up to the caller to decide whether to listen to the answering machine or leave a message or not. He can then cancel the call and there is no charge to him.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it a fact Mr Speaker, that for the reverse, for somebody calling Gibraltar, for example, from a public telephone box, his charge, if he is connected to an answering machine and does not want to call, and he puts the receiver down, is much lower than the other way because on that sort of telephone the minimum is one minute whilst here the minimum I think is three minutes? Is that correct Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I am surprised that the Honourable Member is not up to date with regulations, in fact, I have the British Telecom Guide, November 1980. Calls from UK to Gibraltar and it does say "Operator assisted calls." Because we must compare like with like.

MR SPEAKER:

No. No. We are not going to start talking at cross purposes. You are being asked a simple question. Due to the fact that in England there is direct dialling and therefore the caller can put down the telephone if he does not get an answer or he gets an answer from a machine, is it not a fact that in Gibraltar since the minimum charge is three minutes the cost therefore to the Gibraltar caller will be higher than to a London caller? That is a simple question.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No. There are two things involved here one is direct dialling and one is operator assisted calls. For operator assisted calls the minimum charge is three minutes and this is what happens in Gibraltar. With IDD the system is different. But you have to compare light with light and not an operator assisted calls and IDD, which is obviously. .

MR SPEAKER:

No, I do not want to have another supplementary. What you are being told is that since we have not got IDD in Gibraltar is it not a fact that it is going to cost a Gibraltar call more because the minimum charge is three minutes. That is what you are being asked.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Of course, Sir, it is cheaper because they have IDD from UK to Gibraltar and not from Gibraltar to UK.

HON G T RESTANO:

Since it is not the fault of the Gibraltar subscribers that IDD has not been put into operation on this sort of call I would ask the Government to consider whether they could not reduce the minimum to one minute from three minutes.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it cannot be done because we have got to abide by International Regulations.

MR SPEAKER:

Right. Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO.

Will Government consider installing public telephones at our beaches?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are public telephones at all our beaches however at present four of the six are undergoing repairs. The public can however make use of the beach picket telephones for emergency calls.

Now since the question was prepared I checked up yesterday afternoon and I found out that out of the four of the six under-going repairs one had been repaired so there are now three out of the six.

The following are in working order: Sandy Bay  
Montagu Bathing Pavilion  
Eastern Beach

and the following are out of order which is: Camp Bay  
Little Bay  
and Catalan Bay

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 125 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Are those three which are out of order been out of order for a long time?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, they have been out of order on and off for some time. In fact the department is looking into it and are trying to get them repaired so that they can be used. Let me say that it is sometimes much simpler to go to the beach picket telephones which are all working and be able to get service from the beach picket.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, if they have been out of service for so long, surely, knowing that these are required during the summer bathing season, the Minister should have made sure that these are repaired before. This is just pure inefficiency! Why haven't they been done before the summer?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the main thing is that these beaches are adequately covered by the beach picket telephones. These are public telephones, they tend to break down on and off because of the corrosion from the salt water especially and we are continuously fixing them. The fact that there are some out of action now does not reflect whether we are not doing anything at all about it. We are and I give the Honourable Member an understanding that I will endeavour to make the other three workable.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I am surprised that the Honourable Member is not up to date with regulations, in fact, I have the British Telecom Guide, November 1980. Calls from UK to Gibraltar and it does say "Operator assisted calls." Because we must compare like with like.

MR SPEAKER:

No. No. We are not going to start talking at cross purposes. You are being asked a simple question. Due to the fact that in England there is direct dialling and therefore the caller can put down the telephone if he does not get an answer or he gets an answer from a machine, is it not a fact that in Gibraltar since the minimum charge is three minutes the cost therefore to the Gibraltar caller will be higher than to a London caller? That is a simple question.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No. There are two things involved here one is direct dialling and one is operator assisted calls. For operator assisted calls the minimum charge is three minutes and this is what happens in Gibraltar. With IDD the system is different. But you have to compare light with light and not an operator assisted calls and IDD, which is obviously.

MR SPEAKER:

No, I do not want to have another supplementary. What you are being told is that since we have not got IDD in Gibraltar is it not a fact that it is going to cost a Gibraltar call more because the minimum charge is three minutes. That is what you are being asked.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Of course, Sir, it is cheaper because they have IDD from UK to Gibraltar and not from Gibraltar to UK.

HON G T RESTANO:

Since it is not the fault of the Gibraltar subscribers that IDD has not been put into operation on this sort of call I would ask the Government to consider whether they could not reduce the minimum to one minute from three minutes.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it cannot be done because we have got to abide by International Regulations.

MR SPEAKER:

Right. Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO:

What is Government's policy generally with regard to telephone booths?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the advent of International Direct Dialling (IDD) drawing closer, Government's policy is not to increase the number of telephone booths which are prone to vandalism but to introduce renter-type coin boxes at suitable places where the coinboxes can be looked after e.g. Hospital, Airport, Health Centre, Post Office etc.

We have already connected two renter-type coinboxes at the New Marina and Ocean Heights on a trial-basis with considerable success.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 126 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Since, Mr Speaker, most of the booths have been vandalised and most of them are without any equipment whatsoever inside what is the point of keeping these booths?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, that is a different question altogether. I, at the House, if I remember rightly, definitely said that I will not spend any further money on booths which are being vandalised continuously and will try to find a better system of renter-type coinboxes which can be used by the general public.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am not arguing against that, Mr Speaker, I am asking what is the point of keeping those booths there now? Why not remove them? They are a terrible eye sore.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, eventually as we develop this system some of them will be removed, the ones which are severely vandalised, and at the same time more renter-type phone-boxes will be put in but I am afraid that, with the staff at present, we cannot do everything in one go.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 127 OF 1981

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government issue the list of those countries which have to date taken advantage of the service enabling direct dialling to Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the following countries have made use of the automatic transit facilities of the London International Exchange to route telephone traffic to Gibraltar:

1. United Kingdom
2. France
3. Netherlands
4. Eire
5. Denmark
6. West Germany
7. Hong Kong
8. Switzerland
9. Jordan

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 127 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, can the Minister provide the list or, if he doesn't, go more slowly so that we can take down the countries.

MR SPEAKER:

You will be getting the answer within the next five weeks.

Perhaps you can read it in similar way that it can be heard.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

First, the United Kingdom,

Second, France,

Third, the Netherlands,

MR SPEAKER:

No, No. Let us do it at a reasonable pace neither one nor the other.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

4. Eire
5. Denmark
6. West Germany
7. Hong Kong
8. Switzerland
9. Jordan
10. Belgium
11. Cameroons
12. Yugoslavia

13. Egypt
14. United Arab Emirates
15. Kuwait
16. Sweden

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I notice that a lot of very prominent countries are not in this list. Is the Government doing anything to encourage those countries, who are not in this list, to use this service?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, we are encouraging other countries to use this service. Some countries, especially the new ones do not know that this service can exist but I will say in addition there are over 50 countries which have semi automatic transit facilities to Gibraltar. So this in fact quickly covers the world.

HON G T RESTANO:

In what way has the encouragement been carried out?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Certainly, this is easy. Between correspondence with the Superintende of Telephones and the countries involved. Not only that, through other venues like Cable and Wireless.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, could the Minister say if there has been any country which has objected to joining us and if so for what reasons?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

We are talking about the automatic not on the semi-automatic? There is only one country which we have had problems with and this is Morocco, because they do not have the equipment necessary to be able to switch on to our system and have automatic direct dialling. In fact for the time being Morocco will have to continue with the semi-automatic type of telephone service but I hope that Morocco will eventually come up to scratch and we shall be able to have direct dialling with Morocco as well.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So if there are no objections from any of the other countries I suppose they will all join eventually, will they?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for that remark by Mr Bob Peliza. We should get all the other countries to join this eventually just like the UK have done and the list increases as you go along. Eventually, from Gibraltar, once we get IDD, we shall be able to contact 99.9% of countries throughout the world directly.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister make sure that eventually means before in fact the operation starts so that when we do start we have all those countries connected already?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, at the moment we are really going into the programme and the system of IDD and these particular points that the Honourable and Gallant Major Peliza has brought up, quite rightly, have been looked up and are being looked up expeditiously.

HON P J ISOLA:

In view of the fact that it is obviously antiquated and out of date that countries should not be able to telephone Gibraltar directly as they do to every country in Europe, could not his department, I know the world is very large, make a particular effort to get in any country in Europe that is not already in, such as Italy for example, Austria, and also very very specifically the United States of America and Canada because one gets lots of complaints from individuals from these countries who tell you there are no facilities, nobody seems to have heard of the facilities. Is there not a need to tell these countries that we are getting complaints at this end that they cannot dial automatically. Would not the Minister agree to make a special effort to at least get Europe, North America and Canada into this more modern system?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, in fact I checked up on this just before coming to the House and most USA/Canada traffic comes direct via Satellite. I have had people ringing up from the States and I have been able to ring up directly. As regards Northern Europe is concerned some of the countries are re-routed through the Spanish network which obviously means that you have to use semi automatic dialling unless you really want to go the long way and go through London. Northern countries like West Germany, the Netherlands go through the London network, through the Cable and Wireless Satellite. But I shall endeavour to do what the Honourable Member suggests.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister bear in mind and could not these countries be told that with the use of the Spanish network there is no way they are going to get through to Gibraltar quickly through that network, I have had a personal experience from Greece on that if I may tell the Minister. I eventually had to be put through Germany which got me through straight away whilst through Spain there was no way of getting through. So perhaps these countries could be told of the improved service that they can get by going through the other network.

HON DR G R VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the point is taken.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, may I add a personal experience. In all telephone booths in Denmark and Holland the International Dialling Number for Gibraltar is very prominently set out.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state whether the maintenance programmes to engines at the Generating Station is being carried out fully and effectively and if so whether we can expect a winter free of power cuts?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

The maintenance programme to engines at the Generating Station is being carried out normally.

A backlog has inevitably built up and discussions are taking place in order to catch up to the planned schedule.

Once the maintenance programme is completed, a winter free of power cuts is to be expected, however, it is impossible to forecast any unexpected outages due to engine breakdowns which could result in a loss of generating capacity.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 128 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

What is this particular backlog due to, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, this backlog was due to delays in recommissioning No 11 engine which meant delays in labour availability for the planned maintenance programme.

HON G T RESTANO:

So what, in fact, is required to be done yet?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

What is required to be done? I have mentioned in paragraph 2, there is a backlog and discussions are taking place in order to catch up to the planned schedule.

HON G T RESTANO:

My question was what does the backlog consist of?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I have said what the backlog is due to.

MR SPEAKER:

No. You are being asked what it consists of, perhaps they are talking about a matter which you may not be able to answer, but you are being asked, do you know what the backlog consists of?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The backlog simply consists of that some of the engines, which were scheduled for some summer overhaul have had to have their dates put back. This is what has happened.

HON G T RESTANO:

May we know which engines have yet to be overhauled and which ones have been repaired or maintained correctly and properly and what is the work schedule that is going to be carried out, shall we say, between now and . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect to the questioner. We are not going to get involved with the detailed maintenance of each particular engine. Let us be clear on that one.

HON G T RESTANO:

I do not want the actual details but I want to know, as there are five engines in the Generating Station, I want to know whether two of them or three of them or four of them or all five of them need to be maintained by winter?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, No 13 engine needs a top overhaul. No 12 engine is presently undergoing general overhaul and new turbo-chargers and coolers are being fitted. No 10 engine has been finished except that it needs the cylinder heads changed. No 11 engine, as you know, has been recommissioned. No 9 engine needs a top overhaul and changing of the cylinder head and its overchargers and then we have the two small engines, 5 and 7. No 5 needs a complete overhaul of the air and auxiliary valves and re-tightening of the cylinder heads and in No 7 engine it is also necessary to service all the air and auxiliary valves and re-tightening the cylinder heads as well. This is what is needed as far as King's Bastion North and King's Bastion South is concerned.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Minister confident that he will be able to have all these works carried out by winter?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I can say this. I am sure that everybody down at the Generating Station is trying to help and I am confident that the works, the scheduler works envisaged can be done before the winter period.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister if any of this backlog is due to the IPCS industrial action?



HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid this is an industrial problem but because of the IPCS industrial action no overtime can be done except under very special conditions of immediate urgency arising. This is cleared by the IPCS.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to get involved. You are being asked whether the backlog is due to the industrial action and the answer is yes or no. Let us not get involved.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, to some extent.

HON P J ISOLA:

To some extent. Is this current action seriously affecting the situation because I understood the IPCS to have undertaken to Government that they would not do things that would seriously harm the public and there is nothing more calculated to harm the public than power cuts. So can we have a clear answer to that please, Mr Speaker? I think the public is entitled to know.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

As I said before, Mr Speaker, there is no overtime work except under very special conditions. These have got to be cleared with IPCS but one of the things that IPCS always said is that they regard the Generating Station as a very important element in the life of Gibraltar and that they will do everything they can in their power to help us as much as possible to continue the maintenance programme so that the people of Gibraltar will not suffer any power cuts during the winter.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean then, Mr Speaker, that the IPCS action is not unintentionally affecting the situation then? If they have said that, is Government satisfied that they are implementing it in that area?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it is affecting the situation somewhat because you cannot work regular overtime unless this is cleared by the IPCS. This is not a normal sequence of events so it is affecting the maintenance programme to some extent. But certainly one cannot lay the blame totally at the door of IPCS. I just hope that there is no escalation of the IPCS action at the present time which could seriously hinder our plans for this summer for the maintenance programme.

HON G T RESTANO:

Why is it, in fact, that maintenance cannot be done during normal working hours? Why is it that it has to be done during overtime? Is there a reason for this?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir. Mr Speaker, maintenance is done during normal working hours, unfortunately some other snags crop up and men have to be moved from one machine to another to be able to deal with that particular problem. The other thing during the summer is the leave problems which has meant that there are certainly less people available to deal with problems.

MR SPEAKER:

So maintenance can be done during normal working hours.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, it can be done.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has indicated the manner in which we may be subjected to power cuts, would it be right to assume that in the event of these power cuts the Services Generating Station will be relied upon?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I thank the Hon Mr Haynes for that question. The interservices Generating Station gives us as much help as possible depending on their own commitments.

HON A J HAYNES:

What I am getting at, Mr Speaker, is this. Has the interservices Generating Station indicated that they might not be in a position to help this winter? Are they overrunning their own engines to ensure that we have continuous electric supply or not?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is difficult to tell the interservices Generating Station what . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No. You are being asked, because I do not want to enlarge on this, have you received any indication from the interservices Generating Station that they will not be able to help?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir, they do try to help us as much as possible.

HON A J HAYNES:

Have you received any indication that the interservices Generating Station may not be in a position to help whether they want to or not this winter? It is not that they will help when they can. Have you received any indication . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, you have been given an answer. They have not received an indication from the interservices Generating Station that they will not be able to help this winter.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can you quite say, as far as you are concerned, they are running normally as always and they have no particular problem that you are aware of? Is that correct?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No. You must not answer that question. You cannot give an undertaking as to other Generating Stations in any manner or form. Next question.

NO. 129 OF 1981

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government take the necessary measures to improve public lighting at both Line Wall Road and Devil's Tower Road?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, provision was made to improve the public lighting in both these areas in the financial estimates for 1980/81 and 81/82. Design and all preparatory work has now been completed and the respective state of progress is as follows:-

Line Wall Road

New 90W SOX lanterns are to replace the existing 250W MBT lanterns - these lanterns were ordered in November 1980 and their arrival is expected within the next two months.

Devil's Tower Road

The new lighting scheme will consist of 40 No 90W SOX CO lanterns as opposed to the existing 22 No. All materials are now in Gibraltar and work has been programmed to commence shortly.

NO. 130 OF 1981

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government confirm and give details on the oil leakage from the King's Bastion Generating Station into the Harbour and will Government state what measures they are taking to remedy the problem?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Government can confirm that there is an oil leakage into the harbour.

The oil discharges at the RGYC outflow of the South Station water cooling system.

Investigations to date show that the oil does not come from the Station itself since there is no oil at the source of this outflow within the Station.

These investigations have shown that there is oil in the water table underground in the Queensway area and it is believed that the only feasible explanation for the oil leak at that particular point is that the outflow pipe, which has been in service for at least 80 years is broken in places and that, under conditions of low tide, when the sea is at or below the level of the pipe, the oil present in the water enters the pipe and is discharged to the sea together with the cooling water.

It is believed that there are two possible ways in which the oil can have entered the water table underground. The first that oil has accumulated in the water table over the years from the oil polluted waters, the second is that the oil underground, may come from leaks in the supply line which feeds the fuel to the Generating Station from a Coaling Island berth. This line is used for about 5 hours at intervals of between seven and ten days when it is pressurized under pumping pressure.

Tests so far have not located the fault or faults but further tests are proceeding at this moment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 130 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

What measures are being taken to remedy the problem in terms of pollution?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, at the present moment we are looking into all aspects of this and how to remedy this pollution this year but this is as far as we have got at the present time.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 131 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government make a detailed statement with regard to the number of vacancies for Apprenticeships this year, the number of applicants and the passes attained by them and generally inform this House as to what it proposes offering those applicants who having passed the Entrance requirements and being considered suitable for Industrial Training, find that all vacancies for Apprenticeship training have been taken?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

With your permission, I propose to answer Questions 131, 134 and 135 together.

The Gibraltar Government is offering a total of 17 apprenticeships this year and PSA/DOE are offering 6. Insofar as HM Dockyard is concerned the number of vacancies which they will be able to offer is still under consideration by them.

Of 150 candidates for the engineering/shipbuilding apprenticeship examination, about 80 have attained an acceptable standard. Of 134 who sat the examination for the construction trades, about 90 have reached the required standard. However, because a very high proportion of candidates sat both examinations, the number who have reached the required standard in one or both examinations could be about 110. This figure would be reduced by those who may stay on at school, obtain scholarships, take up other employment, etc.

Turning to the last part of Question 131 - and as I said in reply to Question No 42 of 1981 on 11 March, 1981 - once all the apprenticeships have been taken up, Government can offer the facilities of the Construction Training Centre at Landport to those who could have obtained an apprenticeship but for the fact that all vacancies had been filled. Provided that the numbers who wish to avail themselves of this are not more than the Centre can cope with, the intention is to give these youngsters basic training for one year in one of the construction trades, similar to that given to first year apprentices.

This training would be provided free and regarded as an extension to their education, and there would be no commitment to employing them at the end of the year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTIONS NOS. 131, 134 AND 135 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

I am grateful to the Minister for that answer but can the Minister confirm that the first year in fact of an Apprenticeship Scheme is spent totally at the Centre?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No.

HON W T SCOTT:

There is, in fact, in-field training as it were, therefore, and can the Minister say in fact what numbers can the Centre cope with?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think we could cope with up to about 50.

HON W T SCOTT:

So in fact it might be a situation where only half, or roughly half, of those young men who having past the apprenticeship exam are not being offered a scholarship can be catered for at the Centre?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, that is his opinion. My opinion is to the contrary, I think we can deal with the problem.

HON W T SCOTT:

Does Government not agree in fact that in the amended motion passed in this House there was a commitment by Government to re-train all of these young men?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

We emphasised that if all the vacancies had been filled, and this does not necessarily mean that all the vacancies will be filled, we will give opportunities to all the apprentices. I have said so already.

HON J BOSSANO:

The Government has said that the Dockyard has not yet decided how many. This is in fact a change because the original figure for the apprenticeships given by the official employers was a total of 40 and I imagine that the discrepancy between the 23 we have been given and the 40 is because the MOD. may be considering reducing apprenticeships. Is that the case?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will repeat my answer. Insofar as HM Dockyard is concerned the number of vacancies which they will be able to offer is still under consideration by them. What they are doing, I do not know. I am not HM Dockyard.

HON J BOSSANO:

I accept that the Hon Member is not HM Dockyard but the Hon Member is the Minister for Labour and Social Security and I imagine he must consider whether the Dockyard is going to have apprenticeships or not since if they do not this problem will be aggravated and therefore can he confirm that HM Dockyard had intended to provide 17 vacancies and that it is now no longer certain whether they will because of the Defence Review? Is this the case?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is in fact the Hon Member then saying that he has had no knowledge to date, irrespective of any possible change about what the intentions of the Dockyard were, as to the number of apprentices it would take this year? That in fact when the candidates were asked to apply, is he saying that as Minister for Labour he did not know what the total vacancies available would be?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think your figure may be correct but I do not remember.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would he then go back to the Dockyard and find out from them how it is that, having arrived in the Official Employers Apprentices Training Board at a global figure of 40, including the Dockyard, the amount that the Dockyard can put is no longer known? Can he find out from them what has changed?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will repeat that the Dockyard are considering the whole question of apprenticeships, the whole context of the Defence Review.

HON J BOSSANO:

Then it is in fact that as a result of the Defence Review it is no longer certain that the number of apprenticeships that were being offered initially are still going to be there. That is the case then?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The question is being studied by them.

HON J BOSSANO:

I am well aware of this but if the Dockyard said three months ago that there would be 17 apprenticeships this year and now they are studying, I imagine that that is because it is no longer certain that there are going to be 17 apprenticeships this year and that this is a result of the Defence Review. That is the question which the Minister was unable to answer a few seconds ago. Is that the picture?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I would interpret it as a natural deduction but it could also be interpreted that it might be increased.



HON J BOSSANO:

Highly unlikely. What I am asking the Hon Member, since he is in a position to do so, that he should get a definitive statement on the subject from the Dockyard rather than make assumptions which is what I have to do on this side of the House.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 132 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state the number employed by the UK departments and the total wage and salaries bill in April 1981?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The numbers of locally-entered staff of the United Kingdom Departments on 1.4.81 were as follows:-

	Non- Industrials	Industrials	Total	Gross Wages/ Salaries Bill (in £m per annum)
Ministry of Defence	798	1925	2723	£13.297
PSA/DOE	112	612	724	2.675
	<u>910</u>	<u>2537</u>	<u>3447</u>	<u>£15.972</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 132 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Hon Member have the comparable figures for the UK based civilian employees in the UK Departments?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Sir. The above figures do not include UK based staff whose salaries are paid from UK. Neither do they include the employees of organisations directly connected with the UK Departments, for example, NAAFI, etc.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Minister in a position to obtain such information?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I took this question to mean locally entered staff. I will try.

HON J BOSSANO:

I understand that the employment surveys, for example, produced by his department include the UK based in the figures that they produced and therefore for the sake of consistency when making use of these statistics I am sure he will agree. I am asking the question because it has not yet been published. Looking at the October 1980 statistics, for example, which is the last public figure, it will include a number

of people who are UK based in the figure employed in the UK department and consequently this figure will show a discrepancy. It is not because there has been a reduction, I take it, but because the UK based are not included here are included there. Therefore, what I am asking the Hon Member is information that he will have in the employment survey and if he can make it available to me outside the House I would be grateful.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 133 OF 1981

THE HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker there was a typing error which I would like to correct if I may when I read it out.

Has Government now given consideration to the possibility of raising the tax allowance of a single parent family with a dependent child to the same level as that of a married couple in the current financial year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, I take it that the Honourable Member is referring to the Income Tax allowance for single parent families. This allowance was increased by the Finance Ordinance 1981 from £400 to £500 for the current tax year. The Government also undertook to look into the merits of increasing it further to the level of the Personal Allowance i.e. £850. This is still under consideration together with other amendments to the Income Tax Ordinance.

7.7.81

NO. 134 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government say whether the MOD proposes to reduce the number of apprenticeships?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Answered together with Question Nos. 131 and 135.

7.7.81

NO. 135 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government say what provision is to be made for the training of school leavers who pass the apprentice training examination but fail to be offered an apprenticeship?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Answered together with Question Nos. 131 and 134.

NO. 136 OF 1981

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state how many times the Industrial Training Board met last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The Industrial Training Board did not meet at all in 1980. In fact, appointments to the Board had lapsed in 1974. Due mainly to delays in receiving nominations for membership from relevant organisations, it has not been possible to re-constitute the Board until as recently as April 1981.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 136 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member, now that the Board is to be reconstituted or has been reconstituted, agree that this might be a proper machine to consider activating in the context of a need for perhaps greater training facilities if there is an effect on the unemployment situation in Gibraltar.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 137 OF 1981

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, can Government confirm that the vacancies for two Trainee Social Workers required in the Family Care Unit have been filled and will Government give an indication as to when this Unit will show improvement with regard to the needs of the community?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, two Officers have already been selected for appointment as Trainee Social Workers and they are joining the Department of Labour and Social Security on 15 July 1981.

After a reasonable period of induction and in-service training in the Department's Family Care Unit they will be required to go to U.K. for specialised training in the various aspects of social work, including probation work. On successful completion of this training, they will be appointed as Social Workers.

It is expected that by this time next year one of them will have returned from training and thus become fully effective.

In the meantime, after they take up their duties as trainees next week, their presence should begin to be felt as, gradually, they are able to work on their own.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 137 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there any indication that the department will lose any other social workers before these men return next year through pregnancy or any other reason?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 138 OF 1981

THE HON W T SCOTT

Can Government state what figures it has available for job vacancies as at 31st May, 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 which were open on 31 May 1981 was 34, covering 24 different occupations. This, of course, is not a static figure, as vacancies are opened and filled every day. In fact, during the month of May, 47 notified vacancies were filled by Central Employment Exchange.

I am also able to give the corresponding figures as at 30 June 1981. On that day there were 45 open vacancies, covering a range of 22 occupations, and during June, 74 vacancies were filled.

NO. 139 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government ensure that all authorised requests made to the Family Care Unit for reports are complied with within six weeks of such requests?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

I assume that the "requests" mentioned by the Hon Questioner are the requests from the Housing Department for social reports on applicants for Government housing, and which are only one aspect of the duties of the Family Care Unit of the Department of Labour and Social Security.

In reply to Question No 137 I have explained the present staffing position of this Unit. The improvement which will result from the appointment of the two new Training Social Workers will enable more time to be devoted, amongst other things, to these social reports on applicants for Housing than has been possible in the recent past, to catch up on the backlog (there are about 70 at present) and to deal with new requests.

No assurance can be given that reports will be forwarded to the Housing Department within a specified time, but I can assure the Hon Questioner that my department is as anxious as anyone else to deal with these requests as expeditiously as staff and time allow, in the interests of the applicants themselves.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 139 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, not as anxious as men who make the request. Will the Minister state how long it takes for a report to be made and will the Minister further say when some of the reporting problems today will be likely to be heard or reported on?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No. I cannot give any specific time. We do not deal with housing reports alone, we deal with many aspects of welfare and they are treated as they come in.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am aware that the Family Care Unit deals with other matters and I am also aware of the quality of their work. They work very well. The problem is there are not enough men to handle the numerous requests and the Minister cannot say with a definitive knowledge the exact length of time it will take for a report to be made. Will the Minister confirm that for a person with a housing problem it will take in excess of nine months to have a report?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, as I said, I cannot confirm this.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister give any indication as to how long it takes for a person with a housing problem to have a report made?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister give a reason?

MR SPEAKER:

You have asked a question and he has given you an answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can he give me a reason?

MR SPEAKER:

No. May I say that that is the basic quality of a politician.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, what I am trying to say is, is there any sort of reason for this line of approach by the Minister?

MR SPEAKER:

No. You are quite entitled to ask supplementaries which are relevant to the question not as to the attitude of the Minister.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is it the shortage of staff the reason for the long delay?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I have said so.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the Minister has told you . . . . .

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will not give any commitment and I cannot give knowledge which I have not got. I am not a clerk and I do not go about asking how many days have you taken to do this thing.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, it is not a question here which I am asking for Government assurances and if he does not take the question seriously he might at least find out how long it does take and what motivates . . .

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to argue. Have you a supplementary to ask?

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister endeavour to enquire how long it takes for a report to be made and also how long it takes for a report to be made today? The reason why I ask, Mr Speaker, is that there is, as I understand it, a backlog. Can the Minister confirm that? Can the Minister say how many people are actually waiting to be reported on?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I have said 70. Any other questions I will need proper notification and I will answer properly in the House.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would the Minister consider employing extra staff for the year before these people come in?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 140 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government consider altering the system of grants for further education this year to ensure that all school leavers who obtain the minimum entrance requirements to qualify for a statutory grant in UK will be able to obtain a grant in September?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, at the present time the Educational Awards Regulations provide for minimum academic standards, based on Advanced Level results of the General Certificate of Education, for a mandatory award to be granted to enable a student to pursue a degree course in the UK. It is not felt appropriate to change the present legislation to enable all students who obtain the minimum entrance requirements for an establishment of higher education in the UK to obtain a statutory grant in Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 140 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Government then does not consider it desirable to afford the same educational opportunities to school leavers in Gibraltar as even the reactionary government that exists today in UK is doing to school leavers in UK. Is that the situation?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Sir, quite apart from the educational merits of ensuring satisfactory academic standards before granting scholarships, it should be noted that it will result in a significant increase in terms of expenditure on scholarships if all students gaining a place at a university or polytechnic in UK were to be given an award. Establishments of higher education in UK are desperate, very desperate, to recruit students at the present time and some universities and polytechnics accept students with very poor advance level results in order to boost enrolment figures and so attract the relevant grant from central government in London. This resolves in mediocre standards and high wastage rate; something which Gibraltar cannot afford in terms of the scholarship fund.

HON J BOSSANO:

What evidence does the Hon Member have for this and is he aware that the argument that he is using now was used by his predecessor some 5 years ago to refuse a grant to one of these mediocre students who finished up with a doctorate and a post graduate grant given by the University of Wales? Is he aware of the history of the invalidity of such an argument?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

All credit to the student. My answer will still be that I will not consider it at this stage.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Hon Member then admit that there is no evidence to substantiate the position he has taken? It is either pure political dogma or penny pinching which makes him take a position that deprives young Gibraltarians who could benefit from further education from doing so because they will not make the money available.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, if I were sitting there I would ask the same questions but I am sitting here and I am still saying no.

HON J BOSSANO:

I do not think it is relevant where one sits. The validity of the argument stands, of course, by its contents. Will the Hon Member admit that if there is no evidence to show that what is going to be produced is masses of mediocre students, if it is just a question of money, then what he is saying is that the Gibraltar Government is not prepared to spend the same amount of money in giving an opportunity to further education to school leavers in Gibraltar as a Conservative Government is doing to school leavers in UK. That is the position then?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Sir, there is an element of a wastage rate of about 22%-25%. I see it as far more important if there is money available to spend it on students of Gibraltar who require remediate attention. I feel that it is far more important than getting more graduates.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does not the Hon Member realise that in this difficult times of employment the greater the educational attainment by school leavers the greater the prospect of finding employment? There is a direct relationship between the two. Is he not aware of that?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Sir. I think that as a sociologist he has got it the other way round. The under achievers are the ones who find it more difficult to find employment.

HON J BOSSANO:

What I am saying is that the higher the level the greater the prospect of employment and consequently I want them to encourage more people to go . . . . .

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

By the under achievers I mean people who are ESN mild, educationally subnormal mild, and this is where I would like to spend the money rather than on 10 or 12 more scholarships.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member then saying that there is some magic finite figure of the amount of money available and that to give grants to people who would benefit from a university education would mean reducing the money available for people who are educationally subnormal. Is he making that as a serious statement that he expects this House to accept because I can assure the Hon Member that there are other areas of Government expenditure that can be cut and the educational vote can be increased if he is not aware of it?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 141 OF 1981

THE HON A T LODDO

What is the position regarding sponsored students to the MOD Schools?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, 90 children are at present being sponsored to the Services Primary Schools and a further 29 are on a waiting list pending places becoming available within the maximum of 90 which can be taken up under the sponsorship scheme agreed between Government and MOD some years ago. As a result of a significant increase in the sponsorship fee claimed by MOD for the period April 1980 Government felt the need to review the level of fees charged by MOD and to examine alternative ways of catering for the needs of the Protestant children at present sponsored to the two Services Schools. A paper is currently being prepared for the consideration of Government which will be used as a basis for negotiations with MOD shortly on the future provision for the Protestant children now attending the Services Schools under the sponsorship scheme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 141 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, we are glad to hear the matter is being considered but if the matter is being considered can the Minister explain why letters were sent to Protestant parents children at school telling them what they would have to pay in September. Would he not agree that that is contrary to what was stated in this House by the Minister that there would be prior consultations with religious authorities concerned before any steps were taken to implement this?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, the letters were sent as an advanced notice of Government's intention at the time but it was also stated in the letter that we were making every effort to reduce the possible hardship that would fall on the Protestant parents to a minimum. Then we had further representations from all the Protestant religious bodies and this is why we are taking this line.

HON P J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying that it is government's policy to consult with the authorities before implementing?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am glad to hear that.



NO. 142 OF 1981

THE HON A T LODDO

Why have 5th year French students been issued with photocopies of their French literature book?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, one of the set books for 'A' level students taking French in 1982 was found to be out of stock. This particular book was ordered in September 1980 and is a French publication. In order to ensure that work could progress on this particular set book pending stocks being available for purchase the teacher concerned at Bayside School took the trouble to photocopy as much as was necessary from a single copy that was available in the school.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 142 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker I think that the teacher should be congratulated on his initiative.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I feel the same. The pity is that I do not think this should have been brought to the House.

MR SPEAKER:

Well there might be another reason.

NO. 143 OF 1981

THE HON A T LODDO

What is the situation at the moment regarding the moving of the Middle School to the Old Grammar School?.

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, I presume he means the St. Mary's Middle School because we have 3 Middle schools.

The south wing of the Old Grammar School building at Sacred Heart Terrace was recently handed over to the Department of Education following the completion of phase one of the building works of re-modelling the premises for use as a Middle School. The Castle Road Annexe at present St. Mary's Middle School will be transferred to the south wing of the Old Grammar School during the last week (this week) of the present Summer Term so that accommodation can be prepared ready for the beginning of the next school year in September 1981.

NO. 114 OF 1981

THE HON A T LODDO

Has Government received a reply to its proposals to MOD London reference the transference of the Technical College?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, a reply was received from MOD towards the end of March 1981 in response to the original proposals put forward by Government for transfer of the Gibraltar and Dockyard Technical College and its future running costs. The Government proposals were found to be unacceptable to MOD and counter proposals by MOD were included in their response. These counter proposals were found to be unacceptable to Gibraltar Government. Consequently the precise terms for the transfer of the site and buildings of the present Gibraltar and Dockyard Technical College and the basis of future recurrent expenditure in running the new College of Further Education are still a matter of negotiation with MOD. It is now extremely unlikely that the Gibraltar and Dockyard Technical College will be transferred in September 1981 as originally envisaged. The likely date of transfer if agreement can be reached on the transfer of the site and buildings and on recurrent expenditure will be some time in 1982 possibly at the end of the 1981/82 academic year.

NO. 145 OF 1981

THE HON G T RESTANO

Why is the converted modernised flat at No. 14 Flat Bastion Road still not occupied in view of the acute housing problem that exists?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Sir, the flat referred to at 14 Flat Bastion Road has not been allocated because it has not yet been handed over to this Department, presumably because it is still not ready for occupation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 145 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

What is the reason for that flat not being available for occupation or not being ready for occupation, since it has been unoccupied for quite a number of years?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, as far as I understand that flat suffers from some roof water penetration and there is a problem of an unauthorised building that is being built upon it.

HON G T RESTANO:

An unauthorised building that is being built on top of it. Is any action being taken against the unauthorised building?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, it is not on top of it I should have said near it which provides the access for the Public Works Department. Action has been taken and the matter is being looked into, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

What has been the result of that action?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well legal action has been taken I don't know the result of the action yet, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

There won't be access to this flat until legal action is resolved because that will take a long time?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am sorry I do not understand.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean that access to this flat will not be available until the legal action has been resolved because that always takes a long time?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, when I say legal action I do not think it is court proceedings. I think there is some correspondence between the Surveyor and Planning Secretary and the person concerned.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Minister saying that the persons who have built this unauthorised building will not allow Public Works to move in to repair the flat. Is that the position?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That was the situation I think up to about 4 months ago, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

So what is the position now then?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I understand, and it is not really my department, Mr Speaker, I understand that the person has now accepted that we obviously have a right of entry to carry out the repairs.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state why shop premises at Rose Shrine House are still not occupied and whether any flats there remain unallocated or unoccupied?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 5 units still awaiting acceptance by prospective tenants.

Although this is not within my own responsibility I understand that the shops at Rose Shrine House are intended for the two tenants who had previously occupied similar premises in the old building. How the shops are to be allocated has now been agreed and the terms of the new tenancies will be communicated to the prospective tenants shortly.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 146 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

On the five units which are for acceptance by the prospective tenants I find it difficult to understand how, with the acute housing problem that there is, it should take so long for people to accept. What is the reason for this? I would have thought people who required accommodation would have jumped at any possibility of accommodation.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I would tend to agree with the Hon Member but may I explain that the five flats, one of which is the six roomed flat, have been offered to the three top persons on the list but have rejected it because of distance, or because the actual house consists of three storeys, the rooms are quite small and the flight of steps within the house are not convenient to the persons who were entitled to them under the Housing Allocation Scheme. Since the time of preparing this answer, a week or so ago, I understand that two tenants who will be giving up 4 rooms kitchen and bathroom of postwar standard, will be accepting smaller accommodation at Rose Shrine House. There is some delay because there have been offers to people who are over housed which, of course, will benefit the housing list quite substantially.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 147 OF 1981

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state the area and location of the units which in answer to Question 65 of 1981 were declared to be unoccupied?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Lists of the areas and location of the units that were declared in Question No 65 of 1981 to be unoccupied, and which amount to 164, are being circulated.

I think the House would not bear with me Mr Speaker, if I were to read out 164 dwellings and addresses so I certainly hope I have satisfied the Honourable Member.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 147 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

261 units are unoccupied at present. That was the answer given in March this year.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well there are 164 at present. I should say that there have been some that have been rehabilitated and returned and of course they have been allocated.

MR SPEAKER:

Next Question.

NO. 148 OF 1981

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state their policy as regards allocation of the new housing units to be built and will Government say when the new units will be allocated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The policy remains as follows:-

Medical Category	20%
Government Quarters Agreement	8%
Decanting of Pensioners	6%
General Allocation List	66%

All housing units built will be allocated as and when these are ready for occupation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 148 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister confirm then that there is no likelihood of these being allocated, in say two months time, or one months time, they will be allocated when they are built am I right?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

New housing, Mr Speaker? As and when they are ready. I can say I think that the Tank Ramp Housing complex will be allocated within the next week but I cannot possibly say when St. Jago's or St. Joseph's or Flat Bastion Road Complexes will be ready.

HON A J HAYNES:

Did the Minister say anything about social points being part of their policy in allocating houses in the list he just read?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Social points do not come into percentage. Social matters are dealt with and granted points within the general allocation housing list.

HON A J HAYNES:

Those are 66% you said.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That's right.



HON A J HAYNES:

Would the lack of a Family Care Unit Report therefore prejudice someone who is dependent on those special grounds?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the Family Care Unit Reports are invariably brought to the Housing Department's attention for pre-war accommodation. Not the kind of accommodation we are talking of here.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 149 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government give the number of Housing applications that are supported by medical certificates certifying bronchitis in children under 15 years of age?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, as has already been stated before there are at present about 1800 applications for accommodation.

To obtain the information requested, it would be necessary to examine each and every one of these applications to find out which have been awarded medical points, determine the nature of the illness or illnesses which merited the award of these, and work out the ages of those children under the age of 15.

It is regretted that the pressure of work in the Department is so great that it is virtually impossible for the staff to produce such detailed and exacting information in addition to their daily duties at such short notice. To do this, it would be necessary to close down the offices to the public and leave the daily work aside until the exercise had been completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 149 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that medical certificates certifying bronchitis in children generally are very large indeed?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I do not read medical certificates. That is done by the Housing Advisory Committee. I would not say they are very large indeed compared to other certificates. Certainly not for under 15 years of age.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that there are a large number of children who suffer from bronchitis and are certified in that respect and that these certificates come to the notice of the Minister and I am talking about figures in the region of 200 to 300?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I cannot answer that.

HON A J HAYNES:

Perhaps, Mr Speaker, the Minister will investigate the matter especially when the majority of instances where bronchitis is certified in children it is due to damp and poor housing conditions. The appalling housing conditions of some people does

result in their children suffering from asthmatic bronchitis and other assorted illnesses. That is the reason for asking the question. I would like the Minister to at least assure me that it is not as bad as I believe it may be.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I cannot commit myself or my department into going into this kind of exercise. I do not agree that the immense majority of the medical certificates afforded to the Housing Allocation Committee are for bronchitis. If the Hon Member is trying to make a case for every single applicant that has a bronchitis certificate for a child under 15 because of damp conditions there are, in the scheme, points awarded for dampness but I cannot say . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, you cannot say.

HON P J ISOLA:

I can understand the Minister not being able to give this information but can the Minister consider his department making use of modern methods of filing that give this sort of information by using, for example, the computer that the Government has and feeding information from all the housing applications as they come in so that statistics such as this one, which could be of importance in reviewing the general situation in Gibraltar, can be easily ascertained without closing the Housing Department? Consideration might be given to that suggestion.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

One would always look with certain sympathy at modern approaches to decipher the final statistics or information that Government requires but again I cannot commit Government into a new computer system that would afford this information at this stage.

HON P J ISOLA:

I can understand that but surely it is obviously convenient to have a ready means of finding out, for example, how many three children family are on your housing list and what are the requirements for four children and have all that information readily available. I would have thought that was essential from the point of view of planning future housing development in Gibraltar and as the Government has got a computer I would have thought that, in the long term, it would be well worthwhile and much in the Government's interest to do this.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I wish to assure the Hon Leader of the Opposition that the department certainly has an up-to-date list of family composition within Gibraltar for the requirement of future planning.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 150 OF 1981

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state how many housing applications are still awaiting consideration pending evaluation of supporting medical certificates and how long does such evaluation usually take?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

There are at present about 23 medical certificates awaiting consideration by the Housing Advisory Committee. Under normal circumstances medical certificates are considered within a month from date of receipt at the Department. The Committee meets almost every Friday afternoon unless the Chairman is otherwise occupied and unable to attend.

NO. 151 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Will Government take the necessary steps to prohibit the parking of boats on trailers in car parks?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Police already take steps to deal with such problems commensurate with their other more important duties, and when offences are observed or complaints received, offenders are strictly advised, or in the case of persistent or obstinate offenders, reported for prosecution. In the past 6 months 3 cases have been prosecuted on conviction at the Magistrates Court (at Alameda Grand Parade).

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 151 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Will Government give consideration to increasing penalties in respect of illegal parking as, for example, with containers? Is the Minister aware of a recent case of a container that was on Devil's Tower Road, actually on the road, for 2 or 3 months before the case came to court and then there was a fine of £15? Will the Government give consideration, in order to avoid these things happening, to amending the laws so that the penalties are much stiffer or the court has power to award very stiff penalties in these cases?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think the Government will, of course, consider increasing the penalties. The police have been dedicating themselves to a number of issues and, for instance, in 1981 it is projected that some 3888 traffic offences will be reported and some 5700 parking tickets will be issued. Last year, against 958 which I mentioned for 1981, there were something like 8192. So there is greater activity in trying to clean up Gibraltar by getting all these vehicles off the road.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will Government, since this matter is being considered also consider the possibility of not allowing in certain car park areas which are for cars, the parking of heavy duty lorries and other trailers and things like that which do find themselves in- to car parks?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, Government has considered this very carefully. There have been some areas which we have declared as car parks, for instance, Moorish Castle where goods vehicles are prohibited from parking at specific times.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 152 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Would Government make a statement on the use of the public highway as open air car parks by car dealers?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The practice is discouraged by the police who give regular attention to this matter. Many of the cars that appear abandoned are in fact licensed and insured. In certain cases police have reported blatant offenders, or obtained their assistance in removing and disposing of the unwanted second hand vehicles.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 152 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Would not the Government agree that it is immoral that car dealers should be making money out of the public highway and that car drivers who find it more and more difficult to find parking places should run the risk of parking in no parking areas and be subsequently fined? Would Government agree that this is an immorality?

MR SPEAKER:

No, you are not going to answer that. This question of immorality is a matter of opinion. Next question.

NO. 153 OF 1981

THE HON A T LODDO

Has Government purchased traffic lights?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Government has not purchased traffic lights as at present they are not considered essential. It may become necessary should the frontier re-open and plans for the acquisition and installation of traffic lights at certain venues have already been provisionally drawn-up.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 153 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would not the Government agree that we should have the traffic lights before the frontier opens and so get our own drivers used to the idea of driving with traffic lights and not wait until panic stations arise?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not agree. In fact traffic lights, in a place like Gibraltar, for our present set up could be a great hindrance. That is to say that we do not have a consistent flow of traffic from any particular lane and there are certain hours where traffic is moving solely in one direction, for example, Waterport roundabout. One could find that the exodus from HM Dockyard to the Glacis area would be flowing that way at a given time and if you had traffic lights giving a 3 minute interval for roads coming in, it would be much more cumbersome unless of course, and the Honourable Member may think so, it would be possible to have a computer but then the financial consequences would not today be justified.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government then envisage that once the frontier opens there is going to be a continuous flow of traffic to such an extent that it would warrant having traffic lights?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, it could well warrant the direction of traffic. At present it does not.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 154 OF 1981

THE HON A T LODDO

Is Government contemplating the repeal of the law regarding the sounding of car horns within the town area?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

No. Blatant offenders are warned by the police. When the law was more strictly enforced in the past irate drivers used to bang on their car doors. This was more irritating to the public at large but was not an offence.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 154 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say how many cases have been brought before the courts for sounding their car horns inside the town within the last six months?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I said in my answer that the police were warning offenders. They do not prosecute and take cases to court.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact there is a law which is not being enforced and in view of the fact that the public by and large takes very little notice of warnings given by the police would government consider doing away with the law which is useless?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker. When I say police warn they would warn if they would remember who it was who sounded his horn two days earlier or a week earlier. They could be prosecuted if they were persistent offenders but we find that there are no persistent offender as such. If anybody blows his horn purely accidentally or in cases of emergency they are just warned and certainly not summoned.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, surely the law is that it is illegal to sound the horn therefore will the police prosecute or would the Government repeal the law?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the question of the sounding of horns is an offence in the city area. It is also an offence to sound the horn outside the City area if the car is stationary. In those instances the police would warn and possibly prosecute if they found somebody blowing the horn to call somebody's attention from the 14th storey of the tower blocks. However it is not done, Mr Speaker, people are warned and not prosecuted at this stage.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



7.7.81

NO. 155 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Will Government ensure that cars removed from Casemates by the Police are not allowed to remain derelict in Market Place?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Yes, Sir. The Police have considerably stepped up action to remove derelict vehicles. In 1980, 623 such vehicles were removed by the Police and disposed of and in the first 6 months of this year 405 such vehicles have been dealt with.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 155 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

I am sure it is very laudable but I am referring in particular to cars removed from Casemates at the time when there is a parade and then trundled to Market Place and left there derelict of which, at the moment, there are three that have been there for the last six weeks. Will the Government ensure that the cars that are removed from Casemates are not allowed to remain derelict in Market Place?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think that the Hon Member should refer not only to Market Place because he happens to be in and out of there every day. There are derelict vehicles all around Gibraltar but I think the determination of the Police to stamp this out is quite meritorious. I will, of course, bring to the attention of the Commissioner of Police the three derelict cars at the Market Place at present.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 156 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

How many cases of speeding by motor cyclists have been brought before the courts within the last twelve months?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

The problem of speeding motor cyclists is receiving increased police attention, and will continue to do so.

During the past twelve months ended 30 June, 1981, the following offenders have been reported for speeding offences:

motor cycles	-	27
motor cars	-	<u>47</u>
Total	-	<u>74</u>

NO. 157 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Would Government consider bringing the law regarding motor cycles in line with that in the UK?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not known what the questioner has in mind.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 157 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Perhaps, Mr Speaker, I may be allowed to explain.

MR SPEAKER:

Most certainly.

HON A T LODDO:

In the United Kingdom, on obtaining a driving licence, a motor cyclist is not allowed to drive a motor cycle with an engine capacity of more than 125 cc. This he has to abide by for a period of 12 months, after which he is allowed to drive a motor cycle of a larger engine capacity. Furthermore, in the United Kingdom any holder of a 'B' licence is entitled to drive a moped with an engine capacity not exceeding 50cc without the need to have a special motor cycle licence. The effect of this is two-fold. You get more people using smaller conveyances, there is a saving in fuel, there is less pollution . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not get into the reasons. You have stated what the law is.

HON A T LODDO:

The other very important one is that an 18 year old youth will not, on obtaining his driving licence, go out and buy himself a 600cc engine and go around with a potential death trap.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member has not got his facts right. In the United Kingdom a person who obtains . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

May I say that you knew what he meant when you started.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No.

MR SPEAKER:

In fairness to the questioner either you answer the question or you accept the statement. I am saying this because we are not going to start with an argument as to what the law in the United Kingdom is. I will not have it.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It is not a case that I happen to know the law in England and I happen to know the law in Gibraltar about motor cycles that is exactly why I cannot answer the Hon Member's question.

MR SPEAKER:

The question that he has asked you, and if you know the law in England and if you know the law in Gibraltar, is whether you are prepared to bring the law in Gibraltar up to the law in the United Kingdom.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the thing is he is wrong in what he said. There is no difference in the law of Gibraltar other than in a provisional licence. They have to wear crash helmets, that is exactly what I thought he was aiming at in the question, not the question of a moped of under 50cc. As far as I know a person who obtains a provisional licence for a moped can only get a 'B' class licence for a moped up to 250cc. In England there are two classifications up to 250cc. A person getting a licence and going for a test on a moped is authorised to drive a motor cycle up to 250cc. I agree he cannot go out the following day and buy an 1100cc. That is the only difference. As regards mopeds, they must wear a crash helmet up to 35cc which is exactly the same as our law is in Gibraltar. The only difference is the provisional licence. Up to 50cc is one category of licence and over 50cc is the other category. That is the only difference that exists.

MR SPEAKER:

No. What you are being asked is whether you are prepared to bring the law of Gibraltar up to that standard.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I remember that the Traffic Ordinance in 1957 provided for motor cycles of a weight up to and not exceeding 200 pounds. I will look into this, it may have some merit.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 158 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

What is Government's view on introducing Traffic Wardens?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

This has been discussed from time to time in various contexts but is not considered a viable proposition at present.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 158 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would not the Minister agree that by introducing traffic wardens it would free the police to do more police work and leave the trafficking in hands of the traffic wardens? Would it leave the police free to do far more police work than just parking tickets and the like?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I would have to agree if the increase in the volume of work was to be such that would require an additional traffic warden structure. Since the MOD passed the Gibraltar Police Force back to us there seem to be quite an adequate number of men to look after Gibraltar at present.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, in the possible event of the opening of the frontier, will the Government then consider the introduction of traffic wardens? Would he be prepared to contemplate this?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

We would go further than contemplate, we would consider it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 159 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Has Government considered introducing parking meters?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

This has been discussed in the past but is not considered a practicable proposition at present.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 159 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Presumably, whether and if the frontier opens again it will be considered?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A T LODDO

Would Government consider introducing limits on parking times?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

It is not thought the introduction of such measures would improve matters.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 160 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, how can the Minister say that the introduction of such measures would not improve matters? I would think that it would improve matters considerably.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I can assure the Hon Member that limiting parking time would be extremely cumbersome. The police would have to keep observation of a particular vehicle, just half an hour, but would have to stay there for 24 hours or mark it with chalk but then people move the car two yards further up the road to a new parking and it becomes an absolute folly.

HON A T LODDO:

Would it not be a viable proposition to have traffic wardens?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No. I think that with the Police Force at present, in the past nine months it is quite common to see policemen around Gibraltar which was not the case a year ago.

HON P J ISOLA:

Do we understand from the questions the Minister has been answering on traffic wardens, controlled parking etc that the Government has really given up trying to control the traffic chaos that we have in Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Traffic is a problem that Government looks at constantly. It is not a question of just having a magic wand and thinking that traffic wardens or waiting time would solve the problem. We would have a graver problem by just limiting time or introducing traffic lights or introducing traffic wardens.

HON A T LODDO:

Would not the Minister agree that if time limits on parking were introduced it would ensure at least that cars would have to be moved and consequently cars that are decrepit and left derelict would soon have to disappear from our streets because, by being an offence and having to pay a fine, the owners would make sure that these cars which are useless in any case would be disposed of?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, we are talking of two different things. If he is referring to derelict cars or cars parked . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

We are beginning to argue and debate on question time. We must not do that.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

May I assure the Hon Member that at the moment Government sees that it is impossible. In the past there was a waiting time in certain areas and it was found to be an absolute mockery of the law because persons were moving their cars back by two yards or reversing and going back into it and it became a new parking and that was a total abuse. All you did was inconvenience individuals of having to come out of the shop, office or home and move his car every thirty minutes or so.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



7.7.81

NO. 161 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Will Government prohibit the parking of cars covered with a canvas or plastic cover on the public highway?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

Any cars so parked which are in breach of the law are dealt with in the same manner as any vehicle which is not covered up.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 161 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say how many cars that have been covered have been reported?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am afraid I cannot.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 162 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government explain why it has been found necessary to purchase 3 more patrol cars, 2 more motor cycles and 1 general purpose van for the Police Department and furthermore state what will be the full complement of vehicles for this Department after these purchases?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The proposed purchases will not increase the present police vehicle fleet. The vehicles to be purchased are straight replacements for existing vehicles which are either broken down, past economical repair or at the end of their working life.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 162 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

That answers the first part, can I have the second part of the question?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The police vehicle fleet is and will remain as follows:-

motor cars	-	4
motor cycles	-	7
vans	-	3
ambulances	-	2
land rovers	-	2
		<hr/>
total		18 vehicles
		<hr/>

THE HON A T LODDO:

Taking into account the lack of support from possible contestants for the Miss Gibraltar, would Government consider diverting its energies and finance in this respect to the further promoting of the Gibraltar Song Festival?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

I do not agree that there is a lack of support on the part of eligible girls to participate in the Miss Gibraltar Contest.

Admittedly, the number of contestants is not as high as one would expect, bearing in mind the many attractive girls in this City of ours as well as the very attractive prizes to be won by them.

In spite of a sustained campaign, however, experience has shown that girls tend to come forward at the last possible moment, and indeed it is not unusual for an entry to be accepted minutes before the deadline set by the organisers.

The Government has supported the Song Festival in the past and in 1980 and 1981 by means of a cash grant of £3,000 in each case.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 163 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

The Minister does not agree that there is lack of support? Perhaps the Minister could listen to Radio Gibraltar and he would find out the appeals going out almost every day because precisely there is lack of support. Would not the Minister agree that the political reason for Miss Gibraltar entering the Miss World is no longer necessary when we keep seeing photographs of Miss Gibraltar and Miss Spain, best of friends, cutting cakes and generally, living it up together? Would not the Minister agree that it is far more important now to promote the far more prestigious Gibraltar Song Festival and let the Miss Gibraltar venture now fade into the background seeing the lack of support?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, there is no lack of support. I can assure the Hon Member that very shortly before the Miss Gibraltar takes place we will, like in every other year, obtain the necessary girls to form a Miss Gibraltar contest. There is a sense of shyness, I think, of girls coming forward and they all seem to want to come in at the last moment. I am sure that when one leads we will get others following. I do not agree that the political reason for the Miss Gibraltar contest, vis-a-vis the Spanish situation holds no water today. I think the publicity that Miss Gibraltar gets is much more, with great respect to the Song Festival, than

the Song Festival. For instance, we had this year's Miss Gibraltar in the front page of the Sun. At the moment, I think the Song Festival has its merits but I think the publicity that Gibraltar gets on the Miss Gibraltar situation is much greater than what we get from the Song Festival.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I would not agree with that but I would ask the Minister, what does he consider to be the adequate number? If my memory . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am not having it. I am not going to have under question time the viability of the Miss Gibraltar contest, under no circumstances.

HON W T SCOTT:

May I ask one question? In the event, unlikely as this may seem to the Minister, of not having sufficient contestants and there is no Miss Gibraltar contest either this year or next year, whether at least that money or part of that money which is normally devoted by the Government to that contest will be made available for the promotion of the Gibraltar Song Festival?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not agree. I think that the Hon Member will agree that every single year there is a delay in the girls coming forward. There is no difference in 1981 to 1980 or 1979. I feel that Government makes a contribution towards the Song Festival of £3,000 which I think is quite reasonable.

HON W T SCOTT:

I am asking if in the event, unlikely as this may seem to the Minister, that there is no Miss Gibraltar contest whether the Government would seriously reconsider channelling part of that sum of money which normally is given to the Miss Gibraltar contest into the Gibraltar Song Festival by increasing what it already gives to that Festival?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

When the time comes we will look at it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 164 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state why registered letters are not delivered to the address on the envelope but have to be collected from the Post Office?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

Registered letters are delivered to the addresses shown on the envelope and a signature denoting receipt is obtained. However, at addresses where there is no one available to sign for the receipt of the letter at the time the postman calls, a note to the effect that a registered letter may be collected from the Post Office is left at the address in question. The only exemptions to the general rule concern addresses in blocks of flats which are provided with letter boxes in a central position within the block and Post Office Boxes. In these cases a note to the effect that a registered letter is awaiting collection at the Post Office is left in the letter box or Post Office Box concerned.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 164 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister agree that the whole purpose of a registered letter and why people pay extra for that is to ensure that the addressee does get the letter? Does not he believe that by just dropping a little note in this box it could get mislaid and therefore that letter is never received notwithstanding that the sender has paid extra?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I hope the Hon Member understood what I replied. The letter is taken to the actual address. If there is no one there then, of course, the person cannot sign for the acceptance of a registered letter. A registered letter is so, so that the sender can ensure that the person receives the letter. If there is no one there then the letter cannot be received and the postman would have no evidence of its acceptance. In those circumstances, and in those circumstances alone, when there is no one at home, a note is sent to the letter box of this particular person telling him or her that there is a letter at the Post Office. Let me assure Hon Members there are instances where the letter is taken on two consecutive days. It is not just a once and for all. There are instances where people know that the good old lady of the house may be out and it is invariably taken on a second round except in the case of places like Varyl Begg where there are letter boxes. Then, of course, the postman does not take them individually but the notices are put in the Post Office box.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Perhaps the Minister does not know what I was referring to. First of all, I was very glad to hear that there was more than one occasion because I was going to press on the Minister to see whether he could do that, at least to go a couple of times, but that obviously is being done. As I understood it, and perhaps the Minister will correct me if I am wrong, in the case of the Tower Blocks and other places where there are letter boxes the procedure of taking the letter to the house is not followed. Does the Minister agree that in those cases, seeing that the sender has obviously paid more and also considering that they are sort of a bagful of them but obviously exceptional, the postman should literally go and follow the normal procedure of knocking at the door and getting the addressee to receive that letter and sign for it?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I would tend to agree to an extent but I would not say that they are just a batchful of them. There is an enormous amount of registered mail going round Gibraltar from within Gibraltar itself and from overseas. I would have thought that the Member would have thought that the modern trend is for notes to be put into letter boxes and for the persons to claim. I would not like to see, particularly in places like the Tower Blocks and perhaps the Hon Mr Bossano might support me strongly on that one, a postman having to go up 14 flights to deliver a letter right at the top.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister agree therefore that he is treating a registered letter in the case of the Tower Blocks and places where there are letter boxes the same as any other ordinary letter and consequently, in fact even worse, he is inconveniencing the addressee to have to go to the Post Office and not having it handed over to him? Is it not unfair and really taking money under false pretences, for an individual to pay extra for a registered letter and then find that it is being treated almost the same as any other letter, in certain circumstances? Could not the Minister consider, because I think it is only fair to the person paying extra and also to the addressee, to revise the whole position with regard to the Tower Blocks and other places?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I do not agree, Mr Speaker. It is not treated the same as any other letter. The sender will never check if another letter had got to its destination.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is it not what the Minister is saying, in effect, that the person who pays for a registered letter, the purpose of which is to ensure that it is delivered, has no guarantee of delivery if the addressee does not come for it to the Post Office? Therefore, he is not getting the service for which he is paying which is to ensure delivery at an address.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, he would get no assurance of delivery if there is no one at home.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Minister not agree that in other countries if a registered letter is not delivered after two or three visits it is sent back to the addressor and then the addressor knows it has not been delivered? In the present situation you could have a letter awaiting collection five or six weeks.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That is not so. If a letter is not delivered within 14 days it is sent back to the sender.

HON P J ISOLA:

If it is not delivered how can it be sent back to the sender?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Because the Post Office has it and as no one has come to collect it, it is sent back.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 165 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Is the acting Minister for Postal Services now in a position to issue a statement on the question of TV licence stamps?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, I would like, with your permission, to reply to this question since the scheme is being piloted by the Treasury and not by the Postal Authorities.

The matter is well in hand. The format of the cards to be used has already been agreed upon and it is hoped to have them printed soon. The public will be informed as soon as the cards are available.

Persons who wish to participate in the scheme will be issued with a card on which ordinary postage stamps of not less than 50p in value can be affixed at their convenience. The cards will contain general instructions for the guidance of users and may be surrendered when renewal of the licence falls due.



NO. 166 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that the non-allocation of further work on housing units at Tank Ramp has brought about redundancy in the construction firm already working in that area?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The work referred to is Phase II of the Tank Ramp re-Development Scheme. This project forms part of the new Development Programme 1981/86. The aid submission was made in February, 1981. However, until such time as the UK Government reaction to the submission is known and funds are made available, Government cannot put the projects out to tender.

As regards redundancy in the construction firm already working in that area, it is probable that in the event of the contractor having performed satisfactorily, Government would have considered negotiating with the same contractor for the next phase. However, for the reasons mentioned above and which were explained to the contractor on several occasions, it is regrettable that the schemes will not overlap and the opportunity for continuity lost. The redundancy can be attributed to the general reduction in the level of construction work.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 166 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Therefore, would not the Minister agree that this is regrettable? What we are finding is that because of his hiatus between the ending of one scheme and the beginning of the other, at the end of the day we shall be paying more for our housing because constructors have got to start all over again, when they already have their equipment and their name on the site. Would he not agree that this is introducing an additional cost element into a very costly exercise already?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, I would agree with that.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does not the Minister think that therefore it is not sufficient to regret what is happening and wait for something to happen by itself? What we need to do is to alter the system that we have got to the extent that part of the development programme is being funded by the Gibraltar Government any way; that part should be identified and be got on with while we are waiting for the reply to the UK aid part of it.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That brings up a measure of complications in deciding which scheme, if we were to go ahead, should be the one that was actually taken on. It might not be the Tank Ramp Scheme and therefore this firm would have suffered the redundancy any way. Government has taken the view point that until we know the full implications of the answer to our aid submission we should not go forward on anything at the moment.

HON J BOSSANO:

I can accept this and I assume, and the Minister can confirm whether my assumption is right, that the Government is doing this in order not to reduce the possible impact they can make on being able to persuade ODA to put up money but apart from that does not the Government realise that in the serious situation of the construction industry there may be no construction industry left by the time they get the money? Is not the Government aware of the depth of the recession in the construction industry?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Government has actually gone ahead with certain schemes irrespective of the aid programme. One of them is the Catalan Bay project which will be going out to tender in September. I think that we have looked at the whole situation with reasonable sense of urgency. I do not think the construction industry will disappear overnight. After all they are doing, even on this year's estimates, some £16m of development work so I cannot see that they are going to vanish overnight. I think those allegations might have been more applicable if nothing came up perhaps by the end of 1982. I think at this stage it is rather premature to say that.

HON J BOSSANO:

I take it then that the Hon Member is not aware of the figures produced by his colleague, the Minister for Labour and Social Security, that shows that out of 196 people out of work, 92 are construction workers and that those construction workers, to the extent that 49 of them are non-EEC nationals, will not stay indefinitely in Gibraltar because in fact the law does not allow them to stay in Gibraltar once they have exhausted their unemployment benefit. Is he aware of that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think so. The construction industry has always been afflicted with this malice that sometimes there is more work and sometimes there is less and I think that one cannot, in all circumstances, ensure full employment in an industry which has never to my knowledge had full employment but has been subject to recessions and inflations of various types.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Minister then saying that the situation is not abnormal at present? How does he square that with the statements made by him and by his predecessor in this House, consistently year after year, that it was the inability of the construction industry to build more that was holding up the development programme? Is it not true that until very recently the whole argument was not that it was normal for the construction industry to have a lot of unemployed people? Quite the contrary that more work could not be done because there were not more people in industry.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If the Hon Member will look back over the last 10 years there have been periods when more people have been required than we had and there were periods when there were more people employed than actual work for them. It is a little unfortunate that our aid submission has not yet had the fullest attention that we would have hoped it might have had. Perhaps this situation will improve fairly soon.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Minister then aware that the level of employment in the industry today is the lowest since statistics started being collected in 1971? Is he aware of that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If you inform me I am not aware of it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 167 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

.. Would Government consider making grants available to tenants for the installation of refuse disposal units in existing housing estates?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Presumably the Hon Member is referring to domestic waste disposers intended only for disposing of food wastes.

No, Sir, Government is not considering making grants available to tenants for the installation of waste disposers in existing housing estates. These disposers must be fitted to sinks of larger outlet diameters than those normally in use. The wastes would increase the solid load on existing sewage stacks and indeed on the sewage system. Maintenance and repairs costs would be recurrent and high.

7.7.81

NO. 168 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Would Government consider installing refuse disposal units in new housing projects?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Government is not considering the installation of such disposers in new housing projects. Although an in-depth study has not been carried out, it is known that these machines require sinks of larger outlet diameters than those normally in use, they are noisy in operation, require a liberal flow of water, electric power and also increase the load on the sewage system.

When other than food wastes are inserted, serious jams can occur by foreign objects being trapped in the grinders. This would then involve dismantling the machine with resultant high repairs costs and disruption.

7.7.81

NO. 169 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Can Government say why Tank Ramp was not opened to vehicular traffic in June ultimo as stated in reply to question No. 84 of 1981?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Owing to the requirement to maintain contractor access to the Tank Ramp site while Water and Electrical Department service renewal trenchwork proceeded, work has taken longer than anticipated.

Service trenchwork is now complete.

Pavement work is now well under way and it is anticipated that the road will be opened to vehicular traffic by the autumn.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 169 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, by the autumn of which year?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

1986.

7.7.81

NO. 170 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Can Government say whether they intend doing anything about the dilapidated condition of the Clock Faces at Moorish Castle?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

A survey was carried out in May and work was programmed for completion in late July, 1981. Indeed work started some days ago, and before this question arrived for answer.

7.7.81

NO. 171 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Can the Minister say how many private cars are allowed to drive through and park inside the Alameda Gardens?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Two private cars, the property of the Park Supervisor and his son-in-law, both of whom live at the cottage, have permission to drive through the gardens, also any other supervisory staff, including the Cleansing Superintendent, who visit the depot there on official business.

Other vehicles which may require entry, as in the case of delivery of furniture, musical instruments etc to the Open Air Theatre, have to obtain prior permission.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 171 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

I can assure the Minister that there are more than two private cars parked in the Alameda Gardens outside the cottage. I would like to ask the Minister why is an exception made for these cars to park inside the Alameda Gardens when there is ample parking space in Alameda Grand Parade?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, instructions have been given to the Park Supervisor and his son-in-law that they are the only two people who may park inside the Alameda Gardens. If the Hon Member would give me the number of any other car he sees there I will see that they are prohibited in the future.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, could I then have the two registration numbers of the two cars that are allowed because otherwise I do not know which?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, I will send it to you.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government explain why no lifeguards were employed between the official opening of the bathing season and the 16th June?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

In recent years Government has provided life saving services at the beaches from the date when school children start their half days. As the school half days this year commenced on Tuesday 16th June, the life saving services were commenced on the previous Saturday, that is, 13th June, 1981.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 172 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Does the Minister then feel that no life saving services are required at the beaches between the beginning of the bathing season and the time that schools go on half days?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

This is a question of striking a balance between the absolute need and the absolute costs. Government has felt that until the school children start going on half days there is not all the emergency to have lifeguards there on a permanent basis. There are, of course, beach attendants who are in many instances willing to help in case of necessity.

HON G T RESTANO:

One thing is cost and the other thing is necessity. Surely, for the prevention - and we are talking about people who may be in danger of losing their lives in the sea - the cost aspect should not be a stumbling block for the Government to introduce this service.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I do not agree with the Hon Member. If we are going to have lifeguards at any time when people go bathing then, of course, we must have lifeguards on a sunny day in December when people want to go bathing. Therefore, we should have lifeguards on a 365 day basis.

HON G T RESTANO:

No, Mr Speaker, we are talking about official bathing season.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Perhaps we should shorten the official bathing season as far as the beaches are concerned to the period when the schools start their half days to the period when they finish their half days.

HON G T RESTANO:

What sort of costs are we talking about? How much would it cost in fact to employ these people before the half days?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I cannot remember the exact figures now but I think that when we did reduce the service we saved between £10,000 and £20,000.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 173 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government give details of the time spent and the costs incurred in building a pavement along Rosia Road?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

I would refer the Hon Member to my replies to similar questions in 1979 (206 of 1979) and 1980 (300 of 1980) when small sections of the pavement in Rosia Road were built.

As previously stated these works are of low priority and labour is drafted to the site as and when available and fluctuates daily.

Works started on 1st June this year and the costs to 30th June are:

Labour	£1,549.40
Efficiency Agreement	110.00
Materials	527.00
Total	<u>£2,186.40</u>

NO. 174 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Has Government further considered the advisability of submerged breakwaters on certain sections of the Eastern seaboard to stem the loss of sand from beaches on that side?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Government has not recently considered the construction of submerged breakwaters since these not only would be expensive to construct and maintain, but are of doubtful value in retaining sand.

The eastern foreshore has always been subject to shifting sands caused by winds and currents and hydraulic studies would have to be carried out over a period of years to ensure the correct design was adopted.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 174 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

Is it not a fact that Government has been in possession of certain advices that were given to it, I think, dating back possibly to March, 1969?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, there was some study done. There was a small groin built which broke up after a number of years and has given part of the idea to the thinking that to do the whole thing would be extremely costly, extremely difficult to do and perhaps not fully effective. To be absolutely sure of it much further study would be needed.

HON W T SCOTT:

Does Government have any intention of commissioning this further study?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Not at the moment but it is something we can always consider.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 175 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Is Government now in a position to inform this House as to when the erection of all the new roofs at the Varyl Begg Estate will be completed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The contract completion date is scheduled for May, 1982.

NO. 176 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government give the figures and costs for water production from available sources for the months of February, March, April and May, 1981, and state what the stocks were at 31st May, 1981?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The figures of water production from available sources for the months of February, March, April and May are as follows:

SOURCES	FEBRUARY 1981 M <sup>3</sup>	MARCH 1981 M <sup>3</sup>	APRIL 1981 M <sup>3</sup>	MAY 1981 M <sup>3</sup>
Rainfall	309	3741	9926	2768
Wells	9182	8918	9290	8632
NF Distiller	15967	16624	19069	19006
VTE Distiller	5934	A N N U A L O V E R H A U L		
Importation	28987	30385	26596	29218

The stocks of potable water on 31st May 1981 stood at 61834M (13.6Mg)

The estimated costs for each source for the financial year 1981/82 are:

Rainfall	£1.12 per M <sup>3</sup>
Wells	£1.52 per M <sup>3</sup>
NF Distiller	£4.48 per M <sup>3</sup>
VTE Distiller	£4.43 per M <sup>3</sup>
Importation	£2.90 per M <sup>3</sup>

If the average 16%-20% losses in water are taken into account, these figures have to be increased by this percentage to give an absolute cost.

7.7.81

NO. 177 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Is Government now in a position to inform this House as to when Gibraltar may expect the Air Terminal Extension to be in operation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Site possession and commencement on site:

is scheduled for the 14 July, 1981.

1st Phase completion which is the arrival hall, customs hall etc:

is scheduled for April, 1982.

2nd Phase completion which is the departure lounge etc:

is scheduled for November, 1982.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government give the number of housing units due for completion within the next twelve months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Flat Bastion Road - 15 units (2 bedsits, 6/1RKB, 6/2RKB, 1/3RKB)  
Tank Ramp - 10 units (1 bedsit, 3/2RKB, 6/4RKB)  
Lime Kiln Steps - 15 units (5 bedsits, 4/2RKB, 6/3RKB)  
St Jago's - 26 units (14 bedsits, 12 maisonettes)  
St Joseph's - 50 units (26 maisonettes, 24 bedsits)



NO. 179 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Is Government satisfied that the foundry constructed in the Public Works Department garage at Varyl Begg does not constitute a safety hazard to the resident population?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The foundry at the Public Works Department Garage Workshop is not considered to be a hazard to the resident population of the Varyl Begg Estate.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 179 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the Minister aware that it does emit smoke and unpleasant pollution?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The equipment installed in this garage foundry is the same as that which has been in use for years at Queensway site. Prior to the re-siting of the Public Works garage workshop, the foundry was in operation next to the Services School at New Camp and we never had complaints from the neighbourhood. At the moment the present foundry has only been used once and only on a trial run to melt some distiller fluted tubes. The tubes contain some calcium sulphate scale which gave an alarming amount of smoke resulting in the neighbourhood estate becoming alarmed. This instant could be reason why this question was tabled. The metal furnace is diesel fired and chimney stags have not been finished yet due to the pressure of the workload at the blacksmith shop. Once the chimney is installed the metal furnace should work without causing a hindrance to the public.

HON A J HAYNES:

The Minister is aware then of the instance when certain flats were smoke clogged and so forth but has the Minister asked the Public Health to investigate the substance of the smoke to ensure that this is not a safety hazard?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As I have already said the Public Health has been, more than once, consulted and the thinking is that the foundry does not constitute a safety hazard. At the same time when the full chimney is in operation it will even be less of a hazard than it is at the moment.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will there be no smoke then?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There may be a little smoke obviously at certain times if you have something which you are smelting which inherently produces a lot of smoke then there may be a case when there is a little smoke, yes.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 180 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government erect bollards on the pavement in the area from the Church to the new school at the Varyl Begg Estate to ensure a free passage for pedestrians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No, Sir, it is not considered that erection of such bollards will serve a sufficiently useful purpose.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 180 OF 1981

HON A J HAYNES:

I was informed that the Minister had in fact agreed at one time to erect such bollards.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have had consultations with the Varyl Begg Estate Committee who feel that, since there is hardly sufficient parking in the Varyl Begg area, to put bollards along that area would stop the use of the area as parking at night might create more congestion and eventually result in being more trouble than they would be worth.

HON A J HAYNES:

More trouble? Is the Minister aware of the dangers to pedestrians in that particular area where you have children, prams, the typical concentration of that part of one society which would naturally walk along that area? Children who would be obliged to walk on the road because there is no room on the pavement are endangered.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I do not see that there is any greater danger in that area than in any other area in Gibraltar. I think the whole thing would be that the cars should not be parked on the pavement during normal daylight hours but at night I think to prohibit the parking in that area would make more congestion and possibly would only exacerbate the situation that already exists.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister consider then putting a chain construction which can be removed at night? Something so that people at Varyl Begg who are worried and are concerned at mums having to walk along a road with a pram, children having to walk in the middle of the road. It is dangerous. I am aware that it is inconvenient for cars but I am also aware that it is far more important to save lives.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am quite willing to discuss the matter with the Varyl Begg Estate Committee who I think have the overriding interest in that area.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government give details of the proposed dredging of the commercial Port Berths?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The commercial Port was last dredged in March, 1971. Although the anchorage in the Bay is suitable for the largest vessels, the alongside berths have a draft restriction.

The deepest draft vessel permitted on the Western side of the Western Arm is 31' 6", and on the inside berths, it is 30 feet, with drafts of 30' on No 1 Jetty and 28' on No 2 Jetty.

Due to these limitations, it is essential to ensure that further restrictions are not imposed due to siltation.

The Berths to be dredged are as follows:

Western Arm	East and West side
No 1 Jetty	Berths 4 and 5
No 2 Jetty	Berths 6 and 7
No 4 Jetty	Berths 10 and 11
Detached Mole	Berths 53 and 54

On the outside of the Western Arm dredging will take place up to 120' from Quay and on the inside up to a distance of 80' from Quay.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 181 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

I am sure we all welcome an improvement to the Port facilities. Can we know the estimated cost of this operation?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think there is provision for it in the Estimates. It is of the order of £20,000.

HON G T RESTANO:

Just one further question, Mr Speaker. On the question of dredging, I think the Minister said that the last dredging was done in 1971. Was not dredging also done in 1974 in the commercial harbour?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think so, Mr Speaker. I must naturally go on the information that is provided for me by the Captain of the Port but I do not think that there was any dredging undertaken in the commercial harbour, certainly not at the instance of the Captain of the Port.

HON G T RESTANO:

I believe that in fact it was carried out by a ship called the Fograut, in 1974. I think Gibraltar heard dredging during part of the night.

HON A J CANEPA:

I remember hearing dredging but I do not think the Port Department was responsible for that but I can check to see whether my information is wrong.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Just a clarification point. Did I understand the Minister to say that the intention of this dredging was just to remove any sediment that may have accumulated or is it the idea to go any deeper?

HON A J CANEPA:

No. To prevent siltation within the sediment that does accumulate over a period of time. To remove it.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the material removed then usable for part of the Government's reclamation or not?

HON A J CANEPA:

I would require notice of that, Mr Speaker, I really do not know.

HON G T RESTANO:

I know that the operation has been put out to tender. Has any decision been taken as to who is going to carry out the operation?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not aware that a decision has yet been taken.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the tenders were invited with a closing date of 17th June.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, one is asked the question of details of the proposed dredging and one imagines that we are talking about the technical aspects of dredging and one therefore brings an answer accordingly and cannot possibly and physically answer every possible supplementary. If Hon Members opposite genuinely want information, information can be provided. If they want to score debating points in the House by bringing matters up that the Minister cannot answer that is their privilege but they will not get the information.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I must answer that because that is the most unrealistic type of answer. It is clear, I asked 'would the Government give details of the proposed dredging' and I would have thought it would have been a logical supplementary question to ask. After all the information which was obtained from the tender notice which appeared in the Gazette on the 21st May was that the closing date for the tender was half way through June and I am asking, has the tender been awarded? Surely, we should know if it has been awarded.

HON A J CANEPA:

You should have asked whether the tender had been awarded and whether the Minister would give details of what is proposed. I realise that the Hon Member opposite has a fetish about tenders but I do not.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does the Minister then have no idea when the proposed dredging will commence?

HON A J CANEPA:

It is certainly proposed to commence within this financial year otherwise we would not have voted at the last budget the sum of £20,000 for that purpose.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 182 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Why has legislation to prevent young children from handling speedboats unless they are accompanied by adults still not been brought before this House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The Seaside Pleasure Boats Rules 1981 were enacted on the 25th June, 1981, and published on the same day in the Gazette. They will become effective on the 15th July, 1981. They provide, inter alia, for the testing of persons under the age of 18 before being allowed to handle speedboats and the opportunity has also been taken to review the previous rules generally.

The Hon. Member will also be aware that a Bill to amend the Public Health Ordinance is set down for consideration of all its stages during this meeting. This Bill is intended to make better provision in the principal Ordinance for the control of pleasure boats, It expressly defines certain terms and also expressly confers power to require testing of persons handling speedboats.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 182 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

I do not want to ask any further supplementary but I think I should say that when this question was drafted I was not aware that Rules had come into force on 25th June and in fact there was a weekend in between and we had to present our questions on Monday the 31st. That was the reason I asked this question.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm whether MOD is asking £200,000 for the re-provisioning of the shed at No 4 jetty but it is willing to transfer the jetty without cost if the shed is demolished?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Jetty No 4 was released to the Gibraltar Government on 1 April, 1981, on an extension to the existing Commercial Port Agreement. The transfer excluded temporarily the shed on the Jetty pending future discussions on land matters which will determine whether the shed will have to be paid for. The value of the shed had been assessed by the MOD at £200,000.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 183 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it a fact, the second part of the question, that the MOD have indicated that if the shed were demolished they would not require £200,000 for it?

HON A J CANEPA:

It cannot be. In April I wrote to the Deputy Governor asking him to formally approach the Ministry of Defence with a proposal either that they should demolish these sheds or they should allow the Government to demolish the sheds and more so as the firm, that are using No 4 jetty for their aggregate and sand operation, are quite willing to demolish it themselves at no cost to the Government. This point was made by me in April and there has been no response.

HON J BOSSANO:

Let me try and get a clear picture, Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member will bear with me. Is it true then that the MOD are saying that they want £200,000 for the shed, and the shed is worth that much, and they will not let it go at all? Is it a fact that if the Government does not buy the shed from them for £200,000, in fact, they have no choice but to demolishing it because they have already agreed to release the land on which the shed exists? The land has already been released. Presumably the Government is not willing to buy and the MOD has got no choice but to demolish it and get nothing for it.

HON A J CANEPA:

The Government is not willing to buy the shed because it does not consider that it has any continuing use value. The position is that when we take over MOD land, if the buildings on it have a continuing value to the Gibraltar Government, then we must pay for that. The shed, as far as we are concerned, has no continuing value to us because we want to demolish it. Therefore, we are not going to pay for something that they want to see demolished.



HON J BOSSANO:

I am not suggesting that the Hon Member should pay for it, quite the opposite. What I am trying to establish is, in fact, whether the position of the MOD is that if the shed is demolished then that is fine, you have not got to pay for it but if you were to have some use for it then we want £200,000 for it. It seems to me that whether the Government decides to demolish the shed or not to demolish the shed, it is a matter for Government's decision looking at what is the best use that can be made of the site that has been made available and it is irrelevant to the MOD whether the Government uses it or demolishes it and therefore it should not be a consideration in the Government being charged. I would like to get a clear picture of what the MOD is saying.

HON A J CANEPA:

Let me say, and I will give way to the Attorney-General in a moment because he is more closely involved with the negotiations than I am, I wish that that were their position. Logically it ought to be but I will not say anything more and I will allow the Attorney-General to intervene at this point.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, there is a distinction in the arrangements between the Government and the Ministry of Defence. There is a distinction between natural land and reclaimed land. In the case of the reclaimed land there is no arrangement or understanding that if the building does not have continuing use it may be transferred free of charge and that is a matter on which the Ministry of Defence and the Government are negotiating at the moment. The correct position is that the matter is unresolved. My understanding is, and I feel sure I am right, and I can check and confirm privately that I am right, that at the moment the position of the Ministry of Defence is that if the building is to be handed over it must be paid for.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

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?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

I can confirm that the possibility of excavating rock from William's Way Tunnel was discussed by the Development and Planning Commission early in the year and after enquiry by Ministry of Defence representatives the Commission was informed that such operations could not be permitted having regard to the use made of the tunnel by the Services.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 184 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I ask the Government, once they had been informed of this what further they did to investigate on what grounds the Ministry of Defence was stating this and to persuade the Ministry of Defence that, if it was more important to Gibraltar's economic future that William's Way Tunnel should be made available than it was to MOD's future, which is so uncertain anyway, it should be taken into consideration.

HON A J CANEPA:

The situation has changed of late but at the time we were informed, and I think this is the position at William's Way Tunnel at the moment, that it contained storage tanks of highly inflammable liquid and sensitive signals equipment. Whereas I say as a result of the Defence Review and having regard to the economic benefit that there could be for Gibraltar of reclamation on the eastern side of the Rock that the matter should not be looked at again particularly if MOD space were to become available elsewhere for these materials to be stored there then I think that there is certainly some logic in pressing for this again if that is the only way that the reclamation proposed on the east side of the Rock can take place.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Government not agree then that it is desirable that when a private firm expresses an interest in this they should be given an indication of encouragement from the Government in pursuing such a possibility which goes beyond simply being sent a short letter telling them William's Way Tunnel is not available because the MOD do not like it, fullstop? Would the Minister not agree that if there are objections, then one could see whether it is possible to overcome those objections and preferably to be able to produce the result we want for Gibraltar without disturbing the MOD too much and make an attempt to overcome the obstacle rather than simply accept defeat, as it were?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, I would agree, Mr Speaker. What happens sometimes is that if the application of the enquiry has been made through an official channel, the reply goes through an official channel and is couched in more civil service jargon. Where an enquiry is made to me either in my capacity as Minister for Economic Development or as Chairman of the Development and Planning Commission and people come along to see me to discuss any development proposals that they have, then I think that approach is somewhat different and I have had experience of that. I know the case that the Hon Member has in mind but another interest has been expressed and I think the House will recall that I have stated here in the not very distant past that there had been a number of enquiries and interest was being shown in reclamation on the east side of the Rock. Where an approach is made at ministerial level one is rather in a better position, I think, to show an encouraging approach than what has happened in this case where an enquiry went through official channels to the Development and Planning Commission; through the MOD representative on the Commission we got the answer and the answer was communicated back through the same channel. 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 official level. I do not mind putting myself at the disposal of any people wishing to make an approach to me on the matter.

HON P J ISOLA:

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?

HON A J CANEPA:

Let me choose my words carefully. I think an enquiry was made, I would not call it a building application. Enquiries were made and the matter was brought to the Development and Planning Commission. Not everything that comes to the Development and Planning Commission is a building application. Enquiries are made and they are considered on planning grounds and on broad development grounds and it was indicated in this enquiry that they were looking to the fill coming from William's Way and naturally enquiries had to be made from the MOD but there was no question of a building application. If the Government is going to consider a development programme, the Government, I think the Hon Member is aware, does not always go out to tender. Sometimes there are direct negotiations with the developer like, for instance, Bayside Marina. That did not go out to tender. The proposed hotel at Parson's Lodge is also in that category because many years ago when the Government went out to tender there were no takers. If a developer comes along at a given point in time and is the only developer showing an interest in a particular development project, the Government may well enter into negotiations for a direct allocation to be made in the public interest. Where there is more than one interested as is becoming apparent with the east side of the Rock where we have got more than one enquiry then, obviously, the Government will have to seriously consider whether any project should not be put out to tender.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would not the Government agree that in terms of alternative economic strategy for Gibraltar in certain circumstances, a big project on the east side of the Rock might help in providing the answers for alternative economic strategy and, therefore, one must go very carefully before dishing out any concessions on any part of the eastern side because it would seem to me, would the Minister not agree, that if we are talking of alternative economic strategy we would be talking of a very major reclamation scheme on the east side of the Rock?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, I concur with the Hon Member.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 185 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether it proposes to make compulsory purchase of the privately owned site at Town Range adjacent to the St Jago's housing project now under construction?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The Government is not in a position at this stage to consider whether to exercise its powers of compulsory acquisition (in the absence of an agreement with the freeholders) in respect of the privately owned site at Town Range. Such a decision cannot be taken in isolation but must be related to the Government's Development objectives for housing.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 185 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

The Hon Member, I imagine, sees the logic of carrying out its development for housing when it is already working on a site which is adjacent to an under-used site that has been a scandalous situation in Gibraltar for 20 or 30 years. Do they see the logic of that?

HON A J CANEPA:

A scandalous situation which was not of Government's making. Let it be said. It is a question of expense really. What are the freeholders looking for? What sort of money do they want for that site? I think where the Government is in a position that it has sufficient sites to build on, this site does not become that important. I agree with him that it would be desirable to consider building on it as an extension of the development going on there at the moment. But we do have, as I say, other sites available between 1981 and 1986. We could well reach a stage where sites that become available in the future might be very costly to develop and then the cost of acquiring this site, when set off against the additional cost of building elsewhere, might well make it an economically viable proposition. I do not think we are at that stage at the moment. The matter has been discussed from time to time and other than a compulsory acquisition we do not seem to be able to come to terms with the owners of the site.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 186 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government consider carrying out demolition of the Engineer House site so as to make it available as a temporary parking area pending development of the site?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Government has already considered carrying out demolition of the Engineer House site for use as a temporary car park. However, the cost of this exercise would be very substantial, and bearing in mind that a housing scheme for the Engineer House site forms part of the aid submission, there is little point in reconsidering this proposal until such time as the outcome of the aid submission is known.

It is intended meanwhile that work should proceed shortly on trial holes related to the proposed housing scheme.

NO. 187 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state when work is due to start on the project on the site of the Old Slaughter House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The site of the Old Slaughter House is now being considered for another purpose. This decision followed the failure of the successful tenderer to meet the conditions of the acceptance of tender within the stipulated period.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 187 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister saying that it is being considered for another purpose within the people who answered the original tender or is he saying that it is going out to tender again?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, it is not going out to tender at present. The Government itself has a use that it would like to see that site being put to. In one case for the Government's own benefit in the sense that there is a motor vehicle testing shed that we would like to see built there and there is another matter which is also the subject of negotiations at the moment.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 188 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state when work is due to start on the Buena Vista Cottage site?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The tender for the development of the Buena Vista Cottage site was awarded to a Company on the basis of the most meritorious scheme. Acceptance was, however, conditional on the production of evidence of the tenderer's availability of resources to execute the proposed development. This it has failed to do within the time limits that were extended to permit it to allow negotiations with a financial institution and the award of tender has consequently had to be withdrawn.

A fresh tender notice has already been published and steps will be taken to enforce stricter adherences to those safeguards in the tender conditions which are intended to ensure the economic viability of the scheme and the tenderer's financial standing before a selection is made by the Tender Board.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 188 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

It is welcome that the Government should do something to take this up because at least in two questions the Hon Member has mentioned that the successful tenderer has subsequently been unable to complete. Would not the Minister agree that in circumstances as these other tenderers must feel aggrieved if somebody else perhaps dresses up a scheme to make it seem more attractive to the Government where-as a competitor who puts in a more realistic proposal and then finds that it goes to the person that has produced something that looked on paper sufficiently nice to have the edge and win the tender then the unsuccessful tenderer find himself defeated, as it were, the first time? Then possibly having to go through everything again with the expense of re-submitting tenders and so on, would not the Member agree that the original tenderers must feel that, if the successful tenderer was unsuccessful because he was unable to complete, they should have the choice of being considered first?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Government has to be careful that it does not waste its own time because we have lost over six months with respect to the development of this site and because of that from now on, before we seriously consider any tenders, we shall be requiring evidence of the financial standing of the tenderer. We felt on balance that six or seven months was rather too long to have approached the previous tenderers. Another consideration that we had in



mind was the motion that was passed here in the House in December which would mean a higher density development and because of that we are going out to tender again. Let me tell the Hon Member that we are looking at the minimum of 12 units for that site which is rather more than was the case before December. For all those reasons we thought, on balance, to go for fresh tenders.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 189 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state when work is due to start on the Woodford Cottage scheme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

May I first of all dispel any misunderstanding of the nature of a Housing Association Scheme. In essence, this is a common form of self financed, collective tenant participation which lays on the members responsibility for designing, building and subsequently maintaining the homes which they wish to build. This is necessarily an involved process. Several meetings have already been held at which initial issues have been discussed by the members. These discussions will lead to the selection and appointment by the Association of an architect and other professional advisers who will undertake the preparation of the necessary drawings (on the basis of the sketches prepared by the Public Works Department) and of the accompanying tender documents. Tenders will then be invited by the Association. Within broad limits, therefore, the tempo of events will be dictated by the Association and its advisers but it will, of course, be in the Association's own interest that work should be started as soon as humanly possible, a fact that the members fully appreciate for financial if for no other reason.

The answer to this question, therefore, is that work will commence as soon as the various preliminaries described above have been completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 189 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

The situation then is that the Association has now been formed and is functioning and is dealing with the Government collectively and will be dealing with contractors collectively. Is that the situation, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is right, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Government, I assume, accepts quite apart from the interests that the Association itself is bound to have to get the project going, that it has also got to look at two other aspects which are very important. One is the fact that the use of the land is important and secondly, the flow of work in the construction industry is important. We cannot afford, the Government I assume accepts, to have land lying idle while there are people willing to develop it and construction workers out of work looking for projects to be working on.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

From what I know of the Association I think they are well advanced and I think they will soon be looking for an architect to get the actual thing well under way.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has Government now given consideration to the proposal that all private sector landlords should be required to register with Government their property and the rent charged to tenants?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Government's proposals in this respect are set out in the Bill which has been published for an Ordinance to amend the Landlord and Tenant (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance. These provide for the registration, within a period of three months, of business premises subject to Part III of the Ordinance in a register to be kept by the Surveyor and Planning Secretary. It is also intended that this register shall be open to inspection by the public during normal working hours on payment of a prescribed fee.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 190 OF 1981

HON J BOSSANO:

That is in fact in respect of business premises, Mr Speaker. That is what the Hon Member said or did I misunderstand him?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It is correct. The provisions for a register is in respect of business premises.

HON J BOSSANO:

I am, in fact, asking the Government and I asked the Government at an earlier meeting of the House to consider in terms of responding to the public discontent that has been expressed about the lack of control of rents in the private sector, I would submit to the Government and I would ask the Government to confirm whether they agree that the first step to establish the level of rents that are being charged and the proportion of private sector tenants who are in this situation, is to require people to register that information with the Government in order that when the Government has to come in and legislate they can legislate, not based on emotional reactions or on rumours, but on facts which have been presented to them and where people can challenge those facts. I propose this as a positive and practical step in that direction and I would ask the Government whether they will consider doing it before they actually go into any in-depth change in legislation? Let us at least have the facts in this House.

HON A J CANEPA:

The position is that, as the Hon Member knows, the Bill is just being given first reading at this meeting of the House. I would suggest that the Hon Member should examine it very carefully. It is a complex piece of legislation and obviously over the summer recess before the next meeting there will be plenty of opportunity for all parties concerned to examine these proposals and to make representations on the matter. In fact, depending, I would imagine, on the nature of the representations received, the Government may not even proceed to take the Bill through all stages at the next meeting. It could be open to us just to give it Second Reading and to debate the general principles of the Bill and leave Committee Stage and Third Reading, where specific amendments can be looked at, for an even later meeting before the end of the year. That is the strategy I think that I would suggest should be adopted on the point made by the Hon Member.

HON J BOSSANO:

If the Hon Member will bear with me. In suggesting what the Government was being asked to do was not really to change the law. I do not know myself but I think Members of the House are in a position to hear quite horrific stories about what is happening in the private sector and on the other hand one gets, for example, the family expenditure survey that shows a five per cent of household income is spent on rent. There seems to be a discrepancy and, therefore, what I am putting to the Government and I would ask the Government whether they will consider this, is that quite apart from the policy decision that they may take on what needs to be done on housing, would they not agree that an initial and desirable step, if it is possible within existing legislation, perhaps by regulation, is to require that everybody should have a rent book. That the rents should be registered with the Government and that, therefore, the Government should have the statistical information based on facts of knowing, within the total of the seven households that there are in Gibraltar, what precisely the breakdown in terms of rent people are paying in pre-war, post-war, rent-controlled, non-rent controlled, so we have got facts. That is what I am suggesting and I would ask the Government for an indication of their views.

MR SPEAKER:

I think what the Government has replied is that to be able to do what you have asked they need legislation and the legislation is coming before the House as a Bill. Perhaps I am speaking out of terms.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, that is so. The Bill itself is a complicated piece of legislation on which we would want public reaction on many aspects of the matter. It does intend to change the law and this could be one of the matters that could be taken into account. To look at it in isolation now of the Bill, which has taken a long time to

be produced, would be anticipating the matter. We are open to any suggestion when the time comes. That is why it is only going to be read a first time, it affects properties, it affects tenants and we have got to make sure that everybody will have a say and then the Government will exercise its own responsibilities in reacting to those matters.

HON J BOSSANO:

With due respect to the Hon and Learned Chief Minister, I think he is missing the point because in fact I am not asking the Government to commit itself to any specific policy for or against liberalising or controlling rents. All I am asking it to do is to introduce machines so that we have got facts instead of having to base ourselves in hearsay and therefore I would say to the Government that it is a more sensible and prudent line to follow to have possession of the facts before they legislate rather than to legislate and get the facts afterwards.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We do not propose to legislate until we have had reactions which could include the ones that the Hon Member is raising because it goes to the root of the whole question of private property too.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

In view of recent developments will Government make urgent representations to the Ministry of Defence for the release of the premises at United Services Officers Club to the Gibraltar Government for public use and enjoyment?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

I do not know to what recent developments the question refers. I can, however, confirm that no request has yet been made for the release of the Queensway premises. There has to be a clear appreciation of the financial and other factors involved.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 191 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does not the Government consider it clearly desirable that that complex which is a sport complex should be retained for the use of the public and that the premises that are there should, obviously, also be retained because it seems to me that there is clearly no Ministry of Defence use for that area now? When I said recent developments I was referring, obviously to recent defence cuts that have been announced. Does not the Minister agree that the process of getting clearance of any matter relating to lands with the Ministry of Defence is always a lengthy one and in these circumstances would it not be advisable to put in a claim and at least find out what are the conditions for transfer that are being asked for?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, of course it is desirable to retain that complex for the use it has been traditionally made of it or perhaps for even better use. Under the existing arrangements governing the transfer of land, surplus to defence requirements, the Government would be required to pay for the value of the building on the site. That is the existing position. Now whether a new situation is going to emerge or whether the desire which the Government has to see certain unsatisfactory aspects of the Lands Memorandum negotiated might now be given a fresh impetus, I think, is something that we shall see very shortly because we have been talking about it. There is no point in going along at the moment to the MOD and asking them to hand over those buildings because they are going to ask us to pay a colossal sum of money and that may not arise in future.

HON P J ISOLA:

But that question cannot be answered until the application has been made.

HON A J CANEPA:

No, because there is an obligation on the MOD to come along to the Gibraltar Government and say this piece of land is surplus to defence requirements, here you are.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has the Ministry of Defence not come with that proposition?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, they have not.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Government then ask the Ministry of Defence what are their plans for this site because we cannot have in Gibraltar quite a large area of land and buildings vacant?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think at the juncture at which we are now, not just having regard to the question of the defence review, which I think the Hon Member has in mind, but in respect of the negotiations of the Lands Memorandum which we have been asking for and on which there have been negotiations at the highest level, this is not the time to ask for this specific piece of land. It can be settled in a different way and we may not have to pay a penny for it.

HON P J ISOLA:

I appreciate that but is it not wise for the Government to put in a request in respect of all empty MOD sites and await developments, the fact that the MOD may ask for £1m does not mean that they are going to get it? Therefore, the Government would then be knowing the position of the different MOD sites, would it not?

HON A J CANEPA:

The question of all empty buildings is another matter. Yes, that stems directly from the approach to the Ministry of Defence that all land and all buildings which they do not require should be handed over to us without paying a penny. Even if it is not reclaimed land.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government now inform the House of the results of the tenders received for a multi-storey car park, the applicant to whom the tender has been awarded, if any, and generally inform the House as to the earliest possible date for such a car park to be in operation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Seven firms responded to Government's invitation to submit proposal for the development of the site in question. This was the first step in the selection of a suitable developer. These proposals were duly considered by the Government and the applicants were subsequently informed of Government's intention to invite them to submit tenders if they were prepared to amend their proposals to conform to certain stipulated minimum requirements and to the prior production of satisfactory evidence of their financial standing and availability of the necessary resources.

Government's basic requirement is that the building to be erected should be a multi-storey car park for at least 400 cars and that any additional conforming development should be subsidiary to the main purpose and be within the maximum plot ratio of 5:1.

All the parties except one have indicated their continued interest in the project.

The completion date for the project will depend firstly on how soon the existing seven married quarters can be reprovided and, secondly, on how long it will take the successful tenderer to carry out the work. These are unknown factors at this stage but the period will be appreciably shortened if the reprovisioning of the married quarters can be undertaken by the developer himself on MOD's behalf. A decision on this proposal is awaited from the MOD.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 192 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister whether the Ministry of Defence have now indicated to the Government the site where these seven married quarters are to be built?

HON A J CANEPA:

This was being considered as part of the feasibility study which the Ministry of Defence was carrying out to build over 70 married quarters. What the end result would be for that feasibility study, I think, may well be in the melting pot now.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could the Government possibly ask the MOD again, in view of the statements that have been made publicly now on the whole question of the defence review, whether MOD accommodation that becomes free as a result of any cuts and so forth should not be used to accommodate these seven married quarters with an undertaking that the quarters would be built at some future date in order that the building can be cleared for development?

HON A J CANEPA:

There is no indication naturally at the moment that there are going to be MOD quarters that will become available. If they did become available, I think, having regard to the importance in economic terms of this project, that it is a point that is naturally worth making and I will do so at the earliest opportunity at local level. I should stress it is a matter which can then be taken up at a higher level as developments unfold.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A T LODDO

Can Government say what the position regarding Parson's Lodge is as of this point in time?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The position is that the Company interested in the development of Parson's Lodge met its obligation to submit a feasibility study of the project in time but was at that stage of its negotiations unable to produce the required guarantee or divulge information regarding its sources of finance.

It is understood that contacts have been maintained with the Financing Bank and the Company is confident that it will be in a position to supply the required details shortly. The position will be reviewed by the Government in the light of the Company's response or if it is not forthcoming within a reasonable period.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 193 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister what he terms as a reasonable period?

HON A J CANEPA:

It is very difficult, Mr Speaker, in a changing situation to say that. I would have said before the statement of the Secretary of State for Defence that a reasonable period might have been September or October but having regard to that statement my own view is that I am prepared to wait longer if there is a very real chance of having an hotel built on that site. I think Gibraltar needs that.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 194 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Can Government say whether to their knowledge there are any plans for the development of the old Theatre Royal?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Government has no knowledge of any plans for the development of the old Theatre Royal.

NO. 195 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Can Government say what the position regarding the development of Maida Vale is as of this point in time?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The physical development of the Maida Vale site has made no progress in view of the unfavourable economic climate which continues to depress the tourist industry generally. The developer's efforts to obtain the necessary financial backing have in the circumstances been unsuccessful so far and alternative forms of development have been considered by them. These proposals have been put to the Government very recently and will be considered in the light of all relevant factors.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 195 OF 1981

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask what these alternative proposals are?

HON A J CANEPA:

They entail, Mr Speaker, the building of housing for re-sale.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is this to be another Gardiner's Road type of project?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I do not see why the Hon Member should ask that question. This is what the Company has proposed to the Government. I have not indicated in any way what the Government's reaction is at this stage.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 196 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Will Government inform this House if the re-advertising for further applicants to the Woodford Cottage Scheme has resulted in an increase in the number of people interested and will Government state if it is still their intention to proceed with this development in the manner originally envisaged?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

A further six applications were received in response to the renewed invitation for participation in the Woodford Cottage Scheme. One of the applicants did not however qualify within the terms of the notice. I can confirm that it is Government's intention that the scheme will proceed as originally envisaged.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 196 OF 1981

HON W T SCOTT:

So I can take it, therefore, that other than the last six applications, there are now 12 applications all told?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir. After the second advertisement it became twelve but there have now been another five people interested.

HON W T SCOTT:

So we now have seventeen.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is fluctuating between fifteen and seventeen at the moment. I am not quite sure of the number.

HON W T SCOTT:

For the fourteen or seventeen units?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Seventeen units, yes.

HON W T SCOTT:

So Government, therefore, if they proceed with this scheme would have no intention of building the two or three quarters that they informed this House that they might be building in March of this year?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The participation of Government is dependent on how many we actually get. If we only get fifteen then Government may consider taking the other two. If we get sixteen, Government may take the other one. If we get seventeen there will be no need for Government to participate.

HON W T SCOTT:

But it is still not the intention of Government, obviously, to increase the number of units within the same land area.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir. The maximum number of units is seventeen, that is all that can be built according to the designs.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 197 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government made any progress in acquiring the freehold property in Town Range opposite the Transport and General Workers Union building?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The position is as stated in my reply to Question No 185. Since a substantial amount of money would be involved it will no doubt be appreciated that the acquisition of this freehold property (whether by agreement or compulsorily) can only be considered in the context of the Government's Development Programme objectives in housing having regard to the substantial amount that would be involved in its acquisition.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 197 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

I believe that there have been negotiations over the years. May I ask what is the asking price of the owners of this property at the moment?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think that the asking price has changed over the years and I would not know what is the last figure that was talked about because there have never been real negotiations. There have just been tentative enquiries, that is my understanding. From time to time when proposals have been submitted to develop that site or when a request has been made on a related matter, it has given Government officials an opportunity to enquire. I would not really know what the figure is. I would imagine that it is very substantial having regard to market values of land. I would hazard a guess that it would certainly be well in excess of £100,000.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am surprised that the Minister should say, that to his knowledge, there has not been very much negotiations. I would refer him to a question by the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza, going back nearly three years ago, and the Minister's predecessor on this subject . . .

HON A J CANEPA:

Not the Minister's previous answer, surely, three years ago?

MR SPEAKER:

The Minister's predecessor.



HON G T RESTANO:

The Minister's predecessor said: "the Surveyor and Planning Secretary is negotiating". I do not think, in fairness, that he has made much headway because the price asked is out of the question. So there seem to have been negotiations in 1978.

HON A J CANEPA:

Was that, Mr Speaker, in the course of supplementaries or was it part of the main answer because we are always very careful about the words that we use in the main answer whilst in supplementaries one can use the word "negotiations" when one means discussing or talking without prejudice, without any commitment.

HON G T RESTANO:

In fact, it was in a supplementary but in the actual answer the then Minister said that the freeholder of the site had been approached as to the possibility of Government acquiring this site.

HON A J CANEPA:

That is not negotiations, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

The negotiations came up in a supplementary. I do not know whether the Minister is saying that his predecessor did not say it or that if he did say it . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, he is not saying that. He said that the use of the word "negotiations" in the main answer can be taken as a definite indication as to what Government is doing. The "negotiations" used in supplementaries may have been used more loosely. That is all he is saying. I am not saying whether that is the case I am saying that that is what the Minister was saying.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would like to know what, in fact, the sort of asking price is? Surely, that should be known.

HON A J CANEPA:

The asking price was in the region of £54,000 in 1973 or 1974.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The point is and I think it should be stated quite clearly, that our powers of acquisition are very old and in fact we have to pay the market value and that is why one shirks until we have a better legislation of acquiring something compulsorily.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Government considering bringing forward new legislation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, we are and do not ask me when because I will tell you that I do not know.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government state how many firms in Gibraltar have their businesses registered in Government owned accommodation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The information required is not readily available and would take a considerable time to extract. I regret therefore that it has not been possible to undertake the required research and analysis.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 198 OF 1981

HON G T RESTANO:

Will that search be made at all?

HON A J CANEPA:

Sir, having regard to the fact that there are over 5,500 limited companies registered under the Companies Ordinance and over 3,000 business names are registered under the Business Names Registration Ordinance, it will certainly not be undertaken unless the Hon Member can adduce a very good reason as to why it should be done.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Government in agreement in principle on its accommodation being used for this purpose?

HON A J CANEPA:

I require separate notice of that question, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 199 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does Government now know when talks will start with the British Government on the new development programme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, with your permission I propose to answer this question together with Question No. 200 of 1981.

The Gibraltar Government is awaiting a reply from Her Majesty's Government regarding the timing of discussions on the 1981/86 Development Programme Aid Submission submitted on the 9th February 1981. I would add that the Gibraltar Government continues to be concerned about the delay and has made representations to this effect through the appropriate channels. I am hopeful that these representations will result in an early and positive reaction in line with Her Majesty's Government recently reaffirmed policy to 'support and sustain' Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 199 AND 200 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state the effects on projects planned if these talks are delayed beyond the end of, say, September of this year? Would that not bring a big gap and make the programme 1981/86 impossible to achieve ab initio?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is the position, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 200 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Has Government now arranged a date for the opening of talks with the British Government in respect of the Gibraltar Government Development Programme for 1981/86?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Answered together with Question No. 199 of 1981.

7.7.81

NO. 201 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

In view of recent developments, can Government state whether it is now in a position to make the Port Feasibility Study available to Members of the Opposition?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, I gave you notice on the 23rd June, 1981, that I proposed to make a statement on the Port Feasibility Study during this meeting of the House. The subject matter of the question is covered in the statement.

7.7.81

NO. 202 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Having regard to the assurances given by the Chief Minister that the report on the Public Works Department would be made available to the Opposition, can Government now state when this report will be made available to Members of the Opposition?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the report was made available to the Hon Member on 29 June and I can assure him that it was sent before Government had any knowledge of the Hon Member's question. Earlier this year I informed the Hon Member that the report would be made available to him once I had received comments by those directly concerned. In fact all the comments required have not yet been received. It is a very complex report but I did not wish any longer to delay making the report available. It is for this reason that in making it available to him and in publishing it we have made it clear that the Government has not so far taken decisions on the recommendations.

7.7.81

NO. 203 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether there is a properly constituted Board of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation and if not will Government take immediate steps to constitute such a Board?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. There is a properly constituted Board.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 203 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Is this the same Board that was in existence last year?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes. Letters appointing the Chairman and members of the Board were issued on the 20th of June. The appointments are due to appear in the Gazette this week. There was some delay in making the form of reappointment and discussions have taken place with the Chairman and the result of these discussions had to be considered in Gibraltar Council before a decision was taken. In the end all concerned agreed that the Board should be reappointed for another year in the normal way, that is, on the 1st of January for one whole year. The Gazette will be appearing, I think, today or tomorrow.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON P J ISOLA

Can the Chief Minister inform the House whether the Government is no longer pursuing its policy to appoint a Committee of Inquiry into the Electricity Department and if so why not?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

As has already been announced, the Government does intend to appoint a Committee of Inquiry into the Electricity Department.

As I informed the Hon Member in my letter of 29 June, the Committee will be chaired by Sir Howard Davis. The Committee has not been appointed earlier because offers of the chairmanship made to four other persons were declined.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who had been put on notice about this in January, have now been asked to assist us in obtaining the services of two specialist advisers - a Trade Unionist and a technically qualified person - to serve as members of the Committee. It is hoped that the Committee will start its investigations in September, after the peak leave period and the end of the hot weather.

As has already been announced, the Telephone Department will be the next subject of a Committee of Inquiry. Mr Charles Piccone has agreed to be the Chairman in this case.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 204 OF 1981

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Chief Minister say whether the terms of reference for the inquiry into the Electricity Department are the same as he announced in the House or have there been any changes, or has anything been settled yet?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Subject to any remark that may be made by those taking part in the inquiry.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government reconsider having more counters opened at the Central Post Office in view of the general public dissatisfaction with the existing facilities?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

No, Sir. The Government is not aware that there is general public dissatisfaction at the number of counters in the General Post Office and the facilities being provided, although it is accepted that there have been isolated complaints.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 205 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister realise that even I, in the United Kingdom am getting used to these complaints and that, in fact, if I remember rightly, at least there has been one letter in the Gibraltar Chronicle on it?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

If the Hon Member is as reliant on his United Kingdom information regarding the Post Office as he is about the vending machines outside the Post Office then, of course, I would accept that he is. It is absolutely true that there is a peak period when the counters hold up queues but after that things go reasonably well.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Cannot arrangements be made at least in those peak periods when we do have big long queues which are perhaps the most important ones because that may well affect even our commercial side of Gibraltar? Can we not do something to improve the situation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

This is a matter which has been brought up in this House on a number of occasions. I remember my colleague, Mr Abecasis, going through this. Staff inspection thought that that was the number the Post Office required. It is impossible to have a person employed there just for the peak period and then what else do you do with them during the day? It is a question of finance.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could perhaps the Minister think of this question of vending machines? Perhaps he could have a few vending machines inside the Post Office, a few more to overcome the problem.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I wonder whether the Member knows how many we have at the Post Office.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I do not know how many we have. All I am saying to the Minister is that perhaps he could increase the number because obviously what is available does not cope.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I do not agree that it does not cope. What the Post Office may not be able to cope with is the arrival of a passenger liner on that particular day. I would grant him the fact that if he happens to be in Gibraltar at 10 am on any particular morning, that there are occasions during the particular 9am to 10 am, that there is a rush but again that happens in every shopping area. There is a peak period and there is a slack period. Government does not consider that the peak hour justified a further employment of counter clerks.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Since the Minister has drawn attention to cruise liners and I think we want to attract as many as possible of them, people who come for very short stays in Gibraltar want to make the best of it, see the sights and so on. Particularly on those days is it possible to arrange for, perhaps, individuals from another department to come to the counter even if they get an extra allowance for doing so?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It surprises me from a man who has been the Chief Minister of Gibraltar. One cannot just send people from one department to another for stamp selling because a cruise liner comes in, it is not on. There are knowledge requirements for stamp vending and there is cash to be handled. It is not as simple as that.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Of course I am aware of the difficulties but, surely, all this can be arranged, as I said, by paying them an allowance. Whatever extra cost might be, the facilities that are going to be given to the Gibraltar public, who obviously are complaining, whatever the Minister may say - there are times when there is congestion in that place - will be more than justified because of the depressing dissatisfaction with the service.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I refute that there is a certain dissatisfaction. I strongly refute that.

HON P J ISOLA:

In view of the fact that the Minister has admitted that there are peak periods, can the Minister arrange that during peak periods all available staff is at the windows and nobody takes any tea breaks, after appropriate discussions with the Union and anybody else the Government discusses with? Can he ensure that at least that occurs?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That is certainly so. That is a good logic and it has been done, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 206 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state what is being done to promote tourism for the coming winter season?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

An outline strategy for Advertising and Promotion in 1981/82 has been discussed with the Advertising Agency in Gibraltar and London and a presentation of the campaign is to be made to me in Gibraltar on the 13 July. We shall also make this presentation to the Travel Industry at an all-day meeting I propose to hold with them on 14 July.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state what is the present hotel room occupancy and the latest forecast for this summer?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

The bed occupancy of all hotels in Gibraltar up to May 1981 compared to January/May 1980 was 31.7%. Room occupancy would be around 46%. Regrettably these figures exclude one hotel yet to submit their May figures.

We calculate that Summer 1981 will be down by about 35% to 40% compared to 1980.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 207 OF 1981

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister agree that 1980 was down on 1979 and by how much?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I cannot remember by how much it was down in 1979 but 1979 was the boom year of tourism.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does not the Minister consider that this is a very serious situation indeed for Gibraltar's tourism?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I totally concur with the Hon Member. It is a very serious situation for Gibraltar as it is for other tourist resorts.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is he happy, in trying to promote tourism for the coming winter season that all he has been able to tell us today is that he is having a team coming out to show what sort of films (Presentation) we are going to have?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It is a little bit more elaborate than what sort of films we are going to have. It is an advertising campaign conducted by professional people to try and catch the market. The Hon Member is no doubt aware that we are up against very strong competitive

opposition and, if you may allow me, may I just quote, for instance, that Laker is offering a three day all-inclusive holiday in Spain for £50 and a full week for £59, air passage and full board. There is another firm called Global with a minimum of seven-night prices of £73 in Benidorm and £79 in Majorca. If we subsidise our hotels totally, if we pay their wages totally, we can not compete. I regret to say this and I certainly do not enjoy saying it, we just cannot compete.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

7.7.81

NO. 208 OF 1981

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how much is being done to encourage Cruise Liners to call at Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND SPORT

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

The normal day-to-day contact is maintained with operators and obviously any advertising for Gibraltar stimulates all modes of traffic including cruising which is a static business in Gibraltar.

We recently up-dated and distributed a Port Manual to all shipping companies and operators in the UK.

We have also given hospitality service to selected journalists who have visited Gibraltar on cruise liners. This type of specialised editorial is in our view the most cost effective.